Tourism in Peripheral Areas: The Use of Causal Networks and Lesson Drawing as Analytical Methods

by

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has been composed by myself and has not been presented or accepted in any previous application for a degree. The work, of which this is a record, has been carried out by myself unless otherwise stated. All quotations have been distinguished by quotation marks and all sources of information have been acknowledged by means of references.

Robert Nash

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AGTB	Aberdeen and Grampian Tourist Board
ATB	Area Tourist Board
BTA	British Tourist Authority
CS	Commercial Sector
EC	European Community
ETB	English Tourist Board
EU	European Union
Fungibility	Likelihood to be able to transfer or transferability
GE	Grampian Enterprise
HIE	Highlands and Islands Enterprise
HS	Historic Scotland
INE	Inverness and Nairn Enterprise
NESCOT	North East Scotland Co-ordinating Committee for Tourism
LA	Local Authority
LEL	Local Enterprise Company
NCS	Non Commercial Sector
NTO	National Tourism Organisation
NTS	National Trust For Scotland
RACE	Ross and Cromarty Enterprise
SE	Scottish Enterprise
SNH	Scottish Natural Heritage
STB	Scottish Tourist Board
STCG	Scottish Tourism Co-ordinating Group
TIC	Tourist Information Centre
UK	United Kingdom

ABSTRACT

The thesis sets out to evaluate the use of Causal Networks as a methodology and as a means of highlighting the problems associated with tourism in peripheral areas. Once these problems were identified through this process, the research findings are related to established literature and Lesson Drawing is evaluated as a means of comparative analysis.

In attempting to utilise both Causal Networks and Lesson Drawing, three regions within Scotland were chosen as case studies. It was hoped that the selection of three regions within the same geographical propinquity would allow for Lessons to be both, imported and exported, from within the regions.

The three regions chosen were Grampian; Inverness and Nairn; and Ross and Cromarty. An extensive literature search was conducted in an attempt to establish facts salient to the regions and primary research was carried out in all three regions. The primary research involved the use of an interview questionnaire. The respondents were all involved in tourism provision in one of the three case study regions. The interview data was collated and input onto conceptually clustered matrices. Causal Networks were constructed and analysed for each individual interview and for cognate groups and regions.

Some tentative conclusions were drawn as a result of constructing the Causal Networks. These Causal Networks segmented the respondents into representative groups based on their functions or locations, for example commercial and non-commercial sector respondents or Grampian and Aberdeen City regional sector respondents. Using the Causal Networks opportunities for drawing lessons between the regions were highlighted.

Finally, the effectiveness of both Casual Networks and Lesson Drawing methodologies were assessed in terms of their applicability for tourism provision in peripheral areas.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION - TOURISM IN PERIPHERAL AREAS

1.1 RATIONALE

There has been an increased interest in peripheral areas and the opportunities for tourism to play a part in the economic regeneration of these regions. Many of these peripheral areas face economic, social and political difficulties as a result of their location and much of the literature on these peripheral areas tends to focus on economic issues. As a consequence there is comparatively little research that takes a holistic view of tourism issues in these peripheral regions. The Causal Network approach used in this study attempts to highlight not only the economic factors that impinge on tourism provision in three peripheral regions in Scotland, but seeks to go further and provide a deeper and richer insight into the differences and similarities associated with each region. There has also been relatively little research done in the area of comparative tourism research. Once the differences and similarities have been highlighted (using Causal Network methodology) this research applies Lesson Drawing methodology in an attempt to draw lessons from one region to another and suggest possible improvements to the tourism provision in the regions.

1.1.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF PERIPHERAL AREAS

Richardson (2000, p 59) points out that as far as the EU are concerned peripheral areas "are equated with rural and agricultural areas." The OECD also point to some of the difficulties associated with these regions "remote areas are usually sparsely populated and are often located in or near mountains or islands, especially in places subject to climatic extremes" (1993, p 33). These areas have several definitions or terms associated with them that include "remote", "peripheral", "marginal," while in other cases the definitions are based on the relationships of these areas with other areas, for example core, or centre and periphery.

Lane suggests that "peripheral areas are characterised by sparse populations, small-scale often traditional enterprises, high servicing costs and economic poverty" (1993, p 13). Other problems associated with peripheral areas are often climatic excesses and infrastructural deficiencies. These factors all have an influence, to a greater or lesser degree, on all three case study regions chosen for this research.

1.1.2 ISSUES IN PERIPHERAL AREAS

Many peripheral economies are in deep economic crisis (Bailly et al 1996, P 162). Allied to the economic problems the major areas for population decline are also in the more remote, mountainous and peripheral regions of the EU. In many cases the periphery and peripheral zones tend to be regions that have suffered economically in respect of their relationships with the core. Jenkins et al (1999, p 49) suggest that peripheral area represents an area where the traditional rural economy has failed and where restructuring in economically viable terms is difficult. They point out that "in many cases peripheral regions continue to be zones which demand transfers of public funds."

The increasing severity of socio-economic inequalities between different geographical regions is a challenge facing many countries and regions within countries. Portnov and Pearlmutter (1999, p 242) suggest "this phenomenon has found wide expression in terms of a core-periphery paradigm." Economic development tends to concentrate at the core. This has the effect of weakening the economic activities associated with the periphery. This phenomenon occurs at many different levels. It can occur at city levels where economic activity is centred in the city centre. It can also occur at local and regional levels with larger centres of population (such as Aberdeen and Inverness) becoming the core centres for development. At a national level it occurs with economic development centred in the Central Belt of Scotland and peripheral areas falling behind in terms of development. This can also be said to be true of the UK with development centred on the South East of the country and on a European basis with development in the so called 'golden triangle' or 'blue banana' (Keating, 1998).

Blotevogel and King (1996, p 134) also suggest that the emerging economic geography of Europe has created a system of core centres and peripheries (of which the three case study regions are peripheries. Because of the increased divergence and the relatively uneven development in these peripheral regions the EU (as a result of its' policies and funds) have become major players in the regional development of these areas.

The need for economic regeneration of peripheral regions was stated by O'Cinneide in 1988 as "the consolidation of the periphery during the 1970s has not continued through the 1980s and the so-called turnaround trend has been so dramatically reversed that it is now regarded as only a temporary interruption in the long term decline of marginal regions. Adverse demographic trends such as increased out-migration, reduced in-migration, ageing and decline of overall population again are dominant in the periphery. The policy goals of reducing disparities between core and periphery thus stabilising the rural settlement pattern now appear more elusive than ever" (in McCleery, 1991, p 158).

1.1.3 PERIPHERAL AREAS AND TOURISM

The general trend in these areas is for an increase in service sector employment. One of the major elements associated with the economic restructuring of Europe has been the rise in the service sector and the decline of the traditional manufacturing and primary sector industries (Bailly et al 1996, p 161). It is partly as a result of this decline that peripheral economies have been looking to tourism because "tourism promises extra sources of revenue to bolster economies suffering from decline in other industries" (Young, 1995, p 189). Gilbert (1989, p 41) also suggests that "tourism offers the opportunity to introduce a mixed economy. Tourism can offer a more stable basis for income generation as well as a diversification for the local economy."

Townsend suggests that there is a changing demand amongst tourists that will be to the benefit of the more remote rural and peripheral regions. He suggests that there is "a shift from resort areas to less built-up coasts and upland areas, connected with a change from traditional holidays to 'day tourism' and 'short-break' weekends" (Townsend, 1990, p 92). Muheim and Salant (1994, p 19) suggest that "the demand for rural amenities is growing. Over the past two to three decades rising incomes have given town-dwellers both the time and the wherewithal to investigate and enjoy the countryside far more deeply." This is backed up by Stevens (1995, p 17) and Buhalis (2000, p 106) who suggest that the changing nature of tourism demand and the emergence of new forms of tourism, based on the rural environment is particularly significant. Hassan also suggests that tourist destinations are "diversifying to attract environmentally oriented tourist segments" (2000, p 241).

Because today's tourists cannot be characterised as homogenous and also because competition facing destinations increases (Agarwal 1997, p 67, Buhalis 2000, p 107) the need for marketing has become increasingly important (Hassan 2000, p 239). The concepts of market-oriented or demand-driven tourism have become increasingly important. The factors affecting a region's marketing competitiveness include the regions comparative advantage (which in many peripheral regions is the environment) as well as intangible elements such as service quality and customer interaction. In the case of peripheral regions the comparative advantage could be their culture and heritage based around the assets associated with their natural environments.

Bryden (1994, p 7) points to the fact that "tourism has been an important source of employment in many rural areas, and many are relying on that potential as a substantial part of their future development strategy." Bryden and Bollman (2000, p 199) support this by stating that "there is an inexorable decline in agricultural employment and there is an increase in services employment, especially that linked to tourism and recreation." Jenkins et al (1999, p 53) point out that Local Authorities in peripheral and rural regions have turned to tourism "in the face of agricultural unemployment."

Tourism can be a major factor of economic development and is often considered as an alternative to industries in decline. According to the Travel Trade Gazette UK and Ireland (1995, p 75) "it creates jobs. It stimulates the rapprochement of peripheral regions and it contributes to the preservation of rural life." Several authors have identified the benefits associated with tourism as a means of assisting rural regions. There are undoubted benefits in terms of job creation and rural development but Cavaco (1994, p 140) also notes the difficulties associated with the industry. "Throughout much of rural Europe, there is now a belief that tourism will be able to provide a new source of income and jobs, even if these are traditional rather than modern or innovative, and will mainly involve female employment. There are also expectations that tourism will break down social isolation and will help foster new social and cultural relationships. Tourism has the capacity to facilitate the re-population of rural areas with younger people, even if this is mostly, on a temporary basis."

Tourism has been suggested as one means of redressing the problems of peripheral unemployment and decline. This has meant, "policymakers have been anxious to find programmes that will respond positively to this problem" (Rose, 1993, p 9).

These policy makers tend to be predominantly from the public sector, especially in the more peripheral areas. One of the reasons for choosing tourism for this research was because the heavily labour reliant tourism industry is seen as being compatible with the aims of many of the public sector policy makers, especially within the EU, the UK and Scotland, in relation to peripheral area developments.

Despite the enthusiasm for tourism developments in peripheral regions Burke and O'Cinneide (1995, p 32) also point out that "tourism is not a panacea for the economic crisis confronting many rural communities, even in the most developed countries in the world. Despite impressive growth in tourism generally and a swing towards soft or green tourism, for which rural areas are particularly well placed, this industry is not, in itself, capable of stemming the long term decline that characterises the rural economy and society." Powell concurs with the view that "tourism is not, and should not be portrayed as the panacea of community's economic ills. Tourism can be a positive contributor to economic and social development in an integrated programme of action" (Powell, 1995, p 79). In terms of this research the development of rural and farm based tourism, although welcome initiatives have not been sufficient (on their own) to offset the decline in the local economies as a result of agriculture and fisheries decline.

1.1.4 CAUSAL NETWORKS AND LESSON DRAWING

The methodology used in this research involved using the Causal Network models in an attempt to produce an analysis of processes or set of processes in a particular setting. For this purpose three case study regions is Scotland are used. The identification of common problems associated with tourism provision in peripheral areas, such as the three case study areas is crucial because the first stage in solving any problems is the identification of the problems, or issues. Following on from this, solutions to these problems can be suggested. The identification of the problems and the transferability of the models are fundamental for the second stage of this research methodology, which involves Lesson Drawing between peripheral regions.

Lesson Drawing was tested as a methodology, because it could suggest solutions to the problems of the three case study regions, highlighted using the Causal Networks. This research is concerned with whether or not lessons (projects, programmes or best practice) can be transferred from one case study region to another. The focus on the use of Lesson Drawing is primarily on its applicability and relevance to the public sector. The variables identified using the Causal Network method are discussed and the opportunities for Lesson Drawing are evaluated.

1.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The main purpose of the research, and the primary objectives, were to test and evaluate Causal Network and Lesson Drawing methodologies and their applicability for use in peripheral regions. Three case study regions from within Scotland were chosen to test the applicability of these methodologies and interviews with tourism providers were conducted and transcribed in both narrative and model formats to establish the issues and problems associated with these regions. This information was then used to construct Causal Network models of Grampian, Ross and Cromarty and Inverness and Nairn, based on the issues and factors highlighted by the respondents. The aim was to build an integrated causal model and to test the applicability of Causal Network methodology in the three case study regions.

The next stage of the research involved ascertaining the extent to which lessons could be drawn between the case study regions. This stage involved the use and evaluation of Rose's theory of Lesson Drawing as a methodology. One of the requirements for the effective use of Lesson Drawing is that the case study regions need to share similarities in as many spheres as possible. As a result of this need for similarities the three cases were chosen from within Scotland (Grampian, Inverness and Nairn and Ross and Cromarty). The similarities in geographic, economic, social, environmental and political areas ensured that, problems facing each of the case study regions would be similar and Lesson Drawing would be possible.

Although the primary objectives of the research were based on the use and evaluation of the two methodologies the data collection resulted in the generation of considerable amounts of unique information relating to tourism provision in the three case study regions. This information fulfils a secondary objective of the research that involved a discussion and evaluation of tourism provision in the three case study regions.

The literature review provided an opportunity for the discussion and evaluation of literature related to peripheral regions and for tourism provision in these regions. A further secondary objective involved the comparison of the unique information collected during the primary data collection to the established literature. This involved utilising information from two sections within the research the data collection and the literature review.

1.3 THESIS STRUCTURE

Chapter one introduces the research and sets tourism in a peripheral context. It also identifies the value and importance of tourism to peripheral regions and discusses the structure of the thesis.

Chapter two deals with a review of the current literature. Definitions associated with low profile or peripheral destinations are discussed. The discussion identifies peripheral regions in and describes the characteristics that these regions share. The rural nature of many of these peripheral regions is introduced and the case study regions are suggested as being representative of peripheral regions. The chapter continues to build on the information introduced relating to the problems associated with peripheral areas. The full range of problems and authors are introduced and include economic, social, cultural and political issues. Tourism as a means of addressing the problems associated with peripheral areas is discussed.

Issues relating to the changing demand for tourism, marketing and internationalisation, globalisation and regionalism are discussed in relation to their impacts on peripheral regions.

The effectiveness of tourism in peripheral regions is evaluated. The rationale for using tourism in these regions is the foundation for this section. The increased political interest in tourism is discussed and is placed into the context of commonalities within these regions. Problems associated with tourism are highlighted and counter arguments for and against tourism as a means of developing these peripheral economies are suggested.

Chapter three sets the three case study regions in context by focusing on tourism in Scotland. The demand side of tourism in Scotland is discussed and its market and value are outlined. The chapter continues by dealing with the supply side of tourism in Scotland and looks at the nature of the industry in a national context.

The three case study regions are contextualised and specific problems associated with the case study regions and the consequent importance of tourism to these regions is discussed. The demand side of tourism, visitor statistics and profiles in the case study regions are discussed and specific problems associated with each region are examined. The supply side of tourism in the case study regions is discussed. The focus is on local and regional provision and highlights the roles and involvement of local authorities, enterprise companies and area tourist boards. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the attractions in the case study regions.

Chapter four explains the research methods used. Issues of research philosophy are discussed and social science research is defended. Data collection tools are discussed and the rationale for the chosen tools is outlined. The focus of the research is discussed and the emphasis on the selection of mainly public sector respondents is defended. The case study boundaries are outlined and the use of case studies is evaluated. Both Lesson Drawing and Causal Networks are described and the rationale for the use of Causal Networks is explained. Alternative approaches are evaluated and the development and justification of the methodology is described. Limitations associated with the approach are highlighted.

Chapters five, six and seven deal with the primary data evaluation and analysis for each of the case study regions. Chapter five deals with Grampian, chapter six Inverness and Nairn and chapter seven Ross and Cromarty. Each case study region is evaluated and analysed in terms of the responses from the respondents. The findings are based on cognate and regional groupings. The first grouping involves commercial and non-commercial sector respondents. The second grouping involves respondents according to their location (the region they are from) and the third section analyses the results from all the respondents from within each case study region. It is in these final sections that tentative conclusions relating to each case study region are drawn and the application of Causal Network methodology is discussed.

Chapter eight discusses the findings associated with the response from the population interviewed. The information gathered, as a result of the interviews, is mainly public sector in origin and is compared to the established literature in an attempt to establish a relationship between the responses from this research and the established literature on peripheral areas.

Chapter nine, the final section, evaluates the use of Causal Networks as methodology and as a means of highlighting the problems associated with tourism in peripheral areas. The research findings are supported by reference to the established literature. The use and viability of Rose's theory of Lesson Drawing is evaluated as a means of comparative analysis in the three case study regions, and as a means of lesson exporting in a broader context to other peripheral areas. The contingencies necessary for its application are identified and the ways in which a lesson may be transferred between cases are evaluated. Possibilities for future research and possible research themes are identified and issues associated with the application of the methodologies are discussed.

CHAPTER 2

TOURISM AND PERIPHERAL AREAS: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 AIMS AND STRUCTURE OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review is fundamental in establishing the contextual background for the research. The chapter introduces, discusses and evaluates literature relating to the peripheral focus of this research. The initial sections of the chapter discuss the characteristics and definitional issues associated with peripheral regions before identifying problems that are common to most peripheral areas. The problems associated with these areas tend to be mainly of an economic nature and are often related to issues such as primary industry (in many cases agricultural) decline and rural de-population. The rationale for providing assistance to these regions is discussed and tends to reflect the public sector focus on the economic and cultural issues.

The changing demand for tourism is reported and the opportunities for peripheral areas to benefit from these changes in demand are identified. The requirement for a more effective approach to marketing amongst peripheral areas to take advantage of these changes in demand is developed.

Issues associated with internationalisation and globalisation, are related in terms of possible threats and opportunities for peripheral regions. The possible threats are highlighted in relation to peripheral areas in Scotland, Europe and worldwide. The opportunities associated with increased regionalism (especially within the European Union) are of particular interest to the three case study regions and they are discussed and evaluated.

The discussion of literature relating to peripheral areas concludes with an evaluation of the effectiveness and limits associated with tourism in these regions.

The second section of the literature review focuses in on the three case study regions. For the purposes of this research three case study regions from within Scotland were used. The case study regions are all in the North of Scotland and were Grampian, Inverness/Nairn and Ross/Cromarty. The first part of this section looks at the issues facing tourism in Scotland. The discussion then focuses on the first case study region of Grampian and issues relating to the local economy are introduced. These economic issues are important in contextualising the primary data collection and the variables identified by the respondents. Issues, problems and opportunities associated with tourism demand in Grampian are discussed and explained. The format used for Grampian is repeated for the two case study regions of Inverness and Nairn and Ross and Cromarty.

The final sections of the literature review identifies supply issues associated with tourism in Scotland and describes and discusses the institutional arrangement for tourism in Scotland and the three case study regions.

In addition to contextualising the research the literature review was used to inform the questionnaire design and the initial focus for data collection. The literature review was also fundamental in the chapter discussing the relationship of the primary data to established literature. Although the main focus of the research is to evaluate the use and application of Causal Networks and Lesson Drawing methodologies the respondent's data collected was of importance to the study of tourism provision in the three case study regions. As such the established literature (literature review) was used to support the findings.

The review of literature also served as a crosscheck in relation to the primary data collection. In many cases the issues identified by the respondent's proved to be consistent with the literature on northern peripheral regions. The literature was also informative in relation to the process of Lesson Drawing. This was because some lessons, such as those dealing with the National Tourism Organisation (STB/VisitScotland) could be imported based on lessons identified by the literature, from outside the case study regions.

2.2 PERIPHERAL AREAS

In specifically geographic terms Wanhill states that the EU categorises "the periphery as the Atlantic Arc running from the Outer Hebrides in Scotland through to the tip of Portugal, then west along the Mediterranean, north along the Eastern European borders and then across the sparsely populated zones of Sweden and Finland" (Wanhill, 1995a, p 1). Wanhill regards a peripheral area as an area, which includes some of the following key aspects. "Distance from the core and/or difficult and costly access. Sparsely populated: small towns or villages in rural or coastal locations which are relatively isolated; Low GDP per capita or a GDP at factor cost that is substantially bolstered by public transfers; an economic structure which is largely primary and tertiary industries, without much secondary production" (Wanhill 1995 b, p 2). The challenge for development agencies such as the EU is to design and implement policies that improve the balance of economic opportunities available to these peripheral and often rural regions.

Peripherality can refer either to peoples' subjective perceptions of a place as peripheral or to the geographic fact that a place is a long distance from a core or centre of population. Sorenson (1997, p 9) suggests that "touristic perceptions are not objective. Perceptions depend not only on the peripheral area in itself and what it contains and how it appears; the perceptions are also influenced by the location of the area and the getting there." The former interpretation deals with individuals' perceptions of a particular location as being too far away, off the beaten track, or in British or European cases, too far north. It is often based on an individual's subjective impression of the region's location and is one of the common themes that emerged from this research.

Further problems relating to peripheral areas are to be found in the perceptions of the locations by investors. In an survey of 1,000 executives perceptions of peripheral areas in England and Wales as locations for business, Mori suggested that some of the reasons for not investing in peripheral areas were negative images such as "remoteness from markets and suppliers and poor road and rail communications" (Financial Times, 1995).

The geographic perception of distance is based around the individual areas' distance from core centres or major population bases. According to Robbins (1997, p 3) "there are a number of units of measurement. Accessibility is not only measured by distance. For instance a destination with excellent motorway links or high speed rail links may be more accessible to a generating market than closer destinations without such links. Journey time, journey cost, frequency of service and the necessity for interchange between services are all potentially important measures of accessibility." The region's location could also be described as peripheral in terms of distance from main gateways or from arrival points. However, no matter how the region's peripherality is assessed it will invariably involve the very real fact that the location is relatively difficult to get to. According to Baum (1999 b, p 8) "most peripheral areas are characterised by a remoteness that can be the product of distance, access, low population density, small settlement size and high unemployment." It is the geographic meaning of the term peripheral that will be the main basis for this research.

Wanhill (1995a, p 4) suggests that peripheral areas exhibit economic characteristics such as a dependence on traditional agriculture or fishing, both of which are in decline. He also suggested that these regions may have "a tourism economy that has failed to adapt to changing circumstances and is itself low value-added. Local employment also tends to be supported by the provision of public services, which are given on the basis of needs, rather than ability of the local tax base to fund them. He identified that the majority of firms involved in these areas are Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) which are fragmented in market terms and are often lacking in dynamics. These views are supported by Middleton (2000) who also points out that the smaller operators dominate the tourism industry.

Another term, which is often used in the context of peripheral locations, is 'marginal'. "It is certainly possible to identify a number of defining characteristics of marginal areas - geographical, economic and social hallmarks about which there is no dispute. The most obvious of these characteristics is physical remoteness that, combined with difficult topography, produces geographical isolation" (McCleery, 1991, p 145). Bailly et al (1996, p 171) suggest that the term marginal refers to weaknesses "in social political, cultural or economic terms." They go on to suggest that the most marginalised tend to live in peripheral rural areas and they also suggest that marginality is contingent on economic, social, cultural, political and geographical circumstances.

There is considerable discussion of peripherality in terms of tends of remoteness and rurality. However, some areas may be neither rural nor remote (in a geographic sense), but these places often tend to be in locations, which are not traditionally associated with tourism such as inner cities or old industrial sites. Not all rural areas are peripheral and not all peripheral areas are rural. Cities and large conurbation's can (and in many cases do) exhibit peripheral tendencies such as high unemployment, remoteness from decision-making opportunities, poor levels of service delivery and access to services and opportunities. However, there has been an emergence of marginal peripheral areas as a major regional and rural sub-type which according to Jenkins et al (1999, p 48) are "increasingly distinct from the more viable core regions."

The term marginal was not chosen as the basis for this research because the term used must be the most standard term used by academics (Wacker 1998, p 20) and this term proved to be peripheral as opposed to marginal. The term marginal tends to be more associated with geography literature whilst peripheral tends to be the most cited in the area of tourism research. The term used for this research was therefore peripheral, in the geographic sense and as such this term includes aspects of marginality that are associated with these regions such as the problems of economic isolation and political marginality.

Many peripheral locations have predominantly rural settings and economic and social characteristics. It follows therefore that a definition of the term 'rural' will be an important component of this section. Gilbert and Tung (1990, p 166) refer to the English Tourist Board when describing countryside as including agricultural, forested and other sparsely populated land plus villages and towns within the vicinity with populations under 10,000. This definition is not entirely satisfactory because it can include areas, which may not in the true sense be rural such as, despoiled lowland and greenbelt land surrounding cities. Gilbert suggests that a better definition of a rural area would be one which "may be regarded as one which is outside the jurisdiction of a municipal or town corporation or committee. However, it can include small towns or increasingly suburbanised commuter countryside" (Gilbert, 1989, p 39).

- The Rural Development Commission has no specific definition for 'rural' but exclude settlements with more than 10,000 inhabitants. This definition does not take account of the fact that a population of 10,000 in rural Scotland would be far more influential and important than a similar sized settlement in the South East of England. Other commentators define rural areas as having less than 10-20% of their land covered by buildings. "These areas will often be dominated by agriculture and forestry, they will have large tracts of natural covering and its consequent wildlife and they will exhibit low female activity rates" (Lane, 1993, p 11). Berry et al (2000, p 95) suggest that rural often refers to the opposite of urban and that definitions of rural have gone through various definitional stages which include:

- a focus on spaces and functions within the region which emphasise the landscape
- a focus on political and social processes based on regional economic activity
- a focus on social constructs that include the perceptions and myths surrounding countryside
- and finally through to a focus on community involvement and communication.

Champion and Watkins (1991, p 6) suggest that "rural areas retain distinctive features." They continue to be recognised by most members of the geographic community as having "three of Clouts (1984) attributes of rural areas - namely, a low population density, loose networks of infrastructure and services and a landscape dominated by farming and forestry" (Champion and Watkins, 1991 p 6). Davidson (1992, p 141) describes rural tourism as a concept "which covers tourist activity devised and managed by local people, and based on the strengths of the natural and human environment." Gilbert (1990, p 39) suggests that a suitable definition for rural tourism would be "a trip, or overnight stay in, a countryside area which is often agricultural or natural and has a low density of population." Lane (1994. p 10) suggests that definitions of rural areas must include statements about "population density and size of settlements; land use and economy, and the dominance of agriculture and forestry; traditional social structures and issues of community identity and heritage." In this research the rural areas are most often referred to as including the first two of Lanes categories although the heritage aspects are discussed in the section on cultural perspectives involved in the maintenance of the countryside.

The term rural is difficult to define (Sharpley and Sharpley, 1997) and rural tourism is even more complicated because of the need to define both terms. There are a variety of factors that cause this difficulty. These include, defining what tourism is. Defining where urban growth stops and where rural areas start. Where does urban tourism stop and rural tourism begin? What constitutes a rural vacation? Defining what countryside is. What are the appropriate definitions associated with rural and rurality and what will they be used for? Frochet and MacLellan, (2000) suggest that one of the difficulties is that the definition of rurality is dependent on the definition of the countryside. It is difficult to define one without defining the other. Rural areas are not all the same. Each rural area has its own particular problems and specific issues.

The OECD (1993, p 29) state that "rural areas are strikingly diverse. Each has a unique combination of attributes including soils, climate, ecosystems, topographic features, economy and settlement pattern." Each area or region is likely to be defined to individual, regional or national terms, for example different countries will have different definitions for what constitutes rural in terms of number of inhabitants within a certain geographic area.

Each region exhibits their own individual problems that are specific to their location, for example, local infrastructure problems or localised effects associated with company closures. Some regions tend to specialise in sheep farming and these regions would face different problems than those regions that specialise in cattle farming. On a regional level specific problems are related to each rural areas location. For example the rural region in Scotland is likely to have different problems related to perception of their location and climate than the rural area located in southern Europe. Rural regions in Britain would face different problems related to the strength of the national currency than rural regions in other European countries. Hall and Jenkins (1999, p 19) suggest that "rural areas are economically, physically, socially and politically diverse, and suffer from varying interpretations.

"The OECD (1993, p 11) also encountered difficulties in defining rural areas. They suggest that "rural areas comprise the people, land and other resources, in the open country and small settlements outside the immediate economic influence of major urban centres. " However, this definition does not explain what size would constitute a small settlement or how to decide how when a region could be described as being outside the immediate economic influence of a major conurbation. In the case study regions of this research the influence of oil could expand further that the influence of other less important industry's in different urban areas.

Definitions of rurality also vary because the use to which these definitions are put also vary dependent on the focus of the likely research or the bias of the organisation or individual interpreting the data. The three case study regions involved in this research also vary in terms of the degree of their rurality and their dependence on agriculture. The more remote areas such as regions in the Highlands tend to be more reliant on agriculture than areas closer to Aberdeen or Inverness. However, the common theme in most definitions is that they measure density of population. Bramwell (1994, p 3) suggests that "rural areas tend to have four main qualities: relatively low physical densities of people, buildings and activities; less social and cultural heterogeneity; less economic diversity; and a comparative physical isolation from general economic, social and political networks." With the omission of social and cultural heterogeneity the definition has three main factors that tend to reflect the focus of this research, low physical densities, less economic diversity and some degree of physical isolation. The focus of this research means that definitions of rurality and rural refer mainly to locational and economic aspects of the regions including the three case study regions.

2.3 PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH PERIPHERAL AREAS

Rural regions often involve remote communities that tend to be the areas that are least affected by urbanisation and also tend to be affected by varying degrees of peripherality (Grimes 2000 p 14, Portnov and Pearlmutter 1999, p 256). The OECD (1993, p 51) point out that the most remote areas generally present the greatest challenge for development because "what is involved is striking an appropriate trade-off between cost-effectiveness in service provision, maintaining socially acceptable minimum living standards, economic efficiency and sustainable management of the environment."

Gilbert and Tung point to the predominately rural nature of peripheral tourism and suggest that the reasons for developing tourism areas are because "the rural community can be seen to have both social, non-food needs as well as economic, income-related needs. If relationships are weakened for these two important inputs then rural depopulation will occur in those communities where the roots of the people would otherwise have remained in the rural area. If opportunities are not provided for the physical and social enrichment of rural communities they will fragment. Within this fragmentation it is usually the more able who move away and those who require the most support, because they are less sufficient, are left" (Gilbert and Tung 1990, p 171).

A report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2000) suggests that there has been a view of rural areas that was based more on a concept of the rural idyll rather than on reality. This view they argue has started to change and there is now a more objective view of reality associated with rural life. The report suggests that much of the social exclusion that is associated with rural areas is due to the influence of transport and infrastructure. An example is associated with the high cost of fuel and the governments policy on fuel prices which led to the hauliers and farmers fuel blockades in September 2000. Further issues related to transportation were suggested to be difficulties in travelling to jobs away from the immediate area and difficulties for teenagers (in particular) in travelling to larger settlements to socialise and at a later stage to attend University.

Whilst these transport issues are a reality for those living in the more remote areas it has not meant declining populations for all areas and for all socio-economic groupings. Many urban dwellers have moved from the cities to rural areas for the perceived life style associated with rural life. Indeed the Rowntree report suggests that in some areas the population is growing faster than for Britain as a whole. The increasing population is not even throughout rural and peripheral areas. Those regions that tend to experience the largest increase in population tend to be situated around the larger urban centres. In terms of the three case study regions these areas would include Aberdeen City and Inverness Town. The areas further afield such as North and West Grampian and the more remote parts of Ross and Cromarty and Inverness and Nairn have not tended to see an increase in population. It is these areas that suffer most from the problems associated with rural deprivation and social exclusion.

Cavaco (1994, p 139) describes the problems facing spaces, which are out-with, the reaches of urban regions as being areas, which are "going through a depression in many parts of Europe: there has been a crisis in traditional non-farming activities and in farming. The result has been large-scale out-migration from farms and from rural areas. There is demographic ageing, villages are being depopulated and abandoned (a crisis in the social fabric), and there are ever-increasing expanses of uncultivated land, whose brambles and undergrowth provide a fertile feeding ground for forest fires." These issues are supported by Richardson (2000, p 59) who points out that peripheral regions have "considerable economic problems, often due to their peripheral location." These issues are evident in the three case study regions chosen for this research.

Peripheral economies suffer from the disadvantages associated with an over reliance on unstable industries such as agriculture, fishing and forestry, all of which are reliant on uncontrollable variables such as the weather. Agriculture, fishing and tourism, practised either separately or as a form of occupational pluralism are often the mainstays of these economies (McCleery, 1991). Both the agriculture and fishing industries have experienced steady declines in employment opportunities and a fall in jobs. This decline is not restricted to Scotland and the UK but is a Europe wide issue. "In France alone, between 1945 and the present day, some 6 million people moved off the land and agriculture's share of the active population dropped from 35% in 1939 to 8% now" (Davidson, 1992, p 142).

Bramwell (1993, p 2) states that "changing agricultural practices have led to rural unemployment, and the growth of food surpluses has forced European governments to introduce measures to curtail agricultural production. Many rural areas have suffered from emigration (often of the youngest and most able of the population) and this depopulation has eroded the vitality of rural services and of rural communities." Lane (1993, p 17) also points out the difficulties facing peripheral rural economies. "Only five OECD countries now employ more than 15% of their labour force in farming, forestry and fishing: in eight OECD countries that figure is less than 5%. The economic power of farming and forestry has declined." Gannon (1994, p 52) comments on the fact that "structural change in economies is causing severe stress in many rural areas especially for those with a heavy dependence on agriculture. All countries in Europe have problem areas or regions where farm revenues are decreasing, farm land values changing and unemployment rising, leading to an exodus of productive forces and demographic imbalances in rural areas".

Several authors have commented on the need to address the problems associated with peripheral areas (Stockdale et al 2000, Portnov and Pearlmutter 1999, Grimes 2000, Wanhill 1995a, Gilbert 1989, Whitby and Pearce 1994, Lane 1993 and Bramwell 1993, Jenkins et al 1999, Bryden and Bollman 2000). These issues have included:

- Traditional agriculture, which is in decline partly as a result of EU policies, partly as a result of the strong UK currency and partly because of health issues, associated, with agricultural products.
- Dependence on the sea where resources are becoming depleted and there is the additional issue of EU imposed fishing quotas.
- Distance from the core centres of population and the consequent difficulty and increased costs associated with accessing the regions.

- Sparse populations and the small scale pattern of urbanisation, especially in the more remote regions.
- Small towns or villages in rural or coastal locations which are relatively isolated.
- Low GDP per capita.
- An economic structure that is largely dependent on primary and tertiary industries which are traditionally seasonal and poorly paid.
- Lack of diversity and declining opportunities related to poor provision of alternative sources of employment.
- Isolation from decision-makers who are normally situated in the larger centres of population either in the region such as Aberdeen and Inverness or outside the region such as Edinburgh or Brussels.
- Lack of structure and leadership within the communities.
- Poor infrastructure both within the region and also in getting to the region.
- Seasonality and inclement weather which is most associated with the more northerly peripheral areas.
- A lack of a skilled labour force that means there is a need to improve education, training and re-training.
- Lack of private investment with the private sector exhibiting a reluctance to invest in the more remote areas and the consequent reliance on the public sector.
- Vulnerability to negative changes in the national economy and the impact on exports (of which tourism is one) of the strong national currency.

Most of these factors were evident to some degree in the three case study regions within this research and are often fundamental in terms of the increasing focus on tourism as a means of regenerating the economies of these regions.

Many of the problems in peripheral and rural locations revolve around what have been called disadvantage, deprivation and exclusion. Shucksmith et al (1994, p 3) describe disadvantage as "an inability of individuals or households to share in styles of life open to the majority." They go on to quote Townsend when describing deprivation as "a state of observable and demonstrable disadvantage relative to the local community or the wider society or nation to which an individual, family or group belongs". In terms of exclusion they suggest that it is "the exercise of systematic power in society which disadvantages or excludes people". What each of these terms has in common is the inclusion of people in these categories as poor and that many live in conditions of relative poverty.

"In terms of absolute poverty, 25% of rural households overall were found to be living in or on the margins of poverty (i.e. incomes up to 139% of their supplementary benefit entitlement): this represented 20% of the rural population" (McLaughlin in Shucksmith et al, 1994, p 6). He goes on to point out that "the most significant element of this group was the elderly, with 35% of these households consisting of elderly people living alone (predominantly elderly widows). The other main element was the low paid, manual worker's household. Low wages were found to be typical of family farming areas, such as the uplands. In both scattered and lowland communities, there was a recognition that very limited work options were now a fact of rural life. Individuals who chose to stay in rural areas did so in the knowledge that they would be facing low paid, insecure jobs" (Shucksmith et al 1994, p 6). In most rural areas in England unemployment was not seen as a major contributor to rural poverty. However, this is not the case in areas of rural Scotland where unemployment rates have been as high as 26%.

2.3.1 AGRICULTURAL DECLINE

Bryden and Bollman (2000 p 187) state that there is a decline in the relative importance of agriculture in rural areas. Only 20% (in most cases) of any employment in rural areas are linked to agriculture. Day (1998, p 98) suggests also suggests that the importance of agriculture is diminishing in many rural areas. However, he suggests that farming is still important for the economic activity in these areas because it provides a structure and a focus for personal and institutional connections. Bryden (1994, p 3) also suggests that agriculture is also important for production, value-added, the environment, policy and ideology. The impact of agricultural policies administered by the EU as having major implications on rural and peripheral areas.

These concerns are shared by decision-makers at the European levels. The European Community expressed concern about rural areas in 1988 (and before) when they published "Future of rural Society" which highlighted the problems as being, rural decline, population decline and the pressure of modern developments. Zelie Appleton of the European Commission's DG VI, (whose responsibilities include both agriculture and rural development) stated "the commitment to rural development is based on an increasing recognition and acceptance that agriculture remains an important activity in rural areas. It has major impacts on landscape and the fabric of the countryside." One quarter (24.6%) of the EU's population lives in rural communities, whilst the proportion of the total workforce involved in agriculture is a little over 6%. This emphasises that for a large number of peripheral inhabitants agriculture is not their principal means of support. It is with this in mind that Appleton concluded; "the importance of the non-agricultural aspect of rural development is being increasingly recognised" (1994, p 1).

In many rural areas agriculture has lost the dominant position it once had. The decline in the agricultural workforce is a process, which persists, even when only a small proportion of the total workforce is engaged in agriculture. "Furthermore, the European Commission is committed to a reduction in the level of expenditure on agricultural policy and in particular on price support. Unfortunately these policies are likely to lead to an acceleration in the decline in employment unless alternative measures are taken to maintain farm incomes" (Hodge, 1988, p 305).

The declining importance of agriculture in rural peripheral regions is one of the main reasons for the emphasis on tourism as a means of counter-acting the employment decline associated with agriculture

2.3.2 RURAL DEPOPULATION AND POPULATION TURNAROUND

While employment opportunities began to diminish in Europe's peripheries, core areas began to attract large numbers of rural migrants and rural communities began to lose both population and employment (Bryden and Bollman 2000, Portnov and Pearlmutter 1999). It is the low income rural and peripheral regions that are amongst the regions in Europe that have been most affected by out-migration and population loss (Blotevogel and King 1996, p 153). This is a cause for concern because the process of de-population reduces the local tax base of peripheral areas and increases their dependency on institutions at the core.

The discussion of rural depopulation has been at the centre of most of the policies for remote, rural and peripheral areas. "In most developed countries, the historical migration trend of rural-to-urban movements and the depopulation that accompanied it has largely been reversed and there now exists an urban-to-rural movement" (Stockdale et al 2000, p 244). This turnaround was first commented on in the 1970s and many peripheral rural communities became characterised by positive population change and net migration gain. "More detailed analysis confirmed that this strong performance by rural areas was not confined to more accessible places or a particular part of Britain but was extremely widespread, with some of the largest upward movements in change rate occurring in the most rural and remote areas. These results were confirmed by more localised studies" (Champion and Watkins, 1991, p 8).

There are several reasons for this counter urbanisation or population turnaround including:

- The movement of the local working classes out of the region as their jobs in agriculture, fishing and forestry declined;
- A relatively large scale movement of middle class and elderly people into these areas as these groups became more affluent and exercised their residential preferences;
- Increased car ownership allowed for greater mobility and reduced commuting time;
- An improvement in the quality of housing and infrastructure in these areas as the demand for more rural lifestyle has increased;
- Increasing public expenditure in these areas and the greater awareness of rural and peripheral problems.
- New sources of income for the rural economies (in particular from tourism).
- Impacts of new technology;
- Increased co-operation between local actors and more flexible networks linked to co-operative structures associated with agriculture.

(Bryden and Bollman 2000, Stockdale et al 2000, Champion and Watkins, 1991).

"The overall trend has been towards a recent population increase in these remote areas" (Bryden and Bollman 2000, p 198). However, despite this trend there are many areas where there has been localised depopulation caused by factors such as high levels of unemployment with poor prospects for improving income levels; unequal standards of living; a falling off in work associated with primary industries; out-migration; re-distribution of social capital and the desire of the local population to remain.

Further problems associated with this population inflow are centred on the type of people who are moving into and out of these areas. Net migration out of these regions tends to be amongst the younger population whilst the net migrants in tends to be amongst the older population. "This is particularly true of rural Britain today because, despite overall growth, most rural areas are continuing to lose school-leavers and young adults" (Champion and Watkins, 1991, p 9). These problems were highlighted by McCleery (1991, p 155) in her study of the Highland and Islands where "by the late 1980s there were twice as many of this group of elderly moving in as moving out, which in the context of overall net loss, is particularly unsatisfactory."

This problem is compounded by the fact that "the recent gains in rural areas have been disproportionately weighted towards older families and people nearing retirement age, as well as pensioners themselves. Similarly, the basic population counts hide the fact that the newcomers tend to be wealthier and of higher socio-economic status than local residents, in many cases forcing the latter (and, more particularly, their children) to seek accommodation in the larger rural settlements or leave the countryside altogether" (McCleery, 1991 p 155).

Although the population turnaround development is important it could lead to a false image of rural and peripheral regions. The problems associated with these regions have only disappeared in the aggregate "at lower levels of analysis there is still great diversity of demographic and developmental experience between different parts of the rural areas" (Whitby and Powe, 1994, p 2).

These regions also suffer from the problems associated with seasonality. These problems often occur as a result of weather restrictions associated with the northerly locations of many peripheral areas. This is certainly the case for all three case study regions chosen for this research because each of the regions suffers to a large degree from the difficulties associated with seasonality. Baum (1999 b, p 1) points out that "the issue of seasonality is well documented in the tourism literature, particularly in relation to peripheral, cold water regions of Europe and North America." He goes on to suggest that the approach adopted by these peripheral areas should be to use the same resources and extend the seasons into the shoulder months by targeting different markets, rather that trying to overcome seasonality.

Many tourism destinations seek to redress perceived seasonal imbalances in tourism activity through special campaigns such as the Autumn Gold campaign. This campaign was set up by the Seasonality Working Group (which was itself set up as part of the Scottish Tourism Strategic Plan, with the aim of developing a strategy for the shoulder months). As a marketing initiative it aimed at increasing tourism during the Autumn months. It had some success with an "estimated additional spend in Scotland generated through Autumn Gold in October and November 1995, of £9,720,842" (STB, 1997, p 2). However, the benefits from this campaign, like many other STB initiatives, were viewed by many of those interviewed as being focused on the more traditional tourist destinations of the Central Belt of Scotland, the Highlands and the West Coast. In recent terms the success of the Autumn Gold campaign has been diluted by the decline in the success of Scotland as a tourism destination.

In national terms Scotland suffers from "the problems of seasonality in demand - particularly acute outside the central regional belt; (Economic Intelligence Unit Limited, 1994, p 80). This is a problem for Scotland and can be illustrated by looking at the S.T.Bs survey on Tourism in Scotland 1993, which shows that almost half of all overseas trips to Scotland take place in the peak months of July, August and September (STB, 1994). Baum (1999 b, p 4) suggests that "peripheral, northern environments face particular challenges in the context of seasonality. The impact of seasonality can be seen to operate with especial severity in such locations."

2.3.4 ECONOMIC REGENERATION

It is often the case in peripheral regions that the more remote, rural and peripheral a location is the more marginalised it will be. The problems of depopulation and the resulting decline in peripheral communities can have devastating effects on rural communities. In order to maintain viable rural communities Appleton suggests that "we must be concerned not just with farming, but with all the other aspects of rural life which are so important in creating an integrated and sustainable economy, capable of supporting the local population, not simply in financial terms, but also by ensuring the provision of all the other elements which contribute to that almost indefinable phrase quality of life" (Appleton, 1994, p 2).

The need for the economic regeneration of peripheral regions was noted by O'Cinneide (1988) who stated that, the consolidation of the periphery during the

1970s has not continued through the 1980s. The turnaround trend has been reversed and it is now regarded as only a temporary interruption in the long term decline of marginal regions. The adverse demographic trends such as increased out-migration, reduced in-migration, ageing and decline of overall population are dominant in the periphery. "The policy goals of attempting to stabilise rural settlement patterns by reducing disparities between core and periphery have not been successful" (McCleery, 1991, p 158).

2.3.4 THE CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

Further reasons for encouraging the regeneration of these peripheral regions centre on the cultural perspective. Gray (2000, p 34) suggests that "an image of rural society portraying people and their agricultural way-of-life in the countryside has cultural value." According to Gilbert "if the exodus of people continues away from these areas then pressure will be put on urban receiving areas and the social capital left behind would be expensive to redistribute. Many people in these areas do not wish to leave and others who have left, wish to return" (1989, p 40).

Whitby and Powe (1994, p 3) also add to the argument for the maintenance of rural and peripheral areas by suggesting a cultural perspective. One argument is that depopulation should be prevented in order to maintain and sustain rural life. They suggest that "in an overwhelmingly urban society the existence of rural communities must have an effect out of all proportion to their numbers. It has a psychological value for townspeople, linking them to a life nearer nature and to their rural ancestry. It has a cultural value which cannot be measured." Lane (1993, p 14) suggests that the maintenance of these remote rural communities is desirable because they are different from the norm in our industrialised society and they have their own intrinsic value. Bramwell (1993, p 1) also suggests that "the countryside is highly valued for its inherent variety of landscape, habitat and human heritage."

Wanhill (1995 b, p 3) concurs with the cultural argument and cites a study by the Wales Tourist Board (1994). This study concluded that "the outlook for small farmers and therefore the fabric of the landscape, culture and way of life of rural Wales was bleak without the expenditure of substantial sums of public money for little return. This can be justified only as an act of humanity and conservation, enabling the rest of us and our children to experience these things." Certainly the maintenance of a rural way of life has many supporters (especially in the public and academic sectors) but difficulties are encountered when attempting to convince private sector investors as to the merits of investing in these regions. It is often the lack of investment from the private-sector that means that these more peripheral areas are more dependent on public sector investment.

Whitby and Powe (1994) go on to point out some other areas of concern in rural regions. Rural Britain has fewer younger people than cities and towns; it has more older people; less employed married women and agricultural employment is less significant than either services, distribution, catering or manufacturing the closer the proximity to major centres of population. This last factor is important because it outlines the problems associated with the more peripheral locations.

While these cultural issues are of concern to many individuals and organisations involved in tourism development in peripheral areas the fundamental reason for providing assistance to these areas still remains economic and it is the economic rationale that is most often cited when addressing concerns of rural decline. This is certainly true of the European Union and the provision of assistance from their Structural Funds.

2.4 CHANGING DEMAND FOR TOURISM

Sjoholt (1994) and Ravenscroft (1994) point to the movement away from an industrial economy to a service economy, which represents new opportunities for tourism as a driving force. Recent changes in the tourism product have centred on the changes in the demands of the tourist. Martin and Mason (1993), Jefferson (1995) and Buhalis (2000) point to the increased sophistication of the modern tourist and the increased desire to be involved in the leisure or recreational activity. Hassan (2000, p 248) points out that there is "an emerging global travel segment that tends to be above average in education, environmentally aware, experience oriented, and ready to accept local customs/culture." There is a movement away from the passive to active participation and a shift in the type of holiday demanded. According to Montanari and Williams (1994, p 4) "this shift was predominantly driven by changes in consumption, that is a greater emphasis on more individualistic or on specialised forms of holidays; this demanded smaller and more flexible provision which created niche markets that provided opportunities for small companies."

Bailly et al (1996) suggest that the increased interest in the environment offers new opportunities to rural areas. Cavaco (1994) also points out that "there has been a recent tendency towards greater variation in the ways in which holidays are spent, and it has become increasingly popular to divide up annual leave into more and shorter segments. In the evolution of leisure activities, forms of specifically rural tourism, with strong environmental emphases, have become increasingly popular." Peripheral locations are often "the most inaccessible or remote destinations from the main tourist generating regions" (Robbins, 1997, p 3). Although this is a major problem in terms of accessibility there are certain contradictions in that there are also tourism advantages associated with peripheral remoteness. These centre on the increasing demand for remote, rural and unspoilt areas, of which peripheral regions tend to be the most prominent.

There is increased interest and an increase in demand amongst tourists for a more activity based form of tourism. These trends provide peripheral regions with an opportunity. "The development of tourism and the leisure activities that go with it is without a doubt one of the strongest and most obvious trends of the latter part of this century, and there is nothing to suggest that it will not continue" (Greffe, 1993, p 22). Hummelbrunner and Miglbauer (1994, p 41) concur with Greffe and also point out that "tourism has been one of the most important and fastest growing sectors in Western European economies during the last decades."

Amongst the developments in tourism is the increased interest associated with rural tourism and according to Lane (1993) recent years have provided more opportunities for the rural world and there are new challenges. He points out that "over 70% of all Americans now participate in rural recreation" (1993, p 8). A variety of authors (Powell 1995, Buhalis 2000, Pigram 1996, Bryden and Bollman 2000) have commented on these new challenges and changes and how they impact on rural and peripheral areas. (ETB 1993, p 63) point to the rise in second and third holidays. Gannon (1994, p 59) suggests there will be "an increasing emphasis on the environment, health and increased interest in authenticity." Sisman (1990) says 'Green Tourism' is the next trend. Asian Business (1994, p 29) suggest "the kind of places that tourist want to visit has changed to natural attractions, in remote locations." The Travel Trade Gazette UK and Ireland (1992, p 37) point out that there is "an increasing fascination with wildlife and ecology." Hummelbrunner and

Miglbauer (1994, p 42) suggest that "the traditional economically less favoured clientele is declining in favour of a better off client group." Young (1995, p 198) comments that "it is only within recent times that this isolation and emptiness has itself become an attraction." These changes tend to work in favour of the tourism economy of the three case study regions, which are all well placed to take advantage of these new environmentally based activities.

Crouch (1993, p 94) points out that there is "a restructuring of the rural political economy and a drive towards new forms of capitalisation, alternative sources of profitability, market opportunism and to the assertion of consumer choice." Lane (1994, p 103) sees the change in demand as a move towards high quality unspoilt scenery. Cavaco (1994, p 130) points out that there has been changes in the tourist demand patterns for rural areas "in recent decades tourist demand for rural spaces has undergone further changes and has become more diversified owing to its rediscovery by the medium, high and upper classes of urban society." Hummelbrunner (1994) also sees a movement towards a new rural tourism and suggests some of the changes relate to a growing environmental awareness and a better off clientele. Greffe (1993, p 4) also suggests that there is a " shift in the socio-economic profile of those interested in rural tourism towards the better-off." Claval (1994, p 259) points out that there is a fairly rapid growth in peripheral tourist locations and states that, "contemporary tourists are seeking more and more diversified activities and facilities. It is impossible to provide these when visitor densities are too low: hence the spectacular growth of new forms of tourist resorts in many parts of the mountains or coastal areas of Europe."

Frochet and MacLennan (2000, p 6) suggest that there is "an agreement across academics and managers alike that consumers' markets have been evolving towards a greater concern for the environment and more individualised holidays that should fully benefit rural tourism." These well documented changes offer peripheral areas such as the three case study regions the opportunity to capitalise on their regions comparative advantages associated with their natural environments. They also reflect the current focus on activity based vacations by the STB.

2.5 MARKETING

Marketing is a key issue and tourism activities create a market or a demand. The collective demands of tourists for services such as transport, accommodation, recreation and entertainment generate a need for the tourism suppliers to provide these services (Prideaux 2000). It is then the job of the destination marketer to identify the needs and wants of visitors (and potential visitors) and to facilitate the achievement of the tourism policy (Buhalis 2000). One of the major difficulties is deciding which type of customer demand or niche market is to be targeted.

The demand side of the marketing equation is expressed as a need or want that encourages suppliers to produce goods or services for sale. From a supply perspective suppliers produce a good or service and hope to create a demand for that product. These demand and supply factors act at local, regional, national and international levels (Prideaux, 2000, p 226). Peripheral regions can be peripheral in all of these contexts but they are likely to experience the effects of peripherality most at international level and least at a local level.

Sirgy and Su (2000, p 1) suggest that "the tourism industry has increasingly evolved into an arena of fierce competition in which marketing has become an important element of tourism management." This is supported by Jenkins et al (1999, p 63) who state that "competition between places is therefore intense and becoming increasingly so." This is an important issue for all peripheral regions including the three case study regions. Given that the level of competition facing destinations is increasing, poor standards of marketing would be a major cause for concern.

Visitors or tourists to a region make a choice about a destination based on many factors focusing on requirements that are particular to each individual such as personal space, desire to get away, relaxation or self fulfilment. They also focus on price and quality of the destination as well as on the functional elements associated with the destination. These functional elements are involved in the tourists decision making process and include quality of service, aesthetics and accessibility (Sirgy and Su 2000, Buhalis 2000). Each of these functional elements are important to peripheral regions in general but to the three case study regions in this study in particular. The standards of service associated with Scottish tourism (including the three case study regions) have been accepted as being in need of improvement.

The image associated with a region is very important in determining which visitors will be attracted to a destination because it is the "mental images that are the basis for the evaluation and selection of an individual's choice of a destination." (Butler and Hall, 1999, p 115). In fact Buhalis (2000, p 104) suggests that it is the most important criterion. The image of a destination does not only involve the functional elements discussed above but also involves the tourists (and potential tourist) perception and expectations of the destination. Butler et al (1999, p 14) also suggest that image is of considerable importance. They suggest that "the importance of image has only recently been appreciated." They continue to state that the overall image of rural and peripheral areas is a very positive one in the developed world. Butler and Hall (1999, p 117) support the positive image created by these peripheral and rural areas when they state that "it is only in recent years that regions have explicitly sought to develop, image and promote themselves." It is the positive image of peripheral regions (such as the three case study regions) that offer opportunities for marketers.

Accessibility is an important factor in visitors perception of a destination and it is also important to peripheral regions in terms of getting visitors to an area as well as getting them around when they are there. Infrastructure in peripheral areas is often of a low standard and in need of improvement in order to attracts more visitors. The problems associated with infrastructure are evident in most peripheral regions (including the three case study regions).

The aesthetics, geographical location and atmospheric cues associated with a region do affect the image of the destination and are an area in which many peripheral regions have an advantage (Sirgy and Su, 2000). The images associated with a region can be positive or negative. It is the job of the marketers to maximise the visitor numbers to a destination by promoting the right image. This can be done by using information cues based on the environment and aimed at tourists who use this information to form an impression of the destination. Sirgy and Su (2000, p 5) suggest that "advertising and other forms of marketing communication are a significant source of information for tourists." Regions such as the West Coast and the Highlands of Scotland have an advantage in terms of being associated with a relatively strong image based on its natural environment. However, despite the benefits associated with a strong image, the level of marketing is still an important issue to peripheral regions, such as the three case study regions.

There is an opportunity for marketers to focus on the increasing demand amongst visitors for attractions based on the natural environment. Bryden and Bollman (2000 p 196) suggest that "urban consumers increasingly see rural areas as important for rest and recreation, for fresh air and clean water and as offering lifestyles with advantages over those in urban areas." Hassan (2000, p 239) suggests that "destination planners need to focus on the resource base of their region in an attempt to give themselves a comparative advantage which in turn should improve the regions' market position." These attributes, he suggests include amongst others climate, location, natural resources and an awareness of tourism amongst the local population (some of these attributes are evident in the three case study regions involved in this research).

Rural agricultural areas have been particularly hard hit during the economic restructuring of recent decades as a result of factors such as changes to the Common Agricultural Policy, the BSE crisis and the strong value Sterling. However, Grimes (2000, p 16) suggests that "to some extent disadvantages such as distance from the market can be ameliorated by recent developments in information and communication technologies." The hope has been to facilitate the diffusion of services throughout rural and peripheral regions.

The increase in the use and application of IT has had impacts on the task of marketing. The marketer now has more opportunities to off set the disadvantages associated with remote/peripheral regions (Buhalis 2000, p 117). However, despite the optimism associated with the recent developments in IT Grimes (2000, p 20) points out that "much of the exploitation of these new technologies takes place in large urban centres and not in rural areas." He concludes that there has been a waste of investment in many peripheral and rural areas as the large scale initial investment involved in the installation of the infrastructure has not been fully justified or fully exploited.

2.6 INTERNATIONALISATION AND GLOBALISATION

Internationalisation of economic activity has been occurring gradually for years, whereas globalisation is a recent phenomenon, which has intensified during the 1980s and '90s. Bryden and Bollman (2000, p 193) suggest that "internationalisation refers mainly to trade in goods and services the production of which was organised within national economies, globalisation involves functional integration between internationally dispersed economic activities." Globalisation in recent times has been encouraged with the reduction in tariffs and trade barriers and the growth in trans-national corporations, media conglomerates and "supranational economic institutions that operate irrespective of boundaries" (Day, 1998 p 90).

"The significance of multinational corporations is increasing" (Jenkins et al, 1999, p 52). The internationalisation and globalisation of firms has meant that Europe has become part of a global economy as well as being part of its own regional and national economies. The increasing globalisation associated with economic activity, including tourism, means that there are increasing pressures on those responsible for tourism developments to internationalise their efforts and their focus. Jenkins et al (1999, p 43) suggest that "global and regional economic, political, social and technological developments have dramatically affected rural areas and led to their restructuring." They go on to point out that "the patterns of change in rural areas reflect global pressures and there is considerable evidence of the weakening capacity of the nation state to influence or control local patterns and processes" (1999, p 54).

The effects of this globalisation manifest themselves on tourism in several ways. Butler et al (1999, p 14) suggest that "the processes driving these changes are global in scale and relate to societal and economic forces." At a local and national level Scottish tourism has seen a decline in domestic visitor numbers as more Scots travel abroad instead of taking holidays in Scotland. At a European level the impetus towards regionalism associated with the European Union has meant easier intra-European travel and the phasing out of duty free retailing. The world economy is becoming more international as economic forces and the reorganisation of economic activity forces the changes (Blotevogel and King 1996, Bailly et al 1996, Keating 1998). Partly as a result of this globalisation there has been a substantial reorganisation and restructuring of international and global firms as they merge, are taken over or form strategic alliances or ventures. The impetus for these moves is the need to remain competitive in the international market place and this can be evidenced within tourism by looking at the mergers of airlines, hotel groups and communications organisations.

Despite the fact that the forces of globalisation tend to operate on a world scale they do continue to produce uneven economic outcomes and uneven regional developments. Partly as a consequence there is a desire for economic restructuring or what Keating (1998, p 173) describes as 'new regionalism' which in a European sense is a "mechanism for rectifying the territorial disparities produced by market integration and for achieving allocative efficiency." In the context of this research examples of this would be the categorisation of the case study regions for the purpose of the EU Structural fund assistance, for example Objective 5b.

Bryden and Bollman (2000 p 190) suggest that this "economic restructuring is occurring not only in the service sector but also in agriculture and agri-businesses." They suggest that the rural impacts of globalisation include a decline in agricultural employment, increasing global penetration of local markets, removal of barriers, increased movement capital, regional inter-dependence, standardisation of products, spread of new technology, demographic changes. Each of these changes impact on the three case study regions because of the relatively rural nature and their dependence on agriculture.

Dunford (1994, p 110) also suggests that there is "an increasing internationalisation of economic life and a localisation of politics." He suggests that the process of internationalisation will continue to increase as national governments lose economic sovereignty and local economic development initiatives continue to proliferate. Day suggests that a major task is to identify what factors are relevant in deciding which regions join the ranks of the economically successful and which do not. He suggests that "once this is understood, it might be possible to copy or transfer the ingredients of success into otherwise unsuccessful places" (1998, p 91). The Causal Networks used in this research are an attempt to identify the problems and drawbacks associated with each of the case study regions and what inhibits these regions from joining the successful. The Lesson Drawing aspects involved in this research are an attempt to suggest (where appropriate) that those regions that fall behind the others could import a lesson that may improve their tourism product.

"The level of competition facing the tourism industry has increased as a result of the effects of globalisation" (Dicken and Oberg 1996, p 101). For example, increased mobility and employability of labour, direct booking opportunities, international marketing by competitors and the ability of tourists to travel further afield in shorter times. National Tourism Organisations in countries such as Scotland have to find ways to counter the increasing demand for international holidays by Scottish people, which are often taken at the expense of holidays in Scotland. The strategies of firms are no longer local and national but are now global and the type competition has shifted away from inter-firm competition to competition between destinations. (Blotevogel and King 1996, Go and Govers, 2000).

The increase in competition is also noted by Jenkins et al (1999, p 64) who suggest that "competition between places will necessarily continue in this highly competitive and deregulated global marketplace." Keating (1998, p 161) suggests that the increased level of competition has come about "not necessarily because of globalisation but rather as a result of European integration and the decentralising of policy to regional and local institutions which are themselves increasingly in competition with each other." He goes on to support this (p 185) and suggests that "the new territorial politics is focused less on territorial management and national integration, and more on territorial competition, within national arenas but also within Europe and the wider market."

Bryden and Bollman (2000 p 185) suggest that "rural and peripheral areas have new opportunities to benefit from the increasing globalisation that is occurring." There is not necessarily one particular route for the successful development of all regions and Day (1998, p 95) suggests that "despite modernisation and globalisation marked local variations may persist, and therefore, there are still significant choices to be made about which direction to take."

2.7 REGIONALISM

Regions and territories are constituted by institutions, notably the state. However, there has been an increasing move towards identifying regions according to attributes such as income levels, population, employment and dependence on industries such as agriculture. For example, Gray (2000, p 40) suggests that the "Common Agriculture Policy defined a common space for the agricultural sector by de-emphasising internal national partitioning." According to Keating (1998, p 7) the state "define territories for the purposes of public policy and as the basis for representation, and more recently by international and supranational regimes, notably the European Union, which have moulded the sense of place and helped constitute territorial systems of action through their policy interventions." These policy interventions have come about as a result of the regional inequalities that exist within the European Union.

This 'new regionalism' has transformed the state as a system for making and implementing public policy. The EU has become more involved in the development of regions through the investment subsidies associated with their regional development policies. Their role is mainly one facilitating development as opposed to directing (the principle of subsidiarity). Despite this facilitating role there seems to be a contradiction between the concept of subsidiarity and the process of European integration. Although power has supposedly been devolved down to local and regional levels in reality many of the decisions affecting resource allocation and the direction of inputs are still made outside the local level and often at European level. (Bramwell and Sharman 1999, p 399).

The late 1990s saw significant changes in the design and implementation of rural development programmes in large parts of the UK's more peripheral rural regions. These changes came about largely as a result of the European Structural funds and it is the administration and implementation of these funds that have caused the emergence of new local and regional and supranational actors in these regions. Ward and McNicholas (1998, p 27) suggest that there has emerged a different form of local governance "which requires the building of new institutional forms and the forging of new relationships between various rural development actors."

Goodwin (1998 p 6) also suggests that there has emerged a different form of governance. He suggests that "at the local level the institutional map of rural local government has been transformed into a system of governance which involves a range of agencies and institutions drawn from the public, private and voluntary sectors." It is these hierarchies that appear to be the favoured mechanisms for rural policy delivery and in many cases as part of the rural development programmes tourism has been promoted as a source of rural and peripheral economic growth and employment generation. However, partly as a result of the regional approach to decision making there are opportunities for local and regional pressure groups to exert influence over decisions. These pressure groups could represent local businesses or in other cases they may be based on single emotive issues, such as the involvement of the RSPB in the development of the Cairngorm Funicular in Aviemore, Scotland. The focus of their interest was to restrict access to the

Cairngorm mountaintops in an effort to avoid disturbing the local bird population. Although the development is progressing the RSPB were successful in achieving several delays and concessions to the development.

By categorising a region for economic assistance the EU has been indirectly responsible for creating a sense of place associated with these identified regions. The regions thus identified as suitable for financial create their own organisations to develop the plan for assistance and to create the local identity that is often sought by the EU for programmes such as LEADER.

2.8 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TOURISM IN PERIPHERAL AREAS

It is often the case in peripheral regions that the more remote, rural and peripheral a location is the more marginalised it will be. The problems of depopulation and the resulting decline in peripheral communities can have devastating effects on rural communities. In order to maintain viable rural communities Appleton suggests that "we must be concerned not just with farming, but with all the other aspects of rural life which are so important in creating an integrated and sustainable economy, capable of supporting the local population, not simply in financial terms, but also by ensuring the provision of all the other elements which contribute to that almost indefinable phrase quality of life" (Appleton, 1994, p 2).

When the problems associated with these regions are described, it is little wonder that tourism is seen as a means of regeneration. The limited and fluctuating financial returns from the primary sector industries (which tend to predominate in these regions), allied to the low number of possibilities of employment mean that an outflow of school-leavers to seek their fortunes in the metropolitan centres of the core is inevitable. "This brings about total population decline on the one hand and structural ageing on the other" (McCleery, 1991, p 146).

The OECD (1993, page 18) suggests that a "major consideration in designing policies for an area is its potential for economic development." Swarbooke, (1992, p 65) points out that as a result of changes that have taken place in agricultural regions there is a need to diversify the local economies and "tourism is destined to be a key element of such diversification in many rural areas." Bryden and Bollman go further and suggest that employment in tourism already "exceeds that in agriculture in all types of region" (2000, p 191). Butler et al (1999, p 14) also suggest that "increasingly rural areas and the governments which control and serve them have come to realise the economic benefits which can accrue to rural areas from tourism and recreation development." Davidson (1992, p 147) suggests that "at a European level, widespread optimism exists as to rural tourism's potential for mitigating some of the harmful effects of the EC's agricultural policies, for protecting the heritage of the continent's rural areas, and for improving the overall tourism product."

According to Lane tourism has proved to be an "engine for economic growth - transferring capital, income and employment from industrial, urban and developed areas to non-industrial regions" (1993, p 8). He continues to suggest that "The development of sustainable rural tourism has the potential to help secure the economic viability of rural communities and activities, which consequently can help maintain the special qualities of the countryside" (Lane, 1993, p 2.)

These views are supported by authors such as Davidson (1992), Williams and Shaw (1994) and Shucksmith et al (1995) who suggest that rural tourism is coming to be regarded as part of the solution to the problems associated with rural areas, such as employment creation and regional development. Because rural tourism activities are traditionally found in less urbanised, less industrialised areas, these offer scope for bringing prosperity back to those regions which have been left behind in terms of development (Davidson, 1992). This is emphasised by Shucksmith et al (1995, p 14) who point out that "poverty arises from unemployment, particularly where job opportunities are lacking over a long period and where the low returns to family labour in agriculture set a yardstick for general wage-rates in the local economy."

Peripheral areas often have "few development opportunities other than capitalising on their natural environment" (Wanhill 2000, p 135). This used to take the form of agriculture and in some cases fishing. However, due to the economic difficulties associated with both these industries "there is a move towards introducing tourism as an alternative means of capitalising on the natural environment that is their comparative advantage" (Portnov and Pearlmutter 1999, p 260). The main stimulus for peripheral regions to develop a tourism industry derives from its perceived potential to generate employment. A variety of authors (see table 1) have suggested that tourism can assist in regional development, the diversification of local economies, increasing income levels, the creation of new employment opportunities (often based on traditional skills), reducing the effects of economic and social isolation and, to some extent, improvements associated with the national economy.

Table 1: Authors commenting on the potential of tourism to create jobs

Hall and Jenkins (2000), Wanhill (2000), Andrew (1997), Grimes (2000), Young (1995), Luloff et al, (1994), Oppermann (1992), Hall (1994), Hohl and Tisdell (1995), Townsend, (1990), Cavaco (1994), Greffe (1993), Gannon (1994), Whitby (1981) and The English Tourist Board (ETB)

Rural tourism has historically had an impact on regeneration in peripheral and outlying areas (such as the Highlands and North and West Grampian) as the tourists look for alternatives to the traditional sun, sea and sand vacation (Davidson, 1992). When describing the economy of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland McCleery (1991, p 151) pointed out that "tourism is an important source of employment in the area." This is especially important on the West Coast of Scotland as a result of the limited other employment opportunities.

