

Public Sector Led Development in the Northumberland Heritage Cluster

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Abstract

This thesis maps, for the first time, the Northumberland Heritage Cluster (NHC). Outlining the key theories within clusters discourse I develop a multi-perspective approach to understanding clusters. In parallel with this I draw on understandings of heritage to help identify who, how and why heritages are harnessed by various sectors. In applying these frameworks, I begin by using a Porter-inspired approach to identify a cluster consisting of activity linked to five heritage related sectors: (1) the cultural industries (2) the land-based industries (3) tourism (4) local food and drink and (5) the cultural heritage sector. A series of key 'assets' are highlighted within these sectors that present development opportunities for the NHC.

Building on this foundation I delve further into the cluster to uncover its socio-economic characteristics and institutional architecture. I identify an embryonic agglomeration with a dominant public sector and high levels of collaboration. A common enterprise, or 'industrial purpose', is revealed that aids collective learning and co-operation amongst cluster members. This 'spirit' has its source in Northumberland's history, the role of the public sector and an altruism not found in many clusters. I argue that heritage plays a key role as a catalysing resource that provides a collective identity and inspires cluster members to work for the greater good. In addition to economic objectives, community and environmental development activity are important parts of the NHC. These sustainable development objectives are illustrated through a series of case studies.

In mapping the characteristics of the Northumberland Heritage Cluster, this thesis seeks to challenge stylised notions about the role of clusters in local and regional development. I argue they hold the potential to spur holistic development with more diverse outcomes than simply economic growth.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

For over a century economic geographers and those in related disciplines have sought to better understand processes of industrial localisation. Over this time numerous theories have been consulted, constructed and adapted to explain why firms in particular sectors of the economy, and in particular places in the world, locate together. These range from neo-classical economics to sociology, via economic geography and business studies. A veritable flood of research has examined agglomerations, industrial districts and clusters. This research has identified myriad causal mechanisms that contribute to clustering. This thesis aims to further contribute to this corpus of work by examining the activity of the Northumberland Heritage Cluster.

To date, most of the work done in this field has explored the economic benefits of such agglomerations. Even institutional and socio-cultural approaches are used to uncover the networks and processes that benefit economic growth. Today, much work within this discourse posits the notion that regions need to be competitive in the face of increasing globalisation (Lovering, 2001). This economic focus reinforces the notion that localised production complexes function for solely economic ends. Advances in cognate (sub)disciplines have been examining more diverse forms of development for over a decade, yet, it is relatively recently that regional studies has seen calls for a reassessment of the

normative assumptions within local and regional development policy (Geddes and Newman, 1999; Hudson, 2003; Lovering, 2001; Morgan, 2004b; Pike, et al., 2006), and such calls go largely unnoticed in the literature on clusters (for exceptions see Henry, et al., 2006; Moulaert and Nussbaumer, 2005; for exceptions see Rosenfeld, 2003). Without such a revisioning, regional studies risk being left behind in terms of their theoretical and practical applications. It is the argument of this thesis that concepts explaining territorially embedded production systems remain theoretically generative so long as the assumptions within the discourse are challenged.

The dominant narrative of what counts as local and regional development reinforces the notion that particular industries are more important for the development of regions than others. Frequently these exemplars extend the work of the most popular research into agglomerations of one kind or another – namely bio- and high-technology, media, and automotive and quality manufacturing. In part, this fascination is understandable, not least because examination of these industries is simply fulfilling demand. However, I argue more research is needed that extends the horizon of case study industries to challenge dominant narratives that conflate development in a region with development of a region (Sayer, 1985; Lovering, 2001).

The main aims of this research, then, are to examine a sector that falls outside the set of established case studies. In so doing, I seek to gain new insights into the potential of clusters as drivers for holistic and diverse forms of local and regional development. I do this through examination of heritage related sectors in Northumberland that form the Northumberland Heritage Cluster (NHC).

The NHC is an embryonic cluster encompassing activity ranging from land-management, through arts and crafts, to the operation of museums and galleries. No previous work has been done on this cluster, and before this research there existed only a notional concept of its remit (provided by the Northumberland Learning and Skills Council in their CASE Studentship application to the ESRC). This is reflected in my research questions that provide a framework for mapping and defining the relevant sectors, uncovering what makes the NHC function, what marks it out as different and how this contributes to wider discourses:

1. What is the Northumberland Heritage Cluster?

- How, and by whom, has it been defined?
- What is the scale and scope of the cluster?

2. What are the drivers, structure and characteristics of the Northumberland Heritage Cluster?

3. In what ways does the Northumberland Heritage Cluster contribute to clusters discourse?

Like other clusters, socio-economic and cultural institutional characteristics define much of the NHC's operation. Likewise, economic development is a central feature of the cluster. However, the output of this agglomeration extends beyond economics into community and environmental development. A dominant public sector and the potentials of heritage play an important role in these outcomes.

The diverse activities of the NHC are examples of contemporary uses of heritage that go beyond traditional heritage management and its prevailing conservation ethic. This kind of activity is an emerging part of heritage discourse that seeks greater engagement with communities. For centuries heritage management has supported an elitist, inequitable, often sexist and racist approach to preserving the past. However, in recent decades this dominant approach, referred to as the 'authorised heritage discourse' (see Chapter 3), has been critiqued in the light of feminist, post-structural and post-modern narratives. Through heritage-led projects that reject the authorised heritage discourse, the NHC combines economic, environmental and community development. Thus, this research makes four main contributions. The first contribution is to highlight the benefit of expanding clusters research beyond the 'usual suspects'. Second, the research challenges the assumptions about what clusters can achieve. Here I contribute to what is becoming a stylised discourse about the value of clusters and to debates about holistic, sustainable and equitable forms of local and regional development. Third, I seek to do this with explicit use of heritage approaches to help understand the make up of the cluster and its outputs. Here I am again engaging with

the regional development literature, specifically theories that preface the role of history in regional outcomes. Finally, I seek to bring insights from economic geography to heritage discourse and vice versa.

1.2 Overview of chapters

Chapter 2 discusses the main approaches used to understand localised production systems. It identifies the core concepts that have dominated current research on what are multifariously known as industrial districts, agglomerations, clusters, learning regions, neo-Marshallian nodes etc. I chart perhaps the most influential theories on agglomeration – Marshallian agglomerations, Italianate Districts and Porterian Clusters – and supplement these models with work that builds on and critiques them. By highlighting the origins, characteristics and outcomes of these approaches I seek to outline a typology of clustering characteristics. In so doing I delineate the constituent elements of a multi-perspective theoretical framework for agglomerations (after Benneworth and Henry, 2004). In addition I highlight a number of problematic absences in the literature.

With a theoretical framework for understanding clusters established, Chapter 3 documents the evolution of the heritage concept. Heritage is a complex idea that did not exist in the way we understand it today much before the 19th century. Its history is fascinating and revealing, and is charted to elucidate two things. First, it is done to describe the ways in which heritage has been, and is used by, society. Heritages have been harnessed, exploited and enrolled into various sections of society and the economy for various reasons over the years. It is essential to recognize this to understand the nature and activity of the NHC. Second, in order to comprehend the *narratives* at work within the cluster it is important to understand the milieu in and through which organisations are operating. Furthermore, this discussion highlights links between regional development and heritage, and aids the identification of the cluster's constituent sectors undertaken in Chapter 5.

Chapter 4 outlines the methodological approach adopted for this research. Here I begin with discussion of the theoretical underpinnings of researching new economic geographies. Given my approach of choice, there is particular focus on the role of qualitative case study research

in economic geography. My case study selection criteria and justification of my choices is also made in this chapter. Once this is done I reflect on the process of research and the methods I adopted. The chapter concludes with some personal reflections on the fieldwork stage of this study.

With my conceptual and methodological frameworks established, Chapter 5 is the first of my empirical chapters and answers my first research question. This chapter presents a Porter style analysis adopted in parts of the literature to reveal the broad scale and scope of the NHC. This is a necessary step given there is no previous research on the cluster on which to draw. In addition, by adopting a Porteresque approach it is my aim to demonstrate that while the critiques of Porter's cluster concept (1990; 1998) are valid, there is some value in adopting the approach as part of a multi-dimensional analysis of a potential cluster. Indeed, although such an approach does not reveal in any degree of detail the workings of a cluster, it does provide a framework through which to understand its context. The result of this analysis is a 'first cut' that outline the scope of the NHC and the scale at which it operates.

Building on the previous chapter, my second empirical chapter (6) delves further into the cluster to answer the second research question by uncovering the institutional architecture and socio-economic processes at work. Using further dimensions of the multi-perspective approach developed earlier in the thesis, this second cut presents evidence of competition and collaboration using examples from my case studies. As well as this, processes of institutionalisation are revealed through an application of Amin and Thrift's (1992; 1995) institutional thickness framework. Insights into the cluster's common purpose are also gleaned and compared with other clusters to illustrate the NHC's uniqueness, and thus contributes, along with Chapters 7 and 8, to answering the third research question.

Chapter 7 builds on Chapter 6 by illustrating key outcomes of the NHC's collective enterprise. Here I explore the cluster's sustainable development credentials with four examples that can be considered a more detailed third cut of the cluster. The first two are initiatives run by the Northumberland National Park Authority. The first, focusing on the Park's Traditional Boundaries-Traditional Skills, examines this five year programme seeking to address a serious skills shortage by teaching apprentices heritage boundary techniques

such as dry-stone walling and hedge laying. Through the project the Park has not only trained people in a dying art, but has used walling to engage with local people and the business community. The second case study examines the aSPECT project, and outlines how cultural heritage based tourism products were developed within the Coquetdale Valley. The project brought together previously disparate users groups to initiate collaborative tourism planning and collective learning. My third exemplar focuses on the role that flagship developments have had in Northumberland. With particular focus on The Alnwick Garden I highlight the benefits this attraction has for the local area. Finally, I outline two sustainability projects actively ‘greening’ local businesses. This chapter, together with Chapters 6 and 8, answers the third research question by discussing the potential clusters have for stimulating sustainable development, and the potential of sustainable development has for extending understandings of clusters.

Chapter 8 brings together my findings and outlines my empirical and theoretical contributions in relation to wider academic debates about local and regional development, the role of the public sector in clusters, and contemporary uses of heritage. In addition to this, given the source of funding for this research, I identify some areas for policy contributions. Finally, I highlight five avenues for future research that build on the position of heritages at the interface of economic, social, political and environmental geographies.

Chapter 2

Agglomerations, Industrial Districts & Clusters - a Review of Localised Industrial Complexes

2.1 Introduction

There has been a resurgence of interest in the region over the past two decades as a scale of economic organisation and a key concept for policy intervention (Storper, 1995; MacKinnon et al., 2002). In the early 1980s the region came to be seen as not only an outcome of overarching political-economic processes, but as a fundamental unit of social life comparable to the market: a genuinely important process in social and economic life (Storper, 1997). This renewed focus on the region was further prompted by increased interest in supposed new forms of capital accumulation.

In 1984 Michael Piore and Charles Sabel published *The Second Industrial Divide* highlighting “a turning point that could reverse the order, from giant corporations back towards regional economies organized around networks of small firms in the same industry” (Amin, 2000: 149). Their work reflected that of a number of academics studying change in industrial systems throughout western Europe and North America. As Scott identified, the changes “consist[ed] primarily in a relative decline in the importance of Fordist mass production and

an enormous expansion of manufacturing activities based on less rigid and more highly adaptable (i.e. flexible) technological and institutional structures" (1988: 171). The general change from mass to smaller units of production became multifariously known as post-Fordism, flexible production, flexible accumulation, neo-Fordism, or flexible specialisation (Piore and Sabel, 1984; Scott, 1988; Sayer, 1989; Storper, 1997; Phelps, 2002).

At the time scholars argued that new patterns of demand meant large, inflexible corporations were unable to adapt as the consumer changed. New markets emerged leading to a decline in such large forms of production (Dicken, 1998). As incomes rose in Western Europe and North America, consumers demanded more design intensive products. Niche markets emerged and the availability of new production technology allowed small firms to compete with large companies and adapt quickly to changing demand conditions (Amin, 2000).

Where groups of smaller producers adopted these new technologies the spatial manifestation of flexible firms came in the form of new industrial districts (Amin, 2000). While undeniably important the interest in the industrial district, according to Amin (*ibid*), far outweighed their empirical significance. He outlines four main reasons why so much interest was shown in the industrial districts. First, the move to small scale flexible production gave hope to the smaller firm in the face of large production systems dominating the market place. The smaller firm returned power to the individual employee as they worked closely with management in co-operative and reciprocal relationships. Second, analysis of flexibly organised firms re-focused attention to the social side of economic life. Collectivity, local support systems and institutions such as trust and reciprocity gained importance over neo-classical economic theory. The third reason Amin posits is the role of learning and systems of adaptation. Innovation was acknowledged as an important source of competitive advantage in the 'new' economy. Formal and informal processes of learning and knowledge acquisition became recognised as significant actions in the life of the firm. Finally, the importance of place and the role of the local in the economy drew interest from geographers. At a time when the economy was becoming increasingly global, local linkages were being overlooked. The industrial district provided a hook from which ideas of the region as unit of production could be developed (Amin, 2000).

This interest can be seen in the subsequent libraries of research on variously termed territorial production systems such as agglomerations, industrial districts, regional innovation systems, learning regions and clusters, amongst others. Within this work numerous characteristics and causal mechanisms have been identified to explain how such phenomena function, and importantly outperform other forms of industrial organisation. Much of this work revived previous theories of agglomeration, updating it for the modern day. As the economy evolved further, subsequent theories were constructed to explain emergent forms of agglomeration and their development. The result of this proliferation of theories is a field that has been described as ‘fuzzy’ (Markusen, 1999a) ‘chaotic’ (Martin and Sunley, 2003) and a ‘conceptual headache’ (Malmberg and Power, 2006). In order to overcome this confusion a number of scholars have attempted to create typologies delineating conceptual characteristics and background (Gordon and Mccann, 2000; Keeble and Nachum, 2002; Lagendijk, 2003; Benneworth and Henry, 2004). This chapter seeks to supplement this work by, firstly, outlining the main threads in this field in order to, secondly, construct my own multi-perspective approach for use in mapping potential agglomerations.

Following this introduction, the chapter is divided into four main sections. The first section (2.2) examines the main theories explaining the emergence and function of agglomerated industries. It begins by outlining the origins of agglomeration theory in the work of Adam Smith and Alfred Marshall. I then examine the emergence of New Industrial Spaces (NISs) and the role of transaction costs in generating agglomeration economies. As a key exemplar of NISs, and the revival of Marshall’s theories, I examine Italianate Industrial Districts in the Third Italy (2.2.3.1). Here I particularly concentrate on the role of history and tradition in establishing modes of working and interaction (2.2.3.2).

Embeddedness is an important factor in institutionalist explanations of agglomeration such as those developed by the Italian School of theorists, and I provide an overview of its origins in section 2.2.4. Contrasting this, the next section examines Markusen’s critique of the new industrial districts literature. I explain her typology of alternatives to what was becoming the dominant model of industrial district, with particular focus on her conceptualisation of hub-and-spoke, satellite and state-anchored versions of industrial districts that rely on more

regulated buyer-supplier relationships and labour markets than those characterised in the 'Third Italy' (2.2.5).

The next section addresses the role of untraded interdependencies in establishing locally specific norms and conventions, that act as alternative agglomeration economies to those presented in transaction cost theory (2.2.6). At the time, Storper's (1995; 1997) untraded interdependencies represented the emergence of a new theoretical narrative that prefaced localised learning over other transaction costs. The rise of concepts dealing with learning and innovation are thus dealt with in section 2.2.7.

Section 2.2.8 examines perhaps the most popular theory explaining agglomeration (at least amongst policy-makers), Porter's (1996; 1998) cluster concept. I examine the popularity of this concept as well as its critiques. The following section outlines Amin and Thrift's (1992; 1994; 1995) model of neo-Marshallian nodes that goes some way to delineate globally dominant clusters. I also outline the concept of institutional thickness, that provides a framework for highlighting the institutional make-up and processes of institutionalisation at work within some territorial production systems.

Theories on the stages of development of clusters is provided in section 2.2.10, with an explanation of the characteristics and driving forces within each stage outlined. I also address issues of path dependency and lock-in that can arise within some regions. I finish section 2.2 with an examination of more recent work that seeks to find clusters place in global networks of production and exchange. This is done by presenting the importance of non-local linkages and strategic coupling in global production networks.

Throughout section 2.2 I try to highlight the important role history plays in the formation of clusters and their socio-economic-institutional elements. Drawing on the work of Paasi (1991) I argue that particular cluster characteristics are formed, at least in part, as the outcome of contingent historical processes. This is particularly important where local cultures form part of the production process or generate a cluster's norms and conventions, for example in Italian industrial districts and aspects of untraded interdependencies.

I draw together the different threads and concepts interrogated thus far in section 2.3. Here, building on the work of Gordon and McCann (2000), Nachum and Keeble (2003), Newlands (2003) and Benneworth and Henry (2004), I outline a multi-perspectival approach that appreciates the origins and nuances of various theories on clustered industries. Such an approach is based on the idea that there is not one type of ‘cluster’ as characterised by some commentaries. Instead, clusters should be treated as a ‘portmanteau concept’ made up of myriad theories than can provide increased empirical rigour and offers the potential to add value to economic geography more generally (Benneworth and Henry, 2004). In explaining this approach I present a typology of clustering characteristics drawn from the theories presented earlier in the chapter, along with the origins of such concepts.

Before concluding the chapter I identify three important absences in the literature in section 2.4. I highlight the preponderant focus on economics and economic growth within clusters studies despite advances in cognate fields that have seen the environment and communities gain greater focus alongside economics. Following Christopherson and Clark (2007), I outline the under theorisation of power relations within much work on clustered industries, and the outcomes this has for individuals, firms and the wider area. Finally, I argue there has been too much focus on the ‘usual suspects’ in cluster analysis that is limiting the development of the concept. The chapter concludes with section 2.5 where I draw together the argument made in this chapter.

2.2 Perspectives on Agglomeration

Over the years there have been a number of concepts accounting for agglomerated industries. This section charts their development and critiques their uses as a precursor to the development of a multi-perspective approach in section 2.3.

2.2.1 Proto-Industrial Agglomeration

Most accounts tracing the lineage of spatial agglomeration begin with Alfred Marshall’s (1920) concept of the industrial district. Writing at the beginning of the twentieth century his work greatly influenced the studies of similar areas in the 1970s and 1980s, particularly in

Italy. However, it is worth noting that one can go as far back as Adam Smith for an account of spatial clustering that echoes the characteristics of Marshall's and others theories on agglomerations, at least in terms of the key concept of the division of labour (Ozawa, 1999).

Writing in 1776 Smith described village and town formation as a process of co-location, where small manufacturers settle to meet the needs of farmers:

“Without the assistance of some artificers, indeed, the cultivation of land cannot be carried on, but with great inconveniency and continual interruption. Smiths, carpenters, wheel-wrights, and tailors, are people, whose service the former has frequent occasion for. Such artificers too stand, occasionally, in need of the assistance of one another, and as their residence is not, like that of the farmer, necessarily tied down to a precise spot, they naturally settle in the neighbourhood of one another, and thus form a small town or village. The butcher, the brewer, and the baker, soon join them, together with many other artificers and retailers, necessary or useful for supplying their occasional wants, and who contribute still further to augment the town.”

(Smith, 1983 [1776]: 481 in Phelps and Ozawa, 2003: 588)

The Smithian town was part of an inter-sectoral partnership with settlement as manufacturing base and countryside providing demand for goods and services from the town, as well as food and provisions from agriculture. In a cumulative process, the more productive agriculture was the larger the town became (Phelps and Ozawa, 2003).

Like modern day agglomerations, international and inter-regional trade is a central feature to Smith's theory, especially when production levels are high:

“render[ing] provisions cheap, and encourage[ing] a great number of workmen to settle in the neighbourhood, who find that their industry can there procure them more of the necessaries and conveniences of life than in other places. They work up the materials of manufacture which the land produces, and exchange their finished work...for more materials and provisions. They give a new value

to the surplus part of the rude produce, by saving the expense of carrying it to the water side, or to some distant market;...The manufacturers first supply the neighbourhood, and afterwards, as their work improves and refines, more distant markets. . . . The corn, which could with difficulty have been carried abroad in its own shape, is in this manner virtually exported in that of the complete manufacture, and may easily be sent to the remotest corners of the world.”

(Smith 1983 [1776]: 505-506, in Phelps and Ozawa, 2003: 590).

This idea of surplus transformation in trade is the key principle behind Smith’s rent-for-surplus theory of trade (Myint, 1958). As the process continues and if markets expand a division of labour is possible along with increasing returns to scale. Then, one can exploit the social division of labour and associated external economies (Phelps and Ozawa, 2003). Phelps and Ozawa (2003) also point out a sequence in which innovation facilitates trade, which enhances productivity and demand for manufactured goods, and ultimately creates markets for goods for final consumption. In some ways this echoes the supplier-buyer relationships that develop in more modern production complexes.

2.2.2 The Marshallian Industrial District

Although it is the first, Smith’s theory of agglomeration in towns was generated at a time very different to the capitalism of the 20th and 21st centuries. And although its applicability today is limited, Smith’s theory has elements which have been developed by scholars writing in this field, particularly on divisions of labour, that are fundamental in modern understandings of the economy. Alfred Marshall’s work has still greater relevance. The re-discovery of Marshall’s writings was the spur for the renewed interest in agglomerations during the 1970s and 1980s (Belussi, 2006).

Writing at the start of the twentieth century, Marshall was the first modern economist to posit a theory on industrial agglomeration. Working on areas in Sheffield and West Yorkshire he saw industrial districts as rivals to large firms (Asheim, 1996; Amin, 2000). Instead of the internal economies generated through large scale manufacturing processes,

Marshall argued a group of small firms could enjoy local external economies: economies of scale external to the firm but internal to the area that provide similar advantages (Asheim, 2000).

Within industrial districts Marshall argued small, co-located firms could access three types of scale economies. First, there are the advantages propinquity provides in reducing transaction and transport costs, as well as easier access to labour, services and information. One of the key advantages here is the quality and flexibility of a skilled local labour market that develops as an area specialises over time. Further advantage accrues from reduced training costs, facilitated through familiarity with products, tasks and modes of working (Lublinski, 2003). This familiarity is gained as workers move from firm to firm, live in the same community as other employees and generally have high degrees of contact with each other. This, Marshall posits, generates an industrial atmosphere said to be ‘in the air’ and means workers do not need as much training to meet employer’s needs (1920). Furthermore, a pool of local suppliers and service providers become highly specialised in providing goods and services local firms require. The industrial atmosphere means they understand the way the firms work and tailor their products to suit them.

Second, are the advantages of specialisation in products and tasks by firms in the supply chain. Enterprises specialise in different tasks or phases of production that enables efficiency at the firm level, and along the supply chain (Amin, 2000). Bellandi (1996) calls this ‘economies of variety’ which enables the “possibility of making up the final product in different ways without loss of productive efficiency...[borne] from the benefits of scale economies through task specialisation” (Amin, 2000: 153).

Third, industrial districts often see spin-offs and new entrepreneurship as niche markets are identified and divisions of labour increase. Inception of new firms is aided by their incorporation into the local production system and the local industrial atmosphere (*ibid*). Marshall’s work was very significant at the time of writing, and 50 years later his ideas again came to prominence as academics found renewed interest in the region as a significant economic scale.

2.2.3 New Industrial Spaces

The late 1970s and 1980s saw a resurgence in the interest of regions and a revival of Marshallian ideas (Stroper, 1995). The cause of this were the substantial changes the industrial landscapes of the developed world went through at the same time. A downturn in the global economy and increasing competition from newly industrialised countries saw major deindustrialisation across Europe and parts of North America. Despite this decline, however, a number of regions showed significant and sustained growth. Perhaps most importantly, these areas adopted different production techniques to those seen in large firms. Instead of large scale Fordist production lines, so called post-Fordist smaller scale 'flexible production' was the chosen mode of organisation. For Piore and Sabel (1984), this represented a 'second industrial divide', and monumental shift in the operation of Capitalism.

Scott (1988b) termed these regions New Industrial Spaces (NISs). These places, often in marginalised areas, had been overshadowed by the main centres of industrial growth in the previous decades, and thus were frequently overlooked in analysis of industrialisation. The downturn which saw crisis in old industrial regions, however, revealed their robustness and remarkable rates of growth. Three key factors characterise NISs: "a strong social division of labor, proliferations of small and medium-sized industrial establishments, and the marked reagglomeration of production" (ibid: 4). In line with Marshall's (1920) thesis, the prevalence of small and medium sized firms allowed these regions to develop specialised buyer-supplier relationships replacing the internal, and increasingly inefficient, supply chains of large corporations. This mode of organisation was seen in other areas, however. What marked these NISs out as different, Scott (1988b) argued, was the combination of SMEs with two further elements.

The first of these was the labour market. Scott argued that the socially and, more importantly, geographically marginal position of these regions - in relation to the centres of Fordist industrialisation - meant their labour markets were socially insulated from Fordist modes of organisation. This allowed traditional, and relatively informal, modes of regulation to remain intact.

The second important factor is that of spatial re-agglomeration. Driving this, Scott argued, was transaction costs. Again echoing Marshall, the theory went that in order to meet the competitive demands of the modern economy producers need to be responsive and flexible. Disintegration of the supply chain was one way to achieve this, but this generated additional costs when dealing with numerous suppliers and sub-contractors, especially if they were located non-locally. The transaction cost thesis posits, that to reduce these costs, firms locate close to potential suppliers and “via the play of centripetal locational adjustment, external economies of scale (a non-spatial phenomenon) are eventually transmuted into and consumed in the specifically spatial form of agglomeration economies” (Scott, 1988a: 177).

Together these factors saw the emergence of NISs. Three places became key exemplars of this phenomenon: Silicon Valley, the Third Italy and Ile de France South. Descriptions of these industrial districts are well known, however I want to take a more detailed look at one, the Third Italy, because of the important role of history and labour heritages that make it relevant to the explanation of the NHC. Moreover, the characteristics of the Third Italy are crucial in the development of socio-economic theories of the economy.

2.2.3.1 Italianate Industrial Districts

In the 1980s a group of Italian economists studying industrial districts in North Central and North Eastern Italy developed Marshall's theory of agglomeration into what has become known as the concept of 'Italianate Districts' (Pyke, et al., 1990). The work of the 'Italian School' was the start of the neo-Marshallian revival. Their work was particularly interesting because the localised clusters of firms they studied were performing particularly well even in a climate of increasingly globalised production networks.

Pyke and Becattini (1990: 2) define the industrial districts identified in Italy as “geographically defined productive systems, characterised by a large number of firms that are involved at various stages and in various ways, in the production of a homogeneous product”. They add that, importantly, the firms are small or very small and include many artisan suppliers. Italian districts differ slightly from Marshall's conception - although

exhibiting many of the characteristics of Marshallian districts - placing a greater emphasis on active socio-economic processes and include an appreciation of the historical and spatial context of an agglomeration (Markusen, 1999; Asheim, 2000). This is manifest in a number of ways.

To begin with, Italianate districts exhibit higher degrees of personnel 'churning' as people change jobs within the locale, helping to reinforce the industrial atmosphere of a district (Beccattini, 1990; Pinch and Henry, 1999)¹. Continuous reallocation of jobs is a result of the short-run nature of production cycles and as individuals seek better suited or more aspirational positions within the district. This creates a continuum of employment as individuals reach a level they want, in turn opening up more opportunities for others to advance (Beccattini, 1990). This acts as a mode of attraction and retention for workers as "the most sought-after workers find their ability and experience better acknowledged and appreciated in the district than elsewhere" (ibid, 42).

Collaboration is also higher between firms in Italianate districts. Despite acting in competition with each other businesses cooperate as a means to share risk, stabilize markets and share information and technology (Markusen, 1999)². This is aided by a common enterprise that values hard work and the preservation of artisan techniques in the face of increasing industrialisation. This is enabled through ties of trust and reciprocity that are influenced heavily by an agrarian class structure maintained through institutions such the family, socialist political groupings, and the Catholic church (Putnam, 1993). These defend local society and the unique socio-economic milieu, combining with innovative trade unions (Brutti and Calistri, 1990; Trigilia, 1990) to create a civic-community that supports firm development (Capecchi, 1990; Putnam, 1993).

¹ Interestingly there is no social stigma attached to continually moving from job to job, instead it is seen as helpful to the development of the district as knowledge flows from company to company via workers (Becattini, 1992).

² The idea of simultaneous cooperation and competition has come in for criticism recently, see Malmberg and Maskell (2002) and the critique below.

This local way of working is akin to Marshall's industrial atmosphere that gave the districts he studied competitive advantages. The institutions that reinforce and stimulate a district's shared modes of action include particular norms and procedures which members of the district respect. In turn these aid the efficient coordination of economic actors. As I expand upon below, Storper (1995; 1997) identifies these as 'untraded interdependencies' which become "region-specific assets in production" when stable (Storper, 1997: 5).

As mentioned, a local political community sometimes arises within these districts. In Capecchi's (1990) analysis of the Emilia-Romagna region of Italy, he identified the emergence of Communist and Socialist political communities as "people of the same political leaning came to be in charge of local and regional government, labour unions, small artisan associations and industries, and firms organised as co-operatives" (p.28). These local trade groups provide infrastructure in the form of business and technical support through local service centres, as well as fora for formulating collective strategies. It is argued these region wide policies reinforce the reciprocal links within the community and fosters the local sense of belonging. This sense of local belonging can in turn stimulate self-help and entrepreneurship driven by a willingness to maintain and improve the district's reputation. In a similar way, firm spin-offs maintain a regular flow of innovations and as workers move from firm to firm a culture of emulation is generated. All this helps to achieve a local reputation which attracts investment and new customers (Amin, 2000; Beccattini, 1990; Corolleur and Courlet, 2003).

To summarise, a cyclical process is generated where economic interdependency, high levels of personal contact and social integration, trust and mutual knowledge aid the reduction of transaction costs, facilitate flows of information and knowledge, enable socio-cultural controls to inhibit rogue behaviour and maintain a balance between competition and cooperation between actors (Amin, 2000; Asheim, 2000; Henry and Pinch, 2001). In Chapter 6 I highlight similar processes in the NHC.

It should be noted that the Italian school's explanation of industrial districts success has been criticised for overlooking macro economic policies and mechanisms affecting the competitiveness of the Third Italy. Dunford and Greco (, 2006; Dunford, 2007), for

example, argue that the systematic devaluation of the Lira during the 1990s, and the affect this had on the price of exports, was a factor overlooked by some scholars. Indeed, a general critique of much of the early work on industrial districts is its predominant focus on local phenomena rather than taking a more holistic view (Markusen, 1996; Markusen, 1999a; Bathelt, et al., 2004; Maskell, et al., 2006). Furthermore, more recent studies have identified a greater reliance on outsourcing to countries in Eastern Europe in Italian Districts. This was a necessary step for producers, particularly in fashion, to cut costs and keep prices competitive (Berger and Locke, 2000; Crestanello and Dealla Libera, 2003).

2.2.3.2 History and tradition in Industrial Districts

To fully appreciate the workings of the Italian districts an understanding of local culture and histories is crucial. As mentioned above agrarian class structures, family ties, political groupings and the Church all influence the socio-economic milieux of these districts (Brutti and Calistri, 1990; Capecci, 1990; Putnam, 1993; Trigilia, 1990). These aid the production and reinforcement of local identity and sense of belonging, that in turn aids the success of the district. As I expand upon in the next chapter, heritages play an important role in the formation of identities (Graham, et al., 2000). This happens naturally over time but increasingly is a deliberate process to distinguish a place from competitors (see section 3.6). As Belussi et al. (2003: xvi) argue, local transactions are “sustained by local institutions (private and public), which will use their regulative power to reinforce the social capital embedded in the history of the local community.” In the case of Italian Industrial Districts, farming, family, the church and even production techniques all represent links to the past and traditional ways of doing things. As well as being part of an area’s history, the values these institutions preserve are incorporated into production in the present day. As Becattini (2003: 7) argues, the local market is unique because it is “anchored...to a local socio-cultural equilibrium, univocally defined by history”.

This view is also held in theories from a non-Italian perspective, as Walker (2000: 126) claims:

“One of the most exciting ideas in contemporary economic geography is that industrial history is literally embodied in the present...choices made in the past - technologies embodied in machinery and product design, firm assets gained as patents or specific competencies, or labour skills acquired through learning - influence subsequent choices of method, designs, and practices.”

Ideas of path dependency are strongly prevalent in the regional development literature (Martin and Sunley, 2006). For Anderson (2000), history, heritage and tradition are foundational elements of a region, particularly in peripheral areas. He argues that rural areas cannot ‘hold on to’ large firms because they require more central locations and the conveniences such positions allow (easier contact with suppliers, customers, skill labour etc.). Once these firms have been stripped out by the stronger gravitational forces of more central locations, all that is “left-over [are] qualities such as tradition” (*ibid*: 92). Developing this idea, Benneworth (2004: 440) argues that traditions should be seen as an advantage that can serve “as anchors for entrepreneurs to strongly embed their new firms in the region, creating new territorial assets on which others can draw.” This is a key point I return to in Chapter 6.

History should not only be seen as a dimension of analysis, but also viewed as an input in the production process as it moulds locally embedded conventions approaches and viewpoints. Thus, to explain a place’s contemporary developmental activities, an appreciation of a place’s history is incredibly important (Hudson, 2005; Boschma and Frenken, 2006; Scott, 2006). I continue this argument below in relation to the emergence of untraded interdependencies (2.2.6), processes of institutionalisation (2.2.9) and a cluster’s stages of development (2.2.10).

2.2.4 Embeddedness

The work on industrial districts that acknowledges the social embeddedness of economic activity forms part of wider debates about the institutionalised nature of the economy (Amin, 1999; Martin, 2000; Henry and Dawley, Forthcoming). The emergence of institutionalism has its origins in a number of sources: French regulation theory, recognition of the ‘socio-cultural’ within economic geography, ‘institutionalism’ in other social sciences, and a failure of old categories to explain post-Fordism production regimes (Martin, 2000). Institutional

approaches inform a body of work on regional economies that includes ideas of collective learning, institutional thickness and path dependence (see sections 2.2.7, 2.2.9 and 2.2.10 respectively). The work of American sociologist Mark Granovetter (1985; 1993; Granovetter and Swedberg, 1992) and his concept of embeddedness has been particularly influential in this field. It forms the foundation of much work on localised production complexes and it is therefore worth summarising the concept briefly.

Granovetter's concept (1985; 1993) holds to many of the same ideas seen in the work of Velben (1919) and Polanyi (Polanyi, 1944). Granovetter proposed that economic networks are based on interpersonal and inter-firm relationships which “[avoid] the extremes of under- and oversocialized views of human action” (Granovetter, 1985: 504). Thus, embeddedness can be seen as a middle way between an undersocialised utilitarian and atomised view of economic behaviour - seeing economic transactions as individual dealings with no antecedence or social component - and an oversocialised view which sees social influences as “external forces condition[ing] actors...and render[ing] social relations and structures irrelevant” (Grabher 1993: 2). Both Grabher and Granovetter proposed this embeddedness route between the under- and oversocialized theories, stating that economic behaviour is affected by actors' networks of social relations. Thus avoiding ‘dyadic reductionism’ – which would not acknowledge the structure of a network of relations – and ‘temporal reductionism’ – which does not take account of previous dealings of actors involved in transactions (Grabher, 1993).

Four elements of embeddedness have been identified: cognitive; cultural; structural; and political and can be seen as an another way of theorising socio-economic action within agglomerated industries (Zukin and Dimaggio, 1990; Taylor and Leonard, 2002). Each of these can be seen as emergent features that stem from the context in which they form. *Cognitive embeddedness* is “the ways in which the structured regularities of mental processes limit the exercise of economic reasoning” (Zukin and Dimaggio 1990: 15). *Cultural embeddedness* is the collective rules, ways of working, understandings, ideologies and traditions that bind a group of firms in a place – essentially untraded interdependencies (see below). These norms and understandings regulate market exchange leading to the ‘done’ way of working: creating integrity and cohesion amongst a group of workers (*ibid*).

The third element of embeddedness is *political*. This refers to firms' struggles for power with non-market institutions as they make decisions. The results can either be to constrain or foster economic activity (Taylor and Leonard, 2002). *Structural embeddedness* refers to the structural articulation of relationships between economic actors in a locality, in other words the place based networks of firms and individuals that facilitate information exchange and growth (Zukin and Dimaggio, 1990). Four essential characteristics of structural embeddedness have been identified as reciprocity; interdependence; loose couplings and power asymmetries (Grabher 1993; Taylor and Leonard 2002). Much of the work on NISs, learning regions and clusters are based on these theories of embeddedness. Furthermore, Yeung (2003) identifies embeddedness as a key factor stimulating changes to economic geography methodologies (see Chapter 4).

2.2.5 Hub-and-Spoke, Satellite and State-Anchored Districts

In a critique of new industrial districts, Markusen (1996; 1999a) argues that “[e]mpirical testing of the NID model has been surprisingly thin...[and] no author has rigorously set out the features of new industrial districts in ways that permit easy assessment of their incidence and growth across space and time” (1996: 295). In an attempt to right this, she draws attention to a number of derivations from the Marshallian based and Italianate models.

Markusen starts from a definition of industrial districts as “a sizable and spatially delimited area of trade oriented economic activity which has a distinctive economic specialization, be it resource-related, manufacturing, or services” (Markusen, 1996: 296; Park and Markusen, 1994). From this, and through empirical research in the US, she proposes three additional types of industrial district. The first she terms the ‘hub-and-spoke’ district (Figure 2.1). This agglomeration type is centred around a single large firm or several large firms which uses local and extra-local suppliers in the production of goods and services for external customers. The large firm(s) act as anchors for national and international contracts. This demand is diffused out to local suppliers and sub-contractors through subordinate relationships (*ibid*). A useful example is Seattle (Gray, et al., 1996) where “Weyerhaeuser [is] the dominant resource-sector company, Boeing the dominant industrial

employer...Microsoft the leading services firm...and the Port of Seattle the transportation hub" all of which support a multitude of subcontractors (Markusen, 1996: 197). Within these districts internal economies of scope and scale are high. Any intradistrict cooperation is generally on the terms of the hub firm(s) and there are often long-term contracts and commitments. However, there tends to be a lack of cooperative enterprise within the district (ibid).

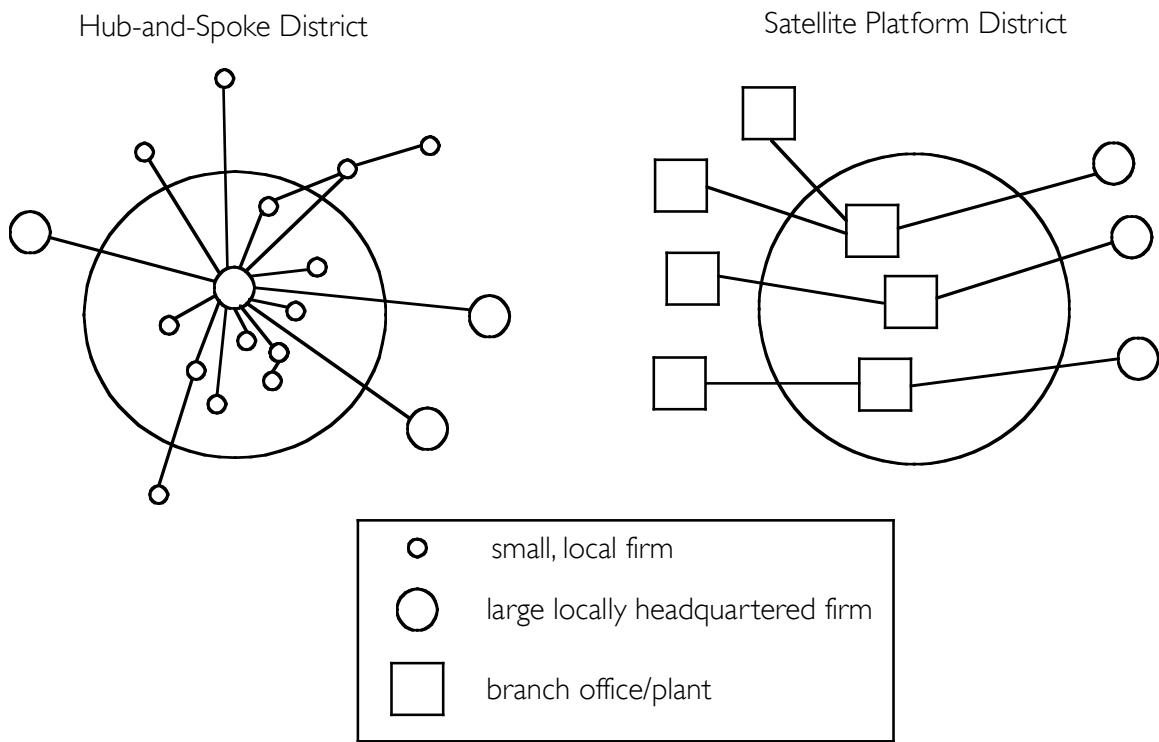


Figure 2.1 Hub and spoke, and satellite platform districts (adapted from Markusen, 1996)

This sort of industrial district is often seen where the hub firm is a large vehicle manufacturer, for examples see Detroit and Piedmont for cars and Seattle for planes (Guerrieri and Pietrobelli, 2000). On the one hand, these examples can be illustrative of the lock-in or growth effects hub firms can have on a place. Districts can become over reliant on the anchor firm leaving the region open to terrible economic consequences should the hub firm leave. In the Detroit example Ford's oligopolistic control in the area prevented the diversification of the economy (Chinitz, 1960; Markusen, 1996). On the other hand hub

firms can stimulate economic growth and vitality leading to a diversified economy and sustainability (Gray et al., 1996). For example, in their case study of Fiat, Whitford and Entrietti (2005) have demonstrated that dominant firms can have positive effects on local suppliers. They argue that Fiat's policies of 'guided growth' have helped sub-contractors diversify, in turn shielding the local economy after crisis at the Italian giant.

The main difference between hub-and-spoke and Italianate districts are politics and power. The former does not have the political community of the latter, instead the hub firm(s) seek political influence for their sole advantage and this is manifest in unequal power relations (Gray et al., 1996). The influence of large TNCs within regional innovation systems is reiterated by Christopherson and Clark (2007) in their research on the photonics sector in Rochester, New York. In their example, Christopherson and Clark detail how international firms use their position and power to leverage local labour and research capacity from smaller competitors (see 2.4.2).

The second model Markusen proposes is the 'satellite platform' based on a group of branch plants with external linkages to parent companies. It is often local or national governments who assemble these groups to foster local economic growth (Markusen, 1996). Constituent firms tend to 'stand-alone' as part of an internal supply chain of a parent company without local relationships (Glasmeier, 1988). Examples of satellite platforms include the US Research Triangle Park, and the collection of automotive plants in Elkhart, Indiana (Luger and Goldstein, 1990; Markusen, 1999b).

Connections to the parent company mean scale economies are relatively high (internal to the firm), but links with local suppliers are low. Links between firms in the region are almost completely absent and the labour market is internal to the vertically integrated firm with only pink- and blue-collar workers recruited locally (Markusen, 1999). For this reason linked industrial development is diluted (Glasmeier, 1988). The future of a satellite platform is greatly jeopardised by the 'foot loose' nature of the branch plants in the medium term. Control is retained externally with all major decisions coming from the parent company: as such little local industrial culture evolves (*ibid*). An example of this can be seen in the North East and the closure of two major microchip factories. Siemens and Fujitsu both invested

millions of pounds in production facilities on Tyneside. But with little control over their future within the UK, when global market conditions changed they were closed in quick succession (Dawley, 2007).

The third variant Markusen proposes is the ‘state-anchored district’. This is a more complex model and can be centred around “a military base, a defence plant...weapons lab, a university...prison complex, or a concentration of government offices” or other public agency (Markusen, 1999b: 198). Very common in the US, these districts can greatly aid local growth in some cases deliberately opting for local suppliers. For instance, as Markusen (1996) and Markusen et al. (1991) point out Colorado Springs, Madison, Seattle, Austin and Boulder owe their rapid expansion to state facilities.

Scale economies are high and local suppliers benefit from high degrees of interaction in complex and long-term supplier relationships (Markusen, 1999). The labour market is a mixture of local for blue collar work but extralocal for skilled or white collar jobs in universities or nationally significant complexes. Sustained growth depends upon the nature of the public body. For example, universities are unlikely to move, whereas industrial complexes are more prone to external pressures. Although the nature of the publicly owned body means there is often political pressure, certain agencies are easier to close or move than others.

Markusen’s examples can be seen as alternatives to the dominant models of industrial district that focus on the role of socio-economic relationships between SMEs. Markusen demonstrates that not all districts are composed or operate in similar ways, and highlights the important role of the state. This latter point was a timely intervention given the increasing role of governments in fostering clusters and is crucial in terms of the findings of this research. The role of the public sector in supporting cluster development has emerged as the responsibility for economic development has devolved to more local institutions. The cluster concept (particularly the Porter version), with its focus on local or regional economic development, has been seen by policy makers as an ideal tool for meeting their objectives.

As Martin and Sunley (2003) note, this has led to an explosion of interest in the concept with public sector bodies commissioning clusters studies, and thereafter implementing cluster policies. Central to such policies are measures to develop partnerships, collaboration, and awareness of commonalities between members. This can happen indirectly through the labour market, or via more direct initiatives such as shared research and development capacity (Taylor and Raines, 2001). Depending on the need, the hand of the public sector can be firm or gentle, but in most cases the public sector plays a supporting, or catalysing role with gradually less direct input.

Other publicly funded institutions, such as universities, also have roles to play in cluster development. In Markusen's example a university is seen to act like a large firm that creates demand for goods and services in the local area. However, universities can also play an important role as suppliers of knowledge to clusters (Charles, 2006; Charles, 2007). This can happen in three main ways (Charles, 2006): through technology transfer and spin-offs (Benneworth and Charles, 2005); through training (Morgan, 1997); and via the formation of social capital (Putnam, 1993). This importance is reflected in inclusion of universities in the development of cluster policies and as key nodes in the policies themselves, particularly in providing sources of innovation.

2.2.6 Untraded Interdependencies

Above I have described the transaction cost thesis developed by the 'Californian School' of economic geographers. They proposed that firms were opting for vertical disintegration over internal integration to overcome problems associated with Fordist production methods and the changing global economy (Scott, 1988b; Storper and Scott, 1989). Proximity was necessary to reduce the transaction costs created by externalising production. As firms' location decisions changed external economies into agglomeration economies new industrial districts emerged as a spatial manifestation of this process (Scott, 1988). Mainstream economics adequately conceptualises traded interdependences between firms in these complexes through input-output analysis. However, Storper (1995; 1997) argued there is a set of *untraded* interdependencies lubricating inter-firm relationships that such analyses cannot reveal. In terms of a theoretical contribution, untraded interdependencies represent a

key step toward the appreciation of the role different knowledges play in localised production and innovation trajectories.

For advocates of this thesis, untraded interdependencies represent “a structured set of technological externalities which can be a collective asset of groups of firms/industries within countries/regions” (Dosi, 1988a: 226). They comprise conventions, rules, practices and institutions shared by workers within an agglomeration that ease collaborative working (Storper and Salais, 1997). In this sense untraded interdependencies go some way to unravelling Marshall’s concept of an ‘industrial atmosphere’ (Pinch and Henry, 1999). Importantly, untraded interdependencies are ‘context conditions’ (Dosi, 1988b) that are nationally or regionally specific (Storper, 1995; Storper, 1997), and cannot easily be learnt by, or transferred to actors in other areas.

Where untraded interdependencies combine they produce ‘frameworks of economic action’, which in turn can structure ‘possible worlds of production’ (Storper and Salais, 1997). These possible worlds of production become ‘real worlds of production’ when they exhibit coherence (Henry and Pinch, 2000) and this can become territorialised to create a ‘local world of productive knowledge’ (Henry, et al., 1996). It is within these territorial worlds of production that locally specific knowledges circulate. The specificity and tacit nature of these knowledges mean it is difficult to transfer them to other areas, and can provide comparative advantages to some places over others. This goes some way to explain why particular areas lead certain fields. For example, in her comparison of Silicon Valley and Route 128, Saxenian (1994) explains such differences between high tech clusters in America. The former, having more effective collaborative networks facilitated by untraded interdependencies - in the form of communal goals that value innovation and pioneering work in emerging fields - out performed the latter.

Crucially, one must appreciate the historical dimension to the origins of untraded interdependencies. The work on which the Californian School is drawing comes from evolutionary economics in which historical trajectories play an important role. It is argued that interdependencies – both traded and untraded – form through technology trajectories

which by their nature have a specific nature. Citing the case of Silicon Valley, Storper (1999: 44) explains that:

“frameworks of action which govern the production system start from a position of generality and move to specificity, as they are sedimented into conventions, practised by actors, and sometimes embodied in formal institutions and rules.”

This process happens over time and is influenced by past as well as present conditions. Critically, as I outline in Chapter 3, historic conditions vary from area to area because no two places share exactly the same past over any time period. It is these differences that influence the formation of local untraded interdependencies unique to a location. Thus, the history of an industry is an important dimension in understanding how that industry operates. Furthermore, in a similar way seen in Italian districts - and given that industries do not operate in isolation, but intertwine themselves in their locale - an appreciation of the area’s history is also essential (Paasi, 1991; Boschma, 2008).

2.2.7 Innovation and Learning

Storper’s untraded interdependencies concept prefaced localised learning over transaction costs, and thus represented the emergence of a new set of debates that see learning and innovation as essential elements in creating and maintaining an agglomeration’s position in the economy (Henry and Dawley, Forthcoming). For instance, drawing on Bianchi and Giordani’s (1993) work on Italian industrial districts, Asheim (2000) argues that “innovation as interactive learning could be used to argue why industrial districts...could stay innovative and competitive in a global economy” (425). In making this claim he points to agglomeration economies as the basic conditions from which incremental innovations can occur. Through tacit knowledges and practical experience, processes such as ‘learning by doing’ and ‘learning by using’ allow learning to take place. Lundvall (1992) reiterates this importance, arguing knowledge is the most fundamental resource in the modern capitalist economy with learning the most important process. Archibugi and Michie (1995: 1) support this view stating that “the production and use of knowledge is at the core of value-added

activities, and innovation is at the core of firms' and nations' strategies for growth." Importantly, it is within a region that this innovation can most easily be diffused between firms and, as this happens, the district as a whole can become more innovative. An essential component of this theory is how knowledges of advancements is transferred between businesses. This section outlines the way learning takes place as explained by the concepts of innovative milieu and learning districts.

First, the concept of innovative milieu is proposed as an alternative to Marshall's 'industrial atmosphere'. It is defined as:

"the set, or the complex network of mainly informal social relationships on a limited geographical area, often determining a specific external 'image' and a specific internal 'representation' and sense of belonging, which enhance the local innovative capability through synergetic and collective learning processes"

(Camagni, 1991: 3)

Set out by the GREMI group (Groupement de Recherche Européenne sur les Milieux Innovatuaers) innovative milieu is seen as an important way to manage the increasing uncertainty in the global economy. Such a milieu is created through imitation, face-to-face contact, inter-firm collaboration and circulation of tacit information; all of which is made easier through clustering. This type of collective learning acts as an intermediary between firms and markets that reduces risk through firm interdependence (MacKinnon, et al., 2002).

Similarly, the concept of 'learning districts' (Asheim, 1994; Asheim, 1996; Asheim, 2000) or 'learning regions' (Florida, 1995; Morgan, 1997) has been proposed to explain how industrial districts disseminate innovation amongst members to sustain their position in the long term. For Florida (1995: 528) learning regions "function as collectors and repositories of knowledge and ideas...[providing an] environment or infracture which facilitates the flow of knowledge, ideas and learning."

A number of authors have pointed to co-operation, facilitated by co-location, as the key means to spur learning with regions (Bianchi and Giordini, 1993; Asheim, 1994; Lundvall,

1994; Cooke, 1998; Porter, 1998). It is argued there exists a co-operative imperative for industrial districts to ensure their future competitiveness through innovation. In the learning region thesis this happens in the same ways as innovative milieu – through various types of interaction. Leborgne and Lipietz's work on technology (1988) concentrates on types of 'quasi-integration'. This refers to stable inter-firm relationships in which the main firms combine the advantages of vertical integration and vertical disintegration in their collaboration with suppliers and subcontractors (Asheim, 1996). This minimises costs of coordination and costs involved with information transfer as firms exploit existing relationships with suppliers (Leborgne and Lipietz, 1992). Crucial to this argument is that proximity allows this to happen relatively easily.

For Asheim (1996), 'quasi-integration' represents a change from vertically dominated to horizontally organised forms of production based on a social division of labour rather than a technical division. Or in Patchell's terms, a transformation from production systems to learning systems (1993), or a move from industrial district to learning region (Asheim, 1996). It is this transformation which Asheim argues is the key to future sustainability of industrial districts.

Malmberg and Maskell (2002) take a slightly different view. While they accept that co-operation is an important aspect within industrial districts they add that "[i]n most existing accounts of the spatial clustering phenomenon, the collaborative element is emphasized at the expense of rivalry" (ibid: 444). They argue learning takes place horizontally, not through co-operation but through observation and competition. They continue that because agglomerations facilitate high levels of observability and comparability a firm can monitor almost everything their rivals do. They term this 'spontaneous automatic observation': that is, firms cannot help but see what their rivals are doing due to proximity, "even if they do not make any dedicated efforts at systematic monitoring...it is more likely that the observing firm will understand [more], and learn from, what it observes" (ibid: 439). Reflecting Porter's (1990) view on factors influencing productivity (see below), Malmberg and Maskell (2002) argue that seeing what a firm's rivals are doing provides incentives to improve and acts as a means to learn from competitors.

2.2.8 Porterian Clusters

Alongside industrial districts and theories on learning within regions, the other highly influential theory on agglomeration comes from the business strategist Michael Porter. In the 1980s and 1990s Porter conceptualised a ‘competitive diamond’ (Figure 2.2) of factors that, he claims, influence a country’s competitive performance in international markets (Porter, 1990). Porter subsequently developed this theory arguing that the interactions in the competitive diamond are more intensive and effective when firms operate in close proximity (Porter, 1996; Porter, 1998a). As evidence of this he points to the fact that clusters of firms in similar industries are “strikingly common around the world” and that a country’s most globally successful firms are likely to be clustered (Porter, 1990: 120).

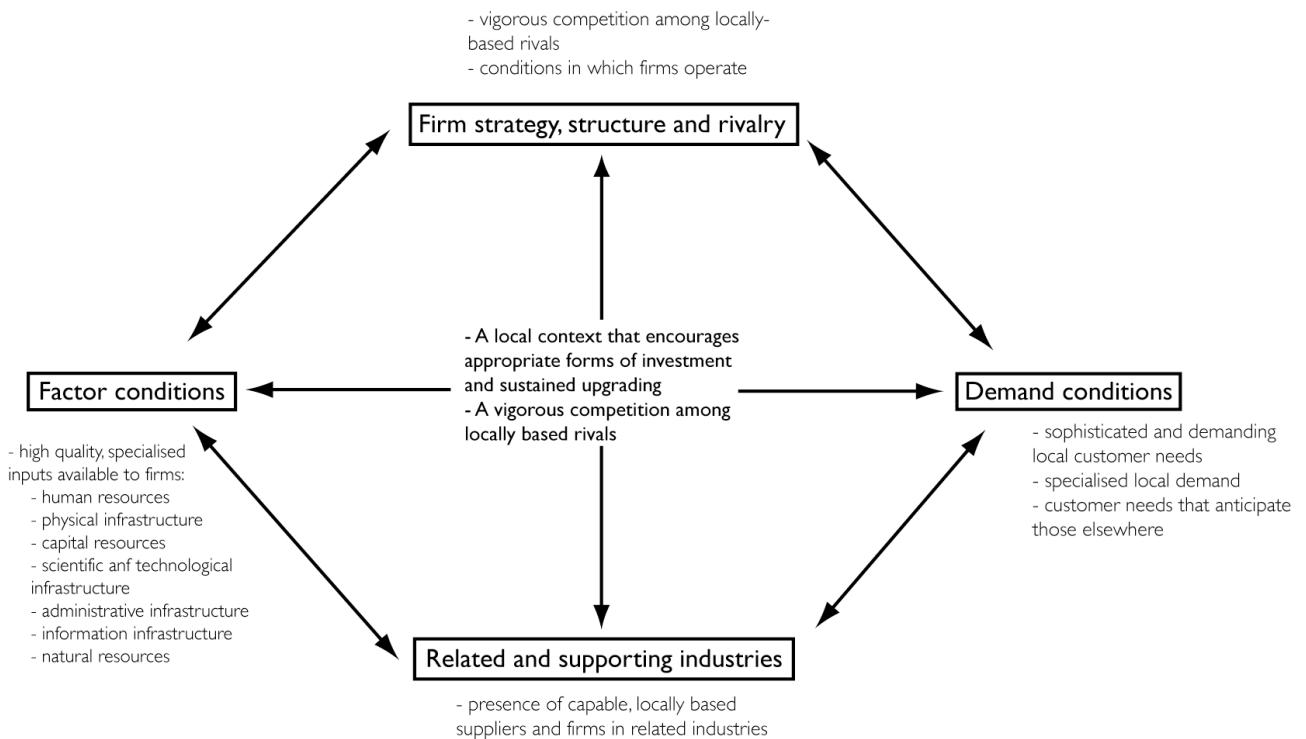


Figure 2.2 Porter's Competitive Diamond (Porter, 1990)

Porter defines such clusters as:

“geographic concentrations of interconnected companies, specialized suppliers, service providers, firms in related industries, and associated institutions (for

example, universities, standards agencies, and trade associations) in particular fields that compete but also co-operate.”

(Porter, 1998a: 197)

Although there are clear parallels with Marshallian and Italian industrial districts, competition is the central feature of a Porter cluster. Critically he argues it is predominantly competition, not socio-economic factors proposed in the Italian model, that leads to greater productivity and in turn advantage. That said, the ambiguous definition Porter proposes, encompassing elements of other concepts, is one of the reasons the field can be seen as confusing and why there is a need for multi-perspective approaches to understand it (see 2.3).

For Porter, the competitive advantage of a cluster is made up of three factors (Porter, 1998b):

1. Productivity – in a similar way to Marshall, Porter posits that co-location affords access to particular agglomeration economies that provide advantages to firms (pools of labour and knowledge, reduced transaction costs, and specialised suppliers). In addition to this, Porter argues firms in clusters tend to be mutually dependent upon each other – particularly in terms of the cluster’s reputation - so work in ways that complement one another. Firms can also improve productivity through access to public goods. Whether generated through investment from public bodies or private institutions, clusters gain from training programmes, infrastructure improvements, trade bodies and centres of excellence. Finally, productivity is enhanced by high levels of local competition that motivates firms to do better.
2. Innovation – as clusters are made up of firms producing similar goods and services, firms have a better view of the market than isolated competitors. This visibility, Porter argues, means firms are able to identify and exploit niches in the market far more quickly than firms situated elsewhere. In addition, the competitive pressure talked about above spurs the innovation process as firms try to out perform their rivals.

3. New business formation - a Porterian cluster, like Marshallian and Italianate districts, benefits from the formation of new firms. Porter argues that, particularly in developed clusters, the size of the market means niches frequently appear. A knowledge of the cluster and its workings ensure workers can use this to their advantage when setting up a new firm. Established relationships within the cluster can also be exploited to give advantages to new enterprises. This is aided by low barriers to entry facilitated by the public goods and other complementarities already in place in a cluster. Furthermore, finance is often more forthcoming from within the cluster. Thus, such conditions mean it is relatively easy for new firms to be supported compared to start-ups in isolated locations.

