

New regional geographies of higher education

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Introduction: Why HE? Why regions? Why the UK?

“Engagements among universities vary widely, and new forms continue to emerge. There is much to observe and analyse. And, to date, no effort has been made to systematically assess the value universities might receive from entering alliances.” (Gunn and Mintrom, 2013: 180).

... so what are these new forms?

Regional higher education has to “map onto the regional development agency boundaries” (Charles and Benneworth, **2001**: 24)

2002 Roberts Review

2003 DfES – *The Future of Higher Education* White Paper

(1) “institutions sit[ting] close to the geographical edge of their regions, see their natural collaborative partners in neighbouring regions”;
(2) national and international players “believe that HE is and will continue to be more competitive than collaborative, and that the future is one in which strategic alliances will prevail”;
(3) “very different geographical distributions of HEIs around regions ... can have a significant effect on their willingness to collaborate within the HERA framework” (Brickwood and Brown, **2005**: 5-6).

2011 BIS – *Innovation and Research Strategy for Growth*

A new regionalisation of HE

Research and equipment sharing consortia

Higher Education Regional Associations – 1997

White Rose Consortium – 1997

N8 – 2007

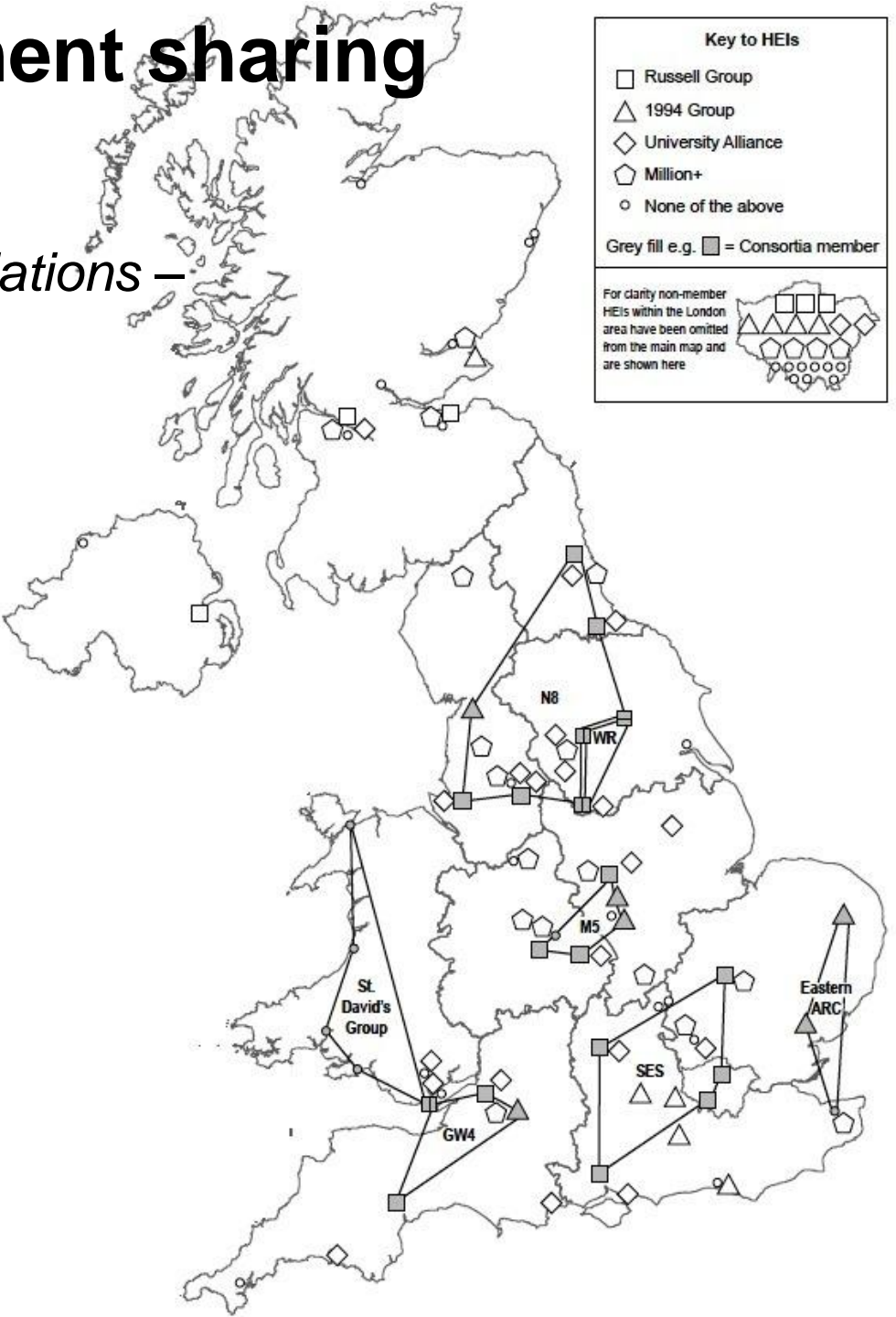
St David's Day Group – 2009

M5 – August 2012

GW4 – January 2013

SES – May 2013

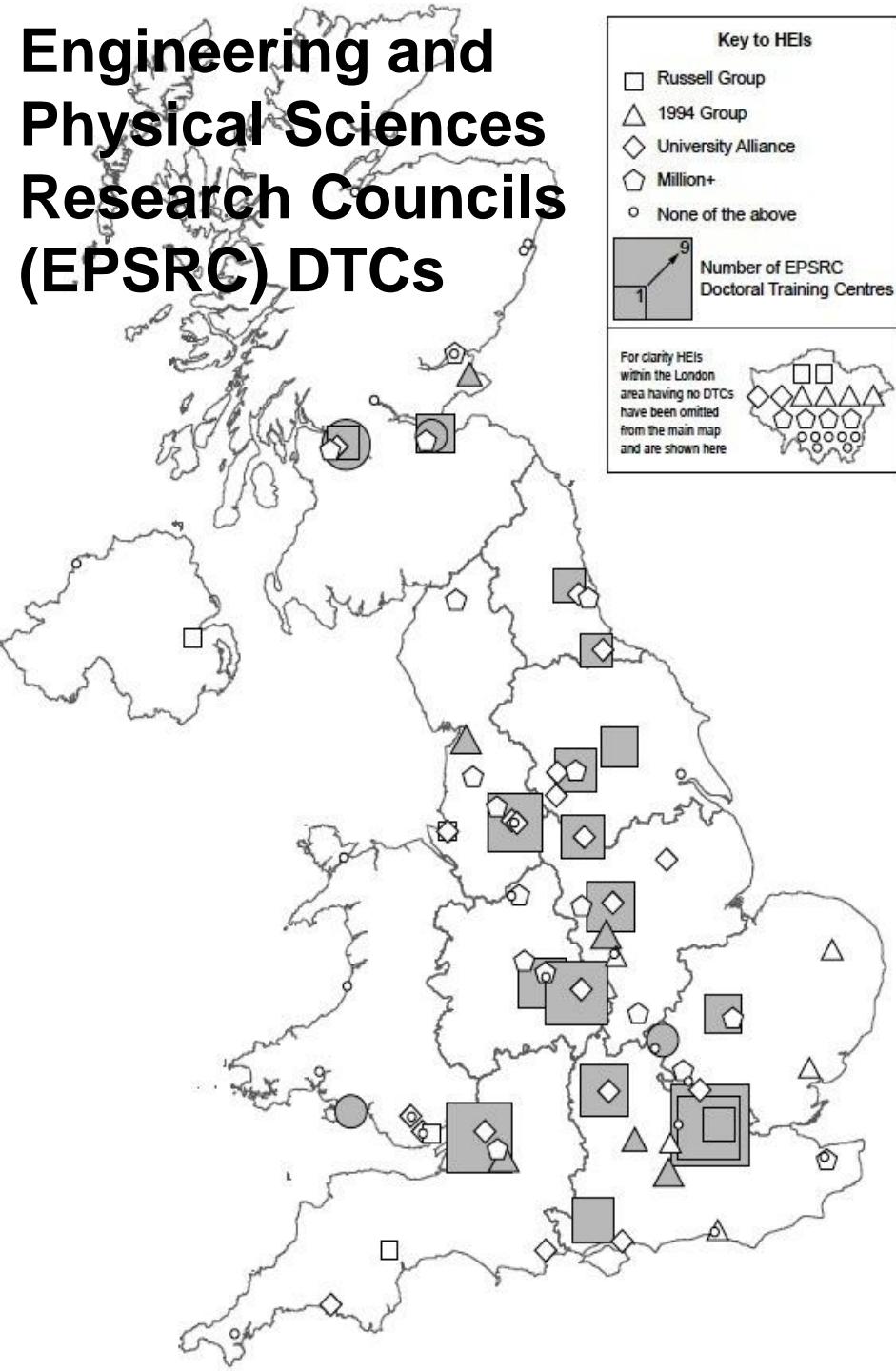
Eastern ARC – September 2013



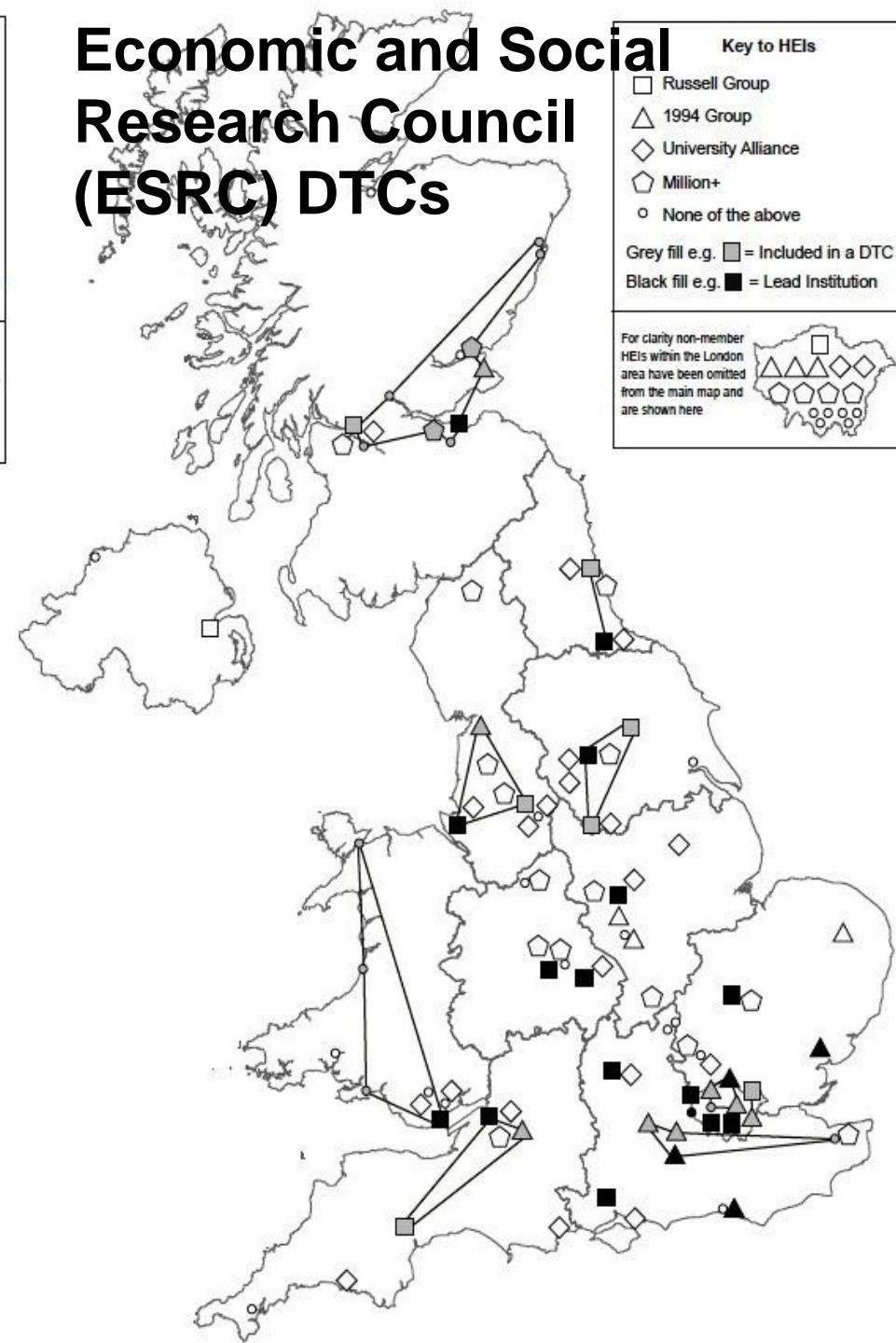
Pike and Tomaney (2009)

“In the wake of a faltering commitment to regionalization and regionalism, the UK state in England has recently encouraged a proliferation of competing ‘spatial imaginaries’ – cities and/or city-regions, localisms and pan-regionalisms – in order to identify, mobilize and valorize their economic growth potentials.” (p14)

Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) DTCs



Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) DTCs



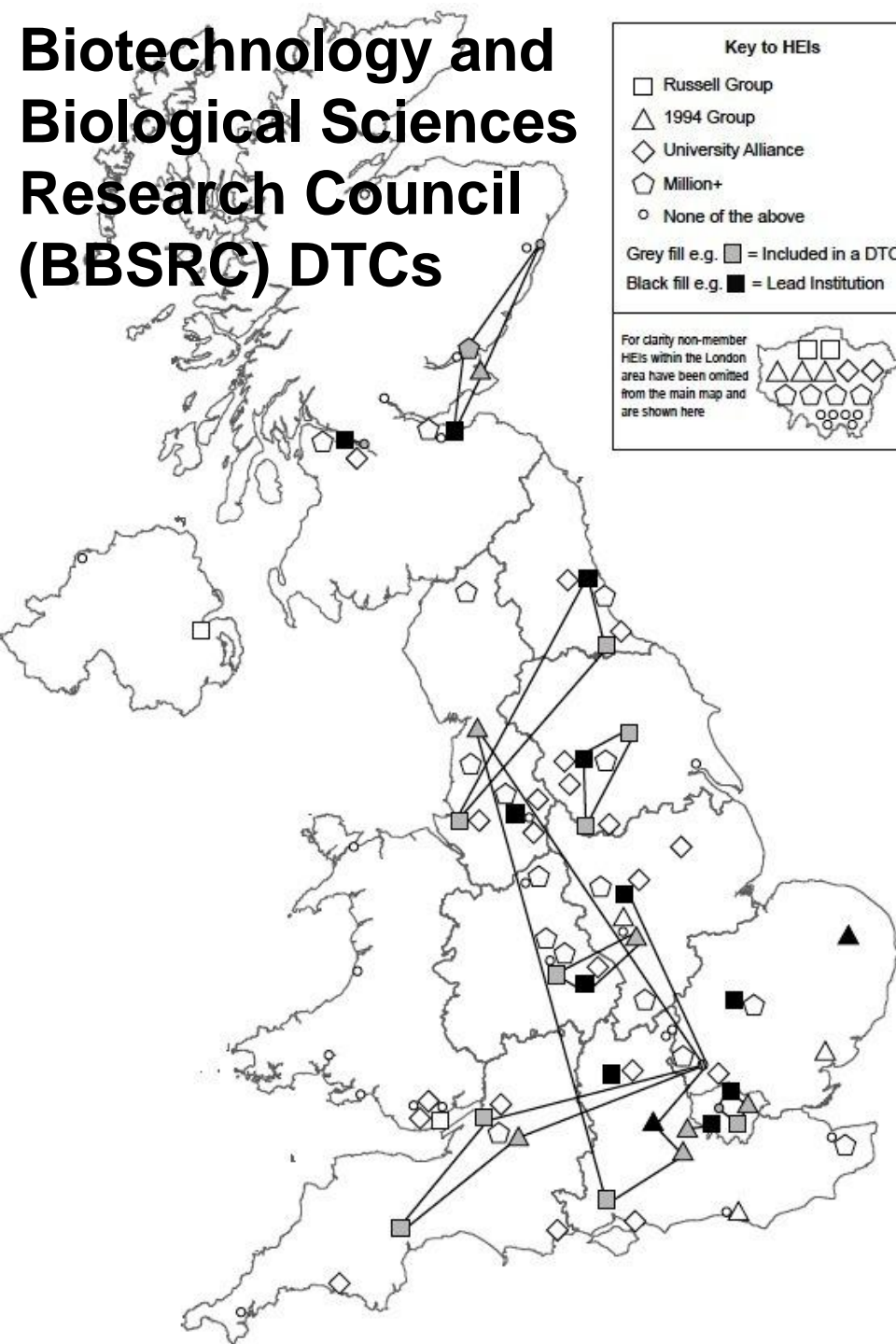
Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) DTCs

Key to HEIs

- Russell Group
- △ 1994 Group
- ◇ University Alliance
- ⬠ Million+
