

Landscape as an integrating framework for rural policy and planning

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**RURAL ECONOMY AND LAND
USE:
THE CHALLENGE FOR
RESEARCH**

An Initial Reflection

First, affirming the obvious: landscape is not purely about the 'visual'

Landscape reflects *structure, function* and *value*

It is valued for different reasons by various groups and possesses multifunctionality, multivocality, multisemity

Landscape is an ideal 'lens' through which to view many of the key RELU issues, but requires an understanding which may not be shared by other practitioners and researchers

Deploying such understanding in protection, management and planning/ design necessitates inter- and trans-disciplinary

Landscape is a hybrid entity, possessing structure, functionality, value and properties of place!



Source: Bergstrom, 1998

Development Activity: *Landscape as an integrating framework for rural policy and planning*

- ▶ Many future decisions about the British countryside will be made in a landscape context
- ▶ Landscape based characterisation/ assessment methods are a means of identifying areas for detailed analysis (e.g. environmental processes, valorise local assets, devise policy, target expenditure)
- ▶ 'Landscape' is not simply a 'sector' or an 'afterthought' – it can be viewed as an over-arching framework for comprehending and interpreting patterns and processes of countryside change
- ▶ A landscape perspective can assist integrated policy delivery for economic recovery, healthy lifestyles, sustainable environmental services and place-distinctiveness