2.2.8.1 Policy influence and critiques

Although Marshallian and Italianate districts have received a great deal of attention in academic circles, Porter's cluster concept has become hugely influential both academically and in the policy arena. Porter's ideas, and he himself, have been consulted by policy-makers the world over. Everybody from OECD and the World Bank, to national, regional and local governments have sought advice from Porter to foster local and regional economic growth through clusters (Martin and Sunley, 2003).

Martin and Sunley (2003) point to three reasons for his popularity. First, in the current political and economic environment of supposedly increasing global competition, policy-makers are keen to be seen fostering local economic growth. Porter aims his work at these people and they lap it up with relish. Furthermore, current political economic strategies are focused on supply-side intervention and the clusters concepts fits this policy nicely (*ibid*). Second, the absence of terms like 'post-Fordism' or 'flexible specialisation', that dominate the economic geography literature for example, mean his writing style is accessible, even 'seductive' (*ibid*: 9). Third, Porter's cluster concept is exceedingly broad and generic in definition, admitting a wide range of industrial groupings and specialisations, thus widening his audience (*ibid*). Porter's popularity with policy makers, and the commodification of his ideas alongside this, has led Martin and Sunley to characterise the Porter Cluster as a brand.

And it is an incredibly powerful brand that, along with other authors positing the importance of competitiveness, became foundational in ‘new regionalism’ (Lovering, 2001).

The demand for a Porter style cluster analysis from policy makers is frequently met by consultancy firms whom Martin and Sunley term ‘flying cluster makers’ (2003: 25). Public organisations commission these companies to map clusters and suggest interventions. However, as any academic who has read some of these reports will know, the time spent investigating clusters is short and the depth of analysis too often shallow. The result is, Martin and Sunley argue, diagnoses that fail to properly identify and understand the links, spillovers and flows within an industry. Furthermore, such consultancies often rely on a cluster blueprint and examples of best practice that fail to appreciate the local contexts in which a cluster operates. An outcome of this is that policy makers are drawn to, or encouraged to foster, standard ‘high-technology, knowledge-based clusters’ in inappropriate locations (*ibid*).

The features that make Porter’s theory seductive for policy makers are points of critique for academics. For instance, the broad definition of a cluster has led to accusations of ‘conceptual elasticity’ (Martin and Sunley, 2003). To begin with, Porter defines clusters as “geographic concentrations of interconnected companies” (1998) but does not clearly set out at which geographic scale clusters operate, where the boundaries of a cluster sit, nor where interconnections lay within and outside a cluster (Belussi, 2006).

What Porter does provide is a set of rather ambiguous and confusing statements (Martin and Sunley, 2003). On the issue of geographical scale and boundaries Porter has written that “cluster boundaries rarely conform to standard industrial classification systems” (Porter, 1998: 204) and “drawing cluster boundaries is often a matter of degree, and involves a creative process” (*ibid*: 202). To support this, Porter cites examples of clusters which vary in scale and scope from a street (e.g. Madison Avenue’s media cluster) to “a network of neighbouring countries” (p.199). With this in mind Martin and Sunley (2003) pose the question: just how important is geographical proximity? They also argue this ‘geographical elasticity’ has caused much confusion as other scholars use geographical terminology in a cavalier fashion to equate clusters with cities, regions, nations and transnational groupings.

In relation to this point, Benneworth and Henry (2004) argue a greater focus on relational rather than geographical ideas of space would be useful in Porter's conceptualisation.

Martin and Sunley's dissatisfaction continues as they go on to address the second issue of industrial boundaries. Porter says that clusters are made of "interconnected companies, specialised suppliers, service providers, firms in related industries, and associated institutions" (1998: 197) yet there is no explanation of:

"what range of related or associated industries and activities should be included? How strong do the linkages between firms have to be? How economically specialised does a local concentration of firms have to be to constitute a cluster?...[or]...at what spatial scale, and over what geographical range, do clustering processes (interfirm linkages, knowledge spillovers, rivalry, business and social networks, and so on) operate?"

(Martin and Sunley, 2003: 10).

While these are valid questions in relation to Porter's theory, and equally applicable to industrial district analysis, when applied I would argue the 'range of related or associated industries and activities' is dependant on the field of study. Further, the strength of linkages will range across case studies and are only testable with empirical study.

Martin and Sunley also critique Porter's conceptualisation of competition. Porter maintains that competition is key to the success of nations and that the processes which make up successful competition are enhanced when industries co-locate. Martin and Sunley point out that the competitive strategies that Porter's concept of competition is built on – differentiation, cost leadership and focus – are largely generic and have been criticised by business, industrial and management studies scholars for being superficial, hard to measure, unspecific, not independent or universal as Porter claims (2003: 15).

However, although Martin and Sunley's (2003) critique is well made and their criticisms are pertinent, Benneworth and Henry (2004) suggest much of the 'chaos' the former describe comes from their notion of clusters as "a single stable idea for which Porter is a gate-keeper"

(1014). In contrast to this, Benneworth and Henry suggest that clusters should be considered a ‘portmanteau concept’ consisting of a variety of work (including the concepts outlined above and those that follow this section). This range of work “extends well beyond the work of Porter and allows the possibility of theoretical debate and multidisciplinary cross-fertilisation” (ibid: 1015). The extension of this concept, together with Porter’s success, has meant that definitions and use of the term ‘cluster’ has expanded to become a catch-all term to describe any localised production complex. For instance, in a *Progress Review* of geographies of production Bathelt (2005: 205) uses the term to refer to “a localized industry configuration, such as a local or regional concentration of industrial firms, and their support infrastructure which are closely interrelated through traded and untraded interdependencies.” In some ways such a move stunts theoretical progress, however with a nuanced understanding of the wider debates in which clusters sit, and the multiple perspectives it encompasses, the use of the term is acceptable. This appreciation of the multiple perspectives on clusters is returned to at the end of the chapter. However, to fully address this issue it is necessary to outline some of the other perspectives on clusters.

2.2.9 Neo-Marshallian Nodes and Processes of Institutionalisation

As interest in, and literature on industrial districts and clusters increased it became apparent that amongst the numerous successful areas identified, some performed better than others and became global leaders. Amin and Thrift (1992; 1994; 1995) conceptualise these globally dominant places as ‘neo-Marshallian nodes’. In describing these configurations, they argue the world economy has changed in four main ways which have contributed to the emergence of neo-Marshallian nodes. First, industries have become increasingly integrated on a world scale through corporate networks of varying scale. Second, in the 1980s mergers meant new global corporations became increasingly oligopolistic. Third, TNCs have become decentralised through processes of hollowing out as new forms of organisation lead to joint ventures, subcontracting and strategic alliances. Finally, they highlight the balance of power between states and corporations has become more volatile through ‘short-run corporationism’ (ibid: 575). The culmination of these changes to a global way of working is to create ‘integrated global production filieres’. Despite this hollowing out into ‘flattened

hierarchies' (ibid), Amin and Thrift point out that power remained centralised in particular areas.

Amin and Thrift continue, arguing that increasingly globalised systems of production present a number of problems for business, particularly in interpreting increasing amounts of information, managing social interaction and tracking innovation. For these reasons, they argue, neo-Marshallian nodes emerge and act "as centres of sociability, so gathering information, establishing or maintaining coalitions and monitoring trust and implicit contracts" (ibid: 576). These nodes act as points at which knowledge structures can be accessed.

Amin and Thrift (1994; 1995) provide three key characteristics of neo-Marshallian nodes:

- they are centred places in a global system
- they are key nodes within global economic circuits
- they are growth centres in a globalised economy

This global domination leads to territorial embeddedness and place-centredness in the context of the globalising division of labour (Henry and Pinch, 2000). Neo-Marshallian nodes do so as centres of representation and interaction, allowing the face-to-face interaction needed to generate and disseminate discourses, interpret 'noise' and allow enculturalisation of the labour force. They are centres where the processes of coalition, monitoring, trust and the rules of production are formed and learnt.

Examples of neo-marshallian nodes include Hollywood, Silicon Valley (Amin and Thrift, 1994), Motorsport Valley in Southern England (Henry and Pinch, 2001), the Soho media (Nachum and Keeble, 2003) and business consultancy clusters (Keeble and Nachum, 2002) in London, and the advertising cluster in New York (Grabher, 2001a).

2.2.9.1 *Institutional Thickness*

Amin and Thrift give particular emphasis to institutional presence as the social and cultural basis for economic success in a neo-Marshallian node, something they term ‘institutional thickness’ (1994). Institutional thickness is perhaps the most methodical approach for understanding institutional architectures, and although it has come in for criticism (see for example MacLeod, 1997; Leonard, 2002; Henry and Pinch) it is a useful lens through which to view and understand the institutional presence in a place. It is therefore worth expanding upon here. Amin and Thrift (1994) identify four elements of institutional thickness:

- A strong institutional presence: i.e. the existence of institutions such as firms, government agencies, chambers of commerce, trade associations, unions, training centres and education establishment³.
- High levels of interaction amongst these institutions creating a set of shared rules and methods of working.
- Structures of domination and coalition to gain collective representation and to minimise sectionalism and rogue behaviour.
- A mutual awareness of ‘industrial purpose’ to a common goal – reinforced by particular sociocultural representations, such as ethnicity, sexuality, regional identity, gender, etc.

These factors help effectuate a “widely held common project which serves to mobilize the region with speed and efficiency” (Amin and Thrift 1994, p.15). They also service institutional persistence (the reproduction of local institutions); institutional flexibility (the ability to learn and change); high innovative capacity; and reciprocity and trust. Importantly, the constituent elements and outcomes of institutional thickness are locally specific.

Amin and Thrift point out that the presence of institutional thickness does not necessarily lead to economic growth; it is the process of institutionalisation that is important, and “[t]he

³ This conceptualisation of formal and informal institutions is clearly similar to those identified as untraded interdependencies, and those seen in Italy.

linkage between institutional thickness and economic development...is not intended to suggest that this, by definition, is a functional linkage and, as such, can be universally established in all locational contexts" (Amin and Thrift, 1994; p17). Rather, institutional thickness holds an array of possibilities for economic performance (Henry and Pinch, 2002).

Institutional thickness has been accepted as a useful framework that allows a greater depth of analysis than simply mapping a location's institutions. By focusing on the process of institutionalisation one avoids a one dimensional view of regional innovation where institutions are the central feature (Macleod, 1997). On this point Becattini (Becattini, 2003: 6; see also Lazzeretti and Storai, 2003; Scott, 2006) argues one needs to trace an area's history to understand its process of institutionalisation:

"The simple idea would be to retrace the steps of the formation of that know-how...A kind of local history of productive techniques and, at the same time, of the design and forms of organisation of local production."

This focus is similar to Paasi's (1991) version of institutionalisation of regions, where areas go through four stages from which territorial and symbolic shape emerge along with institutions and the establishment of a social consciousness. Crucially, within Paasi's theory, regions are viewed as the outcome of historically contingent processes, the foundation of which lies, in part, in the 'time-space-specific role of physical conditions'. One can extend these conditions to other spatially fixed features that are an outcome of time: physical and built heritage for instance. Although Paasi holds to a dualistic view of nature-society relations, I would agree with his explanation of the way time-space-specific features acquire symbolic meaning. In ascribing cultural meaning to such features they are transformed into heritage. In turn, these heritages play a role in the emergence of a regional identity.

But it is not simply physical features that become specific to a place or owe their emergence to history, as exemplified in regionally specific untraded interdependencies. For example, in their explanation for the emergence of the British Motorsport Industry, Pinch and Henry

(1999) acknowledge the important role of historical events and decisions⁴. In particular they highlight governmental support for the aerospace industry, a network of local racing clubs who took advantage of disused World War Two airfields in southern England, and a tradition of entrepreneurial cottage industries in related fields. Each of these elements provided useful spillovers that could be harnessed by an emerging motorsport industry – aerodynamics, engines and design techniques from the aerospace industry; a plethora of flat, tarmaced areas in the form of airfields on which race tracks could be built; a base of enthusiasts who could act as knowledge sources and customers; and a foundation of entrepreneurial firms.

One can argue therefore, the socially embedded knowledges of the aerospace industry and the presence of physically embedded assets, combined to generate conditions conducive to the emergence of a motorsport industry. The continued dominance of Motorsport Valley, however, is explained by a different set of elements: efficient knowledge spillovers through high levels of staff and firm turnover, ‘leakage’ via suppliers, observation of competitors, informal collaboration, and via personal contact networks (*ibid*). Each of these is enhanced by a collective identity which “involves a discourse of aggressive competition, entrepreneurialism, antistate rhetoric, implicit misogyny, and a ‘win at almost all costs’ attitude” (Henry and Pinch, 2001: 1177). Although time and industrial changes mean this attitude is not explicitly linked to factors enabling the emergence of the industry, it is where it has its roots. Similarly, Saxenian (1994) argues although Silicon Valley has ‘a life of its own’, it is built on accumulated advantages of the past.

⁴ It should be noted that their discussion of the historical origins of the British Motorsport Industry is prompted by claims that the industry emerged due to a series of accidents in history (see Aston and Williams, 1996). Aston and Williams’ claims are made by applying Krugman’s explanation for industrial agglomeration which is based on the idea that it is historical accidents that provide seeds of advantage to places (Krugman, 1986; 1991a; 1991b). This view has been critiqued for its attempt to capture universal characteristics of agglomerations and thus fails to appreciate events are often not ‘accidents’ at all, but are the result of a combination of factors (Martin and Sunley, 1996; Pinch and Henry, 1999). In Krugman’s thesis these are overlooked. Furthermore, as I come to highlight in Chapter 3, history cannot be seen as universal or singular.

Thus, in a similar way to the emergence of historically contingent modes of working in Italian districts, one can argue the industrial purpose or common enterprise Amin and Thrift discuss (1992; 1994; 1995), is an emergent feature of a neo-Marshallian node or cluster that can stem from a place's history and heritage. This is a central point to the argument of this thesis, and one I return to and finesse in the next chapter and exemplify in Chapter 6.

2.2.10 Stages of Development and Path Dependency

The previous sections have demonstrated that even with the limited number of examples I have presented, the variety and features of agglomerations, industrial districts and clusters is large. They vary by size of agglomeration and industry, number and size of firms, socio-economic characteristics, global presence, level of innovation, histories etc. The variety can be partially explained by the different stages of development such complexes go through. A number of models exist to chart this development that I will discuss here (Figure 2.3, Figure 2.4, and Figure 2.5).

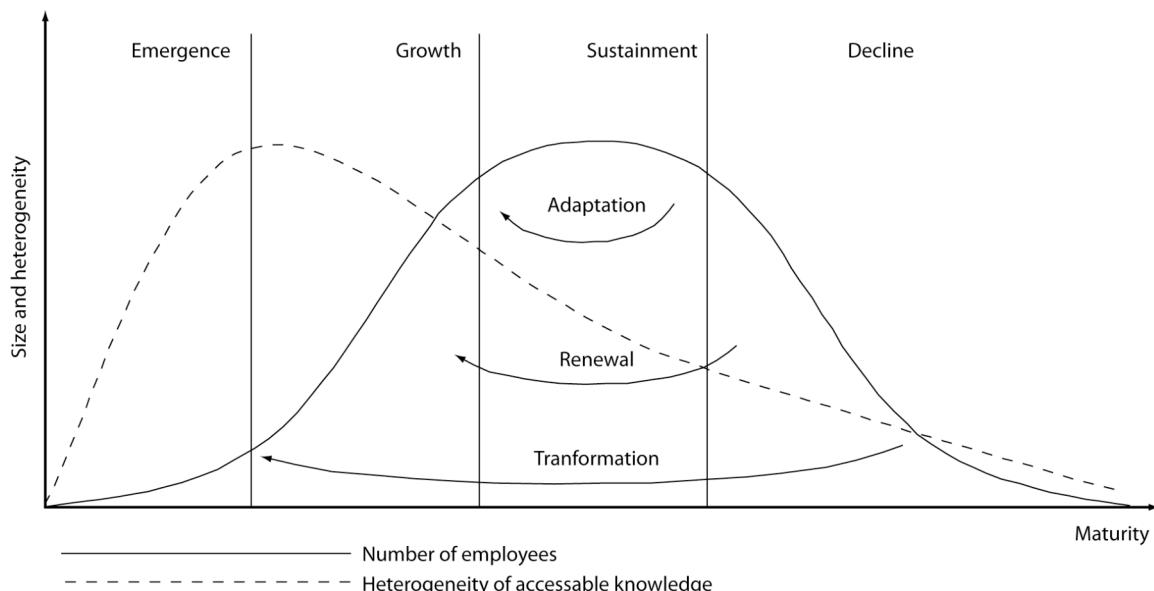


Figure 2.3 Quantitative and qualitative dimensions of the cluster life cycle (Menzel and Fornahl, 2007)

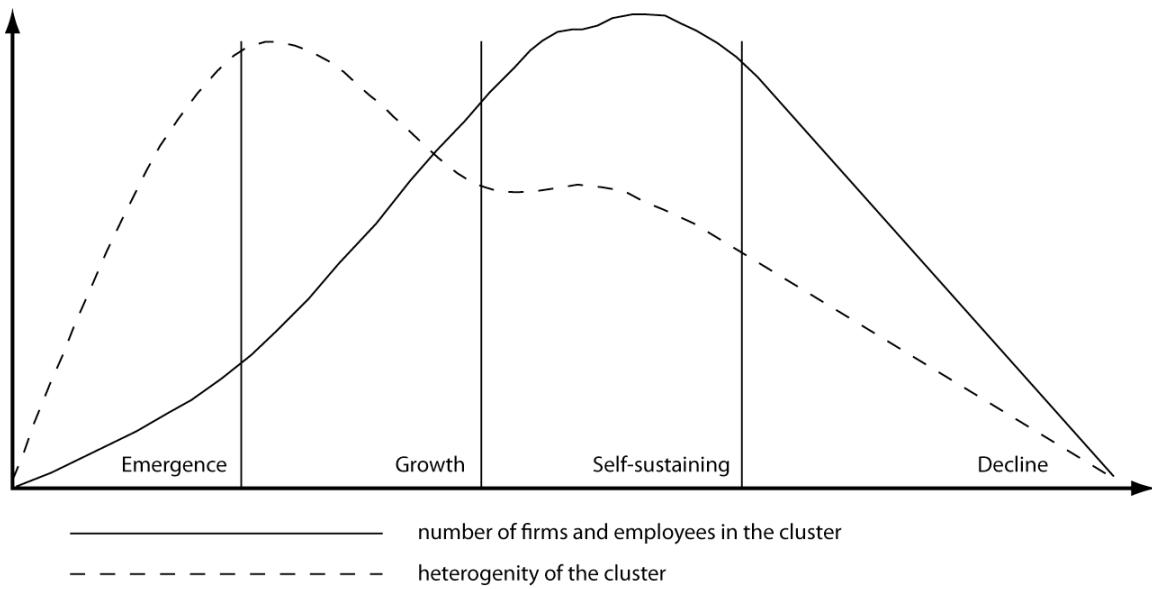


Figure 2.4 The development stages of a cluster (Kohler and Otto, 2006)

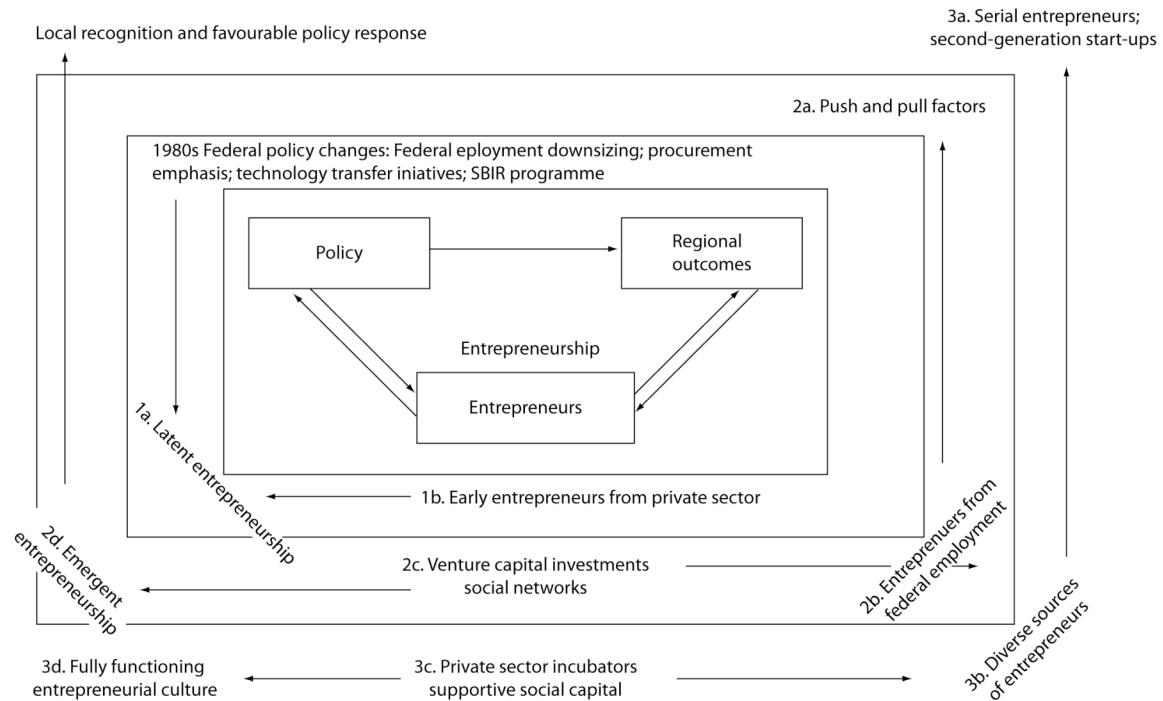


Figure 2.5 Evolution of the entrepreneurial cluster (Feldman, et al., 2005)

Each of these models proposes a number of stages that a cluster⁵ moves through: from an embryonic state, through a growth and sustainment phase, until they reach a stage where the cluster declines (Rosenfeld, 2003). Clusters of different types and in different places will spend different lengths of time in each phase, may be in more than one phase at that same time, could move backwards as well as forwards, or remain in one stage indefinitely (Menzel and Fornahl, 2007).

The characteristics of each stage differs and changes over time. For instance, in emergent or embryonic clusters firm numbers begin to increase and are often the result of spin offs from local research institutions, universities or other firms (Kohler and Otto, 2006). Heterogeneity is high and employment is often concentrated in a small number of large firms (Menzel and Fornahl, 2007). From this stage, once start-up and spin-offs increase, a growth phase is entered, often aided by favourable market conditions (Kohler and Otto, 2006). By the time a cluster has become self sustaining, innovation is common and a dense network of inter-firm relations emerge alongside intense competition (Porter, 1998a; Kohler and Otto, 2006). Often newly formed firms do not have a long life span as spin-offs replace them. When heterogeneity decreases, it is argued, so does the entrepreneurial atmosphere and new firm formation (Menzel and Fornahl, 2007). The net result is the number of firms decreases and in extreme cases the cluster ceases to exist. This process of is an ideal type, and as Markusen's (1996) examples demonstrate, power relations and external factors have an influence in the shape a cluster will take.

The role of spin-offs and associated increases in diversity of knowledge is central in these models (Arthur, 1987). It is argued that diversity of knowledge and skills can stimulate innovation (Boschma, 2008). Importantly, the variety of knowledge needs to be of economic use and accessible to firms (Menzel and Fornahl, 2007). Saxenian (1994) charts how this happens in Silicon Valley as local network linkages enable firms to access and utilise knowledges in the cluster. Similarly, Longhi (1999) outlines how knowledges become unlocked from large or more established firms as new firms 'spin out', taking knowledge

⁵ Here the term cluster does not refer to a Porterian cluster specifically, rather it references clusters as a general term for modern localised production complexes (see Bathelt, 2005).

with them. This can also happen when individuals move from firm to firm, transferring embodied knowledges and learned practices (Henry and Pinch, 2000). Access to knowledge is not enough on its own however. Firms need absorptive capacity to be able to soak up knowledge and this, it is argued, is related to the cultures and practices of firms and clusters (Cohen and Levinthal, 1990; Zahra and George, 2002; Pinch, et al., 2003).

The effectiveness of knowledge transfer and absorption determine the development of the cluster and its movement through the various stages of growth. Adaptation is also important. As Figure 2.3 outlines where adaptation is relatively difficult the cluster may experience a decline in its size or even a complete failure. Examples of the latter include areas that failed to adapt to changes in technology or markets; iron and steel in Ruhr region of Germany (Grabher, 1993) or North East England (Hudson, 1998) for instance.

Above I have outlined how regions can accrue advantages over time. However, in some cases this path dependency, when transformed into lock-in, can make adaptation and innovation difficult. This inability to change can come from poor investment decisions, a lack of support or even the socio-economic characteristics that made an area successful in the first place. Indeed, for Hudson (2005) traded and untraded interdependencies can also have an influence, creating and reproducing a particular ‘growth trajectory’ for a place, and where there is an:

“inappropriate institutional thickness, often a relic from an earlier era when it was supportive of regional economic success, [it] can act as a barrier to moving a regional economy onto a new and more promising development trajectory”

(p.586)

Similarly Martin and Sunley (2006) coin the phrase ‘path interdependence’ to describe the effect mutually reinforcing phenomena such as those found in clusters can have. The ideas of both scholars draw on Grabher’s (1993) research into the Ruhr region of Germany. Grabher’s thesis is that while strong ties can be beneficial for a particular period of time they can limit development trajectories. In his example of the German coal, iron and steel complex Grabher outlines three causes of lock-in: first, *functional lock-in*, caused by a myopic

view that places continuity and cooperation above innovation and 'boundary-spanning' activity, restricting potential functional shifts in firm activity. Second, *cognitive lock-in* describes the inability of the complex to think beyond iron and steel, even when adopting technologies that allowed them to do so. This lock-in was a direct result of the region's untraded interdependencies reinforcing a particular view. Finally, *political lock-in* describes the consensus reached between the public and private sector that again placed an emphasis on maintaining the status quo and protecting what they had. One outcome of this was to block the settlement of new industries in the Ruhr region (Grabher, 1993).

Using these concepts Hudson (2005) highlights the cognitive institutional lock-in experienced by some communities in North East England. He describes the reluctance to commute, low expectations and ambition in relation to education and skills, and an enduring belief that employment will be provided by others. These legacies can, Hudson claims, be traced back to the spatial configuration and employment practices of the formerly dominant industries in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Thus, one can argue that avoiding lock-in is not only important for agglomerated industries, but also for the social and economic well-being of the region in which they sit in the present and the future.

2.2.11 Non-local linkages

To overcome problems of lock-in, to keep up with the latest advances in an industry, and to maintain contact with suppliers/customers it is important firms import, or connect with knowledges outside an agglomeration. Insights from literature on global production networks can be used to inform how this is done (Yeung, 2006). Regional agglomerations are argued to be the result of some kind of resistance to globalising forces, but they are not the only outcome. Like the clusters literature, throughout the 1990s there emerged increasing amounts of work on global networks of production and trade relations. Research on value or commodity chains sought to explain the increasing interdependence of nations as multinational companies outsourced phases of production to places around the world (Gereffi, et al., 2001). Differing from the internationalisation seen centuries ago, these globalising processes are about functional integration of activity rather than just trade relations (Dicken, 1998).

In contrast to work focusing on the region, and in particular local interaction, commodity chain research focuses on interaction at the global level. However, Coe et al. (2004) have argued the early work in both areas was too focused on one scale of analysis to the detriment of their concepts. More recently, work has been undertaken to bring ideas from both fields to generate conceptual explanations on how localising and globalising forces work in unison. In this section I will examine two such concepts, ‘global pipelines’ and ‘strategic coupling’ that develop concepts of agglomeration.

First, the concept of global pipelines originates out of critiques on the dominance of local learning concepts (Markusen, 1996; Markusen, 1999a; Bathelt, et al., 2004; Maskell, et al., 2006). As opposed to ideas focusing on local access to knowledge, pipelines describe non-local connections to areas, firms or communities of practice with complementary knowledges (Owen-Smith and Powell, 2003; Owen-Smith and Powell, 2004). These connections allow access to, and in turn dissemination of, knowledge not found locally. As Maskell et al. (2006: 999) argue, “[d]istant contexts can be a source of novel ideas and expert insights useful for innovation processes”. This is important for creation of new knowledges and sustaining growth locally (Grabher, 2002b). Importantly, however, while non-local linkages are important, they are dependant on local ‘buzz’ to use knowledges effectively (Bathelt, et al., 2004). In turn, local buzz aids the formation of pipelines. For instance, Maskell et al. (2006) argue pipelines can be formed at ‘temporary clusters’ such as trade shows and conventions. These places allow sites for people from around the world to interact over a given period of time, and form relationships that can potentially act as pipelines to new knowledges. In contrast to this theory, technology is also seen as a literal conduit for much information (Lorentzen, 2007).

‘Strategic coupling’ describes a similar process. Coe et al. (2004) argue coupling is an interactive process linking “localized growth factors and the strategic needs of trans-local actors [to propel] regional development” (469). Like the pipelines concept, value is accessed through these non-local connections and again, local assets are enhanced by such linkages. Coe et al, argue coupling is a useful way for regions to break out of path dependency, specifically when contributing conditions are outside of the region. By looking externally a

firm can import knowledges or production techniques from other areas. In a similar way, a peripheral or emerging region can gain knowledge from more successful areas in the same way. Importantly, however, if a region does not have the capacity to absorb or utilize knowledge or value gleaned from elsewhere, the potential benefits of extra-local connections are lost. So, although local relational assets are important, in an increasingly globalised world non-local linkages also determine the success of a region. Thus, although clusters are manifest physically in a local context, they are part of multiscalar networks.

2.3 Multi-perspective Approaches as a Remedy for ‘Chaos’ and ‘Head-aches’

Section 2.2 has attempted to outline and critically engage with the main themes within the conceptualisation of territorial production complexes. What is clear is that it is a burgeoning field with myriad concepts, versions and explanations for how agglomerations operate. The sheer volume of work on what are now commonly referred to as clusters (Bathelt, 2005) and similar phenomenon – only touched upon here – has led academics to describe the concept as ‘fuzzy’ (Markusen, 1999a) ‘chaotic’ (Martin and Sunley, 2003) and a ‘conceptual headache’ (Malmberg and Power, 2006). These critiques have focused on methodological issues – attacking the use of ungeneralisable case studies and hard to measure ‘soft’ features (Markusen, 1999), a lack of clarity in definitions (Martin and Sunley, 2003), under explanation of key characteristics (Nooteboom, 2006), ambiguous use of labels (Belussi, 2006), and confusing application of previously developed concepts (Malmberg and Power, 2006). It is true that it is a complex field of study, but as a number of scholars have sought to explain, a systematic treatment of the various characteristics of clusters cannot just open up this black-box, but can also increase empirical rigour and offers the potential to add value to economic geography more generally (Gordon and McCann, 2000; Keeble and Nachum, 2002; Lagendijk, 2003; Benneworth and Henry, 2004). This section outlines four such efforts that take a ‘multi-perspectival’ approach before I add my own.

First then, in an attempt to unravel the complexity of cluster theories, Gordon and McCann (2000) propose three industrial cluster models. They begin their remodelling with the same

argument Martin and Sunley (2003) make concerning the conflation of various positions on industrial agglomeration, which has led to confusing arguments based on incorrect or insufficient evidence. To rectify the situation Gordon and McCann (2003) posit a framework of three types of cluster drawn from agglomeration studies such as those outlined in this chapter: two developed from neo-classical economics in regional economics and business and management studies, the third from outside mainstream economics in sociology and geography.

The Pure Agglomeration Model - Like most historical accounts of industrial agglomeration Gordon and McCann (2003) begin with Marshall's theory based on a pool of localised labour, local provision of non-traded inputs and an industrial atmosphere facilitating information flows. The authors highlight that these elements have been refined and updated over the last century and can now be seen as local labour markets, local service economies and efficient transfer of technology. Importantly they point out that the sources of these advantages, and the mechanism which drive and transmit these factors, differ greatly from place to place. And "it is solely geographical proximity which is the common element determining their being grouped...[as]...‘external economies’" (ibid: 516).

The Industrial Complex Model - Also from neo-classical economics comes the industrial complex model of agglomeration. This concept is based on real and identifiable relationships between firms manifest in their spatial behaviour. Gordon and McCann trace this concept back to the work of Weber (1929) and the idea of optimal location for firms based on transaction costs. The agglomeration is the spatial outcome of decisions of firms to save on transaction costs and thus locate close to their input and output partners. Today these can be seen as telecommunication and logistical costs (McCann, 1998; Solomon and Schofer, 1990). Gordon and McCann (2000) highlight transaction costs as the foundations for modern neo-classical location theory.

The predictable and fixed nature of the trading relationships in the industrial complex mean it is essentially static in the short and medium term. For this reason Gordon and McCann call it a closed club as the "organisation of the complex monopolises the ability of the firm to realise the benefits of...innovations [developed in the complex]" (p.519).

The Social Network Model - The social network model is based on social relationships between economic actors and can be seen as a critique of the neo-classical theories on economic relationships. Stemming from the work of Granovetter (1985), this neo-institutionalist approach is based upon notions of trust and reciprocity. Gordon and McCann (2000) explain the sociologist's position which argues that economic relationships are not simply defined by transaction costs and externalities (see 2.3.3). Instead, interpersonal relationships transcending firm boundaries can create strong inter-firm bonds and are based on trust. Although informal in nature, these relationships are viewed as a strength rather than a weakness.

With these three distinct models in mind, Gordon and McCann (2000) then demonstrate how examining a cluster through the lens of each model can create a more comprehensive understanding of it. This differs from the chaotic approach Martin and Sunley (2003) identify in Porter's work because it takes each model as separate to begin with and only after each model has been used in an analysis of a cluster are they 'stitched' together. Gordon and McCann's approach is to take a number of different entry points and gain different knowledges about a cluster, which in turn can be compared to gain a better overall understanding of what is happening.

Benneworth and Henry (2004) take a similar but broader approach. In their analysis of cluster theory they argue that Martin and Sunley's (2003) critique of Porter as the owner of the cluster idea overlooks the fact that clusters have, since the late 1990s, been "a web of interdependent academic thinking, policy-making and consultants' work" (Benneworth and Henry, 2004: 1015). Indeed, for Benneworth and Henry, Martin and Sunley's statement that clusters are a world wide fad or fashion item illustrates that clusters are too big a phenomena to be contained under the mantle of one person. Martin and Sunley's use of the word 'chaotic' gives an impression of a great deal of messiness in a singular theory. Instead, they are proponents of Lagendijk and Cornford's (2000) thinking who consider clusters thinking as a black box in which a range of evolving ideas have been placed.

From here Benneworth and Henry propose that one should take a multiperspectival approach to understanding clusters, in line with Gordon and McCann (2000) and work by Keeble and Nachum (2002). The latter authors, like Gordon and McCann (2000), analyse London, with particular focus on the business services cluster. Keeble and Nachum (2002) examine the cluster from four entry points: Porter's broad cluster definition; geographical concentration; interconnectedness through networking, collaboration and labour mobility; and decentralisation theories. In practice, Keeble and Nachum operationalised each perspective's theoretical basis in their analysis and followed them through to their logical conclusion from where conclusions can be drawn (Benneworth and Henry, 2004). This technique means the highly problematic issue of various "implicit and explicit definitions often underpinning differences in research findings and judgements" (Keeble and Nachum, 2002: 85) can be avoided – to some extent – and they are able to give five broad conclusions about the business services cluster in southern England. Their business services cluster can be summarised as:

- involving high levels of local inter-firm collaboration, information transfer and labour mobility
- being powerfully influenced by proximity to clients
- having localized processes of knowledge acquisition, development and networking
- linking to global networks, knowledges and clients
- benefiting from 'enterprise behaviour'

(Keeble and Nachum, 2002)

One could take this to be another definition of a cluster, but the important aspect of Keeble and Nachum's work, is not the conclusions themselves, but the way in which they are generated.

Like Gordon and McCann (2000) this multi-perspective approach allows one to make much more robust statements, not just about clusters in general, but about the cluster you are studying. Each perspective comes with a set of theoretical and methodological approaches which on their own only provide a partial view of the cluster. However, by viewing one's

case study through multiple lenses a much more comprehensive analysis can be provided. This 'innovative methodology' allows one to identify the significant relationships within the cluster rather than simply identifying the cluster (Benneworth and Henry, 2004). Moreover, such an approach appreciates the partiality of a researcher's point of view and seeks a more holistic overview through multiple entry points (O'Neill and Whatmore, 2000).

Rather than seeking a commensurate theory of clusters the authors here posit an overarching, yet reflexive, research approach which takes account of the various definitions of clusters and can be used as a framework to understand them. The focus on significant relationships and processes, through multiple lenses, in the potential cluster ensures more rigorous research outcomes.

However, the number of perspectives and entry points one considers is a key area for debate. Table 2.1 illustrates the sets of perspectives put forward by the authors here, and Table 2.2 outlines some of the motivations for and characteristics of particular types of cluster.

The range of perspectives from three to six illustrates a continuum of gradually more rigorous approaches. For instance, Gordon and McCann's (2000) three-fold approach does not address elements such as institutional thickness or collective learning. Although some might argue these could come under the social network model this would be generalising and the detail the multiperspective approach seeks would be lost.

Keeble and Nachum (2002) take a 3 + 1 approach. However, their work potentially suffers from the same fate as Gordon and McCann (2000), but it seems Keeble and Nachum picked the three most relevant cluster approaches to explain their case study. Moreover, Keeble and Nachum's idea of using an approach not connected to clusters, but the spatial manifestation of the economy more generally, is a good one and allows 'wriggle room' in the approach. Moreover, it allows one to analyse clusters which do not fit the traditional case studies of high-tech or traditional manufacturing industries. For instance, where the output of industries is experiential or production involves constructing perceptions of a place, concept or product such as tourism.

| Authors | Perspectives | Background |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| Gordon and McCann (2000) | 3 Pure agglomeration – Marshallian district Industrial complex – transaction costs Social network – embeddedness | Mainstream (neo-classical) economics Mainstream economics and business studies Sociology and geography |
| Keeble and Nachum (2002) | 3 Porterian cluster Quantitative concentration Localised collective learning (Decentralisation theory – cluster specific) | Strategic management studies Geographical economics Regional economics (e.g. GREMI) |
| Newlands (2003) | 5 Standard agglomeration theory from Marshall onwards Transaction costs: ‘Californian School’ Flexible specialisation, trust, untraded interdependencies Innovative milieux: the GREMI group Institutional and evolutionary economics | Mainstream (neo-classical) economics Economics and economic geography Economics, economic geography and sociology Regional economics Economic geography |
| Benneworth and Henry (2004) | 6 Standard agglomeration theory from Marshall onwards Transaction costs: ‘Californian School’ Flexible specialisation, trust, untraded interdependencies Innovative milieux: the GREMI group Institutional and evolutionary economics Porterian Clusters | Mainstream (neo-classical) economics Economics and economic geography Economics, economic geography and sociology Regional economics Economic geography Strategic management studies |

Table 2.1 Multi-perspective approaches to clusters

| Source | Motivations for, and characteristics of, different types of clustering |
|--|--|
| Marshallian agglomerations | Reduced transaction costs Easily accessed skilled labour pool Industrial atmosphere Specialised suppliers |
| Californian School: transaction cost theory | Reduced transaction costs Untraded interdependencies |
| Flexible specialisation | Collaborative networks Trust Untraded interdependencies * additionally aided by local conditions (political, historical, familial, religious) |
| Innovative milieux | Collective learning processes enabled through: - imitation - high labour mobility - collaborative buyer/supplier networks - face-to-face interaction |
| Institutional and evolutionary economics | Linked technological trajectories Traded and untraded interdependencies |
| Porterian clusters | Intense competition Increased levels of productivity, innovation and firm spin-offs |

Table 2.2 Types of clusters and their characteristics

Newlands (2003) gives a very good account of the different approaches that have developed over the years, yet mystifyingly leaves out the conceptualisation of clusters from Porter's (1998) work. However, Benneworth and Henry (2004) add this to Newlands' list and in so doing reassert their view of Porter's concept as merely one version of clusters thinking. This framework provides the cluster orientated tools needed to analyse the relationships within a potential cluster and taking this together with Keeble and Nachum's (2002) idea of using

non-cluster approaches to give a broader perspective, provides a schema for identifying clusters based on the relationships within them. One should appreciate, however, that such a schema is a work in progress and should be reflexively critical of the perspectives it proposes.

This schema represents a new way of theorising in economic geography which Barnes terms 'hermeneutic theorising' (Barnes, 2001). Barnes asserts that "[o]ne needs to be creative and experimental, suspending one's incredulity when trying out new vocabularies, while recognising that no lexicon is final" (2001: 550-551). In asking 'where is the value added in clusters thinking' Benneworth and Henry (2004) ground the hermeneutic principle of partial and incomplete knowledge in their multiperspectival approach. They appreciate that clusters thinking is a work in progress and one that may never be resolved. Indeed that is the central idea of hermeneutic thinking, the practice of hoping for full agreement on an issue but suspecting there is always something better (Barnes, 2001). Benneworth and Henry's (2004) adaptation of Newlands' (2003) list, and my subsequent synthesis of this with Keeble and Nachum's (2002) approach, is an example of such an appreciation, is the basis for my methodology outlined in Chapter 4 and helps structure my explanation of the Northumberland Heritage Cluster's characteristics in Chapters 5 and 6.

2.4 Absences in Clusters Discourse

Before concluding this chapter I want to highlight a series of critiques on what is missing in the clusters literature, that even the current multi-perspective approach fails to address. These critiques include: the predominant focus on economic growth; under theorised power relations and the exclusionary nature of some cluster characteristics this supports; and the continued analysis of 'the usual suspects'.

2.4.1 Economic Bias

Clusters are largely seen as economic constructs. The value of cultures and socio-institutional relations are acknowledged in the literature, but are predominantly couched in economic terms and the impact they can have on efficiency and productivity. For example, the

terminology adopted to describe the advantages of social constructs such as trust and reciprocity includes ‘rent’, ‘externalities’ and ‘assets’ – terms straight out of economics (Moulaert and Nussbaumer, 2005). This is perhaps unsurprising given the origins of the concept within various shades of economics or economic geography, and the governance regimes under which they flourished (in particular Reaganism and Thatcherism in the US and UK respectively, Geddes and Newman, 1999). Indeed, clusters can be seen as implicit contributors to, and policy outcomes of globalisation-competitiveness discourses such as New Regionalism (Lovering, 2001). This approach to regional development has become so dominant it can be seen as an orthodoxy so strong that, “when invoked, [it] can completely halt public discussion of public or private activities. There is virtually no counterargument available to the simple claim that ‘doing X will make us uncompetitive’” (Schoenberger, 1998: 3).

The economic focus of clusters has been compounded by policy makers influenced by theorists such as Michael Porter and Richard Florida, as described above, who convinced clusters and similar models are the way to generate competitive industries and thus spur economic development. The argument has been made, however, that such approaches address development *in* regions, not development *of* regions (Lovering, 2001). On this theme, arguments have emerged calling for the normative assumptions of regional development to be reconsidered. Such views distinguish between increases in quantitative levels of development (measurements of GVA, income, growth etc.) and the qualitative character of development (standard of jobs, environmental measures, quality of life etc.). As Morgan (2004a) explains the former often hide much more than they reveal about places. There is an (re)emerging narrative acknowledging this with academia, policy circles and civil society. For instance, the US Local Government Commission state that “growth must be distinguished from development: growth means to get bigger, development means to get better – an increase in quality and diversity” (2004, cited in Pike et al., 2006: 37; see also National Assembly for Wales, 2000). Likewise, Pike et al. (2006; 2007), in asking ‘what kind of local and regional development and for whom?’, explicitly call for development to be reassessed in line with qualitative measures to become holistic and diverse.

This is not something new however. Early work on agglomerations did see industrial districts in a more holistic sense. As Markusen (1996) highlights, Piore and Sabel (1984), Best (1990) and Saxenian (1994) write about the virtues of agglomerations. Markusen herself (1996: 296) expands upon the potential positive impacts of ‘sticky places’ that:

“(1) ensures average or better-than-average growth for a region as a whole over time; (2) insulates a region from the job loss and firm failures of short-to-intermediate-term business or political spending cycles; (3) provides relatively good jobs, ameliorates tendencies toward income duality, and prevents undue concentration of wealth and ownership; (4) fosters worker representation and participation in firm decision making; and (5) encourages participation and tolerates contestation in regional politics.”

Such normative values are reflected and called for in the local and regional development literature more broadly (Geddes and Newman, 1999; Lovering, 2001; Hudson, 2003; Morgan, 2004b; Pike, et al., 2006), yet largely go unnoticed in the literature on clusters (for exceptions see Rosenfield, 2003; Moulaert and Nussbaumer, 2005; Henry, et al., 2006) and in wider debates have only recently gained momentum (Pike, et al., 2007). Given that cognate (sub)disciplines have for two decades focused on sustainable development, that the view of clusters remains purely economic is puzzling.

To make a shift from market-led development policies to diverse, equitable and holistic development is not an simple task. As Moulaert and Nussbaumer (2005) argue, there needs to be a shift in the way capital is viewed. These authors highlight the important category of public and collective capital that exist alongside private capital. Public capital includes “any combination of state and private capital designed to satisfy private and collective needs by way of an allocation system other than the capitalist market” (ibid: 53). Collective capital has a broader definition, and “can include state capital with a minor stakeholdership, as well as an association of private capitals based on principles of reciprocity and solidarity” (ibid). Moulaert and Nussbaumer argue that by enrolling public and collective capital into what they term territorial innovation models (TIMs), more socially nuanced development can be affected. To do this, however, a reassessment of the relationship between national and local

politics is needed so that local or regional bodies have the capacity to enact ‘social innovation’ as part of their development strategies. Moulaert and Nussbaumer’s argument is theoretical and lacks empirical evidence. However, as I highlight in Chapter 3, Moulaert and Nussbaumer’s conceptualisation is a useful perspective to understand heritage’s hybrid nature and its contemporary uses.

In Chapters 6 and 7 I demonstrate how heritage’s ability to combine social, environment and economic elements, means that when enrolled into the NHC the development potentials go some way to encompassing the kind of holistic and diverse local and regional development called for in the literature outlined above.

2.4.2 Under Theorised Power Relations

Another critique of the current clusters literature is the under-theorisation of power relations. This is manifest in two ways in the limited literature on the topic, first in terms of the influence of dominant firms on smaller enterprises operating in the same locale, and second, the exploitation of individuals, again, by dominant firms. First then, Christopherson and Clark (2007) argue the motives of large firms, particularly publicly listed TNCs, differ from those of SMEs. They argue it is maintenance of competitive advantage and strong growth figures that drives the multinationals. The outcome of this for regional innovation systems, they argue, is that dominant firms can use their power and influence to leverage key regional assets – namely skilled labour and research capacity – more easily than, and away from, smaller firms. The net result is asymmetries of access to key sources of innovation and an ability by TNCs to shape regional governance structures to suit their own ends. The potential implications of this are to threaten the sustainability of smaller firms and the cluster as a whole.

Second, dominant firms can exercise power over the people they employ. In many clusters, particularly those in the creative industries, project work is the principal mode of working (Faulkner and Andersen, 1987; Grabher, 2002b). This is the result of short run production cycles and to adapt to changing fashions, such as in television, film or advertising. Such short term modes of organisation require a contingent workforce (frequently freelances) who can

understand the norms and conventions of the industry and can thus slot easily into project teams (Grabher, 2002a). Further, employer's job search costs are reduced through 'networking' and social relations, for employees such activities are central to finding and maintaining working relationships (Defillippi and Arthur, 1998; Jones, 1996). These modes of working, and the need to live and work within the cluster, can lead to exploitation of workers in a number of ways (Reich, 2000). In her study of the UK magazine industry based in London, Ekinsmyth (1999; 2002a; 2002b) highlights a number of ways in which this occurs. First, the need to foster social relations with employers means workers have to be seen at the right events and talk to the right people. A lot of time is invested in this process without guaranteed results (Christopherson, 2002; Haunschild, 2003). In addition, freelances may have to work for low pay or in unfavourable circumstances in order to 'get a foot in the door' or to sustain relationships with editors. Second, the short-run nature of the industry means workers have to be flexible enough to work at short notice, "often need[ing] to subsume their own specific needs beneath a mantle of availability and acquiescence" (Ekinsmyth, 2002b: 236). Such practices can greatly impact upon work-life balance (Perrons, et al., 2004; Jarvis and Pratt, 2006).

Third, the over supply of labour in the magazine industry, plus the need to maintain good relations with employers results in workers often not negotiating fees. They are often too embarrassed to discuss such things with friends they have made during the socialisation processes, or fear pricing themselves out of the market. Finally, the geographical embeddedness of the cluster – related industries generating 'buzz' (music, fashion, arts, television etc.), publishers and social networks are all located in central London – creates further difficulties for workers. London is the most expensive housing market in the country meaning space is at a premium, more so when one considers most freelances work from home (Ekinsmyth, 2002b). Moreover, neophytes trying to break into the industry – trying to learn the conventions, norms and rules of the industry, along with accessing social networks – often have to move to the capital without any guarantee of work. This final point is relevant for any cluster where untraded interdependencies are crucial, meaning newcomers are at a disadvantage and may have to exploit themselves or make sacrifices to work in their chosen industry. While clusters are considered in mainly economic terms, such issues are overlooked.

2.4.3 Usual Suspects

Further criticism can be levelled at the clusters literature in terms of what gets researched. Archetypal and formative case studies of clusters aside, there is a propensity in some areas of regional studies to simply repeat studies of the ‘usual suspects’. Here I am referring to the tendency for analysis of a limited selection of industries, namely bio- and hi-technology, media, automotive or quality manufacturing. However, there is a lot of work being done on typical cases that bring nothing new to the table. For Mitchell, “there is absolutely no advantage in going to the trouble to find a ‘typical’ case” (Mitchell, 1983: 204, cited in Peck, 2003) and for Markusen (1999a) such approaches divert attention away from examples with potentially more theoretical interest (see also Buroway, et al., 2000; Lorentzen, 2007).

Markusen (1999a) places some of the blame on researching your ‘back yard’, geographically and conceptually. For Peck (Peck, 2003), the problem of unchallenging case study selection, is down to researchers setting the bar too low. One can add the demand from the policy arena as another factor. Above I have talked about the enormous interest Michael Porter generated from public bodies seeking to spur regional economic development. For Martin and Sunley (2003) this resulted in clusters becoming a policy fashion item everyone wanted. The outcome of this has been a plethora of grants and projects from development agencies to study clusters, or apparent clusters, within their locality. These grants are frequently taken up by what Martin and Sunley call ‘flying cluster makers’ (p.25). Unfortunately, the end product has been myriad analyses of, as it turns out, banal clusters with little or no expansion of an organisation’s knowledge base or contribution to clusters discourse⁶. By not yielding anything new, unique or challenging, the knock-on effect is clusters are no longer in vogue and their real potential is lost.

Selecting cases that are not the norm demonstrates “a greater willingness to confront negative or awkward cases, interrogating nascent theoretical claims in contexts designed to

⁶ Although it is probably not the objective of consultants to contribute to theoretical debates, at least not at the same level as academics.

expose the limitations of initial formulations and the effects of countervailing forces” (Peck, 2003: 737). With this in mind, there has been some research which moves away from the usual suspects to examine alternative forms of clusters. Industrial ecology, for example, promotes the idea that sustainable development in ecological terms can be achieved through supply chain linkages within clusters (Wallner, 1999). In effect, firms use the by-products of other firms as resources. To do this most efficiently enterprises need to locate near to each other. A good example of this is in Kalundborg, Denmark (Brouder and Berry, 2004). This industrial complex comprises energy and bio-technology firms who exploit each others waste streams as a method of reducing transaction costs. At the centre of the complex are a power station and oil refinery. The spillovers from these institutions are used to heat local homes, make plasterboard, produce sulphuric acid for science, and for fertiliser (Indigo Development, 2003).

Drawing on the clusters literature, Wallner (1999), argues that such eco-clusters can become more stable and thus more sustainable by generative collaborative networks beyond transaction relationships. In turn, he posits, innovators and spin-offs will emerge helping the cluster to grow. The concepts developed in industrial ecology have been extended in industrial ecology and eco-industrial development theories (Gibbs and Deutz, 2005; Korhonen, 2005; Geng and Cote, 2007). However, this literature is written from business, management or engineering view point (Gibbs, et al., 2005) and focuses on the economic-environment aspects of sustainable development.

There is also promising work emerging on clusters in peripheral regions that sheds light on the difference between characteristics in successful, cutting edge industries/regions, and those in areas who follow the leaders (see for example Benneworth, 2004; Lorentzen, 2007). Here the role of history, historical assets and path dependence is important. Such an understanding of regional development appreciates the evolutionary nature of regional life and the interdependent historical development of economy and society. Given this, Moulaert and Nussbaumer (2005: 55) argue that to move beyond a ‘market-competition led ontology’ to take into account community dimensions of spatial development “the history of the locality, the power relations and the spatial scales must be included in the analysis.”

This thesis contributes to the first and final of these absences by focusing on an emerging cluster operating in a field that has not been examined through a clusters lens in the past.

2.5 Conclusions

To sum up, this chapter has outlined the origins of, and most influential theories on localised industrial complexes. I began by outlining the work of Adam Smith, and the foundational contribution by Alfred Marshall. From here I tracked the renewed focus on regions as the sites for new forms of industrial organisation. I began with the most influential theories of the Italian School and Michael Porter who have, in different ways and to different audiences, stimulated a great deal of debate on clustered industries. The key characteristics in these schools of thought have been identified.

The chapter continued with an acknowledgement that Italian industrial districts and Porterian clusters, together with their particular causal explanations, are not the only theories on how and why agglomerations emerge. In section 2.3 I outlined some of the other perspectives that have contributed to the debate. In particular I have focused on alternative varieties of district that have emerged as research programmes have advanced, and the driving forces and conditions at work within them. Alongside this I have identified the stages of development a cluster can go through, as well as the importance of non-local linkages.

To draw these concepts together, I have drawn on multi-perspective approaches proposed by a number of authors seeking to open up the ‘black-box’ of clusters. In doing so I have created a typography of cluster characteristics that highlights the increasing emphasis on socio-institutional elements within clusters. It is these time-space specific features that contribute to what makes a cluster function, and importantly, given the emphasis placed on clusters as drivers of economic growth in increasingly competitive markets, that differentiates one from another.

I end the discussion by highlighting some of the absences in the cluster literature. Here I raise the issue of an over emphasis on economic imperatives in the literature, along with the under theorisation of power relations and the focus on the usual suspects.

Throughout this chapter I have sought to highlight the importance that history plays in generating ‘assets’ – whether physical or ‘in the air’ – that can spark a cluster’s formation and/or on which a cluster can draw. It is history, or more specifically heritages, then, that is the focus of the following chapter. For heritage is not just the input and output of the Northumberland Heritage Cluster, but an essential characteristic that goes some way to explain its distinguishing features.

Chapter 3

Heritage: its History, Evolution and Uses

“History is the version of past events that people have decided to agree upon.”

(Napoleon Bonaparte)

3.1 Introduction

Heritage is not what it used to be, and this chapter explains why that is the case. Heritage is an idea that, much like culture and sport, is economically non-conformist and has the potential to reach across all aspects of life. It is valued for myriad reasons: for its historical importance, as a source of identity, for aesthetics, in economic worth, for its uniqueness and as a community resource. Equally it is valued by many groups: for example academics, tourists, local communities, individuals, business people, governments, and artists. It is a complex concept and to understand the Northumberland Heritage Cluster it is crucial to appreciate its many facets. This chapter explores the meanings of heritage, where it came from, how it has changed and what it means today, with particular reference to the European and UK context. In doing so, I hope to illuminate the discourse in which the NHC operates, and part of the framework I use to conceptualise the cluster in later chapters.

Despite its now omnipresent nature, ‘heritage’ did not exist as a category in any recognisable form before the 19th century. This period was a time of great upheaval within Europe, with society wrestling with the advances made possible by Enlightenment progress in science and

technology, the reinvention of nations and the peak of imperial power. In reaction to this progress, to try and recapture values apparently subsumed by it, and to reinforce nascent national identities, particular aspects of the past were venerated, preserved and presented as the greatest endeavours of the past. This was the beginnings of what Smith (2006) terms the authorised heritage discourse (AHD) – a discourse about what heritage is, what it is not, what it should stand for, and who controls it. This is a powerful and enduring treatise that is still influential today. Section 3.2 outlines these origins.

Following this, in section 3.3, I explore the emergence of a heritage industry in the UK during the 1970s and the critiques levelled at those not just commodifying the past, but creating new and ‘inauthentic’ histories. Within this part of the chapter, drawing on Hewison (1987) and Lowenthal (1985; 1998), I highlight the dangers of using the past as a strategy for mitigating the conditions of the present and the implications it has for reasserting archaic values.

Although the arguments in section 3.3 attempt to undermine the AHD they are, by remaining entangled with notions of nostalgia, still part of it. The critiques outlined in section 3.4, however, are much more forceful. In this section I examine the ways certain groups are excluded from or misrepresented in the AHD. I also explore the ways natural heritage is constructed and the implication this has for discriminated groups.

Section 3.5 continues the critique by drawing on theories that seek to challenge the dualisms rife within the AHD. In particular I look at how Actor Network Theory moves away from human-nonhuman binaries, how non-linear understandings of time demonstrate how past and present can exist at the same time, and how Haraway’s cyborg thesis (1991) presents a useful metaphor to encapsulate the hybrid, partial and plural nature of heritages. This section also examines the way newer forms of heritage management seek to include an appreciation of the biomythology of heritages in their designation and management practices.

The penultimate part of the chapter, section 3.6, investigates contemporary uses of the past. Here I examine scales of heritage management and new ways in which heritage is being used for developmental purposes. In particular, I highlight the increasing role communities play in

decisions about heritage preservation and, importantly, the uses of heritage for neo-endogenous forms of growth. I conclude this chapter highlighting the implications of new approaches to heritage. In particular I focus on the potential heritage has for holistic, progressive and sustainable forms of local and regional development. Given the emphasis given to history in the formation of clusters in the previous chapter, throughout this chapter I seek to make linkages between the theories here and those in Chapter 2.

3.2 The Authorised Heritage Discourse

The word 'heritage' takes its meaning from 'inheritance', i.e. to pass something on. However, heritage came to mean something slightly different in the 1970s. It was around this time that the term became related to modern day use of the past. Hewison (1987) points to 1975 and the European Architectural and Heritage Year as significant, but the Oxford English Dictionary dates its origin to 1970 (OED, 1989). However, while attaching the word 'heritage' to some kind of present usage of the historic is modern, the concept has a long and complicated history. Many scholars writing within the broad field of heritage studies trace the origins of heritage back to the nineteenth century and the upheaval which was occurring during this period. In order to demonstrate this, let me outline some of the changes that were happening.

The 18th and 19th centuries were a period, post-enlightenment, where progress was the overriding principle of the day. European colonial power was expanding as Western countries laid claim to foreign lands. This was a time of great scientific discovery - new theories such as evolution were advanced, leading to debates about identity and race, and inevitably the supremacy of white Europeans (Trigger, 1989). The industrial revolution's pace and the advancements it brought created a divide between the past and the brave new world.

On the continent the French Revolution changed the way people thought about territoriality and sovereignty (Jokilehto, 1999; Graham, et al., 2000). The nation state and nationalism emerged anew as "a new meta-narrative to bind populations to a shifting sense of territorial identity and to legitimize state formation" (Smith, 2006b: 18). At the same time the middle

classes became more powerful and the aristocracy less so. Out of this change emerged a new, modern Europe built on the nation and characterised by universalising modernity (Smith, 2006b).