- None of the above

Grey fill e.g. ■ = Included in a DTC
 Black fill e.g. ■ = Lead Institution

For clarity non-member HEIs within the London area have been omitted from the main map and are shown here



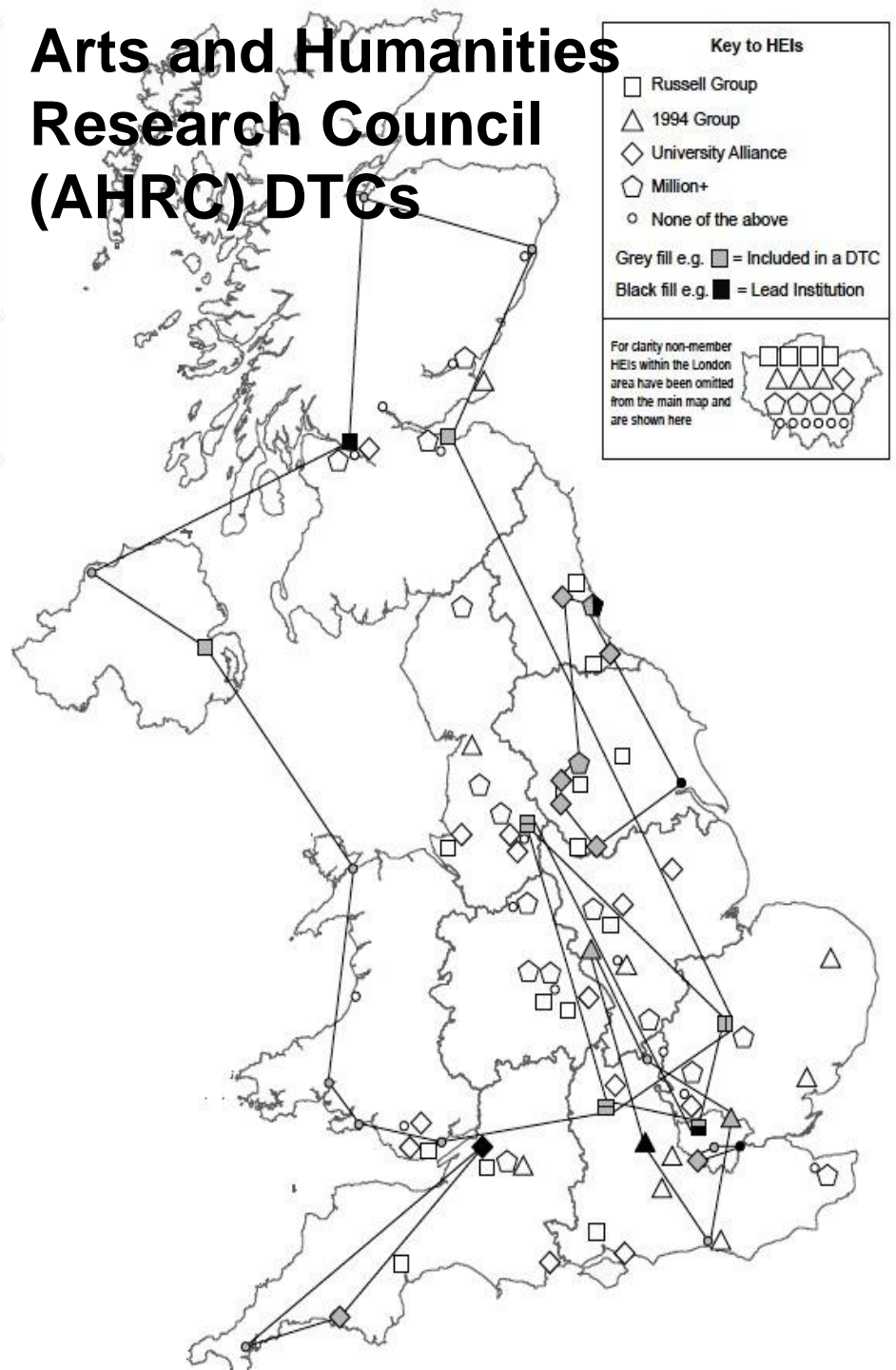
Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) DTCs