Rural tourism is difficult to define and could include concepts such as farm tourism, ecotourism, green tourism, agri-tourism and nature tourism (Frochet and MacLennan, 2000). However, in what ever terms it is defined tourism is often seen as a major force for regenerating economies in peripheral regions, not least because it is a labour intensive industry which could prove effective in areas with high levels of unemployment (The Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2000). Ashworth and Bergsma point out that central governments often identify specific areas where tourist development would be suited and this has also been expressed on both regional and local levels that "tourist development in the peripheral regions is well suited to support the economic goals of regional development policy. In the case of the European Community, tourism's role in regional development is the element most frequently referred to in Community member's tourism policies" (in Hall, 1994, p 115).

Tourism issues facing peripheral areas in Scotland (and the three peripheral case study areas involved in this research) are similar to those elsewhere in the world. According to Wanhill (1995 b, p 4) some of the main issues include:

- The regions have a reliance on extractive industries such as forestry and tend to have a relatively small manufacturing base (such as in the Highlands of Scotland).

- Limited market opportunities. This is true of tourism opportunities especially when the peripheral northern regions (such as the three case study regions) are in competition with the sun based tourist destinations in places like the Mediterranean.
- A lack of tourist infrastructure or old and possibly obsolete infrastructural stock.
- Weather restrictions on the length of the season and the consequent problems associated with seasonality.
- Remoteness and strong natural environments which is especially applicable to regions in the Highlands and the West Coast.
- Environmental issues and concerns over developments in places such as Aviemore.
- Social impact on small, close-knit communities that are typical of the social structure associated with parts of the Highlands.
- A lack of educational and training opportunities which is due to factors such as geographic remoteness, lack of funds and in some cases lower levels of service delivery.
- Limited organisational structures in many parts of the more remote areas.
- A lack of planning direction and leadership which in this research was certainly a concern for the respondents from the Grampian region.

Authors such as Burke and O'Cinneide (1995) and Keane (1992) suggest that diversification of the rural economy through the establishment of alternative enterprises is high on the national agenda. At the heart of the problems facing remote communities is the issue of economic diversity and diversification of the local economic base would mean that the community would be better able to retain population and cope with economic changes. Diversification would give some degree of stability. Keane suggests that "tourism compares very favourably with other forms of development activity in terms of their viability to create income and employment" (1992, p 48).

Tourism has been suggested as a panacea to the economic ills of many regions, "without doubt employment and economic development have become the key to government involvement in tourism in recent years. Economic downturn and restructuring of manufacturing and agriculture have left both urban and rural areas with high unemployment and few opportunities for economic development. In the last decade this has become an important political issue with central government providing finance to assist with tourism development opportunities to create new tourism initiatives" (Granlund, 1991, p 33).

The focus on tourism in the case study regions has largely been brought about as a result of the need to stimulate the declining local rural and peripheral economies, which tend to be reliant on agriculture and fishing. Andrew suggests that tourism can make an important contribution to economic development. The attraction of policy makers to tourism is "particularly true of the physical periphery, where relatively low wages and high unemployment make economic development more urgent and where tourism is seen as having a comparative advantage" (1997, p 721).

2.9 LIMITS ASSOCIATED WITH RURAL AND PERIPHERAL TOURISM

Most tourists visit the countryside for psychological benefits such as fresh air, relaxation and the peace and quiet (Frochet and MacLennan 2000). Tourist activities in peripheral locations such as Scotland tend to revolve around relatively passive outdoor pursuits such as driving in the countryside, eating out, visiting historic houses or visitor centres, picnics, visiting friends and relatives, nature studies, golf or walking (Frochet and MacLennan, 2000). More active pursuits such as climbing, canoeing, rafting, horse riding, shooting, cycling, skiing, adventure holidays etc are also engaged. However, whilst these more active pursuits have proved to be beneficial to places such as Australia, New Zealand and to some extent Ireland not every peripheral area can provide the necessary terrain or climate for these activities. "Some areas are unsuitable for intensive tourism development because of remoteness, lack of scenic or heritage attractions" (Lane, 1993, p 18). The emphasis on water based and adventure activities in Australia can be attributed to the fact that they have the natural environment, the climate and the market segment (young travellers) to benefit form these activities. This is not necessarily the case for regions in Scotland.

Despite the enthusiasm and the commitment towards rural and farm based tourism amongst many policy makers and officials there is concern that tourism may not be the solution to problems associated with these regions (Clancy, 1999, p 4). Despite the encouragement of tourism as a means of providing supplementary incomes for local residents, Hall (1994, p 118) suggests that "there is a substantial body of evidence which suggests that while farm tourism may bring visitation and income into a region, it is the farmers with surplus capital or at least enough capital to reallocate from agricultural activities into tourist activities which have the most to gain from rural tourism strategies.

Prideaux (2000, p 233) also suggests that the growth of any tourism business is dependent on the "willingness or ability of suppliers to invest in new tourist facilities." The most economically marginal farms, and the ones for whom such policies are often supposedly developed, are those with the least flexibility to participate in tourism enterprises because of their lack of capital." As a consequence tourism strategies may be reinforcing the existing income disparities. Keane also suggests that the benefits associated with farm tourism may not be enjoyed by all farmers and states that a number of agri-tourism studies suggests that "it is the medium to large farmers that become involved in tourism. These farmers command more resources and are more likely to have unused buildings" (Keane, 1992, p 50).

Further problems associated with tourism in a rural context are associated with the fact that "visitor spending is often minimal and may be on items that need to be imported to the region" (Hohl and Tisdell, 1995, p 519). The actual costs of organising these visitors can also be prohibitive as a result of "extra costs involved in having to provide the extra facilities and improved services that the increasingly discerning visitor requires "(Greffe, 1993, p 23). Allied to these problems operating costs can often be prohibitive due to the relative isolation of the area and the consequent costs of peripherality. Inward investment and the arrival of new firms and enterprises are limited owing to the nature of these remote areas. Because of the location and the relatively low level of investment of many peripheral areas the market segment attracted is often limited and consequent product diversification is difficult. Because of the geographical isolation and the difficulties associated with travelling to the regions, peripheral locations will encounter problems in attracting visitors. Hovik and Heiberg, (1980, p 80) suggest this is a particular problem because "tourists seldom have strong commitments to particular destinations." They are likely to be put off by the problems associated with transportation to and within remote areas.

According to Buhalis (1999, p 183) "facilities and services also suffer because a lack of profit prevents enterprises from renovating facilities as well as from hiring qualified personnel and maintaining training standards." Poor product standards and service levels have been highlighted by Cavaco, (1994), Hummelbrunner (1994), Greffe (1993) amongst others and the level and quality of the local staff is often associated with a lack of adequately trained personnel and high staff turnover rates.

In most cases (including the three case study regions in this research) the seasonality and the weather restrictions imposed by, the often northerly locations of these peripheral areas compound these problems. These problems have been highlighted by Claval (1994) and Cavaco (1994), who suggested that rural tourism is essentially seasonal in nature, even if this is not necessarily limited to the summer period.

In these often remote areas there is the possibility of over-dependence on tourism because there are often few, if any, alternative sources of employment. Consequently there is also a certain inequity in terms of the comparative strengths of those operating in the peripheral receiving areas and the administrative areas. Those in the receiving areas tend to lack influence when compared to the administrative centres (which are often remote from the receiving areas) where the commercial and financial interests tend to be located. This tends to be the case on the West Coast of Scotland where the economy is dominated by tourism but the public sector bodies, policy makers and fund holders tend to be located on the East Coast and the Central Belt of Scotland.

In many peripheral areas the amenity, such as a landscape or a cultural or historic site is often maintained by the local community. However, there is often no way for them to extract payment from everyone who benefits from it (ramblers or bird-watchers). As a consequence policy mechanisms may be required to compensate local inhabitants for the costs of maintaining the particular amenity, for example the small village of Collieston on the North East coast of Grampian maintains the local pier and looks after the up-keep of the village without local authority assistance. This is because the land on which the village is built is owned by Slains Estate and as a consequence is often not eligible for local authority assistance.

The approach to rural and peripheral development can be seen either in terms of making structural changes or social and economic changes. Bowler and Lewis, (1991, p 160) suggest that there are three alternative models of state intervention: sectoral, integrated and community-based. The first model involves individual government departments each operating in isolation and looking after their own sector interests, such as forestry, transport and agriculture. Over the past forty or so years the rural policy in the UK has been dominated by the agricultural sector. The second approach involves integrated rural development where institutional structures have been created to bring together the sector interests in a co-ordinated programme, for example, the Highlands and Islands Development Board. The third approach involves a fundamental government shift towards the private sector and a greater reliance on market forces. Rural policy in the UK has gone through each of the three phases in turn and is now concentrating on the third approach with a greater emphasise on community participation and local empowerment. To assist in this movement towards local involvement agencies such as the Rural Development Commission have been set up and offer loans and advice in an attempt to "bring new life and new jobs back into the rural areas of England" (Credit Management, 1995, p 44).

The success of peripheral economies in introducing or integrating tourism into their local economies will depend on how well they can compete with the more concentrated and often, more professional operations of the nearest conurbation's. Hummelbrunner and Migbauer (1994) p 43) suggest "these communities need to maximise the opportunities for tourists to spend money. They should move away from economies of scale and towards economies of scope". Slee et al (1995, p 6) suggests that they can be successful because "they can provide the necessary fixed capital for the enterprise relatively cheaply, because they often already have spare capacity for the likes of farmhouse accommodation. Small scale local operations, such as farms often are more adaptable than the larger organisations operating in the cities. Demand-led changes have created new opportunities, which cannot be easily catered to by larger-scale tourism businesses. The new enterprises in these peripheral country locations do not have to cope with the extra burden of redundant infrastructure and outdated capital equipment."

Many authors including Hall, (1994), Young (1995), Luloff et al (1994) Hohl and Tisdell (1995), Bryden (1995), Zurick (1992) and Craik (1984) have pointed to the limitations associated with these developments. The tourism industry has both benefits and costs, in environmental, economic, political and social terms. Some of these costs include economic dependency based on the fact that tourism is a highly insecure industry, which is vulnerable to changes in incomes, fashions and preferences of visitors outside the receiving area and also to national and international policy changes.

The environmental problems associated with tourism such as, environmental degradation, the destruction of natural habitats and the decline in the value of natural resources have been pointed out by authors such as Hassan (2000), Miller (1987), McKercher (1991) and Hohl and Tisdell (1995). Young (1995, p 219) points out that there are also "several negative social effects of tourism development in remote areas, such as, compromising cultural values, growth of consumerism, anti-social behaviour, increased intrusion into local lives and divisions in the community." Mansfield (1992, p 377) suggests that there are particular problems for the more peripheral locations in that "the locals propensity to tolerate negative social impacts resulting from tourism development decreases when a given community is located in a peripheral region." Hall comments that despite the growth in the number of jobs many are part-time, poorly paid, female dominated and seasonal. He goes on to quote Urry and suggest that "the more exclusively an area specialises in tourism the more depressed its general wage levels will be" Hall (1994, p 116).

The availability of local labour to fill the jobs created will also be important when considering the potential of tourism "although jobs are created locally, the benefits to the local economy in terms of employment depend on the ability of residents to fill the jobs. Some of the jobs are filled by inward commuters, which depends on local travel to work areas, and the incomes paid to these people are taken out of the local area" (ETB, 1993, p 500). Problems have occurred in Grampian not as a result of incoming staff working in the tourism industry but rather as a result of incoming staff working in the better paid jobs in oil. This means that the less well paying jobs in tourism are left for the locals. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2000, p 3) suggest that many of the jobs associated with rural areas are "dead-end jobs. Even where young people acquire skills, they may live too far away to take up jobs that would use those skills."

Tourism although it is often cited as a good way to regenerate peripheral economies, carries with it certain problems related to the type of jobs created. The image of the tourism industry as an employer is often negative and it is not usually viewed as a career industry with many of its managers having no formal training. This problem has also been highlighted in Scotland where many of the managers involved in tourism have little or no previous training in tourism. Added to this many of the jobs tend to be part-time and seasonal, have low status, are often unskilled, involving unsociable hours. "Low pay is a particular problem in the industry with only 27% of graduates in hospitality earning over 14,000 pounds compared to 30% of graduates in other industries" (HCIMA, 1996, p 17). So "tourism's contribution to full-time employment is considerably less than its contribution to job hours" (Holloway, 1991, p 175).

Lea goes on to suggest that "there is a close but not perfect correlation between the income generating effects of tourism and the creation of employment, meaning that high returns from the industry do not correspond directly into proportionately more jobs" (1988, p 46). Holloway suggests that "the rapid growth of tourism in the twentieth century has produced both problems and opportunities on a vast scale for societies. Governments have become aware that tourism is not merely a useful means of adding to a nations wealth but also brings with it serious long-term problems which, without careful planning and control, can escalate to a point where they threaten society" (Holloway, 1991, p 174). Jefferson (1995, p 103) also suggests that "tourism was seen as a panacea for economic problems, for trade imbalances or for unemployment. But planners and developers did not take account of the social implications."

Whitby (1981, p 11) also suggests that although tourism can help alleviate economic problems there are limitations to what can be achieved. "Examination of tourism as a rural employer suggests that it may have a good deal to offer as an industry to be promoted in employment generating policies. However, tourism will only be able to help in particular areas where:

- There are tourist attractions;
- There is a supply of local labour;
- There are other local inputs to be used."

In the three case study regions involved in this research many of the attractions tend to be based around the natural or cultural assets associated with each region. The increasing interest in the environment, and on activities based within that environment, are trends that could be used to the advantage of these regions. A local labour force to work in the tourism industry in these regions is also available although, cities such as Aberdeen may have to compete with other industries, such as oil to attract the necessary labour. However, in the more remote locations such as North and West Grampian the benefits associated with tourism may be limited. This is because these areas may not have a sufficient population that is disposed towards working in tourism and may lack the natural assets of places such as the West Coast of Scotland.

There has been an increasing interest in the ability of (mainly built) attractions to encourage tourism in peripheral areas in both the UK and Europe. As a result many of the projects tend to focus on their potential to create employment and are often funded by public bodies in the guise of economic development programmes. These projects range from waterfront developments and shopping centres through to factory tourism. Although the public sector tend to dominate the provision of attractions there are also several voluntary organisations, such as the National Trust for Scotland that make provision for tourists.

Those commercial attractions that actually exist in peripheral regions can, and often are, run at a profit. But, according to the ETB "there are many run by the National Trust and Local Authorities at a loss. It is these attractions, particularly those of historical interest, which are the most significant in attracting visitors to local areas" (ETB, 1993, p 31). Indeed, heritage attractions have the potential to become a major growth area for tourism in the UK (Prentice 1993).

However, despite the optimism associated with heritage as a means of attracting visitors to a region heritage projects tend to have a different focus to commercial attractions. They often tend to have a "curatorial approach" (Garrod and Fyall, 2000) with a focus on caring for the properties. As a consequence many do not have a particularly commercial approach to their businesses. This is true of heritage attractions in Grampian where many struggle in terms of financial viability. (Aberdeenshire Council 1998).

These heritage-based projects are often run by the public sector, conservation groups, voluntary organisations or the Church and they tend to have a different perspective to the commercial operators. They tend to focus on exposing as many people as possible to their historic cultural heritage. As a consequence many of them may not be commercially viable and will be unlikely to attract private funds. Smith (1998, p 189) suggests that the predominance of these type of owners are sometimes "an inhibiting factor in the development of a more commercially aware and competitive approach to running attractions." This could present a problem for Grampian because, many of the present attractions in the region are run by bodies, such as the National Trust for Scotland. The bulk of the attractions tend to be of historic interest and have considerable local authority involvement.

Generally the visitor numbers to attractions are relatively small and whilst commercially operated attractions may be capable of generating reasonable returns many of the major attractions in Scotland tend to be linked with heritage or cultural activities such as historic buildings or heritage museums.

Allied to the problems of financial viability the benefits of these projects to the local area are also often limited. Even if attraction projects are capable of drawing people into a local area, the visitors spend few if any nights in the local area. "It seems, therefore, that the strategy for the area should be to aim for a broad range of attractions of historical interest in order to attract a large number of visitors and to complement these attractions with a few high quality leisure and entertainment attractions which are capable of keeping people on site for a number of hours to generate higher levels of spending in the area" (ETB, 1993, p 31).

According to the ETB (1993, p 60) "while attraction projects are very capable of generating additional visits to a local area, there is no guarantee that they will bring in much more expenditure than visitors make at the attraction." However, attraction projects do have a relatively low cost per job, which suggests that they may be cost-effective ways of re-generating employment in these peripheral economies. "At a regional level, attraction projects still look cost-effective as part of a rural tourism package, and seem reasonable in cost per job terms" (ETB, p 62). In terms of the average spend the ETB suggest that if these visitors can be persuaded to stay overnight in the area and go to one attraction every 1.5 days they will contribute £68.95 per day/night. The conclusion drawn by the ETB was that these areas should be selective in support of the projects that support and should target a few high-spend rural leisure/entertainment attractions and promote a wide range of heritage attractions.

The use of attractions in attempting to persuade more visitors in to a region is dependent on a variety of factors, including such macro factors as;

- The economy. Spending at attractions, like tourism spending in general, is discretionary and the number of visits will rise or fall depending on the state of the national and local economies;
- Leisure time. Increased voluntary leisure time is likely to lead to increased attendance at attractions. Enforced leisure time, such as unemployment is not conducive to increasing visits to attractions (White, 1990);
- Lifestyles. The changing values and lifestyles of the population is likely to mean the visitors of the future will be "more active, physically and mentally, in free time, seeking destinations and pursuits that offer a chance to participate, as well as to have fun and be entertained" (Martin and Mason, 1993, p 37);
- Demographic changes. There is a declining birth rate in both the UK and the USA and an increase in the number of 45-64 year olds. This points to the need to improve and increase the number of attractions that cater to, and appeal to the active elderly;
- Technology. Some of the key changes in the field of technology include "Interactive multi-media, simulator attractions and virtual reality. New techniques of interpretation provide a major opportunity for all types of attractions to improve what they offer to the visitor" (Martin and Mason, 1993, p 38);
- Media coverage. The greater the exposure to a particular destination, attraction or past time, the greater will be the involvement of the public.

The ETB (1993, p 62) sound some cautionary notes concerning the attraction of visitors "the natural endowments of an area, in particular its scenic beauty and its heritage, are the major factors attracting visitors to rural areas. There is therefore an issue of how far tourism development policy can be used to generate additional visitors given the natural endowments of an area. The evidence that we have suggests that attractions, and to a lesser extent self-catering accommodation units, are capable of making visitors additional to local areas, but that this is mainly as a result of diverting visitors from other destinations in the region."

According to Whitby (1982, p 10) "the indirect and induced effects of tourism in rural areas are quite encouraging, compared with other industries, and this suggests that tourism is well worthy of consideration as a rural employer to be promoted in order to expand employment." Hummelbrunner and Miglbauer (1994, p 48) suggest that in order to effectively promote tourism in peripheral areas the tourism product should be based on attractive natural environments and an original regional culture and systems of land-use that preserve the natural resources of the area. They go on to suggest that for successful development, the regions should attract public investment because of the large capital costs involved in infrastructure development in peripheral areas. They should also take account of the future trends, which they highlighted as being: a growing environmental awareness; individualisation; an increased desire for the original and a growing desire to participate. Young (1995, p 222) concludes that "small-scale tourism which concentrates on the environment and cultural aspects of the local population is the way forward for peripheral area tourism development."

There is an increased awareness within the industry that a more sustainable approach is necessary to ensure that sensitive and fragile areas are not subjected to continuous damage caused by tourism developments. Thibal (1996, p 6) suggests that "in a nutshell - it is a matter of reconciling tourism and the environment through strategies geared to sustainable development." According to Hunter (1995, p 52) "there is no universally accepted definition of sustainable development." However, he suggests the most widely acceptable definition is that used by the World Commission which states that sustainable development is "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." Many authors including Slee et al (1994), Bryden (1995), Altman and Finlayson (1993), Brown (1995), Aronsson (1993), Hunter (1995), have defined sustainable tourism and sustainable tourism development but the definition used by Lane encapsulates their meaning in a concise and effective manner. He suggests that "sustainable tourism aims to minimise environmental and cultural damage, optimise visitor satisfaction, and maximise long-term economic growth for the region. It is a way of obtaining a balance between the growth potential of tourism and the conservation needs of the environment" (1994, p 102).

Soft tourism has encountered the same type of definitional scrutiny that has been associated with sustainable tourism development. Slee et al (1994) points out that according to Lane (1988, 1989, 1994) there are a number of characteristics associated with soft tourism which tend to cause confusion when attempting to differentiate between soft and sustainable tourism. Soft tourism includes; employment and empowerment of local people, use of local products, respect of local cultural traditions, the embedding of tourism into a wider functioning economy and operations that do not impose excessive demands on the environment. Soft tourism, according to Slee et al (1994, p 5) is based "on community involvement and a sense of place, rather than other elements of the concept of sustainability." These enterprises are usually small scale, locally owned and based on local products.

The EU emphasis on subsidiarity means that local community lead initiatives (which often tend to be soft tourism in nature) have been important means of development, especially in the more remote peripheral areas. Slee continues by pointing out that "soft/sustainable tourism in regional regions has been identified as a major component of development strategies for rural regions of Europe and other parts of the world. The extent to which soft tourism provides a model solution in Europe is evidenced by the extent to which the EC-funded LEADER projects have established tourism-related projects" (Slee et al 1994, p 5).

Recreation is still - and is likely to continue to be- the secondary use of peripheral areas and as a consequence it will suffer as farmers' or foresters' fortunes improve. Countryside access is a particular problem that has been highlighted by Ravenscroft (1994). He pointed out that "1% of the UK population owns 52% of all private land. 87% of all land is in private hands. 83% of National Parks are in private hands with only 17% in public ownership. This can be seen as a major problem because of the public right of access to private lands. Recently, because of government incentives and a downturn in their economic fortunes, the farmers (who are large-scale landowners) have allowed greater access. However, this does not mean to say that landowners' attitudes to public access may not become more restrictive, (as has happened in the past). The issues dealing with land reform in Scotland are ongoing and are currently under debate as a result of the setting up of the new Scottish Parliament.

In terms of whether tourism is a cost-effective means of generating employment in many economically peripheral areas the creation of some jobs is better than no jobs at all. However, given the substantial amounts of money that the European Union and individual governments place in regional development schemes an examination of the re-distributive effects of tourism development within regions may be applicable." In terms of retraining, Hall (1994, p 149) comments that the ability of employees to transfer from other sectors, such as mining, forestry or agriculture is "somewhat limited unless there is both massive investment in retraining schemes and dramatic shifts in traditional gender roles. Therefore, in many situations, the ability of tourism to provide an employment alternative is extremely limited." Hall concludes that tourism development is seen by many regions as an attractive development because of the policy makers acceptance at face value of perceived economic benefits associated with tourism. Allied to this is a lack of understanding by many officials regarding the socio-cultural and environmental effects of tourism and the fact that there is a core metropolitan economic dominance over the economically peripheral tourist destinations (Hall, 1994).

It seems that tourism may not be as effective at regenerating rural or peripheral areas as many of the tourism policy makers have anticipated. There are certainly social and environmental problems caused by tourism development which are often countered with an economic argument but according to Hjalager (1996, p 103) "the financial returns most often do not measure up either to the expectations of the politicians or to that of the farmers." Butler and Hall (1998, p 101) suggest that "the formulation and implementation of rural tourism and recreation public policies present a number of difficulties. Unrealistic expectations of tourism's potential are unfortunately often combined with ignorance or wilful neglect by decision- makers of the potentially adverse economic, environmental and social consequences of tourist development."

Moore (1966, p 5) suggests caution when evaluating the effectiveness of tourism in peripheral areas "there are and there will be increasing opportunities for recreation (and tourism) development. But this industry should not be considered to be a panacea for the long-standing problems of substantial and persistent unemployment and underemployment besetting low income rural areas."

Because tourism has been suggested as one means of redressing the problems of peripheral unemployment policymakers have been keen to find and introduce programmes that can assist in addressing this problem (Rose, 1993). The effectiveness of tourism depends on a broad range of factors that include the extent of leakages out of the local community, the pattern of visitor expenditure and the degree of linkage between the various sectors within the regional economy. Hall suggests that the following questions are of fundamental importance when assessing the degree of success of any tourism initiatives. Who benefits? Is it cost-effective and can retraining be effective? "The question of who benefits? Should be fundamental to the assessment of development policies. In the case of many peripheral economic regions, primary control of the flow of tourists to the destination region may lie with companies based in the tourism-generating metropoles" (Hall 1994, p 116).

CHAPTER 3

TOURISM IN SCOTLAND

Scotland has a long established tourism industry that goes back to the 1700s (Seaton, 1998). The development of tourism went through many phases based on the scenery, space, and culture, romance literature and the royal connections associated with the country. Like much of Britain the development of the rail network in the 1800s led to major tourism developments, especially in coastal areas. Also in common with other regions and countries the continued use of the motor car has increased demand for tourism in Scotland. Today the industry is one of the largest (if not the largest) employer in Scotland.

There is no doubt that tourism is a major industry in Scotland. The Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning (who has responsibility for tourism) Wendy Alexander stated that "tourism is vital for Scotland." According to the Scottish Tourism Board's Coordinating Group for 1999 (p 3), "tourism is crucial to the future of the Scottish economy, as well as to the social, cultural and environmental future of our country." These findings are backed up by other sources such as the Economist Intelligence Unit (1994, p 63) which stated that "tourism is the key to the Scottish economy." Other commentators have suggested that tourism in Scotland is a major industry. "In Scotland in 1994, over 10 million tourists took overnight trips and spent over 2 billion pounds, supporting around 8% of all employment. The accommodation sector alone accounts for 47,500 employees" (STB, Tourism in Scotland Pamphlet, 1995). Paul Murray Smith (1996) Chairman of the Tourism Forum for Scotland, stated that tourism in Scotland is worth, "£2 billion, employed 180,000 people in 1996, supports 18,000 businesses and by the year 2000 will employ 200,000 people." In 1998 "tourism was worth £2,476 million to the Scottish economy" (STB, 1999, p 3).

Tourism is Scotland's largest employer, providing 177,000 jobs for 8% of the workforce (Scottish Hospitality Industry Congress, 1999, p 2). According to the STB (1998, p 1) "nearly 12 million tourists took overnight trips and spent over £2.5 billion. Within the UK, the main markets are Scotland, the North of England and the South of England. Out-with the UK, the United States of America, Germany and France are the key target markets for Scotland."

The tourism industry in Scotland involves many different businesses and organisations. "The accommodation sector is central to our industry. It has over 20000 hotels, guesthouse, B&Bs, caravan parks, self-catering establishments and youth hostels. There are around 800 visitor attractions, and many thousands of sports and leisure facilities, shops, garages, restaurants, transport services, entertainment facilities. All these play an important part in the tourism industry. Membership of the Area Tourist Board network alone totals over 18000 businesses" (STB, 1995, p 9).

The Scottish Tourist Board is the statutory body for tourism in Scotland and is the lead agency for the marketing and promotion of Scotland (Smith, 1998). Principal responsibilities are "to encourage the British to take holidays in Scotland, to encourage the provision of tourist facilities and amenities in Scotland, and to advise government and public bodies on matters relating to tourism in Scotland" (Pearce, 1992, p 101). The STB derives its funds from three main sources; government grants; specific grants for tourism projects and income from activities.

The majority of visitors to Scotland are interested in some form of participation activity, which reflects the current trend for 'doing' holidays in tourism in general, (Martin and Mason, 1993, p 36). These views are reflected by Wendy Alexander the Minister for Lifelong Learning who suggests that "the tourist of the future will be looking for the kind of environmental facilities that Scotland has." Of overseas visitors 85% participate in some activity, this compares to British figures of 52%. The tourists who originate from within Scotland tend to be day-trippers. This is a large market, which accounts for approximately 85 million leisure trips in Scotland. The bulk of these visits tend to be to areas close to the major urban areas of the central belt.

Most visitors to rural areas tend to enjoy the countryside and the opportunity to relax (Frochet and MacLennan, 2000). However, there is a difference in the type of activities undertaken by domestic and international visitors. The most popular activities for local visitors and day trippers are sightseeing which accounts for 17%, walking and visits to the cinema which both account for 12% and visits to parks which account for 10% of all activities. The international visitors tend to be more interested in heritage and the Arts. In 1990, three quarters of them visited heritage sites, half visited heritage exhibits and some 16 per cent watched the performing Arts. The importance of the Arts to the international visitors is described by Ambrose "in total, tourists visiting the Scottish Folk festivals spent some 8-10 million pounds. Over three quarters of the non locals (52% of the total attendance) saw the presence of the festival as a very important factor in their decision to visit the area" (Ambrose, 1994).

Business tourism is also a major contributor to tourism in Scotland. In terms of the Scottish economy, "revenues from business tourism rose by 37%, from £210 million in 1993, to £287 million in 1997" (STB, 1999, p 3). The industry also contributes a number of indirect benefits to the Scottish economy. It provides work for many employees involved in tourism support businesses, such as, suppliers and maintenance and construction staff. It also helps to justify the expenditure on support facilities and services to areas or communities involved in the tourism product, and who without the financial income generated by tourism, would not be in a position to support these services. While tourism makes a substantial contribution to the Scottish economy overall, at a local level, particularly in rural areas and in the Highlands, it is one of the industries that seems to have most potential for job creation and economic well-being in the near future (STB, 1995). Taylor, et al (1992, p 50) also suggest that tourism is important "international tourism benefits the economy as a whole by contributing to the balance of payments, equalising deficits, creating employment opportunities and producing a knock on effect in the local economy." The actual value of international tourism was stated by the STB (1998) to be £940 million.

However, despite the obvious value of tourism to the economy of Scotland the tourism industry has been under-performing (Alexander 2000, p 1). There remain many problems associated with the delivery of Scottish tourism. According to Smith (1998, p 56) "the uncompetitiveness of the British and Scottish tourism industries has many causes." Crawshaw (1996) commented that the Scottish tourism product left her "disappointed and disillusioned," because of the total indifference of staff in tourism areas and the poor standard of the tourism facilities such as accommodation. She suggested that "hospitality, information and standards need to be improved." The SNP also suggests that "levels of skills are often low. Compared to many of our competitors, the quality of service in Scotland is inconsistent and often poor" (1999, p 11). These views were echoed by Robert Peel of the Thistle

Mount Charlotte hotel group who suggested that Scottish tourism providers "need to put the customer first, because if we don't then some one else will" (Peel, 1996). According to Murray Smith (1996) "there is not a sufficiently high number of quality operations in Scotland." Although these are issues of national concern they are also evident at local levels in the three regions involved in this study.

Other problems facing the industry in Scotland include tourism's reputation as a low wage, low morale industry involving long unsociable hours and few prospects which tends to attract poor quality staff. There is also a lack of training and "in excess of 50% of managers and owners in our industry have no previous experience or training" (Murray-Smith, 1996, p 11). The industry is also fragmented in terms of both supply and marketing, "despite the fact that the number of Area Tourist Boards had been cut back to 14 there was still some confusion about their place and role. It is complicated with the Local Authorities and the Scottish LECs on top of the tourist board areas. it's high time the LEC boundaries were sorted out as well. There should be one lead body for support of tourism in Scotland" (Henry, 1996, p 11).

Other problems include the problems of seasonality in demand, which is particularly acute outside the central regional belt. The level and pace of improvement in the quality of the tourism product is a concern. There is also a relative lack of direct air access, especially from North America and Europe and the attendant issue of high add-on costs from hub airports in England (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 1994). To this list could be added other problems which are often generic amongst the more northerly peripheral areas. These include under-employment, sparsity of population, fragile local economies, poor skill levels, the weather, a lack of indoor and wet weather amenities (especially for families), the perception of remoteness and the relatively high costs associated with peripherality (Watson 1999, Scottish Executive of the Scottish Parliament, 1999). According to the SNP the standard of attractions in Scotland is also poor. They described them as "pricey attractions that are often closed. There are few attractions in Scotland offering a fun element which is perhaps more likely to attract children" (1999, p 10).

Despite the fact that tourism is very important to the Scottish economy it has not been performing particularly well in recent years. According to the SNP " there is increasing competition for Scotland's key markets in the UK, USA and Europe both from existing destinations that are upgrading and repositioning themselves, and from new destinations that are emerging all the time. This strong competition has lead to fragmentation and a reluctance to collaborate" (1999, p 10). The increasing levels of competition have been compounded by the fact that "recent research has shown that the Scottish tourist industry has performed worse than global and European trends over the last 10 years. If the decline continued into the next century, Scotland would drop out of the top 20 European holiday destinations" (The Herald, 1996, p 16). Scotland's tourism industry is in some trouble. In 1994 the Scottish Tourist Board revealed that there was a 6% drop in tourism, representing £130 million in income. According to the STB (1999, p 6) In 1998 the total visitor spending dropped to £3.476 billion, which was down by 6% on the previous year and spending by Scots fell from £573 million to £353 million.

In a Scottish context many rural areas (including the three case study regions) are peripheral and are characterised by inequalities of wealth, status and power (Scottish Office, 1999, p 1). Tourism in these peripheral areas, such as the Highlands, is seen as a major factor in improving the prosperity of the region and the continued viability of remote communities (Foster,1990). On a national level the SNP suggest that "it is vital for economic regeneration, especially for rural communities" (1999, p 12). They go on to suggest that "tourism is often a vital ingredient in the local economy" (p 13). Buhalis (1999, p 183) also points out that tourism is important "due to the decline of the non-tourism related activities and the lack of alternative investment and employment opportunities." It has also been suggested that the economic benefits of tourism can play a role in the preservation of the culture and heritage of a region. In Scotland "two million visitors will spend around 10.5 million pounds" on heritage visits" (SNP, 1999, p12).

3.1 GRAMPIAN

The first case study region to be studied was the Grampian region. The Scottish Office (1994 a, p 21) described the region of North and West Grampian as peripheral and suggested that it suffers from "the economic and social effects of distance from centres of population and economic activity." Particular problems that are applicable to all three case study regions (to a greater or lesser degree) include;

- Inadequate road networks linking settlements.
- High transport costs and the consequent increase in prices of both imports into and exports out of the regions.

- The underdeveloped nature of public transport and telecommunications.

The Scottish Office went on to suggest that "sparsity of population, underdeveloped skills and lack of opportunity restrict development prospects, and hinder economic growth, the small size of the typical community and the low population density compound the problems of high costs due to peripherality" (1994 a, p 21). This was certainly the case in much of the three case study regions but was certainly evident in Grampian where in many cases the small towns in these regions have been dependent on older declining industries such as agriculture. Local work opportunities are often limited and concentrated on a small number of activities, and distances to major centres plus restricted training opportunities, often compound the problems.

The population of Grampian is 528,000 and the region's largest settlement is Aberdeen with a population of 215,930. The region is "naturally bounded to the south and west by mountains, to the north by great firths and rivers, and has always been both physically and culturally distinct from the rest of Scotland" (Leckie, 1991, p 11). North and West Grampian has a population of 154,00 and is bordered to the west by the Highland region and to the South by Tayside. According the Scottish Office (1994 a, p 8) more than 30% of the North and West Grampian is defined as upland and 60% is defined as wholly less favoured and 96% as partly less favoured.

The region of Grampian was officially formed in 1975 and, as a result of the local Government re-organisations of 1996, has been split into three new administrative districts; Aberdeen City; Moray and Aberdeenshire which includes the old councils of Banff and Buchan and Gordon and Kincardine and Deeside; Grampian took its name from the range of mountains located to the west of the region. The district of Grampian included five districts the City of Aberdeen, Moray, Banff and Buchan, Kincardine and Deeside and Gordon with a population of 503,000 (41% of which live in Aberdeen city).

Grampian is located in the North East of Scotland with the Cairngorm mountain range to the West and the North Sea to the North and East. The area is geographically isolated from the rest of Britain and Scotland. According to the Scottish National Party "overall, access is a challenge for the more remote areas of Scotland" (1999, p 12). This is a particular problem for Grampian because it is not on what is called the 'milk run' which refers to the traditional route taken by visitors to Scotland. This 'milk run' consists of Edinburgh, Perth, Ullapool, Oban and Glasgow. (Reed, 1994). People are not willing to take "at least two days to make a detour to Grampian from the A9" (Fisher, 1994, p 150). Grampian's isolation is compounded by the fact that it has still to become a primary destination and is often perceived as remote and difficult to reach. With the possible exception of Royal Deeside, the region is not a place people tend to visit for its own sake.

The Scottish Office (1994 a, p 20) described North and West Grampian as a peripheral area and stated that "given the area's peripherality, new industries are generally reluctant to locate there unless there are specific benefits accruing to their industry." Factors that actively dissuade industry from locating in the area include distance from markets, higher transport costs, transportation time lags, limited availability of staff with specialised skills, limited business support services and small local markets for products. The Scottish Office goes on to suggest that "sparsity of population and lack of concentration of industry constrain the growth rate of the local economies. The typical Small and Medium sized Enterprise (SME) operates at the margin of viability and has limited access to investment capital in order to expand or increase profit. The business prospects of farmers and fishermen are being eroded by the adjustments which have become necessary in the EC's Common Agricultural and Fisheries Policies, limiting the scope for agricultural production and catching capacity respectively" (Scottish Office, 1994 a, p 20).

According to Henry (1994) Grampian, historically is not on the tourist map. Tourists miss out on the North East corner because we are not on the road to anywhere. The A9 has become the Grampian bypass. At a tourism conference in Aberdeen in 1994 he stated that "there is no reason for people to travel off the traditional route to visit the area. The countryside is beautiful but not as spectacular as the Highlands. The attractions and the heritage facilities are good but are often inaccessible and not as well known as the places available in the central belt." These views are shared by Fisher who stated that Grampian is "nice but not spectacular" (1994, p 148).

Grampian is the centre for the North Sea oil industry with Aberdeen being the major commercial centre. The area's economy is dominated by oil. "Reliance on oil has given Grampian its relative prosperity and wealth" (Fisher, 1996, p 12). Other major industries include agriculture, fishing and boat building, papermaking, textiles, food/fish processing, distilling, engineering, services and construction and tourism. As has already been established many of these industries are in decline and as such are not reliable prospects for future employment in the region. This is especially the case in the depressed areas of North and West Grampian, "where the impact of the oil industry has been negligible" (Scottish Office, 1994 a, p 10). The region of North and West Grampian is described as "peripheral in relation to the rest of Grampian, Scotland, the UK and Europe. The dependency of North and West Grampians communities on local economies consisting of a few low growth industries makes the area highly vulnerable to changes in external conditions" (Scottish Office, 1994 a, p 21).

Both agriculture and fishing are controlled, in effect, by EU policies and the market forces are somewhat distorted. Both of these industries are experiencing economic difficulties and both are important providers of much needed employment in the more remote areas of Grampian. "The proportion of the total workforce employed in agriculture rises to very high levels in some parishes. Agriculture is the dominant economic activity across large tracts of North and West Grampian. It is clear that the economic, social and ecological future of a large part of the area is closely tied to the agricultural industry" (Scottish Office, 1994 a, p 11). According to Lord Sewell Agriculture is a key part of the social structure of rural Grampian (1998).

The Scottish Office (1994 a, p 12) also pointed out that "between 1987 and 1991 North and West Grampian experienced a contraction in land use for agriculture. This was accompanied by a decline in the number of full time farmers by 12% and a decline in total agricultural workforce was recorded in more than half the parishes in North and West Grampian." Agriculture in Grampian, Scotland and the rest of the UK is struggling to come to terms with the Common Agricultural Policy thousands of British jobs are being lost every year as a result of the CAP (Redwood, 1996). Compounding these problems was the emergence of the BSE scare that had pronounced effects on cattle rearing in the region. According to the Scottish Office the economic implications for the farmers and associated workers were severe.

The fishing industry is also a major employer in the more remote areas of the region. "Dependence on the fishing industry is pronounced around the North coast of Grampian region. The fishing related sector accounts for 30% of all jobs in Fraserburgh, 16% of all jobs in Peterhead, 8% of all jobs in Banff, 66% in Gardenstown and

36% in Macduff" (Scottish Office, 1994 a, p 13). What these figures do not show is the knock-on effect of and therefore dependence on fishing in the coastal communities. For example, Buckie town has 38% of total employment in fishing yet it is estimated that total dependence is nearer 50% (Scottish Office, 1994).

Unfortunately, the fishing industry, like agriculture, is in difficulties. According to Baum (1999 a, p 51) "the issue of fisheries decline is one that has impacted upon most North Atlantic communities." In current terms Britain has retained only 12% of what its fisheries were valued at in 1972. Gammon quotes Portus of the South Western Fish Producers as saying "up to 75% of the British fishing fleet will soon be owned by Spanish and Dutch companies. Using the currently legal device of 'quota hopping' foreign owners can register their boats in the UK so that, for example, the catch of a Spanish owned boat, with a Spanish crew, can be landed in a Spanish port and yet count as part of the UK quota." Gammon goes on to quote Townsend of the Cornish Fish Producers Organisation "socially, as well as economically, the dwindling and disappearance" of the British fishing industry would be an appalling blow to the country; desperate for small coastal communities" (Gammon, 1996, p 21).

The Scottish Office (1994 a, p 14) sees this dependence as a major problem for the region especially in terms of the fact that "the fishing industry in North Grampian is particularly dependent on demersal species. Landings of demersal at North Grampian ports have now declined in weight by 32% since 1984 as a direct result of quota restrictions. A decline of up to 25% in fishing effort is likely in Grampian and this will have far reaching negative economic consequences in this region." The effects have been felt directly in job losses and a major decline in incomes, and indirectly in related sectors, notably processing which has had serious supply problems, and boat building which has almost disappeared as an industry.

The papermaking industry does not appear to be suffering to the same extent as the others. "It remains committed to the North-east and so far has not run into pollution related problems. However it seems unlikely we will see a new mill in our part of Scotland" (Fisher, 1996, p 12). This industry is likely to encounter more severe competition from the timber producing countries of Finland and Sweden as a result of their recent EU membership.

As regards the textile industry in Grampian, it has a long established tradition in the region but like elsewhere, "the local industry has experienced large scale contraction with the loss of some famous names. An estimated 1,200 people are employed in the textile industry in North and West Grampian. This represents a 40% cut in levels of employment since the mid-1980s" (Scottish Office, 1994 a, p 16).

The remaining industries are all encountering economic difficulties as a result of the same economic problems facing the major industries or because they are in some way dependent on them. Food and fish processing employs some 5,000 people in North and West Grampian but it is faced with the need to upgrade its operations and suffers from dependence on the fishing industry. Distilling employs 1,800 people but much of the bottling and blending takes place in the Central Belt of Scotland and the industry is experiencing some closures and job losses. Engineering accounts for 2,000 jobs in North and West Grampian and it to is experiencing a downturn in demand as oil related business and fishing have declined. The service industry does account for a large proportion of jobs in the region but their market is almost entirely local. The construction industry is highly sensitive to the state of the local economy and as such is regarded as vulnerable given the concentration of declining sectors within the local economy.

As a consequence of the relatively poor performance of these other industries the economy of Grampian depends to a large extent on the oil and gas industry. However, this very reliance makes the region very vulnerable. "The wealth it brings has also made us complacent and self-satisfied. Time is short to prepare the North-east and our children for a time when North Sea related employment begins to wane" (Fisher, 1996, p 12).

3.2 TOURISM IN GRAMPIAN

In terms of the benefits of tourism to Grampian, Henry suggests that "tourism is the only industry that can take up the slack that is bound to happen in the next 20 years or so with the decline of the oil industry. The infrastructure built up for the oil industry - the airport, roads, hotels and restaurants - are all good for tourism" (1996, p 12). Visitors from the UK dominate tourism in Scotland. According to the STB (2000, p 1) they account for 83% of all visitors and 66% of all expenditure. The UK market provides two thirds of the £2 billion Scotland earns from tourism with £536 million from Scottish visitors and £419 million from England. This situation is mirrored in the Grampian region where "over 70% of expenditure is from the UK market (or approximately £150 million) and where 64% of Grampians tourist trips (1.1 million) are from within Scotland compared with the national average of 49%" (STB 2000, p 1)

Tourism is important to Grampian because it attracts 1.3 million visitors, is the fourth largest employer in the area, employing 17,948 people (7% of the regions work force) and there are over 250 visitor attractions and 4,000 businesses involved in the tourism product of the region. According to STB (2000, p 1) The total tourism spending is approximately generates £201,000, 000."

However, despite the obvious economic advantages associated with encouraging tourism in Grampian the benefits associated with oil industry business tourism, and the associated VFR's, tend to be localised around the city of Aberdeen and consequently have had very little influence on more remote areas. This is certainly the case in the north and west of the region where according to Scottish Office, (1994 a, p 17) "the industry is very underdeveloped in North and West Grampian. Visitor numbers are low and there is a lack of major visitor attractions and appropriate hotel/guest house accommodation."

The region of Grampian is not performing to its potential and requires to attract more visitors. There has been a decline in visitor numbers and expenditure over the past couple of years and this decline has been at a lower level than the national average. This falling number of tourists to the region will have pronounced impacts on the area's economy. There has been a significant and long term fall in demand. Between 1984 and 1992 tourism spend in Grampian fell by 40% in real terms from around £250 million to £150 million. The main cause of this fall was a reduction in UK tourists spending over the same period (Henry, 1994). This decline has continued through to the latter part of the decade and is an issue for the whole of Scotland (including all three case study regions).

Many of the visitors choose the region either as a second holiday or to visit friends and relatives (VFR). The importance of the VFR has been recognised on a national basis by such bodies as the HCIMA (1996) suggest that under 20% of people on a main holiday spend it in serviced accommodation and only 25% on a short holiday of less than three nights; the rest stay in self-catering or visit friends and relatives.

Despite the encouraging trend of the increasing numbers of VFR their average spend does tend to be less than other categories of visitor. Amongst those who did visit, the main reasons for visiting the region included 24% who were visiting friends and relatives. This is the largest percentage of visitors to the region with the next highest being 17% who are returning visitors. According to Clarke (1999) tourism providers in the area should target these repeat visitors. This is because getting visitors to return makes sound economic sense. It is estimated that it costs six times as much to attract new clients as it does to retain existing ones.

Grampian's higher than average Scottish share of the VFR market is not particularly encouraging and indicates that it is under-performing in higher-value tourism sectors and the pure holiday segment in particular. Although this may well be the case the value of VFR tourists is not to be underestimated. The VFR sector is clearly significant in Grampian in terms of volume and spending (Clarke, 1999).

The number of people who come to the region to visit friends and relatives is significant in both volume and value. According to Henry the Grampian area has a heavy reliance on off-shore related and VFR tourism (1994). Even though Grampian does attract a large number of VFR it does not mean that tourist spending is not taking place. It simply means that spending is not necessarily going on accommodation. Eating out and day trips are still activities that VFR and the actual people being visited will engage in. For example, people living in the area will often accompany their friends and relatives on day's out and on excursions. So there is still considerable worth in the VFR.

However, the majority of day trips involve a round trip distance of 40 miles. This is a problem because the average 20-mile catchment zone for day outings limits Grampian's ability to attract visitors on day trips and non-stay visits. The average day trip spending in Grampian tends to be lower per trip than other areas. This limits the economic impact of the VFR's to a 20-mile radius around their accommodation. Consequently, even though Grampian as a whole tends to attract a relatively large number of VFR's the more remote regions of North and West Grampian do not tend to benefit greatly from these tourists. The high percentage of VFR's is due to the presence of oil in the region. The centre for the oil industry is Aberdeen and the oil company employees tend to be located either in the city itself or within commuting distance of its commercial centre or airport. As a consequence the tourists who are visiting their friends or relatives will also be based in this central area and the economic benefits associated with VFR's tend to be localised.

Even though there is no doubt that a large proportion of visitors to the region come from the south Gordon Henry suggests that there is still a reluctance of southerners to travel north. The view is often held that it is a lot colder in the North of Scotland so many people will not wish to spend their hard earned vacation time where it is cold and wet (Gordon Henry, 1994). Allied to these unfavourable perceptions of Grampian's weather is the fact that the area is physically remote from the main gateways in the south. The vast majority of international visitors arrive at southern ports of entry and are then faced with a long distance to travel simply to get to the area. Fisher (1994, p 149) also suggests that the perception of remoteness, allied to the physical inaccessibility of the area, cause problems when trying to encourage visitors to the region. "The concept of remoteness is closely linked to culture and perception and has little to do with miles. Geography is more than distance and topography, it is about access and distance from the main arteries of travel, be that business or tourism." Ahmed (1991, p 331) points out the importance of tourist perceptions of a destination "a given image is what tourists as buyers see and feel when the state or its attractions come to mind as a place for the pursuit of leisure. A state's tourist product image(s) as perceived by its actual and potential visitors plays an important role in determining its competitiveness as a tourist destination."

The region also shares the problem of seasonality with the rest of Britain. However this particular problem is exacerbated by the area's location. The weather may not actually be much different from other areas because of the warming influence of the Gulf Stream, but once again, it is the perception of difficulties, which have to be addressed. This is a problem for Scotland (and therefore for Grampian) and can be illustrated by looking at the STB's Survey on Tourism in Scotland 1993 which shows that almost half of all overseas trips to Scotland take place in the peak months of July, August and September (STB,1994).

In common with the rest of Scotland, the hospitality product of the region has been criticised as too expensive and of a poor quality. This may go some way to explaining the poor performance of many of the region's hotels occupancy can be as low as 51% during the main holiday season of May to October (Clarke,1999). Aberdeen hotels perform better because of the oil-related business sector, with occupancy figures of 66%. The impact of oil on the city is highlighted by the fact that there is a large differential between weekday and weekend occupancy. The bulk of Aberdeen and Grampian's hotel business is during the weekdays, which indicates a large reliance on business tourism. Weekend figures can be as low as 43% for hotels in Grampian and 51% for hotels in Aberdeen. These results show that hotels in general are attracting a share of corporate business demand, but leisure tourism is under-performing in Grampian during the main season, and especially at weekends. City accommodation has benefited greatly from oil and gas sector business travel, while out-with the city accommodation sector is under-performing. This is a particular problem for North and West Grampian because of their peripheral location within Grampian and because the beneficial impacts of the oil industry do not tend to extend to the region. The significance of the oil/gas industry to hotels in Aberdeen is clear - with 74% of business related trips in Aberdeen hotels relating to this, while the corresponding figure for non city hotels is only 17% (Clarke, 1999).

The Most visited Attractions in Grampian. 1999
Duthie Park Winter Gardens - 239,614 visitors
Aberdeen Art Gallery – 220,979 visitors
Haddo Country Park - 220,000 visitors
Baxters Visitors' Centre – 212,750 visitors
Aden Country Park - 199,834 visitors
Johnston's Cashmere Visitor Centre – 115,487 visitors.
Crathes Castle - 106,538 visitors
Glenshee Ski Centre - 89,261 visitors
Balmoral Estates – 79,279 visitors.
Macduff Marine Aquarium – 62,540 visitors.

Source: STB 2000.

Allied to these attractions are the sports of skiing, golf, rambling, climbing and spectator activities such as, the Highland Games and the Braemar Gathering. The trails in the region include the Castle Trail, the Whisky Trail and the Coastal Trail.

Heritage attractions are very important to the tourism industry of Grampian, as well as to Scotland and the UK and according to Prentice (1993) heritage is has been suggested as a major growth area for tourism. In Grampian the heritage provision is largely covered by three main organisations. The Scottish Tourist Board, Historic Scotland and The National Trust for Scotland.

A new attraction in an area is likely to have spin off benefits for the other attractions. However, there is concern that any new investment in a new tourist attraction created south of the peripheral region of Grampian means one more obstacle to tourists travelling to the region.

The strength of many peripheral areas, such as Grampian, lies in the fact that they are peripheral. As a result of their locations they often tend to have very attractive natural environments which make them popular with visitors. However, the relative isolation also has its downside in terms of the successful delivery of tourism. Many of the businesses are family units which can (and often do) lack business skills and finance. Shaw and Williams (1990) point out that "family enterprises are of two kinds: first, the self employed who use family labour, have little market stability, low levels of capital investment, weak management skills and are resistant to advice or change. Second, the small employer who uses family and non-family labour, has a better business foundation, but can share similar behaviour patterns to the self-employed" (in Wanhill 1995 b, p 8). They go on to suggest that, some of these businesses may lack entrepreneurial drive because they may not have the same focus as businesses that are solely motivated by profit. They may be more motivated by non-economic motives, such as the way of life, living in an attractive area, low cost of living, etc. This is not unusual amongst artisans and craft people working in tourist areas.

There is still an on-going debate between the interested parties concerning the attraction strategy for the region. Many of the officials at organisations such as Grampian Enterprise, Aberdeen City Council and Gordon District Council see merit in the ideas suggested by PA Consultants (et al) for the provision of a broad range of attractions based largely on heritage and history.

The ex-chairman of the Aberdeen and Grampian Tourist Board, Gordon Henry suggests that what the area needs is a magnet attraction based on what the area is famous for, oil. Henry states that "the concept, abandoned by Local Authorities and enterprise agencies several years ago, could provide the magnet attraction which the north-east desperately needs. All the attractions we already have or are developing are very good in themselves, and collectively they will start to build up an image for the area. But it won't get over the major problem of attracting people here in the first place." (Henry, 1995, page 1).

It would appear that tourism is a major component in the regional strategies to counter economic problems facing Grampian. "With over 17,000 people employed in the tourism sector in Grampian it is one of our largest industries. Moreover there are few if any industries in the rural areas of Grampian that have the capacity to create new jobs and income, except tourism. In the longer term tourism is one of the only industries capable of utilising the facilities developed for the oil and gas industry, such as flight connections, accommodation, catering and entertainment" (Grampian Regional Council, 1995, p 5).

However, Henry (1996) suggests that better co-ordination of the national and local tourism strategies is required. The boundaries of the 14 new ATB's do not even match the boundaries of the 13 LECs and the changes brought about as a result of the Secretary of State's Review of Tourism have been ineffective. There are too many bureaucratic controls and colloquial attitudes based on regionalism. Policy needs to be based on practical not political reasoning and duplication of effort needs to be minimised. Allied to this the funding for tourism marketing in the region is totally inadequate. There has been a 35% cut in the available funding for marketing and the Aberdeen City Council's funding for the AGTB for one year is only £300,000, which is roughly the same as its funding for the Tall Ships race.

In 1998 the local council's contribution to the funding of the Area Tourist Board was cut from £300,000 in 1997 – itself a cut from £481,000 on 1996 – to £150,000 for 1998. The Aberdeen Hotels Association suggests that these funds "fall short by comparison with the support given to other tourist boards by other Local Authorities in Scotland. Real jobs and the long – term prosperity of businesses in Aberdeen are dependent upon healthy leisure and business tourism. If, through lack of funding the Tourist Board is unable to properly sell and market Aberdeen as a destination or to provide a Tourist Information Office, then maintenance and growth of these jobs and businesses will likely be jeopardised" (1998, p 1).

The region of Grampian suffers as a result of its lack of comparative natural advantages when compared to its major competitors, the Highlands and the West Coast. The region has a remote and attractive natural environment but it does not have the image or the natural advantages of its competitors. As a consequence Grampian needs to develop built attractions in an attempt to build an image and attract visitors.

3.3 THE HIGHLANDS – INVERNESS AND NAIRN AND ROSS AND CROMARTY

The most obvious place to look for similar cases with Grampian would be locations within the same general area that is, within Scotland itself. Because of its similarity to Grampian in terms of geographical remoteness, political, economic, social and environmental factors the Highlands of Scotland make a good case for further investigation in attempting to establish commonality with Grampian. The difficulty associated with choosing these regions was that there was a relatively limited amount of statistical data that referred solely to either region. This was because the regions were Enterprise Company classifications as opposed to designated areas Tourist Board areas. This was a problem because most of tourism data is collated by the Tourist Boards (in particular the STB) and they focus their data collection on these designated regions.

The regions of Ross and Cromarty and Inverness and Nairn are located within the Highlands of Scotland and are the two areas highlighted for further study. These two regions were considered appropriate cases because of their geographic location in relation to Grampian. They are close enough to Grampian to share similar institutional, geographic, economic, fiscal and political constraints (see discussion under case study regions in research methods).

The case study regions of Inverness and Nairn and Ross and Cromarty are located within the boundaries of Highlands and Islands Enterprise. Both these regions shared similar local economic bases focusing to a large extent agriculture, fishing, oil, and to a greater extent than Grampian, tourism. However, despite the relative buoyancy of the local tourist market the unemployment figures for the fourth quarter of 1997 show that the region had an unemployment rate of 7.3% (Inverness had an unemployment rate that is 1.3% below this). This is "higher than both the unemployment rate in the UK as a whole) and the Scottish average (5.7%)" (Highland Council, (a) 1998, p 1). The Highlands and Islands Partnership suggest that the employment patterns in the Highlands and Islands is one of "persistent and long -term unemployment. Furthermore, income levels are low and prices for goods and services are higher in the more remote areas" (1998, p 3). These problems are compounded by the problem of seasonality, which the region shares with Grampian, and the rest of Scotland. Although the Highland region of Scotland tends to attract a comparatively large number of international visitors they tend to make their visits in the peak months. The SNP suggest that "the greatest challenge facing the industry is the shortness of the season" (1999, p 13).

The population of Inverness and Nairn is 75,690, which includes 35,600 employees. Unemployment is currently 1751 with the long-term unemployed accounting for 32%, or 543, of these. (Highlands and Islands Enterprise, 1999). The region can be split into two, Inverness town and the surrounding, more rural areas. As with Grampian the main economic activity is associated with the largest centres of population. In Grampian this is Aberdeen and in both Inverness and Nairn and Ross and Cromarty this is Inverness. In Inverness much of the employment is associated with the town's role as the administrative and service centre for the region. Again as in Grampian, the more rural areas tend to be dominated by agriculture, fishing and tourism.

The region of Ross and Cromarty has a population of 50,700 with a work force of 14,070. At present the number of unemployed is 1201 with 343, or 29%, being long term unemployed. (Highlands and Islands Enterprise, 1999). The region can be split into two main areas, East and Western Ross or the East and West Coasts. The majority of the population live on the more accessible East Coast, whose economy tends to be more industrialised and is dominated by the oil fabrication works at Nigg. The West Coast region is characterised by remote communities and an economy that tends to be dominated by agriculture, fishing and tourism. As is the case with the other two case study regions the economies of both the West and East coasts are prone to fluctuations because they are both reliant on unreliable industries. However, Ross and Cromarty (as well as Inverness and Nairn) have strong natural advantages in regards to tourism. This is especially the case on the West Coast where there is a high quality of natural environment.

According to Highlands of Scotland Tourist Board (1997, p 3) "the Highlands of Scotland is a diverse area, rural in nature with some remote parts. Covering 9,800 square miles, almost one third of Scotland. It is characterised by low population densities and a combination of traditional and modern industries." The population trends exhibited within the region mirror those of other peripheral areas (including Grampian) because "the historic population trend in the Highlands and Islands has been one of out-migration" (Highlands and Islands Enterprise, 1997, p 4). Although the current population is 373,000 (75,690 in the Inverness and Nairn area) the region has "one of the lowest population densities of any European region of its size with less than 10 persons per square kilometre" (Highlands and Islands Partnership Programme, 1998, p 1).

In terms of specific cases McCleery suggests that "it would be difficult to find a better example of a remote rural area than the Highlands and Islands. It is situated on the North West periphery of Scotland, which in turn forms the northern extremity of Britain, in its turn an island off the western edge of the European continental landmass. Yet as an example of a region that is peripheral in terms of geographical location and marginal in terms of economic viability, the Highlands and Islands is not unique and should be viewed within the wider framework of a continuum of such North Atlantic marginal regions, encompassing not only the whole of the Atlantic periphery of north west Europe but taking in also the Canadian Maritime provinces" (McCleery, 1991, p 147). Specific regions highlighted by McCleery as sharing the same marginality as the Highlands and Islands include Mid-Wales, West Ireland, North Norway and Nova Scotia. To this list could be added the regions of Grampian, Inverness and Nairn and Ross and Cromarty which all share many of the problems associated with these areas.

In the European context the Highlands of Scotland exhibit more peripheral tendencies than most other regions and "can be considered to have some of the poorest and most disadvantaged agricultural land in Europe" (Loch Broom Community Council, 1998, p 38). Numbered amongst these tendencies are the problems of dependence on a narrow economic base consisting of declining primary industries, high internal costs, low local skill levels, remoteness of communities with fragile economic and social structures, poor public sector service provision, low income levels and underemployment (the Inverness and Nairn area has a wider economic base and is consequently less dependent on seasonal industries such as agriculture). The Highlands and Islands Partnership point out that "there is a high economic dependency on the primary sector in the Highlands and Islands with around 13% of the employed workforce in agriculture. Employment in agriculture is decreasing and is characterised by part-time and seasonal work with low incomes" (1994, p 67).

In fishing the Highlands region accounts for 48% of the Scottish total catch. Unfortunately the employment trends in fishing are also down with a fall in employment of 32% between 1993 and 1998. The Highlands and Islands Partnership (1998, p 1) suggest that "remoteness as well as internal peripherality are the principal reasons for the region's economic difficulties. It is not only isolated from the major markets of the Community but also has problems of peripherality between communities within the region itself." The forestry industry is also a significant employer with 2,700 jobs directly attributed to the industry. But as with agriculture and fishing the industry is having difficulties.

The region shares, with Grampian, the benefits associated with the oil industry (although these benefits do not necessarily extend to the more remote areas). The oil industry encouraged migration into specific parts of the area (such as Moray Firth) but did not counter the population drift away from the more peripheral settlements within the region. In employment terms most migrants to the area "were economically active rather than retirees. Employment in large-scale manufacturing and processing, such as aluminium production, has declined while the service sector, and in particular tourism, has become a major source of economic growth. (Highlands and Islands Enterprise, 1997, p 4).

Some of the outlying parts of the region are up to 1,150 kilometres from Brussels and the area is very thinly populated and can therefore be considered to be remote, peripheral and fragile. The Highlands and Islands Partnership (1994, p 21) suggest the area is a region "whose rurality is unmatched anywhere else in the European Union." Loch Broom Community Council suggest that there are 17,000 crofts in the Highlands and Islands, mainly concentrated on the North West Coast. This is an important statistic because "all crofts have similarities in that they are operating in the most physically disadvantaged areas, with atrocious weather conditions coupled with distance from markets" (Loch Broom Community Council, 1998, p 38).

3.4 TOURISM IN THE HIGHLANDS

"Tourism is a major employer in the region" (Highland Council, (b) 1998). It is one of the largest and most important industries in the Highlands. It is estimated that the industry generates approximately 20% of the Gross Domestic product of the area – and that it supports 13,300 jobs" (HIE, 1997, p 3). According to the STB, over the three years from 1994 to 1996, UK tourists made 1.4 million trips to the Highlands. They spent £234 million and stayed for a total of 7.4 million bed-nights. The average spend per trip was £167 and £32 per night and the average length of stay was 5.3 nights. (1997 (a), p 1). The main tourist markets for the Highlands are Scotland (49%) and England (49%) with the South East of England (16%) being the major English market.

The tourism product is based very much on the natural environment of the region. According to the SNP "15% of the region's work force are employed in tourism" (1999, p 10). It has been suggested by the Highlands and Islands Partnership that it is an industry which "is in many ways ideal for sparsely populated rural regions like the Highlands and Islands" (1994, p 45). The industry does make a considerable contribution to the economy. "Tourism is central to the economy of the Highlands and Islands and offers strong potential for growth. The industry generates £367 million of revenue annually from British and overseas tourists – approximately 20% of the GDP of the Highlands; add to this, £80 million generated by leisure day visits, for a total tourism revenue of £447 million" (HOST, 1998, p 1). Tourism supports approximately 21,711 jobs throughout the Highlands, accounting for 28% of all those employed, (in Inverness and Nairn the service sector employs a greater proportion of employees than in other areas of the Highlands and of the 35,600 employees in all employment in the area one third are female).

One of the commonalties associated with both Grampian and the Highlands is the malt whisky trail. There are 27 malt distilleries in Scotland, with the majority being in the Highlands. These distilleries are important for the local economy as well as for local tourism because they attract over one million tourists a year. (McBoyle, 1996, p 256). On Speyside 6 distilleries, Glenfiddich, Glenlivet, Glenfarclas, Tamdhu, Strathisla and Glen Grant have formed the 'Malt Whisky Trail'. This trail involves a 70-mile tour of the region's distilleries and also encompasses a cooperage and whisky museums. The importance attached to tourism generation as a result of the whisky trail lead to a consortium of distillers opening a £2 million Scotch Whisky Heritage Centre on the Royal Mile in Edinburgh, in 1988 (Leisure Management, 1989, p 44).

However, the economy of the region does suffer as a result of their reliance on tourism. There is a great diversity of operators in the region and the industry is characterised by seasonality and other difficulties associated with tourism employment. Allied to the problems associated with tourism the traditional primary industries of agriculture and forestry are in decline and the problems of fragility, over-dependence on seasonal activities, and out-migration remain in the remote areas. According to the Highlands and Islands Partnership "the economy remains over-dependent on the traditional primary sectors of agriculture, fisheries and textiles. Agriculture provides employment for 23,000 people and fishing employs 3460 directly and a further 8,400 in fish processing. Income levels are substantially below the UK and European average " (1998, p 2).

The low-income levels are a particular problem in the more remote parts of the area (as is the case in both Grampian and Inverness and Nairn) where the European Union have designated the region as a high priority area for development funding. (HIE, 1997). This situation is mirrored in many of the smaller communities in the more remote areas where the local economies have "suffered from the decline of traditional industries such as agriculture and fishing. Although tourism makes an important contribution, no other major employer has replaced these traditional industries" (RACE, 1997, p 5).

Although tourism is important to the economy of the Highlands in general, the economic benefits tend to be centred on the traditional tourist route (or Golden Triangle) of Aviemore, Inverness and Fort William. This raises a question in regards to the geographic dispersion of tourists throughout the Highlands and whether there should be further assistance in spreading the economic benefits that accrue from tourism. However, according to Scottish Natural Heritage the Highlands has a strong image, that is based on both natural and historic built attractions, that directly translates into economic benefits to the more remote areas, "More than 8,000 jobs (6,700 full time equivalent) are directly related to Scotland's heritage. A large proportion of these jobs are based in rural areas and many are in remote parts of Scotland" (SNH, 1998, p 1).

In terms of overseas visitors STB, (1997, (b) p 1) suggests that "in 1996, overseas visitors took approximately 590,000 trips to the Highlands of Scotland. They spent 2.9 million nights in the area and their expenditure amounted to £133 million (an average of £225 per trip and £46 per night)."

However, the region does suffer from the problems associated with seasonality with hotel occupancy in Ross and Cromarty and Inverness and Nairn being as low as 3% and 5% in the month of February. The level of tourist expenditure in the region has also been in decline in real terms, from £283 million in 1991 to £234 million in 1996. The domestic and family markets are also in decline and this is of considerable importance to the Highlands where there is a heavy reliance on these two markets. According to the HIE (1997, p 4) "in the Highlands, the UK market has declined from 87% of expenditure in 1986 to 68% in 1995." However, despite the fall in the expenditure of these domestic visitors the actual number of visits has remained relatively constant. "Holidays by UK tourists in the Highlands of Scotland have shown a fairly flat picture with a marginal decrease in 1996 to 1.1 million trips" (STB, 1997 (b), p2). In terms of total trips made to the region by UK tourists the numbers have also been relatively constant with 1.3 million trips in 1991 and 1.4 million in 1996.

Conversely, "the overseas market has grown from 13% of expenditure in 1986 to 32% in 1995." From 1983 to 1996 there has been a 119% increase in overseas trips to the Highlands, from 270,000 to 590,000" (STB, 1997, (b) p2). Along with the increase in trips has come the increase in expenditure by 196% to £133 million in 1996. The major international markets are North America and Western Europe with 25% of visitors originating from the former and 63% from the latter. The major countries of origin from within these areas are the USA and Germany with totals of 20% and 19% respectively. However, there has been a fall in the number of domestic visitors to the region, mainly from Scotland and South East England. The reasons for this decline include a falling number of tourists visiting the region for their main holiday, increased competition from other UK destinations, the strength of Sterling which makes holidays abroad cheaper and the poor weather associated with Scotland.

The majority of visitors to the Highlands are on holidays with an estimated "83% of expenditure being derived from the holiday market, compared with 65% for Scotland as a whole, demonstrating that people visiting friends and relatives and the business market are smaller than for Scotland" (STB, 1997, (a) p 42). (These VFR figures are in contrast to Grampian where the number of VFR's are higher than the Scottish average). The largest settlement in the region is Inverness with an average number of staying visitors of 300,000.