In this period, within the powerhouses of Europe, much of the past was discarded; capitalism was embraced and feudalism forgotten; industrialisation came to dominate production; and science and reason were favoured over spirituality and religion. However, as Lowenthal (1985) points out, while much of the past was cast off, the nineteenth century was a time of revival for many things historic: "Scott's historical novels, Gothic Revival architecture, neo-chivalric fashions...classical standards of beauty, seductive passions for all things Roman, Greek, Egyptian, Chinese and early English" (p.97). In contrast to the Renaissance Europe had seen in the 14th to 17th centuries, where concepts from the past were adopted for progressive means, the 19th century revival of the historic was as an antidote to what some saw as missing from the present. Sections of the powerful classes believed the new world was lacking in certain virtues - community, religion and order – and in reaction against the perceived loss of these, sought to import them from the past (ibid). This happened through the veneration of ancient artefacts, fashions, places and creative styles. Revivalist architecture, for example, was most often seen in important and powerful buildings; the theory being that if influential buildings can embody particular values the activities within them would also be imbued with them. Key examples of revivalist architecture include the Palace of Westminster (rebuilt between 1836 and 1870 after a devastating fire); cathedrals such as St. Patrick's in New York, St. Andrew's in Sidney, and St. John's in Toronto; and collegiate buildings at Sydney University, Keeble College, Oxford, and many other buildings at American universities.

However, it was a partial memory of the past. Architects might have mimicked the medieval era by designing buildings with battlements and towers, but nobody sought to return to the wars of previous centuries. Similarly, while painters such as John William Waterhouse would depict characters from a bygone age, they would do so using modern brushes, paints and techniques. The politics of this were clear; an example of the ruling classes harking back to the bygone days before change had seen their influence eroded (Lowenthal, 1985). To some extent this view remains part of contemporary heritage narratives. However, as I will outline

in coming sections, this view is being challenged with the result that heritage is being valued in new, more diverse ways.

3.2.1 Institutionalising the Past

In an effort to spread the lost virtues of the past to the general populous two key moves occurred; the first was the emergence of the museum. The nineteenth century museum, across Western Europe became the repository for the values imported from the past. Just as it was thought buildings designed in ways that harked back to times past could embody lost values, it was also believed historical artefacts could embody lost ideals. As the public went to gaze upon the very best endeavours of past societies the museum acted to propagate the lost values to the public through their collections (Merriman, 1991). This was not only an important shift in terms of public education, but also in terms of who owned heritage. Previously collections of fine artefacts from the past were held by the upper classes, displayed in their country houses and only shown to their kin. But with the advent of public museums more could enjoy the ‘spoils of history’. So, in order to try and enlighten the public about their missing virtues, a sacrifice was made in opening up previously private collections to the country. Such a move was seen as epitomising the nascent sense of civic duty (Lowenthal, 1998).

The second move, and perhaps the most influential, was through the conservation of built heritage. As Smith (2006b) documents, numerous legal instruments were adopted across Europe to ensure monuments to the past were protected from the rapid pace of change: “the English Ancient Monuments Protection Act of 1882; the 1807 chancellery recommendations in Denmark; [and] the establishment in the 1930s of the Comité historique in France” (p.19). In England, the Ancient Monuments Protection Act saw the protection of monuments, specifically buildings and structures which were tributes to the new age, the architecturally significant, aesthetically important, or those which embodied particular social or moral values (Graham, et al., 2000).

As I briefly touched upon above, this was a time when nationhood was redefined, and this redefinition was asserted by the selection of structures which were significant for the

country. This is particularly true of monuments that came to embody particular moments in history, often literally, during the seventeenth century (Choay, 2001). In this period monuments were “witness[es] to history” (ibid: 15) and were erected to commemorate particular moments in time, often battles or great leaders. By the nineteenth century, scholars such as Guizot⁷ argued countries were symbolised by monuments taking the form of national sentiment (ibid). The association of monuments with history spread to other structures such as the castle, places of worship and particular buildings which, again, were significant in terms of the nation and its history. These monuments became sources of collective identity that bound people together by a shared history.

Here one can start to make links to ideas of collective identity and shared norms seen in the previous chapter. Where Georgians and Victorians looked to identity shaping events such as battles or leaders, cluster members draw on collective values in class structures, family ties and religion (Italian industrial districts), or shared technological trajectories that shape the ways in which people work (untraded interdependencies), or communal goals that value innovation and pioneering work in emerging fields (Silicon Valley).

During this process the disciplines of architecture and archaeology matured and laid claim to the stewardship of this newly protected heritage. Through their respective expertise they dominated the selection and protection process. At the same time, this conservation ethic saw new institutions such as the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) (est. 1877) emerge and, together with museums, sought to educate the public about the importance of the country’s heritage and the ideals it embodied (Harvey, 2001).

Two central players in the new conservation ethic were John Ruskin and William Morris. Both were influenced by post-revolution French government – in turn influenced by people such as Guizot. In 1849 John Ruskin published *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* which put forward the principle of ‘conserve as found’, a notion which went against the general

⁷ Francois Pierre Guillaume Guizot was a French historian and statesman. It was his suggestion that there be an Inspector General of Historic Monuments in France, thus institutionalising the preservation of historic monuments in France (Choay, 2001)

view at the time that old buildings should be restored to their former glory. On page 163 he writes:

“Of more wanton or ignorant ravage it is vain to speak; my words will not reach those who commit them, and yet, be it heard or not, I must not leave the truth unstated, that it is again no question of expediency or feeling whether we shall preserve the buildings of the past times or not. *We have no right whatever to touch them.* They are not ours. They belong partly to those who built them, and partly to all the generations of mankind who are to follow us.”

[emphasis in original]

The idea that present society are only trustees of the past was reinforced by Morris writing in the SPAB manifesto and is still an influential philosophy today. Domestically it can be seen in the work of English Heritage and even in planning legislation right up to the modern day (Smith, 2006b). Internationally this conservation ethic spread beyond Europe to the colonies of the European empires and to the young United States of America. Perhaps most significantly the ‘conserve as found’ philosophy is embedded in the early international heritage management treaties such as the Athens Charter for the Restoration of Historic Monuments 1931, the International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites 1964, and many International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) charters (ibid). The foundational concepts that underpin these treaties stem from the 19th century idea of heritage and its treatment.

3.2.2 Natural Heritage

Alongside the protection of built heritage the conservation of ‘natural’ heritage was also being advanced during the nineteenth century. To understand how this came about one again needs to go back to the Enlightenment and the changes this brought about. The Enlightenment was a time when reason was advanced as the basis for authority. Advances in mathematics and science revealed how the world worked through their experiments and

theories. A key figure at this time was Francis Bacon whose work on scientific method has been foundational to science ever since. Bacon's work was important and ground breaking, however according to Gold, his work encompassed "language that was starkly sexual in its metaphors and suggestive of a witch-hunter in its techniques" (2004: 105). The result of this was to characterise women, and in turn *Mother Nature*, as " 'mere animals'...agents of the devil...wild and untameable, withholding 'favours' and 'secrets' from men as part of some spiteful and flirtatious game" (ibid). To understand and unlock these secrets scientific knowledge was needed. At the same time Descartes was working on his ideas of rationalism and the separation of body and mind or soul – the so called Cartesian Dualism. He argued that only humans had a conscious rational mind and this differentiated humans from animals (Coates, 1998). Thus, taken together, the work of Descartes and Bacon proposed the idea that humans (particularly men in the case of Bacon) were separate from nature, and through rational science could understand, but more importantly control, nature.

It was believed that because man (sic) could understand and control nature – seeing it as some kind of machine – it could be perfected in the same way that science allowed machines to be adapted, advanced and improved upon (Rigotti, 1986). One of the immediate impacts that ideas of domination of nature had was in the design of parks and gardens. Designers used 'unnatural' straight lines, shrubs were manipulated into abnormal shapes as borders and hedges, new species of plant were bred, and water was controlled with pumps and made to behave how the designer wished in decorative fountains (Gold and Revill, 2004).

Similarly, human dominance of nature was exhibited in agriculture. As farming became more profit orientated estates and farms grew, fields were marked out and animals were kept in enclosed spaces controlled by humans. The landscape was changed dramatically and as demand for fertile land increased woodland was chopped down to provide space for crops and grazing. As the cultivation of crops and husbandry expanded, control of nature was paralleled with a control of the poor who lived off the land. Laws were brought in to protect the landed classes and their farms (most infamously the Black Acts of 1727); poachers were hanged, gleaning was outlawed, grazing on common land was stopped and collection of firewood from forests made illegal (Gold and Revill, 2004). Much like the cities, the countryside became a place for industry. But unlike cities, relatively speaking, mercantile

agriculture did not need the large amounts of labour that mills did. Consequently the countryside became de-populated as people moved to the burgeoning urban areas for work. This reinforced the perception of a human-nonhuman dualism the work of Bacon and Descartes had helped generate.

3.2.3 Romanticism and Heritage

During the middle of the nineteenth century the enclosure of common lands sparked a selection of liberal and radical politicians to create the Commons Preservation Society (CPS). Established in 1865, the main aim of the CPS was defending open spaces in the ever growing urban areas of the time (Conwell, 2002). This organisation was one of many set up in this period as a reaction to the perceived erosion of the ‘natural’ by the ‘industrial’. The Romantic movement had an important part to play in the philosophical roots of such reactions.

Romanticism in this era revered nature, and in particular wilderness. Unlike Enlightenment thinkers Romanticists took a holistic view of life, reacting against the dichotomy of nature-society. They focused on the aesthetic qualities of nature rather than the practical potential it processed for the ‘progressives’. Wilderness, seen as inhospitable, hostile, impenetrable and dangerous by some was re-imagined by the Romantics as beautiful (Tuan, 1993; Gold and Revill, 2004). In the United States, for instance, people such as Henry David Thoreau and John Muir represented the ‘Wild West’ as “an antidote for the poisons of industrial society” (Shama, 1995: 61). In the UK, Romanticists like William Wordsworth, venerated places like the Lake District, seen by others as a county “the wildest, most barren and frightful that I have passed over in England, or even in Wales” (Daniel Defoe, 1724). Wordsworth was so taken with the area he moved there, and captured its sense of beauty in numerous poems, most famous in *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud (The Daffodils)*.

The Romantic movement helped inspire the call for certain lands to be protected in law. Wordsworth spoke of the Lake District as a “sort of national property in which every man [sic] has a right and interest who has an eye to perceive and a heart to enjoy” (Wordsworth,

1810). Similarly, George Catlin, an American painter renowned for his depictions of native Americans, in 1832 said of the American West:

“It is a melancholy contemplation too, when one (who has travelled these realms, and can duly appreciate them) imagines them as they might in future be seen, (by some great protecting policy of government) preserved in their pristine beauty and wildness, in a magnificent park, where the world could see for ages to come...A nation's Park, containing man and beast, in all the wild and freshness of their nature's beauty!”

(Catlin, 1860)

In the US it was not just the Romantics calling for areas to be protected as national parks. As Runte argues (1979) the youngness of the country, and therefore lack of history on which to draw, meant it possessed only a nascent national identity. This led some to call for particularly beautiful areas – arguably areas the US had in abundance - to be preserved as natural monuments for the nation. After years of campaigning it was Yellowstone in Wyoming that was made the first national park in the world by Ulysses S. Grant in 1872 (MacEwen and MacEwen, 1982). In a similar way to debates over what built heritage was preserved, particular definitions of beauty dominated this campaign. By the end of the century Australia, Canada and New Zealand had followed suit. In the UK, however, it was not until after the Second World War that Parliament enacted the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949. After this the 1950s saw ten areas designated as National Parks: Peak District, Lake District, Snowdonia, Dartmoor (1951); Pembrokeshire Coast, North Yorkshire Moors (1952); Yorkshire Dales, Exmoor (1954); Northumberland (1956); and Brecon Beacons (1957). Interestingly, there is a contrast between the uses and purposes of national parks in these countries: US Parks were designated as national monuments and legislation used to protect them in a ‘pristine’ state; UK Parks on the other hand were created because of their beauty and to ensure access, but legislation allows some of the designated areas resources to be exploited (MacEwen and MacEwen, 1982). This difference can be seen as one of the drivers changing how protected heritages are used. As I explain below, the 1995 Environment Act formalised the use of England and Wales’ National Park ‘assets’ for economic and social development (see 3.6 below).

3.2.4 The National Trust

Other organisations were also set up towards the end of, and shortly after, the Victorian era. In 1907 Parliament established the National Trust (NT) out of the National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty (established 1895). It was there,

“for the purpose of promoting the permanent preservation for the benefit of the nation of lands and tenements (including buildings) of beauty or historic interest and as regards lands for the preservation (so far as is practicable) of their natural aspect, features and animal and plant life”

(National Trust Act, 1907)

The Act allowed the Trust to hold properties in trust for the nation but it was not until the late 1930s and post wars years that the National Trust began to acquire properties on any real scale. Today the National Trust is one of the largest land holders in the country and has great influence in terms of protection of the historic environment. Perhaps the type of property the Trust is best known for is the country house, which on the surface may not seem significant, but the history of the NT and its most enduring symbol is one which influenced the heritage concept immensely. Moreover, through the 20th century the National Trust came to epitomise the AHD’s focus on preservation of elite heritages (Smith, 2006).

The story of the Trust and the country house dates back to 1930 when Philip Kerr succeeded his cousin to become the 11th Marquess of Lothian and inherited a large number of stately homes (Mandler, 1997). As part of this inheritance he received a large bill for death duty, but as a liberal he did not see it as a problem. He did have an issue, however, with the fact that the upkeep of such properties was very high. To Kerr this was a problem for the rural way of life as stately homes were important to the operation of the countryside (*ibid*). He believed that the great houses and estates were of public benefit and lobbied his friend MacLoed Matheson, the newly appointed Secretary of the National Trust, about changing the role of the country house. Together with some other publicly minded land owners, Matheson and Kerr negotiated with the Government for tax exemption for estate and

houses in return for allowing the public to visit them. This was done by transferring ownership of the houses, estates, gardens and contents to the National Trust. In return the owner would be allowed to stay on as tenants – it was believed they were the best people to preserve their traditions – effectively renting part of the houses. Although not immediately a popular plan, following World War 2 there were great efforts to save heritage owned by the landed gentry and many houses were entrusted to the National Trust (Howard, 2003).

One can clearly identify the ‘conserve as found’ ethic in the work of the National Trust; stately homes are preserved as they have been for decades, if not centuries. The ‘natural’ heritage under trusteeship of the NT is similarly staid and disqualified from change. And whereas the founding and most influential members in the pre-WW2 years might have been liberal in terms of their politics, today membership and the Trust itself is very much to the right of centre (Mandler, 1997). Further, national identity and conservative discourses highlighted earlier can again been seen played out in the role of the stately home in influencing the idea of what is England. As Crang points out the “English country house has been used to symbolise the very heart of English national identity...It has been used as a talisman for a conservative vision of organic rural values” (2001a: 31). Finally, the roped off displays in stately homes reinforces the passiveness of the tourist gaze (Urry, 1990; Merriman, 1991), reinforcing the role of experts versus the ignorant public. As other parts of the heritage sector begin to embrace holistic and diverse uses of heritage (see 3.5 and 3.6), it will be interesting to see how the Trust and its membership reacts.

3.3 The Emergence of a Heritage Industry

By the 1970s the public’s perception of heritage was based around artefacts and works of art in museums and country homes; the stately home itself and its grounds; castles, cathedrals and other architectural heritage. Up until this point in time heritage was, in the main, used and seen as a public good. Natural heritage was valued and protected for its beauty and uniqueness. Similarly, artefacts and built heritage were seen as monuments to the past, and valued for the memories they embodied and evoked. But, from the 1970s onwards a ‘heritage industry’ appeared in the UK (Hewison, 1987; Fowler, 1992; Walsh, 1992). This industry saw the economic value of heritages and sought to exploit them for financial gain.

This was a time of crisis amongst many industries with increasing competition from overseas and increasing international divisions of labour. This resulted in a loss of many jobs in the UK and people sought new ways to compete. One way to do this was to utilise resources not available elsewhere. Hewison (*ibid*) argued an industry producing heritage emerged as an attempt to reverse this perceived ‘climate of decline’ and heritage’s geographical fixity provided a resource to harness. Here clear connections can be made with the similar way in which regionally specific assets in clusters are harnessed as advantages over competing areas. Hewison goes on to contend that like the Victorians, British society in this period saw the products of heritage as reassuring because by looking into the past one can do away with modern insecurities.

Examples of this commodification of heritage can be grouped into two main categories – direct commodification and associative commodification. The former relates to areas such as the selling of historical items (paintings, artefacts, buildings), charging to see or experience heritage (museums, galleries, monuments, etc.), heritage tourism in general, and souvenirs. Associative commodification comes through the use of the past to sell modern goods or services with no direct relationship to historical events. For example, cooking sauces drawing on Italian cultural heritage, cakes invoking the rural idyll or ‘retro’ kitchen appliances.

While many saw heritage as a way out of decline - through the exploitation of the wealth of heritage the UK had - Hewison critiqued this idea for three reasons. First, he argued that the heritage being created was inauthentic, a “fantas[y] of a world that never was” (p.10). Second, he believed it reasserted outdated values the progress of the twentieth century did away with – particularly class structures. Finally, he stated that the tactic of using the past to ameliorate the present climate of decline was actually worsening it. The culmination of these three critiques was an argument that the heritage industry was a brake on progress because “if the only new thing we have to offer is an improved version of the past, then today can only be inferior to yesterday” (*ibid*). Hewison’s argument has been very influential in heritage studies, and can be seen as a preliminary attack on the AHD. In the following sections I expand on each of his critiques.

3.3.1 Authenticity

Within the fields of heritage studies, architecture, archaeology and history, the question of authenticity is a complex one. As Hewison argued “so many of [the heritage industry’s] productions are fantasies of a world that never was” (Hewison, 1987: 10). Despite conceptions of heritage emerging during the industrial revolution, the question of the authenticity of heritage is relatively recent⁸. Starn (2002) traces the origins of the concept to the 1960s, and particularly the *The Venice Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites* (1964). This document was an agreed framework for international standards of heritage restoration and preservation. The Charter also put forward the idea of universal values inherent within all heritage:

“People are becoming more and more conscious of the unity of human values and regard ancient monuments as a *common* heritage.”

(Icomos, 1964: emphasis added)

Furthermore, for the first time, Starn argues (2002), a value is placed upon the authenticity of heritage:

“The common responsibility to safeguard them for future generations is recognized. It is our duty to hand them on in the full richness of their authenticity.”

(Icomos, 1964)

⁸ It is relatively recent in terms of ‘modern’ conceptualisations of heritage. The debate about whether something conserved remains genuine can be traced back to the ancient Greeks (Plutarch, cited in Starn, 2002). According to Plutarch, the ship used by Theseus was conserved by Athenians with old decaying planks replaced with new timber. Eventually the majority of the original wood was replaced, stimulating a philosophical debate about whether the ship was the same one used by Theseus, or whether it was different after the changes.

The knock on effect of the adoption of authenticity principles was widespread. For example, after the Venice Charter the UNESCO World Heritage Convention 1972 included a test of authenticity for World Heritage Sites.

It was in the 20th century's latter decades, 20-30 years after the Venice Charter, that the most voluminous writings on the question of authenticity were seen. It was in this period that authenticity became the focus of many scholars and, inevitably, definitions were proposed. The two main conceptualisations are 'objective authenticity' and 'constructed authenticity'. The former is where experiential authenticity stems from the fact that objects are inherently authentic; the latter is the idea that authenticity can be constructed through ideas, beliefs and perspectives (Wang, 1999).

The 'heritage industry' was (re)producing a great deal of the latter: constructed authenticity. Hewison (1987) was very critical of this, but perhaps the most scathing critique is Lowenthal's (Lowenthal, 1985; Lowenthal, 1998) and there is little that escapes his eye. On music, citing Morgan (1988), Lowenthal states:

““Recreating the music Bach or Handel as the composer himself might have heard it” is a promise that has launched a thousand disks but is never fulfilled; instead, performers are “actually recreating it in the high-tech, precise, pristine style that chimes with modern taste””

(Lowenthal, 1998: 152)

On art:

“Old master paintings are ‘restored’ to a sumptuous radiance less in line with their original appearance, as restorers often claim, than with expectations based on Impressionist art.”

(Lowenthal, 1998: 152)

On publishing and television:

“A 1990s authentic facsimile of the 1942 *Rupert Annual* unblushingly owns that ‘certain terminology [then] acceptable has been changed or deleted [in] line with present day sensibility.’...the BBC made Edith Wharton’s *The Buccaneers* (1938) ‘accessible’ in 1995 by adding a rape and a homosexual encounter. Almost *anything* that makes the past seriously different is now apt to be axed as too hard for audiences to digest.”

(Lowenthal, 1998: 153, emphasis in original)

On heritage attractions:

“A visitor to Beatrix Potter’s Hilltop Farm in the Lake District exclaims, “This is how I always imagined it!”. That Scotland, rather than the Lake District, had inspired Peter Rabbit is beside the point”

(Lowenthal, 1998: 164-165)

It is argued the impact of false claims of authenticity is that people accept what they see as fact, and history is remade. The point is that no heritage is absolutely authentic, and consequently as media re-invention creates hyper-heritage and heritage becomes formed in the eye of the beholder, the experience becomes central. This is termed existential authenticity. The difference between this and objective or constructive authenticities is that “existential experience involves personal or intersubjective feelings activated by the liminal process of tourist activities” (Wang, 1999: 351). The point is not that the heritage is authentic, but the tourist experience is real: “people feel they themselves are much more authentic and more freely self-expressed than in everyday life...simply because they are engaging in nonordinary activities” (ibid: 351-352).

3.3.2 Re-assertion of Archaic Values and a Brake on Progress

Another strand of the critique levelled at the emerging ‘heritage industry’ was its implicit re-assertion of archaic values. This was particularly evident in the enormous growth post war of visits to country houses as once again people were looking for security in the face of change. This change included the loss of imperial identity (Daniels, 1993), increasing multiculturalism

and a desire to cling to an idea of cultural and social continuity interrupted by war (Smith, 2006b). Heritage became sterile, unchanging and about safety (Urry, 1995).

The consequence of increasing interest and visitation of stately homes was the preservation of unprogressive, conservative values and an inequitable class structure that they represented (Wright, 1985). It was the middle classes visiting the country house, and it was the middle class transposing and reinforcing archaic values in the newly created suburbs (Urry, 1995).

The consequence of this was the stifling of cultural creativity (Smith, 2006b) – it is difficult for culture to spur innovation when the focus is on past culture rather than present or future culture – and thus acted as a brake on progress (Hewison, 1987). Here, again, one can draw parallels to the previous chapter. In similar ways to the brake on creativity Hewison describes, is regional lock-in proposed by Grabher (1993; section 2.2.10). In the case of the Ruhr region, being too strongly wed to the past created functional and cognitive lock-in that restricted the district's ability to adapt in a changing world. Hewison feared a similar situation whereby reproducing the old ways again and again would only deepen a spiral of decline.

While this critique, and the debates about authenticity, went some way to deconstructing the dominant view of heritage, both arguments are played out in an AHD framework. They cannot get past heritage as nostalgic, as something in the past (Smith, 2006b). However, there are another set of critiques with the power to destabilise the AHD and its very foundations.

3.4 Critiquing the AHD and ‘Other’ Heritages

At the start of this chapter I hinted that the commonly held history of heritage I have just outlined was not the only one. The ‘authorised heritage discourse’ (AHD) is not the whole story. As Smith points out, “[t]here is, really, no such thing as heritage,” (2006b: 11). Rather, she argues, there is a hegemonic discourse *about* heritage, what she calls the AHD. It is a discourse which promotes a set of values and notions propagated by Western and elitist views of culture, aesthetics and what is valuable about the past. The critique of this view outlined in this section was the catalyst for new understandings of heritage and importantly

new ways in which people harnessed it. Without such critiques the uniqueness of the NHC would be very different.

Until relatively recently the number of people challenging the AHD was small, and in the view of those validating it they were unimportant. But recently the criticisms of the AHD have gathered pace and numbers. Within heritage studies it is no longer the dominant view of heritage. Within the institutions governing and managing heritage, however, it still holds a good deal of sway.

For Smith (2006), the AHD reinforces particular elite values and elite groups by disengaging heritage from the public in a number of ways. First, terms such as 'the past' creates heritage as abstract and separates it from the very real emotions and culture it influences. Second, experts acting as stewards of heritage or 'caretakers of the past' (*ibid*: 29) separate it from the present and individuals. Third, by representing heritage as inherently valuable the need for experts is reinforced, and heritage comes to signify all that is good and significant in history. Fourth, the AHD emphasises the role heritage - particularly physical and built heritage - plays in relation to universal forms of national identity. The focus on universality and nationality obscures other forms of identity⁹. Finally, within the AHD it is elite history promoted: for example castles, churches and stately homes are the most common forms of built heritage; works of art, ornate furniture and war paraphernalia are most commonly preserved in museums.

This section explores two strands of critique levelled at the AHD, both of which deconstruct essentialist ideas of history, heritage and 'nature'. The first deals with the absence or misrepresentation of certain groups in much heritage discourse. The second undermines the separation of nature of society/culture and thus the dichotomy between 'natural' and 'cultural' heritages.

⁹ Paradoxically, as heritage discourse was assimilating sub-cultures and local identities through the universalising principles of protection documents (published by ICOMOS and UNESCO for example), debates around globalisation were emphasising the greater importance of the local (Smith, 2006).

3.4.1 Inserting ‘Others’ into Heritage Discourse

The critiques I mention above stem from sections of society that have worked to undermine hegemonic, Western, masculine and elitist discourses across the humanities and social sciences – namely women, ethnic minorities and working classes. First, as Dubrow highlights (2003), women have sought to critique and raise the profile of the role women played in historical events wherever they have worked in historical or heritage fields. Amongst other areas, within the history of the heritage preservation movement questions are being asked about how and why women engaged in historical preservation (Dubrow, 2003; Eyring, 2003); the place, or rather absence, of women from monuments and museums is being critiqued (Huyck, 1997; West, 2003). Further, discrimination within protection regimes and policies is also the focus of critique as more and more understand the inherent problems of the AHD (Miller, 2003; Shull, 2003). Second, the analysis of ethnic minority histories and the appreciation that they do not fit within, are missing from, or misrepresented in, the AHD has also served to critique the hegemonic discourse (for example Shackel, 2001 on African Americas; Smith, et al., 2001 on the Waanyi Aboriginal people; Watkins, 2004 on Keenewick Man). Finally, just as an appreciation of the absence of women and ethnic minorities from the AHD has grown, working class histories have also been revealed (Walsh, 1992; Dicks, 2000). This was particularly evident in the reaction to the glut of heritage Hewison (1987) identified in the 1970s and 1980s, the dominance of the stately home as a heritage attraction, and the sanitisation of sites of working class heritage (e.g. pit museums for example existed without any reference to the realities of mining - Smith, 2006).

The result of this work has been to insert excluded groups into heritage discourse and to destabilise the idea that history is what we are told it is. History and heritage therefore become multiple and plural, with greater connection to people who may not have seen themselves in the heritage as portrayed by the AHD. This is an important move on the way to developing heritage as more than conservation.

3.4.2 Critiques of Natural Heritage

Just as a critique of what is missing from the AHD has deconstructed an essentialist view of history, the same sort of arguments have also been made in relation to essentialist views of nature, the implications this has for particular groups and in relation to 'natural' heritage. The idea that nature is something different, outside of, or separate from society dates back to the Enlightenment and the work of people like Bacon and Descartes (see above). Over the centuries this separation has been reinforced by various controlling factors including scientific practice, capitalism and governance structures.

The implications of this separation are widespread, in particular allowing justification for the discrimination of numerous groups. For example, debates about the rights and wrongs of particular sexualities also stem from an essentialist view of the 'natural world'. Foucault's book, *The History of Sexuality* (1978), was a major contribution to constructionist views of nature that seek to undermine the basis for discrimination of homosexuals. In analysing the arguments of homosexuals in the nineteenth century - who contested the status of homosexuality as 'unnatural' - he rejects the discourse of grounding sexual identity with what is 'natural'. To maintain the idea of a natural or essential sexuality is to premise certain sexual identities over others.

Similarly, naturalist views of an essential nature have been challenged by women for the chauvinistic subtexts they support. Feminine sentimentality and terms such as 'Mother nature' are rife as linguistic instruments about nature and create a female space, other to society. At the same time the society which venerates nature is causing huge amounts of environmental destruction with control and domination through science and technology. This paradox is unhelpful to any conceptualisation because of the repression imbued within it (Soper, 1995). Moreover, the hegemonic technocratic domination of nature is fundamentally male; science and technology are infused with masculinity (Haraway, 1991). While nature is seen as outside of society, in a nature-society dichotomy, there still remains the subtext of oppression and domination towards women.

Racial theorists and political ecologists have also adopted constructionist approaches to undermine hegemonic views of non-white peoples and environmental problems. The conceptualisation of some places as wild can have very negative impacts. Wilderness is not a thing but an idea (Cronon, 1995). By defining an area as ‘wilderness’, it is to portray it as a wasteland, devoid of any usefulness. This has a knock on effect for how we think about the people, animals and plants which live in these areas – they too become thought of as ‘wild’, uncivilised and therefore less than civilised peoples. The expulsion of Aboriginal people from their land in Australia was justified by the notion that they lived in land less valuable than European landscapes, and thus they were also lesser beings. European settlers used the doctrine of *terra nullius* as legal justification for their mistreatment (Whatmore, 2002).

In terms of conservation this argument has been used to justify excluding peoples, such as the Meru Peasant people of Tanzania, from their native land in the name of nature preservation (Neumann, 1998). Similarly, notions of what land can or should be used for by local people has sparked much debate in the heritage arena. This issue can be found in relation to farming practices within the Philippine Cordilleras World Heritage Site. The concern here centres on the degradation of rice terraces as farmers change to more profitable vegetable production. The result of this change in land use has been to threaten the integrity of the WHS. The question now being asked is “should local people be kept in a traditional lifestyle that they did not necessarily wish to maintain so that the broader global community could benefit from protection of World Heritage values?” (Aplin, 2007: 438). The relationship between heritage professionals and farmers and land-managers are central in effective management of heritage sites with a landscape element in them.

3.5 Theorising the Implosion of Dualisms

The critiques above demonstrate the problems with essentialist views of heritage and nature, and in particular the dualisms that surround them (i.e. nature-culture, past-present). From a theoretical perspective further challenges to such dualisms come from Actor Network Theory (ANT) and Haraway’s cyborg thesis. The former holds that there is no nature ‘out there’ to be discovered, instead it is based on the idea of relational networks made up of constellations of heterogeneous entities - human and nonhuman – which are aligned

according to their relation to each other (Latour, 1991; Latour, 1994; Latour, 1999; Law, 1995; Law, 1999; Law and Hassard, 1999). Like social constructionism, the argument is that entities are only knowable through their relationships with other things. A central feature of ANT is symmetry; a principle which dictates that there should be no *a priori* conceptions about what constitutes an actor and what are simply intermediaries in a network. One needs to remain agnostic about the influence of humans and nonhumans. Indeed, ANT holds that, firstly, humans are not always actors, they are also intermediaries, and secondly, not all nonhumans are simply intermediaries, they too can be actors (Murdoch, 1998). One can see that binarist thinking cannot exist with such an approach.

Attempts have also been made to do away with the past-present dualism. Ingold argues when experiencing heritage we are always already in the past and present: “we can move through one present to another without having to break through any chronological barrier that might be supposed to separate each present from the next in line” (1993: 159). This is supported by work that demonstrates different stakeholders place different values on heritage. As Waterton (2007) explains such examples “offer insight into the ways by which the dominant archaeological discourse fails to accommodate a situation in which the past mingles with the present” (p.314) and the active role local communities play in constructing these connections and overlaps.

Through her deconstruction of scientific knowledge Haraway’s cyborg thesis also implodes dualisms and provides an interesting metaphor for understanding the construction of heritage. In her book *Simians, Cyborgs and Women* (1991) she develops the idea of the cybernetic organism. This creature is a hybrid of organism and machine, but it is a special type of cyborg. For Haraway the cyborg is constructed from the social and the fictional, an entity made from ‘biomythography’. A concoction of complex political, historical, social, scientific constructions – often mythical in essence while real in perception. They are made of, “ourselves and other organic creatures in our unchosen ‘high-technological’ guise as information systems, texts and ergonomically controlled labouring, desiring and reproducing systems...[and] machines, in their guise, also as communications systems, texts and self acting, ergonomically designed apertures” (Haraway, 1991: 1).

These are not the cyborgs of science fiction, not part human part computer, but made from ideas, historical constructions, exegesis and relations.

For Haraway, the cyborg is partial, unwhole, perverse and contested. In a cyborg world nature and culture are reworked, one is not available for domination, assimilation or appropriation by the other. What counts as nature is undermined as poststructuralist and postmodernist thought deconstructs essentialist organic wholes. Culture is dealt a similar blow as Haraway uncovers the historical construction of the pedigrees in social relations. By tracing the histories of scientific research she demonstrates the fictions that are 'norms' in, the apparently neutral, scientific culture at the end of the Twentieth Century. The result of her deconstruction is to highlight the breaks and boundaries central in binaries such as animal-human, organic-machine and physical-nonphysical.

Not only does the cyborg concept do away with a nature-society dualism, thus deconstructing the idea of cultural heritage vs. natural heritage, it also develops the idea of 'biomythography' which is a useful tool for understanding heritage and encompasses the anti-AHD view of heritage discussed here. For Lorde (1982), biomythology is made up of history, myth and biography much like heritage. By applying this term to heritage one can understand it as a hybrid of partial and biased histories, and emergent and intersubjective biography that can create myths of times past that are experienced in existential moments of meaning. In addition to this, by reasserting the 'always already' relationship between people and their surroundings, together with growing environmental concerns, people's relationship with their environment is remade in closer and more intimate ways. The result is to explode the traditionally held view of heritage and give potential to new ways of understanding, protecting and utilising heritage. The following sections outline some of the ways in which this is happening.

3.5.1 Imploding Dualisms in Heritage Management

Within heritage management institutions there have been attempts to do away with the dualisms of nature-society or natural-cultural. One such effort is the concept of the cultural landscape which UNESCO's operational guidelines define as:

“cultural properties represent the “combined works of nature and of man”
...They are illustrative of the evolution of human society and settlement over time, under the influence of the physical constraints and/or opportunities presented by their natural environment and of successive social, economic and cultural forces, both external and internal.”

(Unesco, 2005: 14)

A slightly less formulaic definition would be that they are “formed through the interaction between people, expressed through their cultural, economic, and spiritual systems, and nature” (Aplin, 2007: 430) and are valued for “their aesthetic appeal and their cultural evidence” (Ashworth and Howard, 1999: 12). The UK has four UNESCO designated cultural landscapes – St Kilda, an island in the Hebrides; Blaenavon Industrial Landscape, South Wales; Kew Royal Botanic Gardens, London; Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape.

While this concept has been welcomed and rolled out across the world through UNESCO’s World Heritage Site classification, it retains a dualism where human and nonhuman realms are held as separate. This is demonstrated by the title of the organisation that drew up the above guideline: *Intergovernmental Committee For The Protection Of The World Cultural And Natural Heritage*¹⁰. Within this conceptualisation the ‘natural’ is held as passive and at the will of humans. The very fact that humans believe they can conserve nature in a particular form is evidence of this. However, the theorisations mentioned above teach us that ‘natural’ entities are not always passive and potentially possess agency. Further, in order to protect these landscapes their constitutive elements are enrolled into and defined by socio-technical networks with give them a particular meaning: the natural and cultural are always already mixed up, intertwined and hybrid (Whatmore, 2002).

¹⁰ ‘Natural’ and ‘cultural’ heritage, although not accurate labels in all cases, are useful linguistic instruments when describing heritages without going into discussion about their hybrid nature and are useful while lay people continue to use them. For that reason the terms are used in this thesis, but within inverted commas.

Further issues relate to progress and development. As with the example of the Meru Peasant people of Tanzania and farming within the Philippine Cordilleras World Heritage Site, there are issues about fixing a place in time. It has been suggested that only places which demonstrate little change over decades or centuries should be inscribed as cultural landscapes, as this implies a degree of long term sustainability (Aplin, 2007). This fails to recognise, however, that the past and present exist at the same time. To deny this is to characterise the protected cultural landscape and the people within it as traditional, unmodern, or backward compared to the rest of us. This is inaccurate and unhelpful as it designates progress out of a place. It denies the evolutionary nature of the activity that has created a particular landscape.

The concept of the ecomuseum, on the other hand, is much more successful at doing away with society-nature dualisms – in theory at least. Moreover, ecomuseums are more effective at managing conservation and development. In part, this is down to the less formal way in which ecomuseums are designated. However, the concept is less well known than the cultural landscape idea and is often misunderstood (Davis, 2005).

The history of ecomuseums dates back to the 1970s when French Minister for the Environment, Hugues de Varine, suggested the term ‘ecomusée’ to describe new approaches to community-environment museological interactions (*ibid*). It is key to understand that ecomuseums are not about single site museums, nor are they about ecological or biological features. The concept is centred on a holistic view of the environment, with a greater appreciation of the construction and evolution of myriad histories generated by humans within the area the ecomuseum represents.

As mentioned the concept has been prone to misconception. This is because over the years the definition has evolved and been adapted. The elements that make up an ecomuseum vary according to who you ask. For instance, Hamrin and Hulander (1995: 72) outline the following indicators:

- Covers a wide area

- Consists of selected environments in the cultural landscape
- Demonstrates what, where and how things took place in their original setting
- Strives to explain what, where and how
- Strives to preserve, restore and reconstruct
- Strives to activate the visitors and make the cultural heritage accessible
- Is founded on the interaction between culture and tourism
- Cares for what already exists
- Is based on the joint efforts of local authorities, associations, organisations companies and private individuals
- Is dependant on active voluntary efforts
- Aims to make a little-known district accessible to tourists
- Appeals to local inhabitants in an effort to create a feeling of local identity
- Appeals to schools and education at all levels
- Is in a continuous process of evolution, where new features and improvements both long and short term are introduced into the development programme
- Aims to show the whole – from the general to the specific
- Collaborates with artists, craftsmen [sic], writers, actors and musicians
- Promotes research by means of study circles and at an academic level
- Aims to illustrate the connection between technology and the individual, between nature and culture, between past and present, between then and now¹¹

However, as Davis (1999) and Corsane et al. (2007) outline not all of these elements are useful as some fail to distinguish ecomuseums from other forms of museum. Boylan (1992 cited in Corsane et al. 2007: 102) proposes five simpler factors that make ecomuseums unique: “territory; fragmentation and the nature of the ecomuseum ‘collections’;

¹¹ While notions of a holistic, non-dualistic approach to society-nature are in the ecomuseum concept in theory, as Davis (1999) explains the greatest failings of ecomuseums is to do away with the dualism in practice.

interdisciplinary approaches to interpretation; the nature of the ecomuseum ‘customer’; and local democracy and community empowerment.” Davis expands on these:

- The adoption of a territory that is not necessarily defined by conventional boundaries
- The adoption of a ‘fragmented-site’ policy which is linked to in-situ conservation and interpretation
- Conventional views of the site ownership are abandoned; conservation and interpretation of sites via liaison and co-operation
- The empowerment of local communities; the involvement of local people in museum activities and in the creation of their cultural identity
- The potential for interdisciplinary and holistic interpretation

(1999: 228)

Implicit within each definition of ecomuseums is a partnership between preservation and development. The inclusion of local communities are key here. Whereas areas designated by national and international bodies have strict criteria outlining what can and cannot be done, ecomuseums are much more flexible. In many ways the inclusion of community groups is a direct rejection of the AHD and its prescriptive expert-led narratives.

One can see that ecomuseums are not single site specific, the emphasis is on a wider area and a number of ‘heritage features’ that may be tangible or intangible, human-made, ‘natural’ or imagined. They are managed by a number of organisations (public and private) where cooperation is key. The importance given to in situ preservation avoids the criticisms of Graham et al. (2000) who argue that value is not just derived from what an object is, but where it is. It also circumvents some issues of ownership and ‘stealing’ of heritage.

Cooperation and the involvement of local communities adds to the more inclusive nature of the ecomuseum. Furthermore, the empowerment of local people ensures their identities are not overlooked in the presentation of a locale. Indeed, the idea of the ecomuseum is to present an area’s terroir, or sense of place, and local identity is crucial in this respect. Thus, as territorially defined groups of similar organisations cooperating and generating some kind

of collective identity from an area's assets, ecomuseums share some characteristics with clusters.

3.6 Contemporary Uses of the Past – the Use of Heritage for Local and Regional Development

Above I have described the important role nationhood has played in heritage preservation: the idea being that monuments, buildings, sites and artefacts pertaining to key moments in a country's history, and in turn its identity, are preserved to capture those moments. As a consequence it was heritage of national (or international) significance which received most attention in the early decades of the preservation movement. As time has moved on, and heritage of national significance was preserved, consideration turned to heritages of sub-national importance, and in turn heritage of local importance¹². This shift has been mirrored in the scale of heritage governance (Graham, et al., 2000). Internationally important heritage (e.g. World Heritage Sites) is presided over by international organisations such as UNESCO, ICOMOS and WAC¹³. National organisations have responsibility for all domestic heritage, but with particular reference to a country's most significant parts. For example, in the UK it is English Heritage, Cadw (Wales), Historic Scotland and the Environment and Heritage Service (Northern Ireland) overseen by DCMS; in France it is overseen by the Ministry of Culture, even in the US it is federal authorities who oversee heritage governance (Graham, et al., 2000). As more regional and local heritage was preserved, documented and visited, however, there emerged a need for regional and local management. In England, English Heritage set up regional offices and local history societies emerged across the country. Powers have also been devolved to regional agencies and local authorities.

Echoing the early uses of heritage to create identity, it is commonplace for these local and regional authorities to harness heritages to reinforce their distinctness from other places,

¹² It should be noted that as scales of protection have been becoming more local, heritage is increasingly understood as multi-scalar.

¹³ UNESCO is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation. ICOMOS is the International Council on Monuments and Sites. The WAC is the World Archaeology Congress.

often in order to promote their area. This kind of usage can be seen as the result of two main shifts: increasing consumer capitalism connected to globalisation and regionalism.

First, in relation to globalisation, one might characterise the reinforcement of localness as a reaction against concerns that cultural flows would erode the distinctiveness of a place. The idea is that McDonaldization or Americanization will see local characteristics or values lost as more dominant homogenising forces exert themselves on a locale (Ritzer, 1993).

Ironically, in some cases, trying to harness heritage to reinforce local identity can have the opposite effect. This is particularly seen in cities where heritage is commodified to add value to everyday functions such as shopping, eating out or other leisure activities. In line with other forms of cultural regeneration, old parts of the urban landscape are redeveloped and promoted as the place to go and shop or eat (Hall, 1998). They become destinations for people to visit, spend money or even live. The systemisation of approaches used by architects, the re-versioning of archetypal models, influences of multi-national development companies, and 'catalogue heritagisation' - that sees the same kinds of benches, street lamps, rubbish bins etc. used repeatedly - means the result is the opposite of what was intended (Graham, et al., 2000). While trying to counter the affects of globalisation this kind of development is actively reproducing it and diminishing the local heritage it sought to play on.

Second, the emergence of regionalism, especially in Europe, has seen regions engaging in self-promotion as a way to preserve their identities and compete with other areas for investment and visitors (Keating, 1998; Tomaney, forthcoming). Heritage has a role to play here because the infinite variety of heritage available means there is always some aspect of a local past that is different to everywhere else (Graham, et al., 2000). A common example of this is done is regional image campaigns that present a corporate image of a place. Figure 3.1 shows two such images from One NorthEast's campaign that attempts to promote the region's dynamism in the form of innovative and exciting people alongside heritage.



Figure 3.1 Two advertisements from the One NorthEast image campaign

Alongside regional image campaigns, place image is also encapsulated in the promotion of particular goods and services. Food and drink is perhaps the most obvious types of product that link to place images. This is, in part, due to increasing demand from consumers to know where their food comes from and how it is produced after a number of food scares in recent decades (Bell and Valentine, 1997). As a result of this increased demand the lineage of a food product is incredibly important. In wine this has long been the case with appellations forming an unique selling point. Similarly, when a distinctive local or regional food product is developed, and particularly when they become worth something, producers frequently seek to limit production of their product to the area in which it originates. In the EU this is

done through the Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) and Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) schemes (Ilbery and Kneasfey, 2000).

History and heritage – whether it be a skill or production technique native to an area, a local breed of animal or aspects of the landscape – play important roles in protected designations as over time particular areas become *the* place for a type of food or drink (e.g. Parma for ham, Dublin for Guinness, Bordeaux for red wine, Devon for clotted cream) and that place becomes encapsulated in that product. There are clear parallels with the way in which particular clusters have been touted as the place for a particular industry. Regions, through their success in a specific industry, become known as *the* place for particular products or services. For example Madison Avenue for New York in advertising, Aberdeen or Houston for oil technology, Soho in London for movie post-production, New Jersey for life sciences technology, etc. These places become centres of excellence and in some cases the only place to learn of new innovations where knowledges are not easily transferred from place to place. This serves to reinforce their territorial identity – for example Henry and Pinch (2000) describe how engineers often return to Motorsport Valley after time away to tap into the knowledge community there. In the previous chapter I have discussed how the origins of Motorsport Valley can be found in the history of the area. Likewise, part of the success of Italian industrial districts can be traced to their preservation of high quality traditional production techniques (Capecchi, 1990).

At the same time as the decreasing scale of governance and management structures (and associated uses of heritage), there has in recent years been a change in the function of heritage to reflect local priorities and identities beyond place promotion. An outcome of this sees heritage adopted for purposes that go beyond ‘conserve as found’. Heritage is still used in image campaigns, and directly and associatively as outlined in section 3.3, but there are also a number of other contemporary uses that are emerging or have emerged in the last two decades or so. These uses see heritage enrolled into community development schemes. To some extent, initiatives like ecomuseums are examples of this new way heritages are being harnessed. Alongside these, the emergence of ‘new museology’ has seen museums become more focused on educational and social purposes (Vergo, 1989). Together with critiques of the AHD the result is that museums are becoming seen as part of the communities in which

they operate with a greater appreciation of their need to be relevant (Stam, 2005).

Increasingly museums have social inclusion strategies and seek to include communities often excluded by the AHD. Furthermore, some argue museums' very existence depends on their ability to demonstrate their relevance as resources for local communities (Smith, 2006b).

It is not just museums taking on this new mantle however. As the connection between communities and their heritage is appreciated more and more it is seen as their greatest asset, something that can be harnessed to bring disparate groups together (Papayannis and Howard, 2007). In the UK, since the creation of the Heritage Lottery Fund in 1995 with its remit to provide funding for projects involving heritage, a place's heritage is increasingly seen as a hook to attract funding to a location for purposes other than physical regeneration of built heritage (*ibid*). Indeed, applications often have to include a community element to be eligible for funding in the first place. Furthermore, the Government's commitment to sustainable practices mean public monies come with criteria ensuring projects are environmentally sensitive.

Protected areas – nature reserves and national parks for example – are also adopting developmental roles (Mose, 2007). An example of this is the so called 'third purpose' of England and Wales' National Parks, set out in the Environment Act of 1995. This calls for Parks to foster the social and economic well being of communities within Park boundaries alongside their original purposes to preserve and enhance the landscape, and encourage enjoyment of the Parks.

Across Europe one can find initiatives harnessing the 'natural' heritage or cultural landscapes of an area for regional development. In the past this has mainly centred on tourism, but this new form of development goes beyond simply attracting more people to an area (although the visitor economy still has an important role to play here and in some cases the economic potential of the tourist sector has been a contributing factor for created new nature parks – see Siegrist, et al., 2007). Examples from Austria indicate that the traditional protection, recreation and education roles of nature parks need to be balanced alongside regional development priorities for protected areas to be successful. The idea is that sectors with a stake in or some other involvement with heritage cooperate to create jobs, add value and

learn from each other using the heritage ‘assets’ as a catalyst (Gamper, et al., 2007). These sectors include those that draw on, develop, protect or reproduce heritage in one form or another, for example agriculture, cultural producers, tourism and food and drink.

An example of this is the Leader+ scheme where heritage, amongst other local ‘assets’, is adopted as a resource for development purposes. This EU project seeks to stimulate development of rural areas by harnessing endogenous assets such as an area’s heritage and by developing links between different sections of local communities. Programmes have frequently included, amongst other things, the use of arts and crafts to capture something about the locale; development of local and traditional food and drink producers; using the ‘natural’ assets of the area for various recreational activities; creating festivals centred on heritages; and making tourism more environmentally friendly. By harnessing endogenous assets places can generate unique selling points and attract visitors or investment using this.

This type of project is part of what Ray (2001) terms the culture economy. This sector has become increasingly important and heritage has a central role in it. Ray (2001) proposes four modes (I-IV) in which the culture economy, including heritage, is being used in neo-endogenous growth strategies¹⁴. These include the commodification of aspects of local or regional culture that encapsulate place identity. This can include regional foods, crafts, music and history which are ‘sold’ to the outside world (Mode I). The construction and projection of a (sometimes new) regional identity to the outside world – e.g. regional image campaigns (Mode II). The promotion of a particular place image internally to local people. According to Ray (*ibid*) the idea is to create self-confidence, reinvigorate local culture and capture “new economic opportunities, innovation and a socio-cultural vibrancy” (p.21) (Mode III). Finally, creating and harnessing the repertoire of development paths stimulated by Modes I-III.

¹⁴ For Ray (2001: 4) neo-endogenous development is “shorthand to describe endogenous-based development in which extra-local factors are recognised and regarded as essential but with a belief in the potential of local areas to shape their future.”

An alternative perspective would be to conceptualise heritage as a form of public or collective capital. As I outlined in the previous chapter, Moulaert and Nussbaumer (2005; and section 2.4.1) suggest public and collective capital work alongside private capital,

“Public capital is any combination of state and private capital designed to satisfy private and collective needs...Collective capital can include state capital with a minor stakeholdership, as well as an association of private capitals based on principles of reciprocity and solidarity. These capitals are not only normalized by market competition but also by other socio-economic coordination norms as well.”

(p.53)

Using these definitions, and drawing on the different uses of heritage described in this chapter, one could conceptualise heritage in these terms. How and who understands the value of heritage has an impact on its categorisation. Using Moulaert and Nussbaumer’s description, heritage can be seen as encompassing all three forms of capital:

- Private capital – heritage commodified and used to generate returns in a heritage industry (3.3);
- Public capital – heritage used to construct national, regional or local identities. Heritage exhibited in museums, galleries and other institutions in an attempt to reproduce lost values (3.2); and,
- Collective capital – heritage as a shared history or tradition that binds people together. Potentially this can be enrolled into local production networks as seen in Italian industrial districts (2.2.3.1), or to bring community groups together in local projects (this section).

The heritage (or collective capital) of protected areas is also being used to stimulate local development. The limited cases where this happens support the claim of Moulaert and Nussbaumer (2005) that a place’s public and collective capital is at the heart of holistic development projects (2.4.1). The Hareshaw Linn project run by Northumberland National Park Authority is an example of this and serves as a reminder that the most successful

heritage management programmes have to take into account and engage with local people (Waterton, 2005). Since 1974 the Linn – a small wooded area with a waterfall and rare ferns and lichen, that was once the site of an iron works – has been managed by the Park Authority in line with its statutory duties to protect and enhance this site of special scientific interest (Northumberland National Park Authority, 2007a). In 1996 the Park began a project to repair the footpath and bridges within the Linn. Through engagement with the local community it became apparent how important the area was for the local residents of Billingham, and how their value differed from that placed on the woodland by the Park Authority and other heritage experts. As a result, in line with third purpose objectives, the project grew to include an oral history record, a creative interpretation project of the Linn, a drama project, and conservation and monitoring work (Northumberland National Park Authority, 2007a; Waterton, 2005).

In sum, heritages offer potentials that go beyond simple conservation. Moreover, heritages have the potential to go beyond place promotion and commodification to catalyse socially focused local and regional development. However, these need to be balanced with other development priorities to be most effective. This potential presents a trajectory for local and regional development that moves beyond market-led globalisation-competitiveness narratives.

3.7 Conclusions

This chapter has highlighted the changes that have happened in the conceptualisation of heritage. In doing so my aim has been to illuminate the discourse in which any heritage formation such as NHC operates, as well as the framework through which the NHC can be conceptualised. This latter point is a key focus of Chapter 5. I began by outlining the emergence of a heritage discourse in 19th century Europe as a response to myriad changes in society, industry and culture. Particular manifestations of the past were seen to embody values subsumed by the progress enabled by the Enlightenment and enacted through the industrial revolution. These forms of heritage were revered, preserved and presented to the public as the best of the past. At the same time the monument came to symbolise nascent forms of nationhood as the European powers looked to past endeavours for identity.

Alongside this, again as a result of the progress made possible by Enlightenment, particularly developments in science and mathematics, nature was separated from society and culture. Humans sought to dominate and control nature as manifest in gardens, more industrialised agriculture and dominion over 'the land' more generally. In contrast, an alternative view was promoted by Romanticists who took a more holistic view of the world. Romantics and similarly minded people campaigned for the protection of 'unspoilt' and aesthetically significant areas. By the end of the 19th century this had led to the creation of National Parks in the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

With the preservation and institutionalisation of cultural and natural heritage, archaeologists, historians, architects and allied professions laid claim to the stewardship of newly protected heritages. Their expertise was privileged above all others and signalled the commencement of the so called authorised heritage discourse (AHD) that remains influential up to the present day.

In the latter half of the twentieth century there emerged what Hewison (1987) termed a heritage industry. The past was commodified more than ever and issues of universal values and authenticity came to the fore. Out of fierce criticism of the heritage industry – questioning claims of authenticity, its unprogressiveness, and tendency to reassert archaic values - came a set of critiques that undermined the AHD and its foundations. These attacked the AHD for being hegemonically Western, masculine and elitist, seeking to expose the absence, discrimination and misrepresentation of myriad groups.

An outcome of this critique has been an appreciation of the partial, biased, multiscalar and constructed nature of heritages. In turn this prompted new forms of protection and heritage management with relevance and inclusion of central importance. New groups have been enrolled into heritage networks and heritage is enrolled into other networks.

There are four main outcomes of this shift away from heritage just being about conservation or commodification. First, communities are more important. They have a central contribution to make in relation to how heritage is perceived, used and managed. The public

are no longer restricted to passively gaze upon heritages. Second, the previous point means co-operation and communication between stakeholders has never been more important to ensure the mistakes of the AHD are not repeated. Partnerships, collectives and collaboration are becoming key features in heritage management. Third, institutions, industries and activities not traditionally considered part of a heritage sector become significant. Heritage is no longer solely an arena for archaeologists, historians, architects and heritage managers. New governance organisations also have a role to play; as do the land-based industries, tourism, the cultural sector, food producers and others actors that harness, reproduce, protect and manage heritages. Finally, heritages are being harnessed - through and by actors mentioned above – for developmental purposes. But, it is not simply for the economic purposes highlighted by Hewison (1987); it is in line with holistic, progressive and sustainable forms of development being championed in regional and local development arenas (Pike, et al., 2006; 2007). These are important points to bear in mind in relation to forthcoming chapters as I explain the place of the Northumberland Heritage Cluster in these debates.

Chapter 2 discussed clusters and the multiple perspectives that explain their workings. In particular I highlighted the role histories and heritages have on the origins of clusters as well as in the emergence of locally specific assets such as untraded interdependencies. Within this chapter, I have tried to link developments in heritage theory back to the claims made in Chapter 2. I believe such linkages, particularly in relation to the identity of clusters, enable a clearer understanding of the role past events play in the formation and operation of clusters. An appreciation of the historical aspects of a place, as I demonstrate in Chapter 6, is crucial if one wants to more fully understand how and why a cluster works (or does not work) in the ways it does. In the case of the NHC, I highlight some of the histories of Northumberland in Chapter 5. However, before I do that, Chapter 4 outlines the methodology I adopted in my research.

Chapter 4

Methodology

“Lord Polonius: Though this be madness, yet there is method in 't.”

(Shakespeare, 1600)

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapters have provided a background to this study and illuminated the conceptual frameworks in which this research sits. I have introduced my research questions in Chapter 1, but allow me to reiterate:

1. What is the Northumberland Heritage Cluster?

- How, and by whom, has it been defined?
- What is the scale and scope of the cluster?

2. What are the drivers, structure and characteristics of the Northumberland Heritage Cluster?

3. In what ways does the Northumberland Heritage Cluster contribute to clusters discourse?

With these questions in mind this chapter explains how they were enacted to produce the empirical findings which make up the rest of the thesis. Although research seems a linear process to the outsider, to the investigator it can seem very much like the quote from Hamlet above. With this in mind, I try to shed light on the if not maddening, then messy process of research (McDowell, 1998; Browne, 2003).

This chapter justifies my approach and the methods adopted. It is divided into four main parts. I begin by outlining the arena I draw on for methodological grounding; namely new economic geographies and qualitative methods more broadly. This section charts the emergence of new ways of ‘doing’ economic geography that appreciate the embedded and cultural elements of the economy. I also address some of the critiques levelled at qualitatively researching economic activity and the measures one has to take to ensure one is true to the knowledges uncovered.

Section 4.3 focuses on my research design. There were two phases in my approach. Given the lack of previous research on this topic, and the notional definition of what constitutes the NHC, the first phase sought to ‘envision’ the NHC. I outline how I did this adopting a ‘Porteresque’ approach often seen in consultancy work on clusters. I argue that although it cannot reveal what is happening ‘on the ground’ in a cluster, it is a useful starting point to uncover the context in which a cluster operates along with an initial outline of what constitutes the cluster. The second half of this section charts my justification and use of case studies to uncover what is driving the NHC.

The penultimate section of this chapter, 4.4, explains the methods I adopted to enact the two phases of my research. Here I describe my use of desk based analysis of documentary evidence and interview techniques. In addition I chart the selection of interview subjects, the use of microgeographies to supplement interview material, and address some of the issues raised during the fieldwork. I also account for what I did not do.

Finally I explain how I undertook my analysis. This section outlines how I turned documents, transcripts and observations into the chapters that follow this one. It was a

‘messy’ process but involved systematic evaluation of my findings and built in checks for rigour.

4.2 Researching New Economic Geographies

Since the late 1980s economic geography has been reshaped and synchronised with advances in the social sciences more generally. As Thrift and Olds (1996) predicted, the ‘economic’ has been deconstructed in the light of hermeneutic approaches to theorisation. Today, new economic geographies are “polycentric...much more open to outside influences...[and] obtain much of its impetus from reconfiguring what is conventionally regarded as ‘the economic’” (313). As a result of this, we no longer rely upon a fixed vocabulary to explain economic activities. As Barnes (2001) explains, “hermeneutics conceives theorizing as a creative and open-ended process of interpretation that is circular, reflexive, indeterminate, and perspectival” (551). As such we can see the reconfiguring of economic entities from the singular, aspatial and deterministic (Yeung, 2003) to conceptualisations as plural, contextual, contested and constructed, located within socio-cultural-political networks through which they gain meaning (Wills and Lee, 1997). Socio-economic action is conceived through networks, flows, currents, and in simultaneity (O'Neill and Whatmore, 2000). In turn parts of economic geography have accepted subjects are emergent, hybrid and heterogeneous “and discards any essentialist notions of knowledge” (Barnes, 1996: 49).

The main catalysts in this shift have been the ‘cultural turn’ in geography more widely, which has seen the acceptance of culture as a legitimate research arena, and the increasing influence of post-structuralist, post-modernist and feminist epistemologies coupled with their hermeneutic approaches. As a result new economic geography is asking new and different questions coupled with changing views on what counts as explanation (Yeung, 2003: 443).