Key to HEIs

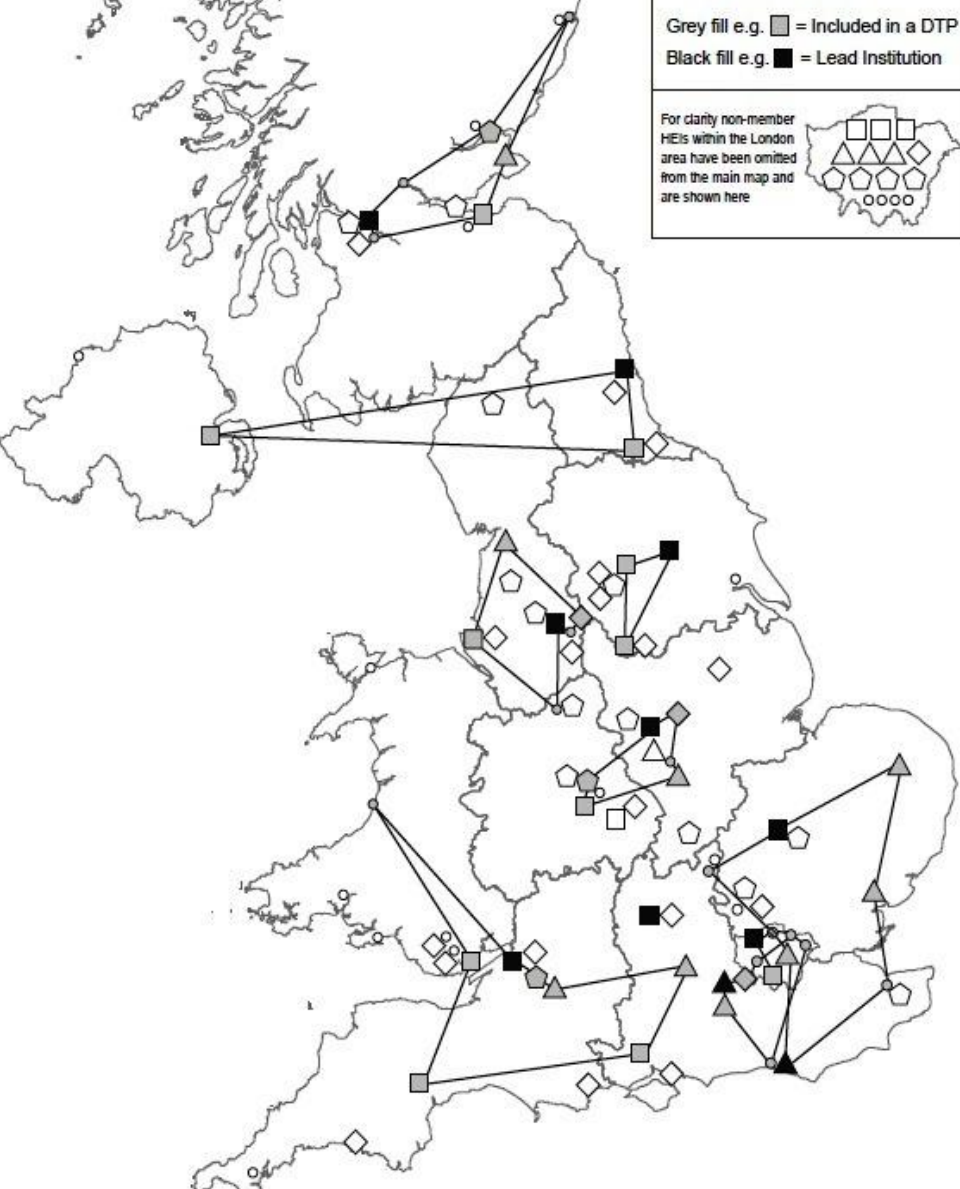
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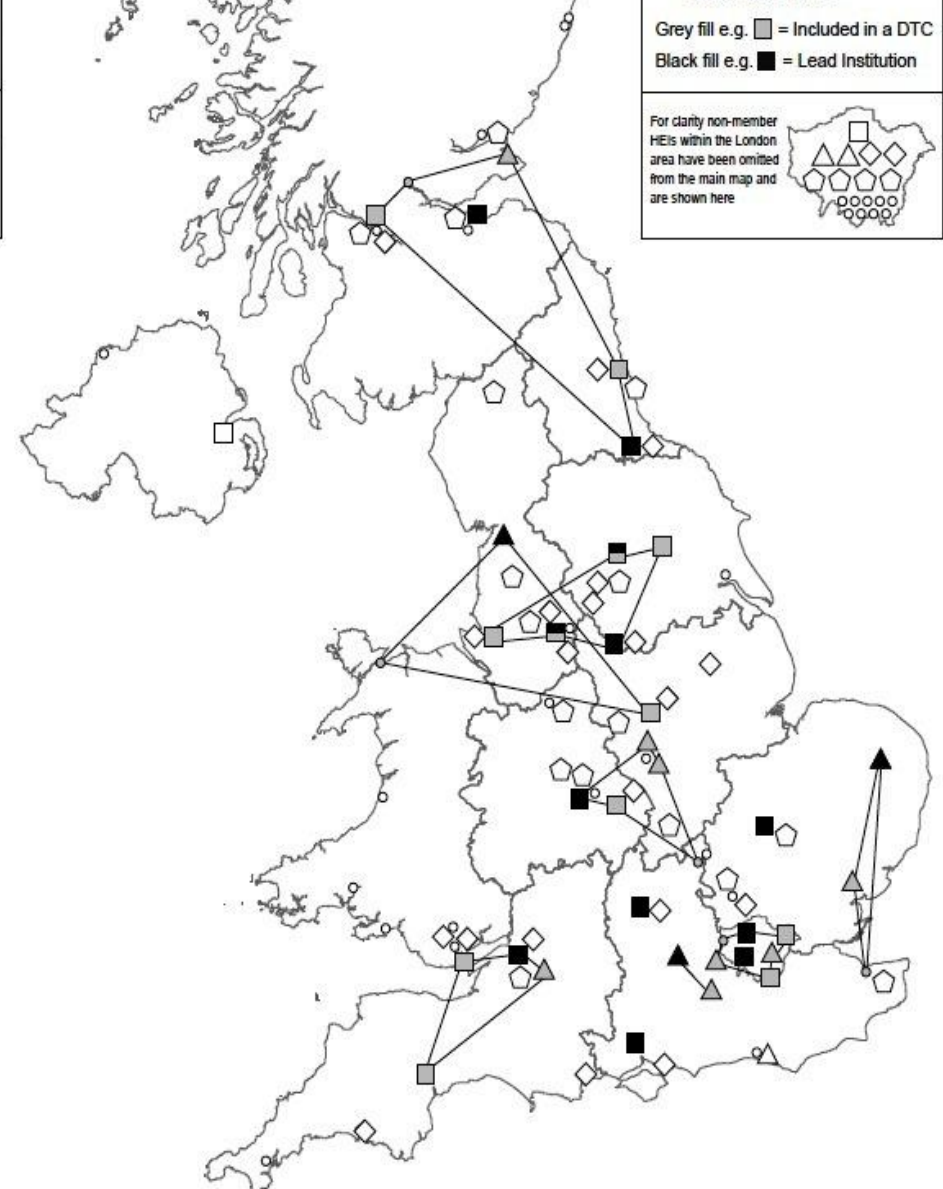
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Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) DTPs



Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) DTCs



When regions collide: in what sense a new ‘regional problem’?