The natural environment is very important to the tourism industry in the Highlands. According to the Highlands of Scotland Tourist Board (1998, p 1) "86% of overseas visitors and 69% of British visitors specifically mentioned scenery as an enjoyable feature of their trip to Scotland. The name 'Highlands of Scotland', projects a strong image which is well known throughout the UK and overseas." This view is supported by the Highland Council who suggests that "the environment is central to the attractiveness of the Highlands to tourists. This includes the ability to participate in outdoor recreational activities, particularly walking/mountaineering, skiing, cycling and fishing" (1998, p 5). The Council suggested that fishing was worth £18 million and supports an estimated 900 full time jobs in the Highlands. Hill walking, mountaineering and associated activities accounted for 5.6 million visitor days in 1995 and were worth an estimated £104 million to the region.

There are over 1,700 hotels, guesthouses, bed and breakfasts, 90 caravan parks and 2,400 self-catering units in the Highlands. However, the seasonal nature of the tourism industry is more pronounced in the Highlands than in most other areas of Scotland. The vast majority of the tourism businesses are small and are often family run. According to HOST (1997, p 3) "there are around 3,000 tourism businesses in the area, many of which employ fewer than 10 people. The industry is also characterised by a high turnover of owners and staff, by a low uptake of training opportunities, and, consequently, by a low level of skills."

Major Attractions in the Highlands of Scotland
Urquhart Castle – 231,623 visitors
Rothiemurchus Estate – 229,977 visitors
Nevis Range – 185,930 visitors
The Official Loch Ness Monster Exhibition – 180,000 visitors
Spean Bridge Woollen Mill - 144,678 visitors
Glencoe Visitor Centre – 126,768 visitors
Inverness Museum and Art Gallery - 90,935
Falls of Shin Visitor Centre - 90,000
Glenmore Forest Park Visitor Centre - 69,502
Ionad Nibhis Visitor Centre - 65,716

Source: STB 2000.

There are 112 core attractions in the Highland region. In national terms this represents 18% of Scottish attractions and 13% of total visitors. "The vast majority of the attractions are small with only 10 attracting more than 100,000 visitors annually" (HOST, 1998, p 14). The National Trust for Scotland and Historic Scotland are the major suppliers of heritage based attractions in the area and according to the Highland Council (1998, (b) p 3) "there is an increasing interest in new attractions based on the Highland's rich heritage of natural history and culture."

3.5 THE SUPPLY OF TOURISM IN SCOTLAND

According to Ioannides (1995, p 56) "Governments promote tourism to generate economic growth and create a labour pool with a certain modicum of human capital. Moreover, tourism's revenues can serve to improve a country's infrastructure (e.g., airports, roads, sewers)." He continues to suggest that these objectives will ultimately "induce diversification of the destination's economic structure."

The UK governments direct involvement in tourism only really began in the 1960s as the full potential of the worth of tourism began to emerge. This was largely due to the dramatic growth in tourism in the United Kingdom during the post - war years.

In 1969 the government established the structure and organisation of tourism in Britain and created the British Tourist Authority (BTA) and the three National Tourist Boards (English, Scottish and Welsh) which were all funded by central government. The main role of the BTA is to promote incoming tourism for the whole of Britain from overseas markets; to advise government on tourism and to encourage the development of the tourism product in Britain. The National Tourist Boards for England, Wales and Scotland and Northern Ireland were established to develop a partnership with local government and commercial interests to develop and manage tourism. They each have a responsibility to encourage British residents to increase the number of visits to their particular areas, to increase the amount of time visitors spend in their areas and to encourage visitors to explore destinations off the standard tourist itinerary. Underneath the national organisations are the Regional Tourist Boards/authorities.

The organisation of the Tourist Boards in Britain are similar to others in Europe where most Western European countries have their own National Tourist Organisations (NTOs). Some are an integral part of the central government, as is the case in Spain and France, while others, such as Britain, are independent bodies but are supported by grants from central government.

On a regional level tourism issues are specific to each area or region and tend to come under the remit of Area Tourist Boards (ATB), Local Enterprise Companies (LEC) and Local Authorities and a large number of interest groups. Each of these organisations have their own remits regarding tourism and their own areas of responsibilities. As a consequence there is some concern that there are too many public sector bodies involved in tourism policy development and delivery. The main difficulty is that neither the STB nor the ATB's have the remit to fund tourism projects. They make recommendations, but the funding is at the discretion of the Enterprise Companies.

Compounding the problems associated with the number of public sector agencies involved in tourism provision is the traditional reluctance amongst the private sector to join (and subsequently fund) local tourist boards, or to get involved in new tourism projects. This means that funds for tourism developments have to be sought elsewhere usually within the public sector from Central government, Local Enterprise Companies, Local Authorities or the EU.

Because tourism is a fragmented industry encompassing businesses such as, hotels, bars, restaurants, shops, garages, tour companies, travel agents, transport services and attractions themselves (to name but a few) the regulation of this diverse set of interests also tends to be fragmented. The difficulties associated with this large number of diverse interests can be illustrated by looking at the composition of the STCG. The Scottish Tourism Co-ordinating Group comprises representatives from; Scottish office Industry Department, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Scottish Enterprise, Historic Scotland, COSLA, Scottish Tourist board, Scottish Arts council, British tourist Authority, Scottish museums Council, Scottish Sports Council, Scottish National Heritage, and the Scottish Confederation of Tourism. This complexity is replicated at the local level and as a result the message can appear confused and diluted" (Grampian Regional Council, 1995, p 1). According to the SNP there are too many public sector bodies involved "do we need Councils, Lecs and the STB in tourism?" (1999, p 9).

In 1992 the Scottish Office conducted a Financial Management Survey (FMS) of the STB. The survey was undertaken in the context of a general review of local government in Scotland concerning the roles of the Scottish Tourist Board, Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, the Area Tourist Boards, Local Enterprise Company's and local government's role in Scottish tourism. Consultation on this document was originally planned to coincide with the review of the reorganisation of local authority structures, which involved replacing the two-tier system with a unitary one. In June 1993 the Scottish Secretary of State, Ian Lang, published the changes identified in the 1992/93 Tourism Review.

According to Adams and Hay, (1994, p 24) the main changes were:

(i) "The Scottish Tourism co-ordinating Group (STCG) would be reviewed and strengthened and would supervise the preparation of a national Strategic Plan for Scottish tourism covering business development as well as marketing.

(ii) From April 1994 responsibility for tourism marketing and for ATB support would be consolidated in the STB, and business development activities would be consolidated in the SE and HIE networks. STB activities under the section 4 programme would be phased out.

(iii) Collaboration amongst the national agencies would be underpinned by Board level appointments and the Scottish Confederation of Tourism would be strengthened.

(iv) As part of the "Scotland in the Union" initiative, STB would establish by April 1995 a substantial office presence in Inverness.

(v) Local Authorities would remain major partners in the industry and the proposed Local Government legislation would contain a statutory obligation on Councils to participate in the promotion of ATB's, the number of which would be greatly reduced.

(vi) STB to evolve into a more strategic body."

Despite these changes to the supply side of tourism provision in Scotland the industry has not managed to resolve many of the major problems associated with tourism delivery. Particular areas of concern continued to be the role and effectiveness of the STB and the effectiveness of the Local Authorities in tourism policy formulation and delivery.

3.6 INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

3.6.1 AREA TOURIST BOARDS

As part of the on-going developments in tourism in Scotland On 1 April 1996 central government instigated its proposals for a more unitary system of local government and the two tier system of District and County Councils were replaced by a new single tier Unitary system. The five Area Tourist Boards were wound up and were merged to form a single Area Tourist Board (Aberdeen and Grampian Tourist Board). The role of the ATBs are to undertake marketing and visitor services with the development work being carried out by the new unitary authority in conjunction with the Local Enterprise Companies and the private sector. These changes require levels of co-operation and co-ordination, which, at present, have eluded the tourism providers in Grampian. The unitary authority is represented on the Area Tourist Board and will also be its major funder.

The Scottish Tourist Board's area tourist board network was restructured in April 1996. These area boards deal with tourism issues in Scotland at a regional and local level and are "a major component of the tourism structure in Scotland" (STB, 1995, p 19). They are managed independently by an area council or an executive committee board whose members have been voted on. They work closely with the tourism trade, the Local Authorities and the STB. The major funding for the ATB's comes from the Local Authorities. According to the SNP (1999, p 8) "in 1997-98 56% of ATB funding came from Local Authority/STB grants. In 1999 the STB funding amounted to £4,395,000, which was an increase on 1998 of £821,000 from the previous year (STB, 1999). However, the Local Authority segment is being cut year on year." In 1997-98 the funds were £7,610,000 and in 1998-99 the funds were £7,513,000. According to the STB's Strategic Plan 1994, (p 47) "the ATB's main activities involve marketing and visitor servicing, but they also have a very important role to play in tourism training and development issues."

One of the major changes identified was the need to reduce the number of Area Tourist Boards from 32 to 14. This was suggested because it was felt that thirty two ATB's were too many to efficiently promote and administer tourism on a regional basis. The new structure came about as a result of discussions between the STB and other concerned parties, including the Local Authorities. The Scottish Office changed the boundaries of the regional tourist boards stating that "our tourism industry will be given a competitive edge by a network which is sensitive to local needs and which delivers the effective marketing called for in the Tourism Review. I am confident that the 14 new board structure will provide visitors to Scotland with a greatly improved service" (Lang, 1993). However, despite this optimism several of the respondents from this research suggested that the new ATB structure has not proved to be as effective as was originally hoped. The main causes for concern centred on a lack of leadership and vision and in all cases the lack of adequate funding available for marketing purposes.

Regional tourist board policies do depend to a great extent upon the co-operation and action of other agencies for the implementation of strategies. At a regional level the Regional Tourist Boards have had the opportunity to establish "a unique position in that they are perhaps the only interest umbrella in the tourism domain who have developed relations with Local Authorities. Given the power which these actors can exert upon a variety of operational fields in tourism, it is perhaps surprising that other associations have on the whole failed to cultivate effective relations with Local Authorities and their national associations" (Greenwood, 1993, p 344).

However, Granlund (1991) suggests that the objectives of a regional tourism strategy may conflict with those of the Local Authorities. "Regional strategies are designed to reflect current market needs and trends in order that Local Authorities and the private sector can adapt and plan to make tourism successful in their region. The regional tourist board intends that its strategy is accepted as the framework for the region within which policies and plans for local areas are compatible" (Granlund, 1991, p 38). The regional tourist board's aims are essentially to develop and promote tourism, whereas the Local Authorities, who are often members of the tourist board, will have broader aims that represent the wider communities they are responsible for.

The Scottish Parliament is responsible for authorising the Directors of the Tourist Boards, even though they are elected, and the membership is split 50/50 between trade representatives and the Local Authorities. The involvement of the Local Enterprise Companies continues albeit in a non-voting capacity. In Grampian the marketing of Aberdeen specifically has been taken over by the Aberdeen Tourist Board (ATB). However, all the ATB staff are employed by the Aberdeen and Grampian Tourist Board (AGTB). The ATB in turn run the Aberdeen Tourist Information Centre (TIC) but it is funded by the District Council and local trade members.

The other Tourist Board involved in this research was the Highlands of Scotland Tourist Board and it includes the regions of Inverness and Nairn and Ross and Cromarty. HOST came into being in April 1996 as a result of the merging of 7 area tourist boards to form the one integrated organisation. HOST is responsible for marketing their local areas, provision of visitor services and (in conjunction with the Highland Council and LEC's) providing their 3,000 plus, members with information and support in areas such as local strategies, marketing, public relations and quality assurance. Their budget for 1998/99 was £2 million, of which £746,000 (26%) came from the STB and £495,000 (17%) came from the Highland Council. The remainder came from annual contributions from the Highland Council, STB, membership subscriptions and other commercial activities (Smith, 1998).

In 1999 the Area Tourist Boards were funded jointly by District Councils, the STB and by trade membership with their main functions being the marketing, information provision and the running of the TICs. The Aberdeen and Grampian Tourist Board received £600,000 of funding from Local Authorities, with £290,000 coming from the STB in grant aid and an additional £282,000 coming from other sources. This meant a total of 68% of the funding came from the public sector. The remaining 32%, or £282,200, came from commercial activities and membership fees. "In terms of expenditure the single largest cost was staffing followed by marketing and administration" (STB, 1999, p 51).

3.6.2 LOCAL AUTHORITIES

The Local Authorities are important to the tourism industry in Scotland. They are particularly important to the peripheral regions that tend to be reliant on public sector support. They are involved in the Scottish Tourism Co-ordinating Group and the Area Tourist Board Network. On a more local level they are involved in the provision of public services such as street cleaning, environmental health, toilet provision and footpath maintenance. They also provide facilities such as leisure and cultural amenities and are the most important organisations involved in town and country planning (Smith, 1998). More recently they have been charged with ensuring that any developments that they become involved in must be of sustainable nature (Scottish Executive of the Scottish Parliament, 1999). Although the promotion of sustainable development is commendable it does not appear to have been carried over to the new Strategy for Scottish Tourism which was published in February 2000. Sustainability was mentioned only once in the whole document and even then it appears to be only in passing (Day and MacLennan 2000).

Tourism development usually occurs "within the context of the local planning framework and community interest groups" (Hall, 1994, p 151). Local Authorities are often the most important powers in terms of implementing strategies or instigating developments "at the end of the day, the implementation of any tourism strategy on the ground rests with the tiers of local government" (Wanhill, in Hall, 1994, p 152). Lunn suggests that Local Authorities have a duty to assist in the development of tourism in their locality "the tourism industry in most areas is in reality thousands of small businesses competing with one another, with relatively few big players in any one destination. Those businesses look to the local authority to act in a co-ordinating role, creating and marketing a product, an image, in a way that individually they could not" (Lunn, 1996, p A-130).

Central government is often the major source of funding but they delegate power to the Local Authorities to provide services to the residents within their particular boundaries. It is the central government that will determine both the range of services and the organisation of the authorities themselves. The activities of local government are subject to many constraints, including central government funding arrangements, parliamentary statutes, local and regional opinions and traditions and resource availability. They seek many of the same economic goals as the central government, and they also tend to share central government's enthusiasm for tourism development (Lunn, 1996 p A-130). The services they provide can be either statutory or discretionary such as, tourism.

The main source of funding for the Local Authorities is the central government. In general terms only about one third of their revenue will come from local taxation with the remainder coming from the central government sources. "The level of support is calculated on the basis of the provision of equal standards and levels of service in each authority. It is designed to take into account the differences in local needs, characteristics, and ability to raise income in individual authorities" (Granlund, 1991, p 54).

The council appoints their members to committees, which reflect the overall political make-up of the region. In each local authority there are usually several committees each with their own areas of responsibility. Each department in local government has its own structure, hierarchy and a dominant professional orientation. Local Authority activities that affect tourism fall into two categories. The first category includes the provision of 'passive' services that would be carried out for the benefit of residents irrespective of the tourist implications, such as health, refuse collection, street repairs and lighting and the provision of leisure facilities. The second category includes activities in which the authority plays a more active role in the provision of facilities seen as requirements for tourism. Such facilities would include attractions, leisure and recreational facilities, infrastructure such as car parks and toilets, tourism strategies, TIC's and marketing.

Greenwood (1993) suggests that Local Authorities impact upon the work of tourism interests in an important way through planning controls; the identification of development plans, the promotion of tourism in their territories as a strategy of economic development; and as members of the Regional Tourist Boards themselves. As a consequence of these varying responsibilities many tourism issues are discussed and decided upon at several different forums and committees. This can and does lead to difficulties in establishing, and pushing towards, common tourism initiatives and strategies for the region.

The degree of involvement of Local Authorities will vary from one authority to another. The CBI suggests that "Local Authorities recognise tourism's massive potential for creating jobs and wealth" (1996, p 2). However, they continue to suggest that most authorities are unclear as to how to encourage and direct the tourism developments. The majority tends to focus on public sector provision based on the countryside and local heritage attractions, at the expense of the private sector areas, such as shopping, sport and accommodation. The more active authorities are likely to be those who already have a regional tourism product such as scenery, coastline or heritage or those who have serious economic problems and see tourism as a means of countering these economic ills.

The Local Authorities involved in the three regions are Aberdeenshire (North, South and Central), Aberdeen City and the Highland Council, which includes Inverness and Nairn and Ross and Cromarty area committees. All of these councils were set up in 1996 as a result of the reorganisation of local government. They are responsible for much of the infrastructure, planning, public buildings and business support programmes in their regions. Because the Highland Council covers such a large area much of its day to day business has been devolved down to 8 area committees. "The tourism budget for 1998/1999 was set at £722,000 of which £495,000 goes to

HOST" (Smith, 1998). The Local Authorities in Grampian tended to be the ones who received the largest amount of criticism in connection with their role in tourism development based largely on the lack of direction and leadership associated with tourism in the region.

3.6.3 ENTERPRISE COMPANY NETWORK

The Enterprise Company network is of great importance to the tourism industry in Scotland, and is in most regions the most important organisation involved in tourism provision, mainly as a result of its role in funding tourism projects. At present there are two umbrella organisations covering the whole of Scotland, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) and Scottish Enterprise (SE). In general terms HIE covers the West and North West and SE covers the East and North East. Each region is divided into smaller regions with the aim of being more responsive to local needs, for example HIE has ten regions including Ross and Cromarty Enterprise (RACE) and Inverness and Nairn Enterprise (INE).

Each of these Local Enterprise Companies have their own individual objectives but they are all broadly responsible for the economic development of their specified regions and this includes funding of tourism based projects. Grampian Enterprise for example has the mission to "work with individuals and organisations to ensure Grampian s place as a leading region in Europe in terms of, growth of our economy, skills in our people and physical business infrastructure and environment" (Grampian Enterprise Limited, 1996, p 6). They obtain their funding from either Highlands and Islands Enterprise or Scottish Enterprise and from commercial activities, but the majority (in Grampians case) 92% coming from Scottish Enterprise.

The Local Enterprise Companies (LECs) involved in the case study regions are Grampian Enterprise, Moray, Badenoch and Strathspey Enterprise, Inverness and Nairn Enterprise and Ross and Cromarty Enterprise. The latter two come under the auspices of the Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the former two come under the control of Scottish Enterprise. Both Scottish Enterprise (SE) and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) were established by the Enterprise and New Towns (Scotland) Act 1990. HIE took over the responsibilities of the former Highlands and Islands Development Board and the Training Agency. Its remit, according to HOST (1997, p 33) is to "cover economic and social development, training and environmental renewal in the Highlands and Islands. HIE is the lead agency, within the public sector, for the development of tourism which includes product and business development support including financial assistance where appropriate." They are also responsible for enhancing skills at all levels in the region, which has been described as "perhaps the greatest single challenge facing our industry" (HOST, 1997, p 33). The budget allocated to HIE is £80 million, of which approximately 20%, or £6 million is allocated for tourism developments (Adams, 1998).

Local Enterprise Companies (LECs) have individual operating agreements with either SE or HIE to carry out specific activities for their local areas. These duties include designing and delivering economic and community development, training and environmental renewal. There are six LECs in the Highland region. The two of interest to this study were Ross and Cromarty Enterprise (RACE) and Inverness and Nairn Enterprise (INE), whose budgets for tourism in 1998/99 were £400,000 and £800,000 respectively (Smith, 1998).

The most important LEC involved in the North East region of Scotland is Grampian Enterprise, with Moray, Badenoch and Strathspey Enterprise involved in the North West of the region. The responsibility of the LECs is "for the development of the tourism product as part of their business advisory, training and development grant functions. Grampian Enterprise approved a Tourism Development Strategy in 1994 which covers 5 main areas of activity as follows:

- Membership of the Board of Grampian Highlands and Aberdeen Marketing Company.
- Support for the accommodation sector through business analysis and development. This may lead to training and advice provision.
- Development of package holidays, especially in the activity sector where there are an extensive range of providers, albeit relatively small for the most part.
- Support and management for major events, such as the Tall Ships Race, or sporting events.
- The upgrading and development of existing and new tourist attractions, often in partnership with Local Authorities and the private sector" (Grampian Regional Council, 1995, p 4).

The objectives of the LECs in promoting tourism basically revolve around the issue of employment and the consequent benefits that extra jobs bring to the region. For this Grampian Enterprise has a budget of £1 million which is designed to research future opportunities in tourism and to improve the regions competitiveness. (Grampian Enterprise, 1999, p 3). Attractions are seen as one way in which to help to achieve these objectives. "Attractions provide the single most important reason for leisure tourism to a particular destination" (Cooper et al, 1996, p 204). A visitor attraction is defined as "a permanently established excursion destination, a primary purpose of which is to allow public access for entertainment, interest or education, rather than being principally a retail outlet or a venue for sporting, theatrical or film performances. It must be open to the public without prior booking, for the published periods each year, and should be capable of attracting tourists or day visitors as well as local residents" (STB, 1994, p rh.36). Other authors (Cooper et al, 1999, p 290) have been a lot less restrictive in their classifications and have included shopping centres and sports stadia in their classifications and suggest that "a tourist attraction is a focus for recreational and in part, educational activity undertaken by both day and stay visitors."

3.6.4 THE SCOTTISH TOURIST BOARD (STB)

The STB had a comprehensive strategic role in developing and promoting tourism in Scotland. It was the leading public-sector organisation whose main aim was to increase the economic benefits of tourism it Scotland. According to the STB (2000) their prime responsibilities were:

- To market Scotland for both leisure and business
- To collaborate with the BTA
- To work with the Local Enterprise Companies
- To support the Area Tourist Boards
- To advise industry
- To develop and promote visitor servicing and quality assurance schemes

Other important objectives were to encourage increased involvement from the private sector and to co-ordinate action amongst the various public sector bodies. In order to achieve these objectives "in 1997-8 the STB received just over £19 million from grant-in-aid and over £5 million from commercial activity. Its total income was £24,842,000. In the same year it spent £25.089,000. That is a deficit of £197,000"

(SNP, 1999, p 8). The STB also collaborated with organisations such as, the Scottish Office Industry Department, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Scottish Enterprise, Historic Scotland, the Scottish Arts Council, British Tourist Authority and Scottish National Heritage.

November 2000 saw the publication of the Price, Waterhouse and Coopers report commissioned by Lord Gordon into the Scottish Tourist Board. This gave rise to a radical re-think on Scottish tourism development and promotion. This followed the Scottish Executives Strategy for Tourism published in February of this year 2000. Key issues identified in the published documents were:

- the need for the STB to re-invent itself
- changing operating environment and a more competitive market place
- higher customer expectations and greater sophistication
- new business opportunities
- new Government strategies for tourism and its development
- the need to develop partnerships
- the greater role of the Scottish Parliament

Other major changes that have occurred within the STB has been the resignation of their Chief executive, Tom Buncle. This has been brought about by the increasing criticism of the role and performance of the STB (as has been identified in this research) from within the industry. The STB itself is undergoing internal changes and has been re-named Visitscotland. Presently the role of Chief Executive is vacant and a search for a replacement is on going.

The Minister for Lifelong Learning stated that "it is important that we now put the industry first so today we strengthen the industry expertise available to the Board, strengthen the STB's strategy and policy role, and begin to attract private investment to support the marketing of Scotland. From today Norman Murray of CoSLA and Paul Murray-Smith of the Scottish Tourism Forum will provide better industry advice to the board. One of our key priorities must be to engage the trade and take on-board their ideas for the development of the industry" (Alexander, 2000, p 2).

3.6.5 SCOTTISH TOURISM CO-ORDINATING GROUP

The STCG published the first national strategy for tourism in Scotland in 1994. The Group consists of representatives from the following organisations; The Scottish Office Industry Department; Highlands and Islands Enterprise; Scottish Enterprise; Historic Scotland; Convention of Scottish Local Authorities; Scottish Tourist Board; Scottish Arts Council; BTA; Scottish Museums Council; Scottish Confederation of Tourism; Scottish Sports Council and Scottish Natural Heritage. Its aims are to "Supervise the preparation of, approve, and publish a National Strategic Plan for tourism. Identify and undertake strategic initiatives that will improve Scotland's tourism product. Act as a forum for discussion of tourism-related issues and, if necessary, commission appropriate action" (Scottish Tourism Co-ordinating Group, 1994, p 56). The Plan was published on November 7th 1994 and covered five main areas: objectives; background; issues and priorities; implementation; the future.

The objective areas highlighted "three key objectives for the plan:

- To create new facilities and improve existing ones;
- To promote tourism in a more effective and co-ordinated way at all levels;
- To enhance skills, including management skills"

(Summers, 1995 p 43).

The second area deals with the background to the industry in Scotland. The third area deals with major issues and priorities associated with tourism in Scotland which included;

- Weaknesses in the industries infrastructure in terms of facilities, standards of service, promotion and poor skill levels;
- Seasonality;
- Marketing in terms of the home market, the overseas market and business marketing;
- Accommodation;
- Visitor attractions;
- The natural environment;
- Sports and activities;
- Entertainment, arts and events;
- Training; services and visitor services;

- Quality assurance;
- Catering;
- Retailing;
- Information technology;
- Working groups;
- Transport;
- Other issues including European funding.

The fourth area deals with implementation in both the public and private sectors. The fifth and final area deals with the future and the needs of the industry.

As of February 15th 2000 the Scottish Tourism Co-ordinating Group was replaced by a new Scottish Parliament Group, chaired by the Minister for Lifelong Learning who is to monitor the implementation and running of the strategy.

3.6.6 THE SCOTTISH TOURISM FORUM

The major focus used to be to represent the private sectors views on strategic issues to national policy makers and to provide a link for consultation between industry, central government and public agencies.

However, the group has now expanded from a membership of 27 in 1999 to 46 member organisations in 2000. These organisations include representatives from accommodation, retail, catering, tour operations, transport, attractions, commerce and Area Tourist Boards. The Forum's vision is "to contribute to Scotland's international competitiveness by providing industry leadership and direction, coherent and considered contributions to political and public decision-making and gaining commitment to Scotland's strategic tourism objectives and targets" (Scottish Tourism Forum, 2000 p 9).

The forum hopes to represent the tourism industry with the aim of achieving key strategic objectives which they outline as acting on strategic issues, communicating effectively with membership, promoting tourism in Scotland, enhancing their own credibility and establishing a sustainable base for the forum.

3.6.7 SCOTTISH NATURAL HERITAGE

Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) is a government agency, which was established in 1992 as a result of a merger of the Countryside Commission and the Nature Conservancy Council for Scotland. Main aims are to safeguard and enhance Scotland's natural heritage, foster awareness and understanding of the natural heritage and to encourage environmental sustainability in all forms of economic activity.

3.6.8 HISTORIC SCOTLAND

Historic Scotland (HS) is the largest operator of visitor attractions in Scotland. It has statutory powers to protect historic buildings and ancient monuments and its main aim is to protect and enhance Scotland's built heritage. They receive £32 million from the Scottish Office as a block grant and they are required to generate £18 million themselves from their commercial activities (Simpson, 1998).

3.6.9 THE NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND

The National Trust for Scotland (NTS) was established for the purpose of promoting the preservation of the lands and buildings in Scotland that are of historic or national interest, or beauty. It is the largest voluntary conservation body in Scotland. It depends for its support on grants, property income, donations, legacies and subscriptions from its 228,000 members. In 1997 the total income of the trust was £25, 695,000 (Gordon, 1998).

3.6.10 OTHER AGENCIES

Other Agencies involved include the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), Scottish Wildlife Trust (SWT), The Forestry Commission (FC) which is divided into the two sub-groups of the Forestry Authority and Forest Enterprise, Scottish Youth Hostels Association (SYHA), Scottish Arts Council (SAC), Scottish Sports Council (SSC), Scottish Museums Council (SMC), and the Scottish Landowners Federation (SLF), Scottish Environmental Protection Agency.

3.6.11 THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

Scottish tourism has many problems and some of them emanate from central government partly as a result of the political expediency associated with the industry. "The UK is at the mercy of trends, whims, international politics and economic conditions. What the UK really needs is clarity of vision, objectives and strategies" (Boulding, 1992, p 62). Owen 1992, (p 359) describes the organisation of tourism in Britain as muddled "as a channel downward for national government funds and influence this is, to say the least, a muddled profusion, with the available money too thinly spread. As a channel upward for grass-root voices the effect is rather spoiled by the tendency for regional boards to be dominated by plodders rather than innovators." At a local level the picture gets even more complicated as each town or city will often have their own tourism organisation whose role will be to promote the interests of the locality by working with local providers of accommodation and tourism facilities.

Allied to these issues Scottish tourism faces further problems relating to mediocre performance, seasonality, lack of direct air access, service attitudes, price, and the ineffectiveness of public sector agencies (Day and MacLennan, 2000). All of these issues are relevant to the three case study regions involved in this research.

With the advent of the Scottish Parliament there is considerable optimism that many of these problems can be addressed and rectified. However, in reality much of the tourism decision making was already taken in Scotland by bodies such as the Scottish Office, STB and Scottish and Highlands and Islands Enterprise networks. The structure for tourism in Scotland changed as a result of the new Scottish Parliament. The minister in charge of tourism is the Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning, Wendy Alexander. Under this Minister are the Deputy Minister for Highlands and Islands and Gaelic and the Deputy Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning.

The political, commercial and fiscal environments have changed as a result of the devolution. In 1999 the new Scottish Parliament sat for the first time which according to the Scottish Office (1999, p 3) "represents unprecedented opportunities for a more integrated approach to tourism as well as rural developments." There has been a good deal of optimism and much has been written about the opportunities that this new development could offer the tourism industry based on the location of the tourism portfolio, a possible tourism tax and licensing and registration of tourism operations. (Day and MacLennan 2000, Watson 1999, British Hospitality Association 1999). According to Watson (1999, p 1) "there is a genuine belief that the Scottish Parliament will recognise the need to promote and market Scotland's unique selling points to the wider world." Much of this optimism is based on the fact that tourism has been identified as a key industry in terms of development, especially in the more peripheral areas. Other grounds for optimism centre around the new strategy document for Scottish tourism that the Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning, Henry McLeish (at that time, now the minister is Wendy Alexander) asked the STB to produce.

The new Strategy for Scottish Tourism was issued on February 15th 2000. The Scottish Tourism Co-ordinating Group has been replaced by a new Scottish Parliament Group. This group is to be chaired by Wendy Alexander, the new Minister for Lifelong Learning. The role of this group will be to monitor the implementation and running of the tourism strategy. It is also suggested that the STB and ATB marketing campaigns be focused more on niche markets and there has been additional funding of £11 million to fund new initiatives, such as e-commerce, tourism quality advisers, niche marketing opportunities and skills development and training initiatives. There has also been an emphasis on the lack of leadership for the industry and an increased focus on the enterprise networks to provide this leadership.

However, there has been some disappointment amongst tourism providers in Scotland as to the actual outcomes associated with the devolved Parliament. Concern has been expressed about the location of the tourism portfolio within the Department of Lifelong Learning instead of it having its own department. This criticism has been exacerbated by the fact that the minister responsible for tourism is a deputy minister (Alisdair Morrison) who has other responsibilities as well. According to Day and MacLennan (2000, p 6) "rather than a strong, unified voice for tourism emanating from the Scottish Parliament we may see contradictory policy making where, for example, transport policy acts as a barrier to visitors to rural areas, rural policies focus on traditional primary industrial sectors, whilst tourism policies attempt to spread benefits into peripheral areas." These issues are obviously of concern to the regions involved in this study and other regions that are classified as peripheral or remote.

Day and MacLennan suggest that little has really changed for tourism in Scotland as a result of devolution and the publication of the new Strategy for Scottish Tourism. They point out that "Most changes relate to a redistribution of responsibilities within Scottish public bodies rather than from Westminster to Edinburgh. The recent Scottish Executive document contains nothing extraordinary and it may result in minor changes, which do not fundamentally alter the industry or public support mechanisms" (2000, p 13).

3.6.12 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Tourism is difficult to define because of the nature of the industry and the number of diverse interests involved. As with tourism, peripherality is also difficult to define. Peripherality can refer to many concepts such as geographic location, perception of peripherality and marginalisation. The concept of core or centre and periphery is fundamental to the discussion of peripherality. In a geographic sense the three case study regions share many commonalties with other peripheral regions within the EU. The most obvious of these being economic problems relating to primary sector industries and other issues relating to rurality. Causal Network methodology is used in this research to highlight the issues of importance to the three case study regions, as well as with other northern peripheral areas.

The primary interest of the public sector and private sectors in tourism is economic and it is mainly for economic factors that public sector institutions such as the European Union are interested in promoting tourism. Tourism development and policy tends to focus mainly on economic issues, however, other areas of concern include environmental, cultural and social issues. These latter concerns tend to be included in the focus of the public and voluntary sectors as opposed to the private sector and there are often difficulties involved in encouraging private sector involvement and investment in these peripheral areas. As a consequence there is often a reliance on the public sector to provide the funds and leadership for tourism developments and initiatives in these peripheral regions. It is because of the dominance of the public sector in these peripheral areas that primary data collection from this research was aimed mainly sat the public sector.

In terms of whether tourism is a cost-effective means of generating employment in many economically peripheral areas the creation of some jobs is better than no jobs at all. However, given the substantial amounts of money that the European Union and individual governments place in regional development schemes an examination of the re-distributive effects of tourism development within regions may be applicable. In terms of retraining, the ability of employees to transfer from other sectors, such as mining, forestry or agriculture to tourism is limited unless there is investment in retraining. As a consequence, in many cases the ability of tourism to provide an employment alternative may be limited.

It seems that tourism may not be as effective at regenerating rural or peripheral areas as many of the tourism policy makers have anticipated. There are certainly social and environmental problems caused by tourism development which are often countered with an economic argument but according to Hjalager (1996, p 103) "the financial returns most often do not measure up either to the expectations of the politicians or to that of the farmers." Butler and Hall (1998, p 101) suggest that "the formulation and implementation of rural tourism and recreation public policies present a number of difficulties. Unrealistic expectations of tourism's potential are unfortunately often combined with ignorance or wilful neglect by decision- makers of the potentially adverse economic, environmental and social consequences of tourist development."

There are many changes and trends associated with tourism that can work in favour of peripheral areas. The use of Lesson Drawing methodology in this research attempts to provide lessons (some based on these trends) that could be transferred, both within the peripheral areas involved in this research, and also to other peripheral regions. Positive changes have occurred in relation to tourism demand that can be utilised by peripheral areas, such as the three case study regions. These include an increased interest in the environment, and as a consequence an increased interest in rural and peripheral areas, as well as interest in activities and individualistic pursuits. To capitalise on these positive changes, marketing and promotion of peripherality as an image needs to be improved in many peripheral areas.

The increased internationalisation, globalisation and regionalism offer both opportunities and threats to peripheral areas. The former two factors serve to increase competition on a global basis but also offer opportunities for peripheral regions to market themselves globally. Regionalism is important to peripheral regions in Europe and has changed political and economic involvement in these areas. In many cases peripheral regions will benefit from the categorisations of the European Union.

Tourism can be an effective means of assisting peripheral regions, but the main focus tends to be economic. However, there are also many limitations associated with tourism in these regions. These include the types of jobs created, the ability of the local labour force to fill them, the investment required, the ability of local farmers to become involved, environmental and cultural concerns, visitor numbers etc.

The trends associated with tourism can be encouraging for peripheral regions but the three case study regions (in common with many other northern, peripheral regions) have not been performing well in terms of tourism visitor numbers. There has been a decline in visitor numbers, mainly as a result of declining domestic visits. These trends are a serious concern for Scotland as well as for the three case study regions. Causal network methodology is used to identify and assess the issues involved in tourism provision in the three case study regions. Many of these issues are applicable to other peripheral regions. Lesson Drawing is then used to suggest appropriate lessons that may be learned or transferred from one or two case study regions to another, both within this research and also out-with this research to other peripheral regions (especially in northern peripheral regions).

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODS

This chapter will outline the research methods chosen for the empirical research in this study, provide justifications for the methods used and describe the problems involved in the research.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This exploratory methodological study was designed to identify problems associated with peripheral areas and translate experiences from one area to another. The aim of the primary research was to obtain relevant information in order to achieve research objectives, which are;

1. **To evaluate Causal Network methodology in assessing the issues involved in tourism provision in Grampian, Ross and Cromarty and Inverness and Nairn.**

2. **To review the use of Lesson Drawing as a methodology by which to enhance tourism development in peripheral locations.**

Many of the characteristics associated with the peripheral areas studied here, such as remoteness from markets, declining employment opportunities and seasonality are often common to other peripheral areas. This is especially true of those regions within the same geographic locality, such as the three case study regions in this research. However, each region is also unique in terms of their own attributes and natural environments. For example, Grampian shares many similarities with Inverness and Nairn but its natural environment, although similar, does not have the same image and consequent tourism potential of the Inverness (in the Highlands) or the West Coast regions.

As well as the similarities and differences associated with the location of each of the regions and their natural environments there are also similarities associated with each region's political and institutional arrangements. All three regions were chosen because of similarities in terms of location, economic factors and political and institutional arrangements. However, despite the obvious similarities there are always going to be different individuals, different agendas and different political priorities operating in each region. For example, each region could exhibit different levels of co-operation and leadership, similar goals but different marketing strategies to achieve those goals and different local political make-ups depending on which local party is in control of the local government at the time.

It is because of the individual differences associated with each individual peripheral region that much of the literature on peripheral areas tends to focus on economic issues. The Causal Network approach used in this study attempts to highlight not only the economic factors that impinge on tourism provision in these regions, but seeks to go further and provide a deeper and richer insight into the differences associated with each region. For example there may be different levels of hospitality and service standards, different levels of co-operation and different levels of economic activity or dependence on oil. Once these differences and similarities have been highlighted (using the Causal Network approach), the aim of this research was to test the Lesson Drawing method and try and draw lessons from one region to another and suggest possible improvements to the tourism provision in the regions.

The initial research was conducted in the Grampian region and Causal Networks were constructed for each individual respondent and each respondent group (transport providers, accommodation providers and attractions etc). However, as is the case with any research that is conducted over a protracted period of time and in different locations, variables within each region could either change or become of greater or lesser importance (such as the strength of Sterling). This research adopted an evolving methodology where the research was developed from one case study to the other. The original case study region of Grampian was the methodological exploratory case study. The Causal Network models developed in this region were then modified in the two subsequent case study regions of Inverness and Nairn and Ross and Cromarty. The Causal Networks in all three regions, although reflecting many of the same variables, also showed different emphasis and different levels of importance associated with each variable. This was expected and acknowledged as part of the Causal Network approach and the evolution and development of the Causal Network models.

Causal Networks were the first part of the research methodology and Lesson Drawing was the second part. The Causal Network method was used to identify problems and issues associated with tourism provision in all three regions. The Lesson Drawing methodology was used as a methodology to enhance tourism knowledge and developments in peripheral areas by highlighting areas of good practice and where possible, suggest lessons that could be transferred within the three case study regions. Because the Lesson Drawing methodology was reliant on the Causal Network method much of the discussion of the effectiveness of Lesson Drawing takes place in the conclusions section.

4.2 METHODODLOGIES

It is important to state the methodological framework from which research is undertaken because, as Deshpande (1983, p 101) suggests, "the impact of implicitly stressing one theoretical paradigm in the conduct of the research necessarily brings with it the inherent biases associated with using that paradigm and its allied methodologies." A paradigm is a set of linked assumptions, which provides the conceptual and philosophical framework to study the world, or in this case to approach the research. In this research, the paradigm is based on the peripherality of all three regions. They can all be categorised as peripheral in both a geographical sense and, to differing degrees, in a perceptual sense. Assumptions based on the categorisation of peripherality include declining and limited economic activity in the primary sectors of agriculture and fishing, inaccessibility and, in this research, northerly locations, inclement weather and seasonality.

Before considering data collection, or sampling, a research strategy, or methodology must be chosen. A methodology is a general approach to studying a research topic. It establishes how one will go about studying a phenomenon.

There are basically two schools of social science, which are often referred to as quantitative and qualitative, or positivism and non-positivism. These schools are associated with different concepts and methods. Quantitative approaches tend to look for objective, statistical descriptions whereas qualitative methods look for understanding, or reasons for outcomes from a more subjective approach, based on the perspective of those involved.

Quantitative research uses procedures to define, count and analyse its variables and is associated with numbers and statistics and is grounded in the positivist tradition. Implicit in positivist research is the desire, or ability to use data in a predictive manner based on previous information. Although qualitative research can also be predictive or positive, it does tend to be associated with describing and illuminating the social science world from an interactive, interpretative or humanistic perspective. "In general, it can be said that quantitative methods provide a wide but shallow emphasis, whereas qualitative methods give a narrower but more detailed focus" (Bell, 1991, p 1).

"Qualitative research employs indirect methods to isolate, understand and evaluate those attitudes, beliefs, pressures, wants and needs which underlie, influence and determine behaviour" (Goodyear, 1971, p 48). Although data collection (such as interviews) is frequently be of a qualitative nature, there is often the requirement to categorise the results in an attempt to generalise from the findings. This, therefore, often involves both a qualitative and a quantitative approach to research. This was the case for this research where respondents data was input into Causal Network variables and models and their relative importance or degree of effectiveness was categorised as low, low/moderate, moderate, moderate/high or high (as suggested by Miles and Hubermannn, 1991).

The positivist school suggests that the world be based around certain fixed laws. They attempt to quantify data and generate theories from a totally objective standpoint. The positivist paradigm is that of the natural sciences. The positivist looks for facts and causes and there is an attempt to minimise subjective input from the subjects, or respondents. Generally the focus is on data that is quantifiable so it can be empirically tested and then either rejected or accepted (hypothesis testing or null hypothesis testing).

The non-positivists are humanistic by nature in that they consider individuals' emotions, experiences and beliefs. The subjectivity of the researcher and the limits of the objectivity of the data is acknowledged and accepted, and research often tends to rely on observation or types of in-depth interviews as the preferred means of data collection. This is because "The interview is seen to give greater depth than other research techniques, because it is a sustained relationship between the informant and the researcher" (Burgess, in Silverman, 1994, p 95). In this research the in-depth interview was the preferred method of data collection because of the reasons cited above. This research was dependent on in-depth feedback in attempting to identify as complete a picture as possible of the problems associated with each region.

Whilst this research attempts to conform to the rigours and objectivity associated with any good research there are issues that need to be discussed.

Firstly, there is a degree of subjectivity that is involved in most social science research. The nature of most social science research means that neither the subject nor the researcher can be totally objective. Positivists seek to ensure that the conditions under which the research is conducted can be controlled and replicated. In the social sciences, it is difficult to achieve such conditions. Because the social science researcher is often "concerned with understanding human behaviour from the actor's own frame of reference" (Deshpande, 1983, p 103), there are likely to be inherent difficulties such as bias associated with social research data collection. Although this was acknowledged and where possible taken into consideration as a limitation, it was accepted that one of the problems associated with this and any other form of social science research, is the issue of bias. As with most social science research the duplication or replication of the research could possibly lead to different results if another researcher were to repeat it. Whilst every attempt has been made to ensure that the research process was as transparent as possible (so as to allow replication) it was acknowledged that different researchers could obtain slightly different variables, categorisations or gradings of variables. This could be as a result of the individual researchers own bias, different conditions, timing or interpretations of the respondent's feedback, for example one researcher might categorise co-operation as low and another may categorise it as moderate or low/moderate.

Secondly, because positivism derives hypotheses from experience or previous research, if the subject being studied is relatively new or innovative, there is likely to be little in the way of previous research available. This was the case for this research where there was little in the way of established literature concerning the use of Causal Networks in the field of tourism research. This was because Causal Networks in the field of tourism research is a new area. In terms of Lesson Drawing there has been some research done notably by Rose (1993) and by others such as Baum (1999) but the literature associated with Lesson Drawing is also comparatively limited.

Positivists view interviews as ways of generating facts about the world that are valid and reliable and take no account of the research setting. The non-positivists believe in interaction with the respondents and the primary aim of the interviews is to gain an insight into the respondent's world.

There is no one set approach amongst qualitative researchers and there are many different philosophical perspectives including, ethnography, cognitive anthropology, behaviourism, structuralism and humanism. According to Patton (in Deshpande, 1983, p 104) the non-positivist school is in complete contrast to the positivist school. The non-positivist school uses the techniques of "in-depth, open ended interviewing and personal observation and relies on qualitative data, holistic analysis, and detailed description derived from close contact with the targets of study." The non-positivist approach accepts that people have feelings and emotions that are different from the material world and as such they may not be subject to the same rules of logic that apply to the positivist, scientific based approach. It is primarily inductive in nature rather than deductive. In contrast to the positivists' approach non-positivists tend to focus on the attitudes, beliefs and emotions of the respondents. Whilst both positivist and non-positivist methodologies were important to this research (depending on the stage of the research) it was the non-positivist approach that was considered to be the most influential in conducting this research. Because the respondents' opinions were fundamental to the research and conclusions were drawn on the basis of these opinions.

4.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research was to evaluate the methodologies of Causal Networks and Lesson Drawing and their application in the context of peripheral area tourism. The nature of this research meant that it was mainly, although not totally based within the qualitative, non-positivist school which as Curtis et al (2000) suggests, are becoming increasingly important. However, there are only a comparatively small number of cases where the approach to social research is totally grounded in one school or the other. In reality Silverman, (1994) suggests that researchers from either school often combine the two approaches. Deshpande (1983) also suggests that the schools are often seen as mutually exclusive, but in reality this is not the case. Researchers from both schools tend to borrow from the other school.

The methodology used in this research involved a composite approach, with aspects of both qualitative and quantitative methods employed. The first stage of the research involved highlighting the obstacles to effective tourism policy delivery in peripheral areas. This involved the qualitative technique of in-depth interviews to collect the respondent data, which highlighted these problems. However, the initial Causal Network models were developed in part using secondary data collection that appeared to be based on a positivist approach, in that this data was derived from published empirical sources. In contrast the testing of these models and the subsequent models generated as a result of the respondent interviews relied more on a non-positivist approach.

The qualitative data gathered as a result of the interviews acknowledged the subjective nature of the data. However, the qualitative approach allowed for an examination of the attitudes, beliefs and motivations of the tourism providers. However, despite the rich in-depth nature of the responses anticipated as a result of this approach, difficulties associated with vested interests, issues of self-perpetuation and the differing perceptions of the respondents were anticipated. To combat these potential problems multiple sources of evidence were obtained from each respondent that allowed for the cross-checking of data. Quantitative analysis was not considered suitable because it was felt that the depth of response required a more personal, interactive approach.

The approach used in this research recognised that the different philosophies and different theories of social research are not mutually exclusive, and that different aspects of the different philosophies and approaches could be used. Indeed this research adopts both the Causal Network and the Lesson Drawing methods. According to Miles and Hubermann "it is getting harder to find any methodologists solidly encamped in one epistemology or the other" (1991, p 20). The main focus of the methodology adopted for this research was based on the Causal Network approach adopted by Miles and Hubermann (1991). The aim was to test and evaluate the Causal Network methodology and identify problems that were associated with the three peripheral case study regions involved in this research. The theory of Lesson Drawing, as developed by Rose (1993), was then used (and later evaluated) in an attempt to suggest solutions for application in the three regions.

The Causal Network approach is described by Miles and Hubermann (1991, p 19) as logical–positivist. "Social phenomena exist not only in the mind but also in the objective world-and that there are some lawful and reasonably stable relationships to be found among them." Hypotheses must be capable of analysis and verification but they are also written in a way that takes account of reality. The approach accepts the need for replicability and rigour but also takes account of social constraints and regularities. They go on to suggest that "we consider it important to evolve a set of valid and verifiable methods for capturing these social relationships and their causes. We want to interpret and explain these phenomena and have confidence that others, using the same tools, would arrive at analogous conclusions. We are committed to clarity in qualitative analysis procedures, a commitment that requires a good deal of explicit structure in our approach to inquiry" (1991, p 20).

Once the issues involved in tourism policy delivery within Grampian were ascertained, the information was used to construct a Causal Network model of Grampian (based on the issues and factors highlighted by the respondents). The second stage of the research involved collecting data from Ross and Cromarty and Inverness and Nairn. The third stage of the research involved the construction of Causal Networks for all three of the areas studied in an attempt to ascertain the issues associated with tourism provision in peripheral areas and to evaluate the effectiveness of Causal Networks as a means of tourism policy analysis. It was hoped, wherever possible, to provide a "clear explanation of how and why specific relationships lead to specific events" (Wacker, 1998, p 5). The fourth stage of the research involved evaluating the effectiveness of Rose's (1993) theory of Lesson Drawing as a means of resolving the problems highlighted by the Causal Networks.

According to Miles and Hubermannn (1989), Causal Networks are data collection tools that suggest themes and groupings. They are both text and diagrammatic representations. They attempt to highlight independent as well as dependent variables involved in the field study. They attempt to describe and highlight causal links and outcomes that are involved in the particular case study. The aim in this research was to identify the issues of concern to tourism providers in the three case study regions. These issues were then included as variables in an integrated model and narrative of each respondent's views.

Tourism has been suggested as one means of redressing the problems of peripheral unemployment and decline. This has meant, "policymakers have been anxious to find programmes that will respond positively to this problem" (Rose, 1993, p 9). These policy makers tend to be predominantly from the public sector, especially in the more peripheral areas. One of the reasons for choosing tourism for this research was because the heavily labour reliant tourism industry is seen as being compatible with the aims of many of the public sector policy makers, especially within the EU, the UK and Scotland, in relation to peripheral area developments.

One of the preconditions for Lesson Drawing is "easy access to information about what governments, authorities or organisations are doing" (Rose 1993, p3). The relatively easy access to information was one of the initial reasons for focusing on the public sector organisations and choosing Grampian as a case study region. The researcher not only had prior knowledge of the areas but also had considerable access to secondary information about the Grampian region and also had good access to key informants and respondents for primary data collection. These key informants tended to be from the public sector where public accountability means that information was often more accessible to the public than was the case with the private sector. This access to sources of information is crucial to any form of qualitative research, especially when seeking to support the research through triangulation of data. This access to information is an issue of importance to lesson Drawing because the transferring of lessons between cases is only desirable if the lessons have been verified as being effective. If they have not been tested and supported then the lessons are likely to be of limited value.

The first stage of this research involved abstracting and understanding the Causal Network models because as Rose (1993, p 13) suggests "a lesson is not a disjointed set of ideas about what to do. It requires a cause-and-effect model or at least an association showing how a programme, or lesson designed on the basis of experience elsewhere can be of use to other areas." In an attempt to import or export lessons within the three case study regions Lesson Drawing is utilised, because the experience of seeing a programme or problem at work in one place "demonstrates that it can be realised in another place" (Rose, 1993, p 2). Rose describes Lesson Drawing as "a tool that policy makers can use when confronted with a situation that causes dissatisfaction" (Rose, 1993, p 21). In this research the aim is to test the methodologies of Causal Networks and Lesson Drawing. The initial stages of the research focused on Causal Network methodology. As part of this focus the issues impacting and affecting tourism provision in Grampian, Inverness and Nairn, and Ross and Cromarty, are identified. It is these issues that are causing respondent dissatisfaction and it is as a result of the levels of dissatisfaction associated with the issues/variables that Lesson Drawing attempts to suggest possibilities for importing or exporting lessons. Rose suggests that "a lesson can be defined as a programme for action based on a programme or programmes undertaken in another city, state or nation, or by the same organisation in its own past" (1993, p 21).

It was hoped to develop further the information gathered and to suggest solutions to problems (such as remoteness from markets, restricted access, dependence on declining primary sector industries, levels of service, levels of training, perception of attractions or levels of marketing) that were either common, or distinct to each region. For this to be successful the case study regions needed to share similarities in as many spheres as possible. The models would only be of use in Lesson Drawing if conditions between the case study regions could be shown to be similar. Without establishing these similarities no model would be of use. There needs to be fungibility or transferability, according to Rose (1993) the transferability of lessons is dependent on certain similarities between the cases studied. As a result of this need for similarities, three cases were chosen from within Scotland (Grampian, Inverness and Nairn and Ross and Cromarty), because they all had geographic, economic, social, environmental and political similarities. This ensured that problems facing each of the case study regions would be similar and the possibility of drawing lessons between the regions would be enhanced.

Rose suggested there are seven contingent influences involved in Lesson Drawing and the most likely cases for Lesson Drawing would be those which shared these contingencies.

(I) The cases should not be unique in their elements. The regions chosen as a basis for this research are based on the Enterprise Company network boundaries. They are all peripheral in nature and because they are all regions within Scotland they all shared economic, environmental, political and social similarities. The peripheral similarities exhibited by the three case study regions included location, weather, and economic dependence on primary sector industries, distance from core centres and markets, costs of peripherality, seasonality and others.

The most obvious cases that share similarities are regions within the same country that share many of the same economic, geographic, political and ideological variables. Consequently the most suitable cases for this research were areas or regions within Scotland or the UK. "The easiest place to search for lessons is within one's own country, for preconditions for lesson-drawing are easily met" (Rose, 1993 p 97). It is for these reasons that the regions of Grampian, Ross and Cromarty and Inverness and Nairn were chosen.

In this research the cases shared many similarities that included a common heritage and culture and local economic bases that were dependent on primary sector industries such as agriculture, and in some cases fishing. The economic conditions associated with each of the three regions were similar (although not exact) in that they were all subject to the prevailing national and international economic conditions. The organisations and firms operating in the three regions all had to take account of the similar economic issues such as the strong currency and the EU regulations relating to agriculture and fisheries.

(ii) They should not be dependent on their delivery on inimitable institutions. This means that the institutional arrangements in each case study region should not be unique to each individual region. This was certainly an area in which all three case study regions shared similarities in terms of the public sector arrangements. The opportunity to import or export lessons between the regions is increased the greater the extent to which the regions share institutional arrangements. In this case there are a great many institutional arrangements that common. All three regions are located in Scotland to ensure a high degree of compatibility between institutions such as the STB and ATB networks, Enterprise Company networks, EU involvement and access to Structural funds, Local Authority operations and constraints. They all shared similar operational and management constraints associated with the institutional arrangements.

(iii) The greater the similarity of resources the more fungible a programme is. The three case study regions are all subject to similar laws, financial resources and staffing constraints. The availability of resources to each of the three regions was subject to similar operational and institutional constraints and arrangements. For example, in the public sector, the National Tourism Organisation provides funds to all the Area Tourist Boards involved. Each region is subject to funding cut backs associated with the ATB and Local Authority networks and each region is identified as areas in need of EU Structural fund assistance.

(iv) The case should have a relatively simple cause-and-effect structure. The simpler the lesson is, the more fungible it is. This research used Causal Networks as a means of establishing the cause and effect links or association. In many cases the Causal Network streams of variables are relatively simple and logical in their links with other variables within the same streams. For example, the link between low levels of hospitality, poor service standards and poor levels of training or the link between oil and business tourism or the link between peripherality and seasonality.

(v) The scale of the changes should not be too large so as to limit imitation. The smaller the scale of the changes the more likely they are to be transferable between regions. Improving customer service standards is an example of a lesson that can be relatively easily transferred to other regions or best practice associated with co-operation can be identified and transferred to other regions.

(vi) The greater the inter-relationship between different regions the more transferable the lesson. The most likely areas to have inter-relationships and to share similarities with each other would be regions within Scotland. The three regions are all represented by the STB and are all involved with other national organisations that operate across their respective boundaries such as the National Trust for Scotland, Historic Scotland and the Association of Scottish Visitor Attractions.

(vi) The greater the similarity between the programmes and the political values in both the lesson exporting and the lesson importing regions the greater the likelihood of fungibility. The three regions all operated within similar frameworks in terms of political constraints. The three case study regions are all subject to regulations and legislation enacted by both the UK government and the Scottish Executive. Each region is also within the remit of the Minister of Lifelong Learning and Enterprise and all three regions share similar economic and fiscal arrangements.

The next step is to create a lesson based on what has been learned in the areas of study. According to Rose (1993, p 30) "there are five ways of creating a lesson; copying, adaptation, making a hybrid, synthesis and inspiration."

- Copying involves "enacting more or less intact a programme already in effect in another jurisdiction" (Rose, 1993, p 30). The copying process is relatively straight forward, and can easily occur within comparative research within a country or regions that share economic, environmental, social and political similarities.
- Adaptation involves "adjusting for contextual differences of a programme already in effect in another jurisdiction." (Rose, 1993, p 30).
- A Hybrid combines "elements of programmes from two different places" (Rose, 1993, p 30).
- Synthesis combines "familiar elements from programmes in a number of different places to create a new programme" (Rose, 1993, p 30).
- Inspiration involves using programmes elsewhere as an intellectual stimulus to develop a new or novel programme.

Each of these methods of creating a lesson is evaluated as to their effectiveness and applicability in relation to the three case study regions in the Conclusions section.

According to Rose (1993) the final stage before utilising Lesson Drawing is a prospective evaluation of the cases being studied.

In this research prospective evaluation involved studying tourism provision in operation in the three peripheral regions of Grampian, Ross and Cromarty and Inverness and Nairn and evaluating the likely opportunities and consequences of adopting a lesson. It involved a comparison against observed outcomes. The comparison of these observed outcomes can be done in four ways.

(i) A comparison of present performance of existing programmes and lessons with current aspirations of the tourism providers in the three areas studied. This process involves looking at the present situation without the importing of new lessons from elsewhere. If achievements and aspirations can be matched, the result would be routine satisfaction and there would be little need or incentive to seek out or import lessons from elsewhere. If this were the case then the applicability of Lesson Drawing would be limited.

(ii) Evaluating a current programme, performance or project with its past performance. This is called Trend Analysis. The establishment of a trend based on past and present performance is a form of comparison that is often carried out within organisations and regions.

(iii) Comparative Studies compare existing programmes or projects in one area with what is done elsewhere in another area. A league table is produced in which different regions or countries are ranked according to the degree of success associated with the programmes or projects in use in their jurisdiction. The programmes or projects are assessed according to a common denominator or theme such as the success in dealing with issues such as seasonality, service standards marketing.

(iv) Comparative Dynamics involve evaluation of current practice elsewhere in the hope that it will lead to lessons for changing the future in other comparable areas. It involves an evaluation of current practice and the establishment of rankings so that the reasons why one area is performing better that another area can be established. With this information the performance gap between the two areas can be closed, by the importing of Lessons from the more successful area. The area with the poorer performance record attempts to match the performance of the other area(s).

Each of these comparative methods is used in varying degrees when comparing performance of one organisation or region with another and establishing the applicability of Lesson Drawing. For example, the success of a National Tourism Organisation such as the STB would be evaluated by comparing its performance with other NTOs (comparative studies), partly by comparing its performance with previous years (trend analysis) and partly by comparing its performance with current aspirations. Organisations and companies tend to measure degrees of success according to several criteria as opposed to one single one and the process is often on-going.

Lesson Drawing is a comparative approach which according to Baum (1999, p 2) is not widely used in tourism research. He quotes Pearce and suggests that "the comparative approach has yet to emerge as a distinctive, readily recognisable methodology in tourism research." The need for comparison is fundamental to this research and is essential to any attempt at drawing lessons between regions. This is because any measures for success (or otherwise) must be based on quantifiable, useable data that must have a starting point and a method of assessing whether the objectives set have been achieved. For example, the approach to tourism provision and hospitality training and service standards may be good in one region and poor in another. But levels of tourism provision or service standards are comparative. The only way to gauge whether one is good or bad is to compare one with another.

Despite the fact that there is a need for an inter-relationship between regions and programmes and political values should be similar Rose suggests that "distance is no obstacle to Lesson-Drawing" (1993, p 105). In fact Rose suggests that "Britain is an extreme example of policymakers ignoring geographical propinquity in favour of social psychological proximity. Ireland and France are each less than twenty-five miles from Great Britain, yet policymakers in London never think of looking there for lessons in public policy. British policymakers often look across the ocean to the United States or Canada, or even further to Australia" (Rose, 1993, p 107). The suggestion is that despite the obvious need for similarity of economic resources and the natural trend to look at close geographical neighbours for lessons, it may be that countries further away, in the Atlantic region, such as Canada, will have more similarity in ideology with the UK. As a consequence they may be in a better position to benefit from lessons in Grampian, than countries closer to Scotland, such as Portugal or France.

The possibility of drawing lessons across time that is, from the past, is also considered for use in this study. However, the past is unlikely to highlight any major lessons from within Scotland because it is only comparatively recently that the development of tourism in these peripheral areas has attracted wide spread interest. This is largely as a result of the decline of the traditional primary industries, such as agriculture and fisheries that are associated with these areas. The issue of peripherality has been, and continues to be, a major obstacle to the economic development of all three case study regions, (especially the more peripheral areas). Lesson Drawing is an on-going process and lessons from the distant past are unlikely to provide viable solutions. However, there are opportunities to import lessons from the recent past not only from within Scotland and the three case study regions but also from other countries that have similar problems to the three case study regions. In a general sense, specific lessons would be difficult to import because of differences associated with institutions, accessibility to resources and different political values. However, this does not mean to say that lessons to do with marketing, training or ways of tackling issues such as seasonality would not be appropriate for use within the three case study regions. Certainly the impact of internationalisation, globalisation and regionalism has meant that many of the problems facing Scotland and the three case study regions would be similar to the problems faced by other peripheral regions around the world.

Baum (1999, p 5) suggests there are certain practical benefits associated with using a comparative approach to tourism research. These include; gauging performance on a longitudinal basis, assessing the relative performances of similar cases, identifying alternative development strategies, benchmarking, learning from the experience of others, assisting in the understanding of specific events and the ability to replicate previous studies. However, he also points to some of the problems and limitations associated with comparative studies. He described these as; "the definitional ambiguity associated with both the supply and demand side of the tourism industry, the variable data quality, the diverse and interdisciplinary character of tourism and the structure and organisation of the industry" (1999, p 7).

Many of the tourism lessons that can be learned, or passed from one region to another, are relatively simple (the goals are often centred around economic regeneration of some sort) however, the tourism policy decision making process itself is not so simple. The number of organisations, companies, individuals and other various bodies involved serve to ensure that this can be a complicated process.

4.4 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

4.4.1 SECONDARY RESEARCH

An extensive literature review was undertaken before the empirical research to identify the current situation and the key issues involved in the research field. Secondary information was gathered on both the Grampian region and the Highlands region of Scotland. The regions within the Highlands to be studied consisted of Ross and Cromarty and Inverness and Nairn (because of their commonality with Grampian) but statistical data was difficult to obtain for these two individual areas. This was because they are Local Enterprise Company regions and are not necessarily recognised as distinct regions by the Local Authorities or other Government departments. As a consequence some of the secondary data concerning these two regions refers more to the Highlands in general as opposed to either specific case.

Much of the secondary information was collected from several different sources involved in the research. These included; Robert Gordon University library service, the STB research department and library service, Local Authorities, Local and National Enterprise Companies, the Scottish Office, Voluntary organisations, Government departments, Area Tourist Boards, individual attractions, the internet and respondents involved in the study. This information was used to establish the literary foundations of the research and to develop the initial hypothesis and Causal Network diagrams.

4.4.2 PRIMARY RESEARCH

There were many options for the collection of the necessary primary data needed for this research but the options most likely to enable this research to achieve its objectives, and the ones elaborated on, are questionnaires, focus groups and interviews. According to Bell (1987, p 52) "the instrument is merely the tool to enable you to gather data, and it is important to select the best tool for the job." The methods of data collection will be qualitative in nature because "there are clearly certain kinds of data which are best obtained by formal methods but there are some questions about consumer's experiences, feelings, attitudes, reactions and comments which are best tackled by qualitative research. This is because they are methods designed to apprehend those implicit qualities of consumer response and disposition that the sieve of quantitative research cannot catch." (R and D sub-committee on qualitative research, 1979, p 113).

4.4.3 POSTAL QUESTIONNAIRES

The main advantages to be gained by using questionnaires are; "low cost of data collection. Low cost of processing. Avoidance of interviewer bias. Ability to reach respondents who live at widely dispersed addresses or abroad" (Oppenheim, 1992, p 102). "The questionnaire is usually chosen rather than observation or interviewing because of its ability to generate a larger sample of organisations and respondents" (Snow and Thomas, 1994, p 162). However, despite these advantages the postal questionnaire was not utilised in this research because of their relatively small number of potential respondents and the likely low response rates associated with postal questionnaires. Also there is little opportunity for further exploration of responses, which is of primary concern during this research.

4.4.4 THE FOCUS GROUP

This involves gathering together a number of respondents from the sample population, at the same time and in the same place, for a structured group discussion, on a particular issue, or subject area. It is a good way to gauge responses through non-verbal forms of communication and can be both cost and time effective when dealing with a relatively large population. However, focus groups were not considered suitable for this research because the research was not seeking consensus from a homogenous group and also because of the possible problems associated with group dynamics and power hierarchies and the difficulty in following up individual responses. Further problems would be associated with arranging dates and times that would be suitable for the relatively high status of respondents and the concern over the respondents' willingness to discuss, and disclose data relating to their institutions in the company of other organisation's representatives.

4.4.5 INTERVIEWS

For the construction of the Causal Network models and narratives and for the testing of Lesson Drawing in all three of the case study regions required in-depth techniques of data collection. The interview was chosen as the most suitable technique for these samples because interviews "encourage the free flow of words, ideas, feelings, thoughts and images in response to stimulus subjects or words" (Goodyear, 1971, p 49). According to Silverman (1993, p 90) interview data can be seen as a way of getting to the "facts about the world; the primary issue is to generate data which are valid and reliable, independently of the research setting." The information required is of a functional nature in that it involves the opinions of experts (many of whom are in public sector/institutional employment) as to the obstacles and problems relating to effective tourism policy delivery in the case study regions. Some of this information was confidential in nature and was not, therefore, suitable for collection using any other method than interviewing. However, a large amount of this information may be subjective in nature because "interviewing as a method relies heavily on the opinions, perspectives, and recollections of respondents" (Snow and Thomas, 1994, p 161). It is still valid because perceptions themselves are important influences on behaviour and "an input to some extent coloured by subjectivity from a properly-informed and qualified source is a perfectly valid form of information" (R and D sub-committee on qualitative research, 1979, p 107).

Telephone interviews would have been preferable to postal questionnaires when collecting the type of information required from the case study regions because, active participation is required and respondents may refuse to respond in writing. In terms of cost, it was likely that where face-to-face interviews would involve considerable travelling costs, the telephone has an advantage. Expenditure of time, for the interview itself, would also be less. However, the telephone interview may not be the most appropriate method of data collection because of the difficulty in transcribing the information and the inability to recognise anything other than verbal feedback.

The use of electronic interviews was not considered to be appropriate because several of the respondents (accommodation providers, smaller attractions and some other members of the commercial sector) did not possess the necessary equipment or technology.

The preferred method of data collection was the face-to-face interview as opposed to telephone interviews because these allowed non-verbal cues to be picked up. The advantages of carrying out personal interviews over postal questionnaires were that the interviewer had the ability to follow up ideas, responses and feelings, which the questionnaire could not do. The personal interview offered standardised explanations to certain questions that arose, such as problems associated with tourism provision in each of the case study region's, and also reduced the likelihood of misinterpretations and allowed greater control over the sequencing of questions.