As economic geographers have sought to answer these new questions, new methodologies have been adopted. Yeung (2003) highlights three key features of new economic geographies which have in turn influenced new methodologies: social embeddedness of economic behaviour; multiple and shifting identities of economic agents; and the context for economic activity. First, he explains that embeddedness has shown that economic institutions are not

isolated from wider social relations which are bound up in a particular locality (see 2.2.4). Conversely such relations can restrain and/or spur their development (see 2.2.10). Second, acknowledging the shifting and multiple identities of economic actors destabilises the “fundamental categories [for] organising social life” (445). The impact of this for economic geographers is that contingency and hybridity are key to understanding how economic activity occurs, and singular motives can no longer be used to explain the actions of firms, labour, markets and other economic entities. Complexity comes to the fore, and complete explanation left in appreciation of the partial and open nature of knowledges. Finally, Yeung explains that context is central to explaining economic geographies. Deterministic models of future economic outcomes are discarded and replaced with the understanding of the embedded and contingent nature of the circumstances in which economic action takes place.

In cluster research the results of this can be seen in the appreciation of context in which clusters operate and the identification of socio-institutional characteristics of modes of action. Furthermore, the multi-perspective approach outlined in Chapter 2 can be seen as an exemplar of how hermeneutic theorising allows an appreciation of plural knowledges. But as identified in Chapter 3, it is not just economic geography which has accepted post-structuralist ways of conceptualising. Within heritage studies the unidimensional view of the past is deconstructed to shed new light on and destabilise what we know. Such approaches take one away from what Clark terms ‘stylized facts’ (1998); hegemonic narratives that obscure ‘other’ knowledges. He claims that the kind of New Economic Geography put forward by economists such as Krugman is decades out of date and relies on propositions which are not properly critiqued or deconstructed. Yet, even within economic geography, stylised facts about what counts as development are only just being deconstructed in the mainstream literature (Pike, et al., 2006; 2007). Similarly, in cluster analysis stylised facts are constructed as the same industries are repeatedly investigated. The result is an archetypal view of a cluster - involving high-technology, quality manufacture or new media - is created.

For Clark (1998) the reason for the differences in mode of explanation is methods. He argues that using a more qualitative based methodology – semi-structured interviews, ethnography and repeated interaction with research subjects – goes beyond stylized facts and gets to the causal processes at the macro *and* micro scale through a closer relationship with

research subjects. He terms this ‘close dialogue’, and explains that it “begins with the personal, relies upon contested social relationships, and demands a level of reflexivity that is antithetical to conventional social science” (1998: 82). The aim is to uncover the deep texture of the local context to appreciate the diverse nature of economic life. What Clark is talking about here is getting ‘up close and personal’ with the people who occupy the area you are researching. This is not always possible because resources and other commitments limit the time you can spend in the field, but through repeated encounters and qualitative interactions one can come close.

As one seeks to reveal the contextual landscape of one’s research arena, the investigator must be aware of their positionality, how this affects their findings and the knowledges they construct. Our views of the subject matter are shaped by our entry points and our interactions with other actors (O’Neill and Whatmore, 2000). Thus one cannot perform a ‘god-trick’; one’s view, and the knowledges constructed, are partial and subjective (Rose, 1997). Reflexivity is a key tool for ensuring one does not repeat the mistakes of more deterministic approaches.

While more and more economic geographers have adopted qualitative research techniques there has been a critique that concepts have become ‘fuzzy’ and theorising has become excessive at the expense of empirical evidence (Markusen, 1999a; Rodriguez-Pose, 2001). As an example, the introspection of theorists seeking to take economic geography into the mainstream, or to compete with economics (Thrift and Olds, 1996; Rodriguez-Pose, 2001; Phelps, 2008), has led to a rash of positional and research agenda papers seeking to theorise new ways of generating conversations with other disciplines. While these are well intentioned it is too often the case that too high a level of abstraction means they fail to achieve their aims (Martin and Sunley, 2007).

I have discussed the fuzziness of concepts adopted in cluster analysis in the previous chapter. Now, following Hudson (2004) and Reimer (2007), let me re-assert my view that concepts often become ‘fuzzy’ because of the lack of empirical findings and context presented alongside them. With this in mind each of my research questions is designed to overcome this problem and others identified thus far. The first of my research questions –

outlining the scale and scope of the Northumberland Heritage Cluster – identifies the relatively wide context (sectorally and geographically) in which the NHC sits (Chapter 5) in order to understand – through a ‘first cut’ – what is, and what is not part of the cluster. While I do not adopt any strongly quantitative methods, the findings in Chapter 5 draw on secondary quantitative evidence from ‘grey’ literature. Addressing critiques of case studies, and in line with the systematic approach favoured by quantitative researchers, a rigorous set of criteria were generated for the selection of case studies that formed the second phase of my research (see 4.3.2) presented in Chapters 6 and 7. The use of case studies supports the issue of the lack of empirical evidence upon which to build or critique theories. In Chapter 6 I answer my second research question: *what are the drivers, structure and characteristics of the Northumberland Heritage Cluster?* In answering this question I build on the theoretical frameworks outlined in the previous two chapters. In particular I use a multi-perspective understanding of agglomerations to identify clustering characteristics in my case studies. To address my critique of research that does little to further clusters research, my third research question asks, *in what ways does the Northumberland Heritage Cluster contribute to clusters discourse?* I go some way to answer this in Chapter 6, but is it mainly dealt with in Chapters 7 and 8 where I outline how this research contributes to work on clusters and debates in regional development more widely.

The research questions are designed and presented in such a way that allows one to move from theoretical foundations, identification of critiques, absences and issues, through the development of said research questions, to address each of these elements with empirical evidence. This evidence is presented in a continuum starting with broad contextual understandings of the NHC (Chapter 5), to a closer examination of the cluster’s strategic drivers, structure and characteristics (Chapter 6), and finally to specific details about what is happening ‘on the ground’ as well as highlighting what the NHC contributes to debates on clusters (Chapters 7 and 8). Each of these stages can be seen as a gradually more detailed ‘cut’ of the cluster. The next section outlines my research design.

4.3 Research Design

This section outlines my research design. There were two main phases to the research: the first was a scoping exercise to identify the wider context of the cluster and pin down what activity is included in the cluster; the second was a deeper examination of the mechanisms and drivers of the cluster.

4.3.1 Envisioning a Heritage Cluster

In terms of identifying clusters, Porter's (1990; 1998) view is perhaps the most widespread of any theory on agglomeration. Usefully, he sets out a procedure to identify local clusters which identifies the number of firms within a given area and applies the 'Porter Diamond' to outline the amount of local resources, supporting institutions and level of demand. As the Porterian approach has been applied by consultancies and other agencies – what Martin and Sunley call 'flying cluster makers' (2003) – it has been adapted and simplified so they can "rapidly produce a cluster decomposition" (ibid: 25). As Martin and Sunley argue such an approach does not give a very detailed picture of a cluster and is therefore of limited use. However, a Porteresque methodology is a good starting point to identify a cluster as it provides a framework that can easily be applied to glean broad contextual detail. This is especially useful where there is little or no previous research on a potential cluster, and where only notional definitions of a sector or industries exist. Thus, given the lack of robust definitions of what a heritage cluster may look like, a Porteresque analysis was adopted in the first phase of my research. This part of the research could be considered a first approximation or envisioning exercise of the NHC.

Five sectors were investigated for this phase of the research which came from two main sources. First, the literature reviewed on contemporary uses of heritage identified in Chapter 3 (3.6) outlines the sectors that most commonly harness, manage or reproduce heritages. Second, the proposal from the CASE partner identifies five areas for investigation: heritage, crafts, agriculture, tourism and food. However as the activities identified in Chapter 3 are broader than the ones proposed by the CASE partner, this disjuncture needed resolving before fieldwork could begin. During the development of the research design it became clear

that the latter's definition of what comprises the NHC was too narrow and missed important areas of activity for the NHC. In addition I felt it less than rigorous to simply accept the industries given to me without further investigation. The result of the literature review presented in Chapter 2, and the development of the original proposal, was a hypothesis that the NHC operated at the intersection of five sectors: heritage, tourism, land-based industries, regional food and drink, and cultural industries (Figure 4.1). The construction of this is elaborated on at the start of Chapter 5.

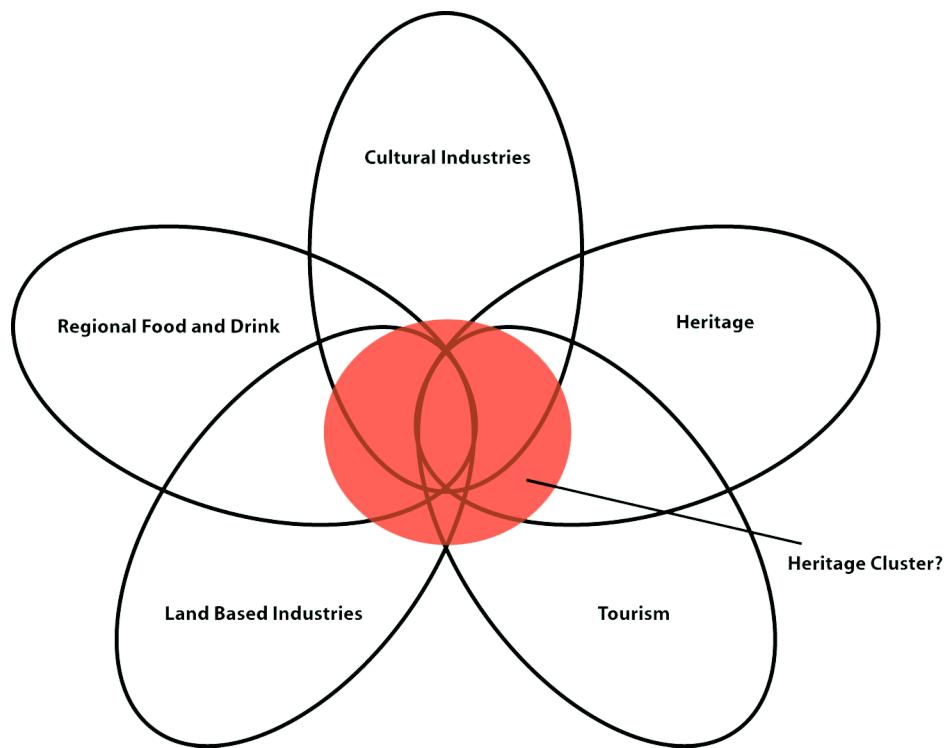


Figure 4.1 Sectors comprising the Northumberland Heritage Cluster

It is these sectors that formed the target of investigation for the first phase of my research. Using a Porter-esque approach each sector was analysed in terms of its size and concentration. Where appropriate the international, national, regional and sub-regional significance; industry/sector composition; real and potential areas of competitive advantage; challenges and opportunities; and contribution to a heritage cluster where outlined. This provided the scale and scope of those sectors related to the NHC. In doing this I also charted some of the history of the North East to provide an appreciation of the heritage the area draws on for its identity. This also highlighted particularly key historical assets for the cluster. The results of this are presented in Chapter 5.

4.3.2 A Case Study Approach

Once the first approximation/contextual study was completed, a second phase of research was needed to understand what was happening within the NHC and to answer my second and third research questions: *What are the drivers, structure and characteristics of the Northumberland Heritage Cluster?* And, *in what ways does the Northumberland Heritage Cluster contribute to clusters discourse?* In order to glean the necessary detail to identify the clustering phenomenon and concepts identified in Chapters 2 and 3, a case study approach was adopted.

Although the case study approach had been around for decades, it was not until the 1960s and 1970s, when serious questions were being asked about the effectiveness of quantitative methods, that the case study saw a resurgence (Tellis, 1997). However, the approach has been criticised for being ‘microscopic’ (for a response to this see Yin, 1993). Within regional studies Markusen (1999) has been particular vociferous in her critique of case study research. She argues “authors of qualitative accounts often fail to make the case that the particular case study is representative or that the findings from it are generalisable” (p.872).

However, this attack misses the point of case study research and intensive approaches more generally. Intensive research does not claim to be representative. The aim is not to sample a population in order to make generalisations about it as extensive research does. An intensive approach is concerned with “how some causal processes work in a particular case or limited number of cases” (Sayer, 1992: 242), sacrificing breadth for explanatory depth. Extensive research does the opposite, seeking breadth and generalisable findings, by sacrificing depth through representative sampling. Extensive research seeks to discover common properties and general patterns of ‘taxonomic’ groups through methods such as large scale survey work, questionnaires and statistical analysis (Sayer, 1992). Members of these groups are only of interest because of their representativeness of the population as a whole. In contrast, in intensive research the individual cases may be similar or different but relate to each other structurally or causally. The limitations of this project meant not all of the above were

possible, but these points formed important elements of the research design process. Table 4.1 summarises the main differences between intensive and extensive research designs.

Table 4.1 Summary of intensive and extensive research (adapted from Sayer, 1992)

| | Intensive | Extensive |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| Research questions | How does a process work in a particular case of small number of cases? What produces a certain change? What did the agents actually do? | What are the regularities, common to patterns, distinguishing features of a population? How widely are certain characteristics or processes distributed or represented? |
| Relations | Substantial relations of connection | Formal relations of similarity |
| Types of groups studied | Causal groups | Taxonomic groups |
| Type of account produced | Causal explanation of certain objects or events, though not necessarily representative ones | Descriptive 'representative' generalisations, lacking in explanatory penetration |
| Typical methods | Study of individual agents in their causal contexts, interactive interviews, ethnography. Qualitative analysis | Large-scale survey of population or representative sample, formal questionnaires, standardised interviews. Statistical analysis. |
| Limitations | Actual concrete patterns and contingent relations are unlikely to be 'representative', 'average' or generalisable. Relations discovered will exist wherever their relata are present, e.g. causal powers of objects are generalisable to other contexts as they are necessary features of these objects | Although representative of a whole population, they are unlikely to be generalisable to other populations at different times and places. Problem of ecological fallacy in making inferences about individuals. Limited explanatory power. |

For Peck (2003) the challenge in case study research is to construct rigorous research designs incorporating appropriate levels of triangulation and verification. Acknowledging the lack of any 'hard-and-fast' rules for intensive research, Peck (2003: 737) offers the following checklist of positive steps for ensuring case studies are implemented in robust and rigorous ways:

- a greater willingness to confront negative or awkward cases, interrogating nascent theoretical claims in contexts designed to expose limitations...
- more transparency and clarity in the discussion of methodological design issues and research practice...in order to render explicit the processes through which theoretical claims are being generated, illustrated or modified...
- a wider embrace of comparative methodologies, especially cross-regional, multi-site and transnational fieldwork, in order to tease out some of the effects of context, situation, conjuncture and relatively autonomous social processes...
- increased utilization of multi-method approaches, including the combination and triangulation both of quantitative and qualitative data...
- more explicit discussions of case-study justification, sample structure and size (however small!), and the criteria used in data analysis, selection and presentation (including the choice of quotations – juiciness not really being an adequate criterion)
- an enhanced level of autocritical reflection and methodological humility, especially concerning the kinds of theory claims that might realistically be developed...

Although case studies cannot provide a true representation of the wider situation, a range of units, chosen carefully to maximise what can be learnt, can provide a breadth of evidence suggestive of wider patterns (Stake, 1995). Furthermore, case studies acknowledge the wider context in which they sit; which as I demonstrate in Chapter 6 is incredibly important to understand why particular institutions act as they do. Sayer points out that it is the “properties, and mode of connection to others” which is important (1992: 244). So, in this research case studies are chosen because of their connection to each other through the concept of heritage and their potential to foster clustering characteristics.

4.3.2.1 Selection Criteria

The following criteria were constructed to ensure the right and most informative case studies were chosen:

The overlapping section of Figure 4.1 is the hypothesised cluster, therefore the focus of the investigation has to be here. The nature of the diagram means that each case study will be

within the overlap of at least two sectors and thus helps bind together the various sectors. So,

Criterion 1: Each case study should exist within the overlaps of the sectors in Figure 4.1

The nature of this case study approach is to peer through windows on the potential cluster. So, to show the greatest possible diversity of the hypothesised cluster, its workings and potential:

Criterion 2: Together, all case studies should represent all sectors of Figure 4.1

Clusters are successful if they represent a competitive advantage over competing industries/regions. Therefore, this investigation of the hypothesised NE heritage cluster needs to focus on the ‘nuggets’ of competitive advantage the region has and, in particular, those ‘nuggets’ which have potential to be developed within an economic development framework.

Criterion 3: The individual cases should represent ‘nuggets’ of competitive advantage highlighted in the first approximation.

For a cluster to grow and develop at least some of the clustering characteristics outlined above need to be present or emerge. For these to emerge in this hypothesised cluster two factors need to be considered. First, many of the clusters around the world cited by academics and policy-makers tend to focus on successful leading edge industries. Heritage in Northumberland is not such an industry. Second, the region is only just beginning to emerge from years of decline and as such the emergence of clustering characteristics may not be as organic as in more successful regions. Therefore, in a search for evidence or potential of such characteristics in a limited number of case studies, it is sensible to focus the search on successful organisations (this also complements Criterion 3) and in particular organisations which have influence over actors beyond the individual case. Thus:

Criterion 4: Cases should have the ability to influence actors beyond the individual case.

To see growth and development of the hypothesised cluster the organisations within it - and particularly the successful ones - cases should have forward thinking aims and the ability to fulfil these aims. Without this ability a heritage cluster will be harder to develop. So:

Criterion 5: Individual cases should have forward thinking aims, and the ability to fulfil them.

These criteria were applied after the initial scoping exercise was undertaken and four case studies emerged as obvious choices:

- Northumberland National Park Authority
- Hadrian's Wall Tourism Partnership and Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd¹⁵
- Northumbria Larder
- Northumberland Cultural Strategy

Each of these cases represents all the overlaps in Figure 4.1; they also represent areas of key strength identified in Chapter 5 (the National Park and Hadrian's Wall are both 'assets' recognised as internationally important); all the cases have strategies to enrol other organisations and actors into their activities and ways of operating; finally, the case studies all possess the desire and ability to drive the cluster forward.

Within each case study there was a number of areas of activity of particular interest. These formed sub-cases as outlined in the tables below along with the rationales, goals and methods adopted (Tables 4.2-4.5).

Corroboration was built into individual cases, and through the research design as a whole together with the findings of the first approximation. Each of the case studies can be seen as windows into the hypothesised heritage cluster.

¹⁵ These are the organisations tasked with developing Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site. Hadrian's Wall Tourism Partnership was wound up in 2006 and replaced with Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd.

Northumberland National Park Authority

| Sub-case | Rationale | Goal | Methods |
|--|--|---|---|
| NNPA Overview | <p>The NNPA is tasked with developing community, economic and environmental elements of the park area. Through their development activities the NNPA is potentially engaging, whether deliberately or not, with clustering processes.</p> | <p>To gain an overview and understanding of the NNPA's activity. In doing so try to identify how the NNPA has come to the position to implement plans which potentially represent cluster development activity. Finally, to shed light on the potential to develop such an important asset as part of a heritage cluster.</p> | <p>Interviews with senior members of the NNPA and with key informants within the organisation. Document analysis.</p> |
| Traditional Boundaries, Traditional Skills | <p>A skilled labour market has been highlighted as important by numerous authors studying agglomerations. This project aims to train 125 people with the skills to help maintain the character of the National Park and surrounding areas.</p> <p>The lack of conservationists in the region is highlighted in Chapter 5. This project begins to address this.</p> | <p>To understand better the motives, processes, future, participation and demand for these skills.</p> | <p>Interviews with those involved with establishing the project. Analysis of project documents.</p> |
| aSPECT | <p>This project aims to “stimulate greater communication and to encourage [interest] groups to identify and discuss the issues and conflicts surrounding cultural tourism within the Cheviot Hills area” (NNPA, 2005). This represents a collective learning process seen in many clusters.</p> | <p>To understand how collective learning is being encouraged and how it is helping those involved with the project.</p> | <p>Interviews with organisers of aSPECT. Documentary analysis of seminar reports, communications, evaluation reports etc.</p> |

Table 4.2 Case study plan for Northumberland National Park Authority

Hadrian's Wall Tourism Partnership and Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd

| Sub-case | Rationale | Goal | Methods |
|---|--|--|--|
| Overview of Hadrian's Wall Tourism Partnership (HWTP) | The aims of the HWTP are to bring economic, social and environmental benefits to the area through the promotion and development of sustainable tourism, education, arts and community initiatives. HWTP's development activities are potentially engaging with clustering processes. | To gain an overview and understanding of HWTP's activity. In doing so try to identify any general activity which represents, or could potentially represent, clustering processes. | Documentary analysis. Interviews with key actors. |
| Hadrian Means Business | This project seeks to connect people and firms operating within the Hadrian's Wall corridor, develop supply chains and focus on the use of local products to aid business development, and boost the Hadrian's Wall brand. The relationships formed through this project are clear examples of the relationships built up in clusters. | To examine the relationships this project aims to establish in the light of a cluster. | Interviews project leaders. |
| Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd (HWHL) | This new company has been setup to oversee the promotion, conservation and education associated with the Wall, and use the heritage assets to create growth and jobs (ONE et al., 2006). How and why HWHL has come into existence will be examined. | To monitor the next stage of development of the Hadrian's Wall brand in terms of a heritage cluster. | Interviews with people involved in forming HWHL. Analysis of documentation. |

Table 4.3 Case study plan for Hadrian's Wall Tourism Partnership and Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd

Northumbria Larder

| Sub-case | Rationale | Goal | Methods |
|------------|---|---|--|
| Overview | <p>NL was set up to develop the regional food and drink sector in the NE through various activities. Through their development activities NL is potentially engaging, whether deliberately or not, with clustering processes.</p> | <p>To gain an overview and understanding of NL's activity. In doing so try to identify any general activity which represents, or could potentially represent, clustering process.</p> | <p>Documentary analysis - previous research.</p> <p>Interviews with key actors within the Larder and wider sector.</p> |
| The Future | <p>NL is already behind its counterparts around the country. The next stage of development is crucial for NL and the potential heritage cluster. With additional funding having just been allocated this is an ideal time to research the future plans of the larder.</p> | <p>To discover where is the Larder going next, and assess the potential of these plans in terms of a heritage cluster.</p> | <p>Interviews with key actors within NL and the main funding body: One NorthEast.</p> |

Table 4.4 Case study plan for Northumbria Larder

Northumberland Cultural Strategy

| Sub-case | Rationale | Goal | Methods |
|-----------------|--|--|---|
| Overview | <p>The NCS potentially represents a cluster development document. It covers all the sectors outlined in this research and has wider linkages with other regional and sub-regional strategies. The strategy also outlines a number of projects which seek to form new partnerships within the public and private sectors.</p> | To gain an overview and understanding of the NCS and its aims. Understand the history of it. | Document analysis Interviews with key actors. |
| Activity | <p>The NCS covers the time period 2002-2008, now past the halfway stage it is important to gauge its success.</p> | To track what has been done so far and to gauge the level of success. | Interviews with key actors and those involved with NCS inspired projects. Analysis of evaluation documents. |

Table 4.5 Case study plan for Northumberland Cultural Strategy

4.4 Methods

4.4.1 Desk Based and Internet Research

The Porteresque envisioning exercise relied mainly on desk based and internet research: analysis of reports, policy documents and previous research, most of which were available online. This was supplemented with contextual information gleaned from the case study analysis.

So called 'grey literature' was extremely helpful in terms of what it revealed and the time it saved. Primary research into the five sectors of interest would have been time consuming and potentially a PhD in itself. Collecting relevant data from secondary sources is also a tool adopted for the Porteresque approach this section of the research mimicked. There was a great deal of information available online and in printed form. This included censuses from professional associations and sector skills councils; consultancy reports; and government publications. There were also reports from academic institutions; of particular help here was Newcastle University's Centre for Urban and Regional Development Studies and Centre for Rural Economy. Further information was gained from an MA dissertation on the early development of Northumbria Larder (Cheeseman, 2003). This provided me with important background detail against which I could compare its current activities.

The nature of this research – mapping a heritage cluster for the first time – meant although the previous research was useful in uncovering details of each sector, there were a set of definitional difficulties. For instance, some definitions of the tourism industry include parts of the heritage sector and food and drink industry. Similarly, there is overlap between the cultural industries and cultural heritage. These issues posed double counting problems and meant placing a firm figure on the size of the NHC was difficult. However, now this research has been completed and the cluster mapped for the first time, it is more feasible to survey the entire cluster in a more focused way. To have attempted that before this research would have been an unending process.

The internet is a useful tool for conducting research as it allows access to a vast array of information which you can find with general and more focused search engines and databases. The information is at your fingertips speeding up the search process dramatically. Furthermore draft publications can be often be downloaded before they are made final, again saving time. Finally, the formats used to store and download files from the internet (PDFs for example) make managing your sources simple, allow you to easily search for keywords, allow importation into qualitative analysis software, and facilitate easy transfer of quotes, statistics, and diagrams from the publication to another document or programme via copy-and-paste.

There are, of course, disadvantages to researching via the internet too. The first is that although there is a lot of information available via the web not everything is, so the internet cannot be used in isolation. Second, the authenticity and reliability of some information is questionable. The growth of wikis means lay people can edit information online. Spurious information can be avoided, however, by using reliable sites and cross-referencing findings. Finally, information is subject to change - often multiple times in one day - without notice. News sites are the most obvious example where stories are updated as events unfold. This problem can be avoided by archiving web pages so you do not lose information. It was essential I did this as some sites of interest underwent redesigns and much information previously available was taken offline.

4.4.2 Interviews

The main method used in the case study research was interviewing, although analysis of further documentation was also undertaken. This section details how I went about the interview process, including selection of interview subjects, the interview itself and thoughts on aspects of the process itself.

In terms of identifying who I wanted to interview it was not a difficult process. Through the envisioning exercise and cases study selection I became familiar with the organisations in question, their structure and even some of the people I wanted to speak to. For those who I had not identified, names and positions could be found from websites, reports and minutes

available in the public domain. Snowballing was also a good way to find contacts as interviewees had a far deeper working knowledge of the case studies than I, and thus were in a better position to suggest key people to approach.

In terms of first contact, making the right impression is essential. Lilleker (2003: 209) suggests highlighting three things: tell people what your research project is about; why you wish to interview them; and what questions you are likely to ask. In line with this, initial contact was made via a letter¹⁶ including a brief explanation of the research, why I wanted to speak to them and in some cases the name dropping of someone they knew who I had already interviewed or who had recommended them to me. The letters were printed on CURDS letterhead paper along with the ESRC logo in order to demonstrate the validity of this project. I was surprised to find that on receipt of my letter some people got back to me very quickly (including a couple of CEOs) and were keen to help and hear what I had to say. In most cases, however, I telephoned a week after the letter had gone out. Everyone I managed to get through to – the vast majority of people – agreed to talk to me. Interestingly, on a number of occasions it was clear people had consulted others about me and this, hopefully, allayed any misgivings about talking to me.

When arranging interviews I was always very flexible, leaving it up to the interviewees to decide times; this was to ensure they felt as comfortable as possible with the interview. Oberhauser (1997) and Dyck (1997) highlight the importance of reducing potential power inequalities and making people feel comfortable in potentially alien situations. Naturally, on some occasions this was not possible because of clashes with other interviews, and travel times had to be considered. For example, although it only takes 40 minutes to travel from Newcastle upon Tyne to Hexham the transport infrastructure in Northumberland meant that an interview in Rothbury or Alnwick meant a whole afternoon was needed. On some occasions it was easier for someone to come into the University to speak to me because they had a meeting in Newcastle that day.

¹⁶ Contact via email may have been quicker than letter, emails are easier to dismiss than letters. Given the people I wanted to talk to get many emails each day this was something I did not want to risk.

The majority of people I spoke to found time within a week to ten days, but on a few occasions finding a mutually conducive time for a meeting meant organising it a few months in advance. The amount of time people had for an interview also ranged from person to person: one interviewee at the regional development authority (RDA) could only give me 30 minutes compared to someone else who had a whole afternoon free if needed. These glimpses into the diaries of people I interviewed helped me get a sense of how much each person was in demand.

Table 4.6 Details of interviews undertaken in phase two of the research

| Case Study | Interviewee | Organisation | How | Location |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| NNPA | Stuart Evans | NNPA | Face-to-face | Workplace |
| | Duncan Wise | NNPA | Face-to-face | University |
| | Kevin Malone | NNPA | Face-to-face | Workplace |
| | Kevin Patrick | NNPA | Face-to-face | Workplace |
| | Andrew Miller | NNPA | Face-to-face | Workplace |
| | Derek Proudlock | NNPA | Face-to-face | Workplace |
| | Tony Gates | NNPA | Face-to-face | Workplace |
| Hadrian's Wall | Jane Brantom | HWTP | Face-to-face | University |
| | Lynn Turner | Tynedale Council | Face-to-face | Workplace |
| | Iain Herbert | HWHL | Face-to-face | Workplace |
| | John Holmes | One NorthEast | Face-to-face | Workplace |
| | Stuart Evans | NNPA | Face-to-face | Workplace |
| | James Beresford* | North West RDA | Telephone | n/a |
| | Hilary Norton | HWTP | Face-to-face | Workplace |
| | Tamsin Beevor | Hexham Dev. Part. | Face-to-face | Workplace |
| | Peter Stone* | Newcastle University | Face-to-face | Workplace |
| | Humphrey Welfare* | English Heritage | Face-to-face | Workplace |
| Northumbria Larder | Chris Pennison | Ross's Pickles | Face-to-face | Workplace |
| | Duncan Wise | NNPA | Face-to-face | University |
| | Jeff Ball | One NorthEast | Face-to-face | Workplace |
| | Karl Christensen | Newcastle University | Face-to-face | University |
| | Ann Hustwit | Jenkins & Hustwit | Telephone | n/a |
| | Mark Robertson | Northumberland Cheese Co. | Telephone | n/a |
| | Richard Hutchinson | One NorthEast | Face-to-face | Workplace |
| | Sandy Duncan | Northumbria Larder | Face-to-face | University |
| | | | | |
| NCS | Zoe Bottrell | Culture Creative | Face-to-face | University |
| | Colin Mitchell | Wansbeck District Council | Face-to-face | Workplace |
| | Jane Blackburn | Northumberland Strategic Part. | Face-to-face | Workplace |
| | Kevin Taylor | Business Link | Face-to-face | Workplace |
| | Penny Wilkinson | MLA North East | Face-to-face | Workplace |
| | Lynn Turner | Tynedale Council | Face-to-face | Workplace |
| | Mike Robertson | Blyth Valley Council | Face-to-face | Workplace |

Table 4.6 shows a list of interviewees, the case study which they were part of, the organisation(s) they work for, the type and location of interview. In total 29 interviews were carried out in the summer and early autumn of 2006. Three further interviews were carried out in January 2007 to follow up people who were not available during the first stage of the research (marked with a *). Interviews were carried out until a saturation point was reached (Schoenberger, 1991).

Luck is an often overlooked feature of the research process but can play an important role in fieldwork (McDowell, 1998; Parry, 1998). For instance, in her work on retailer-manufacturer power relations in the UK and USA, Hughes (1999) acknowledges the role that chance can play in eliciting information from interviewees:

“My research journey was also guided, at least in part, by an element of luck. As the project incorporated the manufacturers of national, proprietary brands in addition to suppliers of own-brands, it fortuitously emerged that some of these brand manufacturers were also producers of retailers own-brands” (367).

Similarly, five of the people I interviewed were involved in two of my case studies. Luck also played a role in arranging interviews; I was fortunate enough to get in contact and organise an interview with a key player from Hadrian’s Wall Tourism Partnership two weeks before she left to go to New Zealand for six months. Conversely, one person at the National Park had just gone on maternity leave so was unavailable during the fieldwork stage of the research.

Once a time and place was decided upon there were a number of things I had to do to prepare for the interview. Background research on each person and their organisation was carried out through documents and the internet, although as I have said above the first approximation and case study selection process was very useful for this. This process, along with reference to my research design and literature reviews, helped form the types of questions I wanted to ask. The use of a semi-structured model of interview allowed flexibility within the interview situation where new threads could be followed. It also provided the opportunity to concentrate on whatever issues the interviewee felt most strongly about while

maintaining some structure to the interview. An interactive dialogue was created between researcher and interviewee so that “the intellectual engagement of respondents, and hence the accuracy and validity of responses are likely to be much greater” (Schoenberger, 1991: 183). In practice, this meant that after I had explained what I was researching¹⁷, I began with some set questions to start the conversation off, then allowed the interviewee to concentrate on matters important to them and to bring up other subjects. If necessary I returned to areas not brought up by the interviewee.

As time went on and I became more confident in the interview situation I was able to notice the different roles I, as interviewer, and the subject played. To begin with it was unconscious, but over time I noticed that positioning myself differently as an interview went on would get different responses. McDowell (1998: 2138) used this technique in her work on merchant banking in order to get past perceived gender stereotypes:

“[i]n some interviews I seemed to fall into the classic male-female pattern, for example with an older charming but rather patriarchal figure I found myself to some extent ‘playing dumb’; with an older extremely fierce senior woman I was brusquely efficient, with other women I was ‘sisterly’ in the sense of the same age – same position, with some of the younger men I was superfast, well informed, and definitely not to be patronised.”

In my case, at the start of the fieldwork I would start with set questions which potentially made me seem uninformed. When asked about their general role in an organisation, or what their organisation did in general terms the interviewee would often answer without much detail. Later in the interview I would return to these topics and try to come across as more informed, which in turn received a more informed answer. It was apparent that some interviewees also used this ploy, whether unconsciously or not, to either check what I was telling them or to gain a greater insight into what I had found out about other people and

¹⁷ An explanation of the research was given with reference to the cluster Venn diagram Figure 4.1 which helped the interviewee understand where I was coming from.

organisations. It was important here not to breach any confidentiality I had promised other people¹⁸.

Also, as time went on and I discovered more about the cluster the general starter questions were dropped in favour of questions that had emerged from other interviews which could be asked to double check what had previously been said. This ‘within-methods’ triangulation (Foss and Ellefsen, 2002) requires the researcher to be alert to inconsistencies, looking for explanations in different contexts and asking the same question in a different manner and at different stages of the interview process. This type of triangulation was combined with other types of triangulation to further improve rigour. Firstly, ‘source triangulation’ (Baxter and Eyles, 1997) was employed through all the phases of research which helped to filter themes from the wide discourse in the academic literature, through to the specific themes of this research, down to individual concerns brought up at interview. This meant common themes could be identified and verified between phases, sources and responses. Secondly, numerous research instruments were adopted – document analysis and semi-structured interviews most obviously, but other qualitative techniques were employed which are explained in more detail below – providing ‘methodological triangulation’ to achieve convergence validity and to act as a check on whether different techniques would yield similar and complementary findings (Yeung, 2003).

All but one of the face to face interviews were recorded¹⁹, which meant I could properly concentrate on what the subject was talking about and not run the risk of missing something in my notes. This helped the flow of the interview as I could pick up on bits of information for further explanation with greater ease than if I was concentrating on note taking. For the three telephone interviews I undertook I had to rely on note-taking as recording equipment was not available. This did not pose too much of a problem because these interviews were relatively short in length and I could expand on my notes easily with the information fresh in my mind once the conversation had finished.

¹⁸ I say more about the subject of confidentiality in section 4.5.

¹⁹ On that occasion I forgot my dictafone and had to rely on notes to record the conversation.

4.4.2.1 Microgeographies

To supplement interview material and provide richer detail to inform my findings I took notes about the microgeographies and the power relationships these implied and manifest during the interview process. As Elwood and Martin (2000: 652) suggest,

“microgeographies of interview locations situate a participant with respect to other actors and to his or her own multiple identities and role, affecting information that is communicated in the interview as well as power dynamics of the interview itself.”

For instance, on a number of occasions I was collected from reception by somebody’s secretary, which indicated that someone is deemed important enough to have a secretary. Conversely, on two occasions after the interview I was given a lift to the station by the person I had just quizzed because they were kind enough to, but also because they had the time to do it. My first thought was that the people who did this were not very senior at all, but actually they had the seniority to take the time out to do it.

Other indicators of time came out when interviewing two people in connection with Northumbria Larder. The first had to delay a phone interview because they were about to “put a batch of cakes into the oven,” (Northumbria Larder Informant 4). The second, Chris Pennison of Ross’s Pickles, could only give me a brief factory tour because they had to finish up some paperwork for Tesco. Both are food producers and without further research one might consider that Ann Hustwit’s business was not at the same level as the Ross’s Pickles, but both supply to the multiples and both are key players within Northumbria Larder.

Microgeographies and observations are also important during the interview. For example, while interviewing at the offices of HWHL the empty post trays, sparse decoration and exquisitely clean carpet and walls where clear signs that the company is very young – a few months at the time of the fieldwork. The phone calls people receive also gave an interesting insight into the position of the informant. For instance one person had to take an important call and spent 10 minutes on the phone (for which they were very apologetic), another

received confirmation that their house move had gone through, and others just ignored the ringing phone. Of course, getting/not getting phone calls is not an indication of somebody's importance or demand because secretaries can intercept calls and an hour of someone's working day is not representative. But this helped establish a broader picture of the people working in the heritage cluster.

Elwood and Martin (2000) go on to emphasise that the interactions around the interview itself are just as important for providing observations about the people one talks to, giving "richer and more detailed information than can be gleaned from interview content alone." (p.653). For example, waiting in the reception of HWHL and NNPA gave me the chance to read some of their publications and in the latter case the minutes of meetings made available to visitors. On the way to Hexham station I learnt about Kevin Malone's previous experience working for Pepsi. Similarly, I had an interesting chat with Kevin Taylor about his past life working in the motorsport industry. Although the information here was not directly related to my research, it is an example of fostering the close dialogue Clark (1998) talks about as important for moving beyond stylised facts.

4.4.2.2 Interviewing 'elites'

There is a sizeable literature within economic geography which focuses on 'elites' (Cochrane, 1998; Cormode and Hughes, 1999; Hughes, 1999; Hughes and Cormode, 1998; McDowell, 1998; Oinas, 1999; Sabot, 1999; Woods, 1998). These are people defined as those who have the ability to shape and influence policy, investment and development decisions (Woods, 1998). All of my interviewees had the ability to do such things, so theoretically could be termed as 'elites'. Some see interviewing elites as 'interviewing up', perceiving them to occupy some higher plain, perhaps in a landscape of power. Woods (, 1998) is one of a few authors who have tried to unpack the term and bring it up to date. In his view: "[c]ompared with other terms of social categorisation – class, race, ethnicity, gender, and community – 'elite' remains remarkably unproblematised" (ibid: 2101). He goes on to posit three characteristics of elites:

1. An elite has privileged access to, or control over, particular resources which may be mobilised in exercise of power or influence.
2. Members of an elite are linked by a network of social or professional relations, performed in exclusive back-region spaces, which may be used for recruitment, or the transmission of influence.
3. Elites are socially and discursively constructed as an elite, either by themselves or by others.

(ibid: 2108)

Smith (2006a) also seeks to problematise the term 'elite' and suggests completely doing away with it as a term to describe interview subjects, and I agree for a number of reasons. First, using the term elite suggests they are more important than you and you are interviewing 'up'. Such positions in a landscape of power have been critiqued as unhelpful and inaccurate in feminist literatures (Dyck, 1993; Miles and Crush, 1993; Kobayashi, 1994; Rose, 1997). But even if one maintains such a view, the 'up' is only superficial, for instance the subject may have a better knowledge of their organisation but as a researcher you may have better knowledges of the context in which their organisation sits. Furthermore, such a viewpoint positions the interviewer as subservient, as less important and therefore implies their insight is less important. Such a perspective is hard to maintain as a researcher, and I found the people I interviewed had a great deal of interest in my findings suggesting their knowledge of the cluster concept was not as 'good' as mine.

4.4.3 What I Did Not Do

Chapter 2 has outlined some of the ways scholars have researched clusters. Much of this work involves interaction with firms. However, I did not take this route. It became apparent during the scoping exercise that the cluster was in an early stage of development and it was publicly funded institutions, not firms, that dominated. The reasons for this are explained fully in Chapter 6, but the result was that the organisations central and most influential in the cluster at its current stage of development were public bodies. These became the main focus of the case study research. Such organisations deal with the firms that make up the cluster and I did plan to speak to some. However, after consultation with the case study

organisations it became clear that this would be a difficult and unfruitful task for a number of reasons. First, the sectors I was interested in are particularly popular as dissertation topics for undergraduate students at the region's universities. In addition, these firms have been the focus of interest from many government bodies seeking to develop the sectors they operate in. Taken together firms suffer from 'research fatigue' and as a result are reluctant to reply, let alone speak to people making interview or survey requests. Second, I was informed that the undeveloped nature of many firms meant they did not have time to speak to people as they were too busy 'fighting fires' and struggling to keep their head above water. So, in order not to hinder their development, or upset the organisations that represent them, I decided against firm interviews.

This presented me with an issue of how I would uncover the experience of firms in the cluster. I sought to overcome this in two ways. First, I did speak to a number of people on the Northumbria Larder board who were business people themselves, and were very close to other members of the Larder. They presented me with insights from their own and other firms. Second, the people I interviewed at other organisations were frequently those dealing with private sector firms everyday. They had contact through signposting and training events, as well as their own research. This meant although I did not have direct contact with firms, I came as close as I could.

4.5 Analysis

The analysis undertaken for the first phase of my research was relatively straightforward. Once documents and statistics had been gathered it was a case of reading and filtering out the pieces of information relevant to the sectors I was researching. Information for each sector at national and regional level was easy to come by, but data for county level less so. Part of the reason for this is that many relevant organisations operate at the regional level, and the region is the key focus for national bodies.

Useful 'nuggets' of data were cross referenced with other sources to ensure what I reported in Chapter 5 was accurate. Given the amount of information available the biggest difficulty

was condensing it down and fitting it into a thesis chapter. This was done using the framework outlined above (4.3.1) and numerous iterations.

The analysis of interview data was less straight forward. I recorded all but one interview and transcribed each one verbatim. Although I had relatively few interviews, compared to colleagues at least, many of the interviews lasted more than 90 minutes and some three hours. The transcription process was a laborious process but had two main advantages. First, it took me back to the interview and refreshed my memory of what happened. I found that through listening again I could add things to the microgeographies recorded in my fieldwork diary. Second, transcription acted as an initial stage of analysis as themes and narratives emerged as I typed. Although I did contemplate the use of a professional transcribers I decided against it as I would have lost out on this process. Doing so would have meant I also lost out on the tone and nuances of the interview – hesitation, silences, laughter or enunciation – things that contribute to the understanding of what is being said (Jackson, 2001). Simply reading something from text is ambiguous and could allow something said with sarcasm to be taken literally (Crang, 2002; Laurier, 1999).

Once transcription was completed I undertook the task of making sense of the material I had. As Crang (2001b) points out there is no ‘cookbook’ explaining how analysis of qualitative information is done. The process of analysis is often a case of personal preference. Computer packages such as NUDIST and NVivo are available to aid the process, but given the cost and time needed to learn how to use them, together with the fact I was analysing four case studies meant it would not be effective.

The approach I adopted was to go through the transcripts looking for narratives about each case study, evidence relating to the concepts outlined in Chapters 2 and 3, areas for cross reference and part of which linked to the goals of my sub-cases outlined in Tables 4.2-4.5. I did this within Word, using the highlighting and comment tools, and by hand, again highlighting and making comments in the margin. Common themes throughout this process included funding, evidence of collaboration and how organisations had changed over time. Although I did not cut up my transcripts by hand as Crang suggests (2001) – to make piles of similar material – I did ‘cut and paste’ sections of different interviews in Word to compare

comments. This also aided the writing up process as it kept similar materials together. As well as collating interview material I mapped emergent themes and points for discussion. I did this simply on A3 pieces of paper connecting themes, various thoughts on points raised, interviews and quotes. This information was also cross referenced with what I had uncovered in the first phase of my research. It also supplemented it.

As the analysis went on certain topics repeatedly emerged across all case studies – collaboration, the role of the public sector, community engagement, environmental sustainability – which formed a skeleton on which I could build the body of my analysis in Chapter 6. The construction of this chapter involved many iterations to be as truthful as possible to what I had found. One way in which I did this was to include verbatim quotes, so readers did not have to rely on my interpretation of what was said. In addition to this sections of the analysis were sent to interviewees. This was done to increase rigour, ensure people were not being quoted out of context and as an initial feedback on what was found.

The names presented in Table 4.6 are the genuine names of the people I interviewed (bar one who only agreed to be interviewed on the condition of confidentiality). However, in the following chapters only a few names remain, those who gave permission to have quotations attributed directly to them with the rest anonymised. The justification of this is as follows.

As well as the reasoning for seeking permission for attribution of quotes mentioned above, getting interviewees to double check what was being presented ensured nothing controversial, or potentially libellous, was presented in the these. As no such summations could be made simply from a list of interviewees, their full names and organisations are presented in Table 4.6. Checks were made to ensure identities could not be worked out by cross referencing the table in this chapter and the quotations presented in the following chapters.

In giving permission for names to be used there were some interesting responses. While those who did get back to me were perfectly happy to allow me to attribute quotes to them and their organisation, some replied with caveats. For instance, two interviewees wanted the grammar of their quotations tidied up and one went so far as restructure their words for me. This presented a dilemma, particularly for the person who asked that I change their quotes

for them. On the one hand, changing the grammar would allow me to keep as much detail about who I spoke to and who said what. However, by changing the grammar there is the risk that the power I have as researcher would impinge upon the moment of the interview, potentially changing the meaning of the quotation. On the other hand, leaving the quote verbatim, as said during the interview, would mean sacrificing the detail about who said what. In the case of the person who re-wrote the quotes, the dilemma was easily solved; I could keep the name and the quote is still in their own words, although I do note the particular quotations that have been 'tidied up'. In the case of the person who wanted me to change their quote, I chose to leave it verbatim and anonymous for fear of misrepresenting them.

4.6 Personal Reflections

Finally, I would like to say that I thoroughly enjoyed both phases of the research, although the desk based research and transcription did become a little laborious at times. The people I interviewed were all interesting and offered fascinating insights into their roles in the cluster. Their attitude and spirit made the research enjoyable and indicated that the cluster is in good hands.

As well as gaining knowledges of the cluster and the role of a selection of organisations and individuals, I also gained some free gifts. For example, I was given a Jenkin's and Hustwit fruit cake when I visited an interviewee on her market stall after a phone interview. I was also given a free ticket to explore Alnwick Garden after an interview with a member of staff there. In addition I got the unusual sight of 500 gallons of beetroot boiling away on a tour of a pickle factory.

4.7 Conclusions

This chapter has provided an insight into the research process. I began by outlining the position of this research within the new economic geography with particular reference to post-structural and postmodernist views of economic action. I have also highlighted the importance of reflexivity and an appreciation of one's positionality.

Section 4.3 has described the development of the research design emphasising the role of desk based and case study approaches in the two main phases of the research. Once this justification was made I outlined the selection criteria for choosing my four case studies along with the research plans detailing sub-cases with my rationale, goal and methods used.

Next I detailed the actual fieldwork procedure, presenting the detail and at times messy process. Particular focus was given to interviews and the processes surrounding them, along with what I did not do. I have sought to present this section as honestly as possible to give as great an insight into this often overlooked element of research. Following a chronological sequence, the final section has outlined the analysis process and again I have sought to present this as candidly as possible.

So, where this chapter has outlined the choice of, and justification for, my methods, the next three chapters present the findings of my scoping research (Chapter 5), identify the cluster's drivers, structure and characteristics (Chapter 6), and demonstrate the NHC's contribution to clusters discourse (Chapter 7). Although Chapter 5 is mainly descriptive it is essential to properly understand the wider context in which the cluster sits.

Chapter 5

The Northumberland Heritage Cluster – Scale and Scope

“You cannot depend on your eyes when your imagination is out of focus.”

(Twain, 1889)

5.1 Introduction

The role of this chapter is to answer my first research question by outlining the scale and scope of the Northumberland Heritage Cluster. In doing so it identifies where the cluster exists – geographically and sectorally - and what constitutes inclusion in it. It does this by, first, outlining those sectors that operate in the wider heritage sector; defining these sectors is a necessary step as no work has been carried out in the past to identify a heritage cluster and only a notional working definition existed before this research. In the proposal for this PhD, prepared jointly with the Northumberland Learning and Skills Council, an idea of what sectors constitute the cluster is given. However, I will show that the suggested sectors are too narrow. As I have demonstrated in Chapter 3, definitions of heritage - and thus definitions of sectors relating to the use, protection and management of heritage – are problematic. Therefore, a more robust conceptualisation is made drawing on discussions in Chapter 3 and predominantly desk based fieldwork.

Second, once the broad scope of the cluster is charted I move on to outline the justification for initially focusing my analysis at a wider scale than originally conceived (a shift from Northumberland to the North East). This is done to capture as much of the cluster as possible, following previous work on clusters (Nachum and Keeble, 2002), but also in light of an appreciation of the boundary spanning nature of clusters, the sectors involved and the geographical scale of the area's history, and recognition of the spatiality of the economic processes once under greater scrutiny.

Third, the main body of the chapter analyses the make up of the NHC through a sector by sector analysis of those areas highlighted in the first part of the chapter. The scale and scope of each sector is outlined as a precursor for an estimate of the size of the heritage related sectors in the North East. I also rationalise the choice of each sector and highlight areas of competitive advantage, potential, and future challenges for the industries in question. It is these findings that answer the first research question – defining the scale and scope of the NHC.

This analysis is done using an approach akin to the Porter-esque analysis adopted and adapted in some types of consultancy work on clusters (see discussion Chapter 2) and can be seen as the first phase of a multi-perspective approach to the cluster. Such a style is used because it is useful a) as providing a framework for initially mapping a cluster and b) to critique the idea that simply scoping a cluster is enough to understand its mechanisms and then use this evidence for advice on its future development. In relation to this latter point this chapter should be seen as a 'first cut' of the NHC. Further, more in-depth, analysis of the cluster is made in Chapter 6. That analysis cannot be done, however, without the context as set out in this chapter.

At the conclusion of this chapter I compare my analysis with criteria for defining a cluster in the consultancy literature to outline the status of Northumberland's heritage related sectors as a cluster. I also revisit the issue of where – geographically – the cluster exists to address some of the critiques of the 'geographical elasticity' of clusters.

5.2 A Series of Shifts in Focus

It is important to note that before this research a heritage cluster was only identified in the proposal for this research, as written by the Northumberland Learning and Skills Council (NLSC). Within this document a ‘natural heritage cluster’ is proposed, comprising the heritage, agriculture, craft, food and tourism sectors. In the process of researching and writing this thesis I came across no other reference to a heritage cluster in any documentation. Moreover, nobody I interviewed had considered a cluster to exist although after discussion many saw the linkages within and across sectors.

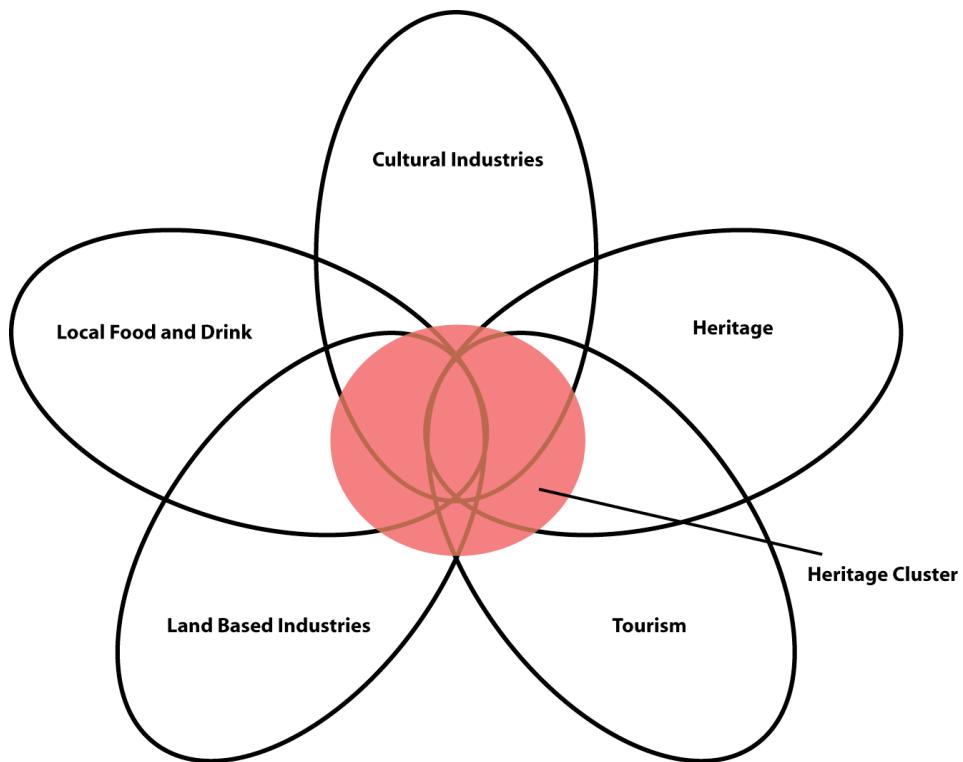
Malmberg and Power (2006), analysing the cluster theory literature, identify self-awareness as a key component to a cluster’s existence “we are a cluster and we are determined to develop together” (p.57). However, such a criterion fails to appreciate the stage of development of a cluster. The NHC, I argue, is embryonic. It has a number of areas of strength, lots of potential, high levels of collaboration (see Chapter 6), and is growing - it is undeveloped and lacks some crucial infrastructure. The nascent nature of the NHC is reinforced by limited, but growing, self-awareness. Furthermore, it is not only the embryonic state that affects self-awareness; those involved in the cluster are often too busy ‘fire-fighting’ to get a broader strategic perspective of their, and others, activity.

5.2.1 Sectoral Shift

Unlike most sectors of the economy there is no clear definition of what the heritage sector is. Until the last few decades the vast majority of heritage was managed by the public sector. However, in the 1980s, Hewison (1987) outlined what he saw as the emergence of a heritage industry based around an increase in the number of museums opening and general commodification of heritages – both in the public and private sectors (see 3.3) – with making money a driving factor. Today, heritage has become even more pervasive than Hewison predicted and is adopted and managed by various sectors right across the economy. Moreover, as section 3.6 explains, heritage is now being harnessed for community projects and used to spur regeneration schemes (Papayannis and Howard, 2007).

Thus, definitions are difficult. For instance, if you use the term 'heritage industry' in certain circles one can expect scowls and despairing looks from those who do not wish heritage to be seen simply economic terms²⁰. 'Heritage sector' is the preferred term amongst heritage professionals. However, 'heritage sector' does not fully encapsulate those individuals, firms and other organisations that draw on heritage in their work. The closest one might get is probably 'heritage related sectors', a phrase I shall use from this point onwards.

The definitional difficulty of what constitutes the heritage related sectors stems not only from the myriad uses for which heritage is adopted, but also the complexity of heritage as a concept. I dealt with this in Chapter 3 as I outlined its roots and evolution over time. One can identify five main sectors that use, develop or manage heritage in their operations: land-based industries, creative industries, the local food and drink sector, the heritage sector, and the tourism industry. Not all of each sector harnesses heritage, but where they do, and crucially where these sectors overlap, collaborate and integrate, it can be argued that a heritage related sectors grouping can be identified (see Figure 5.1).



²⁰ One can receive far worse if you use the term 'heritage asset' as I discovered during my fieldwork.

Figure 5.1 Northumberland Heritage Sectors

Figure 5.1 is only illustrative, and is not meant as a perfect representation of the amount and type of overlap between sectors. However it does demonstrate that not all of each sector can be defined as operating in the potential NHC – businesses, individuals and other organisations within each sector need not only to draw on heritage in their activity, but to also demonstrate clustering characteristics. Some are broadly discussed at the end of this chapter, but the precise nature of these characteristics is dealt with in Chapter 6. It is these which allow a group of related sectors to be defined geographically as a cluster.

The remainder of this chapter outlines the make up of each sector, with particular focus on those sectors operating in the NHC, using an approach similar to that posited by Porter (1990). Before I do that, however, it is worth pointing out that the sectors represented in Figure 5.1 are not the ones identified by the NLSC in their original proposal for this PhD²¹. I undertook a shift in focus from the original five sectors for two main reasons. First, the areas of activity identified by the NLSC were of a very narrow focus; shifting outward from these areas allows a greater scope of industries that may or may not operate in the NHC. This reasoning is supported when one considers that the NHC is in an embryonic state and at this stage of development it would be unwise to exclude any areas that may be emerging. Second, before this PhD there was no research on the heritage cluster. Therefore, it would be less than rigorous on my part to simply accept the sectors given to me to begin with. Figure 5.2 outlines the sectoral shifts made.

As I have argued in Chapter 3 an area's heritage, particularly in relation to 'selling' that heritage, is intimately connected to sense of place (Lowenthal, 1985). The constituent elements of this sense of place come from a wide range of sources, but it frequently comes down to the following: culture (literature, music, film, art), foods, landscape and heritage (Durie, et al., 2006). These distinctive elements may be objective or constructed. They intermingle in various ways – 'real' and imagined – to generate an idea/image/experience of

²¹ The sectors originally identified were crafts, agriculture, food, heritage, and tourism.

a place that can be consumed. Thus the sectors of the NHC encompass all these elements and related activities.

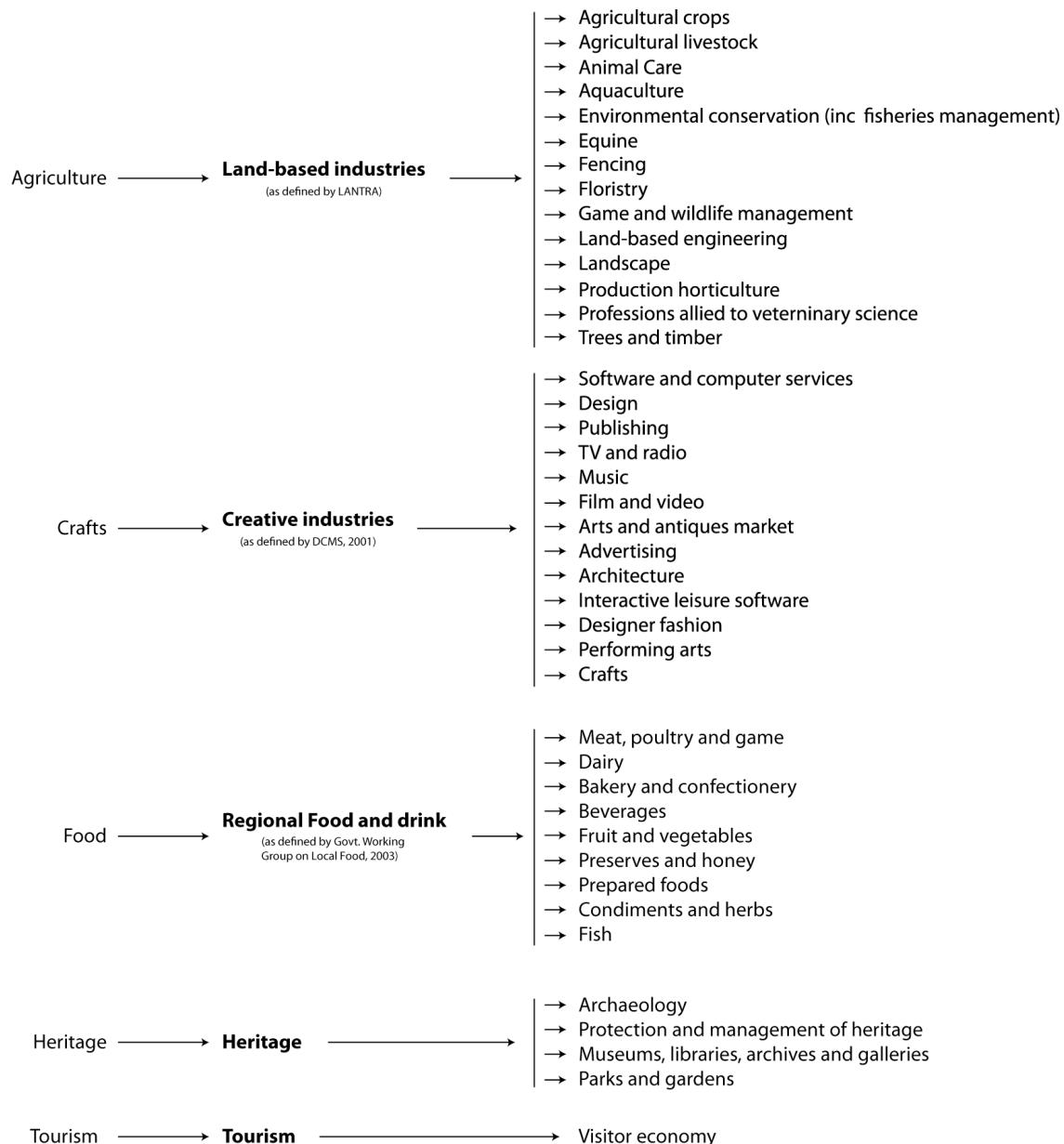


Figure 5.2 Sectoral shifts from original proposal

As one can see agriculture is widened to land-based industries because the agricultural sector is, at the same time, both too broad and too narrow a focus in terms of a heritage cluster. Agriculture takes in a lot of activity not related to heritage and does not include other

important sectors, such as forestry, which are related to heritage. For example, landscape character has an important role to play in relation to heritage (see 3.5 and 3.6), and within the EU the land-based industries that are increasingly responsible for landscape preservation and protection though conditions tied into subsidies. Furthermore, the forestry sector, particularly in the North of England, has an important role in protecting habitats of endangered indigenous species such as the red squirrel. For these reasons, this first approximation shifts the focus away from just agriculture to land based industries as a whole.