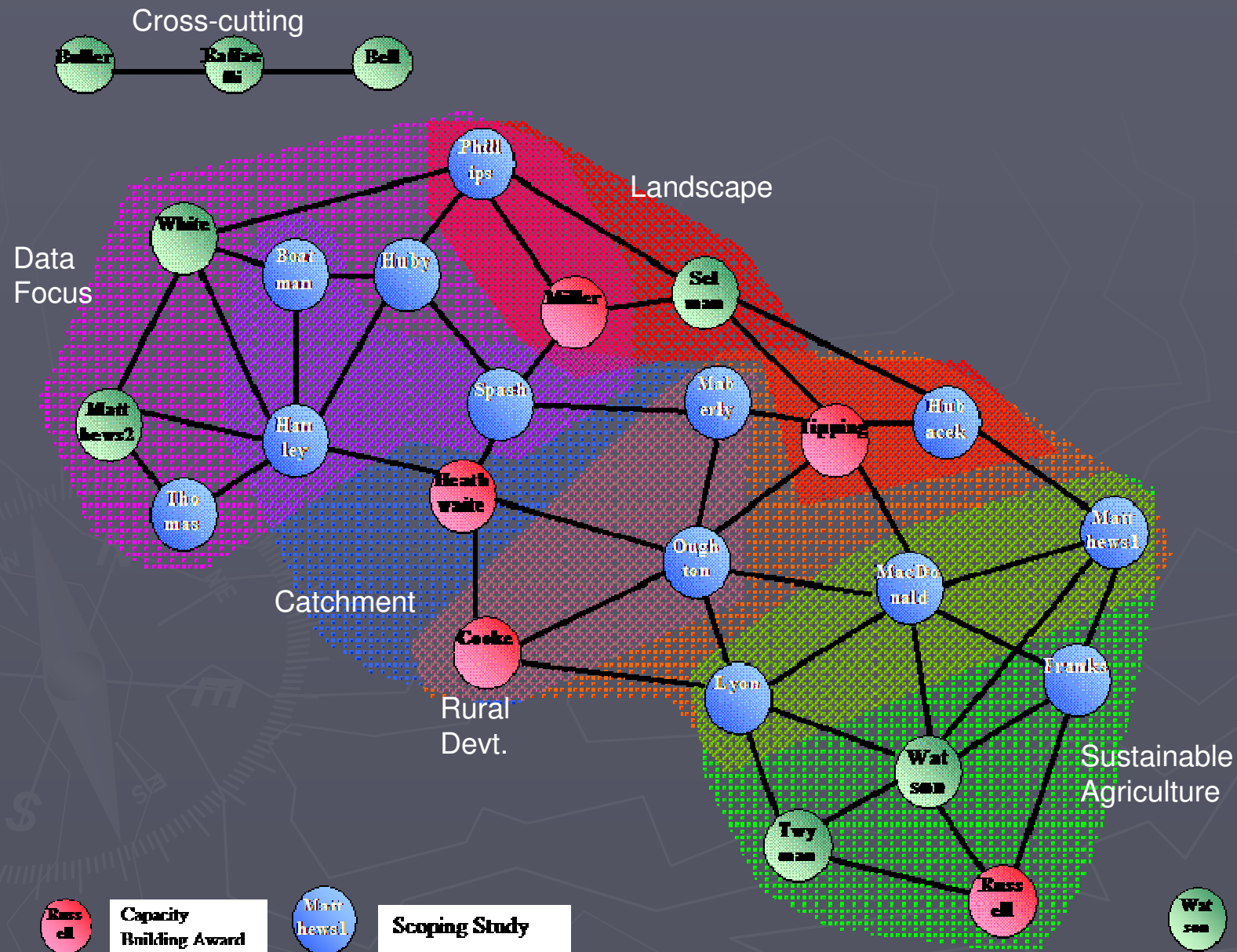
Aims of the Project

- (1) review (a) the scope for social, economic, natural and built capital to mesh within landscapes, and (b) how an understanding of this synthesis can illuminate and assist sustainable rural development;
- (2) elaborate a model with landscape as the conceptual and practical framework for area-based rural policy and management;
- (3) outline how the model could be developed, through interdisciplinary research, to explore the potential of landscape units as loci for a 'virtuous circle' between place, work, people and governance;
- (4) a stakeholder workshop focusing upon the landscape model

The study explores how current thinking on the landscape can:

- ▶ assist integrated policy delivery
- ▶ broach impending major policy issues

Mapped Connections in A, B, D Themes



Four Closely Related Projects

- ▶ Phillips – Gentrifying Rural Natures: an investigation of the enrolment and modification of nature within a gentrifying village (Scoping Study)
- ▶ Tipping – Developing an Inter-disciplinary Approach to Address Environmental and Social Issues Resulting from Changes in Land Use in the English Lake District (Capacity Building)
- ▶ Miller – Analysing Visual Quality in Relation to Landscape Change Scenarios: an assessment of the requirements (Capacity Building)
- ▶ Hubacek – Sustainable Upland Management for Multiple Benefits (Scoping Study)

Gentrifying Rural Natures

Objectives:

- ▶ identify the ways that agents of nature are enrolled in and shape the process of rural gentrification
- ▶ determine change in the agents of nature within and bordering a gentrifying village
- ▶ pilot the integrated use of ecological and social surveys within village spaces
- ▶ consider social differentiation in the enrolment and modification of nature within village space

An observation: the importance of the ways in which 'the natural landscape' is enrolled into social networks – how is it valued and transformed by different social groups within a place-based community?

Developing an Interdisciplinary Approach

Objectives:

- ▶ foster interaction among young scientists from different disciplines, who will be given the task of developing a comprehensive approach to environmental and societal issues driven by land-use change, focusing on specific issues relevant to the Lake District National Park
- ▶ establish links and commonality, in the context of the LDNP, between the academic community and stakeholders
- ▶ produce a report summarising the capacity building exercise (including the outcome of the consultation exercise with stakeholders, and conclusions about the interfaces between natural and social science on land use/ landscape issues)

An observation: atelier-style approach may create constructive tensions between 'natural science' functionality perspectives, technocratic/instrumental 'policy' perspectives, and 'social science' deterritorialised perspective (landscape as a space of flows, not a container)

Analysing Visual Quality

Objectives:

- ▶ identify theoretical basis and key skills from the social and natural sciences to produce a meaningful set of indicators of visual quality
- ▶ develop a framework for identifying common understanding of visual concepts and landscape quality through the spatially based indicators
- ▶ develop a framework for assessing and researching public preferences and expectations for landscape function

An observation: despite extensive research into the perception and character of landscapes, we know little about public acceptability of landscape change, or how to anticipate visible outcomes of land use trends/ policies and convey meaningfully to stakeholders

Sustainable Upland Management for Multiple Benefits

Objectives:

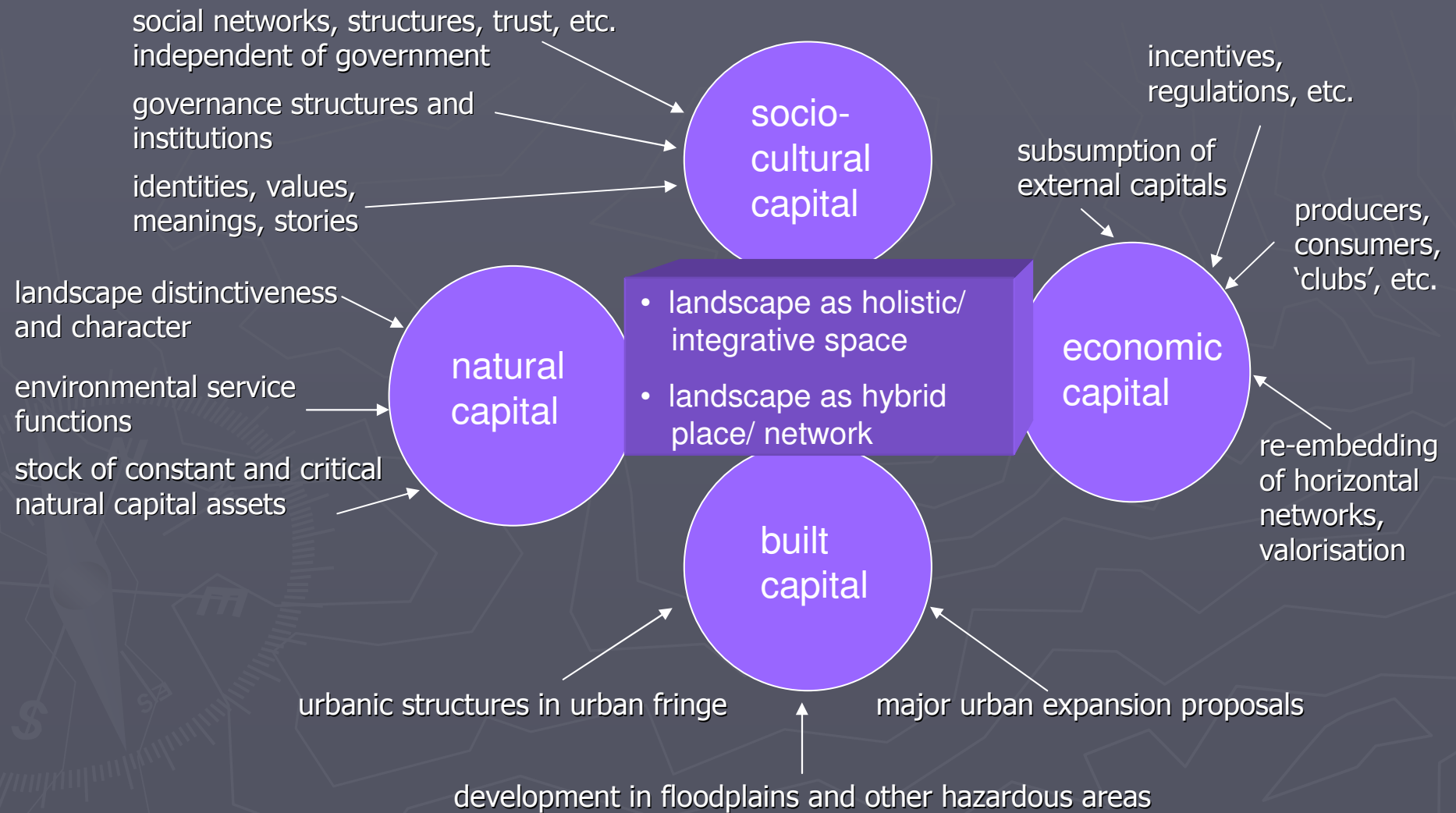
- ▶ develop and apply a novel, multi-disciplinary methodological framework to identify, evaluate and monitor sustainable land management in close collaboration with stakeholders, and natural, economic and social scientists
- ▶ use scientific knowledge to help translate stakeholder perceptions of environment/SD into practical, measurable strategies
- ▶ provide information to support ongoing upland restoration by Moors for the Future (Peak National Park) and disseminate preliminary plans and recommendations to stakeholders and policy-makers
- ▶ identify (a) existing data and gaps, and (b) tools to evaluate environmental, social, economic and carbon impacts of upland management strategies

An observation: the challenge of managing and communicating the landscape as a multi-functional entity – a framework for integrating multidimensional data within a holistic system, yet also enabling stakeholders to grasp the nature and integrity of landscape dynamics in a comprehensible manner

Initial Ideas 1

- ▶ No intention to produce a prescriptive account of exactly how landscape serves as an integrating framework
- ▶ Rather, an interpretive literature review, indicating the potential for synthesis of transdisciplinary research and policy within a landscape context
- ▶ Landscape as something which can be planned for (e.g. protection, distinctiveness) and through (e.g. 'natural units' as context for partnerships and policy delivery)
- ▶ Landscape as 'place' (territorialised) and 'network' (deterritorialised)

Initial Ideas 2



First thoughts about a conceptual model

Model needs:

- ▶ a core concept
- ▶ a degree of policy relevance
- ▶ 'testable' through a research project



Deductively thinking (based on RELU 'calls')...

How might a landscape perspective relate to the following ideas?