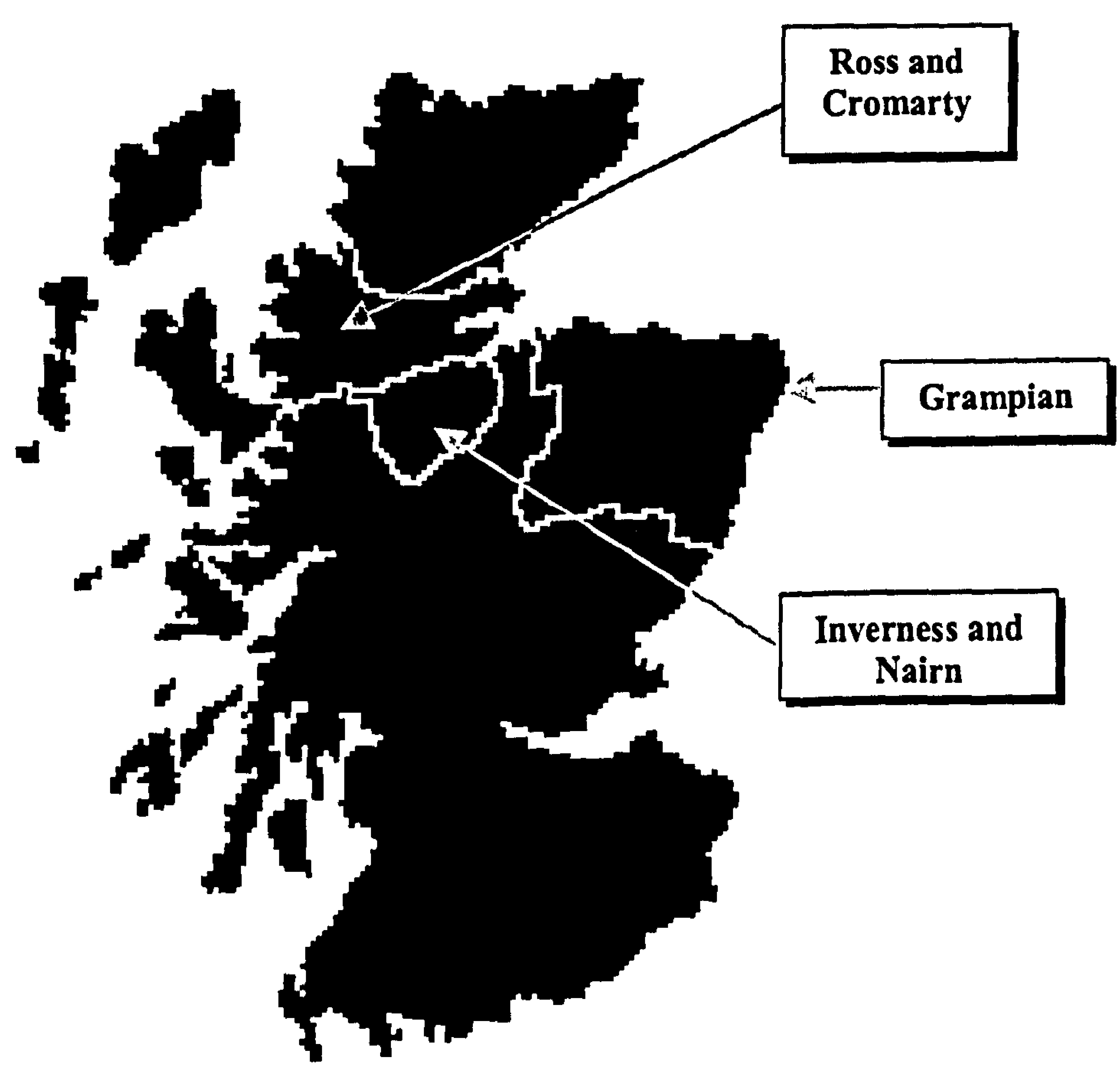
Three types of interviews were considered to be appropriate for this research, structured, semi-structured and unstructured. The structured interview is one in which the questions, order of questions and choice of responses are all fixed. This was not considered an appropriate method for this study because of lack of flexibility in the question responses. The unstructured interview involves no pre-determined set questions or order and consequently there is no choice of response. This method was also not considered suitable because of the lack of focus on the specific questions and areas needed in order to achieve the objectives of this research. The final style is the semi-structured approach, which combines the structured interview with standardised open-ended questions. In choosing a style for interviewing, Oppenheim points out that "the more structured the interview the easier the analysis and the more comparable the responses, but the more limited the data" (Oppenheim, 1992, p 147). With this in mind the style chosen for use in this research was the semi-structured approach. This was because of the standardisation of the questions which facilitated analysis (although it was recognised that the analysis of open ended responses can be difficult) and the ability of the interviewer to follow up any points of interest, and pursue a particular line of questioning if it appeared to be informative and relevant to the research.

4.5 CASE STUDIES

4.5.1 LOCATIONS

The regions studied were all located in the North of Scotland (see map of case study regions). They have all been categorised as peripheral (some more so than others) by the EU and the Scottish Office in their documentation for Structural fund assistance. Grampian is located in the North East of Scotland. Inverness and Nairn is to the west of Grampian and north of the central belt. Ross and Cromarty is to the north of Inverness and Nairn and includes locations on both the west and east Coasts.

MAP OF CASE STUDY REGIONS – GRAMPIAN, INVERNESS AND NAIRN AND ROSS AND CROMARTY



4.6 THE CASE STUDY METHOD

Case studies tend to provide a holistic view of phenomena. They have been described as "probably the most flexible of all research designs. When used in an intellectually rigorous manner they offer the strengths of experimental research within natural settings" (Hakim, 1987, p 61). Yin (1993, p 59) describes the case study method as an empirical inquiry that "investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, addresses a situation in which the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, and uses multiple sources of evidence." Robson (1993, p 52) describes them as a "strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence." In this research the contemporary phenomenon was tourism in peripheral areas and the real life contexts were the three case study regions. The research attempted to achieve experimental isolation of the selected social factors within a real-life context and provide a strong, rigorous test of explanations and ideas.

Case studies tend to be richer in-depth studies that highlight individual instances as opposed to broad ranging studies. They also tend to focus on relationships that are inter-connected and inter-related, usually within a social setting and allow the use of multiple sources and methods. (Johnston et al 1999, Denscombe, 1998, Hakim, 1987, Holloway, 1997). According to Denscombe (1998, p 31) "One of the strengths of the case study approach is that it allows the researcher to use a variety of sources, a variety of types of data and a variety of research methods as part of the investigation."

The use of multiple sources and methods strengthens the claims for research validity through triangulation (Bonoma 1985, Johnston et al 1999). According to Yin (1994) and Johnston et al (1999) multiple sources of evidence provide multiple measures of the same phenomenon. The multiple sources used in this research included interviews, archive material, such as survey data and maps, charts and organisational records, documentation, such as minutes of meetings, administrative documents and newspaper and local press articles.

Triangulation involves getting the same responses from multiple different sources. Yin (1993, p 69) suggests "the most robust fact may be considered to have been established if three (or more) sources all coincide." The use of three case study regions in this research was an attempt to establish triangulation and validity of the findings on the basis that the three case study regions would elicit three independent sources of data that in many cases replicated and supported each other. Johnston et al (1999, p 5) suggest that each case should "complement the others by replicating the findings under various conditions." This was true of this research where the latter two case study regions of Inverness and Nairn and Ross and Cromarty tended to replicate much of the findings associated with the initial Grampian case study region. The tendency in the later stages of the research was for the respondents feedback to reinforce many of the variables suggested by the Grampian respondents (although there were a few new variables suggested such as sustainability and natural attractions). The differences tended to be in the rankings or gradings given to the variables as opposed to the inclusion of many new variables.

Yin (1994) and Johnston et al (1999) suggest that one of the major criticisms levelled at case studies is the issue of bias. According to Robson (1993, p 56) "even with good faith and intentions, biased and selective accounts are undoubtedly possible." This issue of bias was a factor throughout the research but was particularly addressed both during the data collection and the collation of this data. The interviews were fully documented and transcribed. During the writing up of the findings of each individual interview (on the same day as the data was collected) the interview data was input into a Causal model. These models meant that the data had to be categorised and labelled. This process served as a check on the narrative data. If the data had been incorrectly transcribed then the variables and the Causal links would be problematic and would not flow logically to a conclusion. For example, if the STB and the ATB were rated as doing a poor job and the level of marketing was rated as high, then either something has been incorrectly transcribed or further justification or evaluation was needed.

Criticisms have been levelled against the case study method as a result of the production of data, which have been classified as soft, descriptive and lacking in rigour, analysis and evaluation (Johnston et al 1999, Denscombe 1998, Hakim 1987, Robson 1993, Yin 1994). In this research descriptive accounts were included, but so too were analysis and evaluation. The first stage of the analysis and evaluation took place during the identification of the Causal variables and the construction of the Causal Networks. The second stage involved analysing and evaluating each variable and each case study region in terms of Lesson Drawing.

According to Yin (1994), case studies should also be used for the purposes of theory testing and theory building. According to Denscombe (1998) the rationale for choosing a particular case study could be that it contains crucial elements that are significant, or important. These elements could be used in an attempt to predict certain outcomes. In this research, the Grampian region was the first region to be studied and several Causal Networks were generated as a result of the data collected from this initial case study. The Causal models were then tested in the regions of Inverness and Nairn and Ross and Cromarty. The theory of Lesson Drawing was then utilised in an attempt to draw lessons from one region to another. Once the theories had been developed and tested Yin (1994) suggests that it is at this level that generalisation can occur and there could be possibility of transfer to other cases.

An important element of this research involved comparing regions and the possibility of transferring the findings of the study to other areas. This involved highlighting cases that were peripheral in nature and therefore fungible with Grampian. One of the major problems associated with case study research is how representative the actual case? (Denscombe, 1998, Yin 1994). It could be argued that the findings of each case study are unique to the particular circumstances of that case. This research used three case study regions in an attempt to counteract this particular criticism. According to Hakim (1987, p 64) "the general significance and robustness of research findings increases with the number of sites in which a survey is conducted."

One of the main reasons for choosing a case study approach was the possibility of comparing between the three case study regions. Providing the particular cases were similar in crucial respects with the others being studied, the findings from the case study were likely to apply elsewhere. (Denscombe, 1998). Pearce also suggests that "the extent to which experiences can be transferred successfully will depend in large part on the similarity of salient conditions between countries or cases" (1995, p 31). All three case study regions were similar in several respects and consequently there was the opportunity for transferability of lessons and findings to other peripheral areas.

Confidence in the results of case studies is a problem. However, Yin (1994, p 45) suggests that "the evidence from multiple cases is often more compelling, and the overall study is therefore considered more robust. Confidence in case study design increases with the number of cases covered, with the greatest proportional gains being achieved when the number of cases is increased from one to two, three or more." Hakim (1987) and Johnston et al (1999) also suggest that the strongest designs involve the comparative study of two or more cases.

Yin (1994) suggests that the analyst should attempt to generalise to theories and not necessarily other case study regions. "The theoretical framework later becomes the vehicle for generating to new cases" (p 46). In this research the data was related to both the development of the Causal Network models and also to the theory of Lesson Drawing, whose primary function was to transfer lessons between peripheral regions. This is supported by Wacker (1998, p 11) who suggests that "good theory building research's purpose is to build an integrated body of knowledge to be applied to many instances by explaining who, what, when, how and why certain phenomena will occur." The development and testing of Causal Networks and the application of Lesson Drawing theory were an attempt to achieve what Wacker suggests would be good theory building. It was hoped that this could be achieved by identifying and defining the variables, explaining how and why the variables are related and using Lesson Drawing to suggest possible improvements or occurrences.

Each case was chosen with the possibility of complementing one another. Each of the three regions chosen all shared similarities in terms of institutions, geography, politics, economics and social settings. Allied to these factors the author also had prior knowledge of each area. According to Hakim (1987, p 64) "as a general rule the greatest amount of prior knowledge is required by case studies that test causal propositions." The testing of causal inferences (using Causal Networks) was fundamental to this research. Stake et al (1994, p 243) describe the approach used in this study as "instrumental or collective" because this is where one or more cases are chosen from possible alternatives.

The first stages of this research involved an exploratory case study in the Grampian region. In an exploratory case study Holloway (1997) suggests that categories, typologies and themes should be generated. One of the purposes of the research (at this stage) was to ascertain the issues of importance to tourism providers and categorise them as variables, in other words to generate categories and themes. According to Bouma and Atkinson (1995, p 110), "such a study might be done to formulate a hypothesis for later study." The aims were to establish Causal Networks that could be tested in Inverness and Nairn and Ross and Cromarty and to test the applicability of Rose's theory of Lesson Drawing.

The second stage of the research involved comparing responses and explanations generated during the data collection in the second and third case study regions. The data presented focused on cause-effect relationships and was comparative in that it attempted to show how explanations could apply to other situations. (Yin, 1993, Bouma and Atkinson, 1995).

4.7 RESPONDENT SELECTION

"A population is a group in which all the individuals or items are singled out for study. It often happens that the group is so large that to study everyone would be impractical because it is too expensive and too time consuming" (Kane, 1985, p 90). The initial interview population consisted of respondents involved in tourism provision in Grampian. In total 32 respondents were interviewed in the Grampian region. Upon completion of the research in Grampian the process was replicated in the regions of Ross and Cromarty and Inverness and Nairn. In total 36 respondents were interviewed in these latter regions. Seventeen of the respondents were based in Inverness and Nairn and 19 were based in Ross and Cromarty. The focus during the data collection was mainly on the public sector and as a consequence all Local Authorities, Local Enterprise Companies, Area Tourist Boards and National Tourist Boards were interviewed.

"Sampling is an important feature of all research. Part of the whole is studied and results are taken to be an accurate reflection of the whole" (Bouma and Atkinson, 1995, p 137). Dixon also suggests that sampling is an important stage because "the manner in which the sample is drawn determines to what extent we can generalise from the findings" (Dixon et al, 1991, p 134). According to Robson (1996) the types of sampling can be sub-divided into two probability samples include simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified random sampling, cluster sampling; and multistage sampling and non-probability sampling. Each of the probability samples makes an attempt to categorise information into the form of statistical representations or generalisations.

The nature of this research meant that the respondents needed to be experts in their fields, not necessarily random or quota samples. Purposive sampling involved selecting the respondents based on the researcher's judgement as to their typicality or interest. "A sample is built up which enables the researcher to satisfy their specific needs in a project" (Robson, 1996, p 142).

Much of the data collected was elicited using qualitative techniques and according to the Research and Development sub-committee on qualitative research "qualitative research normally works with small samples of consumers. Further, these samples are selected purposively and not by formal statistical sampling" (1979, p 114). Curtis et al (2000, p 3) also point out purposive qualitative samples are typically small and generate large amounts of information. They are often conceptually driven by an evolving theory and they make possible analytical generalisations on a theory depending on how the selected cases fit the general constructs, but they are not necessarily useful for statistical generalisations. These factors were integral to the approach taken for this research.

Further rationale for a purposive sampling strategy (and its relation to this research) is suggested by Curtis et al (2000, p 4) where they develop Miles and Hubermannns' attributes in relation to qualitative purposive sampling strategies. These include the following list.

- The sampling strategy should be relevant to the conceptual framework and the questions being asked. This was applicable for this research because respondents were chosen because they were experts in their field, which meant they would be informed about the issues involved in the study.
- The sample should generate rich information. This was also true of this research where the informants were encouraged to talk and enlarge on their responses with specific data and information.
- The sample should enhance the generalisability of the findings. This was the case for this research where the findings were aimed more at methodological generalisability than to statistical generalisability.
- The samples should produce believable explanations. In most cases in this research the respondent's feedback supported the current literature and established knowledge in the area.

- The sampling plan should be feasible. This was important in the number and selection of respondents in terms of cost, timing and accessibility constraints. If the findings were intended to be generalised and representative to all tourism providers and to all cases then a larger sample would be required. However, this was not the purpose of this research.

It was for these reasons that a purposive sampling technique was considered the most appropriate although it is accepted that it was difficult to identify an entirely satisfactory sampling strategy.

It is acknowledged that the relatively small number of respondents involved in this research (68 in total), could be seen as a limiting factor in terms of statistical representativeness of the findings. The purpose of the research was not to highlight a level of quantitative statistical data, but was an exploratory study of methodologies and their applicability to a specific tourism environment. The respondent interviews were not intended to produce results that were necessarily representative of all tourism providers in all three regions. Rather the purpose was to provide information and data that could be used to inform, construct and test the applicability of both the Causal Network and Lesson Drawing approaches.

In the initial Grampian case study region respondents were drawn from transport providers, accommodation, attractions, Local Enterprise Companies, Local Authorities, Tourist Boards and an "Others" category. However, in terms of feedback and interview data some of the respondents (primarily from the small-scale private sector such as Bed and Breakfast operations and respondents from travel agents and transport) tended to be reluctant to be interviewed and were in many cases reluctant to impart information. However, the public-sector respondents tended to be informed, knowledgeable and more co-operative in terms of giving interviews and imparting information. As a consequence the respondents from the Inverness and Ross and Cromarty case study regions were chosen largely from the public sector.

Because the aim of this research was to test the methodological approaches of Causal Networks and Lesson Drawing it was important to select the respondents who were willing and informed and who could provide the rich in-depth data that was required for the construction of the Causal Network models. The number of public sector organisations involved in tourism provision in all three case study regions, were considerably smaller in number than the private sector. This meant that an equal number of public and private sector respondents would be more representative of the public sector. This is because there were as many as 4000 private sector businesses/organisations in Grampian and the number of public sector organisations would be limited to Enterprise Companies, Local Authorities, Tourist Boards and Government agencies. This meant that on a percentage basis, many of the respondents were public sector respondents. As a result of the fact that the majority of the respondents were from the public sector the methodologies have a greater application when drawing on public sector perspectives of phenomena.

Therefore, even though the findings from this research should not be considered as representative of all tourism providers in all three of the case study regions they can be considered to be representative of the public sector in the three regions.

4.8 SNOWBALL SAMPLING AND KEY INFORMANTS

During the respondent selection a list was drawn up using key informants. The snowball technique was utilised in this research and Fink suggests that "this type of sampling relies on previously identified members of a group to identify other members of the population. As newly identified members name others, the sample snowballs" (Fink, 1995, p 19). These key informants were used in the selection of the initial sample based on the tourism suppliers in Grampian and also for respondent selection in both Inverness and Nairn and Ross and Cromarty (see appendix 1).The snowball sampling strategy identifies multiple informants which according to Johnston et al (1999) goes some way in negating the criticism levelled at single key informants.

A list of organisations and companies involved in tourism provision in all three regions was initially drawn up based on secondary research and the researcher's previous knowledge. This list was then distributed to the key informants who then suggested others. In total five key informants/experts in Grampian were highlighted, based on factors such as; their expertise in the area, their willingness to help, their current involvement in tourism provision and the relative ease of accessibility.

Each respondent was asked if they knew of anyone else who was able to assist in the research. This meant that the original list continued to grow and expand. This method was a continuation of Snowball Sampling and was a method of referral sampling which according to Jackson (1995, p 401), means that, "as you complete one interview you ask if there is anyone else known to the respondent who might be appropriate for the study." This process was an attempt to ensure as complete inclusion of informed respondents as possible. However, the limitations associated with this method (namely that each key informant would tend to recommend people they were familiar with and who in many cases tend to represent the same views and stand point as themselves) are accepted (see limitations of research).

This process was repeated for the other two peripheral areas involved in this study, prior to conducting the interviews.

4.9 CODING OF INFORMATION

The first stage in analysis was to code the raw data. The coding utilised the headings assigned to the question groupings, which were conceptually grouped, on the questionnaire. The data was then input onto a variation of the conceptually clustered matrix, which recorded the responses from all the interviews on the one sheet (see appendix 3 and 4). The vertical axis for the matrix consisted of the conceptually clustered questions and responses and the horizontal axis listed the sites and respondents, according to their functions and roles. The conceptual clusters were initially pre-set and allocated prior to the data collection with the questions on the questionnaire grouped accordingly.

The development of some categories prior to the interview were based on knowledge gained during the course of the literature review and the researcher's previous knowledge and the key informant feedback. Because of the evolving nature of the research, categories were also derived from the data, after the information collection had taken place. This involved the grouping of similar statements or responses under specific headings, or themes that were highlighted during the interviews. According to Robson (1996, p 377) it involves generating "themes, categories, codes, etc. as you go along." Dey suggests that "one source of ideas for generating categories is the data itself. Qualitative methods often involve the acquisition of data that cannot be accommodated within pre-existing categories. Even with a relatively structured technique, such as a structured interview schedule with open-ended questions, all the responses produced cannot be assigned to categories in advance of analysing the data" (Dey, 1993, p 97).

Dey describes the method chosen for this research as one which draws some broad preliminary distinctions within the data" (Dey, 1993, p 104). This approach was adopted because "it fits well with policy-oriented research where a policy agenda already provides a source of categories for analysis" (Dey, 1993 p 104). It allows for the pre-assignment of some categories and codes for questions which only have limited response options, such as funding arrangements or the leaders in tourism provision in the region. It also allowed for the grouping of responses into conceptual categories, which could be utilised at a later stage during the construction of a Causal Network.

4.10 ANALYSIS OF DATA

Yin (1993, p 19) suggests that case studies are well suited to "take advantage of pattern matching techniques." Pattern Matching was also used during the Lesson Drawing stage of the research where it involved comparing, or matching, several pieces of information from the case study regions in an attempt to either import or export lessons. It involved matching the emerging patterns associated with the variables for each of the three regions. For example, marketing was considered to be poor in Grampian. These findings, or patterns, were matched in both Inverness and Nairn and Ross and Cromarty. According to Yin (1994) if the patterns coincide or can be related to the variables In the case study then the results strengthen the internal validity of the case study.

This data was then analysed using the constant comparative and Causal Network methods in an attempt to highlight issues within peripheral area tourism. In most cases these problem areas reflected the literature and included problems such as low levels of economic activity which have been commented on by the authors included in Table 1 below.

Table 2: Authors commenting on the low levels of economic activity in peripheral areas

Pearce 2000, Baum, 1999, McLellan, 1997, Botterill et al, 1997, Wanhill, 1995a and b, Cavaco, 1994, Whitby and Powe, 1994, Henderson, 1993, Lane, 1993, Bramwell, 1993, Gilbert, 1989). Further examples and authors include seasonality, Day and McLennan 2000, Hassan 2000, Clarke 1999, The European Directorate General 23 1999, Baum 1998, HOST 1997, Scottish Enterprise 1996, STB 1994.

Poor standards of service have been identified by authors such as Day and McLennan 2000, Go and Govers 2000, Dredge 1999, Baum 1997, Crawshaw 1996, Peel 1996, Smith 1996, Cavaco 1994, Hummelbrunner 1993, Greffe 1993.

Miles and Huberman (1991 p 130) suggest that field research "is a process of progressive focusing and funnelling." They go on to point out that as data is collected the factors that influence local events are brought into some sort of meaningful pattern. In essence they are mental constructions that are gradually developed and elaborated by the researcher in the course of piecing together discrete pieces of data.

According to Miles and Hubermann (1991, p 21) "analysis consists of three concurrent flows of activity: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data reduction refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the raw data that appears in written up field notes." They consider it to be part of analysis as opposed to distinct from it. They suggest that it is a form of analysis that organises data in such a way that assists in the drawing and verification of conclusions. One method they use and describe is the ranking of data into categories, such as high, moderate and low. This is not uncommon in qualitative research where attributes or variables tend to have labels or names rather than numbers. This was the method of data reduction used in this research.

Data display is the second of the concurrent flows of activity they identified. Display is defined as "an organised assembly of information that permits conclusion drawing and action taking. The most frequent form of display for qualitative data in the past has been narrative text" (Miles and Hubermann, 1991 p 21). They go on to suggest that large amounts of narrative text are dispersed, poorly structured, bulky and cumbersome. Because of these attributes the qualitative researcher may draw the wrong conclusions in an unfounded way. They suggest that humans are not good at processing statistical information and large quantities of data could overload many humans' information processing skills. They suggest that Causal Network models are "designed to assemble organised information in an immediately accessible, compact form, so that the analyst can see what is happening and either draw justified conclusions or move on to the next step of analysis that the display suggests may be useful" (Miles and Hubermann, p 22). This proved to be the case in this research where the model format allowed for the large amount of data to be systematically reduced and put into a diagrammatic format. However, it was recognised that condensing large amounts of narrative data into model format could lead to a loss of richness associated with the respondent interviews. In an attempt to avoid this, some narrative was included with each model to assist understanding and to avoid loss of depth (as suggested by Miles and Hubermann, 1991).

The third stage was that of conclusion drawing/ verification. They suggest that "the coding of data for, example (data reduction), leads to new ideas on what should go into a matrix (data display). Entering the data requires further data reduction. As the matrix fills up, preliminary conclusions are drawn, but they lead to the decision (for example) to add another column to the matrix to test the conclusion" (Miles and Hubermann, p 23). They go on to point out that although final conclusions may not appear until the data collection is over, the process of drawing conclusions is an on-going process that begins from the moment of the initial data collection. Patterns begin to emerge and possible explanations become evident.

The data from each individual interview was used to construct a causal model and narrative for each of the respondents (see section on Causal Network development). This data was then input onto a conceptually clustered matrix which listed the respondents, on the horizontal axis, in the following category groups: Local Authorities; LECs; Tourist Boards; Retail; Transport and Travel Agents; Accommodation; Attractions and "Others." The "Others" group consisted of various government organisations, voluntary groups and pressure groups such as, the National Trust for Scotland, Historic Scotland and Scottish National Heritage.

The vertical axis listed the responses to the questions, which followed the same pattern associated with the Causal Streams. This meant that where one variable, such as 'peripherality' leads naturally to a second variable such as, 'rural economy', they would be listed next to each other. However, this was not always possible because some of the variables were relevant to more than one other variable. For example, 'peripherality' was relevant to 'rural economy' as well as to 'costs to visitors' so it was listed next to the variable that appeared closest to it on the Causal Network diagram. Other examples of conceptual groups included co-operation, integration and leadership and hospitality, service standards and training.

Once the responses had been input into the matrix the data from each of the respondent groups was collated and totalled to provide a group total response for each particular variable and for each particular group. Examples of variables included peripherality, rural economy, marketing and funds. Examples of groups included Local Enterprise Companies, Local Authorities and Area Tourist Boards.

At the beginning of each interview the respondents were asked to try and grade their responses using an ordinal scale. As a consequence, the responses elicited during the interviews were, in most cases ranked by the respondents themselves as low, moderate, and high. Variations of these groupings were low/mod and mod/high. In some cases where the respondents did not suggest a ranking or did not respond using the categories suggested their responses were retrospectively graded and given a rating on the ordinal scale used throughout the research. This was a relatively straight forward process because although the respondents may not have responded using the categories of low, moderate or high they tended to use other terms such as poor (low), weak (low) or very good (high). These responses were encouraged by the wording of the questions on the questionnaire (see questionnaire in appendix and section on interview questionnaire). For example, respondents were asked questions such as how would you rate the standard of tourism provision in the region? How would you describe the levels of co-operation amongst tourism providers in the region?

During the process of aggregation the responses needed to be transferred into percentages so that the responses could be categorised using the ordinal scale. This was not done to suggest statistical representation but was done to allow the categorisation of the respondents. If the actual numbers of respondents were used then this would not be consistent with the other groupings, regions or case study areas because there would be different base numbers. The use of percentages allowed for comparison between and within the case study regions. The category of low referred to 0-20%, low/moderate referred to 21%-40%, moderate was 41%-60%, moderate/high was 61%-80% and high was 81%-100%. This meant that the aggregated responses could be represented using the same ordinal scale. For example, if all of the respondents (100%) suggested that funding was low then that would be represented on the aggregated Causal Network model as low. If eight out of eleven respondents (73%) suggested the variable of co-operation was low then it was categorised as low. If 25% of respondents suggested marketing was low and 25% suggested it was moderate and 50% suggested it was low/moderate then the variable was categorised as low/moderate (for further discussion see the Grampian region case study).

It was recognised that the process of aggregation would inevitably lead to loss of statistical representativeness but the point to be emphasised here is that this research was not intended to produce results that were totally representative. The aims of the research were to test the methodologies of Causal Networks and Lesson Drawing and as such there is no claim for the findings to be representative of all tourism providers in the three regions. The inclusion of the statistical data during the findings sections from the three case study regions is to aid in understanding the categorisations attributed to each variable as opposed to representing a high level of statistical representation.

The groupings of low/moderate and moderate/high also tended to emerge during the collation and aggregation of the data into group findings and totals (for a discussion of aggregation see limitations of research). For example, if there were four respondents in a group, where two rated a variable as low and the other two rated it as moderate, then the variable would be low/moderate. The use of these particular groupings was based on models used by Miles and Hubermann (1991) and which have been the basis for the Causal Network models used in this research.

In other cases when the data was aggregated it was difficult to differentiate between the variable grades (where the number of responses for low, low/moderate,

moderate, moderate/high and high were similar) the actual percentages were used to provide a second level of inference. In cases where the distinctions were still not clear the interview transcripts were referred to in an effort to establish greater clarity (this was the approach suggested by Miles and Hubermann). If there was still doubt then the variable that erred on the side of caution was selected, for example, instead of categorising a variable as high, the variable was categorised as moderate/high. This was done to avoid drawing inferences or correlation's that may not necessarily be present.

4.11 DATA COLLECTION

The data for the Grampian case study was collected between the months of May and June 1997. The data for the Inverness and Nairn and Ross and Cromarty case studies was collected between the months of May and June 1998. All the respondents were contacted by telephone, or in person, to arrange the interviews and all the interviews were conducted at the respondents' place of work. Each interview lasted between 20 – 40 minutes depending on the time constraints and pressures on the respondents and on their willingness to develop points. It was decided not to tape the interviews, despite some of the advantages of doing so. The reasons for not taping the interviews was based solely on the degree of confidentiality of some of the information and the possible reticence of several of the key informants to talk freely with a tape recorder present.

In total 38 respondents were approached and 32 interviews were carried out in and around the Grampian region. In Inverness and Nairn 20 respondents were approached and a total of 17 interviews were conducted. In Ross and Cromarty 21 respondents were approached and 19 interviews were carried out. These relatively high response rates were due to the fact that several of the respondents were known to the researcher and also because key informants were used in the selection of respondents. The sample size was dictated by the need to test the Causal Network and Lesson Drawing methods as opposed to concerns for statistical validity associated with the outcomes. It has been acknowledged that because of this the data was not representative of private sector tourism providers in the case study regions. However, the respondents do represent a relatively large cross section of public sector organisations involved in tourism provision in the three regions and consequently could be considered to be representative of the views of the public sector.

4.12 PILOT STUDY

In general no matter which method is used to collect data, it should (where -ever possible) be tried out on a pilot basis, before being utilised in full-scale data collection. This is an important step because it assists the researcher in clarifying issues associated with questionnaire design and interview structure. A pilot also serves to ensure that questions make sense, that they are suitable and that they elicit the type and nature of response required for the research. The process will almost always lead to improvements to the questionnaire and will help to ensure the validity of the research findings because "interviews based upon pre-tested, standardised questions are a way of increasing the reliability of the research" (Silverman, 1993, p 106). The initial variables were included as a result of the literature review, prior researcher knowledge and key informant feedback. In this research the interviewer had almost continuous access to one of the key informants. It was this source that was utilised as the first of the pilot interviews and was instrumental in the formation of the Grampian interview population. The data collated during the pilot studies lead to the construction of the initial Causal Network model which was developed, tested and refined as the research progressed from the first case study region of Grampian through the third and final case study region of Ross and Cromarty. It was a rolling process that evolved throughout the research (see figure 1).

After the construction of the causal network models for the pilot interviews the models were discussed with the pilot respondents to confirm that the models were valid, represented their views and were an accurate account of the interviews. These pilot interviews were not included as part of the Grampian case study.

Figure 1

Initial variables drawn up as a result of the review of literature, key informant feedback and researchers previous knowledge

First/initial models drawn up after pilot interviews

Model developed in Grampian (see paragraph at the base of figure 15)

Refinement

Models tested in Inverness and Nairn

Moderate refinement

Models tested in Ross and Cromarty

Final model and review/evaluation of the Causal Network method

The Grampian stage of the research was essentially a large scale pilot stage as the models developed and evolved during this stage to form the basis for the models that were used in the case study regions of Inverness and Nairn and Ross and Cromarty. The models and data from the latter two case study regions tended to support the models and variables from the Grampian case study and tended to remain comparatively unchanged during the research in the latter two case study regions. Although the models did evolve and change, the changes tended to be in gradings or rankings and were not as pronounced as during the initial formation stages in Grampian (see section on the case study method).

4.13 INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Developing the semi-structured interview questionnaire was a very important stage in the research because in order for the conclusions generated from the data collected to have any validity, the methods used to collect that data must be both reliable and rigorous. There were a number of criteria that needed to be considered when constructing the questionnaire. These included how to avoid question bias, the requirements of the questionnaire, the format, the types of questions, the question order and the sequence. The interview time was likely to be restricted, in length and opportunity, to one interview lasting approximately 30 - 40 minutes. Because of this the questionnaire needed to be concise and cover all areas of relevance to the interview.

Key issues for inclusion were drawn from themes most frequently addressed in the literature on peripheral area tourism. For example, the level of hospitality provision was an issue in the literature as was seasonality and public sector involvement. The process involved in the questionnaire design was iterative in nature, It involved designing the initial questionnaire based on the literature, then conducting the interview, inputting the data onto the matrix and developing the casual network models. The questionnaire was then amended as a result of the initial data collection to include issues that arose from the interviews. The process continued throughout the pilot study. The question wording was designed to elicit the responses required and in the way that was required so as to allow for suitable analysis after the collection of the primary data was complete. In order for the responses to be included in the Causal Network models they needed to be graded or categorised in some way. The grading or ordinal scale used was based on Miles and Hubermannn (1991) and consisted of the categories of low, low/moderate, moderate, moderate/high and high. The emphasis was not only to encourage the respondents to answer in as full a way as possible but also to encourage them to grade their responses wherever possible (see questionnaire in appendix 2).

The initial aim of the pilot interviews was to test the questionnaire format and style and the relevance of the question content. The questionnaire was designed around cognate groups that included, tourism provision, funding, co-operation, marketing, peripherality and hospitality. These cognate groups and variables were identified during the review of literature, from key informant feedback and from researchers previous knowledge. As a result of the pilot interviews certain variables were taken out and others identified by the respondents were included. It was all part of the rolling nature of the research process and the questionnaire and the Causal Network models evolved throughout the research. For example, the questionnaire format was changed and questions on accommodation, attractions and infra-structure were included. These extra questions reflected the respondents' views and allowed for a more complete model to be constructed that more accurately and fully depicted tourism provision in the regions studied.

The cognate groups were designed around the Causal Streams identified as a result of the pilot interviews and the Grampian interviews. These Causal Streams consisted of causal variables that were linked or connected in some way. Certain questions were related and linked to other questions and as such were grouped with those questions in the questionnaire. For example, the cognate group of peripherality included questions related to the region's location, local economy and benefits/problems associated with the region's location.

The interviews were designed to elicit full and, hopefully, graded, responses using the ordinal scale based on low, low/moderate, moderate, moderate/high and high, which would then be used in the construction of the Causal Network models. It was recognised that there was only a limited range of response opportunities associated with rankings but they were used to quantify the data into a useable. Some rankings were readily associated with the question responses during the actual interview and where possible the respondents were asked to quantify their responses themselves.

The ideal situation was for the respondents to grade their responses in the ordinal scale suggested by the researcher at the time of the interview. However, where this was not possible others were generated after the interview during the process of coding and inputting of the data onto the conceptually clustered matrix and it was recognised that this was a limitation of the study (see limitations of research). For example, if a respondent suggested that the level of local economic activity was very good then this was categorised as high. If the response to the question of peripherality was that the region was not considered to be remote then this was coded as low in terms of peripherality (see analysis of data). These rankings were later used in analysis and the construction of the Causal Network diagrams.

One of the major problems associated with the data collection was converting rich qualitative information into useable model based data, without losing the depth of the responses and any issues of importance. In an attempt to avoid losing the richness of the respondent's feedback the Casual Network models were supported by brief narratives.

4.14 CAUSAL NETWORK DEVELOPMENT

During the initial stages of this research a literary search and review of the literature were conducted in an attempt to focus and conceptualise the study. As the literature search progressed and information and data on Causal Networks was introduced the Causal Network model format began to evolve.

During the data collection a list was drawn up which identified the variables involved in tourism provision in the three case study regions. Wacker (1998, p 9) suggests that "generally the literature provides a base for defining variables." This was the case in this research where the literature, knowledge of the region and feed-back from key informants and pilot study respondents provided the basis for the initial variables. The variables were used as the starting points for the Causal Networks and further variables or outcomes, connected to each variable were included.

Where possible Causal Network models attempted to indicate causality but in cases where it proved difficult to establish which variable was the cause and which was the outcome the linkage between the variables indicated a connection as opposed to definitive causality. These linking variables were called Streams. The starting points for the construction of the Causal Networks were the variables of Tourism provision and Tourism product (see figure 2).

Figure 2

Tourism provision

Tourism product

For the development of the Causal Network models starting variables were required. The variables initially identified as starting points by the key informants were Tourism Provision and Tourism Product. The consensus was that these two variables encapsulated the focus and aim of the study. However, these start variables can (and were) subject to change as the research progressed and evolved. This was expected throughout the pilot studies and also to a lesser extent throughout the three case study regions.

During the early stages of the Grampian case study, the two variables of Tourism Provision and Tourism Product were amalgamated into the one variable of Tourism Provision. The rationale for this was that several of the respondents suggested that tourism provision in a region would logically include the region's tourism product and there was little to be gained by actively trying to distinguish between the two. More logical starting variables suggested by the respondents, based on the focus of the research are Tourism Provision and Peripherality. These two variables then lead to Causal Streams that lead ultimately to the end variable of low Visitor Numbers.

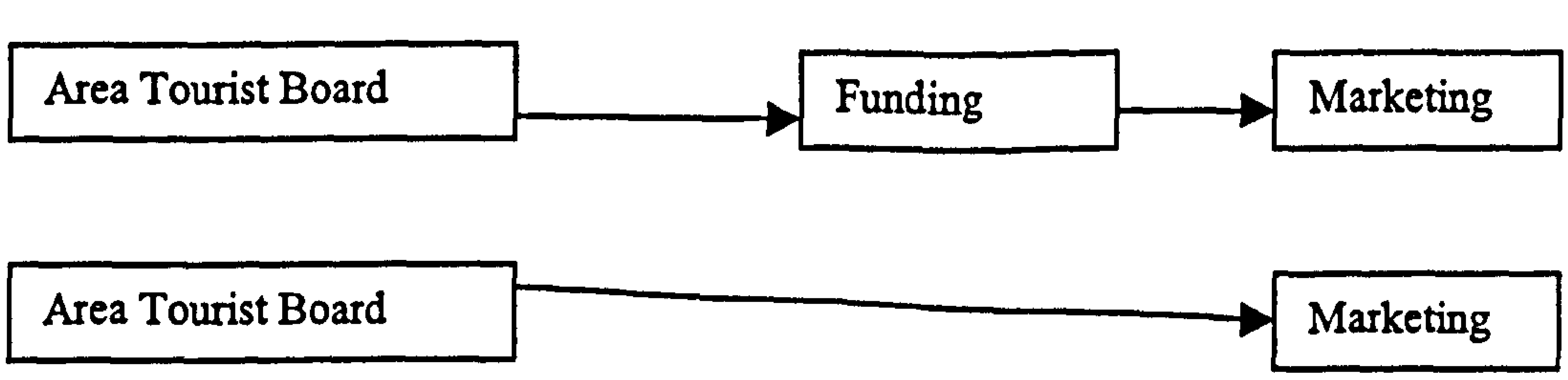
Each variable was connected to another variable with an arrow, which attempted to identify the flow or connection of variables. In some cases the flow or causality was not evident or could not be definitively identified but the identification of a connection between the two variables that the inclusion of as many variables as possible were the most important issues (see figure 3).

Figure 3

The lack of co-operation in a region could be partly responsible for low levels of leadership or could the issue of leadership be responsible for a lack of co-operation? Could low levels of funding be responsible for poor marketing in a region or could poor marketing in that region be responsible for attracting low levels of funding? Could a region's poor image be partly the result of poor marketing or could poor marketing be the result of a region's poor image?

The point to emphasis here is that although causality was important to the study it was also important to include as many of the variables as possible so that the methodologies of Causal Networks and Lesson Drawing could be tested. Also even though causality may not be established between variables the exclusion of variables from the models could mean that some variables could be linked to other variables that may not represent a true connection or reflection of the situation. In figure 4, for example if the variable of Funding were removed it could mean that if respondents suggested the Area Tourist Board were doing a bad job the link would be made directly to the variable of marketing without taking account of the well reported funding cut-backs. As a consequence if causality could not be definitively linked from one variable to another then connection between the two (although not ideal) would be sufficient.

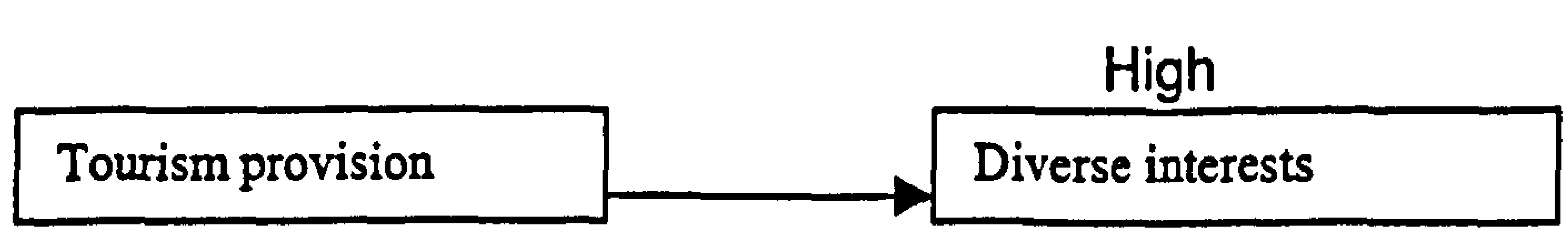
Figure 4



During the construction of the Causal Network models narratives were included alongside the models in an attempt to ensure as complete a picture of the respondents data as possible. It was hoped that this narrative would not only inform the reader but also maintain the depth (and reduce the loss) of respondent data as a result of putting the information into a model format.

The next stage involved developing the links and relationships between variables. The relationship between any two variables in a theory must be stated otherwise the theory cannot be internally consistent (Wacker, 1998). From each of the Causal Network variables, links or connections to other variables were established, for example using the start variable of tourism provision the next variable suggested by respondents (which supported the literature) was the fact that there were many diverse interests involved in tourism provision. This meant that diverse interests were identified as a variable impacting on Tourism Provision. The number of Diverse Interests were rated as high (see figure 5) because of the large number of individuals and organisations involved in tourism in the region (the category of High was suggested by the respondents who were asked to use the ordinal scale of Low, Moderate and High). The linking arrow between the variables of Tourism Provision and Diverse Interests indicates a connection between the two.

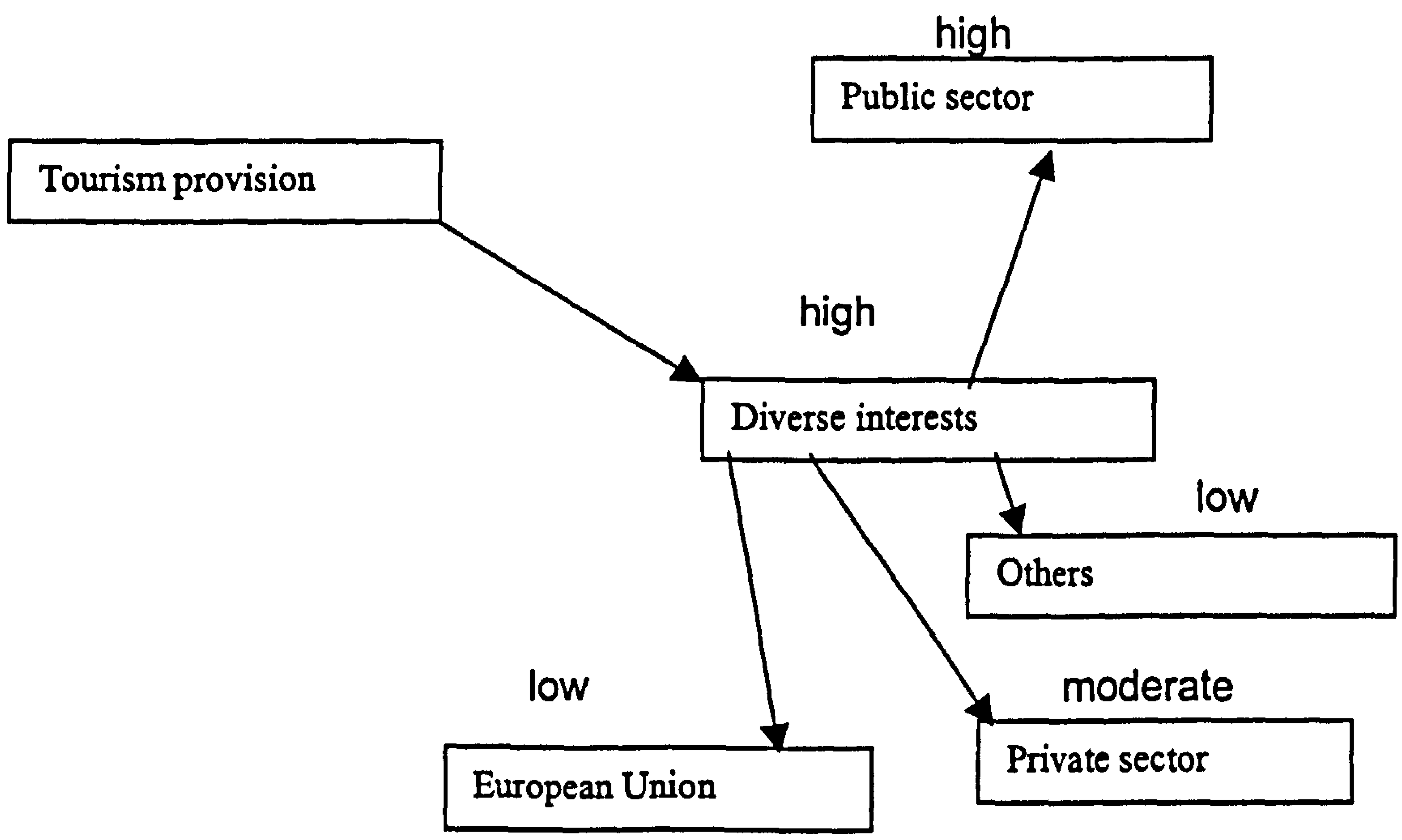
Figure 5



Developing the variable of Diverse Interests meant that the organisations involved, or included as the Diverse Interests also had to be represented. These were identified by the literature, and the respondents, as the Public Sector, Private sector, the European Union and Others (which included voluntary organisations, pressure groups or any organisations that did not fit into the other three variables). Each of these variables would also be given a rating by the respondents based on their influence over tourism provision in each case study region and using the ordinal scale of Low, Moderate and High (see figure 6).

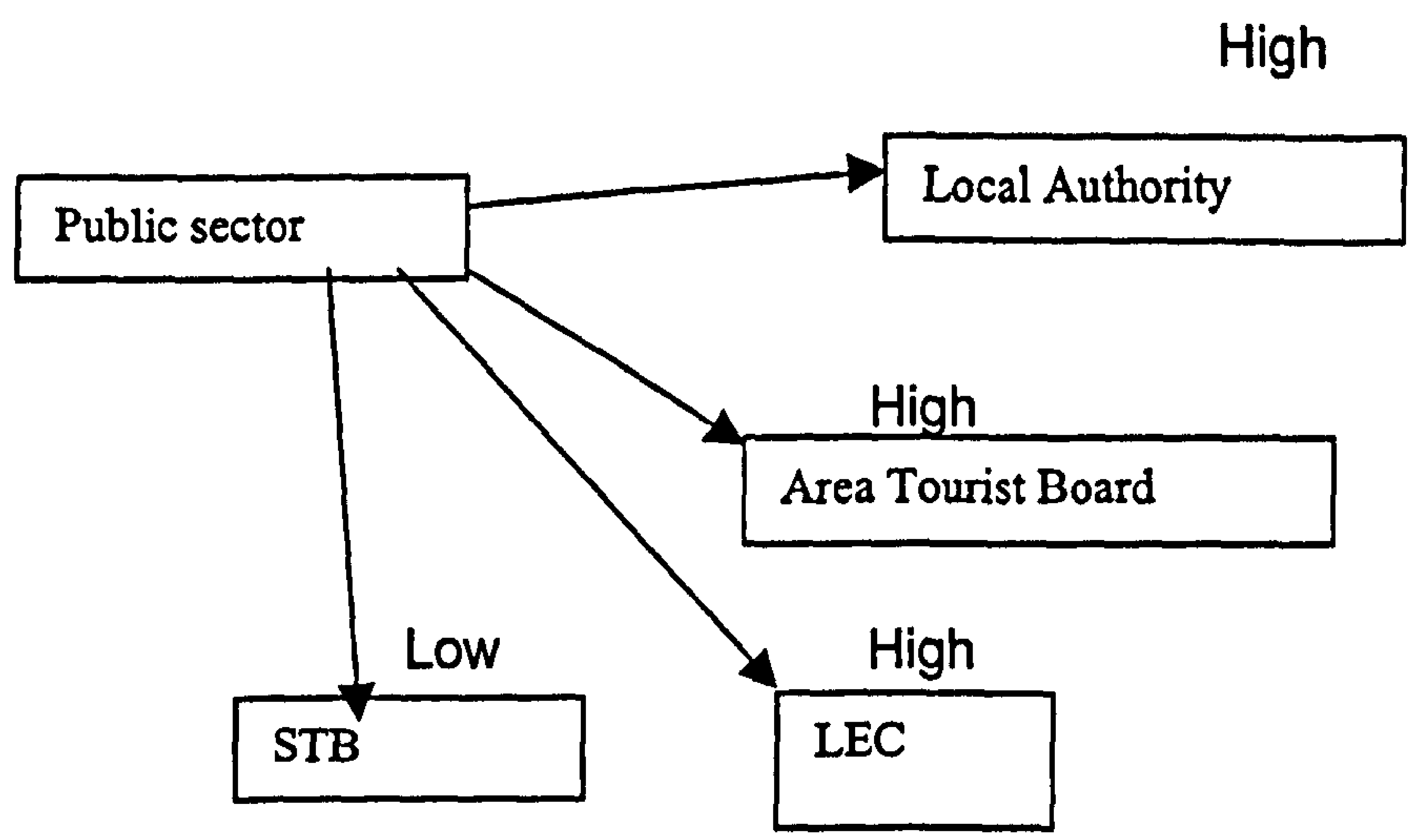
In this case, the Public Sector was rated as having a high level of influence (as was identified in the literature). The Private Sector was rated as moderate, Others as low and the EU as low. The EU influence was not necessarily reflective of the literature (see section on regionalism in literature review) or their financial contribution to the regions but may reflect perceptions of the Principle of Subsidiarity as adopted by the EU itself.

Figure 6



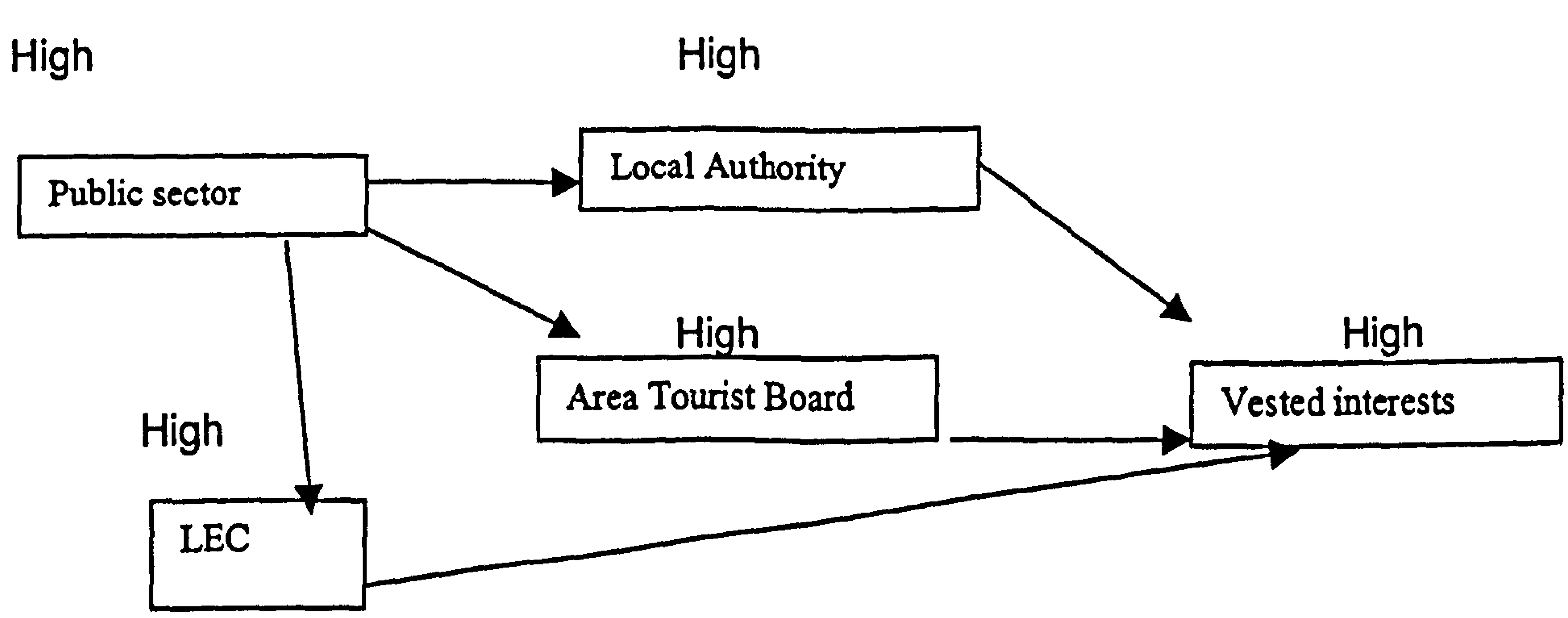
Each of these variables led to other connecting variables. The variable with the most connecting variables was the public sector and each connecting variable, was also rated by the respondents as low, moderate or high. In figure 7, the Public Sector was identified as having four components, Local Authorities, Local Enterprise Companies (LEC), Area Tourist Board (ATB) and the STB. The Local Authority was rated as High as were the ATB and the LEC. The STB was rated as low. The literature tends to emphasise the importance of the Local Authorities, LEC's and the ATB's (Botterill et al 1997, Wanhill 1995a, Oakes 1995, Shucksmith et al 1995, Burke and O'Cinneide 1995). However, the STB, despite being the lead body for tourism in Scotland, was considered to have low levels of influence. This is in contrast to what the literature suggests should be the levels of influence of the STB and other National Tourism Organisations. The low levels of influence attributed to the STB was, according to respondents, partly the result of poor funding, poor operational procedures and a lack of direction. Their influence outside the Central Belt and the Highlands of Scotland was considered to be low.

Figure 7



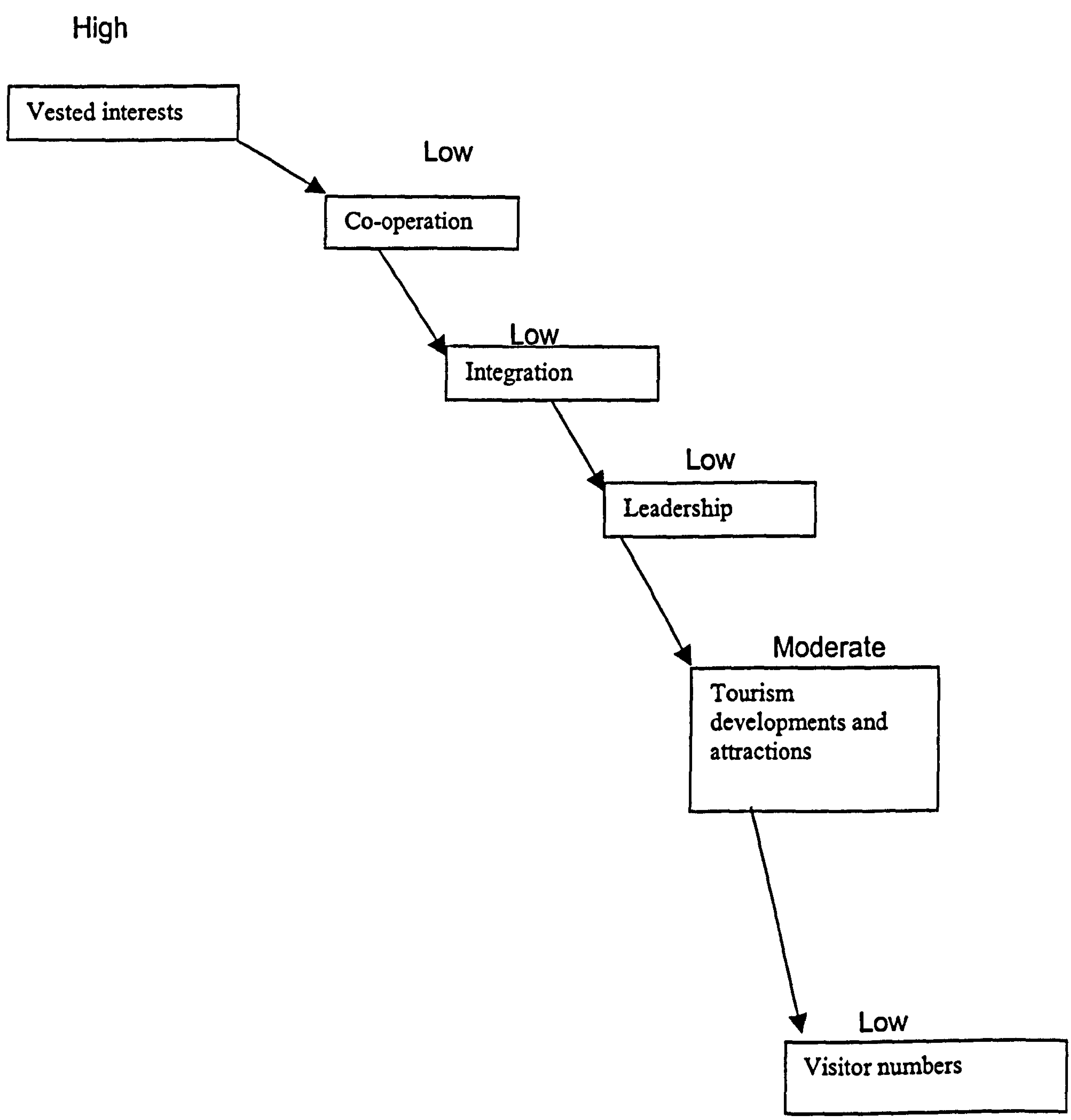
Each of these variables represents a public sector organisation involved in tourism provision in the region being studied. In this case the respondents suggested that all of the organisations (with the exception of the STB) had their own vested interests, which was rated as high (see figure 8).

Figure 8



Partly as a consequence of the number of vested interests involved there were considered to be low levels of co-operation, low levels of integration and low levels of leadership. Although low levels of co-operation and integration do not necessarily lead to low levels of leadership, this was identified and suggested by the respondents. As was discussed earlier, although establishing causality between variables is important, the main aim was to test Causal Networks and Lesson Drawing methods and as such it was important to identify as many connected variables as possible to allow for these theories to be tested (especially Lesson Drawing). Each of the variables of Co-operation, Integration and Leadership have an impact on the variable of Tourism Developments in the region which was rated as moderate and visitor numbers (which was the end outcome) was rated as low (see figure 9).

Figure 9



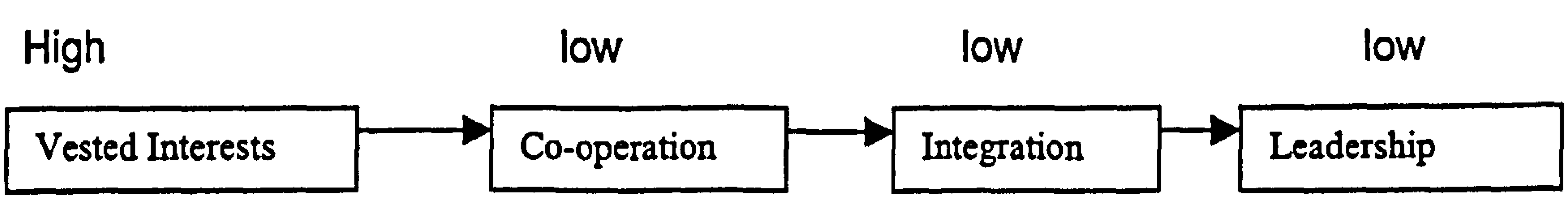
4.15 CAUSAL STREAMS

Each of the variables are connected or joined with other variables to form Causal Streams and these Streams are integrated and included to form the Causal Network diagram for each respondent's interview. Examples of Causal Streams are discussed below.

4.15.1 CAUSAL STREAM OF VESTED INTERESTS, CO-OPERATION, INTEGRATION AND LEADERSHIP (SEE FIGURE 10)

Because of the high number of Vested Interests a high level of Co-operation proved difficult to achieve. This was because Vested Interests involved tend to pursue their own agendas. Linked to the levels of Co-operation were the levels associated with Integration, which were also rated as low. Although a lack of Co-operation does not necessarily lead to low levels of Integration it would be comparatively difficult to have high levels of Integration with the low levels of Co-operation identified by the respondents. Following from the low levels of Co-operation and Integration was the issue of Leadership. As before, low levels of Co-operation and Integration do not necessarily lead to low levels of Leadership. However, Co-operation is often easier to achieve if a leader has been identified and is able to bring all the parties involved together (as has happened with Rory Mair and the Aviemore Partnership).

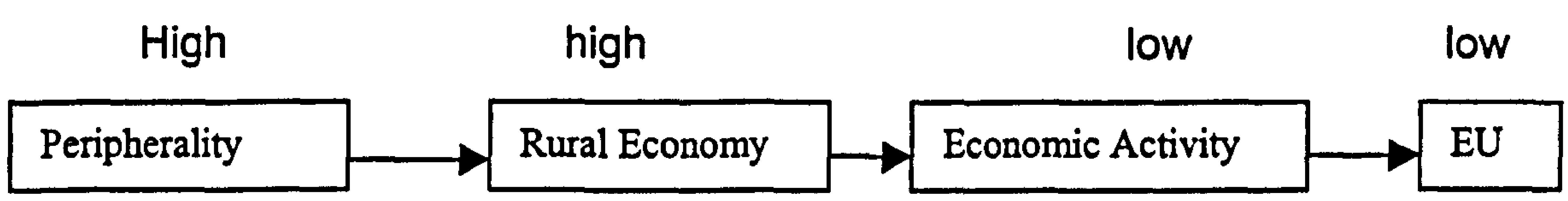
Figure 10



4.15.2 CAUSAL STREAM OF PERIPHERALITY, RURAL ECONOMY, ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AND EU (SEE FIGURE 11)

The level of Peripherality associated with the particular region (in this case Grampian) was considered by the respondents to be high. Allied and linked to the degree of Peripherality was the level of rurality associated with the region. In this (as in most peripheral cases, especially those involved in this research) the level of rurality and dependence on rural industries such as agriculture was considered to be high. Because of the dominance of rural activity the level of Economic Activity was considered to be low (authors commenting on the low levels of economic activity include Pearce 2000, Baum, 1999, McLellan, 1997, Botterill et al, 1997, Wanhill, 1995a and b, Cavaco, 1994). As a consequence of the low level of Economic Activity the region has been identified as an area in need of Structural Assistance form the European Union (in this case from Objective 5b). This means that the EU are involved in the region, but perhaps due to the Principle of Subsidiarity adopted by the EU which means that their funding assistance often comes via other agencies they were not considered by the respondents to be influential in this particular region. However, this may not be accurate in terms of the actual assistance provided (see section on European Unions involvement in the case study regions).

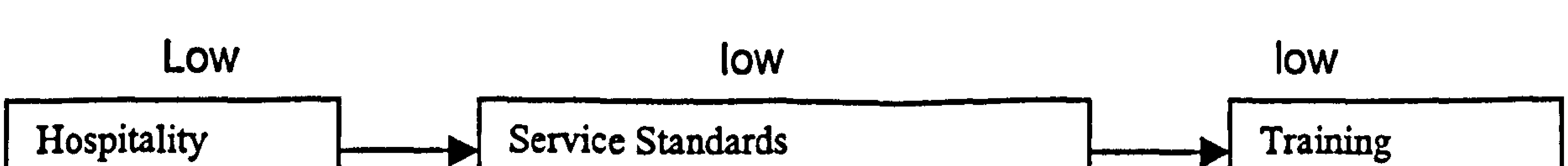
Figure 11



4.15.3 CAUSAL STREAM OF HOSPITALITY, SERVICE STANDARDS AND TRAINING (SEE FIGURE 12)

In figure 12 the respondents identified low levels of Hospitality associated with the region of Grampian in particular and Scotland in general (this is well supported by the literature (Day and McLennan 2000, Go and Govers 2000, HOST 1997, Crawshaw, 1996, Peel, 1996, Smith, 1996). The low levels of Hospitality are connected with the low levels associated with Service Standards, which is also connected with low levels associated with Training.

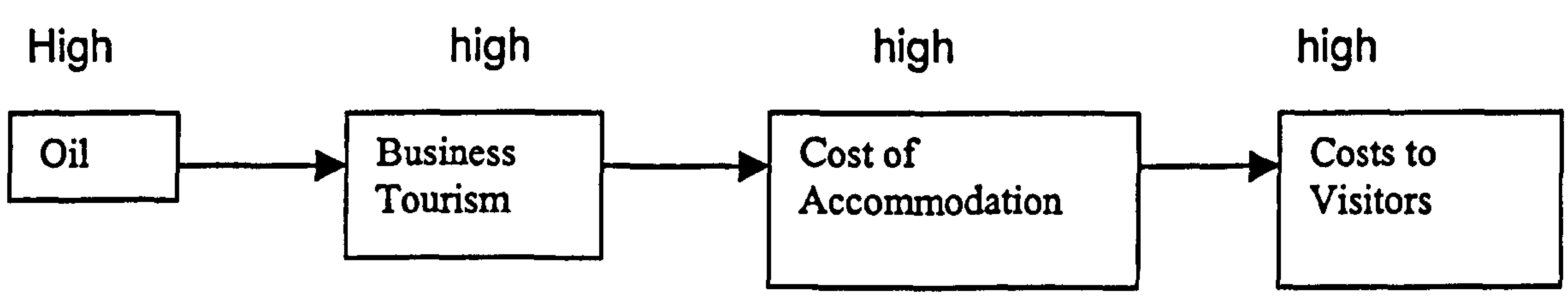
Figure 12



4.15.4 CAUSAL STREAM OF OIL, BUSINESS TOURISM COST OF ACCOMMODATION AND COSTS TO VISITORS (SEE FIGURE 13)

In figure 13 the influence of Oil on the City of Aberdeen was rated as high (which reflects the literature for Aberdeen City but not for the region of North and West Grampian (Clarke, 1999, Grampian Enterprise 1994, Henry 1994, STB 1994). As a consequence of the influence of Oil, the level of Business Tourism in Aberdeen was also rated as high. However, because of the influence of Business Tourism on the local accommodation sector, the Costs of Accommodation were also rated as high (this was because the demand for accommodation from the oil industry and consequent increase in business tourism forces the price of accommodation up). This in turn meant that the perceived Costs to Visitors were also rated as high.

Figure 13



Once the individual interview based Causal Networks and narratives were constructed they were each input into a Causal Network and narrative for their various cognate groups (for example attractions, accommodation, local authorities etc) for the Grampian case study region. From these Causal Networks models and narratives representing the views of larger groupings such as commercial and non-commercial, regional and total numbers from each case study were constructed. This allowed for cross-site comparisons between the three areas being studied. Finally models and narratives representing the views of all the respondents were constructed. There were three models and narratives representing the total number of respondents from all three case study regions. They were based on commercial and non-commercial, regional and total number or all respondents. This approach has been described as "a comparative analysis of all sites in a sample on variables estimated to be the most influential in accounting for the outcome or criterion measures. The analyst looks at each outcome measure and examines for each site the stream of variables leading to or determining that outcome. Streams that are similar or identical across sites, and that differ in some consistent way from other streams, are then extracted and interpreted" (Miles and Hubermann, p 197).

4.16 PILOT INTERVIEWS CAUSAL NETWORKS AND NARRATIVES

Prior to the first pilot interview, variables were identified based on the current literature on peripherality and the Grampian region, the key informant's feedback and also on the researchers previous knowledge. These included variables such as peripherality, diverse interests, co-operation, marketing, competition, costs to visitors, the weather, seasonality, staff motivation, skills levels, wage levels, out-migration, ageing population and the viability of rural communities etc.

A model was not constructed at this stage because the variables were used to frame the questionnaire so that the initial model could be constructed based on the first pilot respondent's feedback. What was hoped for at this stage was the identification and inclusion of the issues that impact on tourism in Grampian.

The initial model constructed as a result of the first pilot interview was not designed to be a definitive version. It was designed to be the starting point for an evolving process that would hopefully end up with a final model that represented as full a picture as possible of tourism issues and problems in peripheral locations based on testing in all three case study regions. As a consequence other models were developed based on this initial model.