The next shift is made from crafts to the wider sector of the creative industries. The Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) defines the creative industries as advertising, crafts, cultural heritage, design, music, publishing and performing, literary and visual arts. As I shall explain not all those sectors are appropriate for a heritage cluster (something akin to the ‘cultural industries’ is more accurate) but by focusing on the creative industries the analysis is moved beyond crafts alone.

The NLSC proposal highlights food as the third sector in the heritage cluster. However, local or regional food and drink is a better approach as it is about the importance of locally produced goods and their embeddedness in a local milieu constructed, in part, from a place’s history: ‘food’ is too vague (Durie, et al., 2006). Local food and drink has clear links with other sectors, particularly the land based industries with a direct link, and major overlaps, with agriculture – especially the primary production part of the supply chain.

The fourth sector suggested was heritage. The lack of a clear definition notwithstanding, this is an unproblematic choice as clearly the heritage sector is central to the NHC. However, while all of the heritage sector is potentially in the cluster, a lack of integration and participation means only parts of it are.

Finally, the tourism sector is included. This is a complex sector because it encompasses a wide range of visitor activities; activities that may or may not include experiencing heritage, such as shopping for example. The tourism sector is the major driver for the NHC, but the plurality of visitor motivations, activities and experiences mean it is also the driver for other aspects of the economy not connected with the NHC.

5.2.2 Geographical Shift

The second shift made in this chapter is one of scale. The original proposal suggests Northumberland as the appropriate scale of focus, however a move to a wider area is made to begin with. This is done for the following reasons. Firstly, the concept of scale in cluster debates is one of those aspects not fully theorised and often dependant upon the geographical area, industry studied and approach of the researcher. Secondly, if one is looking for concentrations of industries it is sometimes necessary to examine a wider scale in order to identify smaller scale agglomerations. Keeble and Nachum's (2002) analysis of the business service firm cluster in London does just this; their initial focus is on the wider South East area of England. This approach is adopted to compare the concentration of business service firms within London and in the wider South East. Such a methodology makes it easier to identify areas with a particular concentration of activity, and adds to the robustness of such claims.

Thirdly, much of Northumberland's heritage is intimately connected to the heritage of Northumbria, an area that once encompassed the North East, and even stretched to parts of southern Scotland, Cumbria, and Yorkshire and Humberside (see Figure 5.3). Moreover, in more recent times, activity in Northumberland has been intimately connected with activity in the wider North East. Given this history a wider scale was an appropriate place to start.

The question then, is what scale to begin with. Given the Government's focus on the regions, and the increased power devolved to the regions in recent years, the Government Office region of the North East is the obvious place to begin. Reflecting this the seemingly most powerful institutions in each of the sectors outlined above operate strategically at the regional level – whereas the sub-regional scale is dominated by operational activity. It is also a useful starting point for practical reasons because the most useful statistics are aggregated at the regional level which makes analysis easier. This wider area is the immediate context in which the NHC sits, but, as will become clear, the NHC is centred on Northumberland.



Figure 5.3 William Shepherd's map of the British Isles, 802 AD

Sector by Sector Analysis

This section analyses each of the sectors identified in Figure 5.1. Each sectoral analysis begins with defining the sector and sub-sectors involved, and justification for selection and significance in terms of the NHC. Then the national and regional context is outlined, and areas of competitive advantage for the NHC highlighted. Overlaps with other sectors and *prima facie* evidence of clustering characteristics is also included.

5.3a The Heritage Sector - Northumberland's Past

5.3.1 History of Northumberland

In line with arguments in Chapters 2 and 3, to understand the heritage of the NHC it is crucial to understand the history of the area. The history of the area we now know as Northumberland is rich with legend, mystery, invasion, innovation and discovery (Figure 5.4). Its legacy is an area well endowed with myriad forms of heritage and heritage attractions. In this section I highlight the most significant periods of history and the resultant 'key strengths' the NHC has because of this²².

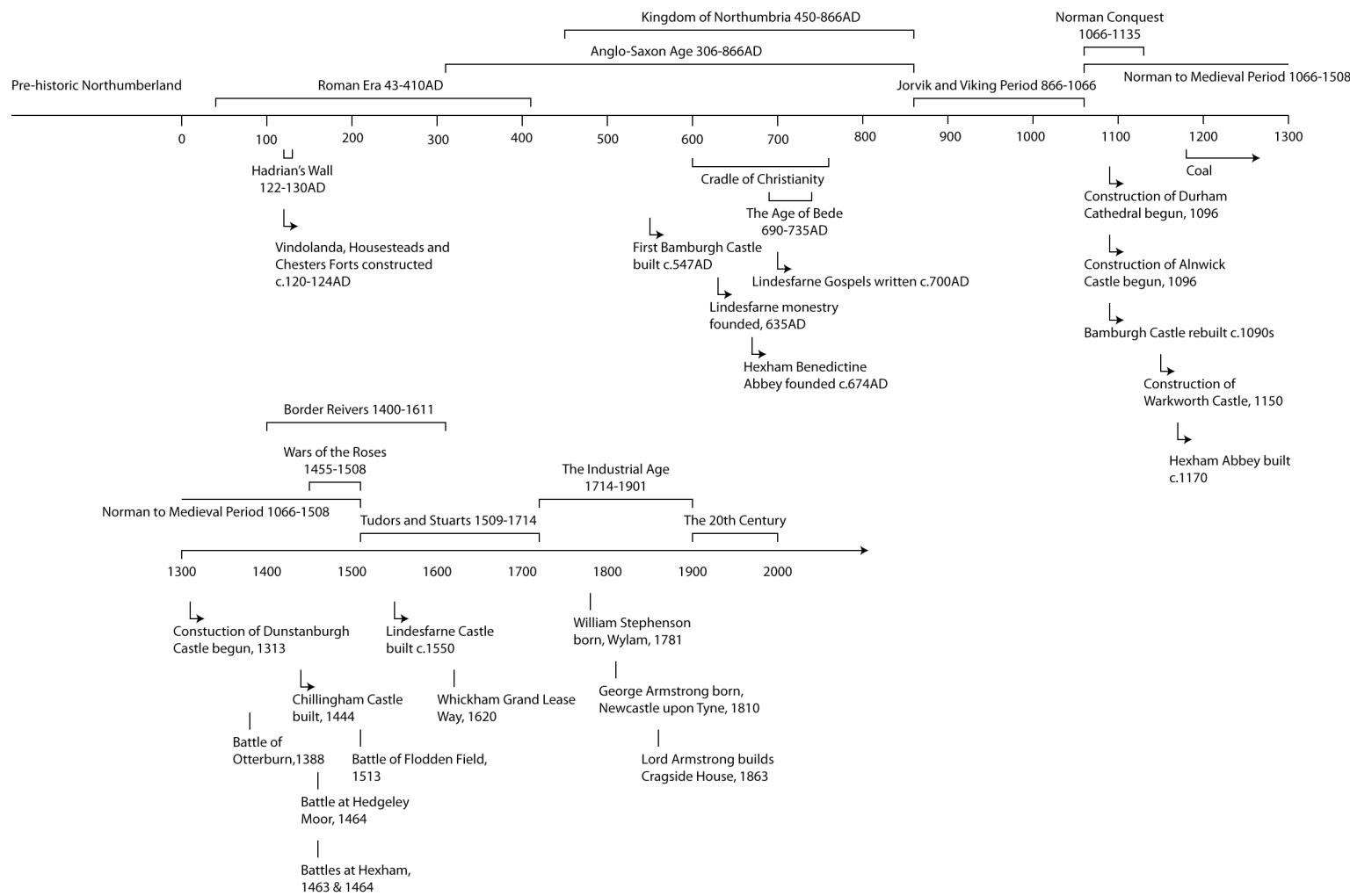
5.3.1.1 *Landscape*

Modern Northumberland is the sixth largest county in England at 5,013 sq km. Formed millions of years ago, the Cheviot Hills in the north are the highest points, with The Cheviot itself the highest at 815m (2,676 ft). In the south of the county are the northern most hills of Pennines. Between the Pennines and the Cheviots are expansive dales and moorland, gradually becoming lowland in the coastal areas.

Archaeologists have found evidence of the region's earliest settlers in the form of Neolithic and early Bronze Age rock art within Northumberland's landscape. These mainly take the form of 'cup and ring' carvings in rock on the high points of the land. Experts believe they formed early maps of the surrounding area (Beckensall, 2003). Whatever their original function, today, knowledge of their existence is limited and an underdeveloped 'asset' for the NHC.

²² As the discussion in Chapter 3 illustrates, highlighting the key historical 'assets' of Northumberland is a subjective process, and one mainly based on advantages identified by strategic bodies.

Figure 5.4 Timeline of Northumberland's History



Key Strength – Coastline

Like much of the landscape Northumberland's coastline is also a key asset. The coast has played an important role in Northumberland's history: it has been used as a staging post for Viking invasion; for exporting goods such as coal from Blyth, salt from Seaton Sluice, shoes from Berwick and lime from Holy Island; it has provided fishing grounds; Brent Geese flock to it in winter; and today it attracts visitors for leisure activities.

Northumberland's coastline is dotted with evidence of important events in history. Holy Island was the home of St Aiden in the 7th century, its castle is operated by The National Trust and Lindisfarne Priory is managed by English Heritage. Just south of Lindisfarne are the Farne Islands that were also once home to monks, but today form one of the UK's most important sea bird sanctuaries. Visitors can take boat rides from Seahouses to see Puffins, Kittiwakes and Guillemots. The beaches along the coastline range from wide, sandy dune edged beaches to ruggedly beautiful rock and stone shores. Further, the northern most 40 miles of the Northumberland coastline is designated as Heritage Coast and protected for its natural beauty. These assets are recognised by a 58 mile coastal walking route.

5.3.1.2 Roman Times

In 122AD, after Emperor Hadrian visited Britain, construction on Hadrian's Wall began and was completed eight years later. The Wall stretches 73 miles from Tynemouth in the east to the Solway Firth in the west. Along the length of Hadrian's Wall mile castles and forts were built, and their remains form tourist attractions today.

Key Strength – Hadrian’s Wall UNESCO World Heritage Site

Today Hadrian’s Wall is one of the UK’s 27 UNESCO inscribed World Heritage Sites (WHS). This marks it out as a historical site of international importance. The Wall was designated in 1987, and in 2005 part of the Raetian frontier in Germany was designated as an extension of Hadrian’s Wall (Hadrian’s Wall Tourism Partnership, 2005). This increased the site’s significance even further by making Hadrian’s Wall the first and only transnational WHS in the world.

The Wall forms a central element of Northumberland’s tourism offer receiving an estimated one million visitors each year – an estimated 23% of these are from overseas - making a large contribution to the local and regional economy (Hadrian’s Wall Heritage Ltd, 2006). As well as forts such as Vindolanda, Housesteads and Chesters (operated privately, by The National Trust and English Heritage respectively) the Hadrian’s Wall National Trail, opened in 2003, is the most recent of ‘offers’ for visitors. The management of the Wall is in the hands of Hadrian’s Wall Heritage Ltd, a quasi-public organisation that took over from Hadrian’s Wall Tourism Partnership – both these organisations are incredibly important in the NHC and form one of my case studies in Chapter 6.

5.3.1.3 Cradle of Christianity

Key Strength – Origins of English Christianity

Although Christianity had been present in the British Isles for centuries, it was in the 7th century that it became widespread, and Northumbria had an important role to play in this. Places like Lindisfarne, the Farne Islands, Lady’s Well at Holstone, Brinkburn Priory and Hexham Abbey are all important places in the history of Christianity in England. These are places where Paulinus, St Aiden, St Cuthbert and St Wilfred lived and worked. Today they form sites of pilgrimage and tourist attractions. Northumbria’s role as the cradle of Christianity in England is an important feature of the heritage ‘offer’ for the NHC.

The 7th and 8th century was a period of great art and literature in the Northumbria. When Ceolfrid became bishop of the Monkwearmouth and Jarrow priories at the end of the 7th century he commissioned work on three single volume illustrated Bibles. Only one survives today, the Codex Amiatinus, and is the earliest manuscript of the Bible in St Jerome's text (Holloway, 2007). The Lindisfarne Gospels were completed in c.715 and are considered the best example of religious art of the time. Although the original is held at the British Library²³ in London, many people journey to Lindisfarne from around the world to see where it was made.

Perhaps the most famous monk during this time was the Venerable Bede. His work *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* marks him out as perhaps the earliest English historian (Higham, 2006). Bede's life is celebrated at Bede's World, a museum of medieval Northumbria in Jarrow.

5.3.1.4 Castles

Key Strength – Castles

Due to its turbulent past – sitting as it does on the border of England and Scotland – more castles have been built in Northumberland than any other county (Newman and Peacock, 2004). Some say Northumberland is the 'Land of 100 Castles', although the accuracy of this is open to debate. However, a recent survey (North of the Tyne, 2007) outlines over 60 castles, and if one adds towers and baste houses the number could easily reach 100. Northumberland's castles are of central importance to the NHC as they are some of the best preserved in the country and all have a rich history.

There is no room to describe all the castles of significance in Northumberland, and to the NHC, so I shall briefly outline the most important and most popular in terms of visitors.

²³ A copy is also held in Durham Cathedral.

Bamburgh Castle, sitting atop a Whin Sill outcrop and overlooking one of Northumberland's finest beaches, has been a fortified site since the year 547 (Newman and Peacock, 2004) when it was the seat of Ida, King of Bernicia²⁴ (Simpson, 1999). It was an important stronghold for the Normans and during the War of the Roses. Today it is privately owned but open to the public.

Alnwick Castle – sometimes called the Windsor of the North – like Bamburgh, was important to the Normans and was a key stronghold during the Reiver Wars (Newman and Peacock, 2004). It has been used as a location in a number of films, most notably Robin Hood Prince of Thieves (1991) and the first Harry Potter films (2001, 2002). The castle receives around 300,000 visitors a year (Alnwick Castle, 2006).

Dunstanburgh Castle, built between 1313 and 1325, is similar in position to Bamburgh sitting as it does on a Whin Sill outcrop next to the sea. It is owned by The National Trust and operated by English Heritage.

Other popular castles in Northumberland include: Chillingham Castle, Warkworth Castle, Aydon Castle, Belsay Castle, Edlingham Castle, Norham Castle, Berwick Barracks, Etal Castle. Ownership and management of these sites are in the hands of The National Trust, English Heritage and the private sector. The Coast and Castles Cycle Path recognises this strength by plotting a route from Newcastle to Edinburgh.

5.3.1.5 Cultural Heritage

As well as a great deal of tangible heritage, Northumberland's past has left a legacy of rich cultural heritage. Perhaps the richest source of this comes from the 15th and 16th centuries when Northumberland was a battle ground for the English and Scottish monarchs, for the houses of Yorkshire and Lancashire, but also for local 'clans' called Border Reivers. In order to survive amongst the turmoil many families resorted to raiding, thieving and rustling neighbouring families lands, property and livestock (Simpson, 2006). It was not until the

²⁴ Bernicia was a kingdom roughly equivalent to the modern day North East (Simpson, 1999).

start of the 17th century, after King James I united England and Scotland, that the Reiver raids stopped. However, their memory lives on in border ballads and latterly through their romanticisation by authors such as Sir Walter Scott. Many believe the North East tradition of folk music stems from the border ballads (see below).

5.3.1.6 Industrial Heritage

The industrial past of Northumberland and the wider North East is perhaps the greatest legacy left to the world. The economic success of the region in the 18th and 19th centuries was built on coal, and although it was mined across the region for hundreds of years it wasn't until the end of the 18th century that it really took off. Durham and South East Northumberland were the main centres of extraction in what was known as the Great North Coalfield. It was coal mining that literally fuelled the growth of carboniferous capitalism in Britain and the Empire. In the North East this took the form of the iron and steel industry, which in turn spawned shipbuilding, heavy engineering and later chemicals manufacture. The intensity of development saw the area become the source of many steam based technological advancements (Pike, et al., 2006). And by the start of the 20th century a quarter of global shipbuilding output came from the North East (Hudson, 1989).

Key Strength – Industrial Heritage

Although the de-industrialisation of the North East was devastating for the social and economic lives of the population, its legacy has provided a rich heritage of solidarity in the face of crisis – something I highlight in Chapter 6 - and resources the heritage sector can draw on. For example, museums such as Woodhorn in South East Northumberland are built on the site of a disused colliery and exhibit the story of coal mining in Northumberland. Similarly in County Durham, Beamish Open Air Museum displays a hyper-real version of life in the region during the industrial age.

However, while the 18th and 19th Century saw massive industrialisation the 20th Century saw equally massive decline in heavy industry. The 1930s and the Great Depression saw large

numbers of job losses, epitomised by the Jarrow March to London by local workers to find jobs and protest at high levels of unemployment. There was an upturn in the post-war period as the country was rebuilt and rearmed, but as the UK economy became more open to international competition it was revealed as structurally weak and proved to be vulnerable to increasing international divisions of labour (Hudson, 1998). The 1980s and 1990s saw recession and restructuring in the coal and steel industries as a result of market forces and government policy; the effect on the region was devastating as tens of thousands lost their jobs (Pike, et al., 2006).

In summary, one can see the history of Northumberland and the surrounding area is rich with significant events for both the country and the world. The results of such a fecund history - especially having a history full of such turmoil and, latterly, neglect - is a togetherness and spirit in the face of adversity (this is something I expand upon in Chapter 6). Importantly, the nature of historical events means that where heritage is created from such episodes it is usually unique and can create a competitive advantage. These competitive advantages are further enhanced because Northumberland's heritage is still embedded in a robust 'cultural landscape' that on the surface is its original backdrop – for example Bamburgh Castle over looks the unchanging sea; and the central parts of Hadrian's Wall sit in 'barren' farmland managed in the same way for thousands of years. To visitors this provides an 'authentic' setting and enhances their experience.

5.3b The Heritage Sector - Northumberland's Present

Chapter 3 has highlighted the definitional difficulties surrounding the term 'heritage' and thus outlining a heritage sector is also difficult. However, if one views the sector like a supply chain, one can identify four main parts (Figure 5.5). It is necessarily simplistic, but gives an indication of how the sector is divided. One might consider, archaeology as an exploratory field, uncovering and 'extracting' heritage before passing it along the supply chain. The 'front end' of the heritage sector – museums, galleries etc. – is the place where people can interact with heritage, a tertiary sector if you will. This section goes through each of these sectors in turn and outlines their function in more detail, as well as their representation in the NHC.

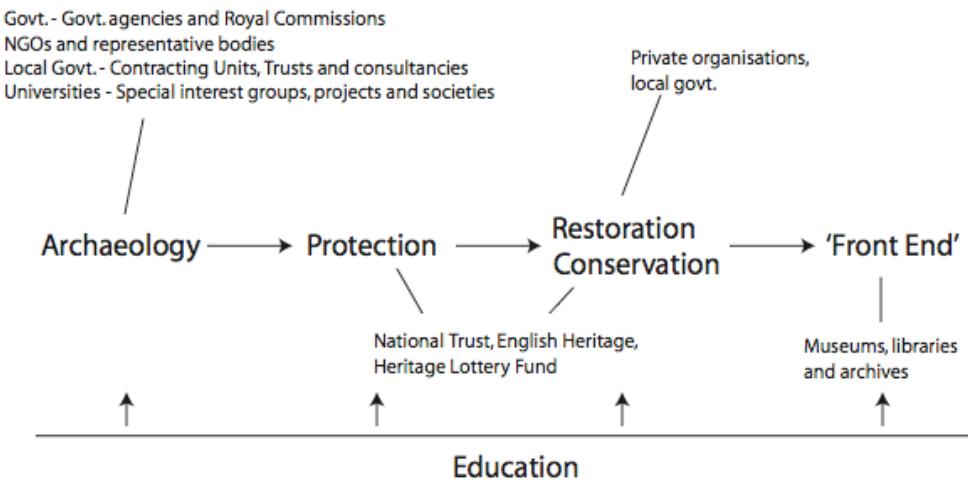


Figure 5.5 Heritage Supply Chain

The difficulties with defining heritage mean there are no comprehensive statistics on the sector as a whole. However, a Creative and Cultural Industries Steering Group report (Bowman Solutions, 2005) outlines the nation's cultural heritage sector. It is defined in the report as:

“archaeology (6800 employees nationally), conservation (660 employees), museums and galleries (15,365 employees in 2500 museums), historic sites and properties managed by English Heritage, the Historic Houses Association, the National Trust and antiques businesses. There are also numerous historic parks and gardens.” (Bowman Solutions, 2005: 13).

The CCISG report (Bowman Solutions, 2005) estimated that there are around 1500 employees working in 324 workplaces (excluding gardens) in the NE cultural heritage sector. Figures for the whole heritage sector in the region are unavailable, although to the figure of 1500 one can add 350 paid archaeologists (see Table 5.1).

To better understand the heritage sector Figure 5.5, above, outlines what one might consider the heritage supply chain. In what follows I outline each of these stages of the chain to put the NHC and North East heritage sector in a national context.

5.3.2 Archaeology

The organisation of archaeology in the UK is extremely complex. There are over 70 national archaeology organisations as well as myriad university departments, local government teams, private contractors, volunteers and societies involved in archaeology. An Institute of Field Archaeologists and CHNOTO report (Aitchison and Edwards, 2003) estimate there are around 5700 paid archaeologists in the UK, and approximately 1100 dedicated support staff. They also estimate that 425 people volunteer as unpaid archaeologists with a further 225 volunteer support staff.

Archaeology is dominated by small firms or units, 72% employ less than 10 people and a further 24% between 11 and 49 (*ibid*).

As Table 5.1 indicates the NE has an average number of archaeologists in terms of population. Given the small size of the industry it does not have any real economic significance. However, it does have significance in providing intellectual inputs to the protection, discovery and management of heritage in the region.

Table 5.1 Geographical distribution of archaeologists

| | Paid archaeologists | Change on 1997/98 | % of UK total |
|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| East Midlands | 339 | +54% | 6% |
| Eastern | 364 | +31% | 6% |
| London | 798 | -7% | 14% |
| North East | 350 | +51% | 6% |
| North West | 295 | +38% | 5% |
| South East | 952 | +46% | 17% |
| South West | 934 | +34% | 16% |
| West Midlands | 249 | -6% | 4% |
| Yorkshire and the Humber | 486 | +32% | 9% |
| Scotland | 456 | +30% | 8% |
| Wales | 387 | +70% | 7% |
| Northern Ireland | 73 | +38% | 1% |
| Total | 5712 | +29% | |

5.3.3 Protection and Management of Heritage

Chapter 2 introduced a number of organisations with a bearing on heritage protection and management. At the national scale the management of the historic environment is overseen by the DCMS and its subsidiary agencies, the biggest being English Heritage (EH). The DCMS provides grant-in-aid to EH to perform its remit of “protect[ing] England's historic, architectural and archaeological heritage and to encourage people to understand and enjoy it” (DCMS, 2005). English Heritage is also the Government's statutory adviser on matters regarding the conservation of England's historic built environment and is responsible for the upkeep and opening to the public of over 400 properties in public ownership. The NE has 43 of these properties (27 in Northumberland).

The governance and protection of England's 'natural' heritage is undertaken by a number of agencies, the key organisation is Natural England (created in 2006 from English Nature, Countryside Agency and parts of the Rural Development Service).

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) - a non-departmental public body which reports to the DCMS - is the main source of funding for heritage and conservation projects nationally, regionally and locally. Set up in 1994 the HLF distributed over £325m in 2005 and since its inception has awarded £3bn of lottery monies to over 15,000 projects in the UK (Hlf, 2005). In the financial year 2001/02 saw the HLF provided over £12m in grants to arts and culture related projects in the North East. Of this £10.8m went to museums & heritage centres. The HLF also granted a further £3.3m to the restoration of parks in the North East (Nerip, 2003).

Key Strength – Local Authority Cultural Services

Local authorities play an important role in heritage conservation through building, listing and planning restrictions on particular areas. A recent Audit Commission survey put the NE's local authorities amongst the best in the country for cultural services: “Over 90% of councils in the North East are achieving the highest scores in culture services.” (Icon, 2007).

The National Trust is the largest heritage charity in the UK. It is funded by membership and looks after over 300 historic houses and gardens as well as forests, woods, fens, beaches, farmland, downs, moorland, islands, archaeological remains, castles, nature reserves, and villages (National Trust, 2005). There are nine National Trust managed properties in the Northumberland (14 in the North East).

Key Strength – International Centre for Cultural Heritage Studies

Based at Newcastle University, ICCHS is a leading centre for international research of museum, gallery and heritage studies. Its members are international experts in their fields with representation on national and international organisations. The Centre has undertaken much research on the North East's heritage (recently holding a symposium to discuss heritage skills shortages in the region) and its Director is Chair of the Hadrian's Wall Management Plan Committee. Its presence is a great benefit for the NHC.

Table 5.2 is a summary of the heritage organisations with a bearing on the NHC²⁵.

Table 5.2 Scope of significant heritage organisations in the NHC

| Scale | Organisations |
|---------------|--|
| International | World Archaeology Congress UNESCO ICOMOS |
| National | English Heritage National Trust NGOs Museums, Libraries and Archives Council Various associations Forestry Commission |

²⁵ These organisations are discussed further in Chapter 6.

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Regional | Museums, Libraries and Archives NE Regional arms of Govt. agencies e.g. English Heritage, Natural England, Forestry Commission |
| Sub-regional | Local authorities Universities Wildlife Trusts Local action groups |

The nature of these organisations, normally publicly funded, means they encourage collaboration and co-operation between other public bodies and the private sector.

5.3.4 Front End Heritage

'Front end' heritage includes museums, art galleries, libraries and archives, gardens, parks, and heritage sites - essentially it is where the public interacts with the historic environment.

In terms of tangible, visitable heritage England has:

- 16 World Heritage Sites (26 in the UK)
- 1860 museums*
- 371,971 listed buildings
- 19,594 sites on scheduled monuments record
- 26 registered historic landscapes
- 43 historic battlefield sites
- 40 protected wrecks
- 9140 conservation areas
- 8 National Parks (plus South Downs in waiting)
- 208 National Nature Reserves (places where wildlife has priority)
- 1050 Local Nature Reserves (for people and wildlife)
- over 2500 Wildlife Trust²⁶ reserves (which operate at a local level)
- over 4000 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)

Of this, the North East has:

- 2 world heritage sites

²⁶ The Wildlife Trust is a national partnership of local Wildlife Trusts, an independent charity with over 530,000 members (Wildlife Trust, 2005).

- 93 museums and galleries*²⁷
- 43 English Heritage properties
- 10 national trust properties
- 37 registered parks and gardens of special historic interest
- 54 historic houses association properties
- 354,00 gardens
- 2 national parks
- 2 AONB
- 2 heritage coastlines
- 14 national nature reserves
- 245 SSSI
- 9,655 rights of way
- 2 national trails

Of course this list is far from definitive. It only includes the heritage which the Government sees fit to protect: it does not take into account the huge amount of built heritage in villages, towns and cities across the country which is unprotected or simply 'listed'. Nor does it include the billions of pounds worth of art, antiques, books and other valuable pieces of heritage in public and private hands. While some of the country's landscapes and wildlife are protected through parks, reserves and SSSIs, the benefits of the town- and county-scapes is immeasurable and practically impossible to protect – indeed one of the great things about landscapes is that they are in flux. Moreover, this list does not include intangible and cultural heritage, the language, customs, knowledge, folklore, cultures and ways of life which pervade everyday life. One could argue this is the real heritage; the assets, in some eyes, really worth protecting – assets in which Northumberland is particularly rich.

The 'front end' of the heritage sector is seeing increasing collaboration on projects. Hadrian's Wall, made up of dozens of interested parties, is a prime example of this with collaboration in marketing and promotions. In addition a new ticketing system - Desti.ne – is bringing together firms in the hospitality, tourism and heritage sectors. However, there is a skills gap within this part of the heritage sector in relation to management and leadership skills. Training to address this issue is emerging but there is little joined up thinking and

²⁷ *This figure only includes museums and galleries registered with Museums Libraries and Archives Council.

leveraging funding is a constant problem. This gap needs filling for the sector to progress effectively.

5.3.5 Summary

To summarise, in terms of heritage the NHC has a number of key strengths unique to the area – landscape, Roman history, early Christian heritage, castles, lots of cultural heritage and a diverse industrial past. Some of this heritage is recognised, protected and used by various organisations, but there remains a great deal under utilised. Harnessing this untapped resource is a challenge for the cluster and a necessary step if it is to develop beyond an embryonic state. However, much of this resource, through its particular uses, remains part of the AHD or is of no use to anybody because it is used for nothing at all.

As I explained in Chapter 2, contemporary conceptualisations of heritage go beyond conservation and visitor attractions. It is no longer seen as just ‘things’ one can gaze upon, there is a greater appreciation that heritage comes in many varieties and is being used and managed by a broader range of sectors. The following sections outline the scale and scope of these sectors.

5.4 Land-based Industries

Chapter 3 outlined the ways in which heritage is becoming less about small sites, buildings, monuments or artefacts, and more about intangible heritages, and larger areas that reflect interaction of humans with each other and their surroundings. As a result new actors have a role to play in relation to heritages. With this in mind, in terms of the NHC the LBI are important because when people experience ‘natural’ heritage and the landscape – woodland, moorland and farmland (see 5.3.1.1) - they are experiencing lands managed and cultivated by the LBI. Furthermore, this sector is increasingly about land stewardship, encouraged through conditions tied into subsidies and other agri-environmental schemes. These schemes place an emphasis on land management, protection and enhancement rather than production. They vary in focus from encouraging traditional farming techniques, to schemes aimed at reducing environmental damage, to protecting landscapes; and thus their role in relation to

‘natural’ heritage preservation and enhancement is very important.

The land-based industries (LBI), as defined by the industry skills council (LANTRA), and those significant to the NHC are shown in Figure 5.6:

Figure 5.6:

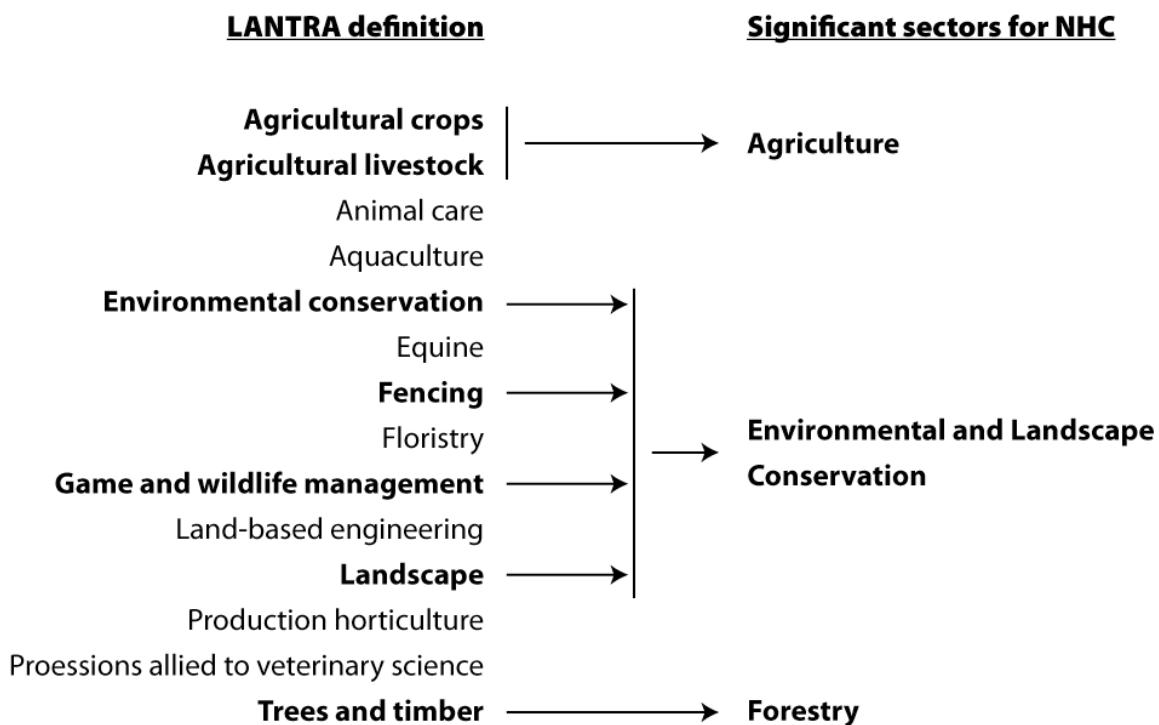


Figure 5.6 Make up of the land-based industries sector

The LBI also represent a major overlap between sectors discussed later in the chapter. For example, regional food producers are, in many cases, farmers; forested land is used by leisure users and tourists; the landscape inspires the Arts; and the land is ‘natural’ heritage and acts as the source of, or background for, much cultural heritage. Importantly, as I shall demonstrate in Chapter 6, these overlaps are central to the socio-economic characteristics of the NHC.

In what follows I analyse the most significant sectors, in terms of employment and significance to a heritage cluster, in the land-based industry in the NE as indicated in Figure

5.6. I begin with agriculture, before examining forestry, then environmental and landscape conservation. The national and regional²⁸ characteristics of each sector are compared and areas of strength identified. I finish the analysis of the LBI by addressing the challenges and areas of potential for the sector.

5.4.1 Industry Characteristics

In the UK there are around 400,000 land-based businesses employing 1.5m workers (including around 500,000 volunteers). This group manage 85% of the UK's landmass (Lantra, 2005a). Firms are mainly micro-businesses (94% of business employ less than 5 people) and sole traders (60% of businesses) (Lantra, 2003). Employment in LBI accounts for 3.85% of the UK workforce and constitutes around 6% of GDP: employment is significant across all the nations accounting for 3.3% of total employment in England, 8.4% in Northern Ireland, 5.2% Scotland and 6.4% in Wales. As one would expect employment is predominantly in rural areas; in some areas the industry accounts for 25% of employment.

As indicated in Table 5.3, the North East only accounts for 3% of the UK's LBI and representation is low across all sectors. Lantra estimates that there are around 9300 land-based businesses in the North East employing a workforce of 28,200 forecasted to grow to over 30,000 by 2006²⁹ (Lantra, 2001). As Figure 5.7 demonstrates agriculture is by far and away the largest employer accounting for 37% of land-based employment.

²⁸ Most available figures are at the regional scale.

²⁹ This forecast was developed before the foot and mouth crisis so one might expect a lag in the forecasted growth.

| | Agricultural Crops | Agricultural Livestock | Land-based Engineering | Animal Care | Environmental Conservation | Equine | Fencing | Aquaculture | Floristry | Tree and Timber | Game Conservation | Landscaping | Production Horticulture | Professions Allied to Veterinary Science | Land-based sector |
|--------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-------------|----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------------------|--|-------------------|
| South East | 12% | 4% | 15% | 17% | 10% | 14% | 26% | 3% | 16% | 8% | 8% | 17% | 19% | 22% | 12% |
| Eastern | 23% | 3% | 11% | 12% | 9% | 8% | 12% | 5% | 11% | 6% | 8% | 12% | 13% | 19% | 10% |
| London | 0% | 0% | 8% | 9% | 4% | 24% | 2% | 3% | 14% | 3% | 1% | 15% | 7% | 7% | 6% |
| South West | 9% | 19% | 10% | 9% | 10% | 7% | 8% | 5% | 7% | 10% | 10% | 11% | 11% | 9% | 12% |
| West Midlands | 8% | 7% | 8% | 9% | 7% | 7% | 12% | 2% | 13% | 7% | 5% | 6% | 9% | 6% | 8% |
| East Midlands | 16% | 5% | 8% | 7% | 7% | 5% | 6% | 2% | 8% | 7% | 6% | 6% | 7% | 5% | 9% |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 12% | 6% | 8% | 7% | 8% | 8% | 5% | 3% | 10% | 6% | 6% | 7% | 8% | 7% | 7% |
| North West | 3% | 9% | 10% | 11% | 8% | 8% | 12% | 3% | 8% | 5% | 6% | 12% | 11% | 10% | 7% |
| North East | 3% | 2% | 3% | 4% | 4% | 3% | 3% | 3% | 1% | 3% | 3% | 4% | 2% | 2% | 3% |
| England | 86% | 55% | 81% | 85% | 67% | 84% | 86% | 29% | 88% | 55% | 53% | 90% | 87% | 89% | 74% |
| Industry ('000) | 166 | 340 | 28 | 55 | 56.1 | 54.3 | 47.5 | 7.2 | 28.7 | 38.03 | 15.2 | 120 | 73.7 | 13.5 | 104 |

Table 5.3 Regional distribution (% of total numbers employed) of the environmental and land-based industries (Source: Lantra, 2003)

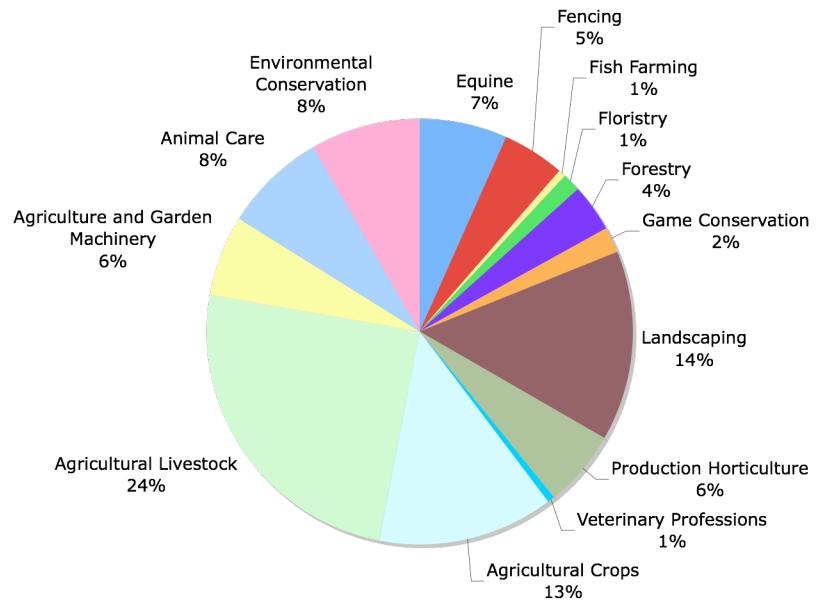


Figure 5.7 North East Land-based Employment by Sector, 2000 (Source: Lantra, 2001)

5.4.2 Agriculture

In the UK it was estimated that, in 2001, 18.5 million hectares (77%) of land was used for agriculture (Lantra, 2002b). Of this 4.5 million hectares is crop land, the remainder being used for livestock and other farming activity (Lantra, 2002a). In the North East 67.5% of the region is farmland (580,296 ha see Table 2) and of this only 15% (in the East) is defined as 'best and most versatile' compared to a national figure of one third (CURDS, 2005). Land classified as 'less favoured areas' accounts for 30% of the region's farmland (in the west) (*ibid*). So, although the landscape of Northumberland is an asset in terms of views and the additional value it adds to the built heritage embedded in it (see 5.3), it is not the most productive land. According to DEFRA there are 304,826 farm holdings in the UK and 5670 in the North East (DEFRA, 2003). Of the English regions only London has fewer holdings³⁰.

³⁰ It should be noted that the North East is the second smallest region in England after London.

| Region | Farm holdings | Farmland (ha) | % of region |
|----------------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|
| North East | 5,670 | 580,296 | 67.5% |
| North West | 19,010 | 897,417 | 63.3% |
| Yorks and Humberside | 18,591 | 1,096,226 | 71.1% |
| East Midlands | 17,650 | 1,225,257 | 78.5% |
| West Midlands | 21,666 | 942,592 | 75.5% |
| Eastern | 19,850 | 1,458,963 | 76.3% |
| London | 423 | 12,399 | 7.9% |
| South East | 21,629 | 1,162,680 | 61.0% |
| South West | 41,058 | 1,801,559 | 75.6% |
| England | 165,547 | 9,177,390 | 70.4% |

Table 5.4 Regional Variation in Farm Holdings and Farmland (source: DEFRA, 2003)

In terms of agricultural employment in the North East, estimated figures range from 1,322 (Northumberland Infonet, 2005) to 2369 (DEFRA, 2003) to 12,000 people (half of which are part-time) (CURDS, 2005). Animal husbandry is the dominant farm type with 35.6% of farms classified as rearing ‘cattle and sheep’ and the region accounts for a significant proportion of England’s sheep and cattle at 5.7% and 4.5% respectively (CURDS, 2005). Livestock play an important role in landscape management through grazing. Indeed, much of the countryside has been shaped by sheep and cattle farming. In terms of farm size ‘superfarmers’ and ‘the best of the rest’ account for 20% of holdings and 80% of output, the remaining 80% of holdings and 20% of output comes from ‘the rest’ (Herrmann, 2002)³¹. It should also be noted that Northumberland is dominated by a few landowners and hence has one of the highest rates of tenant farms in England. There is no obvious evidence of any significant regional specialisation in agriculture as the sector is in a relatively poor state.

³¹ ‘Superfarmers’ are defined as large scale profit driven operations with long term planning horizons. There are 4/5 family names in the NE. ‘The best of the rest’ farmers are classified as quality and profit driven. They have limited diversification but long term horizons. ‘The rest’ are subsidy reliant and production driven, may be ‘hobbyists’ as well as ‘commercial’ operations who have to focus on short-termist in planning and concerned with firefighting (Herrmann, 2002).

However, agriculture plays an important role in maintaining the landscape, increasingly so as land stewardship becomes a part of farming.

5.4.3 Forestry

The region's woodland and forests are also important to heritage because, like agricultural land, these make up the natural heritage of the NHC. Woodland is aesthetically pleasing and provides areas where people can experience a range of flora and fauna (some of which are unique to Northumberland, see 5.3.1.1), where schools can educate pupils, and where recreational activities can be enjoyed. CURDS (2005) highlight that forests can:

“deliver a range of important public benefits related to environmentally-led regeneration, in addition to their contribution to economic activity. Sustainable forest management and the creation of new woodland offers public benefits and supports rural development and economic regeneration.” (ibid: 19).

This is an extremely important contribution in relation to the NHC and particularly the tourist sector.

According to Forestry Commission figures there are around 1 million hectares of woodland in the UK (Forestry Commission, 2004), of that about 12% or 100,000 ha is in the North East (one third of that is Kielder Forest) (Forestry Commission, 2005). In England 8.4% of land is covered by woodland, and thus the North East has an advantage in terms of forest cover compared to other regions (Forestry Commission, 2005). North Eastern employment in forestry, according to Lantra (2001), accounts for 3% of employment of land based industries. This figure is the lowest for any English region outside of London (see Table 5.3). The forestry industry is worth around £425m in turnover each year and primary production employs 1,400 people (CURDS, 2005).

Key Strength – Kielder Forest and Reservoir

At 650 sq km Kielder Forest is the largest forest in England (largest human-made forest in Europe) and is also its most productive (Forestry Commission, 2007).

Located in the north west of Northumberland it straddles the border with Scotland and makes up some of the Northumberland National Park. It is also home to rare wildlife including otters, red squirrels, adders, Roe Deer and rare birds.

At the centre of the forest is Kielder Water a human-made reservoir operated by Northumbrian Water. It is the largest artificial lake in the UK with a capacity of around 200 billion litres and a shoreline of over 27km (Kielder Partnership, 2005). As well as supplying the NE with water, Kielder Water and Forest attracts 250,000 visitors each year.

The major players in the forestry sector are the Forestry Commission and its subsidiary Forest Enterprise. Both manage forests around the country and provide recreational facilities. In summary, while Kielder Forest is an asset to the NE, there is no significant specialisation of the forestry industry in the region.

5.4.4 Environmental and Landscape Conservation

This group of sectors - vis-à-vis the NHC - includes private heritage, botanical gardens, green spaces, “rural and urban conservation of landscapes, flora and fauna, countryside recreation and interpretation, and associated landscape management together with the maintenance and conservation of rivers, coasts and waterways” (Lantra, 2005b). Thus, like agriculture and forestry, it is a very important sector for the maintenance and reproduction of the NHC’s ‘natural’ heritage.

The landscape industry (dealing with more formal ‘natural’ heritage) contributes £3 billion to UK GDP. There are approximately 37,800 landscape businesses in the UK who employ

112,400 people, 37% of the workforce is estimated to be self-employed, 63% of landscape businesses are sole traders and 10% of the workforce is over the age of 55 (Lantra, 2001). As Table 5.3 highlights only 4%, or 4,800 people, in the landscaping industry are based in the NE. However, the disparate nature of the industry means statistics are hard to come by, and particularly difficult when one considers English Heritage and the National Trust account for a large proportion of the activity of the industry. What is clear is a skills gap in construction and maintenance of boundary features such as dry stone walls. This was identified by the Northumberland National Park Authority and is the subject of one of my case studies in Chapter 6³². Maintenance of such features is important for practical and aesthetic reasons, and as a recent study has shown dry-stone walling can contribute significantly to the economy (Courtney, et al., 2007).

Alongside landscape preservation, operating at a larger scale and with a wider remit, is environmental conservation. In the UK 56,100 people are employed in environmental conservation, along with an estimated 200,000 volunteers (Lantra, 2005b). The NE has 4%, or approximately 2,200 people. This sector is dominated by the national organisations, for example: British Waterways, Natural England, the Environment Agency, and Wildlife Trusts. Public sector organisations such as these, and voluntary groups, make up 80% of businesses in this sector. The voluntary sector in the NE includes over 450 people working for organisations such as Wildlife Trusts and other local societies.

Finally, game and wildlife management is a sector intimately connected to the landscape of the NHC. In fact, grouse shooting, along with agriculture, is a transformative sector and one reason for large areas of moorland in Northumberland (see Robbins and Fraser, 2003). In economic terms game shooting is worth £1.6bn to the UK economy (British Association of Shooting and Conservation, 2006). With some infrastructure in place already, this is a potential growth area for the LBI in Northumberland.

³² The size of the National Park (104,947 ha²) means it is a major player in the LBIs. Its role as a planning authority means it oversees any material changes to the Park and thus is central to protecting the landscape of Northumberland.

Key strength – Northumberland National Park

Stretching across a number of the land-based industries, Northumberland National Park is a key asset for the region. Established in 1956 it covers 1,049 sq km and is the most sparsely populated National Park in England. It is not only home to rare flora and fauna and spectacular scenery, the Park Authority manages a large area of land. Its main roles are set out by National Park's statutory purposes: to protect and enhance the area, and to promote opportunities for understanding and enjoyment. It provides much needed support for the wider LBIs through training and via its rangers. Furthermore, the Authority has responsibility for social and economic development of the area it manages. It is this latter role that places it firmly within activity harnessing heritages for new, and more normative means as discussed in Chapter 3. This is expanded upon in Chapter 6.

In terms of environmental and landscape conservation; apart from the National Park, there is no evidence of regional specialisation. In relation to a heritage cluster, this latter point has implications for ensuring the environment of the region is protected, preserved and enhanced. The state of much of the natural environment is poor compared to other regions so its enhancement is important. Consequently, the LBI will play a central role if the NHC is to maintain its strength in landscape. In terms of employment there is no specialisation in the North East in any of the LBI. However, the sector is essential to maintain the advantages the NHC has in landscape.

5.4.5 Summary: Potential and Challenges

While there is a lack of comparative advantages for the LBI, there are a number of areas of potential for the sector. Equally there are a number of challenges. Fortunately, the potentials are related to the challenges.

Agriculture faces perhaps the most challenges. Firstly, farmers in the NE are still recovering from the foot and mouth crisis of 2001 which saw 317,000 sheep and 54,000 cattle destroyed (Phillipson, et al., 2002). Secondly, farming incomes in the NE are very low. This is a problem that has affected the agricultural industry for a number of years and is a problem not limited to the NE. Nevertheless, with large numbers of small farms on low incomes another crisis like foot and mouth could be devastating. Diversification is therefore important and as it matures the NHC is providing potential areas for this diversification. For example, as I discuss in the following chapter, a number of projects are including agricultural organisations alongside community groups and tourist operators in their development schemes. In addition, much like agriculture across the country, a move into the non-food sector and industrial crops for energy and fuel is seen as a real opportunity in the NE

Thirdly, reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is a challenge for agriculture. Subsidies will be decoupled from production allowing farmers greater freedom to meet the demands of the market. For a region like the NE, where many farms rely on subsidies to keep them afloat, a market oriented scheme could have wide ranging negative effects. However, the CAP reforms, and other assistance schemes such as the Countryside Stewardship Scheme, reward environmentally friendly farm practices. On their own, however, subsidies are not a long term solution, but the North East has been successful in gaining these grants:

“The North East’s farmers have been successful in taking advantage of new developments in agriculture, including the introduction of Countryside Stewardship Schemes, with the region accounting for 11.3% of the total number of schemes and 18.9% of the total land area covered by such schemes. In 2003/04, more than £9.5million of English Rural Development Programme funding was allocated to Countryside Stewardship schemes and Environmentally Sensitive Areas in the North East.”

(CURDS, 2005: 18)

Fourthly, consumers have become increasingly concerned with quality, safety and traceability of their food, coupled with a concern for animal welfare and the environment - farmers need

to respond to this. As these concerns grow, organics is becoming a strong growth area. Farmers have a real opportunity to satisfy consumer demand for organic produce. Similarly, the creation of a regionally-embedded food chain is seen as important for agriculture and regional food and drink. At present a significant proportion of farm output is not processed within the region. Instead, limited primary production takes place in the NE with the real value added outside the region. Bringing the processing back into the NE will mean the food and drink sector (see below) will benefit from reduced costs and increased revenues.

In terms of forestry, the *Regional Forestry Strategy for the North East of England* provides a framework for the future development of the forestry industry in the region. It aims to invest in forestry to the benefit of economic regeneration and growth, environment and natural resources and society and communities (Forestry Commission, 2005).

As a demonstration of this, the region's timber processing sector has seen significant increases in capacity in the last decade and now boasts the second and third largest saw mills in England. In northern England and southern Scotland, it is predicted timber production will double in the next 10 years, which provides an opportunity for further expansion in the NE (Forestry Commission, 2005). A recent study (Poyry, 2004) concluded that the timber in the NE could expand to contribute a further £80 million GVA annually to the regional economy. This is significant in terms of the economy, and if the sector expands more woodland creates new opportunities for leisure activities. However, in terms of heritage, any new planting will likely be non-native species and thus, in one sense, if one wants an authentic landscape, it is potentially a negative move (Robbins and Fraser, 2003).

In more general terms, other opportunities for the LBI, and the NHC, stem from the England Rural Development Plan (ERDP). This has a budget of over £10m to help meet the goals set out by regional partners – partners who are central in the NHC³³. Some of the

³³ Forestry Commission, English Heritage, One North East, National Farmers Union, English Nature, Government Office for the North East, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, MAFF, Northumberland Wildlife Trust, Countryside Agency Northumberland, National Park Authority, Council for the Protection of Rural England, Environment Agency, English Heritage, Country Landowners Association, Community Council for Northumberland and Farming and Rural Conservation Agency.

key goals set out in the ERDP, that have a important bearing on, and provide opportunities for, the NHC include:

- protect and enhance the landscape
- to conserve and enhance the region's habitats and species
- reduce waste, harmful emissions and pollution
- a stronger, integrated rural economy
- increase business competitiveness
- increase the added value of goods and services produced in the North East
- increase the well-being of the region's population
- empower rural communities and maintain their distinctiveness and quality

(North East of England Rural Development Plan Regional Planning Group, 1999)

There is evidence that these goals are being addressed, however, sustained focus on them is needed to see the NHC develop further.

In summary the region's land-based industries represent an important part of the NHC's heritage. While there is no real specialisation in any of the industries, the region does have some important assets that provide development opportunities for the future. The future development of landscape based projects will rely on maintaining and improving the state of the landscape. By broadening my focus from just agriculture it has become clear just how important the other sectors of the LBI are in relation to heritage.

5.5 Creative Industries

The craft sector is highlighted in the proposal for this research, however, as I have done with agriculture, I shift the focus wider to the creative industries as whole. But, again like the land-based industries, not all the creative industries are significant to the NHC. Figure 5.8 highlights those that are:

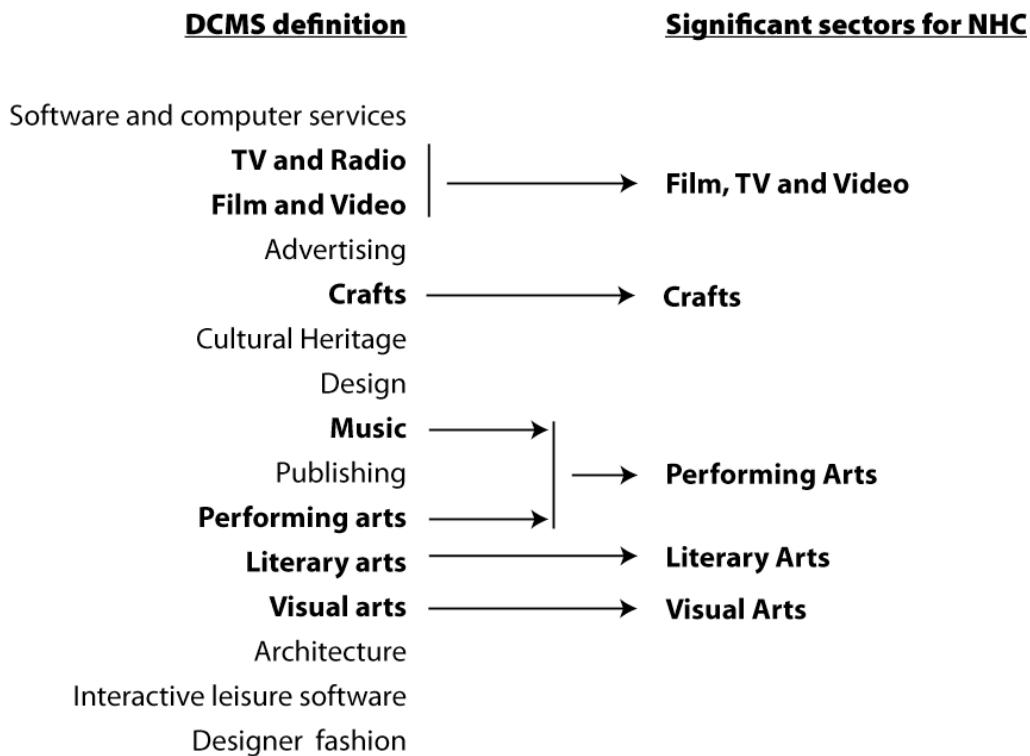


Figure 5.8 Make up of the creative industries sector

Each of the highlighted sectors - crafts, visual, performing and literary arts, and film, TV and video - are relevant to and intertwined with heritage in a number of ways. Firstly, heritage often acts as stimulation for the creative process; perhaps a landscape inspires a piece of writing, a visit to a historic site sparks the idea for a play, or a rock formation may set something off in the mind of a sculptor. Secondly, heritage is directly captured by the creative industries; whether an artist painting an industrial landscape, a church used as a backdrop for a film, or a historical event remembered in a poem. Thirdly, some crafts people adopt heritage techniques or approaches in their work; a potter using traditional methods to create stoneware for example. Finally, the products of the creative industries are potentially the heritage of the future. In these ways the creative industries can be seen to use heritage as an input, and to reproduce it as an output. Furthermore, these sectors demonstrate the changing appreciation of what heritage is and what it means to different people. However, they also represent the way in which heritage is commodified into the kind of heritage industry Hewison (1987) described (see 3.3).

What follows is an account of the creative industries relevant to the NHC. Using a Porter-esque framework, I begin with a general overview before outlining the most important organisations who support the creative industries. Then the national and regional characteristics for the sectors are identified, along with areas of particular strength. I finish this section by examining the challenges and areas of potential for the creative industries.

5.5.1 Industry Characteristics

The significance of the creative industries to the UK economy was outlined in a 2001 DCMS mapping document which estimated the creative industries generated £112.5 billion, employed 1.3 million people and accounted for over 5% of GDP in 2001 (DCMS, 2001).

According to Culture North East (Culture North East, 2007) “the North East’s Creative Industries continue to grow apace, faster than any other region in England”. The sector employs around 59,000 people (CURDS, 2005), there are 5,070 business (12% of regions total firms base) with a total turnover of £2.6 billion (Bowman Solutions, 2005). Over half the 3000 firms working in the creative sector are located in Tyne and Wear and over 65% of businesses are in the performing, literary and visual arts (CURDS, 2005). The creative industries are increasingly important to the NE with culture and creativity identified by regional organisations as a driver for economic development and job creation.

5.5.2 Support for the Creative Industries

Support for the creative industries was poor in the 1990s (Cornford, et al., 2001). However, since then things have changed: from 1997-2005 the Government doubled funding for the Arts Council which in turn increased funding for regional agencies. The Arts Council and The Prince’s Trust, in partnership, through the Cultural Business Venture has assisted 378 business, safeguarded 240 job and created more than 200 jobs (Arts Council England and the Princes Trust, 2004).

In relation to the literary arts New Writers North is the writing development agency for the NE. It is a unique organisation which aims to create an environment in which new writing can flourish. They work to help develop career opportunities, new commissions, projects, residencies, publications, live events and collaboration and cooperation between writers - as well as educational work (New Writing North, 2005). Independent Northern Publishers, supported by Arts Council North East and the EU Creative Industries Development Programme, bring together independent publishers from the NE and provides an online store for customers to access. Literature North East is a portal through which writers and publishers can network and find work.

This support infrastructure came together, in part, through the Newcastle-Gateshead Capital of Culture bid. Although the bid was unsuccessful many of the plans went ahead anyway in the guise of the Newcastle-Gateshead Initiative's Culture10 programme, greatly improving the region's arts infrastructure.

5.5.3 The Crafts Industry

In 2000, around 23,700 people worked in the UK craft industry. As one would expect crafts people are usually sole traders selling their work directly to the public, although some create designs which are sold to retail chains and mass produced.