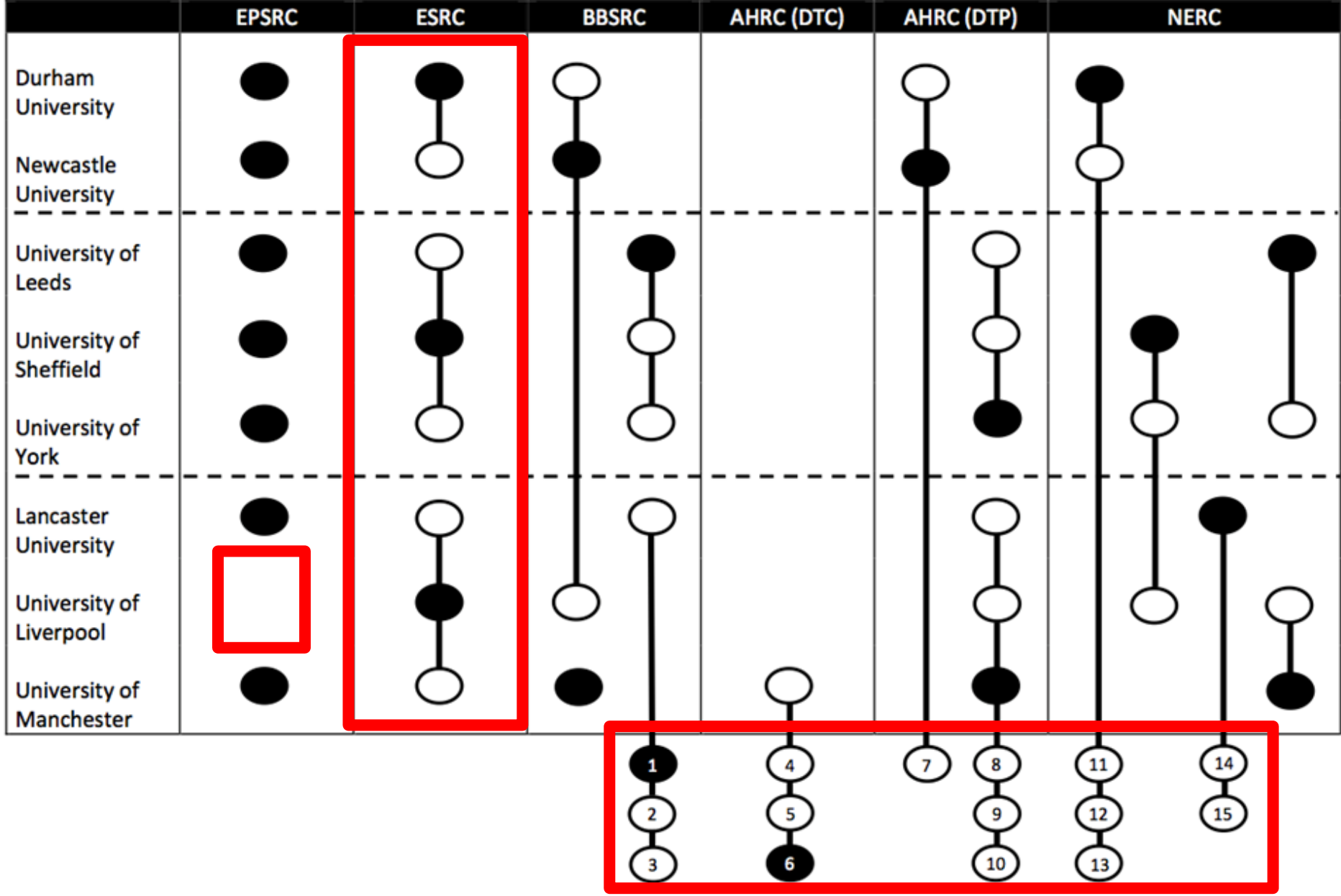
“[F]rom the point of view of a relational approach, there is absolutely no conflict ... Territories are constituted and are to be conceptualized, relationally ... They exist in constant tension with each other, each contributing to the formation, and the explanation, of the other.” (Massey 2011: 4)

“The conventional distinction ... misses the extent to which each necessarily defines and is defined by the other – territories are not fixed, but the outcome of overlapping and interconnecting sets of social, political, and economic relations stretching across space, while the existence of identifiable territories shapes and in some cases limits the ways in which those relations are able to develop (in other words relational space and territorial space are necessarily entangled).” (Cochrane and Ward, 2012: 7)

“Progress on the regionalism question will require further examination both of the relational thinking about territorial politics and of territorial thinking about relational processes.” (Jonas, 2012a: 270)

	EPSRC	ESRC	BBSRC	AHRC (DTC)	AHRC (DTP)	NERC
University of Leeds	●	○ 	● 		○ 	●
University of Sheffield	●	● 	○ 		○ 	●
University of York	●	○	○		●	○
						○
						1