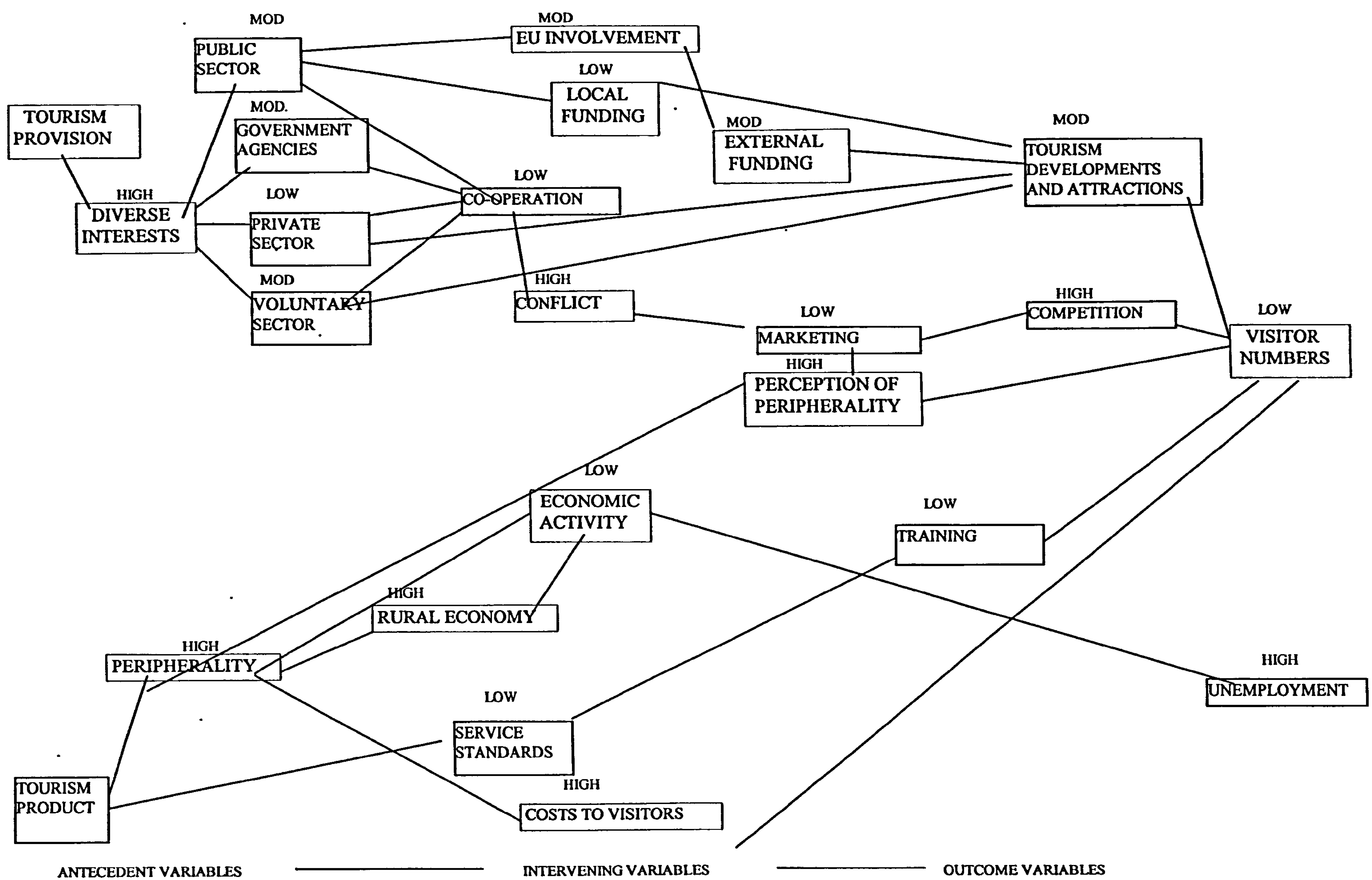
4.16.1 PILOT INTERVIEW ONE

CAUSAL NETWORK MODEL AND NARRATIVE FROM PILOT INTERVIEW ONE (SEE FIGURE 14)

The first pilot respondent suggested that the start or antecedent variables should be tourism provision and tourism product (see figure 14). The large number of diverse interests was identified as an issue in terms of tourism provision in the region and as a consequence the diverse interests variable was linked to tourism provision. These diverse interests included the public sector, private sector and voluntary sector. Government agencies were involved in tourism provision but were not considered by the respondent to be part of these diverse interests. Co-operation between these groups was considered to be low and conflict was rated as high. Local funding was rated as low and the European Union was involved in terms of providing external funding. As a result of the high levels of conflict identified, the level of marketing was considered to be low which meant that the perception of peripherality amongst visitors was considered to be high as was the level of competition. Feedback during the pilot interviews indicated that the major threat to the Grampian region was as a result of competition from other areas in Scotland, particularly the Highlands and the West Coast. The number and standard of attractions in Grampian were mentioned in connection with tourism developments and were considered by the respondent to be adequate for the level of present and likely future demand.

The respondent identified peripherality as an issue that was connected/linked with the start variable of tourism product. The respondent made a direct connection between peripherality and high costs to visitors and low visitor numbers. The peripheral nature of the region meant that there was a predominantly rural economy with low levels of economic activity and high levels of unemployment. The tourism product Causal Stream also included the other issues and intervening variables of low levels associated with service standards and training. However, variables identified through the literature search and key informant feedback such as such as the weather, seasonality, staff motivation, skills levels, wage levels, out-migration, ageing population and the viability of rural communities were not considered to issues by the respondents.

CAUSAL FRAGMENT: TOURISM PROVISION IN NORTH AND WEST GRAMPIAN:RESPONDENT 1. FIGURE 14



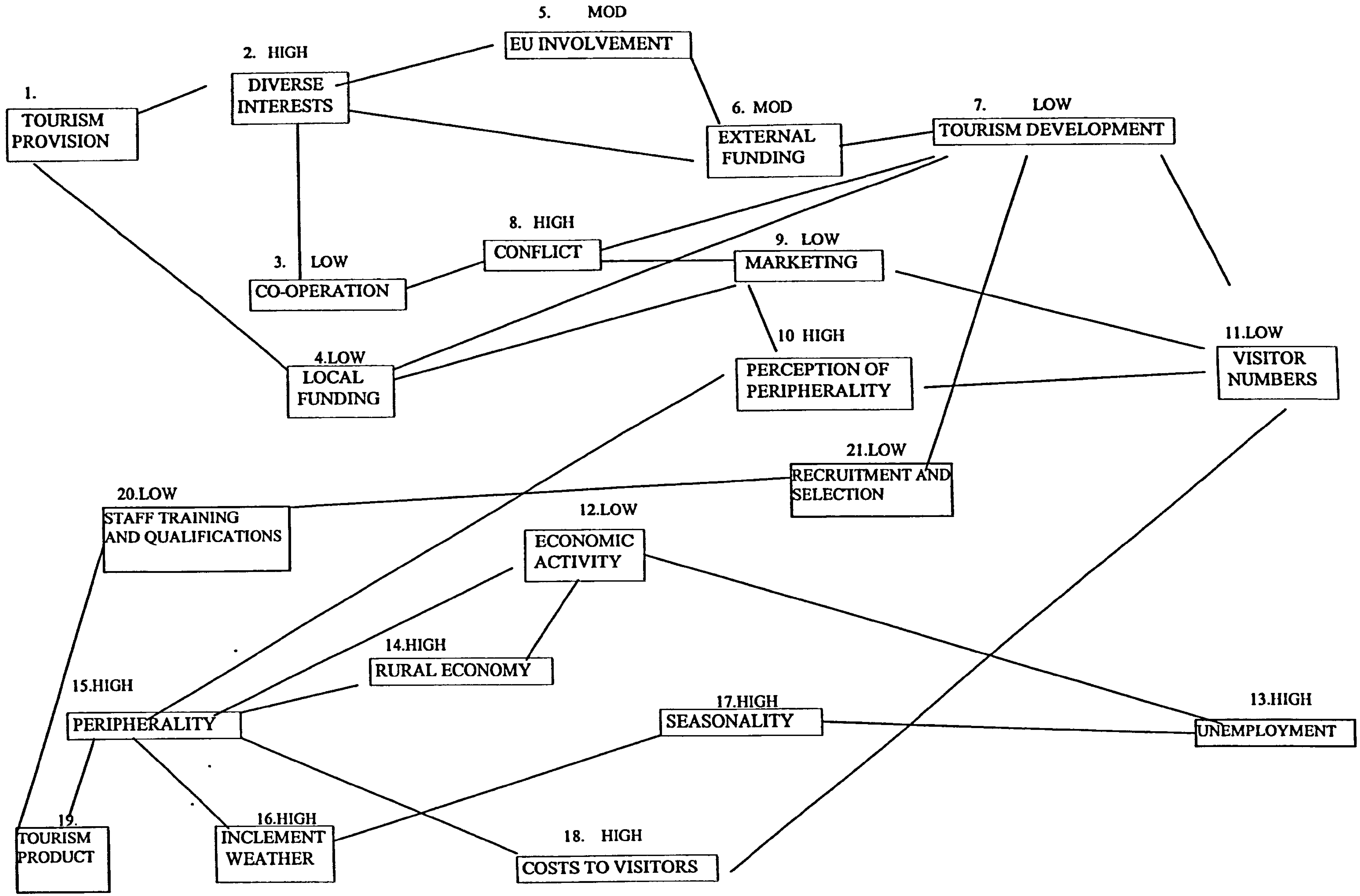
4.16.2 PILOT INTERVIEW TWO

CAUSAL NETWORK MODEL AND NARRATIVE FROM PILOT INTERVIEW TWO (SEE FIGURE 15)

The responses from the second respondent tended to support the feedback from the initial interview (see figure 15). However, a new variable based on the level of staff qualifications amongst some of the public sector tourism providers was introduced as a result of the respondent's feedback. The concern centred on the lack of relevance of the degree qualifications of staff and their inability to be able to properly interpret primary research data. It was felt by the respondent that this lack of tourism specialism was a result of poor recruitment and selection procedures and had an adverse affect on the ability of some of the tourism providers to adequately plan, forecast and implement for the correct number and type of tourism developments and attractions.

The respondent was also concerned about some of the economic and climatic problems associated with peripherality such as the dominance of agriculture and problems associated with the weather and seasonality. As a consequence variables based on these issues were included in the model and more explicit questions were input into the questionnaire to accommodate the emphasis placed on these issues by both respondents.

CAUSAL FRAGMENT: TOURISM PROVISION IN NORTH AND WEST GRAMPIAN:RESPONDENT 2. FIGURE 15



ANTECEDENT VARIABLES —— INTERVENING VARIABLES —— OUTCOME VARIABLES

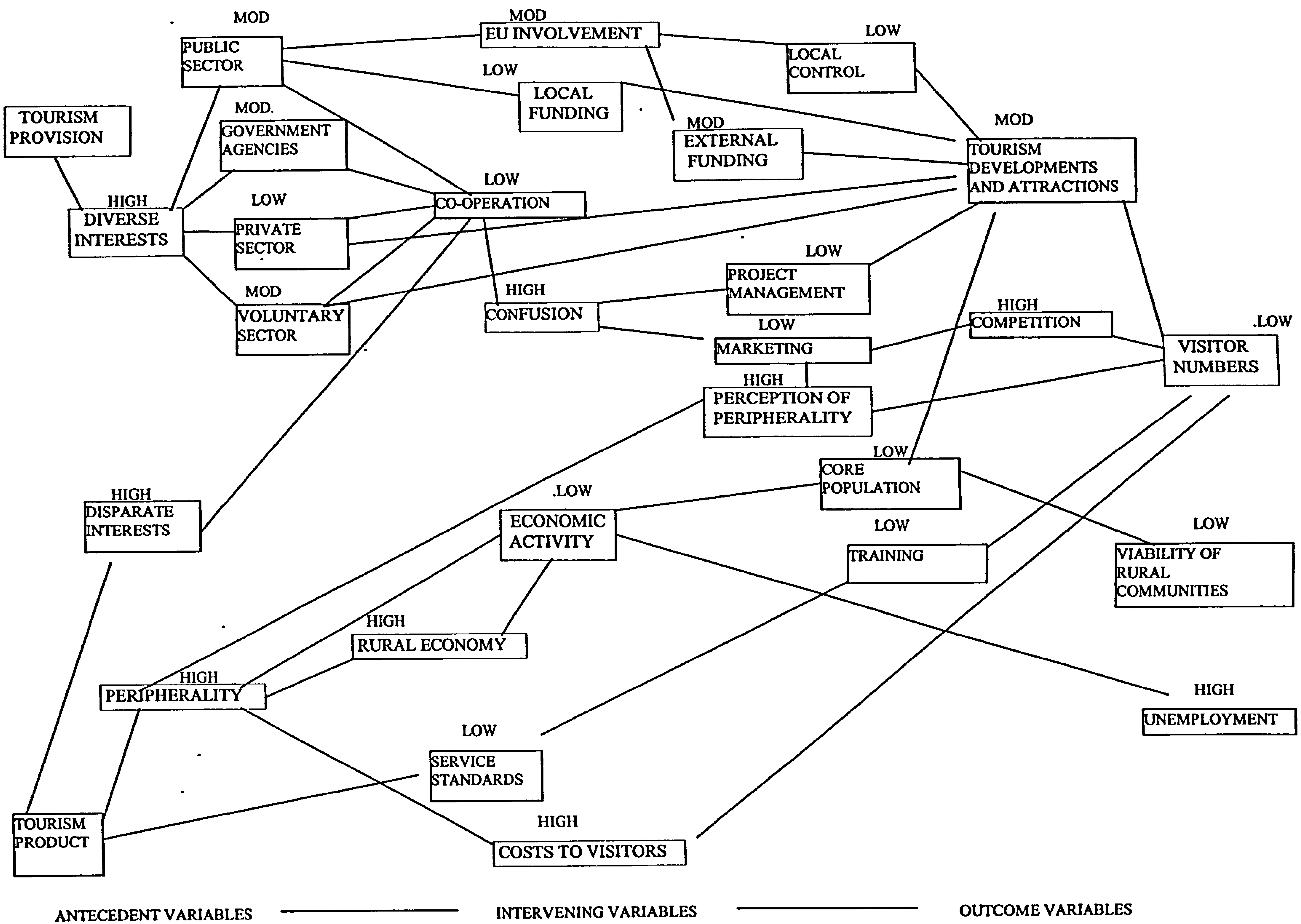
4.16.3 PILOT INTERVIEW THREE

CAUSAL NETWORK MODEL AND NARRATIVE FROM PILOT INTERVIEW THREE (SEE FIGURE 16)

The third respondent suggested that there were considerable problems associated with tourism delivery in the region because of the large number of different vested interest groups (see figure 16). This led to the development of a Causal Stream based on disparate interest's which were seen as being instrumental in bringing about low levels of co-operation. This had a knock-on effect in terms of poor marketing and poor project management. Confusion in the local tourist board was considered to be a major problem that resulted in the area not being marketed effectively. A further problem was associated with a lack of local control over tourism developments both during the planning and development stages of new projects.

In terms of the tourism product the respondents also suggested that there were a large number of disparate interests that were particularly evident in the area of accommodation provision. The respondent also suggested that peripherality is a major problem because of the consequent low level of economic activity and a lack of a core population. The latter was a major problem in terms of attraction developments, because without a relatively large core population there is no basis for repeat visits, which are an essential element in the success of any new tourism product in the region. This lack of a core population also impacted on the viability of rural communities, which was considered to be a problem.

CAUSAL FRAGMENT: TOURISM PROVISION IN NORTH AND WEST GRAMPIAN:RESPONDENT 3. FIGURE 10



The continuous evolving nature of the Causal Network models meant that additions of some variables continued throughout the research. For example, the variable of oil was included as a result of respondent feedback and was important to certain regions in the case study areas, such as Aberdeen, because of its cushioning influence on the economy of the region. As a consequence, the variable of oil was incorporated into the models where appropriate. This process reflected the evolving nature of the research and represented the differing views of the respondents.

After the pilot interviews were conducted the Grampian case study region was the next phase in the development of the causal Network models and some modifications continued. For example, another example of the evolving nature of the research was the variable of attractions. As a result of the Grampian respondent's feedback, attractions became a variable in their own right. This process continued throughout the data collection (in Grampian, Inverness and Nairn and Ross and Cromarty) and, as a result of feedback from the latter two regions, the variable of attractions was sub-divided into natural attractions and built attractions.

At the conclusion of each interview a Causal Network diagram was constructed. These diagrams were then compared, contrasted and analysed to ensure completeness in terms of recording respondent feedback and to aid in the initial development of the questionnaire. The aim at this stage was to permit the development of some preliminary constructs and concepts to allow the construction of the Causal Network models and to focus the questionnaire as well as to establish some causal/ connected relationships.

Each of the respondents' data was represented in a Causal Network diagram and narrative. The result was 32 Causal Network diagrams for the Grampian region. This information was then used in an effort to construct a complete and representative Causal Network model and narrative for each case study region.

4.17 APPROACHES TO CAUSAL NETWORK CONSTRUCTION

There are two general approaches to the construction of a Causal Network. The first is a deductive approach that involves the researcher in the development of some preliminary constructs or concepts to be tested in the field. The second approach is called inductive and in this case the researcher discovers recurrent themes as the research progresses. It does not involve entering the research with any constructs or concepts to be tested. The approach utilised for this research was the deductive approach and involved the construction of a causal fragment to be tested during the fieldwork. Miles and Hubermann (1991, p 134) favour this approach because they "learned inductively that a more deductive approach would have reduced and focused our data set without losing juice or meaning, and helped us find causal relationships faster."

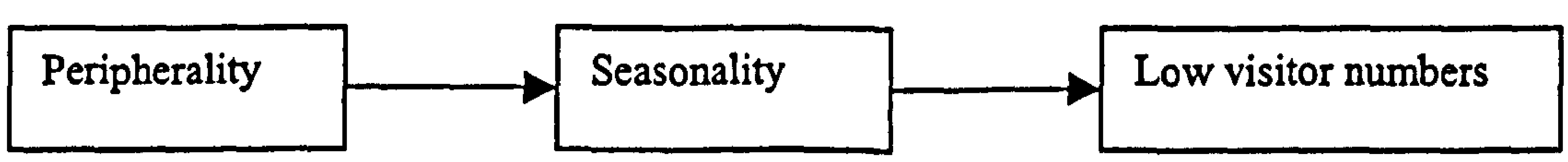
Three regions were studied as case studies and a research objective was to develop and test both the Causal Network and Lesson Drawing theories in each of these regions. Wacker suggests that "theory building research extends domains to new broader areas by testing the theory in a new environment" (1998, p 9). For all stages of theory building a thorough examination of the established literature was essential. In this research the major authors in terms of Causal Network expertise were Miles and Hubermannn. In terms of Lesson Drawing the main author was Rose. Out-with these main sources, there was comparatively little literature on either of these two methodological approaches, with the least represented being Causal Networks.

"The process of drawing inferences from non-experimental data is usually one of slowly elaborating a relationship between two variables, testing that it contains no spurious component due to the operation of a prior variable, and testing to see if one can pin down whether the cause influences the effect or through an intervening variable" (Marsh, 1989, p 235). This was the process involved in the development of the Causal Network models utilised in this research. A Causal Network is defined by Miles and Hubermann (1991, p 132) as "a visual rendering of the most important independent and dependent variables in a field study and of the relationships between them." They are data sorting tools that suggest themes and groupings. They involve text and narrative networks together in an attempt to establish local connection or causality. They attempt to identify the actual events and processes that are involved in specific outcomes. According to Miles and Hubermann (1991), Causal Networks are abstracted, inferential pictures that organise field studies in coherent ways. The aim was to build an integrated map of each respondent interview to highlight the factors that exert influence over tourism provision in Grampian.

A cause and an effect are needed in order to establish a causal relationship. According to Neuman (1994, p 44) three things are needed to establish causality: temporal order, association, and the elimination of plausible alternatives. The temporal order condition means that causes come before effects. However, as has been mentioned before in some cases it was difficult to identify which variable would be the cause and which would be the effect. As discussed previously a region's poor image could be part of the reason for the region's poor marketing. Conversely it could also be that a region's poor marketing could be partly responsible for that region's poor image. Again it should be emphasised here that, whilst causality is important it is not the primary function of this research. The primary functions are to include as many of the relevant impacting variables as possible so that the theories of Causal Networking and Lesson Drawing can be tested.

In looking at problems associated with tourism provision in the three case study regions, the cause of some of the problems is peripherality and the effect could be a seasonal tourism product and low Visitor Numbers (see figure 17, peripherality stream).

Figure 17



The second condition requires an association between two phenomena. A researcher needs to show association, connection or causality (Miles and Hubermann, 1991). In the example cited above, the association between the unfavourable weather conditions, often associated with peripheral locations, and the consequent problems of a seasonal tourism industry was established as a result of respondent feedback during the interviews. It was recognised that the problems associated with tourism in all three case study regions would not revolve solely around peripherality and during the interviews alternative causes of the problems (and the establishment of the problems themselves) were established. These causal alternatives were amalgamated into the causal fragments (records of each interview) so that the final Causal Network illustrated all the specified problems of tourism in each of the three case study regions that were highlighted by the respondents.

4.18 RATIONALE FOR USING CAUSAL NETWORKS

The generation of diagrammatic models were considered to be an advantage because they can be more effective, useful and more easily assimilated than a solely narrative based model. Causal Networks provide transferable, flexible and comparative diagrammatic models, which outline the links between variables. The aim was to build models and narrative for each respondent interview and to integrate and aggregate these models in order to highlight the variables that are influential in each of the case study regions.

Causal Network models can assist in identifying common issues associated with tourism provision in peripheral regions. Once the issues have been identified, Lesson Drawing theory could be used in an attempt to enhance tourism development in peripheral areas by suggesting solutions to the issues identified in this research. Causal Network models could also be useful in identifying areas of good practice in peripheral regions such as these, for example the levels of co-operation and integration exhibited in Inverness and Nairn and Ross and Cromarty, which could be utilised in the Lesson Drawing section of this research.

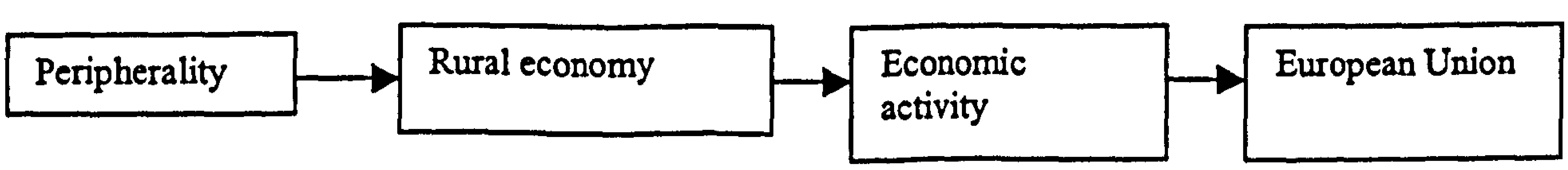
Initial Causal Network variables need to be developed and in the this research they were developed as a result of the review of the literature, key informant feedback and the researchers prior knowledge of the areas. These variables provide a direct and distinct categorisation of variables and Causal Streams that could be used during the construction of the questions and the questionnaire. Because the Causal Network variables and streams can be clearly defined they can be used and assimilated as conceptually based headings for analysis in the conceptually clustered matrix (see analysis of data). These conceptual headings are based on the Causal Network streams identified, for example Competition, Image and Marketing or Hospitality, Service Standards and Training or Co-operation, Integration and Leadership.

Causal Networks allow for on-going testing and modification of models and the categorisation of the data into a model format, which can reduce large quantities of qualitative data. For example, the development of the Causal Network models from the original models in Grampian to later models in Inverness and Nairn and Ross and Cromarty and eventually to the final model. This is because the method involves learning inductively as the research progresses and the methodological approach evolves. It is a rolling process (see figure 1) that starts with the initial variables being drawn up as a result of the literature review, key informant feedback and prior researchers knowledge. The process concludes with the final model constructed after the final case study (in this research the final case study region is Ross and Cromarty).

Causal Network headings could be used to record information during respondent interviews. They could be used to condense the large amounts of qualitative data gathered during the interview by categorising qualitative data into useable categories, based on the ranking of data as low, low/moderate, moderate, moderate/high and high categories. However, in an attempt to ensure completeness, the interview data in this research, was fully transcribed to ensure that the richness and quality of the data was not lost. Where-ever possible the interview responses were graded or ranked using the ordinal scale of low, moderate or high (as suggested by Miles and Hubermann).

They could be useful in ensuring that all variables and issues that effected the respondents in the case study region's chosen were included in the data collection and also in ensuring a logical progression from one variable to another another (Peripherality Causal Stream, see figure 18).

Figure 18



Causal Networking was used for this research because of the generation of Causal Streams. It is the Causal Streams that assist in a high level of analysis and comparability between region's and cognate groups. Miles and Hubermann (1991, p 142) suggest that "Causal Networks are amongst the most ambitious methods of data analysis as a result of the generation of themes and configurations such as Causal Streams."

Causal Networks can assist in focussing possible solutions to the problems highlighted. The aim of this research was for Causal Networks to identify problem areas and for Lesson Drawing to suggest solutions to these problems. Causal Network methodology was also a unique approach in tourism research and in identifying problems associated with tourism in peripheral regions. It is an approach that has not been developed in tourism research and as a consequence offers new opportunities in the study of tourism provision.

Because this research sets out to evaluate the use of Causal Networks as a means of highlighting problems associated with tourism in peripheral areas much of the discussion concerning their use is to be found in the Conclusions section.

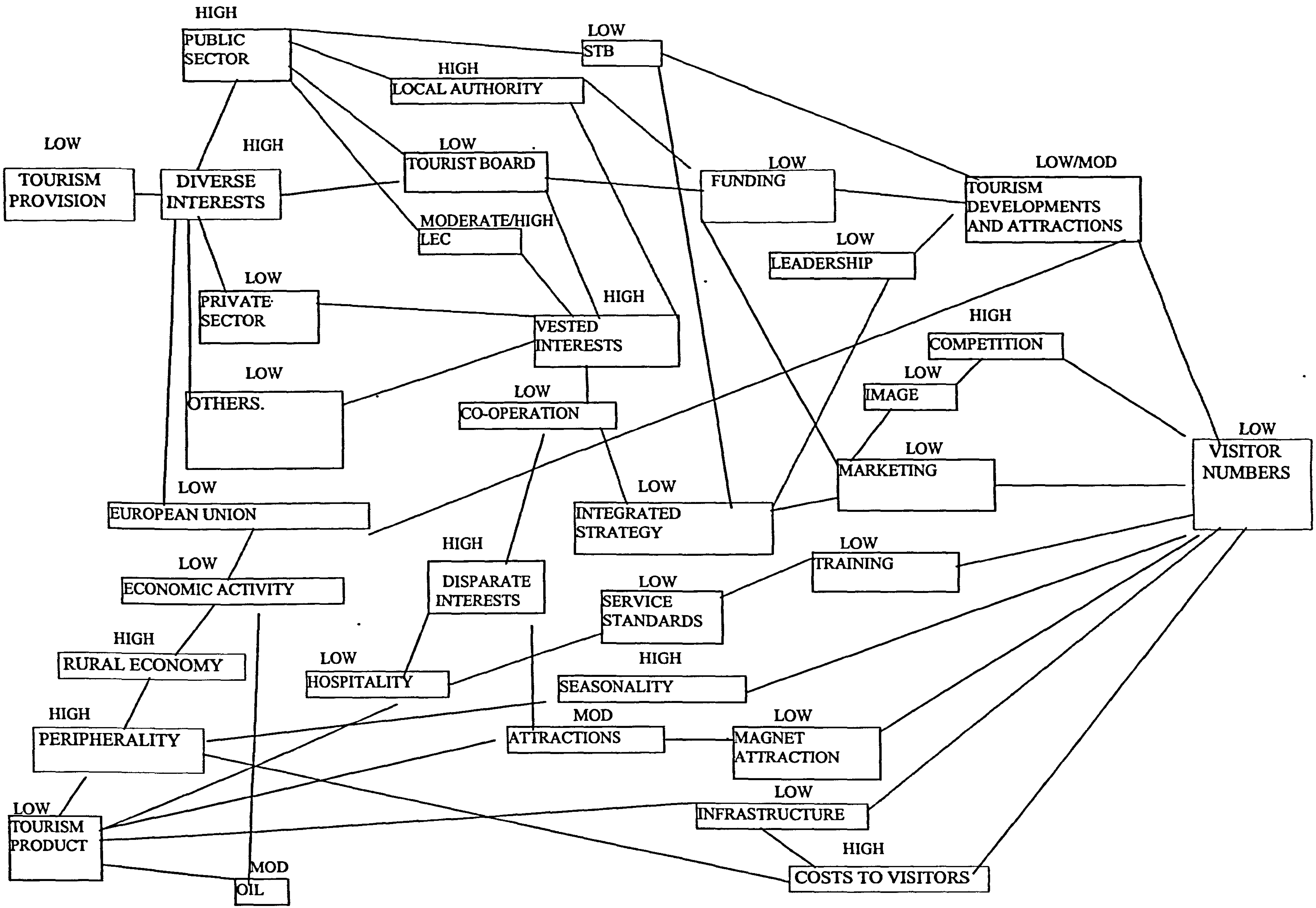
4.19 CAUSAL NETWORK MODEL AND NARRATIVE DEVELOPED AS A RESULT OF THE PILOT INTERVIEWS (SEE FIGURE 19)

The start variables of tourism provision refers to the actual providers of the tourism product and tourism product refers to the product itself, including both tangible and intangible aspects.

The tourism provision variable was rated as being low with a high, or large, number of diverse interests. Included amongst these were the public sector, the private sector, the European Union and an "Others" category that included voluntary organisations and pressure groups. The sector, which was considered to have the most influence over tourism provision, was the public sector with both the private sector and the European Union having little influence. The public sector included Local Authorities, Enterprise Companies, local Tourist Boards and the Scottish Tourist Board. The major influence within the public sector was the Local Authority (LA) with the Local Enterprise Company (LEC) also of importance, but not to the same extent as the LA. Both the Local and National Tourist Boards (STB) were considered to have little influence. There was a high degree of vested interest with all the groups following their own agendas. Partly as a consequence of these vested interests there was a low level of co-operation, a lack of an integrated strategy and poor leadership, which were considered to be a major problem. Also of major concern was the lack of funding for the local Tourist Board which resulted in low levels of marketing, a poor, or weak, image of the region which suffers as a result of its better organised, funded and marketed competitors (mainly in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland). This poor level of funding for the Tourist Boards is due in a large part to the cut-backs in Local Authority budgets, who then cut-back on funding for the Tourist Boards. These cut-backs have a knock on effect on the level of marketing carried out by the Tourist Board. The level and number of tourism developments and attractions would, according to the preceding information, be low, but for the low level of moderating influence of the European Union (EU), in the form of its Objective 5b funding capital assistance for new tourism projects. However, despite this EU funding, the outcome variable is one of low visitor numbers.

The second antecedent variable, the tourism product, was also considered to be poor quality. The tourism product consisted of the four intervening variables of hospitality (which included both accommodation and food and beverage provision), peripherality, infrastructure and attractions (both man-made and natural). The high level of peripherality was a major problem, which led to high visitor costs in terms of both access to the region and the costs of goods and services when they arrived. Because of the peripheral location of the region the area also suffered from an over-dependence on a predominantly rural economy. The rural nature of the local economy meant that there was a low level of economic activity, due largely to the decline in both agriculture and fishing industries. This decline in the fortunes of these primary industries led to the involvement of the EU (Objective 5b) who funded some tourism developments in an attempt to counter-act declines in local economic activity. Hospitality provision, standards of service and levels of training were all considered to be poor. Oil was seen as both a positive and a negative contributor to the local economy. In the areas surrounding Aberdeen it was seen to have more effect than in the more remote areas, where its influence was considered negligible. It was perceived as negative because oil business demand forced up the prices of accommodation and increased the costs to visitors. The standard and level of the attractions was considered to be adequate, but the visitor numbers were adversely affected the lack of a magnet attraction. The major providers of hospitality and visitor attractions lacked co-ordination and each tended to pursue their own interests. These problems were compounded by the high levels of seasonality and the needs for improvements in the region's infrastructure. The outcome variable is low visitor numbers.

CAUSAL FRAGMENT: TOURISM PROVISION IN NORTH AND WEST GRAMPIAN: PILOT INTERVIEWS MODEL. FIGURE 19



ANTECEDENT VARIABLES —— INTERVENING VARIABLES —— OUTCOME VARIABLES

4.20 ISSUES AND LIMITATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE RESEARCH

4.20.1 THE PILOT STUDY

The purpose of the pilot study is to test the validity and rigour associated with the research tool. However, the relatively small scale of the initial pilot study (seven) means that some modifications to the Causal Network Variables are accepted as part of the on-going nature of the research into the Grampian case study region. As a consequence of the evolving process involved in the research some variables added or modified during the case studies in all three regions dependent on which issues are considered important by the respondents. Most of these changes occurred during the initial case study in Grampian.

The temporal nature of the data collection means that the importance of certain variables, such as local economic activity and strength of Sterling, would change between each case study region. The macro economic conditions changed during the course of this study and as a consequence the weightings attributed to variables such as the strength of Sterling also changed to reflect this. Also certain variables had greater significance to different areas based on each regions tourism product, for example, Sustainability is not considered to be as important an issue in Grampian as it is in Inverness and Nairn.

4.20.2 ORDINAL SCALE

The ordinal scale is based on Miles and Hubermanns (1991) categorisation of low, moderate and high. However it became apparent as the research progressed that a scale three categories is not sufficient to allow for the representation of the respondents views. As a result of this the scale is increased from the three categories to five categories by inclusion of low/moderate and moderate/high. This allows for greater representation of respondent's views but is also accepted that the scale of five and the categorisation of the interview responses is also a limitation.

There are also limits associated with the categorisation of the data. For example, if 3 respondents categorised a variable as high and 2 categorised it as low then the variable has no obvious categorisation. In cases such as these they have been categorised as moderate, even though no moderate categorisations were recorded. It is recognised that this categorisation may not be representative but a low or a high categorisation would also not be representative of the respondents views.

4.20.3 THE CASE STUDY BOUNDARIES

It is difficult to limit the actions and repercussions of individuals and organisations to the case study boundaries. The boundaries are somewhat artificial in that they followed the boundaries established by the Enterprise Company network. Unfortunately the decisions and actions taken outside of the case study boundaries can have direct effects on the case study regions. Each Tourist Board region in Scotland has a certain independence to make decisions concerning its tourism focus and activities. As a consequence decisions made in neighbouring (and often competing regions) are likely to impact on their neighbours, for example, if Inverness attempted to attract different market segments then this would affect the clientele that uses Inverness as a gateway to the Western part of Grampian (The Whisky Trail). Each of the regions can have indirect (and direct) influences on the case study regions.

There is also a danger of treating each case study region as an artificially sealed unit. According to Denscombe (1998, p 39) "the problem with most boundaries is that they are rather too rigid and inflexible to reflect the permeable nature of boundaries in real life. But this is not an easy problem to overcome. The more flexible the boundaries become, the more loose the entity becomes in terms of the kind of precision and rigour expected of research." His advice is to be sensitive not to exclude factors occurring outside the case study boundaries and be aware of issues impacting on each region.

Because the research focused on three case study regions that are similar in terms of situation and location Holloway (1997, p 31) suggests that "this type of inquiry may be less readily generalisable than other research." However, the focus of this research means that the regions had to be similar in as many respects as possible. Without these similarities there would be no possibility of Lesson Drawing between the cases (or between other peripheral areas that share these similarities). A further issue related to the case study boundaries is the relative lack of direct comparative data for the regions of Inverness and Nairn, and Ross and Cromarty. This is because the two regions represent Local Enterprise Company boundaries as opposed to generally accepted regional boundaries such as the Grampian region. Consequently data is more difficult to obtain for Inverness and Nairn, and Ross and Cromarty, than it is for the region of Grampian.

Each of the three regions had similar public sector arrangements and each comprised Local Enterprise regions that are located within the Enterprise Company network. However, whilst the these boundaries served to delineate the study there were also considerable differences in terms of size of the areas, funding, local economic structure, impact of oil as well as several tourism issues such as type of visitors, type of attractions and the relative importance of the industry.

4.20.4 SIZE OF SAMPLES

The study could have been expanded and the number of respondents from each of the three regions can have been increased in an attempt to provide information that would be more representative of the views of more tourism providers in the region, especially the private sector.

4.20.5 KEY INFORMANTS AND SNOWBALL SAMPLING

The snowball sampling technique had limitations associated with the representativeness of the respondents. The essence of snowball sampling is that one respondent is interviewed and identifies or suggests other respondents. These respondents are then interviewed and they are asked to suggest other respondents. The problem with this technique is that the respondents are likely to suggest other respondents they know or have dealings with. This means that in many cases the respondents are likely to have similar views to the original respondent. It is unlikely that a respondent would recommend an individual or organisation representative who they did not get on with or who held distinctly different points of view to themselves. Consequently the views of snowball selected samples may not be representative of all the sectors involved in tourism in the three case study regions.

4.20.6 CONFIRMATORY PANEL

There is no confirmatory panel used to verify the findings or feedback. Key informants are involved in the initial stages of development of the Casual Network models during the pilot study and the Grampian region case study, but no formal panel is established.

4.20.7 RESPONDENTS KNOWLEDGE

The opinions of the respondents were essential for the construction of the Causal Network models. However, in some cases, some of the respondents were unaware of specific roles or contributions of various organisations, such as the EU. This meant that in some cases the respondents' opinions were not factually accurate. For example, some respondents rated the influence of the EU as low but they were not aware of contributions made by the EU to the development of local attractions in their area.

4.20.8 AGGREGATION

The aim of this research is primarily to test the methodologies of Causal Networks and Lesson Drawing. For this to be achieved a process of aggregation is necessary. The aggregation process is used for the construction of Causal Network cognate group responses (such as attractions, tourist boards and local authorities) and also for drawing conclusions from within each of the case study regions. However, it is recognised that the conclusions drawn are not representative of all tourism providers and that there are limits to the conclusions that can be drawn based on the public sector.

The process of aggregation also involves a possible reduction in the validity of because as the number of responses being aggregated increases the individual responses can be modified in an attempt to achieve conformity. Aggregation also means that each individual's response might be reduced in importance as the number being aggregated increased. A further issue may be an over emphasis on particular groups, such as the public sector at the expense of individual respondents in say the private sector, as the aggregation increases. Although every effort is made to prevent these issues from occurring it is recognised as a limitation.

4.20.9 CONNECTION, ASSOCIATION OR CAUSALITY

Whilst the ideal situation for this research would be the establishment of causality between all linked or connected variables, it is accepted that this is not possible to achieve for all variables. For example, can poor marketing be a symptom of a regions poor image or can the regions poor image be a symptom of poor marketing? As a consequence the connection between the Causal Network variables or nodes are links or associations which in most cases are causal but not in all cases. This limitation can be addressed in future research by the introduction of two way arrows or links between nodes that are associated or linked as opposed to a single directional link or arrow that would denote causality.

4.20.10 COST

There are the obvious cost constraints placed on any piece of academic the research in terms of physical data collection within the case study regions.

4.20.11 TIME

The time factor is linked to the cost constraints and served to limit the number of respondents that can effectively be interviewed for the research.

4.20.12 DATA COLLECTION

There are time lags between the data collection in the three case study regions of Grampian and the other two cases in Inverness and Nairn, and Ross and Cromarty. This means that external, macro variables such as economic activity, strength of Sterling and political changes occurred during the course of the study.

4.20.13 SUBJECTIVITY AND BIAS

Interviewer subjectivity has to be acknowledged as part of any social science research and whilst every attempt is made to avoid this, it has to be accepted as a possible limitation or constraint on the research findings.

Like any other method case studies are subject to potential researcher bias. This is mainly due to the qualitative nature of the data collection and research. In an attempt to address this issue the interviews are fully documented and transcribed. The interview data is recorded in both narrative and model format (Causal models).

Because several of the respondents are involved in political activities there are politically motivated comments made by some respondents. There is also evidence of certain groupings emerging such as Private versus Public sector involvement. Allied to this is the fact that respondents from groups such as public sector organisations tended to over estimate their own level of importance and under-estimate other groups, such as the private sector.

4.20.4 THEORETICAL VALIDITY

The use of Causal Network methodology in tourism research is a comparatively new approach. As a result of this developed applications and models related to the area of tourism are not available. Consequently the Causal Network method is adapted from other social science research. In terms of the use of Lesson Drawing as a methodological approach access to the literature also proved problematical because as Baum (1999) suggests there is not a great deal of comparative tourism research, especially in the area of Lesson Drawing, which by its very nature is comparative. This means that access to developed applications and theories for both Causal Networks and Lesson Drawing is difficult.

4.21 METHODOLOGICAL CHANGES AS A RESULT OF THE GRAMPIAN CASE STUDY

As a result of the ongoing and evolving nature of the research developments were made to the Causal Network models and narratives during the data collection in all three case study regions. These modifications to the Causal Network models did not mean that the questionnaire construction, data collection methods or any of the collected data were invalid. The data collected was still valid and representative of the respondent's views. The changes were part of the evolving process of the research. The Causal Network models and narratives were intended to represent the views of the respondents, in the clearest possible format. As the data was put into the matrix and the models representing each group's collective data developed, it became apparent that some of the respondent's views were not accommodated in the variables and the Causal Network models that were in use at the time.

The actual changes that were introduced at this stage were:

- The Tourism Provision and Tourism Product start variables were combined under the variable of Tourism Provision. This was because the Tourism Provision in a region included the region's Tourism Product such as its natural assets or its culture. Differentiating or separating the two was difficult for the respondent's to do and tended to serve little purpose because the start variable of Peripherality tended to better represent the focus of this research.

- The peripheral variable was removed from the Tourism Product stream and became a start/antecedent variable itself. This allowed greater clarity and a clearer focus for the research because peripherality was one of the central themes involved in the research.

- The Attractions variable was moved from the Tourism Provision stream and included in the Peripheral stream because the attractions associated with Peripheral regions such as the three case study region's often tend to be based on the natural environment that is associated with theses region's location or peripherality. This was suggested by both the respondent's as well as by the literature on tourism in peripherality.

- The feedback from the respondents concerning funding was all related to the inadequate funding associated with Local Authorities and the local Tourist Board. Consequently the funding variable was moved to make the connection more clear.

- The European Union's involvement in infrastructure developments was highlighted by linking the two nodes/variables.

- The variables of Training and Service Standards were reversed to highlight the correct causal relationship because poor standards associated with service are often a result of poor training. Poor training was considered to be a factor in the poor levels of service in Grampian (although not the only reason).

- The Marketing variable was moved and was more clearly linked to the organisation responsible for this function (the Area Tourist Board and the STB). This was done in an attempt to represent the relationship between the organisations involved and the variable.

- The Disparate Interests variable was removed and the variables experiencing these problems were more accurately linked to the Vested Interests variable. It was not necessarily the Disparate Interests that caused problems associated with tourism delivery in Grampian but rather the degree of Vested Interests associated with these Disparate Interests. The respondent's from both Inverness and Nairn and Ross and Cromarty suggested that despite the large number of Diverse Interests involved in their region's they did in fact work and co-operate quite well together.

- The linking of the Hospitality and the Attractions variables with other variables in their particular Streams were highlighted. For example, Hospitality, Training and Service Standards.

- The rural economy variable includes the primary sector industries of agriculture and fishing and does not refer solely to agriculture.

- As a result of respondent feedback the original ordinal scale of low, moderate and high was enlarged to include the responses of low/moderate and moderate/high. This increased the possible responses from three to five. The rationale for these changes were based on the fact that the increase to five allowed the respondents views to be more accurately represented without increasing the ordinal scale too much and thereby making it difficult to administer, both during and after the interviews.

Because of the evolving nature of the research, changes to both the variables and the models were expected. These changes take account of the different views of the various respondents and were subject to change throughout the whole research process. However, the major changes to the models took place during the pilot and Grampian case study (which was to be expected). By the time the data was collected from the case study regions of Inverness and Nairn and Ross and Cromarty the models were at the stage of being tested and at this stage the changes to the models tended to be minor and tended to focus on gradings or rankings. There were some changes to variables such as Sustainability and Natural and Built Attractions but the main focus remained the gradings of the variables.

CHAPTER 5

GRAMPIAN REGION CASE STUDY

Grampian was the first case study region in which the research methodologies were tested. The aim at this stage was to construct Causal Network models that identified and highlighted issues of concern to the tourism providers in the Grampian region. Each of the respondent interviews were displayed using both a Causal Network model as well as a narrative discussing the models. The respondents were grouped according to their type of business or sector. In total eight sectors were identified;

- the commercial sector (consisting of 2 retailers, and exhibition centre and an events management organisation),
- the accommodation sector (4),
- attractions (7),
- Local Authorities (3),
- Local Enterprise Companies (3),
- Tourist Boards (3),
- "Others" (consisting of Scottish Natural Heritage, Historic Scotland, National Trust for Scotland and Forest Enterprise),
- transport and travel agencies (4).

No conclusions have been drawn from the responses by sector, because the number of the respondents in each sector (often only 3) were considered too few to be able to draw any firm conclusions for this research. However, in other scenarios or future research using these methods, (where there are only a few respondents) the data could be used for the extrapolation of Causal Streams for comparison and analysis of the three individual respondent's views.

The commercial/non-commercial sectors and the regional sectors do allow some tentative conclusions to be drawn, because of the larger number of the respondents in each section (commercial 19 and non-commercial 13, Aberdeen 15, North and West Grampian 5 and "Others" 12).

The findings for each case study will be discussed in three sections: the first consists of the commercial and non-commercial sectors; the second section involves the sub-regional sectors of Aberdeen, North and West Grampian and "Others"; the third deals with the total number of the respondents. Each of the three sections will include a Causal Network model representing the feedback from the respondents. This will be supported by a narrative summary that briefly discusses the model grading, and categorisations. The aim is to inform the reader of the processes involved in the construction of the Causal Network models.

Sample size and the extent to which it is truly representative is recognised as a limitation. It is therefore not possible to draw conclusive conclusions based on this method of data collection alone. However, in the concluding sections of each case study chapter the feedback is presented along with respondent quotes, literature references and other secondary sources that in many cases illustrate and support the feedback from this research. Whilst the findings from this research did not set out to achieve a high level of statistical representation the feedback from the respondents does in many cases support the current literature. Also because of the relatively high number of public sector respondents (all public sector organisations were represented) the feedback does tend to be more representative of the views of the public sector. The aim is to inform the current knowledge on the three case study regions and where applicable on peripheral areas.

It is also acknowledged that the categorising or aggregating of the respondent's feedback could lead to a loss of clarity and representation of individual respondent's views. It was also recognised that there were limits to the statistical representativeness that could be achieved by the use of the ordinal scale in categorising respondents data (see limitations of research).

The inclusion of the statistical information in these sections is to aid in understanding the categorisations attributed to each variable. The limitations with respect to the validity and the reliability of this data are recognised. The main aim of this section is to inform the process of Causal Network development. As a consequence, the respondent's data was not used as the basis for extrapolating definitive conclusions. However, some attempt is made to suggest possible explanations or reasons for respondents' feedback.

The responses listed below are not in percentages because the data is not intended to suggest a representation that may be associated with the use of percentages. However, when the responses were used to construct the Causal Network models and categorise the responses according to the ordinal scale they were converted into percentage terms. This was not done to suggest statistical representation but was done to allow the categorisation of the respondents according to the ordinal scale.

5.1 CAUSAL NETWORK NARRATIVES FOR COMMERCIAL AND NON-COMMERCIAL SECTOR RESPONDENTS

In total the number of the respondents were 32. The aim of these narratives is to inform the process of Causal Network construction and categorisation. The narratives and statistical data are used in an effort to aid in the understanding of why respondents categorised variables in certain ways and how the actual categories associated with the ordinal scale were arrived at.

The commercial sector (CS) respondents consisted of 19 of the total population of 32. Included in this group were any organisations that were profit oriented. The majority were totally commercial operations such as private attractions, accommodation providers or retail outlets. However, there are other operations such as publicly funded attractions that have been set up with EU assistance and whose primary motive may not be to generate profit. The non-commercial (NCS) sector consisted of 13 of the 32 respondents. Included in this section were organisations whose primary function was not to generate profits. Organisations such as Local Authorities, local enterprise companies, tourist boards and other groups such as Historic Scotland were included.

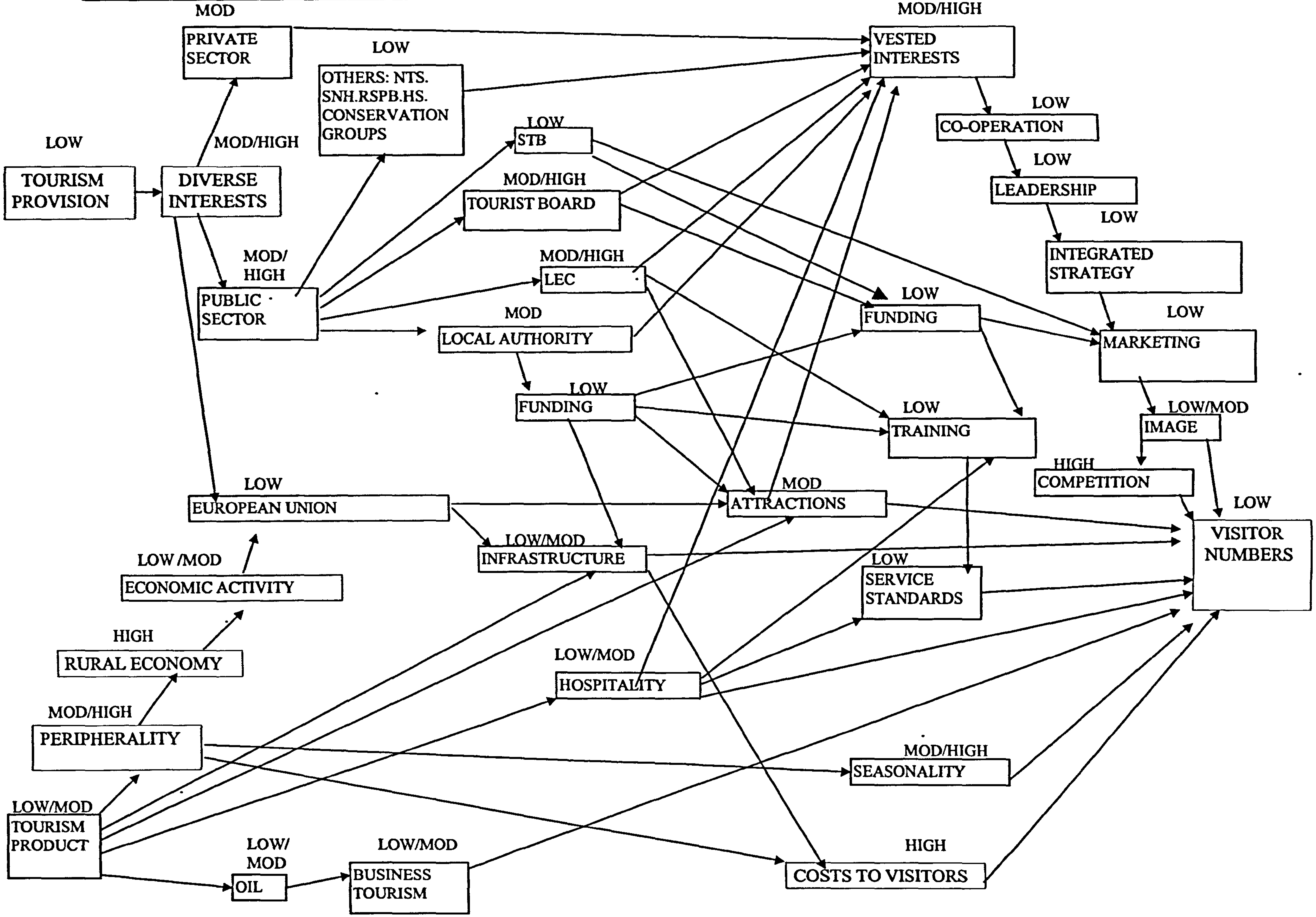
The actual responses related to each of the variables are outlined below. These responses are represented below as well as on the Causal Network model. It is recognised that the listed responses are not easily assimilated and interpreted as they stand. This is one of the reasons for displaying the data using diagrammatic Causal Network model. In some cases the responses may not total 13 or 19. This is because of non-responses to certain questions. It is important to bear in mind when reading this section that the commercial sector respondents totalled 19 and the non-commercial sector 13 and the responses listed below should be taken in this context.

The first twelve of the variables will be discussed in detail in regard to their ordinal categorisation to inform the process of variable categorisation. Twelve examples are considered to be sufficient to suitably inform the ordinal categorisation process.

COMMERCIAL SECTOR CAUSAL NETWORK MODEL (SEE FIGURE 20)

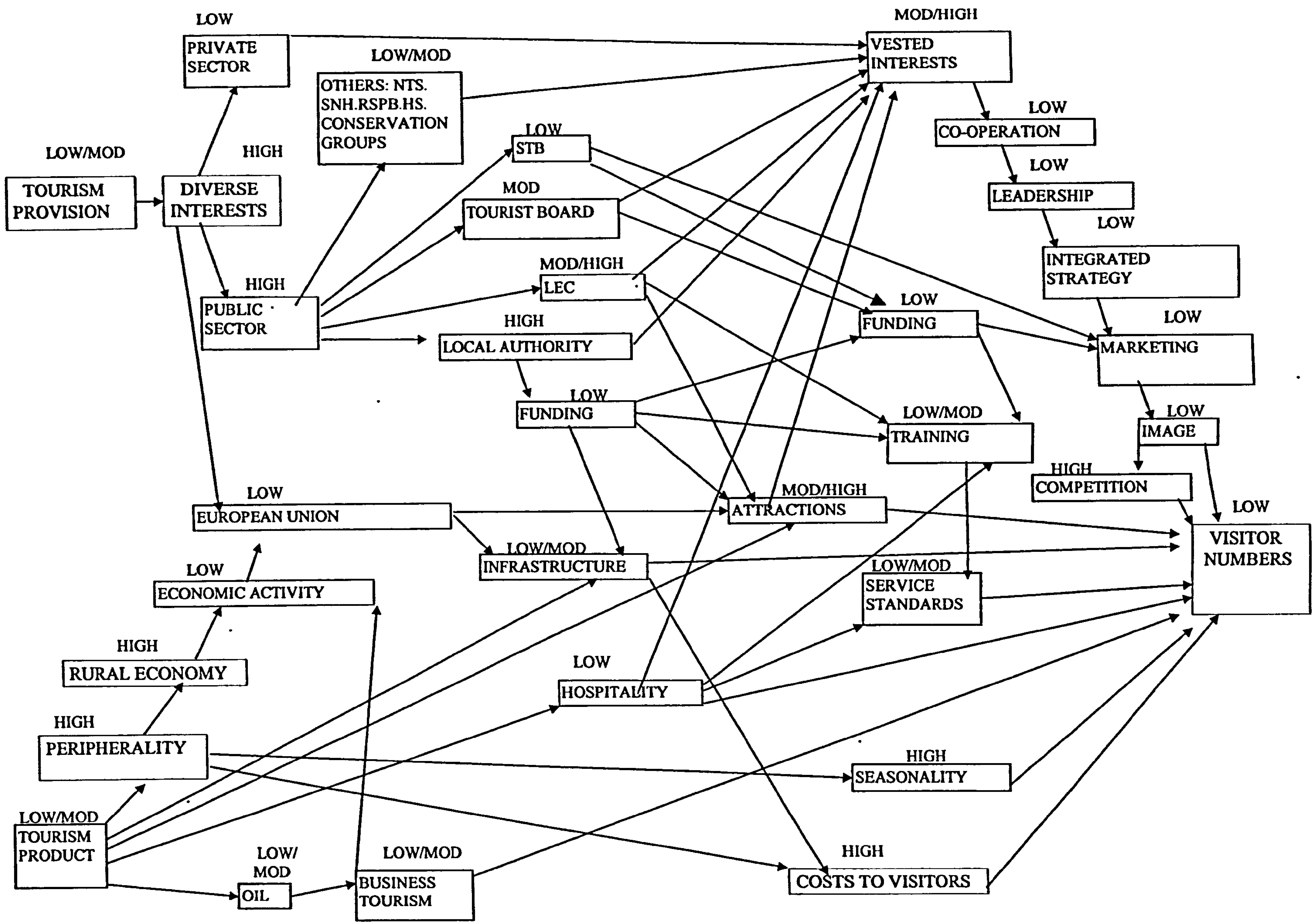
NON-COMMERCIAL SECTOR CAUSAL NETWORK MODEL (SEE FIGURE 21)

CAUSAL FRAGMENT: TOURISM PROVISION IN NORTH AND WEST GRAMPIAN: COMMERCIAL FINDINGS. FIGURE 20



ANTECEDENT VARIABLES → INTERVENING VARIABLES → OUTCOME VARIABLES

CAUSAL FRAGMENT: TOURISM PROVISION IN NORTH AND WEST GRAMPIAN: NON-COMMERCIAL FINDINGS. FIGURE 21



ANTECEDENT VARIABLES → INTERVENING VARIABLES → OUTCOME VARIABLES

Tourism Provision

- Tourism provision was rated as low by 17 out of 19 of the commercial sector respondents. This represents 95% of the commercial sector respondents. The non-commercial sector rated tourism provision as low (7) and moderate (6). This represents 54% and 46% respectively. This meant that the tourism provision variable on commercial sector the Causal Network model was categorised as low but on the non-commercial sector model it was categorised as low/moderate.

Private Sector

- The influence of the private sector was rated as low by 8, moderate by 5 and high by 5 of the commercial sector respondents. These responses represent 42%, 26% and 26% respectively. The categorisation of the commercial sector in regard to the private sector variable was moderate. The private sector was rated as having a low level of influence by 11 of the non-commercial sector respondents. This represents 92% of the respondents and the categorisation was low.

The private (or commercial) sector influence was perceived to be high by none of the NCS. This reflected a general consensus amongst the NCS that the private sector lacks influence over tourism provision decisions in the region and that there was a perceived lack of involvement and investment from this sector by the NCS.

Public Sector

- The public sector influence was rated as moderate by 9 and high by 10 of the commercial sector. These figures represent 47% and 53% respectively and the categorisation was moderate/high. The public sector was rated as having a high level of influence by 11 of the non-commercial sector. This represents 85% of the non-commercial sector and the variable was therefore categorised as high.

This high level of interest attributed to the public sector is expected in peripheral regions.

"Others"

- The "Others" category was rated as low by 16 of the commercial sector (representing 84% and categorised as low) and the non-commercial sector rated them as low (5), moderate (5). These responses represent 38% and 38% respectively. The categorisation was therefore low/moderate.

The "Others" category was considered to have low levels of influence by the NCS. Included amongst the NCS were members of the "Others" group, which could explain the disparity in the responses from the two groups because each group tends to over estimate their own levels of influence.

Diverse Interests

- The level of diverse interests were rated as high by 16 (84%) of the commercial sector respondents. This meant that the variable for the commercial sector was categorised as high. All of the non-commercial sector respondents considered diverse interests to be high (100%), as a consequence the variable was categorised as high.

This suggests that there is a consensus amongst all respondents that the level of diverse interests were high.

STB

- The STB was rated as having low levels of influence by 18 (95%) of the commercial sector respondents and by 12 (92%) of the non-commercial sector. The categorisation for the commercial sector was therefore low and for the non-commercial sector the category was also low.

There was a general consensus that the STB had little influence on tourism provision decisions in the region.

LEC

- The LEC was rated as moderate by 5 (26%) and high by 13 (68%) of the commercial sector. The LEC were therefore categorised as moderate/high. The responses from the non-commercial sector were 9 (69%) high and 4 (31%) moderate. The categorisation was therefore moderate/high.

The consensus was that the influence of the LEC was perceived to be comparatively high.

Local Authority

- The Local Authorities were rated as moderate overall by the commercial sector with responses of 4 (21%) low, 7 (37%) moderate and 7 (37%) high. The non-commercial sector rated the Local Authorities as high (12 or 92%).

The Local Authorities influence was perceived to be very high by the NCS. This high level of influence attributed to the Local Authorities was due, in part, to the fact that several of the respondents in the NCS group rely on Local Authority support, for example, the Tourist Boards receive part of their funding from the Local Authorities. The other NCS members also have close links and constant dealings with the Local Authorities either in terms of joint funding or funding applications for projects or in relation to planning permission or licence applications.

Tourist Board

- The Tourist Board was rated as moderate/high (9 and 8) by the commercial sector. This represents 47% and 42% respectively. The non-commercial sector also rated them as mod/high with responses of 3 (24%) low, 5 (38%) moderate and 5 (38%) high.

The differences in rating between the NCS and the CS could be partly explained by the fact that many of the NCS respondents are based outside of Aberdeen City. The consensus was that the beneficiaries of the tourist board activities tended to be in Aberdeen itself, and not the more remote areas of North and West Grampian.

The EU

- The influence of the EU was rated as low 16 (84%) of the commercial sector respondents and by 11 (85%) of the non-commercial sector respondents. As a consequence both variables were categorised as low. These figures suggested a general consensus concerning EU influence amongst the NCS and the CS.

Funding

- All the commercial and non-commercial sector respondents rated funds for both the Tourist Board, and the Local Authorities, as low. The fund variables for both the sectors were therefore categorised as low.

The level of funding for both the Local Authorities and the Tourist Boards were considered to be low by all of the respondents in both groups.

The process of categorising the variables into the ordinal scale continued throughout this section. However, in an effort to avoid duplication and repetition it is felt that the process has been suitably explained at this stage. The categorisation process will be discussed again in the first eight variables of the regional sector findings. The remainder of the commercial and non-commercial variables will be discussed in actual respondent numbers so as not to suggest a level of statistical representation that may not be present.

Co-operation, Vested Interests and Integration

- The levels of co-operation, and integration were rated as low by 15 and 16 of the commercial sector respondents respectively. The level of co-operation was rated as low by 10 of the non-commercial sector and integration as low by 11. The level of vested interests was rated as moderate by 5 (26%) and high by 13 (68%) of the commercial sector respondents. The variable was categorised as moderate/high. The level of vested interests were rated as moderate by 5 (38%) and as high by 8 (62%) of the non-commercial sector.

The level of co-operation was considered to be low by the majority of respondents. This represented a general consensus amongst both groups concerning the level of co-operation.

Leadership, Marketing, Competition, Image

- The responses concerning leadership suggested there was a consensus amongst respondents that there was a low level of leadership in the region. There was a general consensus that the level of marketing (for which the Aberdeen and Grampian Tourist Board is primarily responsible) was of a low standard. The consensus was that the level of competition was considered to be high. Compounding the problems of poor marketing were the perceived problems of a lack of brand or image associated with the region and the relatively high levels of competition.

Tourism Product and Peripherality

- The tourism product was rated as low/moderate (10 and 9) by the commercial sector and as low (7) and moderate (6) by the non-commercial sector. The region was considered to be peripheral by the majority of the respondents from both sectors with the commercial sector categorising the level of peripherality as moderate/high and the non-commercial sector as high. This difference was due largely to the perspective amongst some of the commercial sector respondents (such as the hoteliers with golf interests and clienteles) that the region was not overly peripheral.

Rural Economy and Economic Activity

- The extent to which the area is dominated by a rural economy was mentioned by all the respondents from the commercial sector and by 13 of the respondents from the non-commercial sector. Economic activity was rated as low by 11 of the non-commercial sector and by the commercial sector as low/moderate (12 and 7)

All of the respondents - from both sections - suggested that the region had a rural economy but fewer of the CS suggested that economic activity was low, as compared to the NCS. This disparity in responses to the level of economic activity could be explained by the location of the respondents in Aberdeen City.

<u>Seasonality</u>

- Seasonality was rated as mod/high (9 and 10) by the commercial sector respondents and by 11 of the non-commercial sector.

In terms of seasonality more NCS respondents than CS respondents suggested it was high. The difference between the respondents could be because the CS respondents included transport operators, retailers and distillers whose primary business interests may not be tourism, and who may not be too reliant on the seasonal tourist trade.

<u>Costs to Visitors</u>

- Costs to visitors were rated as high by 18 of commercial sector respondents and by all the non-commercial sector respondents.

Associated with the problems of seasonality and peripherality was the issue of costs to visitors to the region. All of the NCS respondents suggested this was a problem, as did the majority of CS respondents. These costs included costs associated with both getting to, and staying in the region.

<u>Oil</u>

- Oil was rated as low by 9, moderate by 5 and high by 5 of the commercial sector and as low by 8 and moderate by 5 of the non-commercial sector respondents.

The influence of oil on the economies of North and West Grampian was considered to be high by few of the CS respondents and by none of the NCS respondents. Again the differences associated with the two groups could be explained by referring to the geographic/regional locations of the respondents (the influence of oil in and around Aberdeen was considered to be higher and by the fact that the CS have more direct dealings with the oil industry in terms of providing them with services such as accommodation, transport or retail. The influence of oil on the CS also helps explain the disparity between the NCS and the CS over the issue of seasonality.

Business Tourism

- Business tourism was rated as low by 11 and moderate 8 by 2 of the commercial sector. The non-commercial sector rated business tourism as low (7) and moderate (5).

The results relating to business tourism are linked to the results relating to oil, because of the natural correlation between them. The level of business tourism was generally considered to be lower in locations further away from Aberdeen City.

Hospitality, Service Standards and Training

- Hospitality was rated as low/moderate (12 and 3) by the commercial sector and as low by 11 of the non-commercial sector respondents.

The majority of both the NCS and the CS respondents suggested the standard of hospitality, service standards and training were low. These figures suggested a general consensus concerning the levels and standards of accommodation in the region. As with the levels of hospitality the consensus was that both variables were considered to be poor.

Infrastructure

- Infrastructure was rated as low by 15 and as moderate by 4 of the commercial sector respondents. The region's infrastructure was rated as low (6) and moderate (6) by the non-commercial sector.

The consensus was that the infrastructure of the region was moderate/poor

Attractions

- The attractions in the region were rated as moderate overall with scores of 6 low, 8 moderate and 5 high by the commercial sector. Attractions were regarded as moderate by 7 of the respondents and as high by 6 of the non-commercial sector.

Some of the CS respondents suggested that the level of attractions was poor, whilst none of the NCS suggested this was the case. This disparity could be partly explained by the fact that it is the NCS who are the major providers in terms of attraction developments and strategy forums in the region, and as a consequence, were less likely to be critical of the standards of attractions.

Visitor Numbers

- Visitor numbers were rated as low by 17 of the commercial sector respondents and VFR's were considered important by 6 respondents (the majority of the respondents were classified as non-responses).
- Visitor numbers were rated as low by 12 of the non-commercial sector respondents and VFR's were considered important by 2 respondents (the majority of the respondents were classified as non-responses).

There was consensus amongst the respondents from both groups concerning the number of visitors to Grampian in that they were considered to be low. In terms of VFR they were considered to be more important by the CS than by the NCS.

5.2 CAUSAL NETWORK NARRATIVES FOR REGIONAL SECTOR RESPONDENTS

The sub-regional sectors identified were Aberdeen, North and West Grampian and "Others". The "Others" group consisted of the respondents based out-with Aberdeen and North and West Grampian in places such as Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aviemore or Inverness. Although these respondents were located outside the study area they had impacts and influence over tourism provision in the study area, for example, the STB, Scottish Enterprise or Moray, Badenoch and Strathspey Enterprise.

The sample size and the extent to which it is truly representative is recognised as a particular limitation in respect to the data collected from the North and West Grampian respondents. In total 5 of the 32 respondents were from North and West Grampian. The reason for the relatively low numbers of the respondents being from this area is that respondents such as Tourist Boards, Enterprise Companies, Transport providers and respondents in the "Others" category such as Historic Scotland or Scottish Natural Heritage are not based in North and West Grampian. They tend to be located in Aberdeen, Edinburgh or Glasgow. As a consequence the majority of the respondents are not from the region of North and West Grampian, but they do operate within this area.

As stated at the beginning of this section, the inclusion of the statistical information in these sections is to aid in understanding the categorisations attributed to each variable. The limitations with respect to the validity and the reliability of this data are recognised, especially in connection with the small number of the respondents from North and West Grampian. The aim is to inform the process of Causal Network development. As was the case with the previous section if the data does not correspond to the total of the number of the respondents from each region then it denotes a non-response. To fully inform the process of categorisation the process will be discussed again in the first eight variables of the regional sector findings.

In total 15 of the 32 respondents were from Aberdeen. Although this may appear to be a large percentage of the population the area is the base for many organisations whose responsibilities include North and West Grampian and is often the arrival and departure point for many of the visitors.

The "Others" category consists of 12 of the 32 respondents. Included in this category are respondents who may be based outside the region but whose remits include working in the North and West Grampian region. Each of these respondents is involved in tourism in the region, either directly, such as Historic Scotland or indirectly, such as distilleries who are located on the periphery of the region, but whose catchement area extends into North and West Grampian.