In the NE employment in the crafts sector is dominated by sole-traders who tend to be well educated – both of these characteristics are in line with national surveys (see Crafts Council, 2003). There are 124 craft businesses in the North East; 71 on the Craft Council's National Register of Makers and a further 53 identified in the CCISG document. Cornford et al. (2001) estimate there are 1000 people working in the craft sector in the region and over 15 makers of national importance. Businesses are often started by people seeking to improve their lifestyle, this is particularly true of the over 50s, where profit is not a driving force.

Niche markets are key to the craft worker (or designer maker as they are sometimes called): craft fairs of local, national and international significance are all places designers sell their work. Galleries are also important places to exhibit and sell work – the number of galleries in

the NE does not compare favourably to those in other regions, even when population differences are taken into account (*ibid*).

Key Strength – Glass Making

An important sub-sector of the crafts industry is glass making. The NE has a particular strength here with the presence of the National Glass Centre in Sunderland. The University of Sunderland's Glass, Architectural Glass and Ceramics Departments are located at the National Glass Centre along with the International Institute for Research in Glass. The Centre attracts some of the world's greatest glassmakers and plays an important role in the training and education of new artists.

5.5.4 Visual Arts

Visual artists include painters, sculptors, photographer, and textile artists. The links with the crafts sector are strong and it is not unusual for visual artists to work as designer-makers and vice versa. For this reason it is difficult to find accurate figures for these activities, and it is made even harder as many artists have secondary jobs to supplement income or use art to supplement a primary income.

In terms of galleries there are over 65 in the North East; these range from poster shops to crafts centres to art galleries. Perhaps the most significant addition in recent years, in terms of national and international recognition, is the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art.

In terms of workspaces, Cornford et al. (2001) identified 33 artists studios or workshops, but it is an expanding sector so one can assume this figure has grown. Moreover, this figure does not take into account artists who use their home as workplace.

Key Strength – Baltic Gallery and Quayside

The Baltic was formerly a flour mill converted using an Arts Council grant of £32m. It now boasts some of the largest gallery spaces in Europe and regularly hosts internationally significant exhibitions. It is a trio of distinctive constructions on the Quayside alongside the Millennium Bridge and The Sage, a three hall world class music, education and entertainment centre.

The educational sector play an important role in this sector. The NE has the benefit of five large universities and numerous FE colleges, all of which provide a good supply of talented artists. Interdependencies between the visual arts sector and educational establishment are strengthened further when one considers many artists also teach to supplement their income. The NE also benefits from a number of collaborative projects between artists. The Waygood Gallery, for example, was set up by a former Newcastle University student with a grant of £500 pounds in 1995 and is now home to exhibition and workspace for artists. It is currently undergoing expansion from one floor in the Ward Building in Newcastle-upon-Tyne to take over the entire site, indicating the high demand for workspace. Also, ‘Network’, set up in 1992, is an independent association of artists in Northumberland that aims “to provide a service to the artists individually and collectively through networking and a programme of opportunities and events to aid and further their practise” (Network, 2006).

5.5.5 Performing Arts

According to Creative and Cultural Skills (2006b) 84,470 people (55% are self employed, 68% work full time) worked in the performing arts sector in 2006 and they contributed £4.1bn to the UK economy. There are around 5,350 businesses in this sector, 88% of which employ four people or fewer. The NE has the second lowest share of the performing arts

workforce in the UK (3,900 people), only Northern Ireland has fewer with 1,000 workers. London has the highest workforce with 62,240 workers (*ibid*)³⁴.

Cornford et al (2001) mapped the theatre and performing arts industry in the NE (Figure 5.9). This diagram illustrates the overlaps and collaborations throughout and beyond the creative industries. The NE has a smaller theatre and performing arts infrastructure than the neighbouring regions of Yorkshire and Humberside and the North West – partly because of the population differences, and partly due to low levels of historical investment in this area. Cornford et al. identify the main theatres (or receiving houses) in the NE which are located in the major conurbations and towns (Figure 5.9).

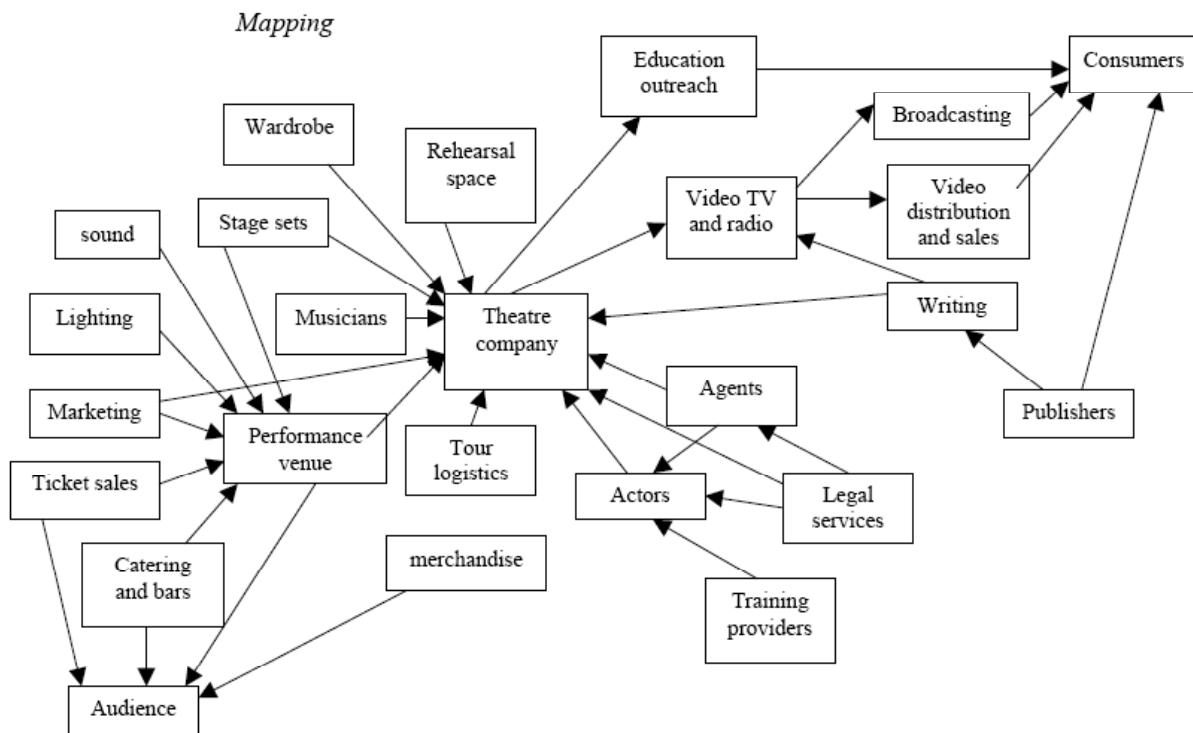


Figure 5.9: North East Theatre and Performing Arts Industry (Source: Cornford, et al., 2001)

³⁴ To some extent these figures reflect population differences, but London disproportionately dominates the cultural industries sector at the expense of the regions.

| Theatre | Capacity |
|-------------------------------|----------|
| Empire, Sunderland | 1875 |
| Newcastle Theatre Royal | 1294 |
| Darlington Civic | 900 |
| Whitley Bay Playhouse | 746 |
| The Forum in Billingham | 649 |
| Customs House, South Shields | 500 |
| Middlesbrough Theatre | 482 |
| Town Hall Theatre, Hartlepool | 406 |
| Arc, Stockton | 400 |
| The Darlington Arts Centre | 375 |

Table 5.5 North East Theatres (Adapted from Cornford, et al., 2001)

The Live Theatre, Northern Stage and Dance City (all in Newcastle upon Tyne) are the main producers of performing arts in the region. They specialise in new writing, spoken and written word; physical theatre; and dance respectively and are of national significance (Cornford, et al., 2001). There are of course numerous smaller theatre companies, many of which are funded by the Arts Council and run educational programmes. In terms of employment, insecurity and freelancing is the norm with some companies existing hand to mouth.

Theatre in the NE has a reputation for being culturally distinctive, and is linked to the wider heritage related sectors by drawing on a strong regional identity and its history. The sector is also strong in terms of developing local talent through educational and training projects (*ibid*). Training provision also means the creative industries as a whole benefits from a skilled pool of labour.

Key Strength – Northumbrian Music

Over the years the NE has produced many music acts – some successful, some critically acclaimed. In relation to the NHC, folk music, and in particular Northumberland pipe music, is very important. The history of Northumbrian music dates back to the time of the border wars between England and Scotland when stories were told in song, Border Ballards for example. Today traditional music can be heard at the many music festivals held throughout Northumberland each year, including the Brinkburn Music Festival, Northumbrian Gathering and Rothbury Traditional Music Festival. The art is kept alive by societies such as the Alnwick Pipers Society and Northumbrian Pipers Society, as well as Newcastle University's International Centre for Music Studies that runs a folk music degree. Perhaps the most famous exponent of traditional Northumbrian music is Kathryn Tickell who has performed on Sting albums.

5.5.6 Literary Arts

According to Creative and Cultural Skills (Creative and Cultural Skills, 2006a) 68,900 people (68% are self employed, 72% work full time) worked in the literary arts sector as their primary job in 2006 and they contributed £2.3bn to the UK economy. Of this 86% was from authors and writers. There are around 17,805 businesses in this sector, 93% of which employ four people or fewer. The NE has the second lowest share of the literary arts workforce at 1,170 people, Northern Ireland is lowest with 180 workers, London has the highest workforce with 23,930 workers (*ibid*)³⁵.

The region's five universities turn out thousands of English, literature and writing graduates each year adding to an already talented pool of writers. Together with The Northern Poetry Library and collections from the Northern Literary Fellows the region is well endowed with literary education. Recently Newcastle University has announced an addition to the region's

³⁵ Again, these figures reflect population differences, but also London's dominance in the sector.

literary capacity with the £52m Northern Writing Centre. Furthermore, the new Seven Stories Centre for Children's Books is educating the youngest readers. Seven Stories is the only organisation in the UK actively collecting original work by children's authors. The Centre is housed in a newly converted flour mill and provides a place where children's books can be explored at first hand through the Centre's collection of original works and 'up close and personal' with resident writers.

Key Strength – Literary Scene

The NE has a thriving literary scene. Many established writers call the region home including best-sellers, award winners, renowned critics and distinguished playwrights. The Universities of Durham and Newcastle support the North Eastern Literary Fellowship – one of the most prestigious in the country (New Writers North, 2005). The NE is also home to the country's largest independent poetry publisher – Bloodaxe Books – as well as around 40 other book publishers and promoters.

5.5.7 Film, Television and Video

Much like the visual, performing and literary arts the film, TV and video sector is connected to heritage through performance, capture and inspiration.

Skillset estimates about half of the 102,000 people employed in the TV and radio industry are freelancers. Over half the industry is located in London and generates the majority of the industry's £12bn turnover (DCMS, 2001).

The North East has "a small but very active and critically acclaimed film cluster, supporting 40-50 small businesses in Tyneside and Northumberland." (DCMS, 2001: 19). Cornford et al. (2001) explore it in more depth and pull out the three main elements of the cluster:

- BBC – currently employing around 170 people within the region in management, production and administrative roles.

- Tyne Tees Television – Now part of Granada Media, employing around 250 people and producing an average of 13 hours per week of news and regional programmes as well as programmes for network television.
- Independent production sector – The Northern Screen Commission's database lists 56 independent production companies currently operating within the North East and Cumbria. Most of these are small firms with a turnover of less than £50,000 per annum.

(Cornford, et al., 2001: 41)

NE employment in this industry is dominated by freelancers, as is the case for the industry throughout the country. There is a lack of technical expertise in the region. One of the reasons for this is that while large domestic production firms mainly source workers from the local area, they go outside the region for technical services (*ibid*). In addition, large Hollywood productions tend to bring their own crew. The industry as a whole is insecure and this is also the case in the NE, a high level of firm turnover is not unexpected, especially in film. The landscape, as identified above, also provides an advantage for this sector:

Key Asset - Locations

The region's unique and varied landscape is a key selling point for the film and TV industry. The size of the region means myriad locations and facilities can be accessed within a small geographical area. And it is the combination of environment and heritage which has attracted a number of major films to the area such as *Get Carter* (1971), *Robin Hood Prince of Thieves* (1991), *Harry Potter* (2001, 2002), *Goal* (2005), and *Atonement* (2007).

5.5.8 Linkages

The interrelations between the performing arts and film, TV and video are strong. These linkages also extend to publishing and music. Writing provides perhaps the clearest link and New Writing North and Northern Film and Media work closely and provide opportunities

for writers across these sectors. Links with educational establishments are also strong, particularly with the University of Teesside which runs media course and holds the Northern Region Film and Television Archive.

Arts and Crafts also benefit from linkages with film, TV and video by providing set and prop design. Northern Film and Media, the organisation tasked to attract film production to the region, has strong links with tourism. One of their key objectives is to “promote the development of ideas at every stage in the creative content process and explore global opportunities for their realisation, building especially on the region’s unique geographical and cultural links with Europe” (North Film and Media, 2005). Northern Film and Media are the main support organisation for film in the NE.

The NE film, TV and video cluster has a number of strengths. Perhaps the most important is the pool of writing talent within the region, linked closely to the literary arts sector (Cornford, et al., 2001).

5.5.9 Potential and Challenges for Creative Industries

There are a number of challenges facing the creative industries in the NE. A major factor in these challenges is London’s dominance of the creative industries. First, the critical mass in London is very attractive for young people and as a result the NE suffers from a brain drain of young talent. Second, the dominance of London also means getting recognition is difficult: critics are reluctant to travel to see exhibitions and performances (Cornford, et al., 2001). To rectify this companies often tour outside the region - turning this around and attracting those outside the region is needed for the long term sustainability. It becomes more essential when one considers the NE has a smaller number of theatre goers than other regions (*ibid*). Finally, networking in the creative sector is characterised by face-to-face interaction and getting yourself known to people (see for example Ekinsmyth, 2002b; Grabher, 2002a). The distance from London makes this difficult, especially for writers as the vast majority of the large publishing companies are based in London or the South East.

Gallery space is not as big an issue as it was five years ago – before the Baltic and other smaller galleries opened with Culture10 funding - but demand for exhibition space remains high. Amongst artists there is a skills gap in terms of business acumen and marketing skills. Designer makers do not usually have the time to dedicate to learning business skills or how to build a website. As a result reaching customers and turning hobbies into businesses is difficult. Finally, with the Olympics looming National Lottery funding is being cut for the arts directly and through funding of the Arts Council (Gardner, 2007).

In terms of future development, the heritage of the area offers a great deal of potential – particularly for locations. Productions such as those listed above have all successfully used the North East as a back drop. This kind of exposure not only showcases the region to film makers, but to visitors as well (Beeton, 2006).

At another level, the cultural output of Northumberland has been harnessed for economic, community, health and environmental purposes in the Northumberland Cultural Strategy. This strategy was drawn up by local authorities in partnership with stakeholder organisations and the general public. It has helped foster collaboration across the NHC and forms a case study used in Chapter 6.

In summary then, although the region is not a dominant force in the UK's creative industries, one can identify a number of areas of national and international significance – glass making, the Baltic, The Sage, folk music, the literary scene, and choice of locations. However, there are also a number of important challenges to be addressed – most importantly is trying to compete with London.

The creative industries play an important role in the NHC. For instance, they harness and reproduce heritage in their work that acts to preserve it and showcase it for others to experience. This sector also has strong linkages with the other activities of the NHC, directly with tourism and more implicitly with the land-based industries and heritage sector.

5.6 Regional Food and Drink

The NSP document highlights food as the third sector in the heritage cluster. In terms of the NHC, local or regional food and drink seems a better approach as it is about the importance of locally produced goods. It also has clear links with other sectors, particularly the land based industries with a direct link, and major overlaps, with agriculture.

The significance of the regional food and drink sector to the NHC can be demonstrated in a number of ways. Firstly the focus on the local is intrinsic in the cluster concept and this is central to the regional food and drinks sector. Many firms emphasise place in their names, for example Lindesfarne Oysters, Tyne Valley Fudge or Redburn Brewery. Others accentuate 'localness' and freshness with the use of 'farm' in their title: *Burtree House Farm* and *New Barns Farm Shop*. Furthermore, the use of local suppliers is a condition for membership of the regional food group.

Secondly, the relation to heritage, and therefore a heritage cluster, is evidenced in the use of traditional production techniques (a prerequisite of membership of Northumbria Larder, see above) and/or traditional recipes which links local food to cultural heritage (Tregear, 2001). Some firms explicitly use heritage in their names such as *Carroll's Heritage Potatoes* – growers of rare and gourmet potatoes. In other cases heritage is reflected in the way products are marketed: members of Northumbria Larder have names like *North Country Lass* with a silhouette of an old fashioned cook as its logo; *Northumberland Cheese Company* has a logo in the style of a wax stamp; *Swallow Fish Limited* indicate their traditional methods of smoking in their logo.

Third, many firms sell through traditional methods such as farmers markets and 'from the gate' through farm shops. However, producers increasingly use websites to promote their goods and sell their products.

5.6.1 Industry Characteristics

The UK food and drink industry is the largest of the manufacturing sectors; with sales of £69bn it accounts for 15.5% of all manufacturing turnover in the UK (UK Trade and Investment, 2005). The industry employs 423,000 people in almost 7,000 companies. UK consumers spent £152.6bn on food, drink and catering in 2004 – this is 21% of total expenditure (ibid).

Regional food and drink is an area which has been receiving greater attention in recent years. The scale of the regional food and drink sector is hard to pin down because of its complexity and interaction with the food and drink industry more widely. However, the Government's Working Group on Local Food draws some preliminary conclusions about the nature of the sector (Working Group on Local Food, 2003). They define the sector as comprising farmers, abattoirs, processors, manufacturers, catering and hospitality, retailers, and community led projects. The vast majority of enterprises are micro businesses, mainly farmer/growers. Local initiatives are driven by small groups of enthusiastic people (sometimes volunteers) who are committed to the sector and area. Sales of produce takes place through farmers markets, farm shops, direct 'from the farm gate' and through local retailers (this means supply chains are very short). Survival is the primary economic objective of businesses, but firms are also committed to other social and environmental objectives – some can even be defined as social enterprises.

A market research report for DEFRA (ADAS Market and Policy Research Group, 2003) estimates, albeit with limited data, that the turnover of the regional food sector is £3.75bn a year and accounts for 6% of the food and drink industry as a whole. In terms of where regional food is sold 65% is locally, 33% nationally and 3% internationally (by turnover).

Figure 5.10 illustrates the types of products produced by the regional food and drink sector.

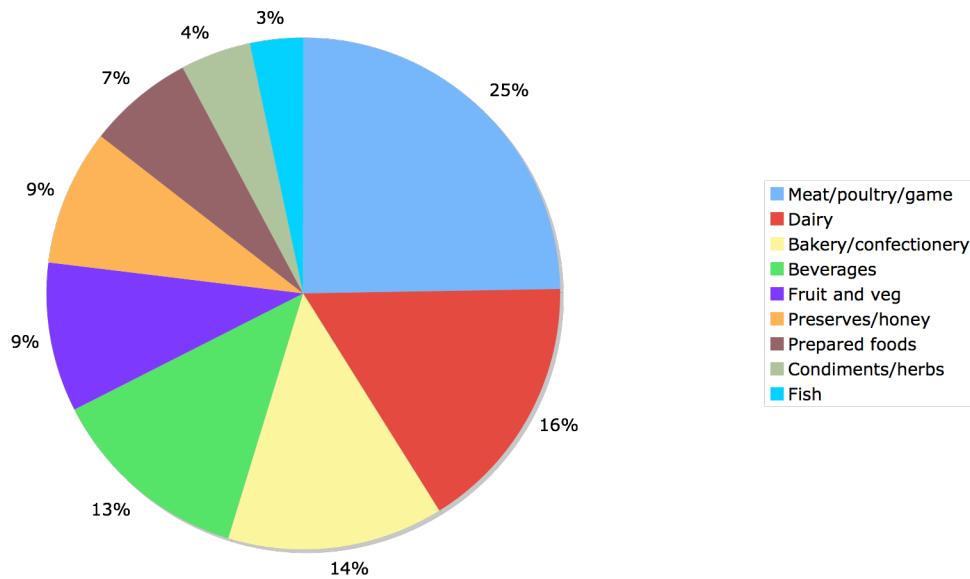


Figure 5.10 Types of Regional Food and Drink Produced in the UK

5.6.2 Support for Regional Food and Drink

In 2001 the Government set up the Curry Commission to look at an official strategy to integrate farming, food, sustainability and nutrition. In relation to regional food the Commission recommended transferring management of regional food issues from the Countryside Agency to Food from Britain, and that each RDA integrate a regional food component into their regional economic strategy (DEFRA, 2005a). Since then DEFRA has commissioned much research into the sector and has formulated a number of policies for the sector. Their perspective is that regional foods should provide quality products to consumers who can be guaranteed traceability and the highest standards of care to create “a flourishing high quality regional food sector” (DEFRA, 2005a). The Curry Commission recommended integration and resultant Government policy acknowledges this and seeks a focus on tackling social exclusion in rural areas, promoting sustainable, competitive and safe food chains, and promoting sustainable and adaptable farming methods. To reflect this integration DEFRA calls for public sector bodies to collaborate in meeting regional food policy objectives.

The Government sees regional food as important for the following reasons:

- Job creation
- Allows farmers to diversify activity
- Attracts tourism
- Increases exports
- Reduces farmers dependence on subsidies
- Increases consumer's awareness of farming and rural issues
- Allows farmers scope for land management
- Tradition landscapes and practices are preserved

In order to achieve these objectives a number of projects have been suggested, to be carried out by regional food groups with producers. These include support for exhibitions and fairs; support for directories of producers; developing clusters of producers and fostering collaboration with operators further down the food chain; information campaigns (including campaigns focused on tourism); advice and support for business management.

5.6.3 North East Regional Food and Drink

Food from Britain has a database of regional food and drink producers for each of the regional, and some county, food groups. Table 5.6 shows that the NE has fewer producers than other regions.

| Food Group | Number of firms |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Highlands And Islands Enterprise | 1158 |
| Wales | 512 |
| Taste of The West | 412 |
| Yorkshire Food Group | 234 |
| Tastes of Anglia | 188 |
| North West Fine Foods | 181 |
| Heart of England Fine Foods | 180 |
| East Midlands Fine Foods | 162 |
| Taste of Sussex | 143 |

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| Buckinghamshire Food Group | 128 |
| Oxfordshire & Berks. Food Group | 117 |
| Hampshire Fare | 96 |
| Produced in Kent | 94 |
| Northumbria Larder | 88 |
| Northern Ireland | 50 |
| Surrey Food Links | 41 |
| Sunshine Fayre (Isle of Wight) | 40 |

(Food from Britain, 2006)

Table 5.6 Regional Food Group Membership

Regional food and drink producers in the North East are represented by Northumbria Larder. Its role is to promote the region's produce as well as offer advice on management and marketing, encourage collaboration and generally act as a representative body – thus it plays a central role in this sector, and the NHC more widely. The importance of the Larder means it forms a case study discussed in Chapter 6. It has 88 members and is recognised by DEFRA, Food From Britain and One NorthEast as the regional fine food group. As the relatively low number of firms indicates the regional food and drinks sector in the NE is under-developed. The main reason for this is the late inception of a regional food group. Taste of the West was established in 1996, Taste of Anglia in 1992 which means that when Northumbria Larder was set up in 2002 other regions already had a head start in developing their brand and support provision. As is often the case in the NE it took a crisis to prompt action. In Northumbria Larder's case it was the foot and mouth outbreak which galvanised local food producers to set up the Larder.

The focus is on locally produced goods which are of high quality and promote traditional production methods; this is reflected in Northumbria Larder's membership criteria:

- source natural raw materials as locally as possible
- support local growers whenever possible
- promote individual and traditional methods wherever possible
- use local employees
- have traceability of raw materials where relevant

- develop regional identity
- promote the high added value in your product to your customers
- have high product quality
- support and/or attend local farmers' markets or other regional food Events
- add regional value to your product

(Northumbria Larder, 2004)

By definition each region has a specialism in their local foods; for example you cannot produce Northumbrian Lamb in Devon. However, the real competitive advantages come through marketing in the short term and reputation in the long term. At the moment the NE lags behind the rest of the country on both counts, but Northumbria Larder and individual producers are making good progress (see 6.2.2).

It should be noted at this stage that in the past a food and drink cluster (not regional food and food) has been identified (Promar International, 2002). Promar International mapped the sector, using an approach like that used in this chapter, to identify a Porterian cluster of 1,500 firms turning over £3.5bn (ibid). Their analysis is that the NE has a number of strengths, however none are particularly significant beyond the regional scale and collaboration between producers is limited. This contrasts with the regional food and drink sector where there is evidence of existing and growing collaboration (Northumbria Larder is a prime example of that collaboration).

5.6.4 Potential and Challenges

Primary processing in the region is limited in scale and level of value added with only basic milling, milk production and meat cutting taking place within the region. Most of the region's produce leaves the region for primary processing. The most notable exception is fish: Ken Bell International and Fisher Foods generate around £43m in turnover and employ 500 people (ibid).

The main issues the NE food and drink industry, and thus local food and drink producers, faces are:

- Large numbers of employment within the secondary processing sector are reliant upon external ownership for continued investment. The ability of subsidiary operations to influence investment decisions and strategies remain limited.
- The potential geographical mobility of operations within the secondary processing sector create pressures for regional competition in terms of investment and repeat investment from externally owned enterprises. The productivity of the labour force and associated logistical and support infrastructure will be important in retaining future investment.
- To support the independent operators in the identification and retention of markets.

(CURDS, 2005: 24)

- Firms lack competitive intelligence
- Where firms have developed business plans communication throughout the firm is lacking
- There is no shared vision for the industry in the region and even amongst individuals themselves

(Promar International, 2002)

Key strength – Secondary Processing

Secondary processing in the NE has been identified as the star of the food and drink industry in the region (CURDS, 2005; Promar International, 2002). This sector ‘makes’ food products, items such as ready meals, bakery goods and snacks. Effective linkage between local food producers and secondary processors offers great potential for the sector and NHC.

At a smaller scale Northumbria Larder have a number of members with emerging international reputations in cheese making, heritage potatoes, and cakes.

CURDS (2005) identify low labour costs, cost and availability of land, the low levels of employee turnover compared to national trends, relatively efficient infrastructure and logistical support as competitive advantages.

In terms of potential, other regions have successfully developed their local food and drink sector and with help so can the NE. With increasing focus on food miles, traceability and animal/environmental welfare, DEFRA expects retail turnover for the sector to increase 25% (2003-2008) (DEFRA, 2005b). Further potential lies in public sector procurement. Since chef Jamie Oliver highlighted the state of school meals, together with environmental concerns, there have been calls for the public sector to use locally sourced produce.

In terms of linkages to other industries/sectors identified here the most obvious is land management and in particular agriculture. There is also limited evidence of food tourism in other regions and although there is no research on that in the NE, Northumbria Larder is keen to strengthen linkages with the tourism sector. Getting accommodation providers to use local produce is a key way to do this. Furthermore, both VisitBritain and Food From Britain are actively encouraging the use of food to attract tourists to the UK.

5.7 Tourism

Along with the heritage sector, the tourism industry – or visitor economy – is the only sector not changed from the original notion of the NHC. Tourism is a major driver for all the sectors of the NHC. This is because it is an all encompassing sector, made up of many firms. As the Northumberland Strategic Partnership's Tourism and Implementation Plan outlines:

“[t]ourism in Northumberland is an unusual industry in that it is made up (for the most part) of a large number of very small companies, many employing 5 or less people. In Northumberland, there are at least 800 tourist accommodation and attraction businesses. But it is also an unusual industry in the scope of its multiplier effects. Pubs, restaurants, cinemas, shops, petrol stations, public transport, craft makers and galleries are some of the more obvious beneficiaries

of tourism but it also brings in substantial business to many other sectors of the economy from food and drink to building services, printers, accountants and solicitors.” (NSP, 2003: 4.4)

5.7.1 Industry Characteristics

The tourism industry accounts for 3.5% of the UK economy, making it one of the largest industries in the country: in 2003 it was worth approximately £74.2bn (Visit Britain, 2005). Between 1.4 and 2.1 million are employed in tourism³⁶, approximately 130,400 are self-employed (DCMS, 2005; Visit Britain, 2005), and there are 127,000 tourism businesses in the UK (DCMS, 2005).

In 2004 27.8 million overseas visitors came to the UK, an increase of 12% on 2003, and spent £13bn, a 10% increase on the previous year. This put the UK sixth in international tourism earnings behind the USA, Spain, France, Italy and Germany (Visit Britain, 2005). Domestically UK residents took:

- 70.5 million holidays of one night or more and spent £13.7bn
- 22.3 million business trips (staying over night) spending £6.1bn
- 34.3 million overnight trips to see friends and relatives spending £3.4bn (2003)

(ibid)

The tourism industry is an important and growing industry for the North East. In 2006 tourism contributed £3.5bn to the NE economy (£1.3bn day visitors, £0.9bn overnight visitors, and a further £1.3bn indirectly) (One NorthEast, 2007). The industry employs 55,000 people directly and a further 13,000 jobs are indirectly supported by tourism (ibid)³⁷. The region is under represented in terms of income from tourism and visitor numbers.

³⁶ Varying depending upon definitions.

³⁷ These figures include parts of the heritage sector and food and drink industry.

Table 5.7 demonstrates the close connection between tourism and the heritage sector: nine of the top ten admission charging attractions³⁸, and all the top ten free admission attractions in the region are heritage related. These figures do not include the numbers of tourists who use other heritage assets such as enjoying landscapes, parks or built heritage.

Table 5.7 The North East's most popular attractions (2003)

| Attractions charging admission | Visitors |
|---|------------|
| New MetroLand | 1,250,000* |
| Kielder Water Leapish Waterside Park | 400,000 |
| Alnwick Garden | 375,000 |
| Beamish, The North of England Open Air Museum | 317,860 |
| Centre for Life | 212,591 |
| Wallington House Walled Garden | 165,899 |
| Cragside House and Gardens | 163,148 |
| Bamburgh Castle | 123,341* |
| Bowes Museum | 115,000* |
| White House Farm Centre | 112,609 |
| <hr/> | |
| Free attractions | |
| Baltic The Centre For Contemporary Arts | 445,931 |
| The Discovery Museum | 440,968 |
| Steart Park, Middlesbrough | 400,000 |
| Derwent Walk | 324,000* |
| Sunderland Museum And Winter Gardens | 320,628 |
| Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle | 286,728 |
| Hardwick Hall Country Park | 230,000* |
| St Aidens Winery | 225,000* |
| Barter Books | 200,000 |
| South Shields Museum And Art Gallery | 178,849 |

(Source: Northumberland Infonet, 2004)

In addition, of the millions of tourists who visit the region each year the vast majority will experience the NE's heritage in some respect. Whether they come specifically because of

³⁸ MetroLand, a theme park, is not a heritage attraction.

what the region has to offer is hard to say, but heritage is playing an increasing role in marketing the area³⁹.

In terms of structure, the governance of tourism in the North East is complex. In March 2004 ONE took over responsibility of the Northumbria Tourist Board and now oversees development of regional tourism strategy for the whole of the NE. Area Tourism Partnerships (ATPs) are ONE's sub-regional partnerships between the public and private sector to deliver resources and strategy for local tourism needs. The situation is further complicated at the local level with city councils, local authorities and county councils promoting tourism in their respective areas. Furthermore, at the county level Strategic Partnerships – made up of public and private stakeholders - play a role in tourism. On the ground strategy comes from the top, middle and bottom of the governance structure (see examples in Chapter 6).

Key Strength – Variety

One of the main advantages the tourism industry are the advantages of the other sector discussed here: Hadrian's Wall, the castles, coast, countryside, wildlife, local food, arts and crafts etc. (see Table 5.7). Importantly there is a wide range of attractions to experience that can cater for all ages and interests – as discussed in Chapter 2, heritage can provide these kinds of niches. In addition there is shopping, entertainment and sporting facilities for visitors to enjoy.

The region also benefits from 2 airports (Newcastle, and Durham and Tees Valley), which has seen Newcastle-Gateshead grow in popularity as a city-break destination. The tourism infrastructure in general is in a good state with the capacity to absorb considerable growth (CURDS, 2005), especially with the major capital investment made over the last half decade which has seen large numbers of tourists visit the region. Key examples include the Sage, The Baltic, The Alnwick Garden and Hadrian's Wall Trail.

³⁹ One North East's regional image campaign emphasises the central role of heritage in the region. Heritage features are often juxtaposed with more modern images of the North East (see Appendix).

Key Strength – The Alnwick Garden

Opened in 2001, the Alnwick Garden is Northumberland's most popular visitor attraction and has had a positive impact on the local economy (Sharpley, 2007). It is projected that after the completion of the final phases of the Garden, 445 jobs (full time equivalents, direct and indirect) will have been created (Garden, 2006).

Key Strength – Investment in culture

CURDS (2005) identify the “ongoing public-private sector support of culture-led regeneration is therefore a competitive advantage, with Culture 10 receiving £60 million for the local councils, One North East, Arts Council and Sport England” (p.66). In addition private sector investment in bars, hotels and other tourism infrastructure means Newcastle-Gateshead has a truly competitive brand in the city break market.

5.7.2 Summary: Challenges and Potential

The NE is still perceived as isolated from the rest of the country, reflected in the fact that a great deal of domestic tourist visits to the NE originate within the region or from neighbouring counties. Furthermore, the costs of a domestic holiday, to Northumberland for example, can be more expensive than a trip abroad.

CURDS (2005) research identifies skills shortages in the tourism sector, with particular gaps in delivering high order service provision. The standard of visitor accommodation is also a concern with many bed and breakfasts in need of modernisation. The region also needs to ensure it can keep track of the changing tourism market especially as it is already lagging behind its competitors.

In terms of future development opportunities for tourism, research has been undertaken to identify where opportunities lay. Three groups of people have been identified as key targets:

The Older Traditionalist⁴⁰; The Upmarket Alternatives⁴¹; Younger Experience Seekers⁴² (CURDS, 2005). Heritage has an important role to play in attracting and fulfilling the needs of these groups.

In terms of overseas growth ONE's North East Tourism Strategy 2005-2010 outlines a trans-regional strategy with Visit Britain and Northern Way partners (North West Development Agency and Yorkshire Forward). Promotion of England's North Country is the marketing objective aiming to increase overseas visits to the area. The aim of ONE is to increase overseas visits by 3% by 2010 (One NorthEast, 2005).

Tourism has important connections with all the sectors of the NHC. Tourism provides the infrastructure for visitors coming to the region – and the other sectors provide heritage attractions for tourists to visit when they are here; local food and drink for consumption and arts and crafts for purchase. The importance of tourism for the NHC means it can be seen, to a certain extent, as a gauge for the success of the NHC. And given the importance heritage plays in the tourism offer of Northumberland and the North East, visitor numbers and spend means tourism and the NHC are intimately connected. However, reliance on a sector as potentially volatile as tourism is not a good plan. Nevertheless, the NHC should aim to increase its share of the UK tourist sector because it can provide jobs and income. To do this the weaknesses outlined above need to be addressed, and the areas of potential developed.

⁴⁰ Including “Ski Brogues” – Age 50+, wellheeled couples, probably retired former professionals or wealthy business people; “New Empty Nesters” – Age 40-65, suburban couples, free of kids, who both work in middle to senior posts; and “Suburban BC1’s” – Age 45-65, couples nearing the end of their employment, up to middle management (NSP, 2003: 3.1).

⁴¹ Age 25-54, couples who tend to choose an “alternative” way of life including holidays off the beaten track, alternative medicines, vegetarian and/or organic food, etc. – including families (ibid).

⁴² A useful additional target for activity breaks such as cycling and walking (including day visits), rather than main holidays (ibid).

5.8 State of the cluster

To recap, there are a number of key strengths for the NHC:

Heritage

- Coastline and landscape
- Hadrian's Wall
- Origins of English Christianity
- Castles
- Industrial Heritage
- Local Authority Cultural Services
- International Centre for Cultural Heritage Studies

Land-based industries

- Kielder Forest and Reservoir
- Northumberland National Park

Cultural Industries

- Glass Making
- Baltic Gallery and Quayside
- Northumbrian Music
- Literary Scene
- Locations

Regional Food and Drink

- Secondary Processing

Tourism

- Variety
- The Alnwick Garden
- Investment in Culture

The approach adopted here is based upon Porter's definition of a cluster and should be regarded as one perspective on the NHC. As I have demonstrated, although there are areas

that still require development, there is a great deal of potential in the NHC. In particular the variety of heritage available is large; something recognised by those already harnessing it. Furthermore, developments within the rest of the North East – significantly NewcastleGateshead – provide a platform of visitors and demand from which the NHC can build. As highlighted above the area is rich in cultural ‘assets’ and the cultural sector is strong. This is another source of potential for the NHC.

In terms of a Porterian cluster (1990; 1998a; 1998b), what I have demonstrated is a group of sectors in a *related field*, comprised of *companies, specialised suppliers, service providers, firms in related industries and associated institutions* that are *geographically concentrated* – centred on Northumberland – that *compete but also co-operate*. Let me to expand on each of these elements:

- *related fields* – as explained in each sector analysis, the common linkage between each sector is heritage. Heritage may be exploited, harnessed or adopted as a resource; or the output of a firm’s activity may be contemporary reproductions of heritage.
- *companies, specialised suppliers...and associated institutions* – these vary in number, size and influence sector by sector. However, all are present in and across the cluster.
- *geographically concentrated* – by broadening my scale of analysis it is possible to say that the strongest concentration of heritage in the NE is in Northumberland. The main activity drawing on this heritage is in Northumberland and Newcastle upon Tyne, with the most direct connection to heritage in the former (Northumberland has a stronger and more robust ‘cultural landscape’), more indirect uses of heritage is in the latter (in the creative industries for example). The latter’s importance may have been missed by simply examining Northumberland’s heritage related sectors. At a wider scale - the North of England or UK for example - the concentration is less strong. However, in terms of the cluster’s key strengths, the NHC has competitive advantages significant at the national and international level.

- *compete but also co-operate* – this element of the cluster is dealt with in more detail in the following chapter, but it is clear that there is both competition and cooperation between firms in the NHC. However, competition in particular, is limited in places due to the undeveloped nature of certain sectors (regional food and drink for example).

The crucial point is that the cluster is embryonic. There are a number of areas of key strength that gives the NHC significance at national and international scales. However, the infrastructure needed to harness this potential is underdeveloped or missing. Furthermore, although there is an undoubted relative upturn in the region's fortunes, the crisis the North East's economy has been through in the past leaves it lagging other areas of the country. The most important thing is that the firms, suppliers, institutions etc. are competing and co-operating in a geographically concentrated area.

So, does this prove the heritage related sectors in Northumberland constitute a cluster? In the terms of 'flying cluster makers' then the answer is easy; yes the heritage related sectors do represent a cluster. But as I have argued above the approach used does not provide a detailed enough analysis of clustering activity to produce anything more than an outline of what a cluster could be. The question is harder to answer in both Porterian and socio-economic terms. For Porter there needs to be vigorous competition, because "[w]ithout vigorous competition a cluster will fail" (Porter, 1998a: 79). Even in newer clusters he argues it is important "[o]nce a cluster begins to form, a self-reinforcing cycle promotes its growth, especially when local institutions are supportive and local competition is vigorous" (ibid: 84). So, perhaps in Porter's terms the heritage related sectors in Northumberland are not a cluster because there is not enough competition.

However, as I argue in Chapter 2, competition should not be seen as the sole mechanism driving a cluster's formation or success. Socio-economic factors are just as, or in some cases more, important depending on the area of focus. Unfortunately simply outlining the scale and scope of a cluster cannot properly identify these socio-economic elements, where they are formed, how they formed and by whom. So, while all the above may be a perfectly acceptable analysis of the NHC for a policy arena – explaining what the NHC is - I would

argue it is not deep enough to properly understand how the NHC works. Understanding the mechanisms at work within a cluster are essential to properly understand it and to give informed advice on its future development – as a CASE student something I feel should be done. To do this further, deeper and closer analysis is required. I do this using a case study approach as outlined in Chapter 4.

5.9 Drawing a line?

With the final points of the last section in mind, it is important to know *where* to focus this further, deeper and closer analysis. Within the clusters debate one issue is continually raised; that of scale and boundaries. Given the interest in the concept from the policy arena, and a desire to create and foster clusters, people want to know exactly where a cluster is. This desire comes from wanting to claim the cluster on the part of local authorities, RDAs etc. who can also claim kudos and recognition for their area (Rosenfeld, 2003). Furthermore, knowing where a cluster exists helps identify from where money for development can be leveraged.

Porter, who himself admits that “drawing cluster boundaries is often a matter of degree, and involves a creative process” (1998: 202), along with other cluster researchers, has been accused of ‘geographical elasticity’ in the cavalier use of scale (Martin and Sunley, 2003). In my view the idea that at an abstract level one can provide a framework for delineating the boundaries of a cluster is futile, unless it is tested empirically. Time and time again it has been shown that the concepts used in cluster analysis, and economic geography more widely, do not and cannot be confined in a predetermined space. Space is an important constitutive element of how such concepts are played out, but trying to draw lines can be a difficult task. It is much more productive to examine the context and scale of individual clusters to provide a clearer understanding of the scales at which different mechanisms are operating. This does not mean, however, that I find geographical elasticity is acceptable. Rather, I would argue that boundary issues should not be seen in isolation amongst a list of other ‘cluster headaches’ as they are in some critiques of the concept (Malmberg and Power, 2006). Instead they should be viewed alongside analysis of the characteristics of different

clusters. Indeed, such an approach may provide greater insight into those other elusive concepts also in need of clarification.

In terms of geographical scale, the NHC it is largely centred on the county of Northumberland. However, as outlined in Table 5.2 there are organisations with direct influence on the cluster that operate at the regional, pan-regional, national and international scales. Northumbria Larder, for example, represents all food and drink producers in the NE; Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd (responsible for the management of HW) has a remit stretching across two Government Office regions; designer makers sell their goods throughout the country; EH and DCMS have national heritage policies influencing the NHC; people who work in the cluster do not all live in Northumberland; funding for projects in the NHC has come from the Newcastle-Gateshead Initiative; the tourism sector is subject to global pressures and trends; I could go on. Furthermore, modern day boundaries did not exist when the histories of the region were being played out: Northumberland did not resemble anything like what we know it as today until the 11th century. The scale of historical events are very different to the scale of modern day policy interventions. As Durie et al. argue, when dealing with heritage and sense of place “[n]either historical accuracy nor strict geographical boundaries matter here” (2006: 48). Moreover, from a visitor’s perspective it matters not where the NHC exists. Often a tourist will not distinguish between a castle in County Durham and one in Northumberland. Importantly though, the main clustering activity (the activity creating and sustaining the NHC) is to be found within Northumberland. This activity is the focus of the next chapter.

In terms of the size of the cluster, it is difficult to put a precise figure on the number of firms and employees in the NHC. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter there is no definition of what a heritage cluster looks like, and only notional ideas of what constitute heritage related sectors (5.2.1). Although this chapter and Chapter 3 have sought to clarify matters by outlining what the scope of the NHC is, the overlap between sectors and the way they are defined means statistics can only be used with caveats. To begin with, most of the available statistics are aggregated at the regional level because that is the level at which responsible bodies now function. For instance, until recently there was a tourist board for Northumberland, but that was amalgamated with the Tyne and Wear, Durham and Teeside

Tourist Boards to create the North East Tourist Board. Further difficulty arises with the definitions of sectors. As cited above, the North East Tourist Board claims there are 55,000 people employed in the tourist industry. However, their definition includes heritage attractions and restaurants that could also be counted in figures for heritage and food and drink sectors respectively. Finally, the seasonal nature of sectors such as tourism, heritage and food and drink, and their vulnerability to events such food and mouth disease, means gaining accurate statistics depends on the time a survey is undertaken.

With the statistics available, and keeping the above provisos in mind, one can estimate there are approximately 150,000 people employed in heritage related sectors in the North East. Heritage related activities are not necessarily driven by economics, but, nevertheless, in monetary terms, these sectors generate over £4bn regionally. The NHC is centred on Northumberland, and a high proportion of the cultural and tourist sectors (particularly accommodation providers) are based in Tyne and Wear, therefore the figures for the NHC will be somewhat lower. Further research in this area needs to be undertaken to gain a more accurate picture of the quantitative nature of the cluster. The findings of this thesis mean such research is now feasible, without a potentially unending survey of undefined sectors.

Chapter 6

Competition, Collaboration and Institutions in the Northumberland Heritage Cluster

“One cannot come here and just take; one has to contribute to its life in order to enjoy it, to earn the privilege of living here.”

(Beckensall, 2001: 11)

6.1 Introduction

Where the previous chapter dealt with the scale and scope of the NHC, and thus answered the first of my research questions (outlining the scale and scope of the cluster), this chapter delves further into the cluster to explain its dynamics and thus answers the second research question (identifying the drivers, mechanisms and socio-economic characteristics of the cluster). The Porter-esque approach to identifying clusters outlined in Chapter 5, while useful in providing an outline of a potential cluster and estimating its size, is limited in shedding light on the more important interaction that produces and reinforces a cluster’s socio-economic characteristics. In fact, as Martin and Sunley (2003) point out, this is not a problem confined to Porter’s work. There is also a tendency in some of the literature to simply point out, for example, there is evidence of collaboration between cluster members but not fully interrogate what form this collaboration takes, its motivations and outcomes. Further, the voices of those initiating and fostering socio-economic processes are sometimes

lost in the clichés of clusters analysis as scholars attempt to construct abstract theories on local and regional development⁴³.

With this critique in mind the chapter begins by discussing two central features of clusters, competition and collaboration. I explore the absence of ‘vigorous’ competition in the NHC, and the sporadic and increasing collaboration between firms. This is the result of the relatively poor performance of the North East economy since massive de-industrialisation in the latter half of the 20th century, as reflected in low levels of inward investment and entrepreneurship (Dawley, 2007; Wray, 2008). As a response the public sector has taken a major role in nurturing local and regional growth. This role is mirrored in the NHC which is dominated by organisations either in the public sector or funded with public monies⁴⁴.

Examining another aspect of the multi-perspective approach, and drawing on the findings of the previous chapter, I outline this strong institutional presence using Amin and Thrift’s institutional thickness framework (1994; 1995). I highlight the intense levels of institutional interaction that manifest themselves in high levels of contact and cooperation. This is facilitated through, and helps reinforce, significant levels of trust and reciprocity between the key organisations of the cluster.

I then go on to illustrate the outcomes of this interaction in the form of structures of domination and coalition, and a common ‘industrial’ purpose. The roots of these are identified in not only the socio-institutional characteristics that make the NHC tick, but also in the heritage and history of Northumberland itself. I emphasise this importance drawing on the discussions in Chapters 2 and 3 to highlight the role local ‘time-space-specific conditions’ play in the make up and operation of the cluster. The result of these factors is a cluster where activity goes beyond the sole economic function of other, supposedly more

⁴³ Perhaps this is one of the reasons the cluster concept is still described as ‘chaotic’ (Martin and Sunley, 2003) and causes ‘recurring headaches’ (Malmberg and Power, 2006).

⁴⁴ As highlighted in Chapter 2 the public sector dominates the heritage sector, this should not be overlooked as a contributing factor to the central role of the publicly funded organisations in the NHC.

successful, clusters. Sustainable development and a desire to develop the cluster for the greater good, not simply in monetary terms, but for the environment and communities of Northumberland, is a dominant feature of the NHC. This marks the NHC out as unusual amongst the clusters identified in the literature and helps address the absence of work looking beyond the economic potential of clusters identified in Chapter 2.

6.2 Competition and Collaboration Between Firms in the Northumberland Heritage Cluster

As outlined in Chapter 2, many scholars have emphasised the role competition and collaboration play in the success of clusters, whether found separately or working in partnership. Porter bases most of his work on the notion that competitiveness is the central driver of a successful cluster. In turn, he argues, competition leads to productivity, and productivity is the key to success (Porter, 1990; Porter, 1998a; Porter, 1998b). However, Porter's ideas on clusters and competition have been criticised for being too simplistic (Martin and Sunley, 2003). Other scholars have argued that competition is the reason rival firms co-locate in the first place. The idea is that by operating in the same environment they can benefit from access to the same resources, and at the same time monitor what competitor firms are doing, and where successful, mimic them (Malmberg and Maskell, 2002).

In a similar way collaboration is seen as a way to learn what other firms are doing, but through embedding themselves in networks of trust and reciprocity rather than observation or monitoring. The sharing of information and technology is also a way to share risk and stabilise markets in the face of competition from competing locations. In the formative years of a cluster, and to newly established firms, this is important as other advantageous spillovers may not have formed, or be inaccessible.

Some scholars have sought to theorise how these seemingly opposing concepts can be found in the same place. Malmberg and Maskell, for example, argue that “whereas firms in the vertical dimension of the cluster are business partners and collaborators, the horizontal dimension consists mainly of rivals and competitors” (2002: 438). However competition and

collaboration are balanced, it is clear that they are important characteristics of a cluster. The question, then, is are these present amongst firms in the NHC? The answer is complex, so I shall take each element in turn.

6.2.1 Competition in the NHC

The competition in the NHC is not at the 'vigorous' levels Porter calls for. It is present, both within each of the sectors in the NHC and in the cluster as a whole, but is limited in Porterian terms. There are a number of reasons for this. First, as outlined in Chapter 2 (2.2.10), clusters go through a series of stages with early developmental periods characterised by low levels of firm numbers and high levels of heterogeneity. The previous chapter, and from what interviewees told me, explains that the size of each of the sectors is relatively small and this matches the level of demand. This means there is not fierce competition between firms. For example, in the food and drink sector there is plenty for everyone:

"they [producers] do compete within the same market. And the only reason they can do this - I will have to be quite careful how I say this - is because there aren't a lot of them out there in the NE; we by far have the least [producers] of all the regions."

(Northumbria Larder Informant 1)

In addition to this, high levels of heterogeneity (made possible by the wide variety of niches available to an industry such as heritage) means this is not an issue at present. Second, collaboration is more prevalent in the early stages of cluster development, which helps protect firms. As Kevin Taylor from Business Link warned in the accommodation sector:

"If they [B&Bs] were in fierce competition they wouldn't survive."

(Kevin Taylor, Business Link)

The lack of competition in these sectors is a result of, and allows the survival of some businesses that are not at the same standard as found elsewhere. For instance, one informant told me of bed and breakfasts still using nylon sheets from the 1980s. They argued without high levels of competition there is no spur to expand a business and offer more to

customers, meaning some providers had become complacent. As such, many operations remain poorer quality 'lifestyle businesses' for their owners happy to continue as they are. Equally, another informant explained that the low level of quality in some areas means it is difficult to compete with more popular places and increase visitor numbers. As the cluster develops however, competition is expected to increase.

6.2.2 Collaboration in the NHC

In terms of collaboration in the NHC there is increasing evidence of firms working together and forming networks of trust and reciprocity crucial to the operation of many clusters. For instance, in the creative industries sector, 'Network' is an independent association of artists in Northumberland established in 1992. It aims "to provide a service to the artists individually and collectively through networking and a programme of opportunities and events to aid and further their practise" (Network, 2006). Network has almost 200 members and provides a number of marketing opportunities for its members including a website facility and the 'Art Tour', a series of 8 Sundays every summer where the public can visit artists in their studios and purchase work. The Tour is a way for the public to experience the embeddedness of the artists in the local environments. As well as this the courses and networking the association engages in are examples of collective learning and a support structure for its members.

There is evidence of similar activity in the tourism sector as Kevin Taylor told me:

"There are a number of, about half a dozen at the most, what are called networks nowadays... What we have is associations, there is a very good one in Alnwick. There is one in Rothbury and Coquetdale... There is one up in North Northumberland, another in Redesdale around the Otterburn area, and another in Haltwhistle. This is where they have grouped together, sometimes pulled together by the public sector, and then get on with it. The three main ones - they have about 90-100 members each."

(Kevin Taylor, Business Link)

In practical terms these associations come together for collective marketing in the form of a website and brochure, but also work together to help each other out:

"The good thing is they are fiercely jealous of their own areas, naturally they do the best for their own business, but they are fiercely jealous of their own areas. So if someone rings up for a room, if they haven't got it they will pass it on, or give telephone numbers out...And they work very well like that."

(ibid)

There is also room for expansion of these networks to include other local businesses:

"They work very closely together, and I'm encouraging some to work even closer...there are lots of things like inns – pubs with rooms – they could band together much more."

(ibid)

In the food and drink sector there is a similar picture:

"There have been attempts [at collaborative associations], there are a few, there is at the minute in North Northumberland between red meat producers. There has been one up in the Pennines which I think started off with 30-40 farms all collectively trying to get together."

(Northumbria Larder Informant 1)

Unfortunately these groups do not tend to last due to a lack of market knowledge:

"the one up in the Pennines is only three of them now. They seem to form and then fall apart. I think that is because they form without knowing the market without actually knowing the food industry...they know the people want their meat but they don't know how to get it there."

(ibid)

One of the roles of Northumbria Larder – itself an organisation formed through collaboration (see 6.3.3) – is to help firms with market intelligence. In terms of vertical integration between primary producers and processors the picture is better:

“...over the last two or three years, probably because our membership has changed quite a lot, we have what I call more strategic producers on board and the development of that has, in the last 12 months, has been quite marked. People processing products, Tanfield Food Products is a prime example, taking primary products from small producers and turning it into ready meals. There is quite a lot now, there is another company down in Darlington who was very much the bottom end of the ready meal market and they are now doing a much more up market product. They are putting the provenance of where the primary products, the protein basically, is coming from. They are even trying to source local veg.”

(ibid)

The sector could be further strengthened and integrated if local producers could provide fruit and vegetables which, at present, are not grown in large quantities and to a high enough quality in the region – this is a key weakness for the industry and a barrier to further integration of firms. Furthermore, external linkages are weak. As highlighted in the previous chapter much produce leaves the region where value is added, only for it to return to the region once processed.

However, where the food and drink sector does have a strength it utilises it, as in the case of the NE’s most famous export:

“...probably Newcastle Brown Ale is the only thing we are famous for but they have allowed quite a number of producers to use Brown Ale in their products, which has helped their products no end, because the marketing behind Brown Ale is so big. So you’ve got Doddington who put it in ice cream,...you’ve got fruit cakes, bread, and jams with it in...”

(Northumbria Larder Informant 2)

Again, there is room for more collaboration and Northumbria Larder is helping to facilitate this:

“So that is one of the things that I feel quite proud of, that without much effort, just pulling these people together they start talking to each other and working out they can help each other. The networking sort of bit of it. [But] it could be a heck of a lot better.”

(ibid)

The Alnwick Garden is another example of a larger operator collaborating with local producers to develop new products. The Garden is collaborating with local firms in innovation partnerships:

“We’re fortunate our Executive Chef is a local lad who has come back to Alnwick, knows all the local farmers very well and what we’re trying to do is work with DEFRA to identify farmers who could diversify and perhaps identify new products for us. And we work with them to bring their product up to quality... Wheelbirks is a really good example, that’s the ice cream we sell on site. We did tasting, we chose Wheelbirks as the one we wanted... and the Executive Chef working with them on flavours which are our own... on the back of [our] order they have been able to get funding from DEFRA and create a much bigger ice cream plant down in Stocksfield.”

(Elisabeth Smith, Alnwick Garden)

As well as assisting firms to expand production through accepting their products, Alnwick Garden also helps on the development side:

“We want local stuff, but we want it to have a specific flavour for the AG or a specific look for the AG which you don’t get anywhere else. So we work with people and say if you can do this instead of that, if you could put that picture on scarves instead of tea towels we’ll be interested. So that initiates discussions around marketing, business planning, product lines – how you produce it, etc. We’re giving people knowledge and stimulating innovation and creative thought.”

(ibid)

Along Hadrian’s Wall (HW), until recently, there was very little integration between firms. But, under the stewardship of the HWTP’s Hadrian Means Business project, many new firms formed as the HW corridor was developed. These firms were aided by HWTP and Business Link, amongst others, in business development and, importantly, networking to try

and integrate the supply chain. Where there was once an environment where firms were “...fairly fragmented...” today there is a situation where “*producers and retailers wanted to find each other more easily*” (Tamsin Beevor, HWTP).

One of the reasons for an increase in collaboration and coordination amongst firms in the NHC was the effect of the 2001 foot and mouth disease outbreak. This revealed structural weaknesses in those sectors reliant on the countryside particularly when movement restrictions were imposed on the land they relied upon (Phillipson, et al., 2002). In the food and drink sector this prompted the establishment of Northumbria Larder:

“it was a reaction by producers who had lost their markets as markets had been closed as part of the bio security measures for controlling foot and mouth...It was the biggest economic shock that they ever experienced. That got people together round a table and ask[ing] what are we going to do about this.”

(Northumbria Larder Informant 3)

Although the linkages discussed here are helpful, it is important smaller firms do not become completely reliant on larger organisations. As Granovetter has argued, forming strong ties is not necessarily the most productive relationship. In Chapter 2 I outlined a number of examples that address this issue. For instance, Ekinsmyth (2002a; 2002b) argues an over-reliance on certain actors can lead to lock-in. Further, Grabher highlights the way in which the Ruhr region missed opportunities to innovate because it became dependent on particular modes of operating. The NHC needs to be wary of only looking inward for support, opportunities and innovation.

To conclude this section, there is clear evidence that firms are working together to share ideas, stimulate innovation and use established brands to help smaller firms grow. At present this is mainly due to geographical embeddedness simply as a result of proximity. However, there is emerging evidence of cultural embeddedness - a common purpose - fostered by the public sector. The role of the public bodies in helping to develop this cultural embeddedness is very important, and therefore the next section interrogates the institutional presence in the NHC and the cultural embeddedness it is supporting.

6.3 Institutional Presence in the Northumberland Heritage Cluster

Institutional economics focuses on the socially embedded and instituted nature of economic activity (Amin, 1999). It draws heavily on the work of Granovetter who argued that economic networks are based on interpersonal and inter-firm relationships which avoid “the extremes of under- and over-socialized views of human action (1985: 504). Within regional development it has been used by scholars to explain why some places perform particularly well in certain industries. As I have highlighted in Chapter 2, notable work include Storper’s untraded interdependencies (Storper, 1997), Amin and Thrift’s (1994; 1995) ‘institutional thickness’, and a whole host of research influenced by Italian theorists on industrial districts in the ‘Third Italy’ (for example Becattini, 1978; Brusco, 1982; Pyke, et al., 1990; Brioschi, et al., 2002).

Institutional thickness is perhaps the most methodical thesis and although it has come in for criticism (see for example MacLeod, 1997; Leonard, 2002; Henry and Pinch, 2001) it is a useful lens through which to view and understand the institutional presence in a place. The framework provided by Amin and Thrift (1994; 1995) is useful insofar as providing a list of elements one can use to identify and analyse the ‘thickness’ or ‘thinness’ of local institutions. However, as the authors state, it is the process of institutionalisation and the spillovers this generates which is the important factor.

Following Amin and Thrift’s four elements of institutional thickness, this section identifies the strong institutional presence, high levels of interaction between these organisations and the common purpose that emerges from this. Amin and Thrift (1994; 1995) provide us with the following four key dimensions of institutional thickness (see also 2.2.9.1):

1. An institutional presence: i.e. the existence of institutions such as firms, government agencies, chambers of commerce, trade associations, unions, training centres and education establishments;
2. High levels of interaction amongst these institutions that create a set of shared rules and methods of working (this factor is similar to cultural embeddedness);

3. Structures of domination and coalition to gain collective representation and to minimize sectionalism and rogue behaviour;
4. A mutual awareness of ‘industrial purpose’ to a common goal – reinforced by particular sociocultural representations, such as ethnicity, sexuality, regional identity, gender, etc.