1 = University of Liverpool

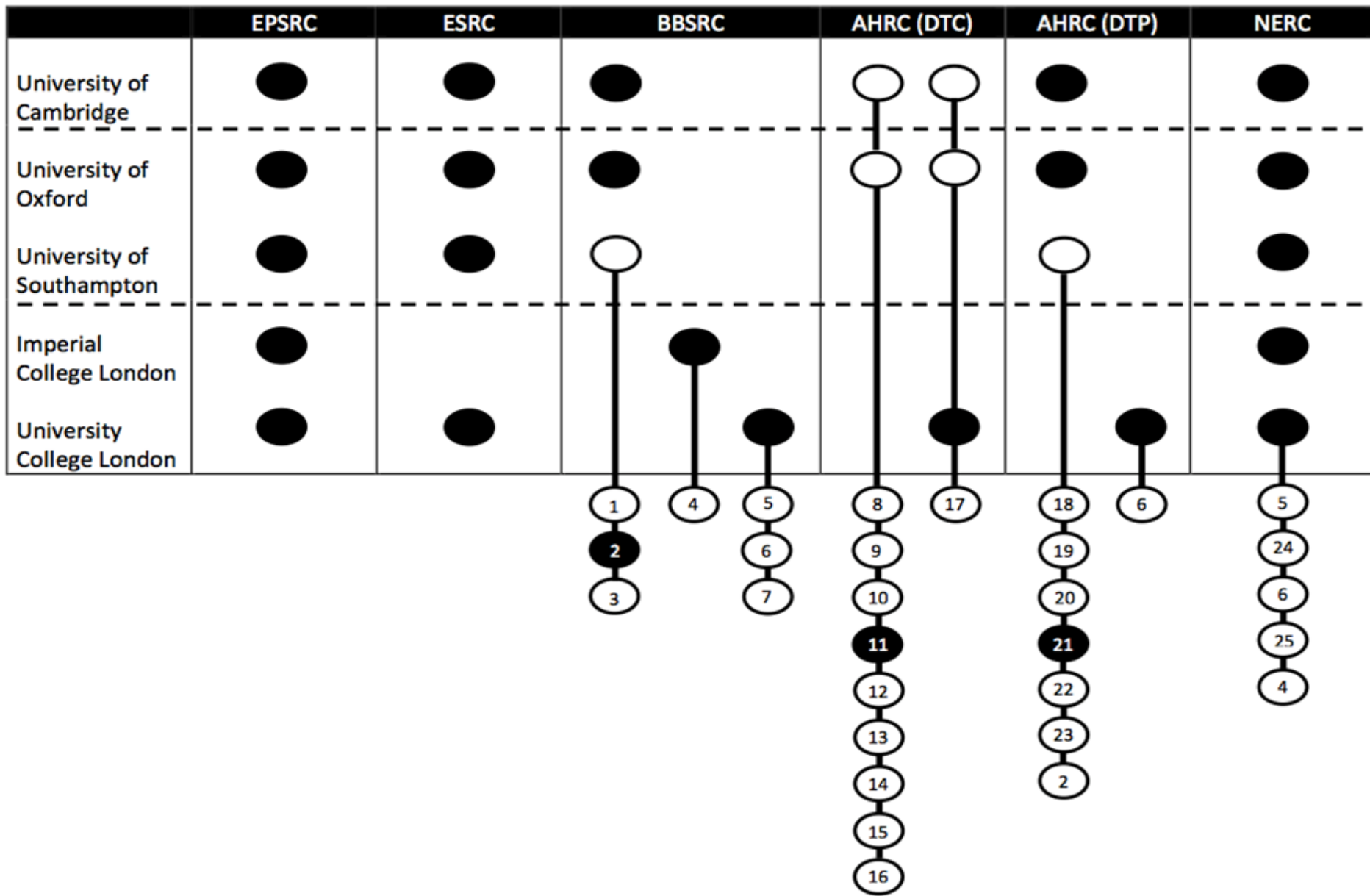


	EPSRC	ESRC	BBSRC	AHRC (DTC)	AHRC (DTP)	NERC
Aston University						
University of Birmingham	●	●	○		○	●
University of Warwick	●	●	●		○	○
University of Leicester			○		○	○
Loughborough University	●			○		○
University of Nottingham	●	●	●		●	○
				○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ● 4	○ 5 ○ 6 ○ 7	○ 3 ○ 8 ● 9

1 = University of Brighton, 2 = Goldsmiths, University of London, 3 = The Open University, 4 = University of Reading, 5 = Birmingham City University, 6 = De Montfort University, 7 = Nottingham Trent University, 8 = Bangor University, 9 = Lancaster University

	EPSRC	ESRC	BBSRC	AHRC (DTC)	AHRC (DTP)	NERC
University of Bath	●	○ ○	○ ○		○ ○	○ ○
University of Bristol	●	● ○	● ○		● ○	● ○
University of Exeter						
Cardiff University		● ○ ○ ○			○ ○ ○ ○	○ ○

1 = Aberystwyth University, 2 = Bangor University, 3 = Swansea University, 4 = Bath Spa University, 5 = University of Reading, 6 = University of Southampton



	EPSRC	ESRC	BBSRC	AHRC (DTC)	AHRC (DTP)	NERC
University of Essex		●			○	○
University of East Anglia			●		○	●
University of Kent		○			○	○
		○ ○ ●			○ ○ ●	

1 = University of Reading, 2 = Royal Holloway, University of London, 3 = University of Surrey, 4 = Goldsmiths, University of London 5 = The Open University, 6 = University of Sussex

Concluding comments

- A(nother) new spatial manifestation of a ‘relational regionalism’
- Uneven geographies of higher education – the regional dimension (cf. Goddard & Vallance, Addie)
- The changing nature of the regional dimension – diverse types/levels of HEI replaced by a relational regionalism which is more exclusive.

- Motivations and aspirations for collaborating ‘regionally’
- New alliances, new rivalries – the territorial politics underlying
- Implications of being ‘off the map’