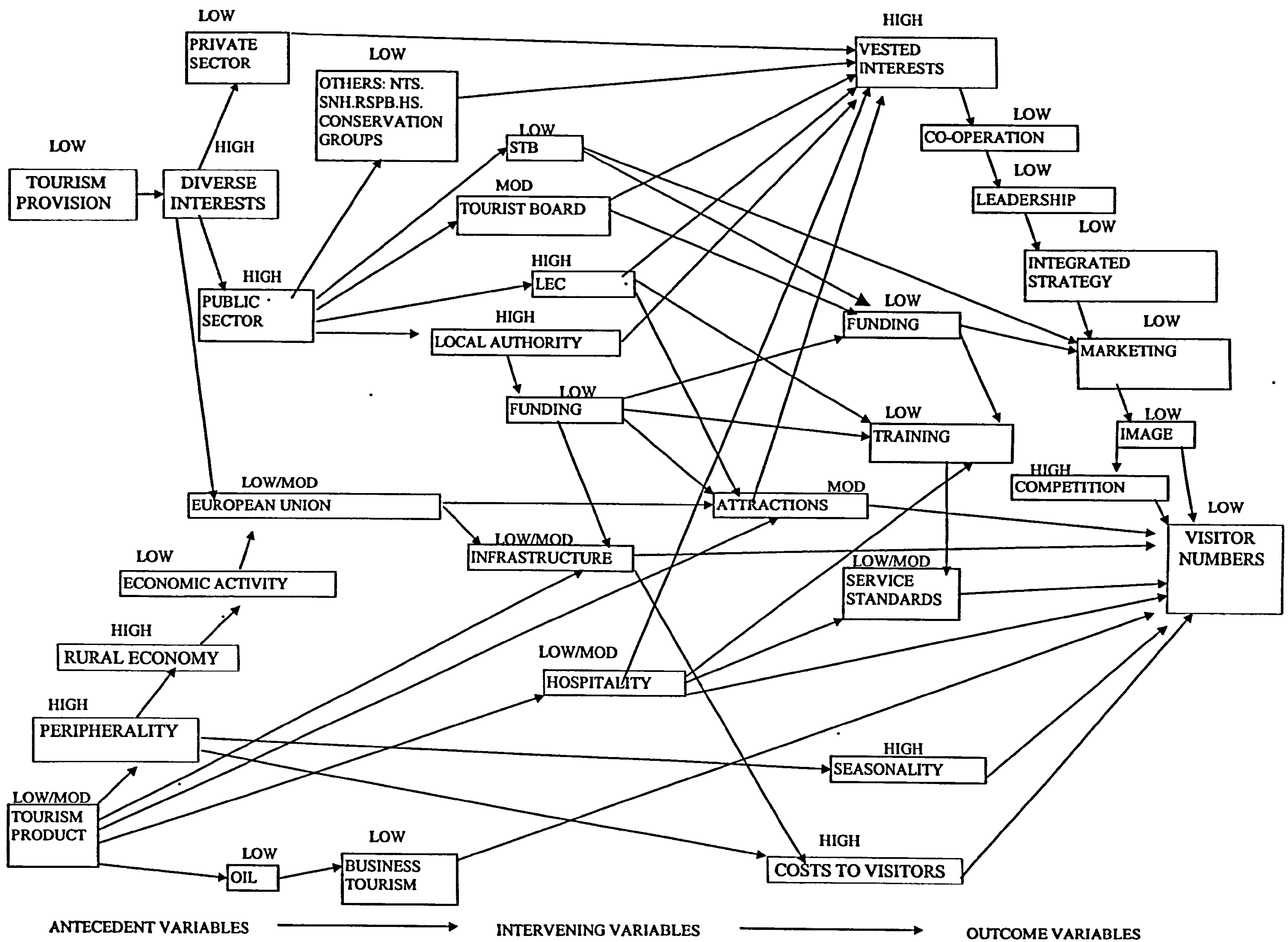
As with the previous section dealing with the commercial and non-commercial sectors the use of statistical data are included to inform the process and to assist in the understanding of the ordinal scale as opposed to representing statistical accuracy.

GRAMPIAN REGIONAL SECTOR CAUSAL NETWORK MODEL (SEE FIGURE 22)

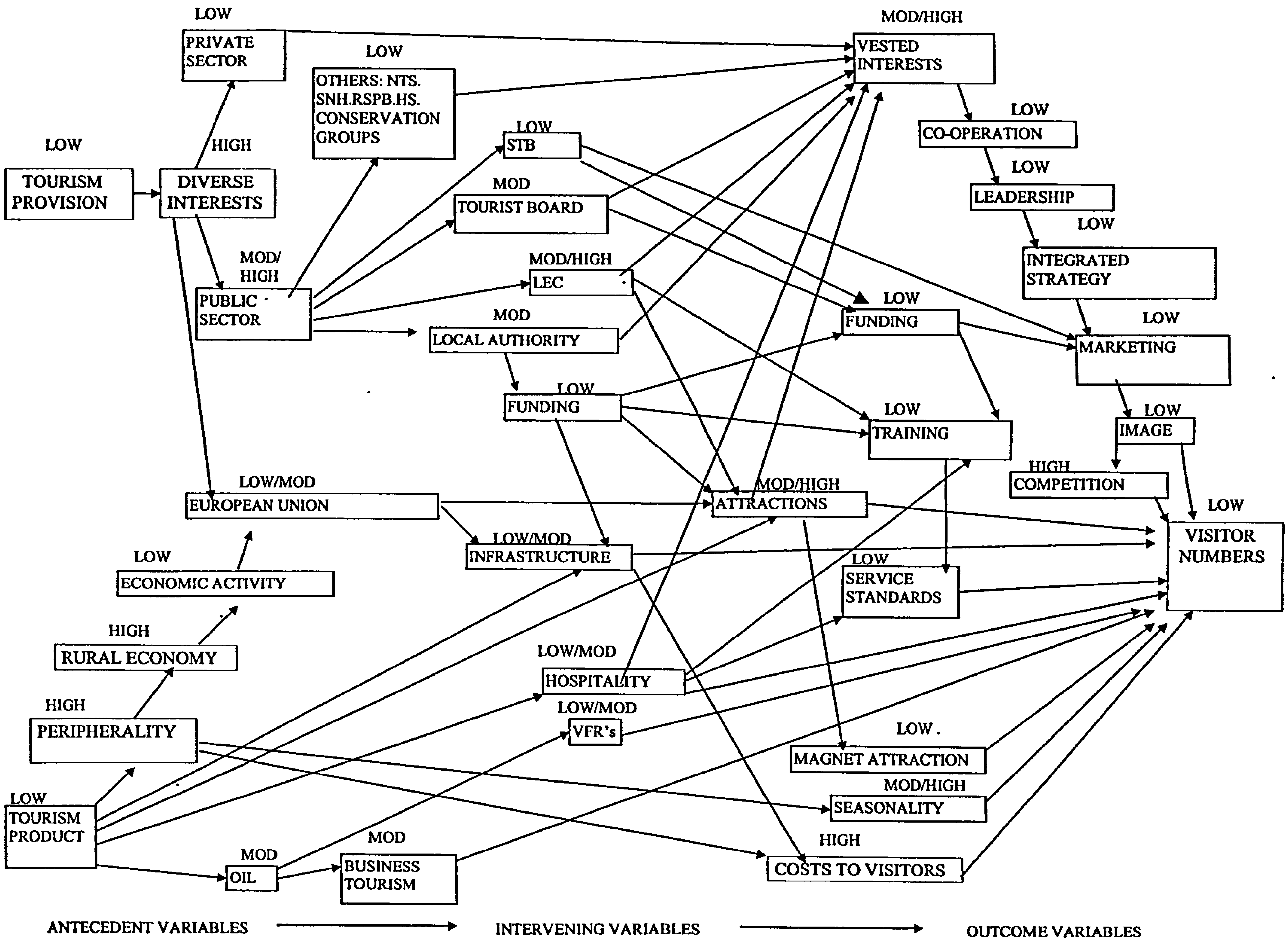
ABERDEEN REGIONAL SECTOR CAUSAL NETWORK MODEL (SEE FIGURE 23)

"OTHERS" REGIONAL SECTOR CAUSAL NETWORK MODEL (SEE FIGURE 24)

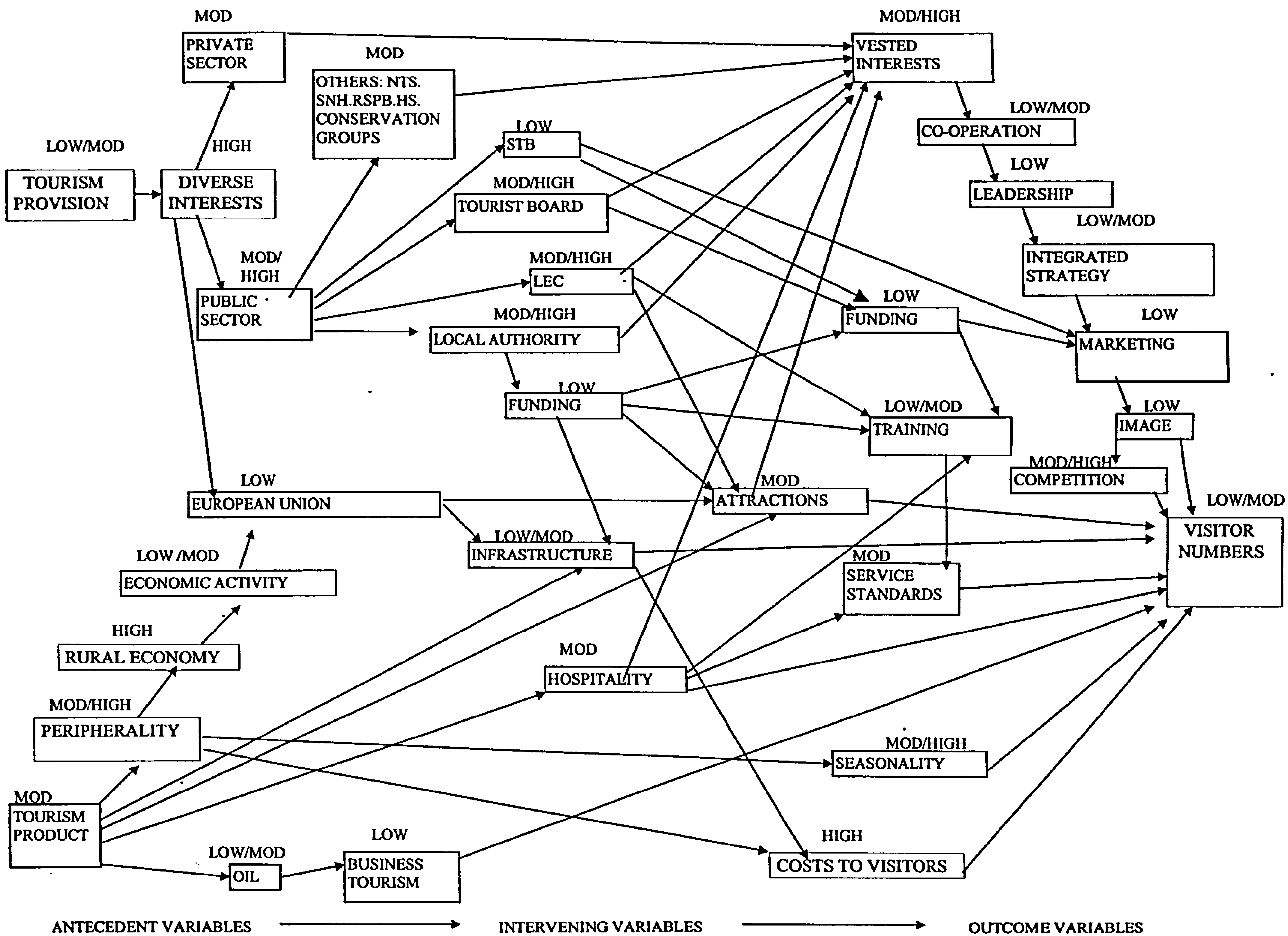
CAUSAL FRAGMENT: TOURISM PROVISION IN NORTH AND WEST GRAMPIAN:GRAMPIAN FINDINGS. FIGURE 22



CAUSAL FRAGMENT: TOURISM PROVISION IN NORTH AND WEST GRAMPIAN:ABERDEEN FINDINGS. FIGURE 23



CAUSAL FRAGMENT: TOURISM PROVISION IN NORTH AND WEST GRAMPIAN: OTHERS FINDINGS. FIGURE 24



In some cases the responses relating to the variables may not total 5, 15 or 12. This is because of non-responses to certain questions. As was stated in the previous section it is important to remember that bear in mind when reading this section that the North and West Grampian sector respondents totalled 5, the Aberdeen respondents totalled 15 and the "Others" respondents totalled 12. The statistical data listed below are based on these number of respondents.

Tourism Provision

- The Aberdeen City respondents (14 or 93%) suggested that it was low. In the North and West Grampian region the number who suggested it was low was 5 or 100% and in the "Others" category only 5 or 42% of the respondents suggested that tourism provision in Grampian was low and a further 6 or 58% suggested it was moderate. The three sub-regional areas all had different views as to the standard and level of tourism provision in the region. As a consequence of the respondents feedback the tourism provision variable was categorised as low for both Aberdeen and North and West Grampian and as low/moderate by the "Others" sector.

The major differences were found in the responses from the "Others" category. These figures could be partly explained by the fact that respondents from the "Others" category were not physically located in the region, so there were spatial differences and comparative unfamiliarity with the area (in relation to the more likely familiarity of the respondents located within the region). Allied to this was the perception that the outlying regions tended to suffer in comparison to the more central areas around Aberdeen. According to the Scottish Office these smaller communities tend to be faced with, "...a particular combination of problems, the result, in the main, of the progressive concentration of public and private sector service provision in large towns" (1995, p 8). Respondents also tended to answer questions based on their own experiences and in the case of the respondents being based out-with the region of North and West Grampian, their feedback is likely to more representative of their own areas than for North and West Grampian.

Public Sector

The most influential group was considered to be the public sector with 53% of the Aberdeen respondents suggesting they had high levels of influence and a further

40% suggesting they had moderate influence. All of the North and West Grampian respondents suggested they had most influence whereas 67% of the "Others" respondents rated their influence as high and the remaining 33% suggesting it was moderate. This represented a general consensus amongst all the regional respondents that the public sector was the most influential. However, there were regional variations in terms of perceptions of the level of their importance. In North and West Grampian every respondent suggested they were the most important which may be due to the reliance of the more outlying/peripheral regions on the public sector to provide services, funds and leadership for tourism projects and diversification of the local economies. It is often in these areas that private sector investment is lacking and it is often left to the public sector (Local Authorities, LEC, Tourist Boards or the European Union) to provide the impetus for tourism investment.

In the "Others" category 67% of the respondents suggested that the public sector was the most influential, and although this is still a high percentage it is in contrast to the feedback from the North and West Grampian respondents. Many of the "Others" category were located in areas where the private sector has made more investment and as a consequence, has more influence, for example, Inverness and Edinburgh. The feedback still indicated that the most influential sector is the public sector, but the disparity between public and private sector influence does not appear to be as large as it is in the North and West Grampian region.

Private Sector and "Others" Sector

- In terms of the most influential sector for tourism provision in the region, Aberdeen respondents suggested that both the private sector and the "Others" sector had low levels of influence (13 or 86% and 12 or 80% respectively). Both these variables were categorised as low. Respondents from North and West Grampian showed similar views with responses of 4 and 4 (categorised as low/moderate). The major differences were found in the responses from the "Others" group whose responses for the private sector were 25% (3) low, 33% (4) moderate and 42% (5) high. This meant that the variables was categorised as moderate. For the "Others" sector the responses were 42% (5) low, 3 (25%) moderate and 4 (33%) high. The variable was categorised as moderate.

Feedback from the Aberdeen and North and West Grampian respondents suggested that the private sector had a low level of influence. Allied to the fact that the public sector was only given a high rating by 53% (8) of the Aberdeen respondents, the influence of the private sector could be seen to be greater in Aberdeen than in the North and West Grampian region as a whole. This was to be expected when comparing private sector involvement in cities and rural locations.

Diverse Interests

- The main problem associated with tourism provision in the region were the level of diverse interests involved. Thirteen or 86% of Aberdeen respondents, all of the North and West Grampian respondents (100%) and 91% (11)of "Others" respondents suggested it was high. The variables for each of the sectors concerning diverse interests were therefore categorised as high.

Although the consensus was that there are too many diverse interests, the respondents from North and West Grampian rated them as higher than the respondents from either Aberdeen or the "Others" category. This may be because they are more likely to be involved, as recipients of any grants or assistance, from public sector bodies than either of the other two regions. This meant that they were more involved in the tourism decision making process and the consequent problems associated with joint initiatives and collaborative projects.

Public Sector Provision

STB

- The influence of the STB was considered to be low by all three of the regions. In both the "Others" and the North and West Grampian categories 100% of the respondents (12 and 5 respectively) suggested that their influence was low. Of the Aberdeen respondents 86% (13) suggested their influence was low.

This difference could be attributed to the greater level of awareness of STB initiatives in the City itself. Certainly there was concern expressed by some of the respondents that the City of Aberdeen was the main beneficiary of tourism marketing initiatives or promotions.

LEC

- The LEC was rated as being of a high level of importance and influence by 66% or 10 of Aberdeen respondents, with the remaining 5 or 34% rated them as moderate. As a consequence the variable was rated as moderate/high. The North and West Grampian respondents also rated them as moderate/high (80% or 4) and 75% (8) of the "Others" respondents rated then as high and 25% or 4 as moderate. The LEC variables were categorised as moderate/high for the "other" respondents.

The greater the degree of dependence on the funding provided by the LEC seems to be the main reason for the "Others" and North and West Grampian categories rating the LEC as high. It is the more outlying or peripheral regions that are more dependent and are often the main beneficiaries of) any financial assistance.

Tourist Board

- The Tourist Board's influence was seen as moderate in Aberdeen and North and West Grampian. In Aberdeen 6 respondents suggested it was moderate, 5 suggested it was high and 4 suggested it was low. In North and West Grampian 3 suggested it was moderate. However, of the "Others" sector 5 suggested it was moderate and 7 suggested it was high which means a categorisation of moderate/high.

There was a general consensus amongst all respondents that the local Tourist Board has comparatively high levels of influence on tourism provision in the region.

The EU

- The influence of the EU was rated as low by 12 (80%) and moderate by 3 (20%) of Aberdeen respondents. All (100%) of the "Others" category rated them as low as did 3 (60%) of the North and West Grampian respondents. The remaining (2) 40% of the North and West Grampian sector suggested their influence was moderate. This meant categorisations of low/moderate, low and low/moderate respectively.

This could be explained by the fact that several of the North and West Grampian respondents are in receipt of some financial assistance from the EU or are involved in some form of partnership or tourism initiative. For example, the Buckie Drifter Maritime Museum at Buckie received financial assistance from the EU, as did the Kinnaird Lighthouse at Fraserburgh.

As was the case in the previous section the process of categorising the variables into the ordinal scale was ongoing. However, to avoid repetition it is felt that the process has been suitably explained for this section and the following variables will be discussed in number terms as opposed to percentages.

Local Authority

- The Local Authorities' influence was rated as high by 4 of the respondents from North and West Grampian and by 9 of the respondents from the "Others" category. The Aberdeen based respondents rated their influence as moderate (4 low, 5 moderate and 6 high).

The importance attached to the Local Authorities by the North and West Grampian and "Others" categories could be attributed to the fact that it is these regions that are often the most dependent on Local Authority assistance.

Co-operation, Vested Interests and Integration

- The level of co-operation was perceived to be low by all of the respondents from North and West Grampian, by 13 of Aberdeen respondents and by 7 of the "Others" respondents. Of the remaining respondents from the "Others" category all of them (5) suggested co-operation was moderate. In terms of integration 14 of the respondents from Aberdeen, all of the respondent from North and West Grampian and 8 of the "Others" category suggested it was low.

There appears to be a consensus that the levels of co-operation in the region were considered to be comparatively low. Although vested interests are a fact of life there was a consensus amongst respondents that the number of organisations and individuals involved in tourism provision in the region had a direct impact on the levels of co-operation amongst tourism providers in the region. All of the North and

West Grampian respondents suggested they were high, all of the "Others" respondents suggested they were moderate/high, as did all of the Aberdeen respondents.

Leadership, Marketing, Funding, Image and Competition

- The consensus was that the level of leadership tended to be low.

The level of marketing was perceived to be low by 14 of the Aberdeen respondents, all of the North and West Grampian respondents and by 11 of the "Others" respondents. Compounding the perception of low levels of marketing was the issue of funding for the local tourist board (whose responsibilities include the marketing of the area). All of the respondents, from all three groups, considered the levels of funding to be inadequate. There was a general consensus amongst all the respondents that the region lacked an image (13 in Aberdeen, 10 in the "Others" sector and 5 in North and West Grampian.

- In terms of competition 13 respondents in Aberdeen, 5 in North and West Grampian and 9 in the "Others" group suggested that the levels of competition for the region were high. The remaining 3 respondents in the "Others" sector suggested it was moderate.

Peripherality, Rural Economy and Economic Activity

- Of the respondents from Aberdeen 14 suggested that peripherality was a problem, 5 of the North and West Grampian respondents and 8 of the "Others" respondents also rated it as high. Of the remainder of the respondents in the North and West Grampian category and the "Others" category they all rated the regions peripherality as moderate. This means that all of the respondents rated the regions peripherality as moderate/high.
- Every respondent suggested that the region is dependent on a rural economy.
- Partly as a result of the regions high dependence on rural activities (all respondents) there is a consequent low level of economic activity (13 of Aberdeen respondents, 4 of North and West Grampian respondents and 5 of the "Others" respondents). The remaining respondents were all classified as moderate.

Seasonality

- The issue of seasonality was considered to be a problem by all three of the respondent groups. Aberdeen respondents rated it as moderate (5) and high (9), 4 of the North and West Grampian respondents rated it as high, whilst the "Others" respondents suggested that it was moderate (4) and high (8).

These figures differ only in the extent to which seasonality was considered a problem. What they do suggest is that there is a consensus that seasonality is moderate/high and is consequently a problem for the region.

Costs to Visitors

- Allied to the problems of peripherality and seasonality are the costs associated with getting to the region. Almost all of the respondents (with the exception of one) from all three groups suggested this was a problem.

Oil and Business Tourism

- The respondents from Aberdeen rated the importance of oil as low 6, moderate 5 and high 4. The responses from North and West Grampian differ in that 4 of the respondents suggested oil had little influence on the region. The "Others" category responses were low 6, moderate 4 and 2 high.

This was in contrast to the relative importance attributed to the industry by the Aberdeen respondents.

- The responses from each group concerning the level of business tourism in the region tended to reflect the response to the influence of oil. Aberdeen rated business tourism as higher than both North and West Grampian and the "Others" categories with 8 (53%) respondents rating it as moderate. This was in contrast to the corresponding figures of 4 low and 1 moderate for North and West Grampian and 9 low and 3 moderate for the "Others" group.

Hospitality, Service Standards and Training

- The consensus was that standards of hospitality were low. Eleven of the Aberdeen respondents suggested they were low and 4 suggested they were moderate. All of the North and West Grampian respondents suggested they were low. Seven of the "Others" category suggested they were low and 1 suggested they were moderate and 4 suggested they were high.

Every respondent from the North and West Grampian group suggested that hospitality, service standards and training were all low. This suggests that North and West Grampian (out-with Aberdeen) has problems with the standard and level of their hospitality product.

Attractions

- The general consensus was that the standard and level of attractions in the region were moderate. The actual responses from each group were as follows, Aberdeen low 2, moderate 7, high 6. North and West Grampian low 1, moderate 3 and high 1, "Others" low 3, moderate 5 and high 4.

Six of the Aberdeen respondents suggested that the area lacked a magnet attraction. This reflected the local debate in North and West Grampian concerning the tourism attractions strategy for the region. Many officials at public organisations such as North and West Grampian Enterprise, Aberdeen City Council and the former Gordon District Council saw merit in the ideas suggested by PA Consultants for the provision of a broad range of attractions based largely on heritage and history. However, The former chairman of the Aberdeen and North and West Grampian Tourist Board, Gordon Henry suggested that what the area needs is a magnet attraction based on what the area is famous for and that is oil (1995).

Infrastructure

- Of the Aberdeen respondents 10 suggested that the region's infrastructure was poor. The corresponding figures from North and West Grampian and the "Others" group were 4 and 5. Five of the Aberdeen respondents suggested it was moderate, as did 7 of the "Others".

None of the respondents suggested that the standards were high.

Visitor Numbers

- All of the respondents from Aberdeen and North and West Grampian suggested that visitor numbers were low. Only 9 of the "Others" respondents suggested they were low.

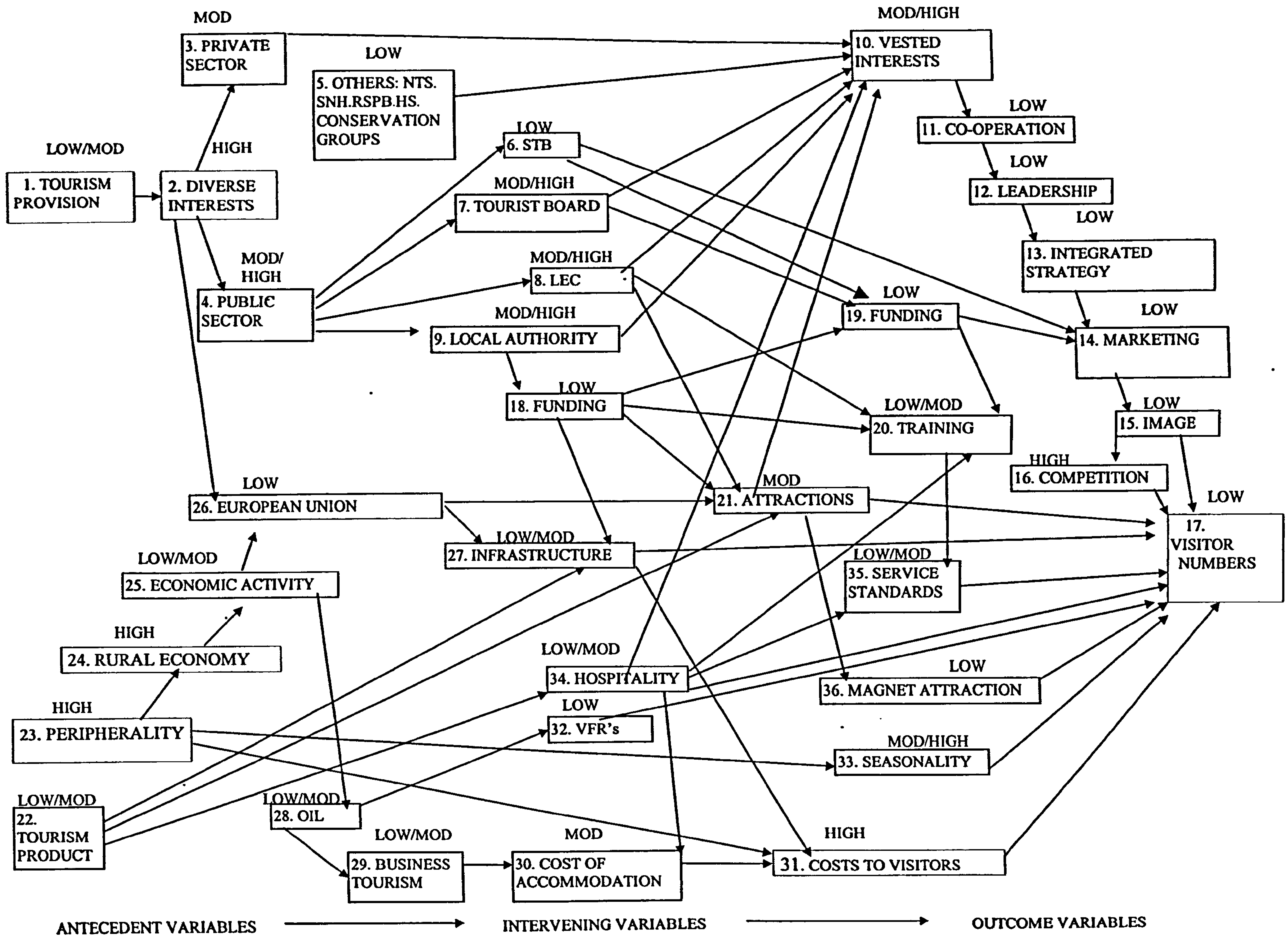
This can be attributed to the comparative lack of familiarity with the actual issues and visitor numbers to the region of North and West Grampian, by respondents from out-with the region. Of Aberdeen respondents 10 suggested that VFR were of moderate importance to the total visitor numbers, as did 2 of the "Others" respondents. The general consensus was that visitor numbers to Grampian were too low.

5.3 CAUSAL NETWORK NARRATIVES AND MODELS FOR THE TOTAL CASE STUDY REGION

CAUSAL NETWORK MODEL (SEE FIGURE 25)

The relatively small sample size (32) is recognised as a limitation. As a consequence it is accepted that drawing conclusions based solely on this method of data collection is not viable. The focus of the research was to test the methodologies of Causal Networks and Lesson Drawing. To effectively accomplish this aim primary data was required from the respondents. This research did not set out to accumulate data that was representative off all tourism providers in the region. However, because of the comparatively large number of public sector respondent the feedback can be said to be representative of the views of the public sector. In this section the respondent data collected is supported by respondent quotes and secondary literature sources. The aim is to inform the current knowledge on the three case study regions and where applicable on peripheral areas.

CAUSAL FRAGMENT: TOURISM PROVISION IN NORTH AND WEST GRAMPIAN: FINAL MODEL. FIGURE 25



Tourism Provision

In general the standard of tourism provision in the region was considered to be low/moderate by the respondents. The respondents feedback suggests a general consensus amongst all those involved in tourism provision in the region that the standard and the quality of tourism delivery is poor. The Economic Intelligence Unit (1994, p 83) suggested that North and West Grampian suffered from a slow "level and pace of improvement in the quality of the tourism product".

The major problem area highlighted by the majority of the respondents was that there were too many diverse interests involved in tourism provision in the region. According to one of the respondents "there are a lot of parties with their own agendas. This causes difficulties making decisions and at tourism forums."

The complex network of organisations and diverse interests involved in tourism delivery in Grampian can be illustrated by looking at the funding arrangements for the development of the Archaeolink project at Oyne, near Inverurie. The project attempts to recreate the past of the region and present it in a modern format and in so doing, help to regenerate the economy of the local area. The aim is to build on the existing stone circle within Gordon district and to develop a trail designed to introduce the visitors to some of the archaeologically important monuments in the region.

The major provision for the funding of the project came from the European Structural Funds (ESF) in the form of a conditional matching grant. The project was co-ordinated by the Archaeolink Trust who were responsible for raising the capital for the development phase and for administering the project when completed. The funding for the project was split between the European Regional Development Fund, Gordon District Council, Grampian Enterprise, Scottish National Heritage and Grampian Regional Council. The problems associated with joint projects are described by Hall and Jenkins "there may be differences in objectives between tourism corporations and organisations in different industry sectors and different industry representative organisations" (1995, p 53). This was certainly the case with the Archaeolink project where the diverse interested parties all had separate agendas and in-house rules with which to conform. These issues were compounded by the EU's system of providing conditional matching grants, which meant that if one of the partners reduced their financial contributions then they too would reduce their contributions, by the same amount. This situation did cause difficulties when the Local Authority boundaries, responsibilities and funds were changed which meant that their priorities also changed and their funding for the project was affected.

The interested parties involved in tourism in Grampian could be split into the three distinct groups of public sector, private sector and "Others".

Conclusions

There was a general consensus amongst all the respondents that the quality of tourism provision in the region was poor. The major problem highlighted was the fact that there was an inability of the tourism providers to set aside their interests and differences.

Public Sector and Private Sector

The most influential sector was considered to be the public sector, with 29 of the respondents rating its influence as high. This dependence on the public sector is well documented (Botterill et al 1997, Wanhill 1995a, Oakes 1995, Shucksmith et al 1995, Burke and O'Cinneide 1995, Cavacao 1994, Keane 1992, Davidson 1992, McCleery 1991) and is common in peripheral regions, where the private sector are often reluctant to invest. One of the public sector respondents stated that "it is common amongst more remote areas such as North and West Grampian for the public sector to be more heavily relied on than in other locations nearer the core, in places such as Aberdeen."

The private sector was seen to be considerably less influential with only 5 of the respondents rating their influence as high, and only 6 giving them a moderate rating. According to one of the public sector respondents "private sector investment appears patchy and the level of direct financial contribution to the ATB by its members is amongst the lowest in Scotland."

The desired involvement of private, commercial sector companies in tourism developments can often prove difficult to attain because of the perceptions of these locations by investors. Some of the problems with areas such as North and West

Grampian are the perceived limited, or small scale returns on investment in new attractions or amenities. The Scottish Office pointed out that because of "the areas peripherality, new industries are generally reluctant to locate there unless there are specific benefits accruing to their industry." Factors that actively dissuade industry from locating in the area include distance from markets, higher transport costs, transportation time lags, limited availability of staff with specialised skills, limited business support services and small local markets for products. Sparsity of population and lack of concentration of industry constrain the growth rate of the local economies. "The typical Small and Medium sized Enterprise (SME) operates at the margin of viability and has limited access to investment capital in order to expand or increase profit" (The Scottish Office, 1994, p 20)

Out-with Aberdeen City, the more peripheral areas of Grampian encounter difficulties associated with their remoteness. The beneficial impacts of the oil industry do not tend to extend out to these regions. The significance of the oil/gas industry to Aberdeen is illustrated by their impact on the hotel sector in the city where "74% of their business is related to the oil and gas industries while the corresponding figure for non-city hotels is only 17%" (TMS, 1994, p 37).

Conclusions

There was a consistent view amongst interested parties in the region that the level of private sector investment and influence needs to be increased. This is certainly the view of several respondents in the public sector that considered the private sector to be, "at best slow in coming forward."

"Others" Sector

The influence of the "Others" category (comprising conservation groups, Forest Enterprise, National Trust for Scotland etc) was considered low, with only 4 respondents acknowledging a high level of influence by this group. The vast majority considered their influence to be low.

The respondents who considered their influence to be high could be split into two groups, either those that were actually part of the "Others" group themselves, such as Historic Scotland or those that were based in or around Aviemore. The Aviemore respondents were more likely to see the "Others" category as being influential because of the on-going discussions and debates about the new Cairngorm chair lift. Some members of the "Others" group, such as the RSPB, are involved in opposing the developments on environmental and wildlife conservancy grounds. This is because the development would provide easier access to upland areas and allow greater access for skiers.

Conclusions

The influence of this group was considered to be low. This is mainly as a result of the fact that many of these groups tend not to have access to large amounts of capital for new project development and in many cases are peripheral to decision making forums by virtue of their locations or their remits.

STB

Within the Public Sector the Scottish Tourist Board was considered to have little influence, with 30 of the 32 respondents rating their influence as low. One of the private sector respondents suggested that "the STB does not have the authority and leadership that it should have and that is expected of the lead agency of the national tourism industry." This perceived low level of influence could be explained by looking at the main responsibilities associated with the STB. These responsibilities are "to encourage the British to take holidays in Scotland, to encourage the provision of tourist facilities and amenities in Scotland, and to advise government and public bodies on matters relating to tourism in Scotland" (Pearce, 1992, p 101). The STB are responsible for the marketing of Scotland as a whole, not particular regions. The promotion of one region over another is not part of their remit. As a consequence the promotion of Grampian as a destination is not undertaken by the STB, which goes some way to explaining why the respondents suggested that the STB had a low level of influence in North and West Grampian.

Conclusions

Despite the low level of influence attributed to the STB in reality their influence in Grampian is greater than it was perceived to be. This was because of the role in the funding arrangements for the Area Tourist Boards. The STB's influence is more indirect than direct because they contribute funds to the local tourist board to market the region. They do not directly market each individual region.

Enterprise Companies

The most influential bodies were thought to be the Enterprise Companies, with 22 respondents rating them as having high levels of influence and a further 9 rating their influence as moderate. This high degree of influence was according to one of the respondents "due to the fact that it is the Enterprise Companies who control the purse strings. If you want finance for tourism relayed developments the Enterprise Companies are the best sources." The Enterprise Companies included Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Grampian Enterprise and Moray, Badenoch and Strathspey Enterprise.

The degree of influence attributed to the Enterprise Companies (Enterprise in particular) can be explained by looking at their areas of responsibility which are "for the development of the tourism product as part of their business advisory, training and development grant functions" (Grampian Regional Council, 1995, p 4).

Grampian Enterprise approves a Tourism Development Strategy, which covers 5 main areas of activity as follows:

- Membership of the Board of Grampian Highlands and Aberdeen Marketing Company.
- Support for the accommodation sector through business analysis and development. This may lead to training and advice provision.
- Development of package holidays, especially in the activity sector where there are an extensive range of providers, albeit relatively small for the most part.
- Support and management for major events, such as the Tall Ships Race, or sporting events.
- The upgrading and development of existing and new tourist attractions, often in partnership with Local Authorities and the private sector."

Conclusions

The Enterprise network was considered to have the greatest level of influence on tourism provision and decision making in North and West Grampian. This is due mainly to the fact that it is the LEC that are the major funders of new tourism initiatives and developments in the region.

Tourist Board and Local Authorities

Nineteen of the respondents considered the Local Authorities to have high influence, and 9 considered them to have a moderate level of influence. Thirteen of the respondents considered the Tourist Boards to have high levels of influence, with 14 respondents rating them as moderate. These comparatively high levels of influence can be attributed to the peripheral nature of the region and the consequent reliance on the public sector for assistance and support.

The Tourist Board (TB) and the Local Authorities (LA) were perceived as having similar levels of influence. Both were considered to have moderate/high levels of influence. This can be explained by the fact that there is a reliance on the public sector in most peripheral regions. One of the private sector respondents suggested that "it is difficult to function without the assistance of the Local Authorities. They provide much of the local infrastructure that is important to the local tourism industry." The Tourist Boards are also seen as important players because at a regional level the Regional Tourist Boards have established "a unique position in that they are perhaps the only interest umbrella in the tourism domain who have developed relations with Local Authorities" (Greenwood, 1993, p 44).

Conclusions

The high level of influence attributed to the Tourist Board and the Local Authorities can be attributed to the fact that Grampian is a peripheral area. This reliance on public sector bodies in peripheral regions is due mainly to the reluctance of the private sector to invest in these regions. As a consequence these areas tend to look to the public sector for leadership and assistance.

European Union

Overall the influence of the European Union (EU) was seen to be limited, with 27 of the respondents giving it a low rating, and only 5 rating this influence as moderate. Of the respondents who rated the influence of the EU as high they all had direct dealings with the EU in terms of joint initiatives or development projects, such as Grampian Enterprise or Aberdeenshire Council. Other respondents were in receipt of conditional matching grant assistance from the Objective 5b Regional Development Funds, such as the Buckie Drifter Maritime Museum, Peterhead Maritime Museum, Kinnaird Lighthouse or the Archaeolink Pre - History Park.

According to Moodie (1994) there are four strategic priority areas within the North and West Grampian Objective 5b Regional Plan. Business development, (the aim of this priority is to improve and diversify the economic structure of North and West Grampian's hinterland), Communication, Human Resources and Environment and Heritage. Both the Regional Council and Grampian Enterprise are important players in the development of these programmes, which illustrates the relatively high profile these two organisations have in the region.

The Objective 5b Regional Plan for North and West Grampian highlights the potential for using tourism as a measure for developing business within the region. The plan makes provision for the need to develop business in order to address the strategic economic issues of the area. Tourism initiatives are required to show that they contribute to the local economy by generating local employment and income. A tourist attraction or project, which satisfied the criteria for receiving 5b funding, would be able to assist in the development of business and also in reducing the disparities between the region and the rest of Europe.

Grants are given to infrastructure and productive investments and to be eligible the project must conform to one or more of the Community objectives and the requirements of the ERDF. "In practice, local income and employment generation are the most significant factors affecting project acceptability, since the primary use of Structural Funds is to correct for regional imbalances" (Wanhill, 1993, p 71).

Conclusions

The perceived low levels of influence attributed to the EU were largely as a result of the principle of subdidiarity adopted by the EU itself. This principle means that the EU will assist in local and regional tourism initiatives but will not lead them. The fundamental principle is to for local developments based on local needs. As a consequence the EU tended to have a relatively low profile. However, the EU was actually more influential than the North and West Grampian respondents suggested. This was due to the financial assistance available to the region from the EU Structural funds. In terms of financial assistance the EU does have greater influence over tourism developments in Grampian than it has been credited with. This was largely as a result of the (now obsolete) Objective 5b Regional Development Plan, whose aims were to assist in the economic renewal in certain regions, such as North and West Grampian. In total the Structural Fund's budget for the 1994 - 1999 period were set at 39 million ECU for North and West Grampian.

Co-operation, vested interests and integration

The level of co-operation between all the interested parties was considered to be low by 25 of the respondents and moderate by 5. This means that 30 of the respondents consider the level of co-operation in the region to be low/moderate.

The major problem associated with these large numbers of diverse interests is the level of individual interests involved. Of the respondents 29 suggested they were high and a further 3 considered them to be moderate, which means that all 32 of the respondents consider this to be a problem.

Hall and Jenkins (1995, p 58) suggest that "coalitions require a critical mass of supporters to lead to action and the increasing complexity of the tourism policy arena works against coalition as the number of stakeholders has increased." This was certainly the case in Grampian where the organisations and interest groups involved in tourism provision included, Grampian Enterprise, Aberdeen and Grampian Tourist Board, Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire County Councils (comprising of North, South and Central divisions), the Scottish Tourist Board, Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enerprise, Moray, Badenoch and Strathspey Enterprise, The

National Trust for Scotland, Forest Enterprise, Historic Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Arts Council, Scottish Museums Council, Scottish Woodlands, Scottish Environmental Protection Agency, Scottish Wildlife Trust plus all those involved in the commercial sector, transport sector and attractions (both public and private).

In terms of the degree to which those involved in tourism in the region work within, and towards, an integrated strategy the responses suggested it was low (27). There are many interested parties involved, but there is no overall consensus on how to achieve the common goal of increasing tourism.

Conclusions

As a consequence of the large number of interested parties involved in tourism provision in Grampian the majority of the respondents consider there to be too many diverse interests which results in low levels of co-operation.

Although this problem is apparent there appears to be an inability and an unwillingness amongst the respondents to address the issues. There is a distrust of the respondents from different regions and from different sectors (mainly between public and private sector respondents).

Leadership

Compounding the problems of lack of co-operation was the perceived lack of leadership for tourism provision in the region, with 27 of the respondents reporting this as low.

The respondents believed that there were too many separate agendas being pursued by the interested parties and that as a consequence there was no integrated strategy or leadership for tourism developments in the region. A private sector respondent suggested that "the industry in Grampian needs consistent leadership that can establish a vision for the industry and, more than that, can sell it to others."

Conclusions

Low levels of co-operation and integration tend to be linked or associated with leadership and as such it was to be expected that the levels of leadership exhibited in the region would be low. This was again attributed mainly to the inability of the interested parties to put their differences aside and work together. The norm is for public sector bodies such as the Area Tourist Boards or the Local Authorities to take the lead but this has not happened in North and West Grampian. The consensus was that there was no one leader for tourism developments in the region.

Marketing, Image and Competition

A major problem was perceived to be the marketing of the area by the Tourist Board, with 30 of the respondents considering the level of marketing to be poor. This was especially true in the more remote areas of North and West Grampian but was also a major issue highlighted by Aberdeen City Council (1997, p 2) who suggested that "the poor quality and quantity of marketing and promotion are considered serious problems. Fisher (1994, p 149) saw the problem centring around the fact that the area "does not have a co-ordinated view as to what the market is."

Additionally it was felt by 28 of the respondents that the region of Grampian suffered from a lack of image or brand. These views were supported by the Aberdeen City Council's survey (1997, p 2) which suggests that "Aberdeen has failed to be perceived as a tourist destination by both its citizens and the external markets. According to the Scottish Office "Grampian is off the beaten track relative to other UK destinations and remote from volume markets. It does not have a clearly defined image, in contrast to other parts of Scotland" (1995, p 16).

Compounding the problem of the perceived low levels of marketing and lack of image were the reported high levels of competition. Of the respondents 27 suggested the level of Competition was. Named competitors were the Highlands and Islands of Scotland and the West of Scotland.

Conclusions

The consensus was that the region was marketed very poorly and that Grampian lacked a brand or an image, and there was "a general lack of agreement in who we should be targeting as potential visitors and tourists" (Aberdeen City Council, 1997, p 2). This was not the case for the region's major competitors, The West Coast and The Highlands and Islands which both have strong brand images based on their natural scenic beauty and their cultural heritage and both of which are on the main tourist route.

The challenge for the marketers is to change the visitors' perceptions of Grampian as a tourist destination because, "the view is often held that it is a lot colder in the North of Scotland so many people will not wish to spend their hard earned vacation time where it is cold and wet" (Henry 1994). Compounding these unfavourable perceptions of North and West Grampians weather is the very real issue of peripherality

Funding

One of the major reasons given for the poor level of marketing was the lack of funding for the local Tourist Board. All of the respondents suggested that the level of funding for the local tourist board was inadequate for the functions they were charged to carry out. Henry suggests that the funding for tourism marketing in the region has suffered major cut-backs and the Aberdeen City Council's funding for the AGTB for one year is £300,000, which is roughly the same as its funding for one event, the Tall Ships race (1996).

One of the respondents discussed the level of funding and stated that "in 1997 the total funds available to the Aberdeen and Grampian Tourist Board were £1.95 million. Their three areas of responsibility and expenditure were: Marketing and Public Relations - £700,000; Visitor Services - £ 800,000 and Finance and Administration - £450,000." These figures represent a cut in the budgets for the Tourist Board of 35% on the previous year. In 1998 the total funds available were cut to £946,000. This trend in cutting funds has been directly linked to the cut backs in Local Authority funds, who then cut back on Tourist Board funds. As a result of these financial pressures the Aberdeen and Grampian Tourist Board have cut back on the number of tourist information centres and are tending to rely more and more on commercial activities and membership fees to raise the funds they require. Compounding these financial difficulties is the fact that the Tourist Board is going through what some respondents suggested was a crisis of confidence, which was exacerbated in May 1997 by the resignation of the Tourist Board Chairman.

Conclusions

There have been several severe cut-backs in funding for both the Local Authorities and the Area tourist Boards. These trends look set to continue into the foreseeable future as the central Government in London cuts the funds available to the Local Authorities, who in turn cut their contributions to the ATB's. However, there may be some cause for optimism for the Scottish Local Authorities with the election of the Scottish Parliament.

Oil

Oil was considered to be of importance to the economy of Aberdeen, with 9 of the respondents suggesting the influence was high/moderate. However, none of the respondents from North and West Grampian considered oil to be of any significance to their regions where, one of the respondents pointed out "the local economies are still dominated by the declining industries of agriculture and fishing." This is supported by the Scottish Office who state that "the minimal impact of the oil industry in the area and the dominance of the primary sector point to earnings significantly below the regional average" (Scottish Office, 1995, p 9). However, in Aberdeen the business generated as a result of oil was considered good for local hotel occupancies. Aberdeen hotels (with occupancies of 66%) tend to out perform their North and West Grampian rivals because of the oil related business. Some of the respondents felt that the prices charged for accommodation were too expensive and were kept high as a result of the business demand generated by the oil industry. Other respondents suggested that the price and quality of the local labour force had also been negatively affected by the high wages offered to staff by the oil industry.

The impact of oil on the City was highlighted by the fact that there was a large differential between weekday and weekend occupancy. The bulk of Aberdeen's hotel business is conducted during the week days, which indicated a large reliance on business tourism.

Conclusions

Whilst oil had an influence on the local economy in and around Aberdeen, (both positive in terms of employment and negative in terms of increased costs and a diminished labour force), its influence was far less apparent in the more peripheral regions of North and West Grampian. It was in these regions that many of the local industries were in decline and as such were not reliable prospects for future employment in the region. This was especially the case in the depressed areas of North and West Grampian, "where the impact of the oil industry has been negligible. The dependency of North and West Grampians communities on local economies consisting of a few low growth industries makes the area highly vulnerable to changes in external conditions" (Scottish Office, 1994, p 21). This was also true of the areas tourism industry which "is very underdeveloped in North and West Grampian where visitor numbers are low and there are a lack of major visitor attractions and appropriate hotel/guest house accommodation" (Scottish Office, p 17).

Peripherality

The region's location was considered to be a considerable disadvantage in respect to tourism. Twenty seven of the respondents suggested it was peripheral in relation to its markets. One of the respondents said that "the region was not only peripheral in a Scottish sense, it is also peripheral in a UK, European and world-wide sense."

North and West Grampian's isolation is compounded by the fact that it has still to become a primary destination and is often perceived as remote and difficult to reach. It is not a place people tend to visit for its own sake (Henry 1994, Fisher 1994).

Conclusions

The main problem facing the demand for tourism in Grampian is its peripherality. These problems are exacerbated for the region of Grampian in general, and the North and West of Grampian in particular. Because the area is not only geographically isolated from the rest of Britain, it is also isolated from the rest of Scotland. It is not on what is called the 'milk run', which refers to the traditional route taken by visitors to Scotland. This 'milk run' consists of Edinburgh, Perth, Ullapool, Oban and Glasgow. (Reed 1994). "People are not willing to take at least two days to make a detour to North and West Grampian from the A9" (Fisher, 1994, p 150).

Economic Activity

All of the respondents suggested the region had either a low or a moderate level of economic activity. None of them suggested economic activity was high.

Both agriculture and fishing are controlled, in effect, by Brussels and the market forces are somewhat distorted. Both of these industries are experiencing economic difficulties. Both are also important providers of much needed employment in the more remote areas of North and West Grampian. "The proportion of the total workforce employed in agriculture rises to very high levels in some parishes. Agriculture is the dominant economic activity across large tracts of North and West Grampian. It is clear that the economic, social and ecological future of a large part of the area is closely tied to the agricultural industry" (Scottish Office, 1994, p 11). The Scottish Office (1994, p 12) also pointed out that "between 1987 and 1991 Grampian experienced a contraction in land use for agriculture. This was accompanied by a decline in the number of full time farmers by 12% and a decline in total agricultural workforce was recorded in more than half the parishes in North and West Grampian." These problems are compounded by the BSE crisis and the continuing problems associated with the CAP (Redwood 1996, Scottish Office 1994).

The fishing industry is also a major employer in the more remote areas of the region. "Dependence on the fishing industry is pronounced around the North coast of Grampian region. The fishing related sector accounts for 30.6% of all jobs in Fraserburgh, 16% of all jobs in Peterhead, 8.55 of all jobs in Banff (66% in Gardenstown, 36% in Macduff). What these figures do not show is the knock-on effect of and therefore dependence on fishing in the coastal communities. For example, Buckie town has 38% of total employment in fishing yet it is estimated that total dependence is nearer 50%" (Scottish Office, 1994, p 13). The actual extent of the problem was described by the Scottish Office, who suggested that "a decline of up to 25% in fishing effort is likely in North and West Grampian. This will have far reaching negative economic consequences in this region" (Scottish Office, 1994 p 14). The problem is particularly acute in two of the largest settlements in the region, Fraserburgh and Peterhead where "the decline in fishing related employment has created a significant pool of unemployed and under-employed people concentrated in disadvantaged areas in both towns" (Scottish Office, 1995, p 7).

Conclusions

As a result of its location the region has a predominantly rural economy (100% of the respondents) with low levels of economic activity (69% suggested it was low and the remaining 31% suggested it was moderate). These findings are supported by the Scottish Office who suggests that the region has 96% of its land that can be classified as either "wholly less favoured or partly less favoured" (1995, p 6).

Seasonality

Compounding the economic problems of the region are the high levels of seasonality associated with tourism in North and West Grampian. Twenty one of the respondents suggested it was high and nine suggested it was moderate. None of the respondents suggested that seasonality was not an issue. One of the private sector respondents said that "seasonality is the major problem facing my business."

Conclusions

The Grampian region suffers more with the problem of seasonality than most other areas in Scotland, because of the area's remote northerly location. According to Clarke (1999) "44% of UK holiday trips and 55% of overseas trips are taken in the third quarter compared with Scottish figures of 33% and 50%." In Aberdeen itself seasonality was not perceived to be as much of a problem as it was to the more remote areas. This can be explained by the opportunities for tourism operators (especially hotels) in Aberdeen to take advantage of business tourism related not only to the oil industry but also to the research centres, Universities and conference facilities available in the City.

Costs to Visitors

Thirty one of the respondents suggested that costs associated with getting to and staying in the region were high. This is a problem that Grampian has in common with other peripheral areas. One of the Aberdeen respondents pointed out that "the costs of tourists getting to the region are the main problem. We also suffer from the perception that the costs to stay in the area are high."

Operating costs can often be prohibitive due to the relative isolation of the area and the consequent costs of peripherality. The Scottish Office described the region of North and West Grampian as "peripheral in relation to the rest of Grampian, Scotland, the UK and Europe and suggested that it suffers from the economic and social effects of distance from centres of population and economic activity" (1994 b, p 21). Particular problems highlighted included; inadequate road networks linking settlements; high transport costs and the consequent increase in prices of both imports into and exports out of the regions; the underdeveloped nature of public transport and telecommunications. Sparsity of population, underdeveloped skills and lack of opportunity restrict development prospects, and hinder economic growth. The small size of the typical community and the low population density compound the problems of high costs due to peripherality.

Conclusions

Costs associated with getting to and staying in the Grampian region were considered to be high. This is typical of costs associated with peripheral regions but the problems are exacerbated by the negative inflationary impacts of oil on the local economies.

Hospitality

The hospitality provision in Aberdeen was considered to be expensive. Of the respondents 23 suggested that the regions hospitality was of a low standard with poor levels of service (24) and low levels of training (23). One of the public sector respondents suggested that "we have to improve the level of service and the standard of our hospitality operations. We are competing in a world market place and we can not get away with providing sub-standard services."

The Aberdeen City Council survey of local tourism providers suggested that "the city offered poor levels of service and customer care coupled with an indigenous population that was not even tourist conscious never mind tourist friendly" (1997, p 2).

Conclusions

The standards of service and hospitality were considered to be poor. This is a national as well as a local problem but the situation in exacerbated in North and West Grampian because of the region's peripheral location, the local attitude towards tourism and because of the oil industry. A large percentage of the local population work in oil related jobs that pay better than jobs in the hospitality industry. This has had the effect of reducing the number and quality of staff willing to work in the hospitality industry.

Attractions

The attractions in the region were considered to be of a moderate/high standard (26), but several of the respondents suggested that the area is lacking a magnet attraction. Other respondents suggested that there may be too much emphasis on heritage based attractions, especially those part funded by the EU. One respondents pointed out that "the region has several heritage theme attractions which do not necessarily appeal to the repeat customer or children and generally the visitor numbers to these attractions are relatively low."

Conclusions

If the standard of the attractions in the region were considered adequate then the problem does not seem to be one of entertaining the visitors when they are in the region, but rather one of getting the visitors to the area in the first place. It was on this basis that the Aberdeen and Grampian Tourist Board have been criticised.

Infrastructure

The region's infrastructure was considered to be poor with 21 of the respondents rating it as low and 10 rating it as moderate.

In the city of Aberdeen itself the infrastructure has been criticised as being "in need of various improvements" (Aberdeen City Council, 1997, p 2). The main areas highlighted for improvement by the respondents to this research were the road and air links. The road network to and within the region was considered poor and the 22.30 curfew on flights into and out of Aberdeen Airport was also criticised. The Economic Intelligence Unit Limited (1994, p 81) suggested that the region had "a relative lack of direct air access, especially from North America and Europe; and the attendant issue of high add-on costs from hub airports in England." In terms of improvements there have been some efforts to improve the road access to the region with the renumbering of the A92 and the A952 to the A90 which now runs from Edinburgh through to Fraserburgh.

Conclusions

The level and standard of North and West Grampian's infrastructure was considered to be poor. This is often the case in peripheral regions, especially in the more remote parts of these peripheral northern locations.

Visitor Numbers

The almost unanimous view of the respondent's (29) was that the visitor numbers were too low. The comparatively small number of visitors attracted to the region are compounded by the fact that the visitor numbers to Grampian includes a higher than national average number of VFR. Both the STB's Survey on Tourism in Scotland and the United Kingdom Tourism Survey (UKTS) 1994 suggests that the actual number of VFR maybe as much as 34%. (The UKTS suggests that approximately 46% of these visitors actually stay with friends or relatives, as opposed to just visiting them.

One of the hotel respondents pointed to the fact that "North and West Grampian's higher than average Scottish share of the VFR market is not particularly encouraging. They do not tend to spend on accommodation." Although this may well be the case the value of VFR tourists is not to be underestimated because the VFR sector is important to the region.

However, this large number of VFR does have an impact on the level of spending in the region because they tend not to use commercial accommodation. In a comparison between visitor spending in Grampian and the Highlands and Islands, one of the respondents out that "the biggest difference is in terms of visitor spending. The average spend in the Highlands is higher than it is here."

Conclusions

In North and West Grampian the actual visitor figures will be considerably lower than those for Grampian (which are themselves lower than the regions major competitors). The Scottish Office support some of the findings of this research and suggest that some of the reason for these low visitor numbers are "insufficient appropriate accommodation, not enough linked attractions, insufficient family activities/attractions, few all weather attractions, inadequate marketing and a poor awareness of customer needs" (1995, p 17).

Grampian is not performing well in terms of tourism and the region needs to attract more visitors. There has been a decline in visitor numbers over the past few years and the falling number of tourists to the region could have pronounced impacts on the area's economy.

5.4 METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND OUTCOMES FROM THE GRAMPIAN CASE STUDY REGION

The study in the Grampian region does not purport to be representative of all the tourism providers in that region. This was certainly the case in the North and West Grampian regional sector, where the number of respondents was comparatively low. This is recognised as a limitation in respect of the representativeness of the findings. However, the respondents did represent a relatively large number of the public sector departments, organisations or agencies involved in tourism in Grampian. As a consequence of this the respondent feedback could be considered to represent the views of many of those working in the public sector. A conscious choice was made to continue with the emphasis on the public sector in the subsequent two case study regions of Inverness and Nairn and Ross and Cromarty. This was because the public sector were found to be a rich source of information and generally they were accessible and responsive during the data collection process. The inclusion of relatively large numbers of public sector respondents also served to increase the representativeness of the data, in that the public sector were well represented. For example, in the Inverness and Nairn section 11 of the 17 respondents were public sector.

The final section of the Grampian case study dealing with the total number of the respondents was an attempt to inform the process of Causal Network construction and categorisation. It was also intended to relate the respondent's feedback to the current literature and the current knowledge of both peripheral areas and the region of Grampian.

As a result of the data collection in Grampian, certain changes were made to the Causal Network models and the Causal Network variables. Some of these are discussed below whilst other specific changes made as a result of the on-going research in Inverness and Nairn are discussed at the beginning of the next chapter.

- The Tourism Provision and Tourism Product variables were left in as a starting variable but was not quantified in terms of low, moderate or high. This was because of two reasons. Firstly, it was difficult to quantify exactly what was required from the respondents. This was because the intervening variables (those that followed on) were all questions based on, or relating, to the standards of tourism provision in the area. The term itself was too general and broad to elicit specific responses to the respondents' views of tourism provision as one variable. Secondly, the results of the Grampian case study suggested that each group of respondents (private, public, local authorities, ATB etc) tended to over-emphasise their own levels of importance, or influence. As a consequence of these two points, the value of rating this particular variable was questionable. However, it was still important as a starting point (or antecedent variable) for the causal network.

- A link was established/included in the Causal Network between the Marketing variable and competition. In the Grampian case the link was from Image to Competition only (that is to say that the problem of competition in Grampian was perceived to be related to the regions lack of image). In Inverness and Nairn problems associated with marketing were perceived to contribute to the high level of competition facing the region.

The Grampian region was the first case study region and it was intended to use Grampian as the main case study region in which the majority of the changes would take place. As was the case with the pilot study every attempt was made to highlight and amend any problems and issues that arose. It was expected that changes would continue throughout the research as part of the ongoing and evolving nature of the research. It was also expected that the majority of these changes would occur during the large-scale data collection in the Grampian region.

As mentioned in the section on the limitations associated with this research the ordinal scale is relatively limited in that there are only five options. There are also limits associated with the categorisation of the data. For example, if some respondents categorised a variable as high and others categorised it as low then the variable has no obvious categorisation that represents a consensus of views. In cases such as these they have been categorised as moderate, even though no moderate categorisations were recorded. It is recognised that this categorisation may not be representative but a low or a high categorisation would also not be representative of the respondents views.

The main changes occurred during the Grampian case study and changes that occurred in the later case study regions of Inverness and Nairn and Ross and Cromarty tended to be related to categories or gradings of responses and in some cases to variables to reflect respondents feedback. Because the Causal Network variables were generated as a result of the respondents' feedback, the variables generated in each case study region were always going to be slightly different, (depending on what issues were important and the extent to which they impinged on the respondents). As a consequence some of the variables were modified or changed between the three case study regions.

During the second stage of the data collection in Inverness and Nairn, the Causal Network methodology was tested using the models developed in the Grampian case study and the research attempted to build up as complete a picture as possible concerning problems associated with the region's. The research was aimed both at generating a model of problems associated with tourism in peripheral areas, to allow for lesson drawing between regions, as well as to test the use of Causal Networks as a means of tourism policy analysis. It was with this in mind that the changes identified in the following chapter were made for the data collection in Inverness and Nairn and Ross and Cromarty.

No attempt was made to replicate, exactly, the numbers and types of respondents associated with the Grampian region. This was because the aim of the research was to test the methodologies of Causal Networks and Lesson Drawing as opposed to providing a model that was representative of all tourism providers in all three case study regions. It was recognised that the prominence of the public sector respondents meant that the findings would not be representative of all tourism providers in these three regions. Although there were many similarities between the three regions (see introduction to the case study regions) it was recognised that each area had certain unique characteristics associated with their geographical and spatial make-up. For example, the Grampian respondents were relatively easy to segment into the three geographic areas of, Aberdeen, Grampian and "Others". In Inverness and Nairn the categorisations were based on Inverness town and "Others", not in Inverness town. In Ross and Cromarty the categories were based on an East and West split. The Ross and Cromarty area did not have a large centre of population to compare to either Aberdeen or Inverness.

CHAPTER 6

INVERNESS AND NAIRN REGION CASE STUDY

The Inverness and Nairn region was the second region used for this research. In total 20 respondents were approached and 17 interviews were carried out in and around the Inverness region. This represented a comparatively high response rate, which was mainly due to the use of key informants in the selection of respondents. As in the Grampian case study there was not an emphasis on the representativeness of the sample size or of the respondents' themselves. The aim was to inform the process of Causal Network development and where possible suggest some tentative reasons for respondent's feedback. In the total number of respondent's section the respondent's feedback will be compared with relevant literature and information.

As was the case with the Grampian case study the findings are discussed in three sections: the first consists of the commercial and non-commercial sectors; the second section involves the regional sectors of Inverness and "Others" and the third deals with the total number of respondents. Each of the three sections includes a Causal Network model representing the feedback from the respondents and a comparative narrative.

6.1 CAUSAL NETWORK NARRATIVES FOR COMMERCIAL AND NON-COMMERCIAL SECTOR RESPONDENTS

The commercial sector respondents were 5 of the total of population of 17. Included in this group were organisations that were profit oriented, commercial operations such as private attractions/businesses or accommodation providers. The relatively small number of respondents in this group was as a result of the focus of this research. The aim was not to establish a totally representative picture of all of the tourism providers in the region. The aim of the research was to test the methodologies of Causal Networks and Lesson Drawing. As a consequence the respondent population was not necessarily representative of all tourism providers. However, because of the comparatively large number of public sector respondents the feedback from the respondents could be considered to represent the views of many of the public sector bodies involved.

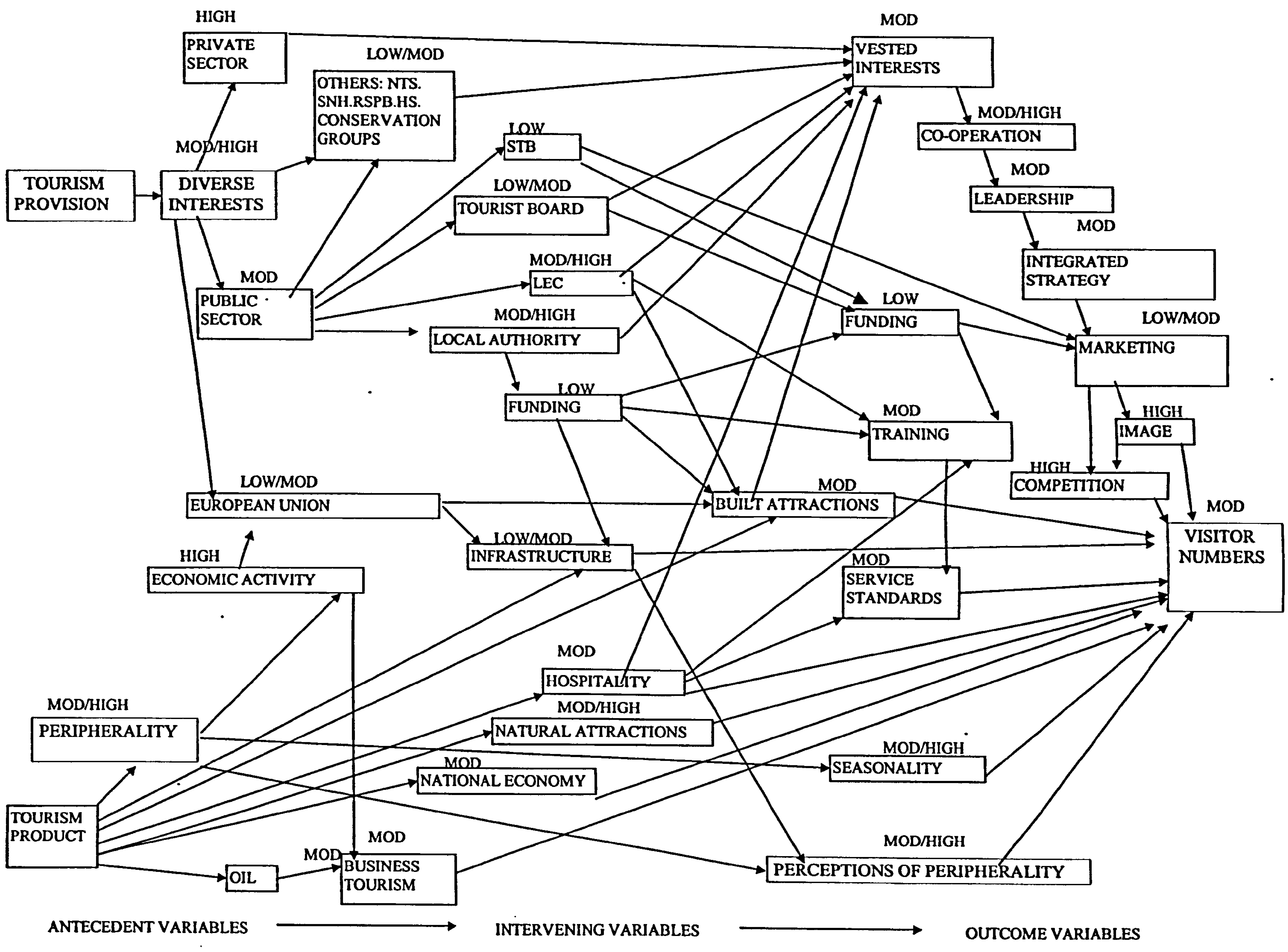
The non-commercial sector consisted of 12 of the total respondents. This represents 79% of the total population. Included in this section were organisations whose primary function was not to generate profits. Organisations such as local authorities, local enterprise companies, tourist boards and other groups such as Historic Scotland were included.

As with the case study in Grampian the categorisation of the variables is discussed in the early stages of the findings below.