In best case scenarios institutional thickness should produce six outcomes: institutional persistence (the reproduction of local institutions); a ‘library’ of both codified and tacit knowledge; institutional flexibility (the ability to learn and change); high innovative capacity; reciprocity and trust; and a “widely held common project which serves to mobilize the region with speed and efficiency” (Amin and Thrift, 1994: 15).

6.3.1 Institutional Presence in the NHC

Chapters 3 and 5 provide an indication of the types of institutions which relate to the NHC. To recap, these organisations operate at a variety of scales ranging from supra-national organisations such as UNESCO and the World Archaeological Congress; to national bodies such as DCMS, National Trust, English Heritage and LANTRA; to regional organisations including ONE, Government Office North East, and the NE tourist board; to more locally focused institutions such as local councils (including NNPA), Northumberland Strategic Partnership and its boards (e.g. Culture Sector Board), and local chambers of commerce; at the micro level there are bodies such as the Kielder Partnership, North Pennines AONB Partnership, Rothbury and Coquetdale Business Club and bed and breakfast associations. There are also institutions specific to particular sectors, these include Arts Council England NE, Natural England NE and Northumbria Larder. Many of these, both general and sectoral institutions, extend their presence through strategies such as the Northumberland

Cultural Strategy, Regional Food and Drink Strategy, Regional Economic Strategy and connected local responses⁴⁵.

In terms of educational institutions contributing to the NHC, Newcastle University's International Centre for Cultural Heritage Studies and the Centre for Rural Economy have strong ties to the cluster, in particular links with Hadrian's Wall and Northumbria Larder respectively. Indeed, personnel from these departments sit on boards of these organisations. Northumbria Larder and the food and drink sector in general have strong links to the Food Technology Centre at the University of Teesside, which provides help and advice to producers. And as outlined in the previous chapter, the region's higher education establishments also provide the creative sector with qualified and experienced graduates.

Clearly, then, there is a plethora of institutions influencing the NHC, some of which "can provide a basis for the growth of particular *local* practices and collective representations in social networks" (Amin and Thrift, 1995: 102 emphasis in original). It is also clear that there is a particular type of institution working in, with and for the cluster: almost exclusively these are publicly funded organisations. The reason for this is twofold. First, as outlined in Chapter 2, the national significance of heritage means much of it is controlled by the state and its quangos. Second, Northumberland is part of an old industrial region still recovering from intense restructuring since the 1930s (see Hudson, 1989; Hudson, 1998). As a result the area has been reliant on public monies to help it redevelop, and hence public bodies dominate large aspects of the region. The upshot of these two factors is that while there is a significant, and growing, number of firms in the NHC, they operate within a context defined by publicly funded institutions. Further, given the embryonic nature of the cluster and inability at this stage to be self sustaining, public bodies act as providers of training, signposting, and capacity. This is a crucial finding of this research as it helps to explain the operation of the cluster. Furthermore, it marks the out the NHC as different compared to other clusters where the public sector generally only plays a supporting role, with the private sector dominating.

⁴⁵ The current climate of regional strategies requires local action plans are drawn up to demonstrate how the wider strategy will be implemented.

In some ways, the major part the public sector plays in the NHC mirrors what has been seen elsewhere. As discussed in Chapter 2, in recent years public bodies have sought to foster clusters within their region or country. This usually involves measures to develop the socio-economic relationships touted in the literature. This is happening in the NHC, although it is not being done as an explicit cluster development policy. As mentioned in the previous chapter there was little self-awareness from the people I spoke to that the sectors I investigated were as connected as they are. Some more strategic actors could appreciate the immediate linkages – between land-based industries and food and drink, or between heritage sector and tourism, for example – but a holistic picture was missing until it was discussed at interview. The measures and characteristics being fostered are aimed at simply developing economic development more generally and without reference to creating a cluster. This reflects three things. First, as is made clear in Chapter 5, parts of the sectors constituting the cluster are underdeveloped. This is being addressed through the kind of generic economic development activity being undertaken by cluster members. Second, connected to this is the fact that the cluster is still embryonic with a self awareness still emerging – as demonstrated by discussions during fieldwork. Third, incorporation of policies to foster cluster characteristics through general economic development programmes may reflect the diffusion of cluster ideas into development agendas more widely.

6.3.2 Institutional Interaction

Amin and Thrift's second factor is "high levels of interaction amongst the network of institutions...high levels of contact, cooperation and information interchange" (1995: 102). Institutional interaction in the NHC is very high for two reasons. Firstly the small size of Northumberland, and the size of the sectors involved in the NHC, means people meet a lot, become familiar with each other and develop the trust which is so important in collaborative relationships:

"[Northumberland is] a big place but it's a very small population and it is a very small amount of people at the strategic level who deliver these things. So everyone in the county gets to know each other very well. When you go to a meeting, it doesn't matter if it is an environment forum, a cultural

forum, planning forum, there is a lot of the same faces around the table and you get to know the organisations quite well. In that respect we work together very well.”

(NNPA Informant 2)

“The North East is a big village really, and Northumberland is a hamlet. It is the same people you come across all the time...and you build up that trust, and respect.”

(HW Informant 1)

Secondly, if people want to get things done they have to work together:

“Northumberland...has learnt that working together gives us greater force to any requests...if all the district [authorities] go to region[al bodies] for whatever reason it weakens the argument whereas combining together gets us further and I think we've learnt that over the years.”

(NCS Informant 3)

The high levels of interaction in the NHC manifest themselves in four ways. First, in terms of contact, numerous people I interviewed worked for, or sat on boards of, a variety of institutions. For example, Lynn Turner, Tynedale District Council's Director of Tourism, Culture and Communications, sits on the Culture Sector Board (CSB) and was a main player in developing the NCS. As well as this she is:

“...on Northumberland Sport so I see a lot of officers at Northumberland sport, I'm on the Creative Partnerships Board, obviously the Culture Sector Board, I'm also on Northumberland Tourism, so another set of stakeholders, and in the Kielder Partnership quite a lot of those are the same people. Similarly HWTP when it was in existence. So I have quite a lot of contact in different forums.”

(Lynn Turner, Tynedale DC)

Similarly, a heritage professional on the CSB, is on the board of more than one organisation:

“other organisations I sit on? Well not many at the moment because I divested myself from some of them to concentrate on what I'm doing at the moment. But as an example of other things I was on

the board of Northern Country Skills Partnership...the NE regional film and TV archive...the Museums and Gallery Board at the University of Newcastle.....oh, I'm a member of Newcastle City Arts and Culture Trust...In terms of formal memberships of things, not many at the moment."

(NCS Informant 2)

Second, there are high levels of cooperation between organisations through joint working, and there is a lot of evidence of this from the case studies - Figure 6.1 gives an indication of some of the partnerships formed in the NHC. That seven local authorities, plus NNPA, work together to develop the NCS, is a clear example of this. Northumbria Larder has worked closely with HWTP on three food events on the Wall. The Larder and NNPA are working together to get local food products into the Park's visitor centres. The NNPA is working very closely with ONE on a number of projects, as the Park's Chief Executive, Tony Gates, described:

"With One NorthEast we have been working on a number of individual projects. You probably heard from Andrew [Miller] the Rothbury Coquetdale vision project [ASPECT] we're working with One NorthEast on that...I'm currently working with ONE on the development of the Rural Development Programme, the working group there, helping to devise how a new social economic scheme for rural areas can be rolled out in future."

(Tony Gates, NNPA)

HWTP also worked very closely with ONE, Newcastle City Council and the now defunct Northumbria Tourist Board on a whole range of projects. Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd is working even more closely with ONE and the North West RDA which are its main funders. This is only a sample of the high levels of collaboration between institutions in the NHC, which, according to interviewees with experience in other places, is unusual in the heritage sector.

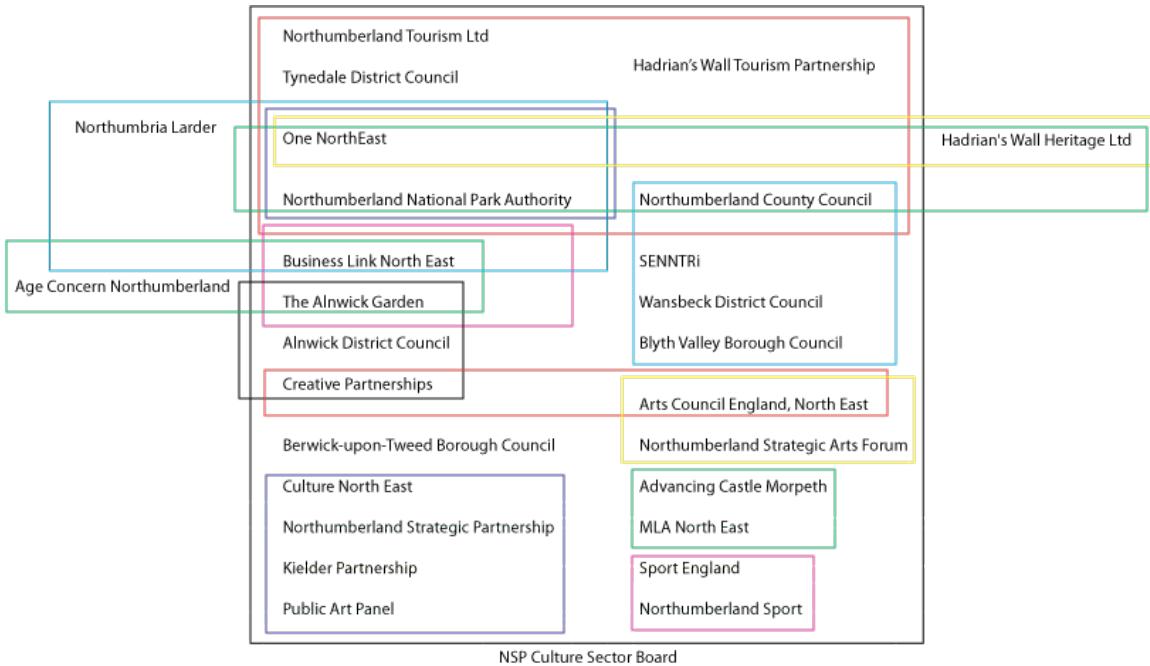


Figure 6.1 Examples of collaboration between organisations represented on the NSP Culture Sector Board (boxes indicate joint project work).

Third, the significance of public bodies as funders of heritage related projects means there is a lot of information exchange when applying for funding. Detailed, and often joint, bids have to be drawn up in application for monies which mean people are very aware what activities others are involved in. Finally, a number of organisations facilitate collective learning in the cluster by running seminars and workshops in Northumberland, and the wider NE, to share ideas and exchange experiences of their work. One such example is the Northern Rural Network (NRN) run by the Centre for Rural Economy at Newcastle University. The NRN holds frequent seminars for its 900 members based on a variety of subjects pertinent for rural firms, volunteer organisations, individuals, community groups and the public sector. In the past events have focused on cultural heritage and rural development, the role estates play in the rural economy and food supply chains. As well as acting as fora for knowledge sharing and learning, these events also allow people to form and reinforce networks.

One of the outcomes of this high level of interaction is that knowledge is shared between actors. For Kevin Taylor from Business Link this was a key advantage of organisations such as the CSB:

“...you have [name removed] sitting opposite you and you say, ‘What about doing so and so, and so and so..?’ And she’ll say, ‘No you can’t do that because...’ and she’ll explain it to you what is basically council procedure. Or you might be talking to someone from the Arts Council and say, ‘Have you thought about...?’ and they’ll say, ‘You can’t do that because of this, this and this.’ Or ‘Yeah actually we could do that, if we used that you could do this and this. I’ll look into it and get back to you.’ That’s the sort of meetings we used to have.”

(Kevin Taylor, Business Link)

Furthermore, as has been shown in the project work literature, iterative working practices rely upon and breed trust (Grabher, 2001a; 2001b). Trust can be advantageous in creating scale economies, negotiating risk and fostering creativity, as well as promoting rapid information exchange outside of the project context through affiliated networking activity. A prime example of this from my fieldwork was the fact that on more than one occasion interviewees had spoken to each other and mentioned my research before I had met them. It was a little unnerving, but demonstrated the close ties that have formed within parts of the cluster. It was also not uncommon for people to meet outside of their working environments.

Continual interaction between actors - in formal transactional relationships, collaborative partnerships and informal interaction - creates relationships that bind a group of people together in trust-based relationships. In the most successful cases this is manifest as ‘swift trust’ (Grabher, 2002a; Mayerson, et al., 1996). This is a category driven trust allowing individuals to deal with each other as roles rather than individuals, as expectations are standardized in terms of task. For example, “we trust engineers because we trust engineering and believe that engineers are trained to apply valid principals of engineering” (Dawes, 1994: 24 cited in Grabher, 2002a: 210). In the NHC this can be seen in the construction of project teams for particular events. These groupings will be made up of representatives of interested parties and will work because people understand that if someone is from the Arts

Council they will be an Arts Council person, in that they will embody, to a certain extent, the views and practices of the Arts Council. Similarly if there is a local authority representative people will understand what this person will bring to the team. Furthermore, representatives on the board with events management skills, for example, are trusted because of others' experience of people with similar skills and the successful events they have managed in the past – much like the engineers in Dawes' example (1994).

On top of this is a layer of familiarity – either personal or through a network of relations – formed from working with people in the past. For example, interviewees referred to each other in familiar terms, had repeatedly worked with each other and knew intimately what their jobs involved. More importantly they understood their viewpoint on all manner of issues. In summary, institutional and personal interaction is very high, found in various forms and is to the benefit of the cluster through its stabilising and binding effect. One of the outcomes of this are structures of coalition.

Again, as mentioned above, these ties are important for the operation of the cluster, but if they become too embedded to the detriment of external linkages there is a danger that such strong ties could become disadvantageous. At the current stage of development however, such collaborative relationships are important while the cluster 'finds its feet'.

6.3.3 Structures of Domination and Coalition

Amin and Thrift's third factor, that of "sharply defined structures of domination and/or patterns of coalition resulting in the collective representation of what are normally sectional interests, and the socialisation of costs and the control of rogue behaviour" (1995: 102) is also to be found in the NHC. As mentioned above the main structure of dominance is the fact that the majority of formal institutions in the NHC are public bodies or publicly funded agencies. These institutions play an important role in encouraging collaboration and collective representation. Two cases which illustrate this well: Northumbria Larder and Hadrian's Wall Tourism Partnership. First, Northumbria Larder which, as explained above, is the regional fine food and drink group. Although there were previous attempts at creating a food and drink organisation, none had established themselves properly. Notably Food

from Northumberland lasted less than a year after funding from Northumberland County Council was cut (circa 1999). However, in 2001, foot and mouth disease devastated much of the rural economy as the countryside was effectively closed and with it the markets for food and drink producers. As mentioned earlier, to local business people this was a catalyst to create something that would bring producers together and provide coordination and support functions for the sector.

NL was established and membership has grown to over 60, more than a quarter of the estimated food and drink producers in the NE. The advantage of having one organisation collectively representing producers was key to getting Larder member's products into Asda:

"there was a focus for things to latch on to – Asda was developing a local food strategy, they had someone to talk to who was prepared to consolidate producers' products for them. Before that, before that sort of catalyst, they weren't prepared to talk to 60 odd little producers individually. What they wanted was one delivery. And NL was able to facilitate that and we are still doing that and we are turning over six figure sums now in product within the 20 stores that Asda has in this region."

(Northumbria Larder Informant 3)

The second example of collective representation is Hadrian's Wall Tourism Partnership – like NL it was tasked with coordinating and representing businesses, in this case along Hadrian's Wall. Despite being inscribed as a World Heritage site in 1987, in the early 1990s - before HWTP was established in 1995 - the attractions along HW, stakeholders in the Wall (English Heritage, the National Trust as well as landowners and farmers) and firms operating in the vicinity of the Wall cooperated very little. In their words:

"...talking but not communicating"

"...no joined up thinking"

"...it was chaos and uncoordinated"

"...we all tended to do our own thing, there were very few mechanisms for doing joint work together"

(HW stakeholders cited in Hadrian's Wall Tourism Partnership, 2006)

Even after English Heritage had drawn up the first management plan for HW, there was a belief amongst some stakeholders that English Heritage were dictating how to live their lives and run their businesses⁴⁶. This was compounded by a lack of communication between organisations; Professor Peter Stone, Chair of Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site Management Plan Committee and Head of Newcastle University's School of Arts and Culture, recollected that:

“it got to the stage that farmers were scared that English Heritage would somehow stop them ploughing their fields, that owners were worried English Heritage would somehow insist open access.”

(Prof. Peter Stone, Newcastle University)

Despite this turmoil, the potential of the Wall was recognised by a number of people, particularly Andrew Duff, then Head of the Northumbria Tourist Board. However, if the Wall was to become a sustainable tourist attraction stakeholders needed to work together. To actualise this HWTP was established in 1995, and although the early focus was to create a sustainable tourist product, the need to align the new ‘partners’ was clear. The Partnership built good relationships with stakeholders and it worked hard to get people communicating with each other:

“It is just recognising everyone has their own agenda and reason for being around the table. There are great tensions on Hadrian’s Wall... So it wasn’t always easy and there were always the tensions of conservation versus tourism side of things, but we were able to broker a lot of things which would have been more difficult had we not been there.”

(Jane Brantom, HWTP)

The work of HWTP led to more communication and coordination between organisations invested in the Wall, to quote again from stakeholders on the work of the Partnership:

⁴⁶ Evidence of the pervading view of the establishment controlling heritage for their own ends (see also Chapter 3).

“...it really has been about coordination and not control”

“...it is part of the culture of HWTP and the staff within it that has gained the trust of stakeholders, who can trust them to deliver on everyone’s behalf”

(HW stakeholders cited in Hadrian's Wall Tourism Partnership, 2006)

The cooperation and communication between organisations, through the HWTP, leading to a better coordination is an example of what Amin and Thrift refer to as ‘socialisation of costs’ (1995) in that they are able to tap into economies of scale and scope formed through collaboration and collective representation.

Furthermore, as Stuart Evans of the NNPA and HWTP management group explains, the Partnership also sought to inhibit rogue behaviour:

“...when I walked the Hadrian’s Wall Trail the first year it was open, you went to Housesteads and you could buy water from the Peak District National Park, you could buy ice cream from the Yorkshire Dales National Park, and you could get an energy bar that was made in the Lake District! You could get nothing from Northumberland because the operator had a national purchasing policy. And that was challenged.”

(Stuart Evans, NNPA)

A brand has also been developed to give a single image for the Hadrian’s Wall corridor (a single ‘face’ for the coalition) to further enhance the consistency of offer, and build consumer confidence:

“...brands have to be clarity consistency and leadership. So sometimes you have to go with and know it will work and therefore they will follow...If the other information that people then get bears a resemblance from the top level from the consumer’s perspective it is more joined up. It gives the consumers much more confidence. They can see x’s bed and breakfast is part of this bigger whole.”

(HW Informant 2)

This brand builds on the identities provided by the shared heritage of Hadrian's Wall and helps manage a collective identity as firms can use it to demonstrate their affiliation to a wider group of people/firms and the values they share (Pike, 2007).

6.3.3.1 The Dominance of the Public Sector

Given the dominance of the public sector, as the cluster matures and, hopefully, grows and prospers, there comes a question of what role the public sector has in the future. The long term sustainability of the cluster will depend on the private sector taking a more prominent role. It would be unsustainable and inappropriate, even potentially illegal, for public monies to be used to support a more developed NHC in the way it currently does, especially given complex state aid rules (see Collie, 2002; Cremona, 2003; Deak, 2002). There is even the potential for the cluster to experience 'lock-in' if the private sector cannot be weaned off public sector support. However, given the government's role as protectorate of the nation's heritage, the public will always have an important role to play in the cluster. It will be a complex transition.

Moreover, the current institutional environment fostered by the public sector – expanded on below – may not be conducive to the NHC if/when the private sector matures and becomes more self-sustaining. As Hudson (2005) has demonstrated, the institutional environment of the North East in the 19th and early 20th century, while being one of the driving forces of massive industrialisation in the region, was a hindrance to making necessary adaptations in the mid and latter parts of the twentieth century. For Hudson,

“inappropriate institutional thickness, often a relic from an earlier era when it was supportive of regional economic success, [it] can act as a barrier to moving a regional economy onto a new and more promising development trajectory”

(Hudson, 2005: 586)

As discussed in Chapter 2, such lock-in is dangerous to the long run sustainability of regions. Drawing on the work of Grabher (1993), Hudson (2005) highlights the cognitive institutional lock-in experienced by some communities in the North East. He describes the

reluctance to commute, low expectations and ambition in relation to education and skills, and an enduring belief that employment will be provided by others. These legacies can, Hudson claims, be traced back to the spatial configuration and employment practices of the formerly dominant industries in the 19th and early 20th centuries. One result of the latent dependency on others for employment is low levels of entrepreneurship in the region (Hudson, 1998; Benneworth, 2004).

The lack of, and need for increased, entrepreneurship is widely recognised within the region (Hudson, 1998; Van Stel and Storey, 2004; One NorthEast, 2005; Wray, 2008) and poses a potential barrier for the further development of the NHC. This is reflected by the amount of work done by public agencies to coax people into establishing their own businesses, or if they have a small business to expand it:

“I personally think that the only way we are going to completely have a food industry in this area is if some of these innovative small people who want to grow, there are a lot who don’t, its either a lifestyle or they don’t want anyone to get too involved in what they do... we signpost them off to various people who do and assist them in trying to find markets be it independent shops, farmers markets, food multiples or food service or whatever.”

(Northumbria Larder Informant 1)

“Our role is in upskilling, training and business advice and support. Also encouraging new starters into the businesses. We are desperately short of serviced accommodation in this part of the world so we are looking to bring in new people who can come in and at least hit the ground at least on their feet, never mind running. And then we look after them for a little while afterwards, gradually backing away but we’re always there.”

(Kevin Taylor, Business Link)

Alongside direct policies to increase and expand firms, the collaboration and institutions described above also aid entrepreneurship by creating an environment for firms to emerge (see also 6.4.3). However, as public organisations dominate both direct and indirect measures to aid the NHC’s development there is a danger the public sector is reinforcing the cognitive lock-in Hudson describes (Hudson, 2005). Paradoxically, while it is the public sector who are

helping create mechanisms and relationships which might, one day, mean their help is no longer needed to the same extent, it is public sector involvement that risks lock-in for the cluster.

6.3.4 A Mutual Awareness of a Commonly held Industrial Purpose

Given the institutional thickness of the NHC one might expect substantive overlap and therefore confusion surrounding who is responsible for what in a crowded arena. Drawing on Sharpe (1993), Gibbs and Jonas (2001) identify a ‘disjointed meso’ where regional level governance bodies’ responsibilities overlap creating confusion over whose functions start and end vis-à-vis similarly endowed institutions. Within the NHC there is a great deal of overlap but any tensions are managed through Amin and Thrift’s final element of institutional thickness, “a mutual awareness that they are involved in a common enterprise...that there is a commonly held industrial purpose” (1995: 102).

This is a result of the interaction and structures of coalition/domination referred to above. As Amin and Thrift explain “contact and interchanges are often embodied in shared rules, conventions and knowledge which serve to constitute the ‘social enterprise’ of a particular region” (1994: 14). Here then is a good place to also address Storper’s (1997; 1997) similarly phrased concept of untraded interdependencies of the NHC. For Storper, untraded interdependencies come in the form of “labor markets, public institutions, and locally or nationally defined rules of actions, customs, understandings and values” (Storper, 1997: 19). The similarities with these latter features and Amin and Thrift’s fourth element of institutional thickness are clear, it is the same sets of institutions highlighted as foundational in both theories. Thus, identification of the NHC’s informal institutions which contribute to its untraded interdependencies aids the apperception of the cluster’s ‘commonly held industrial purpose’.

During the fieldwork interviews there emerged an ‘industrial purpose’ amongst members of the NHC (demonstrated in quotes below) that can be summarised as wanting to see Northumberland’s heritage developed in a sustainable way for community, environmental

and economic ends⁴⁷. It is these common goals, along with effective lines of communication, that negates confusion over who does what.

As Storper (1997) argues, untraded interdependencies form from particular knowledges and understandings of how particular resources and technologies can be used or exploited. In the case of the NHC the main resource in question is the varied heritage of Northumberland. Furthermore, as explained in Chapter 2, history plays an important role in constructing the characteristics and modes of operation of a region. To repeat Walker's assertion, "history is literally embodied in the present...choices made in the past...influence subsequent choices of method, designs, and practices" (2000: 126)

From these factors come an interesting set of 'rules of actions, customs, understandings and values' that are influenced by two main elements within the cluster. The first comes from the people and institutions of the cluster, in particular their understanding of how and for what purposes heritage can be developed – the roots of this, and how it compares to other clusters, is discussed in the following section (6.3.4.1). The second is related to the heritages that are the focus of the cluster's work, but also influence the *way* the cluster works (drawing on Chapters 2 and 3 this is analysed in section 6.3.4.2). I end this section with a comparison of 'industrial purposes' to illustrate the contrast between the NHC and other clusters.

6.3.4.1 Altruism and Public Sector Influence on the Northumberland Heritage Cluster's 'Industrial Purpose'

In terms of people's understanding of how and for what purposes heritage can be developed, there is an appreciation that it can be harnessed for developmental purposes that parallels the changes I have outlined in section 3.6. This is an implicit rejection of the AHD, and explicit acceptance that heritage is a resource with scope to engage with holistic

⁴⁷ Given the community and environmental aspects of the NHC an 'industrial' purpose seems inappropriate. However, in an absence of a better term I shall continue to use it, albeit within inverted commas.

developmental projects. As Jane Blackburn explained heritage and culture are important features in myriad activities:

“as far as I’m concerned Northumberland’s culture is its brain. And I know jobs are important and money is important but if you’re a cultural society and a cultural person you’re going to be better at the other stuff as well.”

(Jane Blackburn, NSP)

This appreciation of the role heritage plays in all aspects of people’s life is spreading:

“there are more and more people who have that view [the developmental potential of heritage], who will be driving policy at the highest level and our job is to ensure as many people as possible at those levels have that same mindset... We’re not lone voices driving something, we wouldn’t be successful if we were lone voices, it is more widespread.”

(NCS Informant 2)

Allied to this, a particular shared attitude is visible amongst cluster members: that of seeing the bigger picture of the developmental potential of heritage beyond money making. Again representing the developments in collective and collaborative uses of heritage such as those embodied by ecomuseums, there is willingness to work together to achieve development through heritage. This combines to create a culture of altruism. This outlook was particularly evident amongst NSP Culture Sector Board members:

“the people who sit on the board have by nature an altruistic personality, you do something for the greater good, not necessarily if it will benefit you or your organisation. And I think there are a lot of people, or all the people on the board who have that characteristic I suspect.”

(NCS Informant 3)

“One of the great things about the CSB and the people on it, is when we go there we all put aside our day jobs for the greater good. So whenever we meet, we go there as representatives of our own organisations but it actually doesn’t matter... we discuss what is best of the area and what is best for culture.”

(NNPA Informant 2)

“it’s a good region to work in...we can get things done here and we can, it sounds trite, but we can make a difference.”

(NCS Informant 2)

One might expect this from people who work in the public sector, but there is also evidence of a generous attitude from the private sector. As a NL board member and managing director, rationalises:

“It’s a two way street. We’ve got stuff we can do, when we go to exhibitions that Larder members are attending, we will marshal all the stuff to take, we’ll use our ‘muscle’ to get a better haulage rate...its being about part of something which is putting a stake in the ground for rationality. Its all very well Ross’s banging on about our heritage, about being from the North East and always have been, what better way than to be part of the regional food group.”

(Northumbria Larder Informant 3)

In some ways, then, heritage as private, public and collective capital (see 3.6) is enrolled into the work of the cluster through actors understanding of its heritage’s potential. Concurrent with this culture appreciating the potential uses of heritage, are three further factors which are intrinsically linked to the common enterprise of the NHC: the dominance of public sector or publicly funded organisations; the work of heritage professionals; and an economic imperative for growth.

Firstly, then, public institutions dominate the cluster and in the current political climate where public monies are involved sustainable development is a key element of funding. For instance, local authorities are tasked with providing “prosperous and cohesive communities, [and] offering a safe, healthy and sustainable environment for all” (Communities and Local Government, 2007). And where funding for projects (like those in the NHC) comes from the tax payer the principles of sustainable development come with it. Given the central role that public monies play in the NHC at its current stage of development, and the conservation component implicit in all heritage activity, it is unsurprising that sustainable

development has been transposed onto the cluster's activity. This has been reinforced in rural areas by the success of the EU's Leader and Leader+ programmes which draw upon indigenous assets to foster sustainable local development. Combined with this is a desire to increase access to, and participation in, culture and heritage more generally from cultural and heritage professionals, and an economic imperative for growth from the private sector. The result of this is that sustainable development is at the centre of the NHC's activity.

Interestingly there is not much conflict between these three factors at present. There is, and probably always will be, some tension around how and for what purposes heritage assets are developed and used. But, within the NHC, these situations are exceptional and balance has been found once parties see the bigger picture and communicate. Northumberland National Park Authority, for example, balances conservation, social and economic development well. It should be noted, however, that such good relations, in general terms, are a relatively new occurrence. Chapter 3 has outlined the dominance of the AHD since the Victorian era until recently. Only in the past few decades has heritage become more open and reconnected with local (indigenous) populations (see sections 3.5 and 3.6). Indeed, heritage is unique in that, if handled correctly, it can bring together communities, economics and the environment. This is primarily because heritage is constitutive of and constructed by all three concepts. Moreover, as the ecomuseum concept demonstrates, dualisms separating communities, the economy and the environment are not intellectually or practically sustainable (see 3.5.1).

This realisation is one of the reasons much cluster activity is environmentally sustainable. Firms realise how important the 'natural' environment of Northumberland is to the identity of the area, and therefore their products, and operate so as not to damage, and in some cases enhance, their local environment. Evidence of this can be seen in the 'greening' schemes highlighted in Chapter 7.

6.3.4.2 The Role of Heritage in the NHC's Industrial Purpose'

Chapters 2 and 3 have shown how the particularities of the industry in question, along with the historical and socio-cultural context, have a defining influence on the characteristics of a cluster. Indeed, the key argument in institutional perspectives on clusters is that the formal

and informal institutions that emerge over time give particular areas a comparative advantage over others, and cannot be recreated elsewhere due to the specific local conditions which produce them. This section deals with this by demonstrating the way Northumberland's heritage impacts on the activity of the NHC.

In the literature on urban based cultural clusters a specific spatial logic is identified, whereby there is strong mutual dependency of culture and the city. Individuals working within, and interacting with the city are exposed to new ideas that in turn inspire others (Banks, et al., 2000; Scott, 2000; Grabher, 2002a). As Ray (1998: 8) describes it:

“Local culture thus becomes more than an instrument to fuel trade in the global economy, and instead is rediscovered as the source of local wisdom and ethics”

Local culture, then, is a form of what Paasi terms ‘time-space-specific conditions’ (1991; and section 2.2.9.1). People working in the NHC are mobilising forms of heritage unique to Northumberland not only as marketable products, but also as informal institutions on which to build advantage and lubricate interactions. Benneworth (2004) addresses this process in the context of a major North East electronics firm and their spin-offs. In his example, heritage, in the form of industrial tradition, is used as an asset to embed firms in the region and to build entrepreneurial environments that cannot be copied elsewhere. Given the lack of entrepreneurship in the North East, heritage has potentially an important role to play in fostering it. In Chapter 3 I discussed the almost infinite niches heritage can provide through its many forms, and it is these niches that provide potential hooks for entrepreneurs.

Importantly, the historical aspect of heritage provides stability as it has always (sic) been there. The longer something has existed the easier it is to accept it without renegotiating its meaning (Benneworth, 2002). Thus, because heritage provides a central pillar for the NHC, it is relatively easy to enrol people into the cluster and its way of thinking.

In a similar way to Benneworth's (2004) example, heritage can provide an advantage for a place in terms of competitiveness by the fact that the heritage of Northumberland cannot be found elsewhere. In Chapter 2 I explain that regions are historically contingent and their emergent properties the result of accumulative events, decisions and actions over time.

Because nowhere else has the history and people which have created the heritage of the area, different features emerge in different places. Therefore no other place can recreate the socio-economic features of the NHC which give it its particular identity and mode of action.

Within this line of thinking, the origins of a region's path dependency or technology trajectory are normally traced back through the history of the industry, or related industries in question (see Pinch and Henry, 1999). However, in the case of the NHC, dealing as it does with much older histories, a longer path needs to be traced back. An especially useful tool to do this, given its part in capturing heritages, is the concept of *terroir* (O'Neill and Whatmore, 2000). This term comes from wine making and although there is no literal translation, 'sense of place' comes close. It is used to describe the qualities of the local environment which become embodied in a grape and in turn the wine (Lichfield, 1998). These include the altitude, latitude, aspect and local geomorphology which govern the climate of a vineyard, as well as the geology of the area, the soil type and specific fermentation process a wine undergoes. Areas with the same or similar *terroir* are grouped into appellations that are marks of quality for wine⁴⁸. History is only implicit within the *terroir* concept, and does not fully appreciate the role of time. However, combining it with Passi's (1991) notion of 'time-space-specific conditions', it is a useful tool to understand how places' socio-cultural features emerge. In their examination of a hotel, restaurant and winery complex in the Hunter Valley, Australia, O'Neill and Whatmore (2000) outline the use of a *cuisine de terroir* as a unique selling point. In a climate where perceived authenticity is increasingly valued, such tactics are more and more common. In O'Neill and Whatmore's example the chef at the restaurant sought to create an "organic relationship between food, wine and place" to embed the complex in a "complementary and evolutionary network [of farmers, food producers, wineries etc.] keenly tuned to local growing conditions, markets and each other's needs" (p.132). Thus capturing the Hunter Valley's 'time-space-specific conditions' in socio-economic networks.

⁴⁸ Hungary was the first country to instigate appellation controls, although France, under the governance of the *Institut National des Appellations d'Origine*, is perhaps the most famous for its use of the system.

As Moran (1993) notes, it is claimed particular appellations cannot be replicated. Thus when a distinctive local or regional product is developed, and particularly when they become worth something, producers frequently seek to limit production of their product to the area in which it originates. In the EU this is done through the Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) and Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) schemes (see also 3.6). Moran argues that through such recognition systems the local knowledge used to produce such products becomes, in effect, intellectual property (cf. Walker, 2000; Becattini, 2003; Scott, 2006). He goes on to suggest that product identity, through association with a place, reinforces regional identity (see also Lowenthal, 1985; Durie, et al., 2006). This is seen in both early debates and uses of heritage in construction of national identity in the 19th century, and more recently as regional identity is constructed in similar ways (see 3.2 and 3.6). In such examples heritage and place intertwine and identity is reproduced out of the interaction and constructions each other; for heritage is place, and place is heritage.

One can apply this concept to the cluster literature where particular regions become known as *the* place for particular products or services. As discussed in Chapter 2 examples include Madison Avenue for New York in advertising, Aberdeen or Houston for oil technology, Soho in London for movie post-production, and New Jersey for life sciences technology. Through their success, often drawing on regionally specific assets that emerge and develop over time, these places become centres of excellence that generate innovations and knowledges new to the fields in which they operate. It is these regions that people look to, visit or study to find out what is the latest production technique or product innovation because of their heritage of excellence (for example see Henry and Pinch, 2000). This serves to reinforce their territorial identity and reproduces their reputation.

So, the question is what is the *terrior* and time-space-specific conditions that contribute to the NHC's 'industrial purpose'? Chapter 5 has charted some of the main features in Northumberland's past that contribute to its time-space-specific conditions (5.3.1). Ever since humans have lived in the area, it seems Northumberland has been subject to invasion, turmoil and crisis. In the first centuries AD it was the Romans, then came the Anglo-Saxons, and then battles between the early kings of England. After this it was the Vikings who invaded followed by the Normans. The 15th and 16th centuries saw the border Reivers cause

havoc in the area between England and Scotland, compounded by the War of the Roses during the latter half of the 15th century. Relative stability was established thereafter, and the area became prosperous during the industrial revolution and 19th century. However, the 20th century saw the return of instability with massive deindustrialisation and the area's economic peripheralisation. Again, at the start of this century, crisis returned to the region in the form of foot and mouth disease. As a result of this, throughout this history the people of the Northumberland have developed a resolute attitude and learnt that hard work was needed to survive. This is embodied in the character of the people and cultures of the area, and demonstrated physically by particular heritage 'assets' that remind and reinforce past events. This history and its artefacts – tangible and intangible – go to form Northumberland's *terrior*. Stan Beckensall – author, playwright, archaeologist and expert on Northumberland – captures the spirit of Northumberland and Northumbrians well:

"One cannot come here [Northumberland] and just take; one has to contribute to its life in order to enjoy it, to earn the privilege of living here."

(Beckensall, 2001: 11)

It is this character, embodied and represented by the area's heritage, together with the important role the public sector plays (see 6.3.4.1), that contributes to the socio-economic institutions which make the cluster work⁴⁹. From these factors, forged over time, a desire to see Northumberland's heritage developed in a sustainable way for community, environmental and economic ends emerges.

6.3.4.3 'Industrial Purpose' Comparison

Before I explain the role heritage and the character of Northumberland plays in the NHC's 'industrial purpose' I want to briefly compare this 'industrial purpose' to that of other

⁴⁹ It is important to note that in line with discussion in Chapter 3 about the plurality of heritage and thus identities, the 'spirit' of Northumberland described in Beckensall's quote is just one narrative amongst many. Importantly it is one enrolled into the work of key actors in the cluster and thus the cluster itself.

clusters. I do this for three reasons. First, to support my critique in Chapter 2 that studying industries not normally addressed in cluster analyses has the potential to shed new light on the contribution clusters can make to a locality or region beyond market economics. Second, it highlights the importance of context in cluster formation (Staber, 2007). Finally, the NHC's 'industrial purpose' is not like that seen in other clusters and a comparison bears this out. The comparators I use are Motor Sport Valley, the City, Silicon Valley and the Third Italy. These are selected because they each have a well documented common enterprise and are frequently held up as exemplars of best practice in clusters discourse.

So, to recap, the NHC's 'industrial purpose' can be summarised as wanting to see Northumberland's heritage developed in a sustainable way for community, environmental and economic ends. In Henry and Pinch's analysis of the institutional thickness of Motor Sport Valley (MSV) they identify a 'win at all costs' mentality which drives high levels of innovation (2001: 1177). Similarly, the financial cluster in the City of London has been described as "meritocratic rather than egalitarian, efficient rather than generous, individualistic rather than corporate" (Lloyd, 1988 cited in Thift, 1992). For McDowell (1997) the City was about 'making money' even at the expense of morals and ethics. Likewise, within Silicon Valley, Saxenian highlights "entrepreneurial risk taking and competitive individualism" (1994: 31). However, in the early days of the semi-conductor agglomeration, a self-image amongst workers is identified as "pioneers...advancing the development of a revolutionary new technology" (ibid: 30). And finally, again in contrast, Saxenian recognises a drive for technological development "motivated less by money than by the challenges of independently pursuing a new technology opportunity" (ibid: 38).

The contrast of MSV and the City's mutual goals and that of the NHC is stark. This is unsurprising, however, given the maturity of those clusters, the sectors in which they operate, and, as discussed in Chapter 2, these are clusters operating in and through a particular 'variety of capitalism' (Peck and Theodore, 2007); the driving forces within them are different. In contrast, similarities can be seen between the NHC and Saxenian's view of Silicon Valley in its formative years; where the aspiration for technological, and therefore cluster, advancement over personal gain was a common value. Again, one can suggest the

similarities between the early Silicon Valley and the NHC stem from the relatively immature status of the cluster and the desire of its members to ‘make things happen’.

These brief examples demonstrate that context is very important in explaining a cluster’s socio-economic institutions: the industry in which a cluster operates, the stage of development, the make up of the cluster, regulatory framework, political ideology, and the history of the location where the cluster is based, amongst other factors, are all important. And all these factors are especially revealing for the NHC: the cluster is nascent; deals with a ‘resource’ that has never been considered in purely economic terms and thus can spur more than economic development; this is reinforced by the domination of the public sector and the ‘spirit’ of Northumberland; and all of this is happening in a region trying to regenerate itself after years of deindustrialisation.

Perhaps the greatest similarities between the NHC and the common enterprise of other clusters can be found in Italy, particularly given the role historical contingency plays in the formation of these districts. In Italian industrial districts numerous authors have identified a common enterprise that values hard work and the preservation of artisan techniques in the face of increasing industrialisation. This is fostered through a unique socio-economic milieu influenced heavily by an agrarian class structure maintained through strong family ties, socialist political institutions that defend local society, and innovative trade unions (Brutti and Calistri, 1990; Trigilia, 1990). These combine to create a civic-community (Putnam, 1993) that supports firm development (Capecchi, 1990).

Links with activity in the NHC can be found. First, the preservation of artisan techniques is analogous to the actions of heritage institutions in preserving aspects of the past. There is an important point to be made here about the ways in which heritage is preserved and who has the power to preserve it. The AHD thesis would have us believe too much control lies with the establishment who conserve the past through ‘museumification’. In contrast to this Italian artisan production conserves techniques through practice. In the NHC similar expertise, in the form of traditional dry stone walling techniques, is being preserved through projects such as Traditional Boundaries-Traditional Skills that are mid-way between conservation without change, and preservation through practice. Furthermore, the heritage

of Italian production methods is intimately tied to the success of clusters, just as the heritage of Northumberland is inextricably linked to the successful ‘production methods’ of the NHC.

Second, in terms of institutional environment one can identify further similarities between Italian IDs and the NHC. For instance one can make a comparison between NHC institutions and the activist trade associations seen in the work of the Italian School in the 1970s and 1980s. In the Italian case trade associations provided shared infrastructure to local firms in the form of training, advice, marketing and financial backing, as well as acting as forums to develop coordinated strategy. In the NHC case one can identify this sort of action in the work of the NNPA, HWTP and Northumbria Larder. For instance, the National Park’s TSTB project provides training for local people as well as marketing opportunities for firms on their website which operate within sustainable frameworks. Furthermore, aSPECT provided advice and financial backing for local businesses and interest groups to learn about best practice amongst cognate projects in Europe.

Hopefully one can see the elements that make clusters function are present within the NHC, although there are considerable differences between the motives of the NHC compared to the archetypal clusters one reads so much about – holistic forms of development versus economic development. As this section has explained, this is down to the particularities of the region’s past in influencing the public sector and forming the heritage which is the focus of the cluster. These combine to create a spirit of altruism that acknowledges the bigger picture needed in, and provided by, Northumberland.

6.4 Conclusions

At the start of this chapter I argued that whereas the analysis in Chapter 5 is useful in determining the scale and scope of a cluster, it does not provide deep enough insight to understand a cluster more fully. This chapter has provided that greater breadth of understanding. In doing so it has enabled me to better comprehend the drivers and processes at work within and through the cluster.

As I have highlighted above I have been able to uncover the collaborative relationships between firms, public institutions and other organisations. In examining such relations I am able to elucidate on the nature and quality of these linkages. Likewise, instead of relying on secondary sources, speaking with individuals has allowed a clearer understanding of the motivations of those involved in the cluster. Without this knowledge it would be unclear why the cluster is what it is, and where potential development opportunities lie.

In addition, a closer examination of the activity organisations undertake enables a quality of detail not found through desk based or secondary research. This is where the case study approach has been particularly useful. It allowed me to get a sense of what is actually being achieved 'on the ground', the background of this activity and its outcomes. And, although a number of existing frameworks were drawn on, they were utilised through a multi-perspectival approach that avoided the application of a cluster 'blue print' criticised in the literature (Martin and Sunley, 2003). A one-dimensional method may not have uncovered the quality of findings presented in this chapter. Finally, by building in a historical perspective it allowed me to uncover the cultural, social and economic antecedents of life in Northumberland and the wider North East. This additional point of entry allowed a slightly different perspective on the long term development of the cluster.

Through this in depth investigation I have uncovered three major features. First, the embryonic nature of the cluster means the relationships between firms is based on collaboration not competition. Indeed, as I have illustrated, at this stage of development the 'vigorous' competition Porter calls for would be detrimental to the cluster's development. This collaboration has been illustrated through a number of examples where larger, more mature firms are lending brand power and expertise to smaller enterprises.

Second, the public sector play a crucial role in the cluster. This stems from the economic crises the region has undergone for almost a century and resultant reliance on state intervention in a number of areas. Likewise, public bodies play central roles in heritage management and protection. It is amongst public sector institutions where interaction is at its highest, helping to stimulate an atmosphere of co-operation through ties of trust and reciprocity. The outcomes of this interaction are structures of domination and coalition,

along with a common enterprise that values holistic sustainable development. This helps reinforce a collective identity and collaborative working.

Third, central to the cluster's activity is heritage. In line with arguments made in Chapter 2, the NHC is the outcome of historically contingent processes that form its emergent characteristics. Heritage provides a shared identity and a 'spirit' encapsulated succinctly by Stan Beckensall's quote. This helps enrol people into the cluster's common enterprise through the stability and shared identity heritage provides. In addition, the boundary crossing capabilities and conservation elements present within all heritage activity provides potential for heritage related work to move beyond conservation and commodification to sustainable work that incorporates environmental and community projects.

It is this latter feature of the NHC that marks it out as different. To demonstrate this further the next chapter examines the work of leading organisations who act as providers of capacity, growth poles, and as influences on the community and environmental work done in the cluster.

Chapter 7

Environmental and Community Engagement in the Northumberland Heritage Cluster

7.1 Introduction

Reflecting the majority of clusters research, what I have identified in the previous chapter has focused on those clustering characteristics which benefit the performance of firms and institutions. In doing so I have highlighted activity that goes beyond economics to incorporate sustainable development objectives, something unusual in work on clusters. This chapter builds on that discovery by examining case studies that engage in economic, community and environmental development. In examining the projects in more detail I seek to reiterate the NHC's sustainability credentials and to go some way to fill the absences highlighted at the end of Chapter 2. Furthermore, the projects I highlight here make links with Chapter 3 as they are prime examples of the ways in which heritage is being harnessed in new ways for the good of groups excluded, overlooked and misrepresented in the AHD. Thus, together with Chapter 8, this chapter answers my third research question concerning the contribution of the NHC to wider cluster debates.

In terms of clusters, sustainability is normally discussed in relation to sustaining the development of firms, innovation and the cluster itself. The focus is on competition,

economic performance and efficiency – economics are central. On the other hand, evidence of clusters adopting sustainable development principles – balancing social, economic and environmental needs - is limited at present.

The concept of sustainable development has its roots in the World Commission on Environment and Development's report, *Our Common Future* (1987). Often referred to as the *Brundtland Report*, it outlines the foundational elements of sustainable development. Although these have been subject to adaptation over time, the report stresses the interdependence of a economy – society – environment chain (Baker, 2006). The fundamental objective highlighted in the document is that development should “meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Wced, 1987: 43). Extending the concept, ‘Local Agenda 21’ (LA21), the result of the UN Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, is a blueprint of sustainable action. It outlines a set of normative assumptions of sustainable development and proposes it is most effectively managed at the local level. In particular it suggests local authorities take responsibility for implementing sustainable measures.

Although LA21 has been adopted by the UK Government, and its principles rolled out in local authority policy, sustainable development remains an afterthought in much local economic development, especially cluster policy (Gibbs, et al., 2005). There are some incidents where there are overlaps however. Industrial ecology, for example, promotes the idea that sustainable development in ecological terms can be achieved through supply chain linkages within clusters (Wallner, 1999). In effect, firms use the by-products of other firms as resources. To do this most efficiently enterprises need to locate near to each other. A good example of this is in Kalundborg, Denmark (Brouder and Berry, 2004). This industrial complex comprises energy and bio-technology firms who exploit each others waste streams as a method of reducing transaction costs. At the centre of the complex are a power station and oil refinery. The spillovers from these institutions are used to heat local homes, make plasterboard, produce sulphuric acid for science, and for fertiliser (Indigo Development, 2003).

Drawing on the clusters literature, Wallner (1999) argues that such eco-clusters can become more stable and thus more sustainable by generative collaborative networks beyond transaction relationships. In turn, he posits, innovators and spin-offs will emerge helping the cluster to grow. The concepts developed in industrial ecology have been extended in industrial ecology and eco-industrial development theories (Gibbs and Deutz, 2005; Korhonen, 2005; Geng and Cote, 2007). However, this literature is written from business, management or engineering view points (Gibbs, et al., 2005) and focuses on the economic-environment aspects of sustainable development.

The activity of the NHC, encompasses aspects across the broader economic-environment-society chain. A focus on environmental sustainability is not surprising given conservation is central to heritage management. It is perhaps also unsurprising, given the way heritage is being harnessed in recent years (see Chapter 3), and the dominant public sector, that communities play an important role in the NHC. This is one of the elements that marks the NHC out as different and seeks to fill two of the absences in clusters research I identify at the end of Chapter 2 (the lack of studies looking beyond the economic potential of clusters, and the theoretical potential of case studies outside of the ‘usual suspects’).

This chapter demonstrates this through four case studies of organisations that embody and practice the cluster’s industrial purpose through their own activity and through roles as grand animateurs. These examples also provide a more detailed picture of the cluster’s activity. The first case study examines the Northumberland National Park Authority’s (NNPA) role in fostering community and environmental sustainability. This is done through two sub-case studies; the first of these examines the Park’s Traditional Boundaries-Traditional Skills training scheme that is filling a skills gap in the heritage labour market, conserving and enhancing the Park’s cultural landscape and engaging a number of local communities in heritage preservation (7.2.1). The other sub-case study examines the aSPECT project which the Park ran in 2005 and 2006. This scheme brought together a number of local user groups in the north of the Park to work on community led cultural heritage projects emphasising the role of collaborative planning and collective learning (7.2.2).

The second case study (7.3) looks at the way the development of the Northumberland Cultural Strategy has brought about collaboration and engaged with communities, as well as setting out targets for specific cluster development. The third example, Alnwick Garden (7.4), highlights the way some heritage attractions act as growth poles for their local areas, and the cluster as a whole. Finally, section (7.5) focuses on the tourism sector in general and its capacity, aided by the public sector, to stimulate sustainable tourism practices through 'greening' schemes.

Each of the case studies demonstrates the cluster's sustainable development credentials. However, as stated above, this sort of activity is not normally seen within clusters. Section 7.7 addresses this issue and suggests a number of reasons for this absence.

7.2 The Role of the Northumberland National Park Authority in Community and Environmental Development

The Northumberland National Park is a key player in the NHC. Traditionally the work of the Park has been centred around environmental enhancement and promoting understanding of 'special qualities' as outlined by its two statutory purposes (see section 5.4.4). However, since the Environment Act of 1995 the Park has been able to expand its work to foster the social and economic well being of communities within Park boundaries because,

"many people saw this as a third purpose, a social and economic purpose, it is not quite because it has never had the same standing as the other two statutory purposes, but it is very much part of the remit of National Parks now."

(Tony Gates, NNPA CEO)

The changes made by the Environment Act (1995) reflect the contemporary uses of heritage outlined in Chapter 3, and have been made explicit in the NNPA's vision statement:

"Northumberland National Park Authority will be proactive, innovative and forward-looking, working towards a National Park with thriving communities

and a sustainable local economy grounded in its special qualities, including a richness of cultural heritage and biodiversity, a true sense of tranquility and a distinct character associated with a living, working landscape, in which everyone has an opportunity to understand, enjoy and contribute to those special qualities.”

(Northumberland National Park Authority, 2003)

In reality this means the NNPA can implement projects not primarily focused on the ‘natural’ environment. Thus, these changes have brought the work of the Park more into line with the activity of other organisations both in the NHC and around the National Park boundaries by using endogenous assets (such as heritages) to deal with economic and social aspects of life. This alignment is further enhanced due to the Park’s status as a ‘special purposes local authority’. This gives a Park the same powers over land use and planning as any other local authority. Planning applications for any type of development within the Park’s boundaries have to be approved by the Park Authority and this ensures any material changes within a park are made in line with the statutory purposes and the management plan. The Park’s role as planning authority and the projects run under the ‘third purpose’ are heavily influenced by its statutory purposes and therefore strongly reflect community and environmental sustainability. Furthermore, the Park is more than willing to lend its expertise to those who want it in the wider North East, nationally and internationally.

In the previous chapter I have demonstrated how the Park works with other institutions to foster collaboration and cooperation in the NHC. In what follows I demonstrate further the contribution the NNPA makes to the cluster in economic, environmental and community terms. I do this through my sub-case studies of Traditional Boundaries-Traditional Skills (TBTS) and aSPECT.

7.2.1 Traditional Boundaries-Traditional Skills

Traditional Boundaries-Traditional Skills is a training project that preserves traditional boundary techniques such as dry stone walling and hedge laying. It also helps participants set up their own businesses utilising these skills. It contributes to the cluster in four main ways.

First, as stated above, the NHC is embryonic in nature with a limited number of firms but a great deal of potential. TBTS is helping expand the firm base of the NHC by training people in heritage skills lacking in the area. Second, through community engagement TBTS is fostering partnerships within the cluster – between farmer/landowner and wallers – and beyond the cluster – with communities. Third, the project is ensuring the competitive advantages of the NHC, particularly the landscape, is preserved. Finally, the project demonstrates that heritage can go beyond conservation.

The project began as a response to the lack of qualified wallers in the Northumberland area,

“concerns were being shown by the rangers that farmers were indicating to them that there was a skills shortage. They couldn’t get wallers to do the work they had tied themselves into in stewardship.”

(Derek Proudlock, NNPA)

This skills gap, and the generally poor state of the area’s dry-stone walls, was highlighted in a survey commissioned by the NNPA. Alarmingly, in the survey area (an area covering 4% of NNP) only 49% of dry stone wall and 8% of hedging was stock proof⁵⁰ (Turnbull and Walsh, 2004). This not only has an impact on agriculture, but the quality of the landscape is also affected.

Throughout 2002/03 the project was developed; a Traditional Boundaries Conservation Management Plan was drawn up and the constituent elements of the projects decided upon. Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) provided 50% of the funding, with the rest gleaned from various sources including Cultural Sector Development Initiative⁵¹, the National Park

⁵⁰ All of the fences surveyed were stock proof.

⁵¹ CSDI is a funding stream set up by Arts Council England in the North East to harness EU funding from the Objective 2 Programme.

Sustainable Development Fund⁵² and the NSP. Again the reliance is on public funding and this is reflected in the project's aims that reflect environmental preservation, economic development and community engagement (See Appendix 1).

Trainees spend 60% of their time learning boundary techniques,

“the other 40% is either in business studies or IT or other areas of skills, such as quad bike, scrub clearance and that sort of thing. And the rangers provide what we call mentoring training on other skills such as fencing, pathways, gates. So these trainees don’t have to rely on the walling, so they have other skills that supplement their business.”

(Derek Proudlock, NNPA)

The first cohort of trainees graduated in 2006. Of the ten who undertook the course seven have gone into business utilising their boundary techniques; one is working for the National Trust on a placement scheme; one has gone to work in the building trade; and one is studying for unrelated qualifications. From a purely economic perspective the scheme has contributed to developing the NHC's labour market, a central element in cluster theories dating back to Marshall's foundational work (1920). Also, the cluster benefits from an expanded firm base and, as a recent report has shown, dry stone wall repair can benefit other sectors in the cluster through indirect and induced effects such as locally sourced materials along with other multiplier effects (Courtney, et al., 2007).

Furthermore, the project has worked to forge linkages with local people and businesses, embedding the project in the local community. One of the aims of TBTS is to train 25 volunteers a year, provide or support five public events each year and work with five local communities to “identify key traditional boundaries in the locality requiring conservation” over five years (Northumberland National Park Authority, 2005e). TBTS is on target to achieve these aims and more. First, in terms of volunteers, a number of taster days have been run:

⁵² The National Park Sustainable Development fund is monies from DEFRA for projects which encourage sustainable development.

“we’ve had four sessions this year, two taster days for a mixture of NP volunteers and people who want to join the project next year....we have put up training walls at a place called Wall Town, a place near Greenhead and also in the Ingram Valley...And so on those days we’ve laid on our trainers, our trainees and they take people through a voluntary exercise.”

(Kevin Malone, NNPA)

These events give a taste of the TBTS course to prospective trainees, to widen public knowledge about traditional boundary techniques and engage the local community with the project and thus their local environment. These latter points are in line with the Park’s second statutory purpose:

“at the outset I think the idea was we would, they could be used for project, what it ended up being was an educational thing for them, if they used the skills, then all well and good. But it would give public exposure to the skill, rather than volunteers to the extent they would then go out and do walling.”

(Kevin Malone, NNPA)

The second community objective of taking walling to public events has also been very successful. In 2006 the TBTS team attended ten agricultural shows as well as another ten or so other public events (Northumberland National Park Authority, 2007b). Third, in terms of working with communities to identify their important boundaries the first year saw the TBTS project go to Greenhaugh in the North Tyne Valley. The team worked with the local community to identify a stretch of wall in need of work. Here they repaired and extended the wall to incorporate a drainage spillway over a small burn in work that demonstrates community engagement alongside economic development and preservation.

Other activities have been carried out with other groups not normally considered to be part of the local community in the traditional sense:

“we had four/five guys from Network Rail out the other week who did some board walks on top of the fells near Rothbury, so putting posts in and putting boards on and all that...and I suppose that

was community to the extent we had something which needed doing and they provided the labour...there was [also] a Dutch bank a few of them who came up, about 30 of them."

(Kevin Malone, NNPA)

Derek Proudlock explained the importance of this:

"we keep linking in with businesses or organisations who want to...They tend to like some form of conservation work and we can help them with that...we connect with the community we need to connect with; private sector as far as we're concerned is either another partner or another community."

(Derek Proudlock, NNPA)

The involvement of the private sector means not only is the Park and heritage of Northumberland shown to a new audience, but they have a sense of ownership of the local environment which enhances their connection with it and potentially extends the cluster by attracting new members.

At a smaller level the project has allowed the Park to help individuals. Three examples were highlighted by my interviewees. The first involved a pupil from a local school with learning difficulties, who, through work experience at the Park, built up his confidence and social skills. The second example was of a local man suffering from depression who had been learning to wall previously, but his illness abrogated further progress. However, the Park helped him get back on his feet by providing opportunities for him to practice his skills on Park walls. In return for his work the Park paid his transport costs. The final example was of a man who had retired to the area but wanted to set up a walling operation. With the lack of skilled people about the Park was happy to provide him with work to establish his business. As Kevin Malone explains, helping local firms is important to the Park because,

KM – "we're looking after people if we can help them improve their rural businesses and that is in the brief."

Jon – "that's part of the role of the National Park I guess?"

KM – ‘I guess so because what we’re interested in doing is having sustainable businesses and also lately the Park has reviewed its policy on the website and now saying we’ll advertise on the website sustainable businesses. It just so happens dry stone walling is, but also lots of other businesses that are sustainable. That would be if you like a free website facility, which is worth having.’

One can clearly identify the economic and community elements of the Park’s work, influenced by the Environment Act 1995. In the case of the TBTS project the protection and enhancement, and understanding and enjoyment purposes are also achieved through improving the landscape and by engaging the public about traditional boundaries, and contributing to developing the NHC’s labour market. The environmental work and community engagement I have just described demonstrates to the public that tradition and heritage are important to the modern land-based industries. Furthermore, although this project is restoring walls and other boundaries to their former glory, and could therefore be classified as conservation work, it is work that rejects the idea that physical/built heritage should be preserved and nothing more (cf. Ruskin’s stance of looking but not touching in section 3.2.1). TBTS demonstrates that tradition and heritage are flexible and relevant in the 21st century, but also that when harnessed correctly they can be used for developmental purposes at the community and individual level. In this way it is reinforcing the cluster’s ‘industrial purpose’ as well as contributing economically and in conservation terms.