- ▶ *Integrated Solutions for Land and Water Resource Use and Management*
 - synthesising social, economic and environmental drivers
 - inter-disciplinary understanding
- ▶ *The Environmental Basis of Rural Economies and Regeneration*
 - interdisciplinary research to provide models informed by 'greenprints' and to understand how to achieve a sound environmental foundation for rural conservation and regeneration
- ▶ *Successful and Sustainable Food Products and Food Chains*
 - knowledge of how 'place' qualities can be valorised into distinctive and trusted food and timber
- ▶ *Economic and Social Interactions with the Rural Environment*
 - providing a proper and realistic understanding of continuing economic activity, population movement and settlement change to secure the existence of 'cherished places'

Inductively thinking (based on First Call abstracts)...

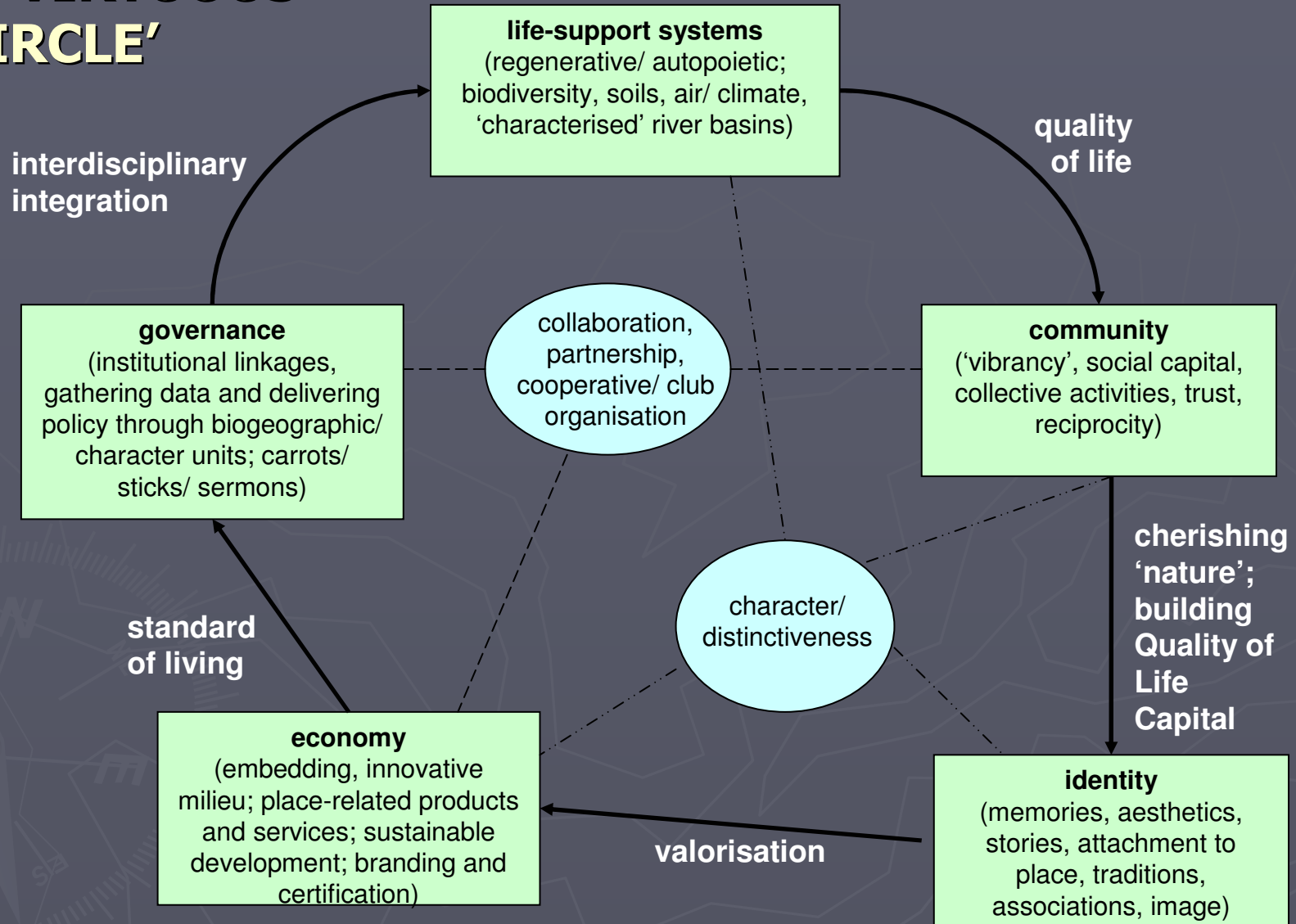
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landscape ecology																																			
scenario planning																																			

leading to some initial areas of literature search, synthesis and mapping cross-linkages....