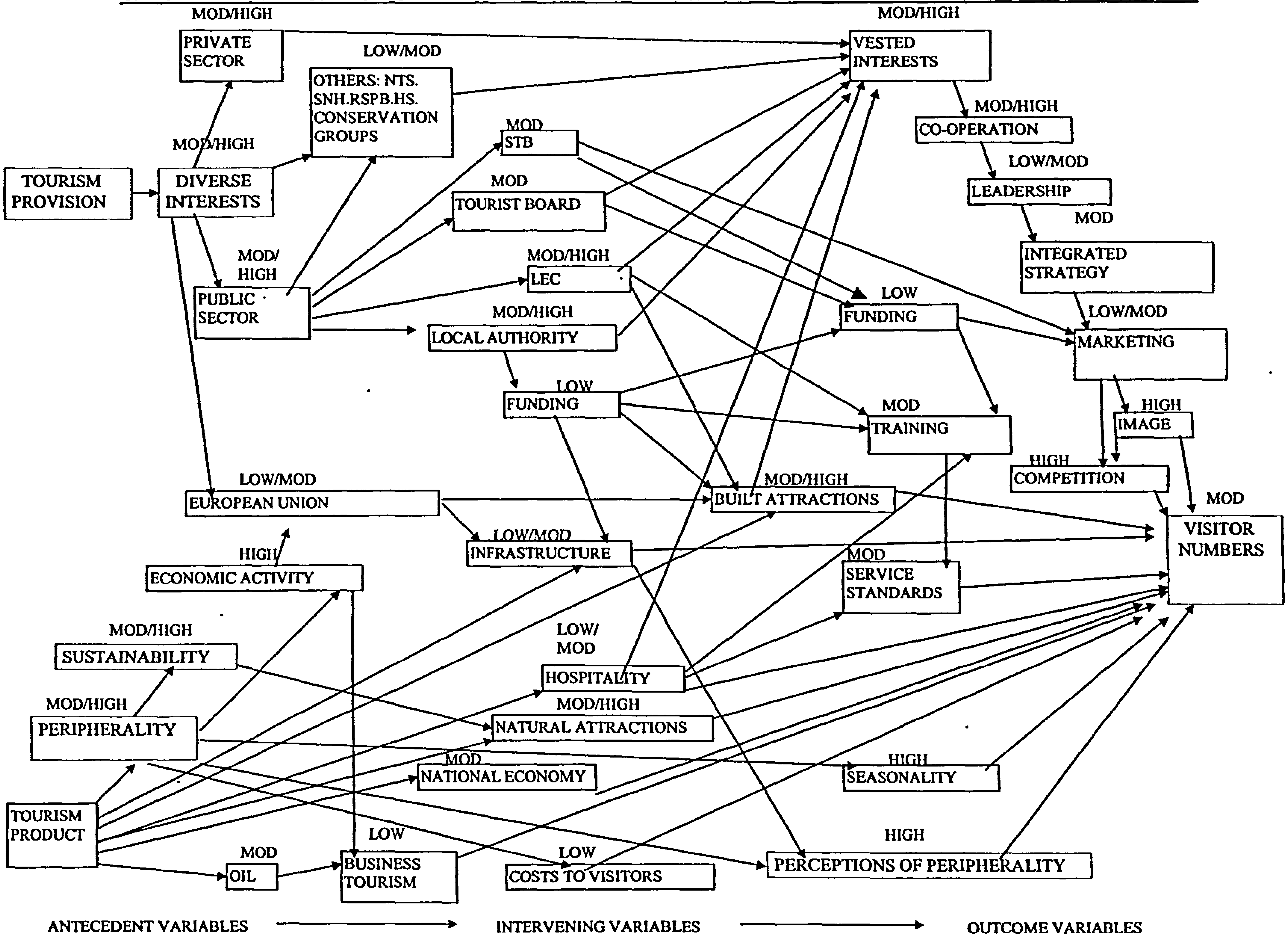
COMMERCIAL SECTOR CAUSAL NETWORK MODEL (SEE FIGURE 26)

NON-COMMERCIAL SECTOR CAUSAL NETWORK MODEL (SEE FIGURE 27)

CAUSAL FRAGMENT: TOURISM PROVISION IN INVERNESS AND NAIRN: COMMERCIAL FINDINGS. FIGURE 26



CAUSAL FRAGMENT: TOURISM PROVISION IN INVERNESS AND NAIRN. NON-COMMERCIAL MODEL. FIGURE 27



Diverse Interests

- Of the non-commercial sector 11 of the respondents recognised the diversity involved in tourism provision in the region and rated these as moderate/high. This response was similar to the commercial sector where all of the respondents suggested that there were many diverse interests involved.

Private Sector

- All of the respondents from the commercial sector (all of whom work in the private sector) rated their own influence as high. Fifty percent (6) of the non-commercial sector respondents also rated the private sector influence as high with 42% (5) rating it as moderate. The variables were categorised as high and moderate/high respectively.

There was some concern expressed by respondents from the non-commercial sector about the private sector's willingness or ability to get involved in tourism projects/developments. According to one respondent "the private sector/hotels are unable to capitalise on programmes such as Autumn Gold because they are reluctant to provide discounted rates." Another respondent suggested that "the private sector are very good at coming up with ideas but they expect the public sector to fund them."

Public Sector

- The influence of the public sector was perceived to be moderate/high by 92% (11) of respondents from the non-commercial sector (they were in effect rating themselves in terms of influence). The commercial sector respondents were split in terms of the public sector's influence between either high (60% or 3) or low (40% or 2). The variables were categorised as moderate high and moderate and moderate.

One of the private sector respondents suggested that there was "a degree of antipathy from members of the private sector towards the public sector. The public sector are not at the sharp end of the industry. It is not their money that is being invested."

European Union

- The influence of the EU was considered to be low/moderate by 92% of the non-commercial sector and by 100% of the commercial sector. This suggests that the EU influence was perceived to be low/moderate.

"Others"

- The findings associated with the "Others" category also reflect the findings concerning the EU. The non-commercial respondents suggested that their influence was low/moderate (100% or 12). All of the commercial sector respondents suggested their influence was low/moderate.

STB

- The STB was rated as having low levels of influence by 80% (4) of the commercial sector respondents and as low by 42% (5) of the non-commercial respondents (a further 33% or 4 of respondents rated them as low/moderate).

The disparity between the commercial and non-commercial sectors could be partly explained by the fact that the non-commercial sector respondents included 3 (or 25% of respondents) who are directly linked to the STB and are therefore less likely to be critical.

ATB/HOST

- Of the commercial respondents 40% (2) rated HOST as being ineffective, or as having low levels of influence. A further 40% (2) rated them as being low/moderate. In contrast only 8% (1) of the non-commercial sector respondents rated then as low, with 50% (6) suggesting they were low/moderate.

The disparity between the commercial and non-commercial sector respondents can be attributed to the same cause as noted in the STB responses, above in that HOST are included in the non-commercial sector.

Enterprise Companies

- Of non-commercial sector 50% (6) of respondents rated the Enterprise Companies as high with a further 42% (5) rating them as moderate. Eighty percent (4) of the commercial respondents rated them as high with 1 rating them as moderate. This represented totals of 100% (5) of commercial respondents and 92% (11) of non-commercial respondents rating their influence as moderate/high.

There may be several reasons why there was a relatively high level of influence attributed to the Enterprise Companies. It was partly because they were the fund holders, partly because of their objectives in regard to tourism projects and promotion and partly because of their access to tourism forums (which were not always open or accessible to the commercial respondents).

Local Authorities

- The local Authorities' influence was perceived to be high by 40% (2) of the commercial sector respondents (with the remaining 60% (3) rating them as moderate). The non-commercial sector respondents rated them as high (33% or 4) and moderate/high (17% or 2) and moderate (42% or 5). This represented responses of 100% moderate/high from the commercial sector and 92% moderate/high by the non-commercial sector.

These findings are consistent with the expectations associated with their influence, especially in more peripheral areas and they reflect the fact that the public sector rated their own influence as higher than the private sector did.

Funds

- The level of funding for the Local Authorities and the Tourist Boards were both considered to be low by 92% (11) of non-commercial respondents and by 100% (5) of commercial respondents.

As was the case with the Grampian case study the use of percentages served to inform the process of variable categorisation. At this stage the variables will be categorised as actual numbers of respondents.

Co-operation, Integration and Leadership

- The level of co-operation was rated as high by 5 of the non-commercial sector and by 2 of the commercial sector. The remaining 7 of the non-commercial sector rated it as moderate/high as did the remaining 3 of the commercial sector (this means that all of the commercial and non-commercial sector rated co-operation as moderate/high).

- The degree to which there was consensus or an integrated approach to tourism developments reflects the findings associated with co-operation. Of the commercial sector 4 rated it as high (the same as the number who rated co-operation as high) and a further 2 rated it as moderate. The respondents from the non-commercial sector rated the level of integration as moderate/high with 8 rating it as moderate/high and 1 as high.
- In terms of Leadership the non-commercial sector respondents suggested that it was low/moderate (11). The commercial sector respondents also suggested it was low/moderate (5).

The absence of strong leadership was not necessarily seen as a bad thing. One of the respondents suggested that "leadership is not the crucial thing. Leaders tend to emerge for specific projects depending on their main interests." However, there was a general consensus that no matter what the project and the interests of the parties involved, the leader for each project tended to emerge from the non-commercial/public sector.

Marketing, Competition and Image

- The marketing of the area was considered to be low by 6 of the non-commercial respondents and by 3 of the commercial respondents.
- These figures were in contrast to the responses from the other Grampian case study. This can be largely attributed to the fact that almost all of the respondents (11 non-commercial sector and all of the commercial sector) suggested that the image of their region was high. Several of the respondents suggested that the name of the Highlands of Scotland projected a strong image, which was well known both in the UK and abroad. This was not the case in Grampian where the region was considered to lack an image and was also considered to be poorly marketed.
- The response rates to the issue of competition were 10 of non-commercial respondents and 4 of commercial respondents suggesting that competition was high. The main area for competition highlighted by the Inverness and Nairn respondents was the West Coast of Scotland.

Peripherality

- Only 7 of the non-commercial sector respondents and 1 of the commercial sector respondents suggested that the Inverness and Nairn region had a high level of peripherality. However, 4 of the non-commercial sector and 3 of the commercial sector classified the region as having moderate/high levels of peripherality.

These differences may be partly explained by the fact that many of the Inverness and Nairn respondents (10 of the non-commercial sector and 3 of the commercial sector) thought their region was not peripheral in terms of location but was considered to be perceptually peripheral by visitors. One of the respondents suggested that "it is not that we are physically peripheral it is just that people perceive us as being more peripheral than we actually are. Peripherality is part physical and part perceptual".

Economic Activity

- These differences in the perception of the region also surfaced concerning the question of local economic activity. In Inverness and Nairn 10 of the non-commercial respondents and, all of the commercial sector respondents suggested that the local economy was good/high.

One of the respondents suggested that "the region has a good economic base but it is perceived by people outside the region as remote and the image of the economic conditions in the region is that we have a weak primary sector dominated base."

Strength of Sterling/National Economy

- The strength of Sterling was considered to be an important factor by 6 of the non-commercial respondents and by 2 of the commercial sector respondents.

This issue was unsolicited and as a consequence was not suggested by all respondents (but it was an issue that was of considerable concern to those respondents who made the effort to mention it).

Seasonality

- This was considered to be a major problem by all of the non-commercial sector respondents and by 2 of the commercial sector respondents (the remaining 3 of the commercial sector suggested it was moderate/high).

These findings are expected as a result of the location of all three case study regions.

Costs to Visitors

- The Inverness and Nairn respondents did not consider this to be a problem. Only 3 of the non-commercial sector suggested that costs were moderate/high and none of the commercial sector respondents suggested that this was an issue.

The issue of expensive accommodation was also not considered to be a problem by the Inverness and Nairn respondents (which again is in contrast to the Grampian respondents).

Infrastructure

- Six of the non-commercial sector and 2 of the commercial sector suggested that the regions infrastructure was moderate and the remaining 9 respondents categorised it as low.

One of the respondents from Inverness and Nairn suggested that "although public transport within the area is a problem the region is relatively well serviced by rail and air links." One further point of interest elicited from the Inverness and Nairn respondents was that although there was a recognition of the relatively low standards of local road networks "the single track roads of the highlands suit the image of the Highlands. It is what the visitors want. So although infrastructure in some parts may be poor it is part of the overall image."

Oil

- The influence of oil on the region was perceived to be high by 6 of the non-commercial respondents and as moderate by 5. The commercial sector respondents suggested that the influence of oil was moderate/high (2) or moderate by (2).

Hospitality, Service Standards and Training

- The level of hospitality provision was rated as low by 2 (17%) and as low/moderate by 6 (50%) of the non-commercial sector respondents. In contrast 1(20%) of the commercial sector respondents suggested they were moderate/high, 3 (60%) suggested they were moderate and 1 (20% suggested they were low.

The differences between the two groups could be explained by the fact that the commercial sector respondents were the ones directly involved in providing the hospitality and as a consequence are less likely to be critical of themselves. The number of respondents who suggested that hospitality was of a low standard was 2 and 1 respectively.

- The standards of service and the levels of training associated with the hospitality product were considered to be low/moderate by 3 (25%) of the non-commercial respondents and as moderate by the remaining 9 (75%) of respondents. The commercial sector respondents also showed similar ratings with 1 (20%) suggesting they were low and the remaining 4 (80%) suggesting they were moderate.

Attractions

- The attractions variable was split into natural and man-made attractions as a result of the feedback from the Inverness and Nairn respondents.
- The non-commercial sector suggested that built attractions were moderate/high (11) and natural attractions were rated as high by 7 and moderate/high by 4. The commercial sector suggested that built attractions were moderate (3) with 1 rating them as low and 1 rating them as moderate/high. Natural attractions were rated as high by 3 of the commercial respondents and as moderate by 1 and as moderate/high by the remaining respondent.

The overall perception of the standards of both built and natural attractions was moderate/high. The perception of attractions in the Inverness and Nairn region was favourable with the natural attractions being considered to be better that the built attractions.

Sustainability

- Six of the non-commercial sector respondents suggested (in terms of an unsolicited response) that sustainability was an issue. None of the commercial sector respondents suggested that it was an issue of concern to them.

The inference being that the non-commercial sector were more aware of environmental issues than their commercial counterparts. In fact several of the non-commercial respondents were directly involved in sustainable developments. One of these respondents suggested that there was "a lot of interest in the sustainable/green approach to tourism, especially in the Highlands where the natural environment is the main attraction and there is an increasing realisation that these natural tourism attractions need to be protected."

6.2 CAUSAL NETWORK NARRATIVES FOR REGIONAL SECTOR RESPONDENTS

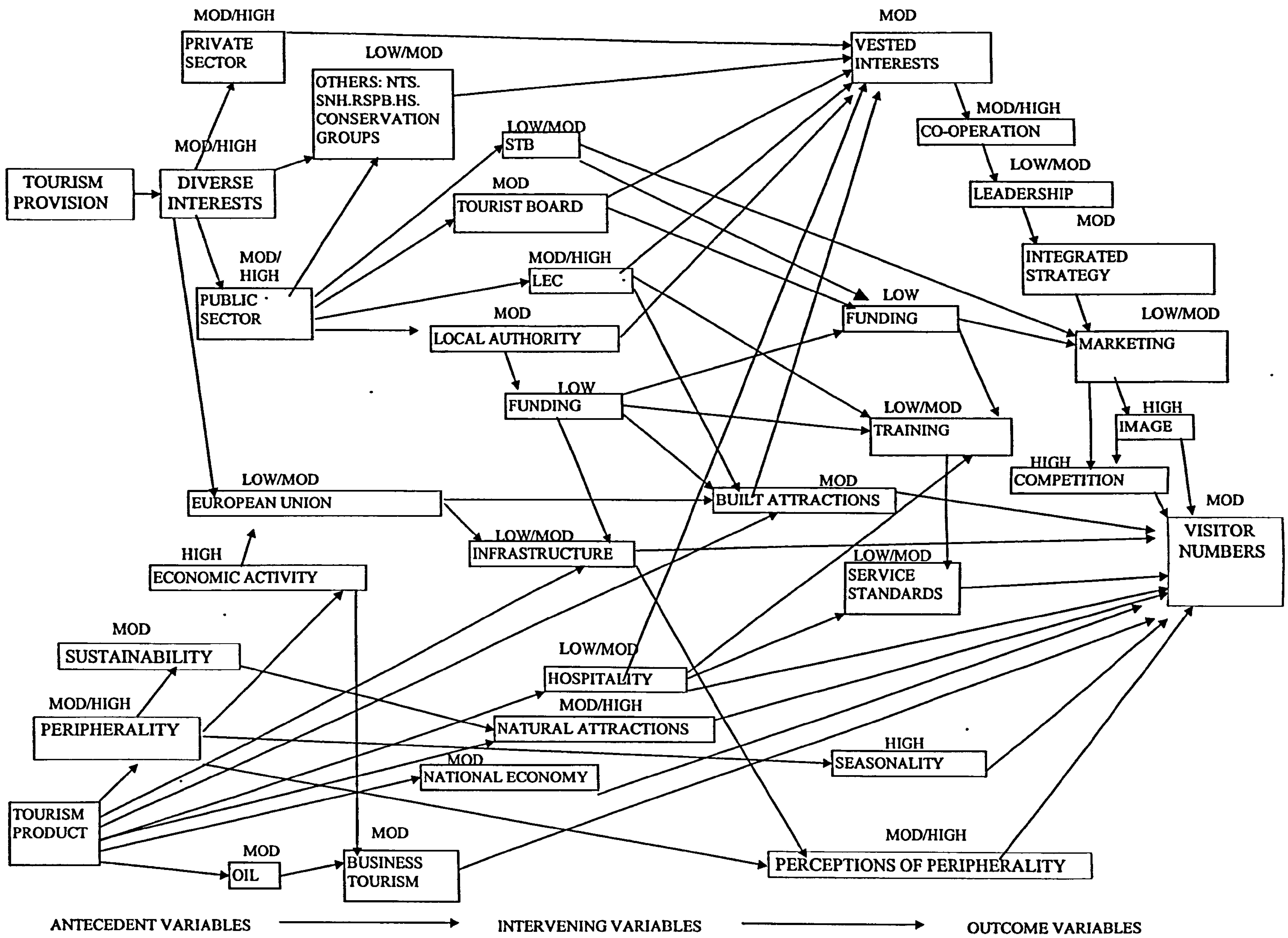
The area studied was sub-divided into two distinct geographical areas, Inverness and "other". The "other" respondents were located out-with the city of Inverness, in places such as Fort George, Nairn and Strathpeffer. In total 6 of the 17 respondents were from out-with Inverness (this represents 35% of the total population) and 11 of the respondents were from Inverness city (65% of respondents). The reason for the relatively uneven split is that respondents such as local Tourist Boards, Enterprise Companies, some commercial providers and respondents in the "Others" category (such as Historic Scotland or Scottish National Heritage) are based in Inverness itself. As a consequence many of the respondents have bases in Inverness but also have responsibilities and operations out-with the city.

As with the previous section and the Grampian case study some of the initial categorisations associated with the variables will be discussed.

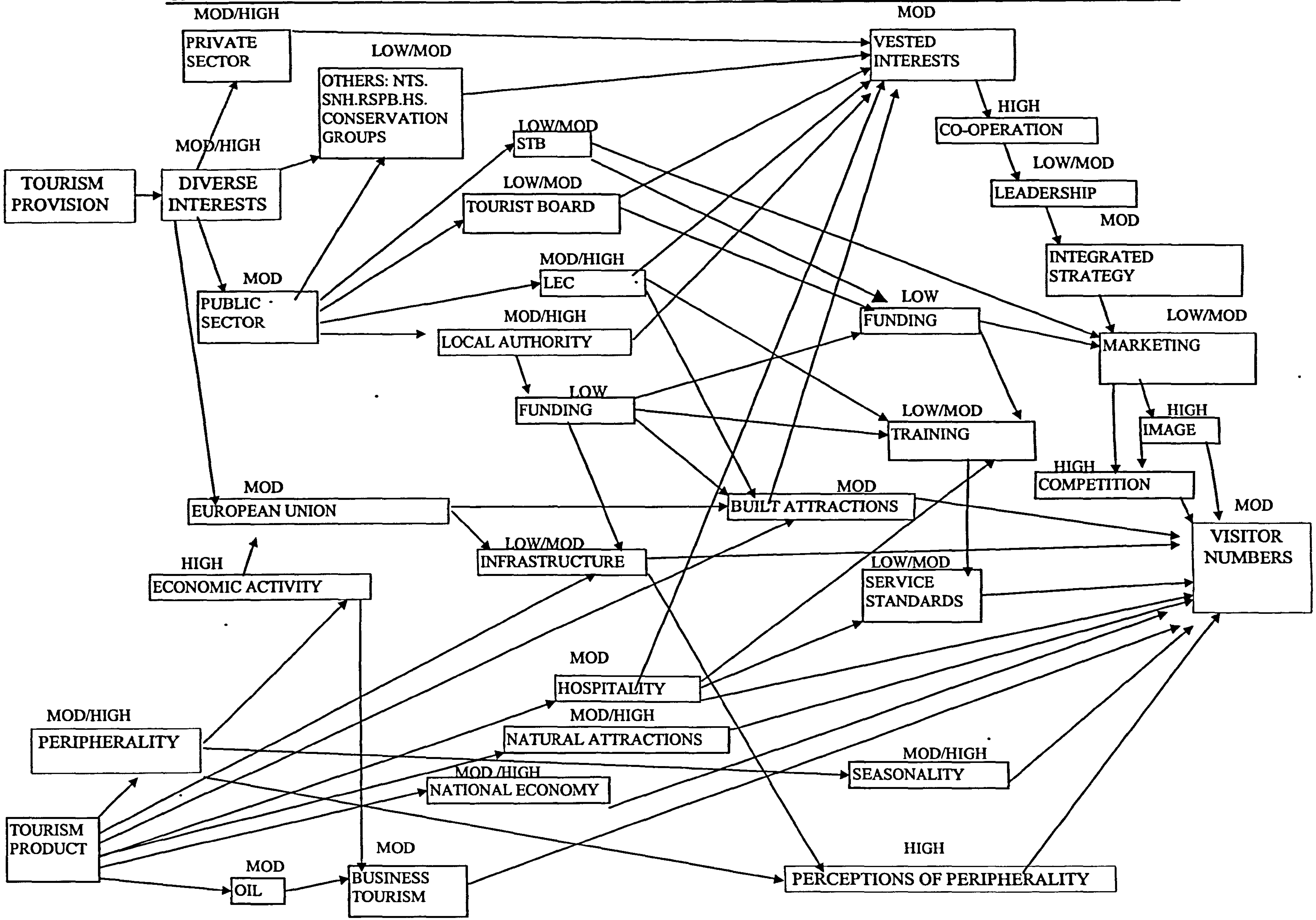
CAUSAL NETWORK MODEL INVERNESS (SEE FIGURE 28)

CAUSAL NETWORK MODEL "OTHERS" (SEE FIGURE 29)

CAUSAL FRAGMENT: TOURISM PROVISION IN INVERNESS AND NAIRN: INVERNESS FINDINGS. FIGURE 28



CAUSAL FRAGMENT: TOURISM PROVISION IN INVERNESS AND NAIRN: OTHERS FINDINGS. FIGURE 29



ANTECEDENT VARIABLES → INTERVENING VARIABLES → OUTCOME VARIABLES

Diverse Interests

- In terms of diverse interests 18% (2) of the Inverness respondents considered them to be high, with the majority (73% or 8) considering them to be moderate. The respondents from out-with Inverness ("Others") suggested that the levels of diverse interests were high (50% or 3), moderate/high (33% or 2) and moderate (17% or 1). The variables were categorised as moderate/high for both groups of respondents.

Although the actual numbers vary between the respondents the general consensus from both groups was that the level of diverse interests was moderate/high (Inverness - 91% and "Others" - 100%). This reflects the views of the commercial and non-commercial sector respondents and highlights the understanding of the diverse nature of the industry.

Private Sector

- The private sector were considered to have a high level of influence by 63% (7) of the Inverness respondents and by 66% (4) of the "Others" respondents (with 37% (4) of the Inverness respondents suggesting it was moderate and 17% (1) of the "Others" respondents also suggesting it was moderate). The categorisations were moderate /high for both groups of respondents.

These relatively high levels of responses are similar to the non-commercial and commercial sector responses and suggest that the private sector were both influential and active in the region.

Public Sector

- The influence of the public sector was seen as high by 73% (8) and as low by 18% (2) and moderate by 18% (2) of the Inverness respondents (where 73% or 8 of the respondents were from the public sector). Only 33% (2) of the "Others" respondents (where 3 of the respondents were from the public sector) rated them as high. The remaining 67% (4) of the "Others" respondents rated the public sector as low/moderate. The categorisation of the variables were moderate/high and moderate respectively.

Some of the discrepancy could be attributed to the fact that many of the public sector respondents were located in Inverness.

European Union

- The influence of the EU was perceived to be low by 55% (6) and moderate by 36% (4) of the Inverness respondents and as low by 17% (1) and as moderate by 83% (5) of the "Others" respondents. This represented 91% (10) of the Inverness respondents and all of the "Others" respondents who suggested that the European Union influence was low/moderate.

"Others"

- The respondents from Inverness suggested that the influence of the "Others" category (voluntary organisations, conservation groups, NTS etc) was low 64% (7). Three or 50% of the "Others" respondents also suggested it was low. The remaining 36% (5) of the Inverness respondents suggested their influence was moderate, as did 33% (2) of the "Others" respondents. This represented 100% (11) of the Inverness respondents who suggested their influence was low/moderate and 83% (5) of the "Others" respondents.

The consensus was that their influence was low/ moderate.

STB

- The influence of the STB was rated as low by 55% (6) of the Inverness respondents and by low/moderate by 27% (3). Half (3) of the "Others" respondents suggested that their influence was low with 17% (1) suggesting it was moderate and 33% (2) suggesting it was high. the STB was rated as low/moderate for both sectors.

This reflected the views of the commercial and non-commercial sector respondents and is also reflective of the other two case study regions.

ATB

- The ATB was rated as high by 28% (3) of the Inverness respondents and by only 17% (1) of the "Others" respondents. Of the "Others" respondents 67% (4) rated them as low/moderate as did 63% (7) of the Inverness respondents.

This suggested that the ATB was considered to have low/moderate levels of influence.

Enterprise Companies

- The Inverness respondents suggested that the level of influence of the LECs was moderate/high (82% or 9) with 36% (4) suggesting it was moderate and 46% (5) suggesting it was high. The "Others" respondents also suggested that their influence was moderate/high (100%) with 33% (2) suggesting it was moderate and 67% (4) suggesting it was high. The variables were categorised as moderate/high.

These findings are in contrast to the relatively low ratings attributed to the ATB and are more in line with the degree of influence usually attributed to public sector bodies.

Local Authorities

- The Local Authorities involved in this region are the Highland Council and the Inverness Area Council (part of the Highland Council, which covers the whole of the Highlands with separate Area administrative offices, such as Inverness).
- The level of influence of the Councils was perceived to be moderate by 73% or 8 of the Inverness respondents, as moderate/high by 18% (2) and high by 9% (1), a total of 100% rating them as moderate/high. The "Others" respondents rated then as high by (83% or 5).

The comparatively high levels of influence attributed to the Local Authority is common in peripheral areas.

Funds

- The funding associated with the Local Authorities and the Tourist Boards was considered to be low by 91% (10) of the Inverness respondents and by all of the "Others" respondents. The variables were categorise as low.

HOST experienced a cut in their Local Authority funds of 10% for the 1998 financial year and a further 10% cut in1999.

Co-operation, Integration and Leadership

- The levels of co-operation were rated as moderate/high by all the Inverness respondents'. The "Others" respondents also rated the levels of co-operation as moderate/high.
- The level of integration was rated as moderate by 1, as moderate/high by 6 and as high by 1 of the Inverness respondents (a total of 8 or 73% rating it as moderate/high). Eighty three percent of the "Others" category respondents rated integration as moderate/high (1 moderate, 2 moderate/high and 2 high).
- The levels of leadership were rated as low/moderate by 11 (91%) of the Inverness respondents and by 84% (5) of the "Others" respondents.

The results regarding Co-operation, Integration and Leadership reflected the responses and findings for the commercial and non-commercial sector respondents from Inverness and Nairn.

Marketing, Competition and Image

- The marketing of the region was rated as low by 6 of the Inverness respondents and by 3 of the "Others" respondents (3 of the Inverness respondents and 2 of the "Others" respondents rated it as moderate).

This reflected the low level of influence attributed to the ATB whose responsibilities include the marketing of the area.

- The level of competition facing the region was considered to be high by 9 of the Inverness respondents and by 5 of the "Others" respondents.

These responses reflected the views of the commercial and non-commercial sector respondents from Inverness and Nairn and the views of the regional sector respondents from Grampian. The general consensus was that the level of competition was high.

- The image of the area was considered to be strong/high by 10 of the Inverness respondents and by all of the "Others" respondents.

This reflected the views of the commercial and non-commercial sector respondents. The strong image associated with the region (Highlands) was an important factor because as one respondent suggested "our strong image means that the poor marketing efforts of the region by HOST are not such a problem."

<u>Peripherality</u>

- Of the Inverness respondents 6 suggested the region had a peripheral location (high) whilst 2 of the "Others" respondents suggested the region had a high level of peripherality.
- In terms of the perception of peripherality 7 of the Inverness respondents suggested that visitors' perceptions of peripherality were a problem (as opposed to the region actually being peripheral) and all of the "Others" respondents suggested that perceptions were a problem.

The respondents did not necessarily see their region as peripheral but thought that visitors tended to perceive it as more peripheral than it actually was. According to one of the respondents "the perception of remoteness and peripherality is greater than the reality." These responses were similar to responses from the commercial and non-commercial respondents from the Inverness and Nairn case study.

- Allied to the issue of peripherality was the issue of local economic activity. Of the Inverness respondents 9 suggested their region had a good level of local economic activity. All of the "Others" respondents also suggested that the Inverness and Nairn region had a good local economy.

These figures were similar to the commercial and non-commercial sector respondents. One of the respondents suggested that "the local economy is very strong. It is one of the fastest growing regions in the country."

Strength of Sterling/National Economy

- Four of the Inverness respondents and 4 of the "Others" respondents suggested that the strength of sterling was causing them problems.

This was due mainly to the negative impacts associated with international visitors to the region. One of the hoteliers commented that "it means that it is more expensive for overseas visitors to come here and it is having a big effect on many businesses in the area.

Seasonality

- Seasonality was considered to be a problem by all (moderate/high) of both the Inverness and the "Others" respondents.

Again, these figures were representative of the commercial and non-commercial sector respondents from Inverness and Nairn. All three case study regions suffer from seasonality, which was typical of some of the problems facing northern peripheral locations.

Costs to Visitors

- Only 2 of the Inverness respondents and 1 of the "Others" respondents suggested that costs to visitors were moderate/high.

These responses were not typical of peripheral areas and can be largely attributed to the fact that Inverness (the gateway to the region) has a large supply of budget accommodation and offers facilities to lower income visitors. Allied to this was the view amongst respondents that they are relatively accessible.

Oil

- The influence of oil on the economy was perceived to be high by 3 and as moderate by 6 of the Inverness respondents. Three of the "Others" respondents suggested it was high with 2 suggesting it was moderate/high and the remaining 1 suggesting it was moderate.

The oil industry does tend to benefit Inverness as well as the regions outside of Inverness such as Nairn and Nigg. Inverness, also tended to have a relatively buoyant local economy based to a large extent on other industries such as tourism.

Infrastructure

- Four of the Inverness respondents and 4 of the "Others" respondents suggested that the regions infrastructure was moderate. (The remaining respondents all considered the infrastructure to be low).

These figures were similar to the commercial and non-commercial respondents from Inverness and Nairn. Complaints about a regions infrastructure are a common feature of peripheral areas and are largely as a result of the fact that there is less demand in these areas. Consequently the services and infrastructure tend to attract limited investment because of their limited potential returns.

Hospitality, Service Standards and Training

- The Inverness respondents suggested that the level of hospitality in the region was low/moderate (7). The "Others" respondents also suggested that hospitality was of a low/moderate level (2 low/moderate, 2 moderate).

These figures suggested a general consensus that the level of hospitality in the region was of a relatively poor standard and they reflected the views held by the commercial and non-commercial sector respondents, as well as most of the other two case study respondents.

- The Inverness respondents suggested that the levels of training and the standards of service were moderate (8) The corresponding figure for the "Others" respondents was 5.

These figures were representative of the commercial and non-commercial sector respondents from Inverness and Nairn. One of the respondents suggested that "our hospitality product is better than in some other areas of Scotland but we still have a good deal to do to get our levels of service to the standards we require."

Attractions

- The feedback from the regional sector respondents tended to follow a similar pattern to the commercial and non-commercial sector respondents in that the natural attractions were considered to be of a higher standard than the built attractions.
- Of the Inverness respondents 4 rated built attractions as moderate, with a further 4 rating them as moderate/high and 1 rating them as high. Four of the "Others" respondents suggested that the built attractions were moderate and 2 suggested they were moderate/high.
- However, the natural attractions were rated as high by 6 of the Inverness respondents and 4 of the "Others" respondents. (3 of the Inverness respondents suggested they were moderate/high as did 2 of the "Others" respondents).

Sustainability

- Five of the Inverness respondents and 1 of the "Others" respondents made unsolicited reference to the issue of sustainability.

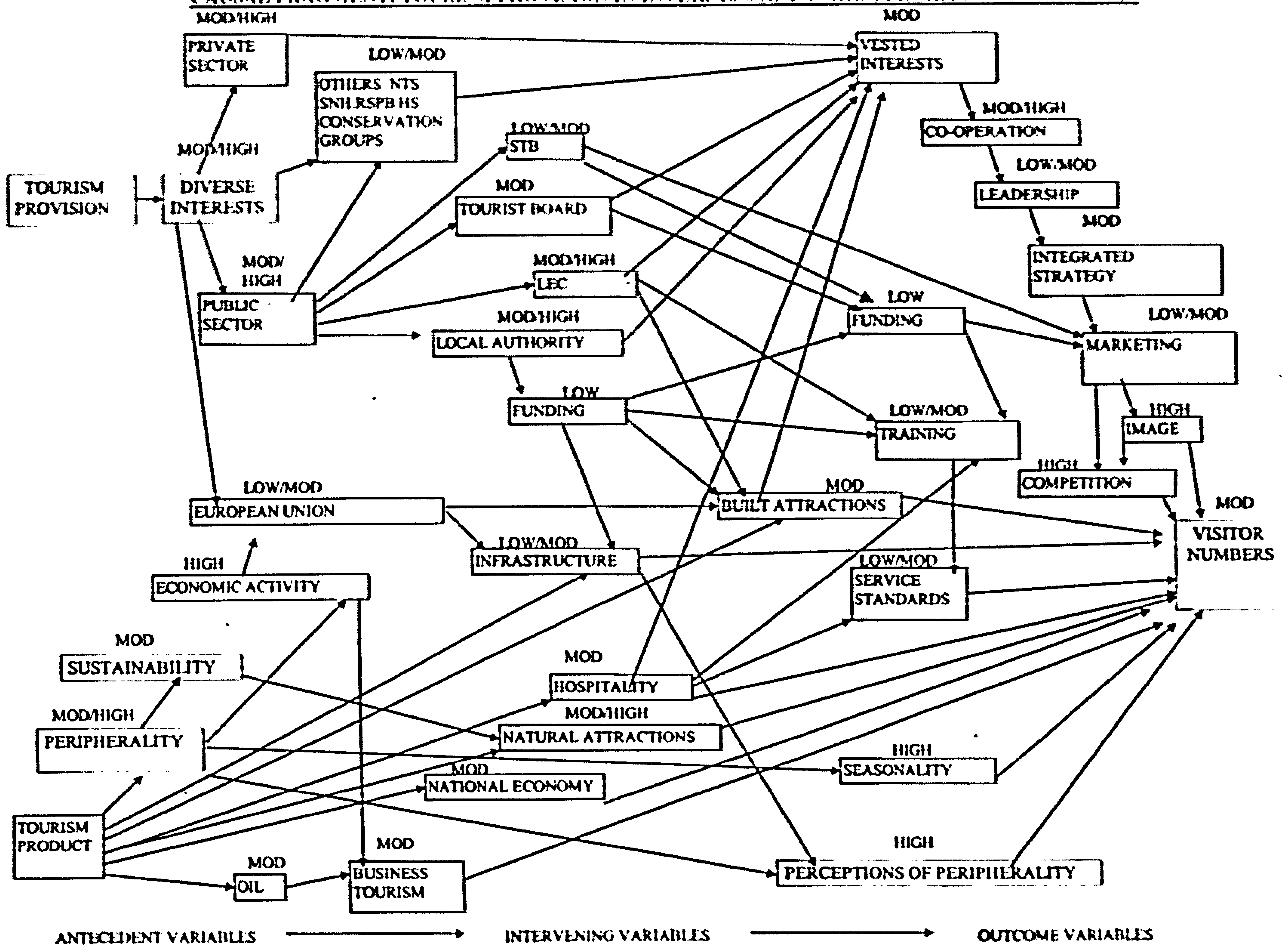
The unsolicited nature of the responses emphasises the importance that the respondents attached to this issue.

6.3 CAUSAL NETWORK NARRATIVES AND MODELS BY TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS

Included in this section were all the respondents from the Inverness and Nairn case study, a total of 17 respondents. Despite the limited number of respondents tentative conclusions were drawn for this case study based on the fact that the majority of the respondents held influential positions within the public sector tourism policy arena and their opinions were influential in shaping tourism policy decisions.

CAUSAL NETWORK MODEL (SEE FIGURE 30)

CAUSAL FRAGMENT: TOURISM PROVISION IN INVERNESS AND NAIRN: FINAL MODEL. FIGURE 30



Diverse Interests

The consensus amongst the Inverness and Nairn respondents was that there was a moderate/high level of diverse interests involved in tourism provision in the region.

Conclusions

The high level of diversity referred to the recognition of the many different businesses, organisations and individuals involved, as well as pointing to a possible lack of integration and co-operation. The high levels of diversity was an issue for tourism providers in all regions because of the difficulties associated with arriving at consensus or compromise when dealing with many diverse interests.

Private Sector

The level of influence of the private sector was considered to be low by only 1 of the respondents. Of the respondents 5 suggested their influence was moderate and the remaining 11 suggested their influence was high (this means that 94% or 16 of the respondents suggested their influence was moderate/high). The relatively high ratings attributed to the Private sector was unusual for peripheral regions, where traditionally there is a reluctance amongst the private sector to invest because their return on investment may be better achieved in less peripheral areas.

Conclusions

The high ratings associated with Private sector was due largely to the fact that they were more interested in investing in the region because the region attracts relatively large numbers of visitors and because the local economy (at the time of data collection) was very buoyant. There was also an awareness (amongst both Public and Private sectors) of the need to involve the Private sector in tourism policy decision making in the region. The situation in Inverness and Nairn was in contrast to most other peripheral regions (especially Grampian).

Public Sector

The respondents suggested that the public sector had a moderate/high level of influence. One of the public sector respondents commented that "it is the public sector that tends to have the most influence. This is to be expected in areas such as this but it would be nice if the private sector contributed more."

Conclusions

The high ratings associated with the public sector were typical of responses from the other case study regions and were typical of peripheral regions in general. These traditionally high levels of influence are due in part to the reluctance of the private sector to invest in these regions. This was not necessarily the case in Inverness and Nairn and as a consequence the level of influence attributed to the public sector was less than it is in the other two case study regions (and was less than in most other peripheral regions).

European Union

The European Union was considered to have a low/moderate level of influence with 7 suggesting it was low and 9 suggesting it was moderate (16 or 94% suggesting it was low/moderate). This means that almost all of the respondents from all three of the case study regions suggested its influence was low/moderate.

Conclusions

These comparatively low levels of influence attributed to the EU were due mainly to the EU's principle of Subsidiarity, where the member countries take the lead in Regional tourism issues and the EU acts in support of the local communities. There is a deliberate policy to support rather than lead in regards to tourism initiatives and developments.

"Others"

Ten of the respondents suggested that the "Others" group had a low level of influence with a further 7 suggesting it was moderate (a total of 94% or 17 responses as low/moderate). This was the norm for all three case study regions.

Conclusions

The influence of the "Others" group is usually lower than the Public and Private sectors. This is often due to the fact that the decision-making, and influence is often dominated by the bodies with access to the money for investment. These traditionally have been the Public sector (most often the Enterprise Companies) and the Private sector.

STB

The level of influence attributed to the STB was low/moderate, with 9 rating it as low, 4 as low/moderate (a total of 13 rating it as low/moderate). Several of the respondents criticised the STB for doing a poor job of marketing the region. There were several comments about the general/generic type of marketing approach adopted by the STB. Many of the respondent's felt that niche marketing would be more effective and more suitable for the Highland region (for example, golf tourism was considered to be under-promoted).

Conclusions

The STB were perceived as having relatively low levels of influence in the region and was also criticised for doing a poor job of marketing the area. This criticism of the STB was common in all three case study regions and can be partly explained by the fact that the remit of the STB was to market the whole of Scotland and not individual areas. However, even with this taken into consideration the STB was still considered to be doing a poor job.

ATB/HOST

The ATB (which is HOST) was considered to have a low/moderate level of influence. The relatively low level of influence attributed to the Inverness and Nairn Area Tourist Board could be partly explained by the fact that there were considered to be better levels of communication and co-operation between all those involved in tourism in Inverness and Nairn. As a consequence there may be less of a tendency to look towards any one body as a leader.

Conclusions

Although the level of leadership in the region was considered to be comparatively low, it was not considered to be a problem, because, as one of the respondents suggested " leaders tend to emerge for each issue dependant on the interests of those involved. The issue of leadership is not problematic." Consequently there was not as much emphasis on attempting to establish leadership or position but there was more concern with attaining consensus and moving tourism issues forward.

Enterprise Companies

The influence of the Enterprise Companies was considered to be moderate/high by 16 of the respondents. These levels of response are typical of peripheral regions because of their dependence on public sector bodies and because of the funding role of the LEC. One of the private sector respondents suggested that "the LEC is bound to have the most influence because they have got the money."

Conclusions

The Enterprise Companies are usually attributed with the most influence. This was true in most regions but was especially the case in more peripheral regions where there was a tendency to be more dependent on public sector funds. As a consequence of this increased dependence the most obvious body to look to for assistance in new tourism developments would be the LEC because of their funding role in tourism issues.

Local Authority (Highland Council)

Of the respondents 16 rated the influence of the Local Authority as moderate/high. The moderate/high level of influence of the local authorities is common in peripheral areas because of their dependence on public sector agencies.

Conclusions

The high ratings associated with the Local Authority was typical of the responses from all three case study regions and was typical of peripheral regions in general. There is traditionally a reliance on Local Authorities to provide the infrastructure requirements for these regions and it is these infrastructure provisions that allow for tourism developments to take place. As a consequence there is often a reliance on both the Local Authorities and the LEC.

Funds

The level of funds available to the Tourist Boards was considered to be low by 16 of the respondents and moderate by the remaining one.

Conclusions

The trend in cutting funds in the public sector looks set to continue. In 1998/99 and 1999/2000 the Local Authority contributions to HOST were cut by 10% per annum. This pressure to cut costs has been passed on from Central Government to the Local Authorities who have passed it on to the ATB's. The cuts in ATB funding has serious implications on their ability to perform their functions (for which they are already criticised). The future funding for ATB's involves more income generation through commercial activities and membership subscriptions. In Inverness and Nairn the LEC is assisting in this move to increase membership by insisting that any financial contributions made by them were only provided to members of the ATB. This is serving to increase the number of ATB members and as a consequence increase the ATB's revenue from membership.

Co-operation, Integration and Leadership

The levels of co-operation were rated as moderate/high by all of the respondents.

The level of co-operation has been pushed by the efforts of HIE who now require membership of HOST as a pre-requisite for any financial assistance. This is obviously encouraging membership of HOST and should assist in improving co-operation. A final comment from a respondent was that "if you truly want to succeed you have to co-operate. There is now a growing acceptance of tourism as a positive industry. There is a common vision."

The level of integration was also considered to be as high but was not considered to be as high as the levels of co-operation. Although co-operation is good problems associated with the number of diverse interests involved can manifest itself in the difference between the levels of co-operation and integration.

The level of leadership was rated as low/moderate by 16 of the respondents.

Conclusions

In Inverness and Nairn the levels of co-operation and integration were comparatively high and the lack of a leader for tourism in the area was not considered to be a problem. One of the respondents suggested this was because the political shake-up has meant that in-fighting and hidden agendas have had to be removed (at least in part). He suggested that "the financial cut-backs meant that organisations now have to work together and there was a common vision and awareness of the importance and the need for tourism in the region. As a consequence who leads initiatives is not important so long as the work gets done." As mentioned earlier leaders tend to emerge for individual projects depending on the interests of those involved.

Marketing, Competition and Image

The levels of marketing of the region were perceived to be low by 9 of respondents and as moderate by 5 (a total of 14 or 82% low/moderate). Although the marketing was considered to be poor the image of the region was considered to be high by 16 of the respondents.

In terms of competition 14 of the respondents suggested it was high. The Inverness and Nairn respondents saw their main competitors, not to be Grampian, but the West Coast of Scotland. This is obviously a problem for Grampian who are losing out in terms of visitor numbers to both the Highlands and the West Coast.

Conclusions

In common with the other case study regions the level of marketing was considered to be poor. However, in contrast to the Grampian region (and in common with the Ross and Cromarty region) the image of the Inverness and Nairn region was considered to be good. This positive image served to offset the poor marketing associated with both the HOST and the STB, because as one respondent suggested "the region markets itself because the image of the Highlands is strong."

Peripherality

Eight of the respondents suggested that the region had a high degree of peripherality, with 7 suggesting it was moderate/high (a total of 15 suggesting it was moderate/high). According to one of the respondents "outside the Inverness, Nairn and Invergordon triangle there are marginal economies that require a lot of public sector support."

The majority (13 or 76%) of the Inverness and Nairn respondents suggested that their region suffered from the perception of peripherality in that visitors perceive it to be more peripheral than it actually is. The perceptual issue was considered to be a problem by many of the respondents. A typical response was "perceptions need to be overcome because development is hindered by peoples perception of the region." However, other respondents suggested that the issue of peripherality was not all, bad "the area is fairly remote, it is this very remoteness that the visitors are looking for." All of the respondents suggested the region had a moderate/high level of local economic activity.

Conclusions

The economic activity in the region was good. This was not considered to be a problem (which is unusual for peripheral regions). The major problem was also not considered to be geographical peripherality but rather the perception of the region as peripheral by potential visitors. The consensus was that the region was not inaccessible but that potential visitors perceived it to be more of a problem that it actually was. One of the respondents suggested that "if we can overcome the perceptual problems of potential visitors then we will have solved our major difficulties."

Strength of Sterling/National Economy

In total almost half (8) of the Inverness and Nairn respondents suggested that the strength of the national economy and the strength of the national currency was a problem.

Conclusions

These figures suggest that this was an issue of considerable concern to the respondents in this region because it was an unsolicited response. According to one respondent "the national economy (in particular the strength of the currency) has had an effect on tourism in the Highlands and is resulting in less overseas bookings."

Seasonality

All of the respondents suggested seasonality was a moderate/high problem. This reflects the responses from the other case study regions.

Conclusions

Seasonality is a problem for all three case study regions and is a National as well as local and regional problem.

Costs to Visitors

Only 3 of the Inverness and Nairn respondents suggested that costs to visitors were moderate/high.

Conclusions

This is in contrast to most peripheral regions where costs are traditionally high. These high costs usually apply to getting to, as well as staying in the region. In Inverness and Nairn there is a large supply of facilities catering for budget travellers and the region is considered to be relatively accessible (although the infrastructure was criticised). As a consequence the costs associated with visiting the region were not considered to be high (which is in contrast to the other case study regions, especially Grampian).

Oil

Oil was considered to be important to the economy of the region with 15 of the respondents suggesting it was moderate/high.

Conclusions

The areas to the north of the region were the main recipients of the benefits associated with the oil industry (Nigg and Invergordon). However, because of the relatively small distances between these centres and the main settlement of the region (Inverness) oil was important to the economy of the whole region.

Hospitality, Service Standards and Training

The standard of hospitality in the region was rated as low/moderate by 11 of the respondents. These responses are typical of hospitality standards in Scotland and is an issue of national concern.

The standards of service and the levels of training were rated as low by 1 of the respondents, as low/moderate by 3 and as moderate by the remaining 13 of the respondents.

Conclusions

The standards of service and training associated with the hospitality product were considered to be moderate. This is in contrast to the Grampian case study as well as to the trend for Scotland. According to one of the respondents much of the problem in Scotland (as well as Inverness and Nairn) "revolves around the poor pay and conditions of service which are often associated with hospitality and tourism. These often negative images mean that the industry tends to attract a relatively low level of staff. This is not conducive to the provision of good standards of service". Another respondents suggested that We are relatively lucky in Inverness because we have some good staff and people seem to be aware of the value of the industry."

Attractions

The standard of the built attractions were rated as moderate/high by 15 of the respondents. The natural attractions were rated as moderate/ high by all of the respondents. The natural attractions were considered to be of a higher standard than the built attractions. According to one of the respondents "the major attractions tend to be the physical environment. It is the remote unspoilt locations and the regions heritage and traditions that are the major pull factors for the region".

Conclusions

The Natural Attractions of the region were of a high standard and were the main reason for visitors coming to the region. This was in common with Ross and Cromarty but was in contrast to the Grampian case study.

Infrastructure

The regions infrastructure was rated as low/moderate with 9 rating it as low, 8 as moderate.

Conclusions

Certainly there was a belief amongst many of the Inverness and Nairn respondents that "although the public transport within the area is in need of improvement, and the area may be relatively difficult to get to the local infrastructure suits the image of the Highlands. It is what many of the visitors come to the region for."

Sustainability

Of the respondents 6 suggested that sustainability was an issue of concern.

Conclusions

This was an important indicator of the concern over the environment expressed by the respondents. The responses were all unsolicited and as one of the respondents suggested are as a result of "an understanding of the importance of the environment to the image of the highlands. 90% of the visitors to the region are attracted because of the natural environment and 82% of them said that the main reason for visiting the area was to enjoy the scenery. "

6.4 METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND OUTCOMES FROM THE INVERNESS AND NAIRN CASE STUDY REGION

As was the case with the study in the Grampian region the Inverness and Nairn case study also does not purport to be representative of all the tourism providers in that region. However, as was also the case in the Grampian study the respondents did represent a relatively large number of the public sector agencies involved in tourism in Inverness and Nairn. As a consequence the feedback could be considered to represent the views of many of those working in the public sector in Inverness and Nairn.

As a consequence of the Grampian case study (see methodological considerations in the previous chapter) a conscious effort was made to include the public sector for both the Inverness and Nairn and Ross and Cromarty case studies. This meant that the respondent feedback could be considered to represent the views of many of those working in the public sector.

Again, as was the case with the Grampian case study, the final section of the Inverness and Nairn case study (total number of respondents) was an attempt to inform the process of Causal Network construction and categorisation. It also attempted to discuss the respondent's feedback in relation to the current literature and knowledge of peripheral areas and the region of Inverness and Nairn.

As has been mentioned before the main changes to the Causal Networks occurred during the Grampian case study. The changes that tended to occur in the region of Inverness and Nairn tended to be relate to categories of responses. However, because Causal Network variables are generated by the individual respondents' feedback, the variables in each case study region were always likely to be slightly different. The changing nature of the variables was part of the evolving process associated with this research.

During the data collection in Inverness and Nairn the Causal Network models were refined as opposed to changed on a large-scale basis. It was anticipated that this refinement process would be continued during the third and final stage of the data collection in Ross and Cromarty.

It was expected that the level of changes would reduce as the research progressed but it was also expected that changes to the models would (and will) occur where ever the process is repeated in another region. It is the nature of this research that the variables and categorisations would change according to the respondent's views and feedback. This is because the variables and the rating or gradings attached to them by respondents will vary depending on both the tourism issues involved in the region being studied and the importance attached to them by respondents.

Changes to the variables were part of the on-going and evolving nature of this research and were to be expected. The changes made specifically from the Grampian case study for the next phase of the research in the Inverness and Nairn case study consisted of the following:-

- The LEC variable referred to Scottish Enterprise and the Grampian Enterprise Company in the Grampian case study, but in the Inverness and Nairn case study it included Inverness and Nairn Enterprise and HIE (Highland and Island Enterprise).

- The Attractions variable was divided into two separate variables; Built Attractions and Natural Attractions. This was to reflect the respondents' feedback concerning the questions related to attractions. The majority of the respondents (9 out of 16) actually differentiated between the two (which was not the case in Grampian).

- The Rural Economy variable and Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) variable were taken out of the model because they were not considered to be accurate or influential (for the Inverness and Nairn region) by the respondents.

- A new variable was introduced to the Inverness and Nairn model as a result of respondent's feedback. Sustainability was considered to be an issue by 6 of the 17 respondents.

- The Cost of Accommodation and the Costs to Visitors variables were removed from the model because they were not considered to be important issues by the Inverness and Nairn respondents.

- A new variable was introduced because 8 of the 17 respondents considered the National Economy/Strength of the £ were considered to have an impact on the region.

- Fourteen of the seventeen respondents suggested although peripherality was an important issue, Perceptions of Peripherality were also important. Consequently this was inserted as a variable.

CHAPTER 7

ROSS AND CROMARTY REGION CASE STUDY

In total 21 respondents were approached and 19 interviews were carried out in the Ross and Cromarty region. This represents a high response rate, which was mainly due to the use of key informants and direct telephone contact being made with the respondents. As in the Grampian and Inverness and Nairn case studies there is not an emphasis on the representativeness of the sample size or of the respondents themselves. The aim is to inform the process of Causal Network development and where possible suggest some tentative reasons for respondent's feedback. In the total number of respondent's section the respondent's feedback will be compared with relevant literature and information.

No attempt was made to replicate, exactly the numbers and types of respondents associated with the Grampian or the Inverness and Nairn case study regions. It was recognised that each of the three case study areas had different characteristics, which were associated with their location, such as the natural environment or their proximity to large centres of population. This meant the first case study area of Grampian the respondents could be put into the three relatively straight forward geographic areas of, Aberdeen City, Grampian and "Others". In Inverness and Nairn the geographical split was Inverness town and "Others". For the Ross and Cromarty area the distinctions would not be appropriate, because there was no large centre of population to compare to either Aberdeen or Inverness and the region had both a West Coast and an East Coast, which the other two case study regions did not.

As was the case with the Inverness and Nairn and Grampian case studies the findings are discussed in three sections: commercial and non-commercial sectors; regional sectors and total number of respondents. Each of the three sections includes a Causal Network model representing the feedback from the respondents and a comparative narrative.

7.1 CAUSAL NETWORK NARRATIVES FOR COMMERCIAL AND NON-COMMERCIAL SECTOR RESPONDENTS

The commercial sector respondents were 7 of the total of population of 19. Included in this group were any organisations that were profit oriented, commercial operations such as private attractions/businesses or accommodation providers. As with the Inverness and Nairn case study, the relatively small number of respondents in this group was as a result of the focus of this research (see Inverness and Nairn Causal Networks by Commercial and Non-commercial sectors).

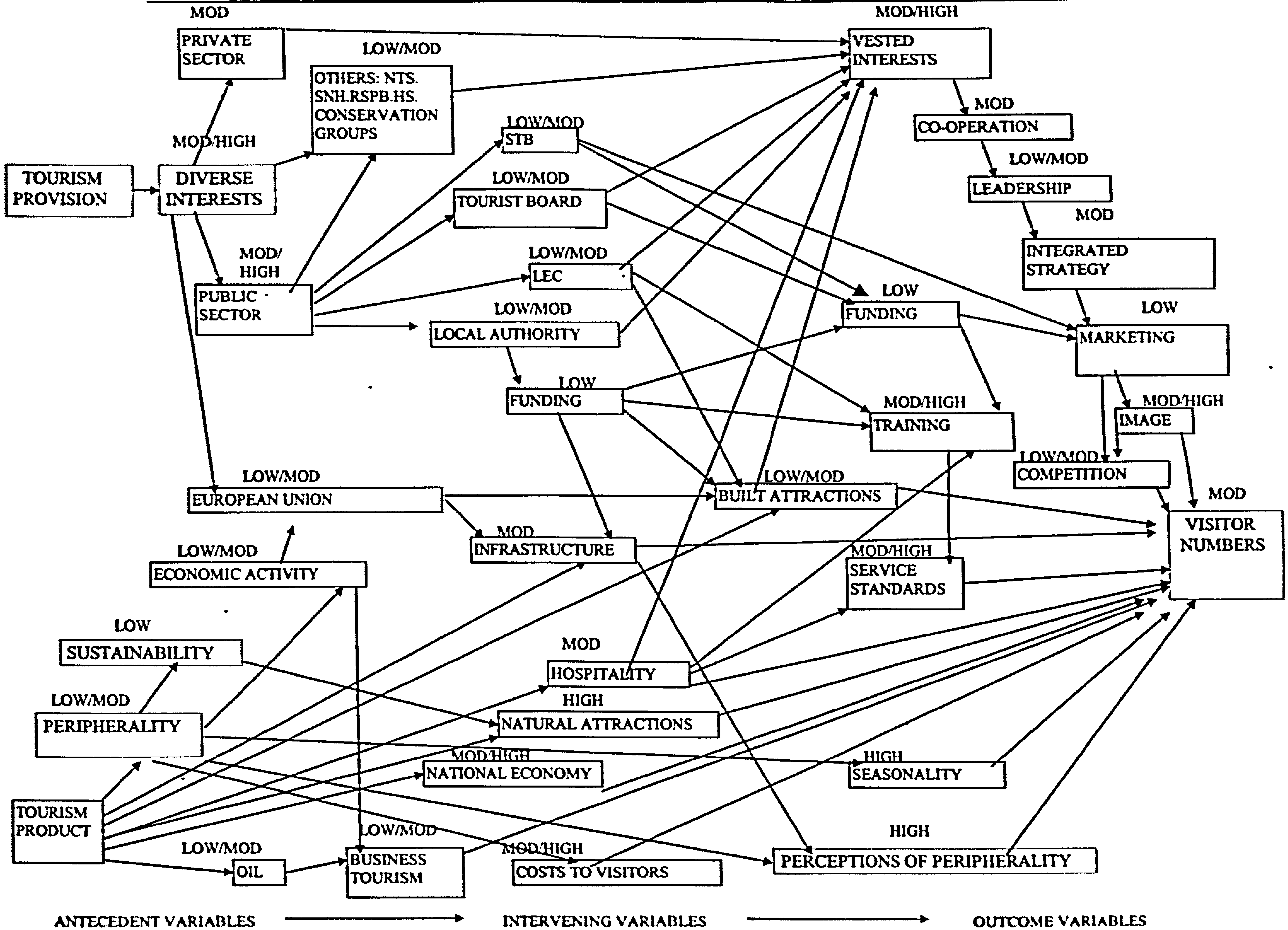
The non-commercial sector consisted of 12 of the total respondents. Included in this section were organisations whose primary function was not to generate profits. Organisations such as Local Authorities, Local Enterprise Companies, Tourist boards and other groups such as Historic Scotland were included.

As with the previous two case studies some of the initial variables will be described in both percentage terms as well as the actual number of respondents to inform the process of variable categorisation.

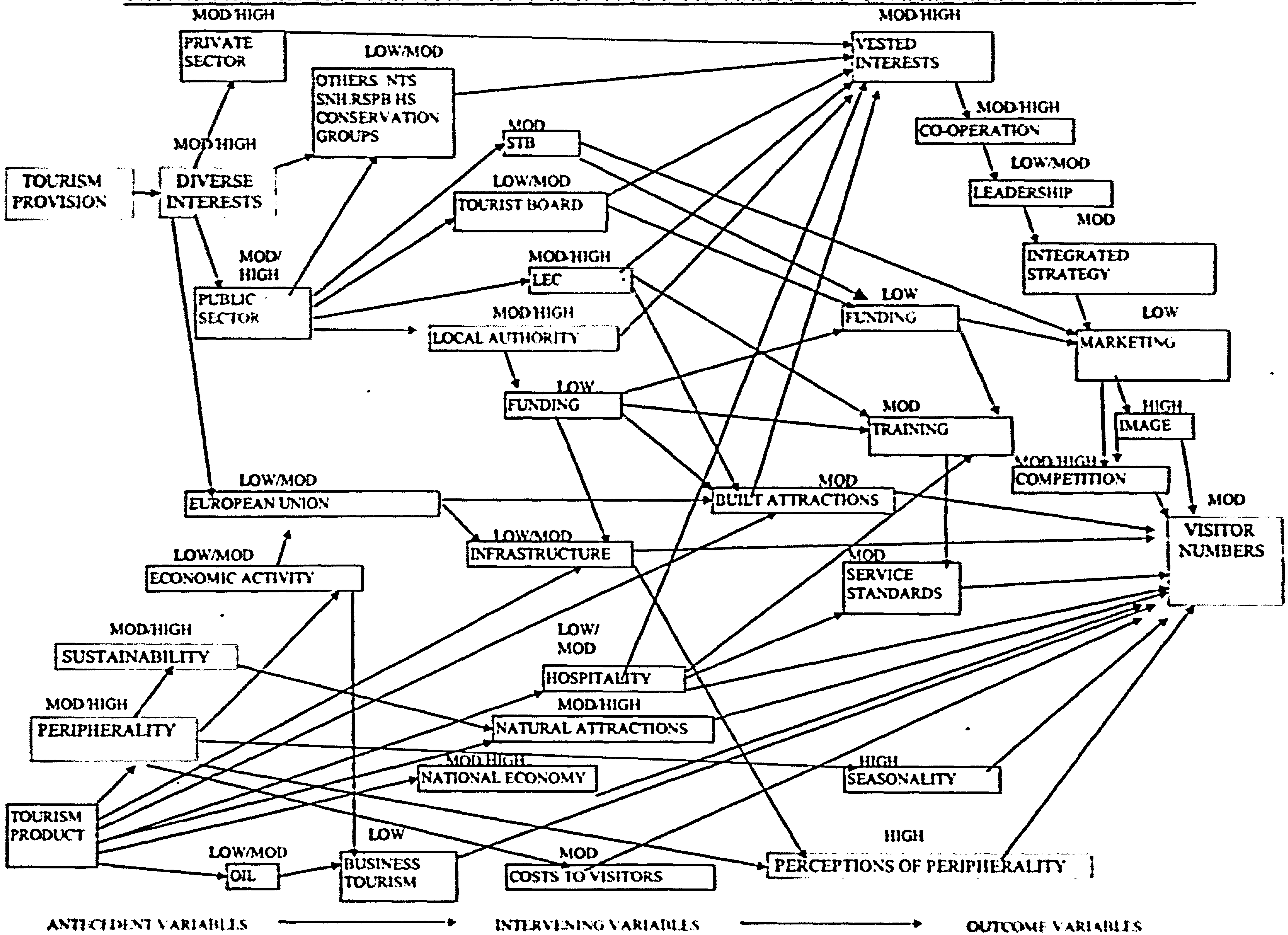
COMMERCIAL SECTOR CAUSAL NETWORK MODEL (SEE FIGURE 31)

NON-COMMERCIAL SECTOR CAUSAL NETWORK MODEL (SEE FIGURE 32)

CAUSAL FRAGMENT: TOURISM PROVISION IN ROSS AND CROMARTY. COMMERCIAL MODEL. FIGURE 31



CAUSAL FRAGMENT: TOURISM PROVISION IN ROSS AND CROMARTY. NON-COMMERCIAL MODEL. FIGURE 32



Diverse Interests

- All of the non-commercial sector respondents (12 or 100%) in Ross and Cromarty suggested that the level of diversity involved in tourism provision in the region were moderate/high (50% or 6 moderate, 2 or 17% moderate/high and 4 or 33% high). The corresponding responses from the commercial sector were 4 or 57% moderate, 2 or 29% moderate/high and 1 or 14% high, a total of 7 or 100% rating them as moderate/high. As a consequence of the responses the variables for both the commercial and non-commercial sectors were rated as moderate/high.

The recognition of the relatively high levels of diversity is common amongst tourism providers in peripheral areas (including Inverness and Nairn and Grampian) and the nature of the tourism industry itself is the reason for the high level of diversity associated with its provision (see literary review).

Private Sector

- Of the non-commercial sector respondents 11 or 92% suggested that the private sector had a moderate/high level of influence (4 or 33% moderate, 1 respondent, or 8% moderate/high and 6 or 50% high). Of the commercial sector 6 or 85% suggested they were moderate/high (2 or 28% moderate/high and 4 or 57% high). The remaining respondents rated them as low, consequently the variables for the commercial sector was categorised as moderate and the non-commercial sector as moderate/high.

Although the level of interest attributed to the private sector was comparatively high there was some concern about the level of involvement of the private sector, amongst some of the respondents from the public sector. One of them suggested that "the private sector are happy to let the public sector take the lead".

Public Sector

- The public sector was rated as moderate/high by 11 or 92% of the non-commercial sector and by 6 or 86% of the commercial sector. The variable for both groups of respondents was moderate/high.

These findings are common in peripheral areas where there is traditionally a dependence on the public sector to provide services as a consequence of the reluctance of the private sector to invest in these regions.

European Union

- The EU was rated as low by 6 or 50% of the non-commercial sector, with the other 6 or 50% rating it as moderate (a total of 12 or 100% rating them as low/moderate). The commercial sector respondents also rated it as low/moderate, with 5 or 72% low, 1 or 14% low/moderate and 1or 14% moderate. The variables were categorised as low/moderate for both sectors.

The commercial sector respondents tended to rate the EU as having less influence. This may be partly explained by the fact that it is the public sector (which includes the non-commercial sector respondents) who have the most direct dealings with the EU and were consequently more likely to be aware of its actual influence in assisting in new tourism developments. These figures were also similar to the responses from both Inverness and Nairn and Grampian and tended to reflect the views that the EU was considered to have a low level of influence over tourism provision in all three case study regions.

"Others"

- All of the commercial sector (7) and 92% (11) of the non-commercial sector respondents rated the influence of the "Others" sector as low/moderate. The variables were low/moderate for both sectors.

These findings were similar to the responses from the other case study regions.

STB

- The STB was rated as low by 25% (3) of non-commercial sector respondents, as low/moderate by 17% (2) and as moderate by 25% (3) and as moderate/high by 17% (2) and as high by 17% (2). The variable was categorised as moderate. Of the commercial respondents 43% (3) rated them as low and a further 43% (3)

rated them as moderate, a total of 86% (6) low/moderate. The commercial sector responses were categorised as low/moderate.

The commercial sector rated the STB as lower than the non-commercial sector. This may be attributed to the fact that the STB was included as part of the non-commercial sector and partly because the non-commercial sector were likely to have more dealings with the STB at tourism forums and initiative meetings. This low overall level of influence may also be partly attributed to the role of the STB in promoting the whole of Scotland (as opposed to one particular region) and partly by comments such as "the STB is not doing its job. It is not focusing on the right product or the right areas."

<u>ATB (HOST)</u>

- The ATB was rated as having a low/moderate level of influence over tourism by 83% (10) of the non-commercial sector (25% or 3 low, 25% or 3 low/moderate and 33% or 4 moderate). The commercial sector rated the ATB as low/moderate (100% or all 7 of respondents, 72% or 5 low, 14% or 1 low/moderate and 14% or 1 moderate). The variables were categorised as low/moderate.

The consensus was that the ATB was not doing a good job. As one of the respondents suggested "they are not performing well. They are not doing the job that is required." The commercial sector tended to be more critical of the ATB than the non-commercial sector. This could be partly attributed to the fact the ATB is part of the non-commercial sector.

<u>Enterprise Companies</u>

- Of the non-commercial sector 42% (5) rated the LEC as high, with 25% or 3 rating them as moderate/high and 25% or 3 as moderate, a total of 92% or 11 rating them as moderate/high. The variable was categorised as moderate/high. The commercial sector attributed them with less influence (14% or 1 high and 57% or 4 as moderate and 29% or 2 as low. The commercial sector respondents were categorised as moderate.

The fact that the commercial sector rated them lower may be attributed to the inclusion of the Enterprise Companies in the non-commercial sector. However, the general consensus was that they (and the Local Authorities) were the most influential of all the public sector bodies, due in most part to the fact that they are the major financiers for tourism projects.

Local Authorities (Highland Council)

- In total the non-commercial sector rated them as moderate/high 92% (11) and the commercial sector as moderate by 57% (4), as high by 14% (1) and as low by 29% (2). The variables were categorised as moderate/high and moderate respectively.

The discrepancy between the commercial and non-commercial respondents may be due to the fact that the non-commercial sector actually include the Local Authorities and because of the greater involvement of the non-commercial sector in tourism forums, which were often chaired by the Local Authorities. However, they (along with the LEC) were considered to be the most influential public sector agencies. These responses were typical of peripheral areas' reliance on the public sector, in particular the Local Authorities and the LEC.

Funds

- The level of funds available to the ATB and the Local Authorities were rated as low by 92% (11) of the non-commercial sector respondents and by 100% (7) of the commercial sector. Both sectors were categorised as low.

These findings were replicated in the other two case study regions and as one of the non-commercial sector respondents said "unfortunately, the cut-back in the level of funding looks set to continue".

Co-operation, Integration and Leadership

- The levels of co-operation were rated as moderate/high by 10 of the non-commercial sector and by 5 of the commercial sector (with the remaining 2 commercial respondents rating co-operation as low).

Although these were encouraging responses the actual breakdown of these figures suggest that the non-commercial sector was more positive about the levels of co-operation than were the commercial sector respondents. This was a common finding in that it was often the non-commercial sector respondents who were either responsible for, or involved with, joint tourism initiatives. The private sector was often reluctant to get involved in tourism forums and were often sceptical of their worth. As one of the respondents remarked "it is the public sector who is responsible for the development of joint initiatives and establishing the levels of co-operation, especially in peripheral areas."

- The level of integration in the region was rated as moderate/high by both groups of respondents (non-commercial sector 75% or 9 and the commercial sector 86% or 5.