7.2.2 aSPECT

Another way the NNPA has contributed to economic, community and environmental aspects of the NHC is through the aSPECT project (A Sustainable Process for Environmental and Cultural Tourism). It also represents a commodification of heritage, but a sensitive one in line with local needs. This is a scheme created to solve two problems the Park has faced - the lack of cultural projects and disparate user groups. aSPECT sought to address these by bringing together community groups to learn and work together on collaborative cultural heritage tourism initiatives.

This kind of collaborative tourism planning can have a number of benefits for those involved. First, collaboration avoids the potential for strengthening adversarial relationships between actors (Bramwell and Sharman, 1999; Healey, 1998). Second, cooperative planning gives strategies increased political legitimacy (Benveniste, 1989 cited in Bramwell and Sharman, 1999). Third, through consideration of a wide range of views, collaborative working can aid the development of more sustainable futures (Lane, 1994). Fourth, as outlined above and in the clusters literature (and above), collaboration provides opportunities for collective learning and knowledge sharing. aSPECT provided opportunities for these advantages to be built upon, but before I go into detail of how this was done some background on the project is useful.

In the past the NNPA has carried out lots of work on archaeological sites and historic buildings (the Park's Historic Village Atlas and Coquetal Community Archaeology projects for example), but little work had been done on cultural heritage. A project was sought to remedy this, and to help bring disparate stakeholder groups together (much like along Hadrian's Wall before HWTP). As Andrew Miller explained:

"I have worked for many years with farmers and land owners who are the people who have affected the cultural/ environment asset. Kim was working with the businesses and tourism providers who are exploiting this asset, and I didn't speak to the tourism people and Kim didn't speak to the land owners. So we thought we should bring the two together to see if we can get to a point where everybody wins."

(Andrew Miller, NNPA)

This was the beginning of Suspect, which later became known as aSPECT. Funding came from an EU stream - TouriSME RFO INTERREG 3C - being managed by ONE.

Four outcomes were sought:

- new and strengthened local community and business networks and partnerships;
- an increase in the sharing of skills between participating regions, both at the individual business and wider community levels;

- support for the integration of traditional land management with tourism products;
- and,
- to support the development of tourism products

(source: interview with Kevin Patrick)

These outcomes are classic socio-economic cluster characteristics like those identified in the first half of this chapter (collaboration, knowledge sharing and building shared capacity). In this case they are being used to develop links not just between economic actors, but also local user groups, reinforcing the importance that local people play in the NHC (see also 7.3). By doing this through the use and development of the area's cultural heritage, aSPECT illustrates the contemporary uses of heritage highlighted in Chapter 3. By implicitly accepting the plural and contested nature of heritages aSPECT rejects the AHD allowing community engagement, rather than expert opinion, to drive the project.

The project began by bringing together eight interest groups with a stake in the local area: farmers, landowners⁵³, local businesses (tourism and non-tourism) recreational users, local food producers, and conservationists. Informal meetings were then held to discuss views and concerns people had, both in each interest group and all together.

"What we anticipated was there would be some very similar answers and some very opposite answers. What was interesting was there was more that were common than those that were different. Certainly in terms of what was special about the area, everybody recognises the same sorts of things, it's about space, tranquillity, same words used again and again."

(Andrew Miller, NNPA)

This is borne out in the minutes of these meetings with terms such as 'great skies and stars', 'emptiness', 'natural landscape', 'history/timeless', 'uniqueness' and 'friendly locals' used throughout (Northumberland National Park Authority, 2005a; Northumberland National Park Authority, 2005b; Northumberland National Park Authority, 2005c; Northumberland

⁵³ Farmers and landowners are separate groups because Northumberland is dominated by a few landowners and hence has one of the highest rates of tenant farms in England.

National Park Authority, 2005d)⁵⁴. Such things are clear advantages for NNP and Northumberland in general, as identified in the previous chapter and amongst other case studies, but they also pose problems for the area. For instance, empty and timeless places do not have modern facilities able to attract visitors and get them to stay. The lack of accommodation and quality restaurants means tourists often visit the countryside and enjoy the landscape, but do not spend much money in places like Rothbury and Wooler. Furthermore, if people did spend money the effect is minimal as many places did not stock or use local goods and produce – this was particularly a concern of local businesses and food producers. Moreover, the consensus amongst users is further evidence of the particular character of Northumbrians as reflected in the ‘spirit’ of the NHC (see Chapter 6).

Once a number of common areas of interest were identified, aSPECT provided opportunities for collective learning through funding group visits to areas of best practice around the UK and Ireland. For instance, there was a specific interest in self guided horse riding trails using traditional drove routes and ancient bridleways.

In addition, amongst farmers and land owners there was an awareness of the need to diversify as the farming sector changes. There has already been some activity in this area – for instance game management is becoming more popular – but it was felt there was a need for more information. In response to this the Park organised a trip to Scotland to visit the Glenlivet Estate which has successfully diversified into a number of areas.

Another trip to Scotland, this time Peebles, was provided by the project. aSPECT personnel and some members of the Rothbury and Coquetdale Business Club went to visit some projects being developed based on the local environment. The result was very positive,

“without over stating it, because this in the words of the business club chair, we were inspired and wanted to develop an event, in our valley, in Coquetdale, which a) reflected the cultural heritage of the valley, b) just pushed the visitor season a little bit, and c) was a way to bring everybody together.”

⁵⁴ These are the same things identified above in relation to the connection people feel to Northumberland.

(Kevin Patrick, NNPA)

The event which was developed was the John Barleycorn Festival. The festival, now an annual event, is based on the illicit whiskey trade in the Coquetal Valley in the 18th century. Funding from aSPECT was provided to commission research on the production and trade of whiskey in the area (see The Archaeological Practice Ltd., 2006) and Park personnel offered their expertise to the organisers. For example, Duncan Wise, Visitor Services Manager, gave advice on how to market the event, and Fiona Whitehead, Park Communication Officer, briefed them on press releases. Most of the work, however, was done by local people:

"I think the success is evident in that there are other local residents and local businesses which continue to get involved, it's not big scale – in total about 20 local business people are actively involved. But again that's a pretty good response to something which came from a local idea."

(Kevin Patrick, NNPA)

The above quote gives some indication of the willingness of people to work together as discussed above. This is made possible through the kind of untraded interdependencies discussed in section 6.3.4 and illustrated in the consensus found in aSPECT's early meetings.

The first festival took place on the 28th October 2006 with local goods for sale; displays of farming memorabilia, old postcards and pictures; a working 'illicit' whiskey still; guided walks; themed fancy dress; and vintage buses to transport people between sites (Northumberland National Park Authority, 2006). The TBTS team also helped out by building a small stell (a circular, dry stone sheep pen) to put a whiskey still in. In October 2007 the festival ran over two days.

aSPECT, much like TSTB, can be seen as an example of Ray's neo-endogenous growth (2001). It is generating economic development (extending the visitor season and creating new business opportunities) embedded in the local communities. It does this by drawing on the cultural landscape of the area in the form of ancient bridleways and whiskey making in the 18th century.

This kind of collaborative planning gives local people a sense of collective ownership and aids the sustainability of the projects (Healey, 1998; Lane, 1994), as well as aiding the political legitimacy of the project (Benveniste, 1989 cited in Bramwell and Sharman, 1999). The community collectively learns how to put on events such as the John Barleycorn Festival. Not only have they learnt new skills through this project, but the previous disparate groups have learnt to work together through shared understandings of their local environment and thus, on a micro scale, have created the kind of characteristics I have identified in the wider NHC.

One can clearly see the influence of endogenous models of rural development as epitomised in the EU's Leader and Leader+ programmes here which encourage the kind of bottom up, community driven approach seen⁵⁵. It should be noted, however, that the Leader programmes are aimed at territories with populations of under 100,000, but this does not mean there is no bearing on the NHC as a whole. On the contrary, the type of endogenous growth promoted by these approaches is important in forming the type of cluster I am describing. And although Leader and Leader+ are aimed at small scale interventions, the impact of a number of small scale interventions can be large. However, if we examine the NHC as a whole, the presence of major assets such as The Alnwick Garden, Hadrian's Wall and the National Park means a rural development perspective can only take us so far. With this in mind the following sections describe projects that acknowledge the import of local development objectives, but combine them with the potential for growth significant at the regional, national and even international scales.

7.3 Northumberland Cultural Strategy and Community Engagement

⁵⁵ Interestingly nobody I interviewed for any of the case studies mentioned Leader+ despite parallels with their work. Perhaps the unconscious acceptance of its premises is evidence of the success of the programmes. Moreover it indicates that on the ground in peripheral areas community driven projects are *the way to work*.

Like TBTS and Apsect, the Northumberland Cultural Strategy (NCS) is an example of strong community engagement alongside clustering characteristics. In Chapters 4 and 5 I briefly introduced the NCS, so here I examine it in more detail and in terms of the NHC's dynamics. The NCS is a very significant document for the NHC. It is implicitly a cluster development strategy with actions to help foster and strengthen some of the clustering characteristics outlined in the first half of this chapter. More importantly, its construction brought together a wide range of people and got them collaborating and networking, in some cases for the first time. This coming together generated and reinforced the mutual awareness of a common purpose amongst cluster members, and helped avoid the kind of 'disjointed meso' introduced in the previous chapter. The NCS manages to combine economic development objectives with a strong emphasis on working with and for the community and some, albeit limited, environmental sustainability. This achievement encompasses, almost completely, the cluster's 'industrial' purpose.

While still engaging with the local community the NCS differs from aSPECT in four ways. First, where aSPECT was built primarily from the bottom up, the NCS began as a more mid-level intercession. Second, the NCS has a larger scope in that it goes beyond cultural heritage. Third, the scale of the NCS is countywide rather than local. Finally, the NCS is a more formal project in that its genesis was in the DCMS, who tasked local authorities to create a cultural strategy. However, the NCS was still formed through community engagement and much like the other examples I describe here, the NCS was heavily influenced by the public organisations – it was drawn up by a group of organisations almost entirely in the public sector – and thus is influenced by the public sector's commitment to sustainable development. These influences can be traced back to the genesis of the cultural strategies programme:

"cultural services play a crucial role tackling social exclusion, contributing to regeneration, to promoting safer communities, encouraging healthier lifestyles, providing opportunities for voluntary and community activity, and stimulating lifelong learning"

(DCMS, 1999: 2)

Each local authority in England was tasked with creating its own cultural strategy to “promote cultural well-being in their area” for 2002-2008 (DCMS, 1999: 5). However, in a move that demonstrates the kind of collaboration I have discussed above, it was proposed that instead of seven documents⁵⁶ one countywide strategy would be developed.

“because we are six small district councils and a big county council the chief officers group got together and said wouldn’t it make a lot of sense if the seven authorities in Northumberland worked together.”

(NCS Informant 1)

“it makes sense to work together to make one rather than seven as we’re all small local authorities and we’ve got scarce resources.”

(Lynn Turner, Tynedale DC)

In terms of attaining ideas for the strategy a number of events were held with invited stakeholders from a number of sectors: heritage, sport, arts, environment and tourism⁵⁷. This ‘cultural audit’ involved over 600 cultural sector members and, importantly, members of the public (Northumberland Strategic Partnership, 2002). This is another example of the sort of community involvement seen in aSPECT - to give political legitimacy, provide a sense of ownership and find out what people want - albeit on a larger scale. All of the people I spoke to in relation to the NCS said how useful these events were:

“Lots of people came [to the heritage event] that was good...Quite a lot of people, we’re talking about 40 odd which is quite a lot, I think it was that many. It was enough, it didn’t feel like you were talking to a small group of usual suspects. There were quite a lot of people there.”

(NCS Informant 2)

⁵⁶ One each for Alnwick, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Blyth Valley, Castle Morpeth, Tynedale and Wansbeck

⁵⁷ These sectors closely reflect those in Figure 4.1

“we spoke to about 600 people from all sorts of different, you know, voluntary, public, private sector...people talked about what they were up to, so we used that info.”

(Jane Blackburn, NSP)

“Those events were very much to try to get as many people as possible involved and then they would divide into sub groups on the day.”

(Lynn Turner, Tynedale DC)

In another example of the cluster's common purpose (wanting to see Northumberland's heritage developed in a sustainable way for community, environmental and economic ends) there was a great deal of consensus amongst the people consulted, as one informant explained:

“We went into a consultation evening, with heritage people, one of the things we wondered about was would the Northumberland people come back and say ‘well we actually think there should be Alton Park type attraction’ – a themed attraction somewhere in the county. There was only one individual out of over 600 people who said yes, everyone else said no, they said the castles and coast heritage [should be the focus].”

(NCS Informant 1)

Ideas and projects identified from the consultation events were combined with cultural and heritage work of the local authorities, and in line with the Regional Cultural Strategy and Regional Economic Strategy, by the stakeholder working group to form the NCS. The Strategy itself is formed around six priority aims that outline the way culture and heritage can be used to achieve economic aims alongside community focused projects (see Appendix 2).

The bulk of the NCS document is made up of over 80 ‘strategic objectives and indicative actions’ that work towards achieving the priority aims. These are wide ranging and some explicitly emphasise the idea of a cluster:

“4.2 a. Introduce tourism cluster training for businesses, for example farm tourism, crafts.

...

- c. Work with ONE to identify those businesses that could benefit from working within a cluster.”

(Northumberland Strategic Partnership, 2002: 32)

As well as these explicit calls for cluster development the NCS encourages collaborative partnerships and labour market development. But the NCS is not a cluster strategy document in the usual sense, it is much more than that because it focuses on fostering more than economic development or even socio-economic features. It has projects, alongside the culturally focused ones, to create a Northumberland brand; promote three flagship projects within Northumberland (Alnwick Garden, Hadrian’s Wall, Woodhorn); develop recreational activities to improve health and well being; encourage participation in culture within deprived wards; strengthen partnerships between the public and private sectors and local communities; and facilitate better access to culture for young people. So, in line with other activity in the NHC, the NCS is interested in more than economic and more than cultural development. Now, one might not expect all of these aims to be included in a cultural strategy, but as Jane Blackburn explained culture and heritage have the ability to touch myriad aspects of human activity:

“as far as I’m concerned Northumberland’s culture is its brain. And I know jobs are important and money is important but if you’re a cultural society and a cultural person you’re going to be better at the other stuff as well.”

(Jane Blackburn, NSP)

This idea can be linked back to the developments seen in heritage discourse, and in particular the inseparability of heritage from everyday life. An appreciation that it is possible, indeed sensible, to explicitly connect heritage with development programmes across a range of objectives, is an example of the expanding uses of heritage identified in Chapter 3. A look at the projects within the AHD demonstrates this. For example, using heritage as a catalyst for working with deprived communities (Northumberland Strategic Partnership, 2002:19); providing apprenticeships and entrepreneurship training through established heritage

attractions (Northumberland Strategic Partnership, 2002: 30); and re-establish the link between communities creative writing (Northumberland Strategic Partnership, 2002: 16). This kind of acknowledgement, through all the case studies presented here, is a crucial aspect of what makes the NHC what it is. Indeed, without implicit rejection of the AHD and explicit acceptance that heritage can be used for developmental purposes, the NHC would not engage with sustainable development principles.

For its users, the NCS has been deemed a success, not only in terms of events and projects completed, but also as a framework on which people can draw to get the go ahead for projects or leverage funding. The priority aims and strategic objectives are actions people can point to when justifying the need for a project.

“The strategy has stimulated work, and there are sub-strategies and action plans linked to that in Tynedale...For Big Lottery we will have to have a play strategy to access 200k Big Lottery funds, so there will be a prioritised action plan and that all sits with this [NCS], that’s the framework document.”

(Lynn Turner, Tynedale DC)

“it [the NCS] has been very useful because what we’ve done, where appropriate, we’ve drawn the work we’ve done in Wansbeck back to demonstrate as part of this, not everything we do is part of this obviously but it is useful. Because it sets a strategic context for our members, for our community...so we always go back to it and say here’s our overarching framework for cultural services.”

(NCS Informant 1)

The most notable outcomes of the NCS are probably the three flagship attractions it supports – Hadrian’s Wall, Woodhorn and the Alnwick Garden. Although HW has been a World Heritage Site since 1987, visitor numbers were beginning to plateau by the end of the 1990s. The NCS supported its rejuvenation. In contrast with HW, Woodhorn – a museum, exhibition centre and home to Northumberland’s archives - was a completely new development (although it was first mooted in the early 1990s). Work had begun on the Alnwick Garden when the NCS was drawn up, but the NCS team recognised its potential

and gave it their backing. In the next section I highlight the success of these attractions, particularly the Alnwick Garden, as growth poles and as exemplars of sustainability.

7.4 The Alnwick Garden and Sustainable Flagship Developments

The NNPA is a longstanding institution acting as a grand animatuer. Similarly, the NCS is bringing together established organisations in the cluster and instigating sustainable clustering characteristics. Thus, both have an authority to bring about change. There are, however, three much newer enterprises that are taking similar roles. Alnwick Garden, together with Woodhorn and a revitalised and newly managed Hadrian's Wall, form three 'flagship' attractions for the county as outlined in the NCS (Northumberland Strategic Partnership, 2002). They also form three of the biggest 'assets' for the NHC. Unfortunately Woodhorn was not open in time for a proper examination in this research, but as explained above, Hadrian's Wall and the Alnwick Garden have had significant impacts on the area. These impacts, in line with the other cases studies outlined, include environmental and community sustainability alongside economic development.

The development of large attractions in peripheral areas has been criticised in the past for being too top-down and relying on a linear model of economic growth (Telfer, 2002). Such strategies have been rejected in favour of smaller scale community focused approaches such as the EU's Leader and Leader+ schemes. The critique of 'mega-attractions' as driver for regeneration has also been seen in the cultural industries literature, notably in response to regional and local government's seeming obsession with flagship attractions.

As policy makers implement flagship projects, critics have called into question the actual benefits of such policies. For Zukin, cultural strategies are a sign a place has nothing else left to offer stating "cultural strategies suggest the utter absence of new industrial strategies for growth" (1995: 274). Further, McGuigan (1996) argues such developments can have negative effects on society, as they only "articulate the interests and tastes of the postmodern

professional and managerial class without solving the problems of a diminishing production base, growing disparities of wealth and opportunity, and the multiple forms of social exclusion.” (p.99).

Evidence to support the critic’s claims can be found in the list of unsuccessful projects launched, and in some cases closed, in the last few years: the National Botanic Garden of Wales, Earth Centre outside Doncaster, Edinburgh’s Dynamic Earth, the Royal Armouries in Leeds and the National Railway Museum at York have all underperformed in recent years (Sharpley, 2007).

However, a number of notable examples have been successful – the Eden Project in Cornwall, for example, attracted 500,000 additional visitors to Cornwall in 2001 (Smit, 2001). Likewise, the Alnwick Garden, opened in 2001, has quickly become Northumberland’s most popular visitor attraction and, along with parallel developments in the county, has had a positive impact on the local economy (Sharpley, 2007)⁵⁸. Above I have discussed the role of the Garden in helping foster growth and innovation amongst local businesses through local sourcing for the catering and other visitor facilities (see section 6.2.2). In addition, in 2003 88% of local businesses experienced significant increases in takings compared to the same period in 2002 (Alnwick District Council, 2003). It is projected that after the completion of the final phases of the Garden 445 jobs (full time equivalents, direct and indirect) will have been created (Garden, 2006). In addition the Garden has had a great impact for local accommodation providers with many bed and breakfast owners seeking planning permission for additional bedrooms to cope with the increased visitor numbers (Kevin Taylor, Business Link).

⁵⁸ Other factors, not fully addressed in Sharpley’s study of the Alnwick Garden, include the work of the NCS in providing new tourism events, an increase in visitors to the neighbouring Alnwick Castle due to the ‘Harry Potter effect’ felt after parts of the films were shot there, and the success of other flagship attractions such as Hadrian’s Wall opening its National Trail, and the Woodhorn museum, archive and country park facility.

However, the impact of the Garden is not simply economic, it is also strengthening the NHC's credentials as a sustainable cluster. Although the garden, by its very nature, is human-made, it is seen as environmentally appropriate for its setting. The added plant life has also greened a formerly derelict site and attracted wildlife. Further the Garden is marketed as a public garden for the local community and runs educational projects encouraging skills and learning for children through to the elderly from a range of approaches (The Alnwick Garden, 2006d). It also has prominent disability, arts, play and health and well-being strategies that engage strongly with local people (The Alnwick Garden, 2006a; 2006b; 2006c; 2006e).

So, although the Garden is a major attraction 'imposed' on Alnwick, it has been beneficial for the area. Much like Hadrian's Wall, the Alnwick Garden has acted as a growth pole. This was strongly emphasised by my interviewees, who argued the three flagships of the NCS (although to a lesser extent for Woodhorn at present) have been successful in not only establishing themselves, but have also created room at the grass roots for newer attractions and firms to emerge, as well as showing others what can be achieved. Allied to this is the expertise the attractions are able, but more importantly willing, to share with the rest of the cluster. The flagships have been able to do this, in part, by tapping into the characteristics of the emerging NHC and by harnessing what Benneworth (2004) calls unique assets. These are things unique to an area, the result of historical events or because other regions have forgotten them. By harnessing these the flagships create assets embedded and anchored in Northumberland, and emerge as growth nodes that "make it easier for smaller scale activities to constellate around those leaders, building the network through discrete new linkages" (Benneworth, 2004: 454). Examples include, firms along Hadrian's Wall drawing on the success and capacity of HWTP, and accommodation providers expanding their businesses in Alnwick.

The performance of these nodes – both as tourist attractions, as catalysts for sustainable development, and as capacity providers for local firms – is crucial for the future development of the NHC.

7.5 Sustainable Tourism and ‘Greening’ Businesses

In addition to the perspectives discussed above, it is useful to add another: sustainable tourism. It is important to add this dimension given the large influence of the tourism sector on the NHC, and the important role sustainable tourism is playing in fostering sustainability, particularly in terms of ‘natural’ heritage, in the NHC.

Rather than seeing the inherent value for the environment, the concept of sustainable tourism, formed explicitly in the late 1980s and early 1990s, is usually accepted by the tourist industry for the following three reasons:

1. Economics – being sustainable by consuming less resources is an effective way to cut costs. A popular example of this is the accommodation sector is not washing towels and bed linen everyday;
2. Public relations – in the current climate is it advantageous for firms to come across as environmentally friendly for PR purposes; and,
3. Marketing – in a similar way to PR, the sustainable label has become very marketable in recent years.

(Butler, 1998)

All three reasons can be found in the motivations of organisations in the NHC. For example, numerous Larder members emphasise the localness and sustainability of their products on their websites and the participants in the NNPA’s green business scheme proudly display their awards in their brochures (see below).

Some scholars have argued that for many tourist firms it is hard to be sustainable because of their size. Williams and Shaw (1998), for instance, claim the small size of many tourist operators can lead to fragmentation which is problematic for a sustainable approach that requires holistic strategies. They go on to posit that for sustainable tourism to be achievable high levels of coordination are needed within a sector where firms have apparently contradictory views. Furthermore, tourism businesses, and particularly those in rural and/or peripheral areas, may not be able to implement sustainable practices due to their vulnerable

nature. This vulnerability stems from a number of factors including the small scale and dispersed nature of the sector that often means low returns on investment. A knock on effect of this is that inward investment and new firm creation can be limited. Further, rural tourism businesses are often very small enterprises requiring a diverse range of skills are difficult for one person to learn and develop. Small firms can also have difficulty accessing capacity (time, labour, finance, and knowledge) that limits engagement in strategic planning processes (Nylander and Hall, 2005: 26-27).

The dynamics of the NHC mean firms can tap into the kind of collaboration discussed by Williams and Shaw (1998). Moreover, the public sector plays a major role in helping firms overcome the above vulnerabilities by providing capacity individual firms could not achieve. Indeed, in some cases the vulnerabilities are so great that without public sector involvement large numbers of rural businesses could not survive - as highlighted by the impact of foot and mouth disease (see Phillipson, et al., 2002).

An example of the role the public sector plays in fostering sustainable tourism practices is through 'greening' schemes. NNPA and HWTP/HWHL are two public organisations who help firms adopt more sustainable working practices. This is unsurprising given the environment is an essential feature of Northumberland's 'offer'. Above I have suggested it is in the firm's own interest to act in an environmentally friendly way. Here I expand on this and highlight how some firms are going a step further and using their environmental credentials as a selling point.

Environmental sustainability was a strong feature of HWTP when it was running (and something HWHL is keen to keep going)⁵⁹, and as discussed earlier, this is central to the work of NNPA. Both these organisations have taken this ethos to local businesses. As part of HWTP's Hadrian Means Business scheme local firms were invited to attend a series of 'Green Advantage' courses which were very popular:

⁵⁹ Both HWTP and HWHL make it explicit that they are guided by sustainable tourism principles in their strategy documents and publicity material (Hadrian's Wall Tourism Partnership, 2006; Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd, 2007).

“We had a lot of courses for people; the Green Advantage course was teaching, helping businesses to run their businesses in an environmentally friendly way in order to actually save money and run the business more efficiently.”

(HW Informant 3)

NNPA run a similar course called the ‘Green Tourism Businesses Scheme’. This is a national project which awards medals depending on how green an organisation is:

“So it could be looking at promoting local transport, promoting local walks and cycling opportunities. Having cycling facilities within the building, adopting energy efficiency savings, waste recycling scheme, including new technology putting in solar heating...so it can be wide and diverse it could be improving the gardens and grounds for wildlife.”

(NNPA Informant 1)

The course revolves around how many measures a firm put in place in relation to nine criteria:

1. Compliance with environmental legislation
2. Good environmental management
3. Communication of environmental actions to customers
4. Energy efficiency
5. Water efficiency
6. Purchase of environmentally friendly goods and services
7. Waste minimisation
8. Transport efficiency
9. Increased biodiversity

(Green Tourism Business Scheme, 2007)

Since the National Park launched its scheme in 2006 it has sponsored 11 firms to undertake the green audit. These firms are mainly accommodation providers and have undertaken various greening activities including setting up wildlife CCTV that provides visitors with live

images of wildlife, tree planting and cutting energy consumption. The scheme also promotes inter-sectoral development by encouraging the use of local suppliers for food and drink. This creates higher demand for local produce, fosters cooperation, strengthens the supply chain, reduces transaction costs and therefore helps the food and drink sector and reinforces the dynamics of the NHC. It also deepens the connection to place through food and provides a holistic visitor experience. As one respondent told me, there is nothing more intimate than eating; one is consuming something which has literally been part of a place and formed part of its landscape. This is something strongly promoted by the Countryside Agency through their 'Eat the View' scheme.

Alongside not wanting to kill the goose that lays Northumberland's golden egg, and using sustainability as a marketing tool, there is another reason why it might be expected to see sustainable practices adopted by the tourism sector. Contrary to Williams and Shaw (1998), Dewhurst and Thomas (2003) argue smaller firms feel a greater commitment to the future of an area and are therefore more likely to adopt environmentally friendly practices (see also Swarbrooke, 1999). Further, Post (1993) suggests that family operated firms with connections to a locale can also align business with sustainable working practices. Perhaps then, given that many NHC business are small and family run (particularly in the accommodation sector), in addition to the strong connection to place found throughout the NHC, it is inevitable the cluster exhibits sustainable characteristics. As addressed in the previous chapter, this kind of geographical and cultural embeddedness is crucial to the NHC.

7.6 Sustainable Development and Clusters

So far this chapter has highlighted the way organisations provide all important capacity for developing firms. This is done through activity where environmental and community development has been undertaken alongside, and together with, economic and cluster development. Driving this three-pronged development programme is the potential of heritage, together with the spirit of the cluster (intensely connected to the heritage of the area) and its members. Importantly, the adoption of these objectives marks the NHC out as a rare example of a cluster with aims beyond its own economic sustainability. As mentioned

in the previous chapter, this is due to the specificities of the 'industry' in question and the context in which it operates.

Given that clusters and sustainable development have been high on policy agendas for over a decade (Jonas, et al., 2004), it seems odd they have not been seen together more often. Compounding this, clusters are perhaps ideally suited to developing and implementing sustainable development objectives because, as it has been argued elsewhere, sustainable development cannot be the "remit of one government department, one agency or one sector of society" (Thomas, 2004: 16). Clusters then, with myriad actors and high levels of interaction, provide a useful tool for fostering inter-departmental –agency and –sector collaboration. Furthermore, the scale of clusters – most commonly found between the 'local' and 'regional' levels – also matches the level at which sustainability can most effectively be delivered (Gibbs and Jonas, 2001). As Flynn and Morgan (2004: 21) argue, it is in regions where our "prosaic, habitual and taken-for-granted routines will be the real measure of our collective commitment to sustainable development." As demonstrated in EU policy, and in turn national and sub-national strategies, this is recognised amongst some policy makers.

However, sustainable development has seemingly not registered significantly on the radars of clusters (see above). One reason for this could be the inevitable time lag one sees in the transfer of ideas and concepts from one arena to another. This is not convincing, however, as concepts of sustainability have been around longer than clusters in their neo-Marshallian guise. A more persuasive argument can be made that, until recently, there has been no match between those organisations tasked with developing clusters and those who seek to foster sustainable development – i.e. economic development organisations versus a miscellany of suitability focused agencies (Gibbs, 1998; Gibbs and Jonas, 2001). In the UK at least, the rise of regionalism has seen responsibility for regional development devolved to Regional Development Agencies (RDAs). Answering to the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (formerly the Department for Trade and Industry), the RDAs have primarily focused on stimulating and sustaining economic growth within their localities. Furthermore, their inception and the policies advanced to encourage growth have their roots in 'new regionalist' approaches such as the cluster concept. As discussed in Chapter 2, these approaches are based on dominant assumptions prefacing the economic threats of

globalisation and related business discourses centred on competitiveness (Lovering, 2001). So, despite overarching policy rhetoric from national and European bodies, and having responsibilities at a scale suitable for implementing sustainability policies, sustainable development, relatively speaking, has failed to make significant impact on the work of RDAs. It is only recently that, as greater responsibilities have been devolved to RDAs, environmental and community objectives have made their way into the most influential regional policies, namely Regional Economic Strategies. After Local Agenda 21, English local authorities have been relatively more successful at incorporating sustainable development objectives into their strategies, although, for similar reasons to those posited above, economic agendas often impede ecological and community modernisation (Jonas, et al., 2004).

In contrast, the example of the NHC demonstrates that where organisations have a remit for both economic (cluster) development and 'more than economic' development, or where effective communication and a common purpose act to coordinate policy and action, one can find clustering activity that includes sustainable development (particularly in relation to communities). In addition to this, with environmental problems increasingly at the forefront of consumers minds, the private sector are forced to act in ways that at least appear to be environmentally friendly.

The fact that the NHC is a cluster that incorporates sustainable development objectives raises two interesting points. First, in terms of clusters, the NHC demonstrates that where there is the desire and resources, clusters can have an impact that goes beyond economic growth. Second, the NHC suggests clusters are highly useful units for initiating and enhancing sustainable development. For example, one of the foundational arguments about clusters is that co-location brings with it advantages for firms; advantages not as intense or as accessible in other places - particularly the ease of interaction, collaboration, collective learning and coalition building. As Wallman (1999) tentatively proposes, for an issue that requires a great deal of coordination and collective action - such as sustainable development – it follows that clustering can offer an efficient and effective model of how to instigate cooperative and 'joined-up' action. If organisations are seeking to engage in more than economic activity then working in a cluster could enhance this. Importantly however, one

needs to refigure or re-imagine the basis on which the cluster concept is based – i.e. the business and competition centred discourses of new regionalism. In Lovering's terms, it requires an appreciation that the 'low road' may in fact be the most effective route to success (2001).

That said however, as I have argued above, clusters are formed, in part, from their *terroir*. Therefore, transposing the characteristics of one cluster to another place is very difficult. Not all locales are suitable for, or could manage, the kind of refiguring seen in the NHC. For example, heritage is one of those 'things' that can be harnessed and/or related to various aspects of the economy, environment and community. Therefore it can be used to develop those areas. On the other hand, ICTs cannot be utilised in such a way because in most cases there is limited historical or geographical connection between ICTs, people or place. Equally, some clusters are driven by competition and individualism (rather than collaboration) and this is not as conducive to the kind of 'joined-up' thinking required for sustainable development, as collaborative practices are. Likewise, places operating as hubs of global production and exchange could not easily adopt 'slower' routes of development. That is not to say they should not attempt to, but one needs to be careful the adoption of holistic developmental aims does not cause more harm than good.

7.7 Conclusions

This chapter has sought to do two things. First, as seen in the previous two chapters, I have provided gradually deeper and more nuanced analysis of the cluster. This chapter has followed that progression by detailing four key case studies. In doing so I have demonstrated further the sustainable development features of the NHC and the ways in which the AHD is rejected in favour of more holistic uses of heritage. Second, this examination has sought to fill the gap in cluster studies that fails to examine the 'more than economic' potential of clusters.

I began by outlining the ways in which the Northumberland National Park Authority is stimulating socio-economic clustering activity alongside community and environmental development. The Traditional Boundaries-Traditional Skills project, for example, is plugging

a skills gap in the labour market and helping increase the level of heritage related firm start-ups. In addition TBTS is enabling the park to forge links with communities of local people and businesses. Similarly aSPECT is also strengthening community ties. It is doing this by bringing together previously disparate user groups through collaborative tourism planning and collective learning. The focus of this co-operation and learning is on developing the area's cultural heritage for business opportunities.

The second case study, the Northumberland Cultural Strategy, has again reiterated the sustainable development features of the NHC, with particular focus on community involvement in the planning process. In addition to this, the strategy itself demonstrates the contemporary uses heritage can be harnessed for. Through projects that incorporate culture and heritage the NCS is implicitly a cluster development strategy with aims to develop collaboration, partnership and workforce development. It has been a successful document by allowing local people a voice and as a framework on which organisations can draw to support their activities and funding applications. Perhaps most importantly, in terms of the cluster, the NCS has brought people and organisations together and enabled them to share ideas, establish networks and generate trust.

My third case study has examined the role of flagship developments as growth poles for businesses. Again, in addition to economic development, these attractions have roles as catalysts for local environmental and community projects. The final case study has outlined the way in which the tourism sector is looking at sustainability and 'greening' policies as selling points. These programmes value the cultural landscapes in which they sit in terms of sustainability and the value green initiatives can add to their businesses.

After highlighting the sustainable credentials of the NHC, I finished the chapter with a brief discussion about the lack of clusters work that includes analysis of the 'more than economic' potential of such agglomerations. As regional authorities become increasingly important in meeting sustainable development objectives, I argue clusters provide a useful tool for delivering such aims through the well established characteristics valued for their socio-economic benefits.

Thus, these findings demonstrate that researching examples outside the norm – i.e. not another analysis of bio- and hi-technology, media, automotive or quality manufacturing clusters – and in a variety of different contexts, can be empirically richer and more theoretically generative than the ‘usual suspects’ (following Buroway, et al., 2000). While it is unlikely, and indeed unwise, scholars will cease research on traditional clusters, or that development organisations will stop trying to stimulate high-tech clusters, hopefully these findings will encourage work that looks beyond the purely economic value of agglomerations.

Chapter 8

Conclusions – Moving Clusters On

8.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to draw together my findings and outline the conclusions of this research. In addition, I highlight a number of policy contributions that might be made and identify avenues for future research.

As outlined in Chapter 1, my research questions were as follows:

1. What is the Northumberland Heritage Cluster?

- How, and by whom, has it been defined?
- What is the scale and scope of the cluster?

2. What are the drivers, structure and characteristics of the Northumberland Heritage Cluster?

3. In what ways does the Northumberland Heritage Cluster contribute to clusters discourse?

In order to answer these questions, Chapters 2 and 3 reviewed relevant literatures. Chapter 2 outlined the origins of, and most influential theories on localised industrial complexes.

Beginning with Marshall's (1920) theory on agglomerations, through neo-Marshallian industrial districts, theories on innovation and path dependence, to Porterian clusters, I discussed the different schools of thought explaining why clusters form and how they work. In line with theorists attempting to unravel what has become a confusing discourse (Gordon and McCann, 2000; Keeble and Nachum, 2002; Lagendijk, 2003; Benneworth and Henry, 2004), I outlined a multi-perspective approach for understanding clusters that acknowledges their antecedent explanatory frameworks. In so doing, I argued a multi-perspective approach goes some way to ensuring rigour in research design and robustness of findings.

Critiquing the predominant narratives of clusters research I then outlined three absences in previous work. The first of these highlights the conceptualisation of clusters as purely economic phenomena, a result, I argue, of the contexts in which theories of agglomeration emerged and the influence of policy-led theory (Lovering, 1999). The outcome of this conceptualisation is to characterise regional development as economic development, overlooking community and environmental concerns. In identifying the second absence I drew on recent literature examining asymmetrical power relations within some clusters (Ekinsmyth, 2002b; Christopherson and Clark, 2007). The argument of these authors is that within much of the research on clusters power is under-theorised, and thus the heralded reciprocal relationships within some industries are misconstrued. The final absence I describe concentrates on repeated case studies of similar industries that, in the extreme cases, fail to provide a broader theoretical basis for taking forward our understanding of new economic geographies. I argue, instead, that by expanding the types of sectors examined new potentials for clusters could be uncovered.

Chapter 3, then, charts the history of a sector with just that potential: heritage. Here I outline the ways heritage has been understood and used over the previous three centuries. Early conceptualisations of heritage saw, and to some extent still do see, it as an institution for capturing and preserving lost virtues, or to commemorate past glories and reinforce particular views of history (the AHD). More recent understandings have seen heritage commodified for economic gain. As part of a critique of this and the AHD, the most progressive modern views of heritage perceive it as plural, contested and hybrid, and recognise the diverse potentials of the concept. One outcome of this has seen heritages

enrolled into networks of local and regional development. On the one hand, this sees the past enacted in narratives of place promotion as part of globalisation-competition narratives, on the other, it is adopted in more diverse development trajectories that echo the critique of clusters as purely economic made in Chapter 2.

In Chapter 4 I built on these arguments, developing my research questions and outlining a theory driven research design to investigate heritage in Northumberland. This development allowed me to move from theoretical foundations, identification of critiques, absences and issues identified in Chapters 2 and 3, through the development of a rigorous research design, to, in Chapter 5-7, address each of these elements with empirical evidence. The research design revolved around two major stages: first, a predominantly desk based research phase analysing previous work to understand the scale and scope of the NHC. From this I was able to construct a series of criteria to select case studies with. These case studies formed the second phase of fieldwork as I investigated the Northumberland National Park Authority, Hadrian's Wall, the Northumberland Cultural Strategy and Northumbria Larder.

8.2 Summary of Findings

8.2.1 The Northumberland Heritage Cluster: Scale and Scope

Given the absence of any previous research on the NHC, or indeed any research examining a heritage cluster elsewhere, the most elementary finding of this research was to map the scale and scope of the NHC. A guide was provided by the co-funders, the Northumberland Learning and Skills Council but, as discussed in Chapter 5, this did not capture the full extent of the cluster. I argue, then, that the NHC can be conceptualised as being constituted by five interconnected sectors that have direct and indirect links to heritage and each other.

First, the heritage sector incorporates activity that deals most directly with 'cultural', built and 'visitable' heritages. This activity ranges from archaeology and historically focused academic discourse at one end, through conservation and restoration services, to front end heritage operations including museums, galleries and historic sites. The major organisations within this supply chain are English Heritage, the National Trust, universities, archaeology

consultancies of various types, Northumberland National Park Authority, HLF funded projects, and Hadrian's Wall related organisations. As well as managing heritage these institutions also provide a governance structure for other parts of the cluster. The main strengths within this sector stem from Roman and Christian heritages, castles, the Border Reivers with associated cultural heritage, and industrial heritages.

Second, the land-based industries are identified for their increasingly important role in protecting, preserving and enhancing the 'natural' elements of Northumberland's cultural landscape. This role is in line with discussions in Chapter 2 highlighting the ways in which heritage is becoming less about small sites, buildings, monuments or artefacts, with greater emphasis on intangible heritages, and larger areas that reflect interaction of humans with their surroundings. It is the farmland, woodland and moorland within these larger areas that the LBIs manage. Northumberland has an advantage in landscape, particularly 'untouched' areas with little (obvious) sign of human impact.

Third, the cultural sector - specifically the visual, literary and performing arts - captures, reproduces and is inspired by heritage. Northumberland and Newcastle-upon-Tyne are particularly strong here with innovative writers and artists, matched with good theatre and gallery infrastructure. Folk music is also a key asset for Northumberland with many traditional music festivals throughout the year. The advantage provided by a variety of cultural landscapes means the cluster offers a plethora of opportunities for the film and television industry.

The fourth sector in the NHC is local food and drink which captures heritage through recipes, marketing and traditional recipes. There are around 200 enterprises in this sector with strengths in cheeses, potatoes and cakes. Northumbria Larder has been successful in stimulating collaboration between producers and getting local products into the multiples. There are strong overlaps with the land-based industries and growing linkages with tourism.

Finally, the tourism sector plays a major role in providing capacity for the sector through its activity in accommodation provision, marketing, attraction management and governance structures. The most popular attractions in the North East of England – The Alnwick

Garden, Kielder Water and Baltic amongst others - are heritage related indicating another key strength. The variety of attractions is also an advantage for the cluster.

Heritage related activities are not solely driven by economics, but together these sectors employ approximately 150,000 people across the North East generating over £4bn for the region. As discussed in Chapter 5 these figures come with a set of caveats because of definitional overlap, conflicting geographies and seasonal inaccuracies.

With these as the constituent sectors, it is their overlaps and linkages which bind and support the argument for a putative cluster. Evidence shows that linkages within and between all sectors are strong and strengthening – for instance, Northumberland National Park Authority and Northumbria Larder working together, Alnwick Gardening linking up with the food and cultural industries, flagships stimulating growth of accommodation providers etc.. Moreover, these overlaps are increasingly recognised as people come to see themselves as part of a cluster.

These linkages are forming an emergent cluster but there are a number of challenges facing individual sectors and the cluster as a whole. In particular there are a number of skills gaps in the heritage, cultural and tourism sectors that need addressing. Agriculture is under enormous pressure as policy priorities and subsidies focus on land management ahead of food production. Likewise, the local food and drink sector needs to be responsive to changes in consumer focus, particularly in relation to traceability, organics and food miles. Finally, the dominance of London is a major challenge for the cultural sector. Despite these issues the situation is improving and certainly better than ten years ago. This is, in part, due to major investment in culture which has created opportunities in all sectors. Further potential remains, and importantly this potential is acknowledged by strategic bodies who recognise that many of the challenges facing the cluster can be addressed through its underdeveloped ‘assets’. Aiding this process is an emerging strategic framework as actors recognise the potential of the cluster.

8.2.2 Competition, Collaboration and Institutions in the Northumberland Heritage Cluster

Building on, but also critiquing Chapter 5, Chapter 6 seeks to illuminate a more detailed picture of the NHC. Here I highlight the strong collaborative elements of the cluster in and between the private and public sectors. Amongst private sector firms competition is present, but not at the ‘vigorous’ levels Porter (1998) calls for. A number of informants commented that too high a level of competition would be dangerous for the cluster given its embryonic state. Collaboration is far more pervasive amongst this part of the NHC. I have sought to illustrate this with a number of examples of larger firms lending expertise and brand power to smaller counterparts.

Collaboration is higher still amongst the public sector. After decades of economic crisis, the state plays an important role in the North East of England. In addition, as outlined in Chapter 3, publicly funded organisations have always played an important role in the protection and management of heritage. This combination has generated an institutionally thick cluster with high levels of interaction between organisations. This interaction is manifest in four ways: (1) through contact on sector boards; (2) collaborative working; (3) joint funding bids; (4) at seminars, workshops and other collective learning events. The outcome of this interaction are structures of coalition and dominance facilitated through shared norms and understandings of Northumberland’s heritage. A collective identity emerges that values holistic development and reinforces processes of institutionalisation. There is a strong common enterprise that aims to develop Northumberland’s heritage in sustainable ways for the good of the county.

Heritage plays an important part in the cluster. Obviously it is the main resource that is exhibited, captured, reproduced, commodified and drawn on by both the public and private sectors. But it is also a major influence on the NHC members and aims. The shared identity, goals and ‘spirit’ of the cluster are drawn from the area’s history where collective enterprise and an acknowledgement that hard work is the only real way to achieve things is valued. As described in Chapter 3, the nature of heritage as economically non-conformist, encapsulating

a wide spectrum of activity, means the aims the NHC seeks to achieve are not solely economic as seen in other examples of clusters.

Demonstrating this, and addressing one of my criticisms that too much clusters research fails to look beyond the economic impacts of a cluster, Chapter 7 examines four case studies that exemplify the sustainable development credentials of the NHC. The case studies represent linkages between sectors, sustainable characteristics and clustering activity.

The first examples highlighted in Chapter 7 illustrate the work of the Northumberland National Park Authority. As well as addressing a crafts skills gap in the heritage sector, Traditional Boundaries-Traditional Skills is supplying the labour market with skilled workers, stimulating firm start ups and enhancing the cultural landscape of Northumberland. In addition the project is a catalyst for engaging local and business communities with the work of the Park and the environment of Northumberland. aSPECT is also strengthening community ties; this time by providing capacity for user groups to work and learn together. The development of sustainable tourism offers has created a more robust, co-operative and engaged community.

Similarly, Northumberland Cultural Strategy has worked to enrol local people into the process of strategy construction, as well as the collaborative working practices developed between the Strategy's stakeholders. The content of the NCS included work on sustainable uses of heritage for a variety of purposes, as well as developing clustering characteristics. The third case study highlighted the way flagship developments are acting as growth poles for local businesses. Northumberland's flagships are spurring innovation, spin-offs, entrepreneurship and local economic growth. As with the other examples, community and environmental sustainability is also a key focus. The final case study illustrates perhaps the most obvious adoption of sustainable development objectives. This is done by highlighting schemes encouraging tourism enterprises to become more environmentally friendly. In doing so the firms are helping their local environment and adding value to their offer.

8.3 Contributions to Academic Discourses

The findings presented here make a number of empirical and theoretical contributions to a range of discourses. In this section I highlight what those are before suggesting some policy contributions that could be made, as well as future research ideas.

The main empirical contribution of this research is mapping, for the first time, the Northumberland Heritage Cluster. In Chapters 4 and 5 I explained that previously only a notional idea of the cluster existed with no previous research on it. This thesis has developed that notion and detailed the scale, scope, institutions and socio-cultural processes of the NHC. In the process of this mapping exercise my research has sought to highlight common linkages between seemingly separate sectors. Previous work has examined the linkages between two or three sectors - research on alternative food networks for example - but there is little work taking a wider perspective of heritage related sectors.

Examining this cluster has highlighted a role played by the state that goes beyond what is normally seen in clusters. Most commonly, public policy is directed to explicitly develop a cluster, with public bodies playing a supporting role. This can happen indirectly through the labour market, or via more direct initiatives such as providing shared research and development capacity (Taylor and Raines, 2001). Depending on the need, the hand of the public sector can be firm or gentle, but in most cases the public sector plays a supporting, or catalysing role with gradually less direct input as the cluster matures. In contrast, the NHC is dominated by public organisations because a) heritage management is dominated by publicly funded organisations and b) the institutional architecture of the North East.

The case studies detailed in Chapter 7 extend the range of contemporary uses of heritage that go beyond conservation and commodification. Chapter 3 outlined the critique of the authorised heritage discourse and increasing incidences where heritage is appreciated as multi-scalar, plural and embedded in real and present day places. Much of the activity within the NHC is in line with a rejection of the AHD, allowing projects that engage with communities to be rolled out.

In theoretical terms this research contributes to gaps in the literature identified in Chapter 2. As mentioned above, the first of these revolved around the economic bias in cluster analysis. Unsurprisingly, given the concept's origins, competitiveness and economic growth are the foundational elements of clusters. Reflecting this the vast majority of work on clusters has focused on uncovering the ways in which co-location generates externalities of benefit to a firm's economic performance. While this has been a fruitful exercise, little work has sought to highlight the 'more than economic' potential clusters possess. The absence of work that deconstructs this focus is puzzling given advances and critiques in other (sub)disciplines. Sustainable development has long been a theme of development policy, particularly in 'developing' countries, but it is only recently one has seen emerging debates in the academic literature considering the connection between regional development and sustainability (Gibbs, 1998; Thomas and Rhisiart, 2004). Chapter 7 discusses the limited instances where sustainable development is part of eco-clusters. However, such examples only demonstrate part of the economy-environment-society chain. In contrast, the examples provided here demonstrate activity that encompass broader aspects of the economic-environment-society chain. Thus this thesis demonstrates more holistic and diverse forms of development can be achieved through clusters. My work, therefore, is a timely contribution to debates about what local and regional development should aim to achieve (Pike, et al., 2006; 2007). Furthermore, in line with other calls (see Chapters 2 and 7), it disrupts, or at least calls for a refiguring of, the basic assumptions of the dominant economic-competitiveness narrative within the cluster concept and regional development. For example, acknowledgement that clusters, through the features that make them economically successful, have latent potentials extending beyond competitiveness, questions the value of cluster strategies that focus on economic development alone.

The second gap identified in Chapter 2 is the reliance on the same kind of case studies in empirical work. These cases most commonly extend the work of foundational research into agglomerations – namely bio- and high-technology, media, and automotive and quality manufacturing. One can understand this fascination, not least because examination of these industries is simply fulfilling demand. However, in line with a number of authors (Mitchell, 1983; Markusen, 1999a; Buroway, et al., 2000; Peck, 2003; Lorentzen, 2007), I have argued it is potentially more theoretically generative to look beyond the 'usual suspects'. Examination

of heritage-related sectors expands the horizon of cluster research, and as described above this thesis has uncovered the ‘more than economic’ potential my critique identified.

In terms of methodological contributions, the multi-perspectival approach (Benneworth and Henry, 2004) outlined in Chapter 2 is extended to delineate more clearly a typology of clustering characteristics, their origins and outcomes. In parallel to hermeneutic theorisations that understand clusters as a hybrid concept constructed from myriad theories, I have attempted to unravel its constituent elements to create a framework for methodological use.

In applying this typology in a systematic, yet reflexive, way my intention has been to illustrate a continuum of findings with increasing levels of detail. The first stage in this continuum applied a Porteresque perspective to the NHC. The intention here was to highlight that despite critiques in the literature (e.g. Martin and Sunley, 2003), and erroneous applications in the field, the Porter cluster concept has value. Conceptually it is a useful departure point in order to identify the broad scale, scope, strengths and weaknesses of a cluster. It can be particularly useful where little previous research on an area exists. Building on this foundation, and extending my continuum, the next stage was to uncover those characteristics identified in my framework. Once this stage was completed I sought to illustrate the cluster’s features through key exemplars. Thus, I have aimed to not only refine cluster theory into a more parsimonious and methodologically useful way, but to do so through empirical validation.

Finally, the importance that history plays in constructing the NHC’s identity and socio-cultural institutions, reiterates the notion that regions are historically contingent. Moreover, by examining the interdependence of place, history and regional (cluster) identity with explicit use of theories about heritage, I have broadened the theoretical contributions an appreciation of histories can make to economic geography. Heritage should not be seen as a passive element used to complement an array of pull factors a region has to offer investors. It is an important explanatory feature of a region’s *terrior*. Moreover, heritage’s economic non-conformity provides ample opportunities for integrative research and theory construction within and beyond economic geography.

8.4 Policy Contributions

Given the subject of this research and my status as a CASE funded student, it is only right one seeks to feedback my findings and policy suggestions to the cluster. An executive summary has been produced for each of my interviewees to provide insights into my findings. In addition, I propose the following four steps be taken.

First, the embryonic nature of the cluster and the nascent collective identity as a cluster, means there is a decision to be made about where future development strategies are focused. There needs to be a decision taken whether to explicitly develop the overlaps of the sectors collectively as a cluster or not. Recognition as a cluster is potentially the best step as it would enable more focused support and facilitate leverage of funding from strategic bodies. However, development as a cluster would need to be handled carefully. As discussed, a key feature of the NHC is its grounding in local communities and normative values that enable sustainable development to occur. As discussed in Chapter 6, the future sustainability of the NHC depends on the private sector taking a more prominent role. It would be unsustainable and inappropriate for public monies to be used to support a more developed NHC in the way it currently does. Given that clusters are most commonly seen as economic development tools, any future development needs to be careful that economic objectives do not subsume environmental and community development. Promisingly, the recent review of sub-national economic development and regeneration seeks to “ensure that localities and regions have the tools they need to achieve sustainable economic, social and environmental development for the whole nation” (HM Treasury et al, 2007: 4).

Related to this point is the way in which heritage can and should be used for development. Chapter 7 has illustrated a number of contemporary uses of heritage that harness heritages sensitively. However, if the private sector is to take a more prominent role there are two potential problems, each relating to Hewison’s (1987) and Lowenthal’s (1985; 1998) points about the heritage industry. First, too strong a focus on the past can act as a brake on progress. Thus far, in the examples in Chapter 7, there is little evidence of this. However, with a stronger commercial sector there is the danger that archaic values may be reinforced, and/or that people place too much emphasis on looking to the past at the expense of the

future. Second, as discussed in Chapter 2, commodification of heritage can lead to the creation of inauthentic histories. The collective identity of the NHC is based on a particular narrative about Northumberland that could be disrupted by more marketable histories. The impact of this could be less cohesion and shared values. Moreover, the commodification of any heritage has to be done sensitively so as not to damage it.

In terms of more practical measures, as highlighted in Chapter 5 there are a number of skills gaps in the heritage related sectors. In addition, recruitment and retention of cultural sector workers is an issue throughout the country. These sectors are crucial to the preservation and use of heritage ‘assets’ and central to ensuring the NHC maintains its good work. Work is already underway to address this within the heritage sector, but it is important the issues are not seen as isolated to one sector. As this research has demonstrated the interdependencies between sectors are deep, and impacts in one sector ripple across to related industries. A holistic cluster strategy is required to deal with these issues.

Finally, as many interviewees were acutely aware, there is a looming funding crisis. Part of the funding for the London Olympics is coming from National Lottery budgets NHC members rely on for funding. With around £2.2 billion being taken out of the good causes fund, there is a shortage of monies for projects. Sources of funding need to be found to continue the sort of projects highlighted throughout this thesis. The private sector and regional bodies need to contribute.

8.5 Future Research Agenda

In terms of future research, I foresee five avenues of interest. First, in most direct relation to this thesis, a longitudinal study would be useful to track the development of the NHC. There is a great deal of unrealised potential within the cluster, returning to the NHC in 3-5 years would be useful to understand its development trajectories. In particular this would identify how the balance between the public and private sectors has changed – if at all – given the suggestions I have made above. Further, quantitative study is now possible after this research that could map the numerical dimensions of the cluster more accurately now the cluster is better understood.

Second, again in direct relation to this research, a comparative study of similar assemblages would enable a comparison of outcomes. For instance, examining areas where heritage sectors are more developed would better inform policy interventions. Furthermore, it would also help understand sustainable outcomes. As discussed above, sustainability is inherent in the heritage concept, by examining other places where heritage is being enrolled into local and regional development strategies, one could compare sustainable outcomes with the NHC. Similarly, comparators in different countries would enable an insight into how different heritage management and governance structures influence the use of heritages.

Third, given the influence of Northumberland National Park Authority in the NHC, the role similar bodies have in local and regional development strategies is a potentially fruitful avenue for further research. There is an emerging literature on the influence protected areas can have on local development (see Mose, 2007), and these areas are increasingly recognised as keystones for sustainable development initiatives. National parks, eco-museums and nature parks are unique constellations of 'nature', people, heritage, tourism and culture. These resources are managed with under appreciated pools of drive and expertise. Such areas represent key nodes for stimulating sustainable development trajectories and an under theorised area within academic discourse. Given the large number of these areas, and their increasing responsibilities in development programmes, there is scope for large scale studies.

Fourth, the role of clusters as drivers of sustainable development is an area of interest. As discussed in Chapter 7 there is emerging work examining eco-industrial clusters. However, research here only focuses on environment-economy relations, social aspects of sustainable development are not considered. Further work could be done to examine how clustering characteristics can lend themselves to holistic forms of development.

Finally, the intersection of heritage and economic activity is an interesting field; particularly how firms, institutions and places enrol, harness and develop heritages as economic assets. Within regional studies it has long been acknowledged that history is an important factor in the performance of regions. Indeed, the most successful districts develop a reputation for excellence borne out of their heritage. Prime examples of this include Silicon Valley, the City

of London, the ‘Third Italy’, and Motor Sport Valley. There are other examples that exhibit similar features: the wine industry in France; local food branding; and places such as Savile Row in London. In line with discussions I raised in Chapter 6, these areas represent useful examples for understanding the intersection of economics and heritage that go beyond simplistic ideas of place promotion.

As this thesis has sought to demonstrate, heritage is an important factor within local and regional development trajectories, in constructing collective identities and as a tool for diverse forms of development. Further, by their very nature, there is a distinct geography to heritages, and they also help reveal the present and future as well as the past. In addition, heritages represent a powerful tool for engaging undergraduates and the public in a variety of geographies. Thus, I hope the geographies of heritage emerge as a discrete sub-discipline within geography.

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Appendix 1

Traditional Boundaries-Traditional Skills

Information from NNPA website:

How will the Project Make a Difference?

The project will not only make a visible difference to the landscape of the area, but will also help the National Park Authority to underpin and develop new social enterprises that will deliver long lasting benefits to local communities. It is being developed as a national pilot scheme with the support of a number of organisations.

By offering a service to farmers and landowners in boundary conservation and maintenance the project will provide on-site and workshop training to equip 50 apprentices with the necessary skills to enable them to achieve certification in the management and repair of traditional boundaries.

In addition, to increase conservation skills among the local community 125 volunteers will be trained by the National Park Authority to work with communities to identify key traditional boundaries in need of conservation work.

Local school children will also be getting in on the act, as the project will link up with village schools to provide learning activities for key stages 2 and 3 in history, geography and citizenship.

Main objectives

- Provide 10 apprentice places per annum, i.e. a total of 50 during the project lifetime
- Train 25 volunteers per year, i.e. a total of 125 during the project lifetime
- Provide/support 5 public events per year, i.e. a total of 25 during the project life
- Provide an electronic/web based activity per annum, i.e. a total of five during the project life
- Restore 10km of dry stone wall in the National Park
- Restore 10km of other boundaries, including hedgerows, in the National Park
- Work with a minimum of 5 local communities to identify key traditional boundaries in the locality requiring conservation
- Mentor and support three new rural skills based businesses

(Northumberland National Park Authority, 2005e)

Appendix 2

Priority aims of NCS

Key Priority Aim 1:

- Northumberland will accelerate its renaissance by ensuring it is an attractive and celebrated place in which to live, work, visit and invest by improving its infrastructure and marketing its strengths to the region and beyond

Key Agency: Northumberland County Council

Key Priority Aim 2

- Northumberland will become more accessible and inclusive by developing needs-led programmes that allow individuals and communities to fully experience, participate in and benefit from cultural activity

Key Agency: Local Authorities

Key Priority Aim 3

- Northumberland will create the conditions in which new or existing organisations and partnerships can empower communities to improve their confidence and well being

Key Agency: Northumberland Strategic Partnership

Key Priority Aim 4

- Northumberland will provide an environment in which cultural entrepreneurs can run sustainable businesses

Key Agency: Business Link for Northumberland

Key Priority Aim 5

- Northumberland will build an adaptable and highly skilled workforce by raising participation and attainment through high quality cultural education and training

Key Agency: Learning + Skills Council and Local Education Authority

Key Priority Aim 6

- Northumberland will use information and communication technologies to help culture to flourish

Key Agency: Northumberland Strategic Partnership

(Northumberland Strategic Partnership, 2002: 11)