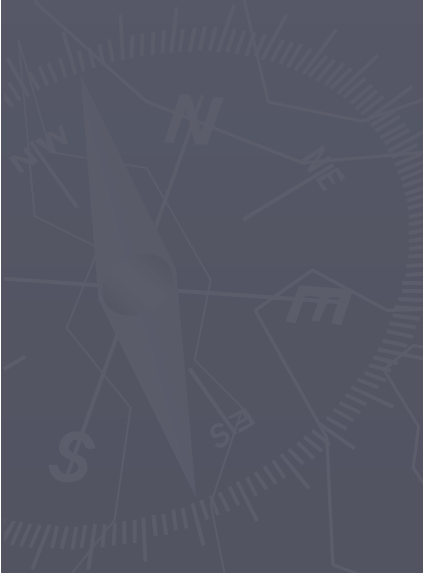
Emergent Themes for Thinkpiece Structure...?

- ▶ **integrative framework** – what are the key social, economic and environmental drivers and can addressing them within a landscape unit/network provide a 'spatial' basis for synthesis and data capture?
- ▶ **inter-disciplinarity** – does landscape, as an inherently multifunctional construct, assist inter-disciplinarity, and what kinds of epistemic/ research design problems would this pose?
- ▶ **greenprints** – does the study of particular cultural landscapes help us to understand the condition of 'rural sustainability'?
- ▶ **landscape mosaic** – does a landscape-scale perspective assist with modelling the mosaic of food and non-food crops, managed natural habitats and hydrosphere?
- ▶ **valorisation** – can 'place' qualities be valorised into rural produce as a means of linking economy and ecology?
- ▶ **landscape change** – can a landscape-based analysis of obsolescence and dysfunction, and new globalising/localising trends, inform strategies for protection?
- ▶ **institutional setting** – how are economic and governance practices expressed within and through landscape units?
- ▶ **stakeholders** – do stakeholders identify with, and participate within, distinctive landscapes; can a landscape setting help them grasp the consequence and significance of land use change scenarios; how are people enrolled into the hybrid entity of 'landscape'?

A 'VIRTUOUS CIRCLE'



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- ▶ catchment –the fundamental landscape unit?, new requirement for 'characterisation' (modelling, quality, resource attributes)
- ▶ data, modelling, GIS – landscape units as basis for data capture, manipulation and integration; GIS enables a spatially explicit approach; models link human decisions to landscape processes/responses; handling uncertainty; management information needs
- ▶ economic-institutional – governance infrastructure underlying landscape; policy delivery through landscape units; incentives and market signals; collective action by land managers; integrated management approaches; economic and institutional analysis
- ▶ epistemic-knowledge – problematisation of landscape dilemmas; experimental design in landscape-scale settings; integrated systems analysis of social/natural science and expert/lay knowledge (shared epistemologies, Mode 2 knowledge, conceptual mapping)
- ▶ cross-disciplinary – landscape as a focus for inter- and trans-disciplinary working; project management within landscapes using a transdisciplinary approach to research, participation and planning (bridging science/ non-science discourses, knowledge transfer, diverse data and tool sets, diffuse problems)
- ▶ valorisation – linking place qualities to 'typical' products to achieve value added; embedding (branding, win-win, biodiversity is tasty)
- ▶ stakeholders – identifying and mapping links between stakeholders; understanding stakeholders' behaviour and responses; engaging stakeholders in 'visions' and decisions ('club' members, gatekeepers, decision-support)
- ▶ landscape scale – working at scales above the 'site' to achieve joined-up action in the wider countryside; natural processes occurring at distinctive spatial scales (whole landscape, downstreaming, regional action plan)
- ▶ people-place – role of landscape units as a means of integrating knowledge and action; specificities of place as expressed through landscape (case studies of named landscapes, socio-cultural and economic specificities)
- ▶ functionality/sustainability – maintaining service functions within landscapes; landscape is about more than biodiversity; landscape multifunctionality; notions of 'sustainable landscapes' (re-bugging, multifunctional agriculture, sustainable intensification and trade-offs)
- ▶ visual change – visual/aesthetic changes in landscape, and people's reactions to them; rural land uses as drivers of landscape change (common understandings of visual concepts, landscape preferences)
- ▶ participation– watershed alliances, stakeholder/public involvement in scenarios,
- ▶ landscape ecology – role of spatial heterogeneity as support for ecological processes
- ▶ scenario planning – visioning and describing alternative rural/landscape futures; use of these in normative landscape planning