This was a reversal of the responses concerning co-operation, in that the commercial sector tended to be more positive about the levels of integration, than their non-commercial counter parts. The relatively high levels of integration associated with tourism in Ross and Cromarty was encouraging. The fact that the commercial sector was more positive about integration than they were about co-operation, suggests that they feel involved in the tourism process but were not necessarily involved in the consultation and decision making processes. One of the commercial sector respondents said "I do not want to be involved in all the talk shops. I don't have the time, but I want to have a say if, and when, I feel that the public sector are going the wrong way. As it happens I feel that they are moving in the right direction, at the moment."

- The levels of leadership were rated as low/moderate by the non-commercial sector (11) and also by all the commercial sector.

These were unusual findings in that the levels of co-operation and integration were both rated as moderate/high. However, the responses suggest that although the level of leadership was relatively low, it was not considered to be a problem. One of the respondents pointed out that "the general feeling was that leadership, as such is unimportant. It is getting the job done that is important. There is not a lot of jockeying for positions. Leaders for each project will come forward depending on whether or not the individual project is of use/benefit to them".

Marketing, Competition and Image

- The level of marketing was rated as low by 10 of the non-commercial sector and as low by all of the commercial sector.

One of the reasons for the low levels of satisfaction associated with the level of marketing was the lack of adequate funds for the job. However, there was a general consensus amongst the respondents that "HOST does not do a good job".

- In contrast to the views on marketing the respondents from both groups suggested that the image of Ross and Cromarty was moderate/high (all of the non-commercial sector and 6 of the commercial sector).

The consensus was that the region (and the West Coast in particular) "has a very strong brand and image". The strength of the regions' image does assist the ATB (HOST) in marketing the region, but the consensus was still that the regions' marketers did a poor job.

- The levels of competition facing the region were considered to be moderate/high by all of the non-commercial sector respondents and as moderate by only 4 and low by 2 of the commercial sector.

The differences between the two groups can be partly explained by that fact that the non-commercial sector are more involved with tourism providers in other regions. They were also more influenced by national tourism statistics and direct regional comparisons (in some case, as part of their measures of success) and because several of the commercial sector respondents felt that the region had a strong image and consequently did not have a great deal of competition. The unusual point was that it was the non-commercial sector, which was more concerned about the perceived level of competition as opposed to the commercial sector.

Peripherality

- The region was considered to be geographically peripheral by 10 of the non-commercial sector (moderate/high) but was considered to be peripheral by only 4 of the commercial sector respondents.

This could be partly explained by referring to the explanations above, relating to the commercial sector responses regarding the levels of competition associated with the region. The commercial sector tended to see the region as possessing unique attributes that according to one of the respondents "overcome any problems associated with peripherality or the level of competition".

- Although there was some discrepancy between the two groups concerning the degree to which they thought the region was peripheral there was consensus about the degree to which the region was perceived as peripheral. Six of the commercial sector suggested perceptions of peripherality were high, as did 10 of the non-commercial sector (all of the respondents from both groups rated it as moderate/high).

As one of the respondents suggested the "main problem is more perceptual than actual"

- The level of economic activity associated with the region was rated as low/moderate by 11 of the non-commercial sector and by all of the commercial sector.

This represents a consensus amongst all the respondents that the region has a low level of economic activity.

Strength of Sterling/National Economy

- All of the commercial sector and 8 of the non-commercial sector suggested that the strength of the currency was a problem.

These were significant findings because the responses were unsolicited and were offered by the respondents themselves. The difference between the two groups may be explained by the fact that it is the commercial sector that were most likely to be adversely influenced by the strength of Sterling. This was especially true for those members of the commercial sector who were more reliant on the comparatively high spending visitors from the USA.

Seasonality

- This was rated as a problem by all of the respondents from both groups (moderate/high).

This was a common problem associated with peripheral regions, especially those in more remote northerly locations.

Costs to Visitors

- The costs associated with getting to, and staying in the region were not considered to be high. Only 1 of the non-commercial sector and 3 of the commercial sector suggested that these costs were prohibitive.

The discrepancy between the two groups may be partly explained by referring to the geographical location of the respondents. The respondents who suggested that the costs were high were mainly the commercial operators located on the West Coast, where there is a consensus that the costs are moderate/high. The respondents based on the East Coast tended to think that the costs were not prohibitive.

Oil

- In total 11 of the non-commercial sector and all of the commercial sector suggested its impact was low/moderate.

This suggested a degree of consensus amongst both groups of respondents concerning the relatively low levels of influence of oil on the region. The only respondent who suggested that oil had a high level of influence on the region was the respondent from the LEC who was based on the East Coast near the main beneficiaries of any economic benefits accruing from the oil industry.

Hospitality, Service Standards and Training

- The standard of hospitality was rated as low by only 1 of the non-commercial sector and by 1 of the commercial sector.

Whilst these were fairly encouraging responses, (especially when compared to the Grampian responses) when the number of respondents who rated the level of hospitality as low/moderate were considered (10 of the non-commercial sector and 4 of the commercial sector) then the responses were not so encouraging. This was a problem that caused concern to tourism providers in Scotland as a whole and was not just a regional issue.

- The standards of service and levels of training associated with the hospitality product in the region were rated as low by 2 of the non-commercial sector and moderate by 9. The corresponding figures for the commercial sector were 1 and 3 with the remaining 3 respondents rating them as high.

The differences between the two groups could be attributed to the fact that the commercial sector were the major service providers and, so it was themselves that they were rating (consequently they are unlikely to rate themselves too harshly). However, the responses do suggest that the majority of the respondents were unhappy with these particular factors.

Attractions

- The standard of the regions' built attractions were not considered to be high by any of the non-commercial sector respondents and by only 2 of the commercial sector respondents (although 9 of the non-commercial sector and 4 of the commercial sector rated them as moderate/high).
- The natural attractions of the region were rated considerably higher than the built attractions with 11 of the non-commercial sector respondents and all of the commercial sector respondents rating them as high.

This could be attributed largely to a respondents comment "the region, in particular the West Coast is the epitome of what Scotland is all about. The natural attractions of the region are unsurpassed any where in the world."

Infrastructure

- The region's infrastructure was rated as low/moderate by all of both the commercial and the non-commercial sector.

These findings were common in peripheral areas and although they may not appear to be very encouraging some of the respondents suggested that the regions infrastructure suited the regions image. One respondents suggested that it was "what the tourists, especially the Americans, come here for".

Sustainability

- The issue of sustainability was considered to be important by 6 of the non-commercial sector respondents, but was not considered to be important by any of the commercial sector respondents.

Although this was surprising, in that there was an awareness amongst the Ross and Cromarty respondents about the importance of the environment and the region's natural attractions to the tourism industry in the area, the findings are exactly the same as the responses from the Inverness and Nairn case study. (See Inverness and Nairn commercial and non-commercial sector findings - Sustainability). The conclusion to be drawn from these findings was that sustainability was an issue for the non-commercial sector providers, who were mainly based in and around Dingwall and the East Coast, but not for the commercial sector

7.2 CAUSAL NETWORK NARRATIVES FOR REGIONAL SECTOR RESPONDENTS

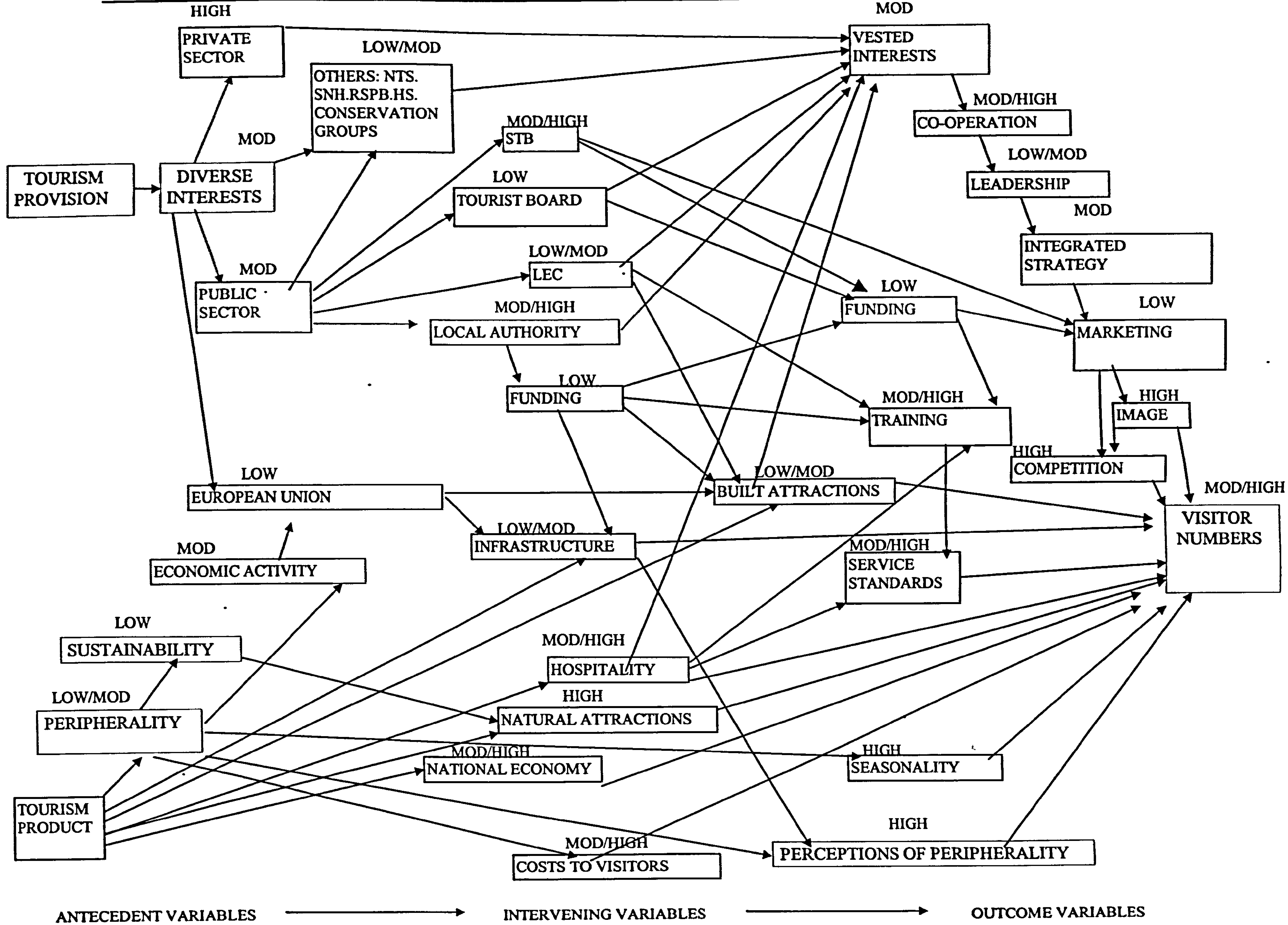
The area studied was sub-divided into two distinct geographical areas, the West Coast and the East Coast. The West Coast respondents were centred mainly on Ullapool. In total 5 of the 19 respondents were from this area and 14 of the respondents were from the East Coast. The reason for the relatively uneven split is that respondents such as local Tourist Boards, RACE, some commercial providers and respondents in the Others category (such as Historic Scotland or Scottish National Heritage) are based on the East Coast but also have responsibilities for the

West Coast. As with the previous cases some of the initial variable categorisations are described.

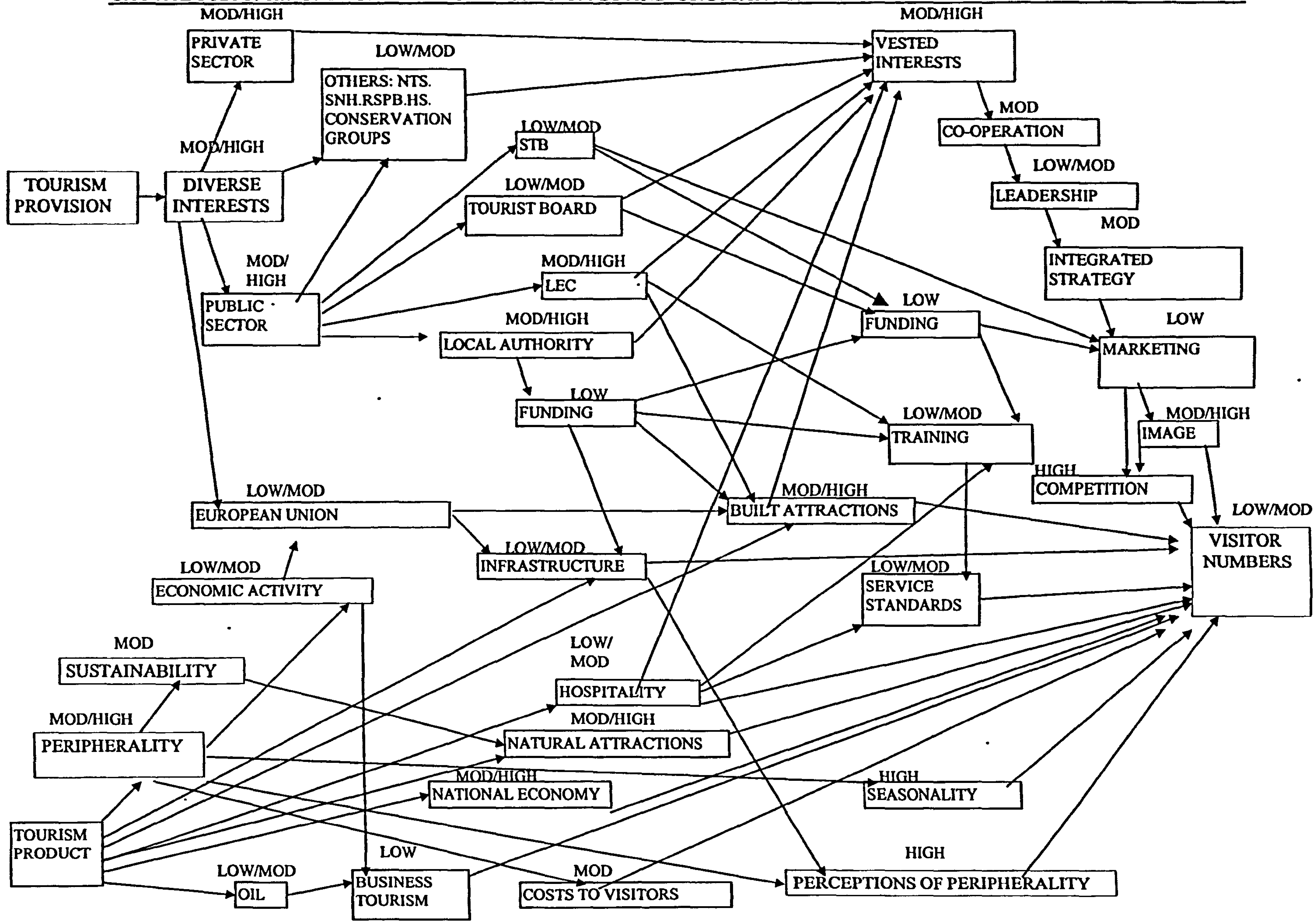
CAUSAL NETWORK MODEL WEST COAST (SEE FIGURE 33)

CAUSAL NETWORK MODEL EAST COAST (SEE FIGURE 34)

CAUSAL FRAGMENT: TOURISM PROVISION IN ROSS AND CROMARTY. WEST COAST REGIONAL MODEL FIGURE 33



CAUSAL FRAGMENT: TOURISM PROVISION IN ROSS AND CROMARTY. EAST COAST REGIONAL MODEL. FIGURE 34



ANTECEDENT VARIABLES → INTERVENING VARIABLES → OUTCOME VARIABLES

Diverse Interests

- All of the respondents from both the West Coast and the East Coast suggested that the level of diversity involved with the industry was moderate/high. The variable was categorised as moderate/high.

This was also the case with the respondents from Grampian and Inverness and Nairn and was a common problem in Scotland and in many peripheral regions.

Private Sector

- In total, all the West Coast respondents rated their influence as moderate/high as did 85% (12) of the East Coast respondents. The variables were categorised as moderate/high.

The differences between the two groups of respondents may be attributed to the fact that there were more public sector respondents based on the East Coast than on the West Coast. The public sector shows a tendency to play up the role/influence of the public sector at the expense of the private sector.

Public Sector

- The West Coast respondents rated the public sector as moderate (4 or 80%) and as moderate/high (1 or 20%). In contrast 86% (12) of the East Coast respondents suggested that the public sector were moderate/high (with 22% or 3 rating them as moderate, 14% or 2 as moderate/high and 50% or 7 as high). The variables were categorised as moderate and moderate/high respectively.

The differences between the two regions could be explained by the fact that the Private sector was considered to be more influential on the West Coast, at the expense of the Public sector. This could be attributed to the fact that the region is more dependent on tourism than the East Coast and consequently there is a more active involvement of the Private sector (because tourism is the main regional industry). The Public sector was also considered to be less effective as a result of the reduced level of influence attributed to the Enterprise Company.

European Union

- Of the West Coast respondents 80% (4) rated the EU as low and the remaining 20% (1) rated them as moderate (a total of 100% or 5 rating them as low/moderate). Seven or 50% of the East Coast respondents rated them as low, 1 or 7% as low/moderate and the remaining 6 or 43% as moderate (a total of 100% rating them as low/moderate). The categorisations were low and low/moderate respectively.

There was not a large discrepancy between the respondent's feedback concerning the influence of the EU and the consensus was that the EU had comparatively little influence in the region.

"Others"

- The responses from both the regions suggest that the influence of the "Others" group was low/moderate (West Coast 60% or 3 low and 40% or 2 moderate, a total of 100% or 5 low/moderate). Five (36%) of the East Coast respondents suggested that "Others" were low, 2 (15%) low/moderate and 6 (42%) moderate, a total of 13 or 93% low/moderate. The variables were both categorised as low/moderate.

These findings were similar to the Inverness and Nairn and Grampian respondents and reflect the importance attributed to both the Public and Privates sector (especially the Private sector).

STB

- The STB was rated as moderate by 3 of the West Coast respondents and as high by the remaining 2. In contrast the East Coast respondents rated it as low/moderate (6 low, 2 low/moderate and 3 as moderate, a total of 11 low/moderate.

One of the respondents suggested the higher rating attributed to the STB by the West Coast respondents could be explained by the fact that "the STB markets the image of the West Coast as the image of Scotland."

ATB (HOST)

- The ATB was rated as low by 4 and high by 1 of the West Coast respondents and as low/moderate by 13 of the East Coast respondents.

The consensus was that the ATB was ineffective. This is in contrast to the views expressed by the West Coast respondents concerning the effectiveness of the STB. The STB was considered to be effective in its role of marketing Scotland but the local ATB was considered to be ineffective in its role of marketing the region. The marketing of Ross and Cromarty was considered problematical by several of the respondents because the region can effectively be split in two, with two distinct areas Wester Ross and North West Sutherland (West Coast) and Easter Ross and North East Sutherland and Caithness (East Coast). According to one of the respondents "there are obvious difficulties associated with marketing and selling the area. There are confusing messages about the image of the region. Is it the West Coast image or the East Coast image? There is no central focal point or focus."

Enterprise Companies

- The Enterprise Companies were rated as moderate by 3 of the West Coast respondents and as low by the remaining 2. The East Coast respondents rated them as moderate/high (11).

The East Coast responses were reflective of the responses from both the other case study areas. However, the West Coast responses were distinctly different with all of the respondents rating them as low/moderate. This difference was explained by one of the respondents. He suggested that "the Local Enterprise Company (RACE) used to have considerable influence on the West Coast. However, because of funding cut-backs the representative who used to be based in Ullapool (and who used to deal with local issues) has been removed and replaced with a once a week visit by different RACE officials based on the East Coast. As a consequence their local influence has declined."

Local Authorities

- The Local Authority (Highland Council) was rated as moderate/high by all of the West Coast respondents and by 11 of the East Coast respondents.

The comparatively high level of influence attributed to the Local Authority was typical of peripheral regions, because of their reliance on public sector funds.

Funds

- The funds associated with the Local Authorities and the ATBs were rated as low by all of the West Coast respondents and by 13 of the East Coast respondents.

These responses reflect the views of the respondents from the other case study regions, where public sector funding has been cut and there are continuing moves towards more commercial ways of raising funds for the ATBs.

Co-operation, Integration and Leadership

- The level of co-operation was rated as moderate/high by all of the West Coast respondents and by 10 of the East Coast respondents.

The comparatively high ratings associated with the levels of Co-operation by the West Coast respondents were possibly due to the fact that tourism was very important to the region and there was an awareness amongst those involved with tourism of this importance. One of the respondents suggested that "as a consequence there is a genuine effort to co-operate and work together."

- The levels of integration were similar to the responses regarding the levels of co-operation. Four of the West Coast respondents and 10 of the East Coast respondents rated the levels of Integration as moderate/high.

- Leadership was rated as low/moderate by 4 of the West Coast respondents and by all of the East Coast respondents.

These comparatively low levels of Leadership were not considered to be a problem (unlike Grampian). The consensus was that the leading of initiatives was not important. One of the respondents stated that "so long as the work gets done, it doesn't matter who leads it."

Marketing, Competition and Image

- The level of marketing was rated as low by 12 of the East Coast respondents and by all of the West Coast respondents.

Both groups of respondents felt the marketing of their regions suffered as a result of over-emphasising other areas. The East Coast respondents suggested the West Coast and the Highlands (particularly Inverness) benefited at their expense. The West Coast respondents suggested that it was the Highlands who benefited the most.

- The levels of competition were rated as high by 10 of the East Coast respondents. This reflects the views of both the Inverness and Nairn and the Grampian case studies. However, the respondents from the West Coast suggested that the levels of competition were either low (1) or moderate (4).

This was due mainly to the fact that the West Coast has a very strong brand image and as such the respondents felt that competition was not such a big problem for their region, as it was for other regions in Scotland.

- The respondents from the West Coast rated the image of their region as high (5). However, the East Coast respondents rated their region's image as lower with only 65% rating it as high.

This could be partly explained by looking at a comment from one of the East Coast respondents. "There is too much emphasis on marketing the West Coast by both the STB and HOST. The West Coast is always being pushed. The East Coast is not. The STB do not market the East Coast effectively."

Peripherality

- Of the West Coast respondents 4 suggested that their region was not peripheral (low/moderate levels of peripherality). However, 13 of the East Coast respondents suggested that their region was peripheral (moderate/high).

The difference between the two groups can be summed up by a comment from one of the West Coast respondents. "The West Coast is on the tourist milk run. We are not peripheral for tourists visiting Scotland. We are one of the primary destinations. The remoteness of the region is part of the attraction of the West Coast."

Perception of Peripherality

- In perceptual terms all of the West and East groups suggested that visitors regarded their region as peripheral (moderate/high).

The West Coast respondents felt that their area was not peripheral but it was regarded as peripheral by people/visitors who had not been there. The East Coast respondents suggested that their region was peripheral but the main problem was not the physical peripherality, but more the perception of peripherality. On of the respondents suggested that "the region has an image of remoteness. Peripherality is more perceptual than reality".

Economic Activity

- The West Coast respondents also suggested that their region had a moderate level of economic activity. The East Coast respondents suggested their region had a low/moderate level of economic activity.

Both the West Coast and the East Coast are dependent on tourism and according to one respondent "the area is heavily dependent on the tourism industry." Another respondent suggested that "45% of the local economy is dependent on tourism." However, a dependence on tourism can be a negative thing especially when the region depends on international tourism.

Strength of Sterling/National Economy

- The strength of the national currency was considered to be a problem by all of the West Coast respondents. Of the East Coast respondents 10 suggested it was moderate/high.

This was because a strong currency affects the foreign visitors spending power and the West Coast is reliant on overseas visitors. The fact that the response was unsolicited demonstrates the strength of feeling of the respondents.

Seasonality

- All of the respondents from both groups considered seasonality to be a problem (they all rated it as moderate/high).

This was typical of peripheral locations and reflects the views of the respondents from both Inverness and Nairn and Grampian.

Costs to Visitors

- The costs to visitors were rated as high by 3 of the West Coast respondents and by only 1 of the East Coast respondents.

According to one of the respondents from the West Coast "the region is not particularly peripheral but it can be expensive to get to and although the hospitality product is of a high standard it can be expensive."

Oil

- The influence of oil was rated as low by all of the West Coast respondents and by 4 of the East Coast respondents. Of the remaining East Coast respondents 1 suggested it was low/moderate and 9 suggested it was moderate, a total of 14 suggesting it was low/ moderate.

Although the influence of oil was low/moderate in both areas it did have less of an impact on the West Coast than it did on the East Coast (because of the oil industry presence at places such as Nigg and Invergordon).

Hospitality, Service Standards and Training

- The levels of hospitality were considered to be considerably better on the West Coast than on the East Coast. All of the West Coast respondents suggested that hospitality was moderate/high. In comparison all of the East Coast respondents suggested that their standards of hospitality were low/moderate.

The West Coast respondents were the region that differ from the norm. The feeling from the West Coast was that "the standard of hospitality on the West Coast is of a higher standard than on the East Coast and is generally better than the rest of Scotland."

- These views were reflected in the responses regarding the standards of service and levels of training associated with the hospitality product on the West Coast. All of the respondents suggested they were of a moderate/high level. Whilst on the East coast the standard of services and levels of training were rated as low/moderate (13).

Attractions

- The attractions of the region were differentiated between natural and built (unlike Grampian). The built attractions were rated as high by none of the West Coast respondents and by only 2 of the East Coast respondents.

These responses were similar to the Inverness and Narin responses.

- The natural attractions were rated as high by all of the West Coast respondents and by 13 of the East Coast respondents. The natural attractions of the region (in particular the West Coast) were considered to be a major advantage to the region over other regions in Scotland. One of the respondents suggested that "our advantage over our competitors in Scotland is the fact that we have a very good natural environment which is a major draw for visitors to our region. Without the natural attractions of our region we would not have tourism."

Infrastructure

- The respondents from both regions suggested the region's infrastructure was low/moderate (all of the West Coast respondents and all of the East Coast respondents).

The low level of infrastructure was common in peripheral regions and although the standards were criticised, several of the respondents shared the same views as the Inverness and Nairn respondents, in that the infrastructure suited the image of their region.

Sustainability

- Sustainability was not considered to be a major problem by any of the West Coast respondents. In contrast 6 of the East Coast respondents rated it as high.

The apparent low level of awareness concerning the issue of sustainability was surprising in that the region is dependent on tourists who come to the region for the natural attractions. There were several factors that may have been responsible for this. Firstly, the infrastructure of the region exhibits more peripheral tendencies, in that the road links tend to be single carriageways (as opposed to the dual carriageway links of the East Coast. The region also has more B class roads and single track roads). This has the effect of limiting the numbers of large-scale coach tours to the region. As a consequence the visitors to the region tend to be less and in most cases arrive in smaller groups than those who visit the more easily accessible centres on the East Coast (especially Inverness). This is important because one of the major problems regarding sustainability relates to the number of visitors to a particular area.

A further factor related to the region's infrastructure and the coach parties attracted to the region is that the coaches are restricted to the main routes and are unable to access many of the more remote regions. This means that these sensitive areas are not necessarily opened up to large scale tourist numbers.

Allied to this was the fact that the Western Isles (in most cases) are not accessible, other than by boat. This has the effect of automatically limiting the numbers of visitors.

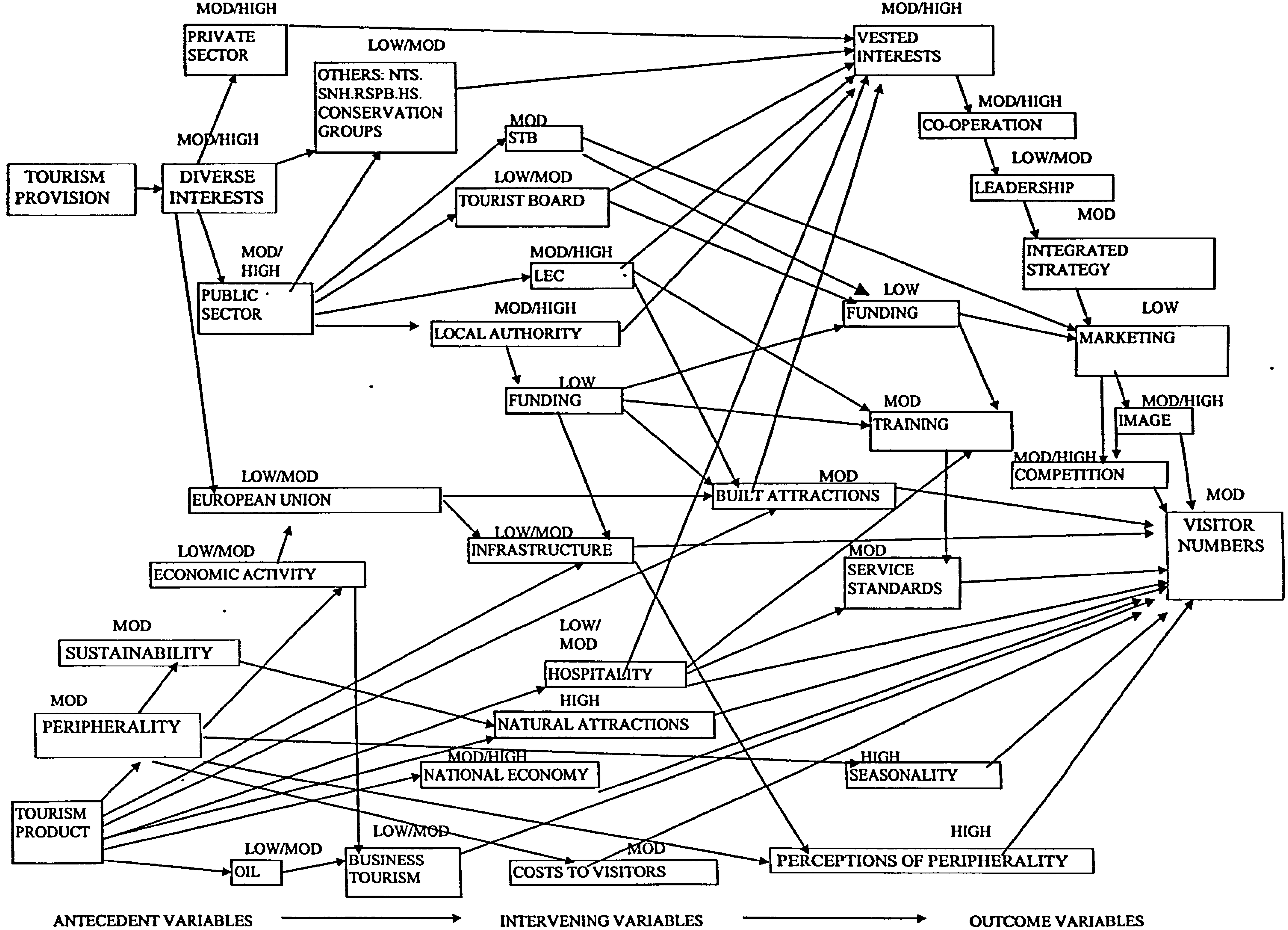
The region also tends to attract (in percentage terms) more activity based visitors who are often seeking the outdoor/wilderness type of holiday (walking, climbing, fishing etc). They tend to be more aware of countryside care and sustainable issues than the mass tourists are likely to be. According to one respondent "visitors to the area tend not to fall into any particular category, other than the fact that they all have a love of the natural environment."

The main settlement on the West Coast is Ullapool, which has a population of only 1,500. As a consequence the number and type of visitors attracted to the region tends to differ from the number and type of visitors attracted to the larger settlements on the East Coast.

7.3.1 DISCUSSION OF CAUSAL NETWORK NARRATIVES FOR TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS

CAUSAL NETWORK MODEL (SEE FIGURE 35)

CAUSAL FRAGMENT: TOURISM PROVISION IN ROSS AND CROMARTY. FINAL MODEL. FIGURE 35



Included in this section were all the respondents from the Ross and Cromarty case study, a total of 19 respondents. As in the Inverness and Nairn case study despite the limited number of respondents tentative conclusions were drawn for this case study based on the fact that the majority of the respondents held influential positions within the tourism policy arena and their opinions were influential in shaping tourism policy decisions.

Diverse Interests

- All the respondents from Ross and Cromarty rated diverse interests as moderate/high.

Conclusions

The level of diversity was common in the industry and was generally typical of tourism in all three case study regions and throughout Scotland. One of the respondents suggested that "policy formulation and strategic developments are difficult to achieve because of the large number of small, diverse businesses involved in the industry."

Private Sector

The private sector was rated as moderate/high by 17 of the respondents. This is a high number of respondents and this is not normally the case in peripheral regions because of their traditional reliance on the public sector.

Conclusions

The comparatively high responses were largely as a result of the West Coast respondents. The Private sector was viewed as being actively involved on both the West and East Coasts, but it was rated as having a higher response by the West Coast respondents. According to one of the West Coast respondents "the private sector realise the importance of tourism to their livelihood. They know that they need to be involved to survive."

Public Sector

The public sector was rated as moderate/high by 17 of the Ross and Cromarty respondents.

Conclusions

These figures were typical of the dependence of peripheral regions on the public sector where the private sector tended to be reluctant to invest. However, the West Coast respondents did not rate the Public sector as high as the other two case study regions. This could be attributed to the higher profile of the Private sector and the lower profile associated with the Enterprise companies, due to the closure of their local office on the West Coast.

European Union

The EU was rated as low/ moderate by all of the respondents. These responses were similar to the responses from the other two case study regions.

Conclusions

Although these were common perceptions they were not totally accurate. This was because of the European Union's funding role in tourism developments and because of the Subsidiarity principle adopted by the EU. According to one of the East Coast respondents "the European Union tended to be perceived as being anonymous but they are actively involved in new tourism projects. They are not the leaders in new initiatives but they are involved."

"Others"

Of the Ross and Cromarty respondents 18 rated the "Others" group as having low/moderate levels of influence.

Conclusions

These were typical responses and were replicated in the other two regions where the public sector tended to dominate tourism provision decision making. Although the public sector was very influential in Ross and Cromarty the unusual finding was that the private sector was also very influential. The influence attributed to both these sectors meant that the influence attributed to the "Others" sector was consequently lower.

STB

The STB was rated as low/moderate by 14 of the Ross and Cromarty respondents. This was representative of the responses from the other two case study regions.

Conclusions

However, there were discrepancies between the regional groups of respondents. The West Coast respondents tended to rate the STB as being more effective than the East Coast respondents. These responses were in contrast to the responses from all the other case study groups. This could be mainly attributed to the fact that it was the West Coast, more than any other case study region that benefited from the STBs activities. One of the West Coast respondents suggested that this was because "the image of the West Coast is one that is actively promoted by the STB, not to promote the West Coast as a region, but to promote Scotland as a brand."

ATB

The ATB (HOST) was rated as low/moderate by 17 of the Ross and Cromarty respondents. The consensus was that the ATB was ineffective. This is in contrast to the responses concerning the STB.

Conclusions

The reason for the differences was that the Ross and Cromarty region itself is not a natural entity. The West Coast and the East Coast are two different regions which according to one of the respondents "makes it difficult to market. What is the image of both regions? They are distinctly different and consequently the messages of the ATB tend to be confusing and disparate."

Enterprise Companies

The Enterprise Companies were rated as moderate/high by 16 of the Ross and Cromarty respondents. These responses were slightly different to the responses from the other case study regions (and for peripheral areas in general).

Conclusions

The different responses may be attributed to the West Coast respondents who rated their LEC as low/moderate. This was based purely on regional grievances arising from the removal of the local LEC official from the West Coast. This led to a consensus amongst West Coast respondents that they were represented by officials based on the East Coast who did not have knowledge of the local area or the interests of the local people at heart. One of the respondents suggested that "the LEC is run by and for the East Coast."

Local Authority

In common with the other regions in the study Ross and Cromarty respondents rated the Local Authority as moderate/high (16).

Conclusions

These responses were typical of the responses from the other case study regions and were also representative of peripheral areas in general, where there is a natural dependence of the local state. One of the West Coast respondents suggested that "the Local Authorities do tend to have a great deal of influence in areas such as this."

Funds

The level of funding for Local Authorities and local Tourist Boards was considered to be low by 18 of the respondents.

Conclusions

This situation was common in both the other case study regions and was caused largely by funding cut-backs in the Local Authority which were passed on to the Area Tourist Boards. The trend in cutting funds is continuing and means that the ATB are having to focus more on raising funds from subscriptions, sales and other activities.

Co-operation, Integration and Leadership

The levels of co-operation were rated as moderate/high by 15 of the Ross and Cromarty respondents. The responses differed between regions. All of the West Coast respondents rated the level of co-operation as moderate/high, whereas 10 of the East Coast respondents rated it as moderate/high.

The level of integration was rated as moderate/high by 14 of the respondents. None of the respondents from the West Coast rated integration as low but 5 of the East Coast respondents suggested this was the case.

The levels of leadership were rated as low/moderate by 18 of the Ross and Cromarty respondents. There was a regional difference in that all of the East Coast respondents rated leadership as low/moderate and 4 of the West Coast respondents rated it as low/moderate.

Conclusions

The differences regarding the levels of co-operation may be partly attributed to the fact there was a genuine appreciation of the importance of tourism to the West Coast and the consequent need to co-operate and also because the East Coast respondents do not tend to have a natural focal point. There was a split between the more northern respondents and the respondents based closer to the centres of population (Dingwall and the area to the north on Inverness). There was a resentment of the influence of the latter group. A typical response was that "they have undue influence over decisions which affect us." One of the respondents from the North East Coast suggested that they "resented the dominance of the more Southerly located tourism organisations in places such as Dingwall." Consequently they tended to rate the levels of co-operation as lower than their West Coast counterparts.

The responses concerning the level of integration were naturally similar to the responses regarding co-operation but even though they differ in degree between the West and East Coast respondents, they did reflect the responses concerning Co-operation.

The West Coast respondents rated the level of leadership as higher than their counterparts on the East Coast. Despite the generally low levels of leadership the West Coast respondents tended not to see it as a major area of concern. One of the respondents suggested that "the natural leader for tourism would logically be the ATB. They have not really fulfilled this role, but it is not a problem because people tend to get involved when they see benefits accruing to them, or to their organisations, and the ones who stand to gain most tend to take on the lead role."

Marketing, Competition and Image

Marketing was rated as low by 17 of the Ross and Cromarty respondents. The West Coast respondents suggested that the STB did a good job of marketing the area but the general consensus was that the region was marketed poorly by the ATB.

The levels of competition were rated as moderate/high by 16 of the respondents. However, there were marked differences between the West and East Coast respondents.

Conclusions

The consensus was that the region was poorly marketed by the ATB (HOST). Respondents from both the West and the East coast suggested that their regions suffered as a result of over-emphasis of other regions by the ATB. This was particularly true of the East Coast where one respondent suggested "they suffered as a result of the HOST spending too much time and money promoting the West coast."

In terms of image the respondents from the West Coast considered their region to have a very strong brand and Image. However, the East Coast respondents suggested that "the East Coast needs an image for marketing and a clear marketing strategy. We ought to be targeting niche markets."

All of the West Coast respondents suggested that the level of competition facing their region was low/moderate. The differences can be explained by referring to comments made by respondents from both the West and East Coast. A West Coast respondent suggested that "we do not have a great deal of competition because of our natural scenery and because of the strength of our image." An East Coast respondent suggested that "our region suffers as a result of competition from the Highlands and the West Coast. We do not have as strong an image as these two regions."

Peripherality

Of the respondents 14 suggested that Ross and Cromarty had a moderate/high level of peripherality. The main differences were in the responses from the West and East Coasts. Four of the West Coast respondents suggested their region had a low/moderate level of peripherality, whereas 14 of the East Coast respondents suggested that their region had a moderate/high level of peripherality.

The main problem was not perceived to be peripheral locations but rather the perception of the region as peripheral. Of the Ross and Cromarty respondents 16 of them rated the perception of peripherality as a problem (high).

In terms of the local economy of the region, 18 of the Ross and Cromarty respondents suggested the economic activity needed to be improved. The effectiveness of the local economy was rated as low/moderate. The main reasons for these low ratings was the East Coast, where all of the respondents rated the local economy as being low/moderate. The economic activity on the West Coast was considered to be moderate/high by all of the respondents.

Conclusions

The West Coast respondents suggested that their region was not necessarily peripheral in location because it was on the tourist route though Scotland. The region was considered to be a destination in itself. One of the respondents suggested that "the region is a place visitors aim for. They are not travelling through the region to some where else. They are coming through other regions to get to us."

The major problem was not considered to be the region's location but the perception of the region's location by prospective visitors. One of the respondents suggested that "visitors perceive us to be remote. This is not the case, especially not on the West Coast."

The differences between the West and East Coasts concerning the level of economic activity can be explained by the fact that the West Coast relies heavily on tourism. Mainly as a result of its natural environment and its strong brand image, the region benefits from comparatively high visitor numbers. In contrast there are parts of the East Coast that rely on oil and its subsidiary industries, and it is often these regions (especially the oil rig dependent areas such as the Cromarty Firth) that tend to have the lower levels of economic activity. One of the respondents suggested that "there are parts of the East Coast that are in real economic trouble because of the vagaries associated with the oil industry."

Strength of Sterling/National Economy

Of the respondents 15 rated the strength of the national currency as a problem (high). The remaining 4 of respondents did not mention it.

Conclusions

These responses were significant because they were unsolicited. The West Coast respondents rated this as more of a problem than their East Coast counter-parts, with all of the West Coast group rating it as moderate/high and only 10 of the East Coast respondents rating it as moderate/high. The differences could be attributed to the fact that the West Coast receives more international visitors and is consequently more likely to be affected by a strong currency and changes in the exchange rates than the East Coast respondents.

Seasonality

All of the respondents suggested that seasonality was a problem (moderate/high). These findings were not only reflective of the other two case study regions, but also of tourism in Scotland in general.

Conclusions

Seasonality is was a common problem associated with peripheral regions. One of the respondents pointed out that "room occupancy varies from a high of 85% in August to a low of 13% in January."

Costs to Visitors

Only 4 of the Ross and Cromarty respondents suggested that costs to visitors were high. All of the West Coast respondents suggested that costs associated with getting to, and staying on the West Coast could be prohibitive.

Conclusions

The perception was that the region was not particularly peripheral but it could be expensive to get to. The East Coast respondents tended to view their region as cheaper to stay in and easier to get to. One of the respondents suggested that "we are closer to Inverness than we are to the West Coast and there is a plentiful supply of good quality economically priced accommodation there. We are also easier to get to than the West Coast so it keeps the costs for visitors down."

Oil

Oil was considered to be of comparatively little importance to the Ross and Cromarty region, with 9 of respondents rating it as low, 1 as low/moderate and 9 as moderate. All of the West Coast respondents rated oil as low.

Conclusions

Oil does have an impact on parts of the East Coast, such as Cromarty Firth but has little impact on the West Coast.

Hospitality, Service Standards and Training

The levels of hospitality were rated as low/moderate by 14 of Ross and Cromarty respondents. However, the responses showed distinct regional variations. All of the West Coast respondents rated hospitality as moderate/high as opposed to all of the East Coast respondents rating it as low/moderate.

The responses regarding the standards of service and levels of training associated with the tourism and hospitality product in Ross and Cromarty were similar to the responses concerning hospitality provision. The general consensus was that they were low/moderate (13). However, the West Coast respondents suggested that the level of service and training in their region was moderate/high (5).

Conclusions

The standard of hospitality and the levels of service and training associated with the region differed between the West and the East Coasts. The responses from the East Coast were similar to the responses from the other two case study regions and were also typical of hospitality provision in Scotland. However, the responses from the West Coast suggest that their standards were considerably better. This could be explained by the fact that the West Coast depends heavily on the revenue generated by the tourism industry. It is the region's largest industry and as one respondent suggested "the region would be in real trouble if we saw a fall in tourism earnings." There is a realisation of the region's dependence on tourism amongst both the public and private sectors and there are concerted efforts to provide and maintain standards.

Attractions

The standard of the built attractions were rated as moderate by 13 of respondents, but the natural attractions of the region were rated considerably higher, with 18 suggesting they were of a high.

Conclusions

The consensus was that the built attractions in the region were of a low/moderate standard but the natural attractions were of a high standard. This was especially true on the West Coast where all of the respondents rated the natural attractions as high. One of the respondents pointed out that "there is not a great deal of man-made interest in the area, but what the region does have is its natural environment which is known around the world."

Infrastructure

The region's infrastructure was rated as low/moderate by 18 of the respondents.

Conclusions

One of the respondents suggested that the region's infrastructure should be "integrated and existing transport systems ought to be improved to facilitate access. The sign posting in the area also needs improving". There was little difference between the responses from the West and East Coast regions. However, there was a view expressed by one of the West Coast respondents that "the infrastructure for getting into and out of the region could be improved but the local infrastructure actually suits the image of the West Coast and the Highlands."

Sustainability

Sustainability was rated as a major issue by 6 of the respondents.

Conclusions

The responses to the issue of sustainability were unsolicited which adds weight to the importance that the respondents attached to the issue. However, the respondents from the West Coast did not consider it to be as important an issue as the respondents from the East Coast. This apparent lack of awareness amongst the West Coast respondents was surprising given the region's dependence on its natural attractions.

7.4 METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND OUTCOMES FROM THE ROSS AND CROMARTY CASE STUDY REGION

As was the case with the study in the previous two sections the Ross and Cromarty case study was not necessarily representative of all tourism providers in the region. However, as was the case in the previous two case studies the population did represent a relatively large cross section of public sector respondents.

As was the case with the previous two case studies the total number of respondents section was used not only to inform the process of Causal Network construction, but also to discuss the respondents feedback in relation to the current literature and knowledge of peripheral areas and the region of Ross and Cromarty.

The main changes to the Causal Networks occurred during the Grampian case study, with the scale of changes reducing as the research progressed to the third and final case study in Ross and Cromarty.

During the final stages of data collection in Ross and Cromarty the Causal Network models changed little in terms of their construction. As in Inverness and Nairn the models were refined as opposed to changed. The refinement process continued from the initial case study in Grampian through to the case study in Inverness and Nairn and was finalised in the third case study region of Ross and Cromarty.

The nature of the research meant that the issues and variables that were considered to be important by the respondents from each of the three regions were likely to be slightly different. This proved to be the case in all three regions, with the majority of the changes occurring during the Grampian case study. In the latter two case study regions of Inverness and Nairn and Ross and Cromarty the changes tended to be in categorisations of the variables using the same ordinal scale as opposed to the fundamental structure of the Causal Network models. However, there were also some changes to the variables considered to be important by the respondents.

Because the Causal Network variables were generated as a result of respondent feedback there were inevitably going to be differences between the three case study regions. These differences were based on what issues and factors were considered to be important by the respondents from each group. As a consequence some different variables were used in each of the three case studies (however, the majority of the variables remained constant). The changes that were made for the Causal Networks in Ross and Cromarty were as follows:

- As with the Inverness and Nairn causal networks the Tourism Provision variable was left in as a starting variable but was not quantified in terms of low, moderate or high (See Inverness and Nairn justification).

- In the original case the LEC variable referred to Grampian Enterprise and Scottish Enterprise, but in the Inverness and Nairn case study it included the local enterprise company (Inverness and Nairn Enterprise) and HIE (Highland and Island Enterprise). This was also done in the Ross and Cromarty case but the local enterprise company was Ross and Cromarty Enterprise (RACE) and not Inverness and Nairn Enterprise.

- The Attractions variable was divided into two separate variables, Built Attractions and Natural Attractions. This was to reflect the respondent's feedback concerning the questions related to attractions.

- A link was established/included in the Causal Network between the Marketing variable and competition (see Inverness and Nairn justification).

- The Rural Economy variable and Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) variable were taken out of the model because they were not considered to be accurate or influential by the respondents.

- Sustainability was maintained as a variable.

- The Cost of Accommodation was removed from the model because it was not considered to be an important issue by the respondents.

- The variable concerning the National Economy/Strength of Sterling was maintained.

- Perceptions of Peripherality was also kept as a variable.

- The Oil and Business Tourism variables were removed for the West Coast model because neither were considered important by the respondents.

- The Costs to Visitors variable was re-introduced for the West Coast model, because it was considered important by the respondents.

The aim of the data collection in the third case study region was to finalise the Causal Network model that highlighted the problems associated with tourism in the three case study areas (that would hopefully be indicative of problems common to other peripheral areas). This outcome will be discussed in more detail in subsequent chapters. Likewise the theory of Lesson Drawing is discussed in the conclusions section.

CHAPTER 8

RELATIONSHIP OF THE PRIMARY DATA TO THE ESTABLISHED LITERATURE

The purpose of this research is to develop and test the methodologies of Causal Networks and Lesson Drawing but integral to this process is the creation of large amounts of respondent data concerning tourism provision in the three case study regions that came primarily from the public sector. It is accepted that this research may not necessarily be representative of all tourism providers in the three case study regions. However, the data does represent the responses of a large number of the public sector organisations (including all Local Authorities, Enterprise Companies, Area and National Tourist Boards) involved in tourism provision in the three regions. As a consequence the models do provide a level of representation for the public sector respondents involved in tourism provision in the three regions. This data is compared and contrasted with the established literature in an attempt to identify where the Causal Network variables used in this research support or refute existing literature sources.

8.1 DIVERSE INTERESTS

The respondents suggested that in the Inverness and Nairn and the Ross and Cromarty regions the issues of diversity are more effectively dealt with than in the Grampian region. However, each region exhibited both diverse and vested interests, which is a problem, not only for the regions studied but also for tourism provision on a national and an international context. This is also in keeping with the literature on peripheral areas. However, the respondents from Inverness and Nairn, and Ross and Cromarty, did suggest that their approach to tourism and to the issue of diversity and vested interests is more conducive to providing a better working relationship between the parties involved.

There are many problems associated with differing objectives and agendas (Lickorish, 1991). For example, the Regional Tourist Board's aims are essentially to develop and promote tourism, whereas the Local Authorities, who are often members of the tourist board, will have broader aims that represent the wider communities they are responsible for (Greenwood, 1993). The level of co-operation in the Grampian region is perceived by the respondents to be very poor, due mainly to internal politics and individuals working to their own agendas, as opposed to working together for the benefit of the region.

There appear to be too many diverse interests involved in tourism provision in all three case study regions. The views of the respondents from the three case study regions reflect the views associated with tourism provision at both a national and a peripheral sense. Elliott (2000, p190) suggests that "the structure of the tourism industry covers a vast spectrum of private and public sector enterprises and what distinguishes them from other industries is that they are mostly small, disparate and spread throughout the land." The major problem associated with these large numbers of diverse interests is the level of vested interests involved (SNP, 1999, Bramwell and Sharman, 1999, Baum, 1994, Owen, 1992, Choy, 1993, Pearce, 1992, Hall and Jenkins, 1995).

8.2 PRIVATE SECTOR

The key tourism operators are in many cases in the private sector, with the public service acting as enablers providing support services such as transport and resort infrastructure (Scottish Enterprise, 1998). Hoare and Connelly (2000, p207) suggest that the "tourism industry is dominated by small businesses." This is especially true in peripheral areas (Armstrong and Taylor, 1993). According to Middleton (2000, p36) the micro environment - which involved many of the private sector "outweighs the large enterprises (50 plus employees) by 1000:1."

Tourism developments require a partnership between the public and the private sector. These partnerships often prove difficult to attain (Lickorish, 1991, Andrew 1997). This is especially the case in the Grampian region where the Aberdeen Chamber of Commerce (ACC, 1996) also saw the need for a movement towards private sector involvement and contributions to tourism provision, based on commercial developments, such as food and beverage and accommodation. "The public sector is still the basic sector in tourism" (Elliott, 2000, p23).

Because of the reluctance of many private investors to get involved in new tourism projects, funds are often sought from central government, Local Authorities or the EU (which is keen to support private sector investment and enterprise, The European Directorate General XX111, 1999). When finance is required for new projects the public bodies may well be the only possible providers of large-scale capital investment. "The marketing of tourism, especially overseas, is a good example of where government intervention is necessary" (Elliott, 2000, p183). This is because the diversity and differences in the industry make it difficult to get agreement and raise funds for marketing and promotion. Although respondents suggested that the West Coast and Inverness areas exhibited higher levels of private sector involvement the tendency to look towards the public sector for large-scale funds is evident in all three case study regions.

Further problems associated with private sector involvement centre around the fact that it is these more peripheral locations (such as North and West Grampian) that tend to have lower levels of core population to make any private sector investments financially viable. This low density of population is exacerbated by the problems (which are evident in all three case study regions) of rural de-population in many remote, rural and peripheral areas where localised depopulation has been caused by factors such as high levels of unemployment, poor prospects for improving income levels; unequal standards of living; a falling off in work associated with primary industries; out-migration; re-distribution of social capital and the desire of the locals to remain. (Cavaco, 1989, Gilbert, 1989).

However, in the area of farm based tourism there has been a noticeable move towards tourism involvement . This has been noted by several authors (see table 3).

Table 3: Authors commenting on the move towards farm based tourism

Stevens, 1995, Shafer and Ziegler, 1990, Davidson, 1992, Lane, 1993, Keane, 1992, Burke and O'Cinneide, 1995, Evans and Ilberry, 1992, Williams and Shaw, 1994, Akarca, 1991, Davies and Gilbert, 1992, Paynter, 1991, Denman, 1994.

This is an area where the private sector has become involved in all three case study regions in developing tourism. The reasons for involvement have often been as a result of a decline in agricultural profitability. Although these moves toward more private sector involvement are encouraging there has been a recent decline in the market attracted to these farms. Paynter (1991) and Denman (1994) suggest that the farm based tourism market is largely reliant on the domestic tourist. However, in the 1998/99 year there is a 20% drop in the number of domestic tourists attracted to

Scotland which has had an impact on all three case study regions (STB, 1999). This decline in domestic tourism has continued into 1999/2000.

In contrast to the established literature the respondents from the West Coast and the Inverness and Nairn regions tended to display relatively higher levels of private sector involvement. The respondents from Grampian suggested that their region exhibited the normal tendencies associated with peripheral regions in that the level of private sector involvement is relatively low.

8.3 PUBLIC SECTOR

The relatively high ratings attributed to the public sector in the three case study regions are in keeping with the literature, which emphasises the dependence on public sector support (Portnov and Pearlmatter 1999, HOST, 1997). This dependence can be explained in part by the fact that the central government and the local state have increased its involvement in economic activity. (Elliott 1997, Hall and Jenkins, 1995). In a Scottish context the public sector role has been increased because tourism is seen as crucial to the future of the Scottish economy, as well as to the social, cultural and environmental future of the country (STCG, 1999).

Respondents suggested that many of those involved in tourism in all the three case study regions tended to look to the public sector for leads and initiatives. One of the most consistent issues in peripheral regions is the reliance on public sector funds and initiatives to assist in the development, diversification and promotion of tourism ventures

Table 4: Authors commenting on the reliance on public sector funds in peripheral areas

Portnov and Pearlmatter 1999, Fayos-Sola, 1996, Choy, 1993, Cooper et al, 1996, Hall and Jenkins, 1995, (Wanhill, 1995a, Baum, 1998, McCleery, 1991, Cavacao, 1994, Davidson, 1992, Oakes, 1995, Williams and Shaw, 1994, Shucksmith et al, 1995, Burke and O'Cinneide, 1995 and Keane, 1992.

Elliott (1997, p 181) suggests that "the industry cannot survive without the system and the infrastructure of support and security provides by the public sector."

Despite the inability of peripheral areas (including the three case study regions) to fund changes and developments themselves, there is a well recognised need to provide assistance to these regions (see table 4 above). The government is often required to play "a greater role in promoting economic development in the periphery than in the core" (Botterill et al, 1997). The increased need for assistance in the three regions studied has been recognised by the European Union, who provide assistance in the form of their Structural Funds, and in particular Objective 1 (Highlands) and Objective 5b (Grampian).

8.4 THE EUROPEAN UNION

This research supports the established literature in that the EU is perceived by the respondents to have a relatively low profile. This is in comparison to the other public sector bodies. This low profile is a result of the principle of Subsidarity, where development initiatives do not emanate from the EU, but rather, come from the member states' themselves. The EU supports initiatives, but will not lead them. Those respondents, who suggested that the EU had influence, are the ones who are actually involved with them, in terms of joint projects/initiatives, or are actually in receipt of financial assistance from the EU. However, their influence is greater than is perceived, because of their funding for new tourism projects, especially in more peripheral areas. In the 1994-99 Structural Fund Programme, rural Scotland in Objective 1 and 5b programmes is allocated 454 ECU (around £320 million) from the ERDF and the role of the EU is on the increase (Scottish Office, 1998 Snowdon et al, 1997).

The EU suggests that a policy for all rural and peripheral areas must take account of regional differences and must respect the principle of Subsidiarity (The European Directorate General XX111, 1999). The findings for all three of the case study regions suggested that the principle of Subsidiarity adopted by the EU is being adhered to because their influence is perceived to be lower than it actually is. A greater appreciation of the real value of the EU contribution in these regions can serve to enhance the political credibility of the EU and of pro-European politicians. However, in terms of direct transferability of lessons between the three case study regions the opportunities are limited. This is because the EU provides financial assistance for tourism projects to all three case study regions.

8.5 "OTHERS"

The "Others" group often have a low level of influence over tourism provision and decision making. This is mainly due to the fact that many of them tend not to have access to the same level of funds associated with the public sector. Organisations such as Scottish Natural Heritage and Historic Scotland are responsible for generating £5.5 million and £8 million respectively, to the Scottish tourism economy in 1998. (Scottish Office, 1998). Allied to the general lack of funds associated with this sector many of those involved tended to be distant from decision making forums, which in the case of the three case study regions are usually based at commercial centres such as Aberdeen or Inverness. Many of these "Others" groups are also voluntary or conservation organisations (which may not have the full time interests or financial involvement associated with the private and public sectors). The aims of many voluntary organisations also tend to focus on specific issues, outcomes or areas that they are directly involved with. For example the RSPB focuses on issues related to birds, their protection and the protection of their environment and are often not involved in many tourism forums other than those associated with their specific interests.

Not surprisingly when compared to the influence attributed to both the public and private sectors, the influence of the "Others" groups is considered by the respondents to be low in all three regions. However, the others group are considered to be the least influential in Grampian. This is also true of the findings associated with the private sector in Grampian and as a consequence the public sector dominate tourism provision in Grampian. This is an important issue because decisions concerning tourism provision are best made with a consensus amongst equal partners.

8.6 NATIONAL TOURISM ORGANISATION (STB/VISIT SCOTLAND)

The main responsibilities associated with National Tourism Organisations (NTO) often include, co-ordination, legislation, promotion, research, providing tourist information, marketing, visitor servicing, development, planning and lobbying. (Choy, 1993, Pearce, 1992). Many of the respondents from this research suggested that the Scottish Tourist Board were considered to have little influence. These findings are supported by Day and McLennan (2000, p5) who suggest that the STB has been criticised for their overall poor performance, especially in relation to the falling number of visitors to Scotland. These findings are in contrast to the level of influence that should be attributed to a National Tourism Organisation considering the level of funds associated with NTOs such as the STB, which according to the Scottish Office (1998) are £19.3 million per year. It is also surprising because the STB (1999) described themselves as the lead agency in policy developments for tourism and marketing in Scotland.

However, the relatively low levels of influence attributed to the STB can be partly explained by the problems associated with tourism policy formulation on a national basis. According to Baum (1994) the STB's (like other NTOs), main involvement in tourism policy area reflects a limited contribution to meeting general policy objectives. Their job is not assisted by the diversity of ministries to which NTOs are responsible in both a political and an operational sense. In practice the influence of the STB may have been greater than the respondents perceptions, because they not only promote Scotland in general, but they also provide funding for the local tourist boards.

According to respondents it is the West Coast that tended to benefit most from the activities of the STB. This is because the image that the STB promoted tended to be the image of the West Coast. The region does not benefit because of any regional marketing that was carried out by the STB (which was out-with their remit) but benefits because the image of their region is that associated with visitors perceptions of Scotland and that marketed by the STB.

8.7 AREA TOURIST BOARDS

The relatively high ratings attributed to the ATBs by the respondents are in keeping with the ratings given to all the public sector organisations and also reflect the current literature. The ATBs are important to tourism in Scotland and they often underpin tourism marketing initiatives (STB 1999, Smith 1998). However, the poorer ratings attributed to the ATB by the respondents in terms of comparisons with the LEC, can be attributed to the fact that they are responsible for, and consequently blamed for, the poor levels of marketing associated with all three case study regions.

All three case study regions suggested that marketing of their regions (which is the remit of the local ATB) is poor. The unusual findings from this study are that the ATB for Grampian (AGTB), despite having the lowest level of funding (£1,721,000 in 1998 compared to HOST's funding of £2,898,000 for the same period), were considered not to be as ineffective as their counter-parts at HOST. The slightly higher level of influence attributed to the AGTB can be attributed to the fact that the outlying regions in Grampian tended to look to the ATB as the natural leader for tourism decision making. This is not necessarily the case in Inverness and Nairn, and Ross and Cromarty, where the issue of leadership is not of paramount importance.

8.8 ENTERPRISE COMPANIES

The Enterprise Companies are rated as moderate/high by the respondents in all three case study regions. This is in keeping with the expectations of public sector organisations in peripheral areas. However, in contrast to the current literature the Enterprise Companies are considered to be the most influential organisation involved in tourism provision in the three case study regions.

The high levels of influence associated with the LEC can be attributed to their objectives, which essentially involve promoting tourism and creating employment in their regions. It is for these reasons and also because the LEC are the major fund holders and financiers of many of the new tourism developments in the region that they are perceived as having the most influence. In 1998 Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise had a direct spend for tourism of £25 million (Scottish Office, 1998). Because they are the key players in the provision of funds for new developments they hold a preferred position and are often the leaders for tourism developments (Day and McLennan 2000, Smith, 1998). As a consequence they are placed in a position to defend and promote their vested interests (Hall and Jenkins, 1995) that tends to emphasise their own levels of importance. This is true of the public sector in general (especially the Enterprise Companies and the Local Authorities) and especially in relation to their dealings with the private sector.

8.9 LOCAL AUTHORITIES

The comparatively high levels of influence of the Local Authorities supports the literature and can be attributed to the peripheral nature of the regions and the consequent reliance on the public sector for assistance and support. Local Authorities are often the most important powers in terms of implementing strategies or instigating developments (Hall, 1994, Lunn, 1996, Wanhill, 1994, Greenwood, 1993, Aberdeenshire Council 1998). The implementation of any tourism strategy on the ground rests with the tiers of local government. Local Authorities have a duty to assist in the development of tourism in their locality because businesses look to the Local Authority to act in a co-ordinating role to create and market a product or an image, in a way that individually they can not. (Lunn, 1996). They also impact on the work of tourism interests through planning, development plans, protection of the environment, the sustenance of local communities, the promotion of tourism, economic development and as individual members of the Regional Tourist Boards (Greenwood, 1993, CBI, 1996).

The influence of the Local Authorities is considered to be moderate/high in all three regions (as is the case with the Enterprise Companies) which is common in peripheral regions. However, the findings from this research contradicted the literature in that the Local Authorities are not considered to be the most influential organisation in the three regions. The most influential are the Enterprise Companies.

8.10 FUNDS

There has been a well documented and publicised cutback in the funding of the local Area Tourist Boards in Scotland (Day and McLennan 2000, HOST, 1997, Clarke, 1999, Smith, 1998, Henry, 1996, STB, 1999). These trends in cutting funds have been directly linked to the cut backs in Local Authority funds, who then cut back on Tourist Board funds (Scotland's Hospitality Industry Congress, 1998). The lack of funds is a major problem (STB, 1999). As a result of these financial pressures all the Area Tourist Boards are re-evaluating their operations and many are looking at the value of local TICs (especially in Grampian) and all are focusing more and more on commercial activities and membership fees to raise the funds they require.

8.11 CO-OPERATION

Despite the difficulties associated with achieving a consensus (Prentice 1993) the findings from this research supported the literature in that it is considered vital for the future well being of the industry that everyone involved in tourism improves co-operation and attempts to work together (see table 5).

Table 5: Authors commenting on the reliance on the importance of co-operation to tourism decision making

HOST, 1997, Scottish Office, 1997, STB, 1999, The European Directorate General XX111 1999, Hassan 2000, Buhalis 2000, Day 1998, Aberdeenshire Council 1998, Bramwell and Sharman 1999.

In Inverness and Nairn, and Ross and Cromarty, the levels of co-operation are perceived by the respondents to be moderate/high, however, in Grampian the levels of co-operation are rated as low. The norm is for co-operation amongst tourism providers to be relatively low. This can be partly explained by the large number of diverse interests (including interest groups) involved in tourism provision in these regions and by the fact that the objectives of these interested parties may differ or conflict with one another.

The implementation of policies and strategies do depend to a great extent upon the co-operation between the various agencies for their successful implementation (Buhalis 2000) and the Local Authorities and Local Enterprise Companies could form an established working relationship (Greenwood, 1993, Granlund, 1991, Scottish Executive-Scottish Parliament, 1999). However, these desired levels of co-operation often prove difficult to achieve. The findings of this research support the general assumptions of established literature in that the level of co-operation in Grampian is low. A partnership between the public and the private sector is required. However these partnerships are often inadequate or even non-existent. (Lickorish, 1991). This is certainly the case in the Grampian region.

However, in Inverness and Nairn, and Ross and Cromarty, there are greater levels of co-operation exhibited in both these regions than the established literature suggests is normal for other peripheral areas. In both Inverness and Nairn, and Ross and Cromarty, 22% of the work force are employed in tourism related industries and there is an understanding and appreciation of the importance of tourism to the local economies. As a consequence respondents suggested that there are greater efforts made to co-operate in an effort to maximise the tourism potential of the regions (especially in Inverness and Nairn). This is not the case in Grampian where the levels of co-operation are considered to be low and tourism is not seen, or valued as an industry of importance to the local economy, especially in Aberdeen.

There could be moves to establish more integrated and strategic development plans by agencies and interests in tourism. (Snowdon et al, 1997, Scottish Office, 1998, Bramwell and Sharman 1999, Go and Govers 2000). This is particularly true in Grampian where respondents suggested there tended to be a lack of co-operation with little attempt to integrate developments. This lack of cohesion is exentuated by poor management practices, which have characterised the delivery of the tourism product in Grampian to date (Aberdeenshire Council, 1998).

8.12 LEADERSHIP

The problems of leadership exist on a Scottish level where the National Tourism Organisation should be the natural leaders for marketing and promoting Scottish tourism but the STB were perceived by the respondents as having little influence over tourism in the regions. Despite the fact that the number of Area Tourist Boards had been cut back to 14, respondents suggested that there is still some confusion about their place and role. There are few political strategies that apply to tourism with little lead from the top (Boulding, 1992, Robinson, 1993, Owen, 1992). At a local level the picture continues to be complicated as each town or city often have their own tourism organisation who's role will be to promote the interests of the locality by working with local providers of accommodation and tourism facilities.

The public sector in the form of the Enterprise Companies, Area Tourist Boards or the Local Authorities tend to be the natural leaders for tourism in these peripheral areas because of the reliance on the public sector in peripheral areas (Day and McLennan 2000, Smith 1998, Granlund 1991, CBI 1996). However, despite their naturally high profile in tourism developments, especially in more remote areas, and their understanding of the potential for tourism to create jobs, they are less than clear about how to encourage and direct this potential, and their lack of understanding of the industry is a barrier to its development (CBI, 1996).

The issues of a lack of co-operation and leadership have historically been a problem for Grampian. According to Tourism Focus Group (1992) the promotion bodies are currently fragmented. The City Council in Aberdeen (1997) concluded that it is strongly felt that there is a need for far greater co-operation and joint working between all the public sector tourism bodies and the tourism industry. There is no champion for tourism development.

The need for leadership is important (Bramwell and Sharman 1999, Buhalis 2000) but this is not apparent in Inverness and Nairn, or Ross and Cromarty, where the consensus is that leaders would emerge depending on the goals of the project and the interests of those involved. Achieving the end result is more important than leadership. This is not the case in Grampian. There are too many vested interests wanting to lead the developments. This lack is a problem for Grampian when the lack of leadership is combined with the lack of co-operation and integration within the region.

8.13 MARKETING

Marketing is a key issue for both individual attractions and regions alike. "Integral to effective marketing is the development of a marketing strategy and strategic framework for investment" (Aberdeenshire Council 1998, p 4). However, marketing is perceived to be a major problem in all three areas. The responsibility for marketing rests with the Area Tourist Boards and the National Tourism Organisation. Day and McLennan (2000, p 9) suggest that the ATBs "need to better understand not only their current or existing markets but also their potential markets." According to HOST (1998) despite the strong image conjured up by the name "Highlands of Scotland" the area has seen a serious decline in its main UK markets. Unfortunately for HOST (who is responsible for marketing the region) several of the respondents suggested this has been largely as a result of poor marketing. The issue of marketing is especially a problem for the more remote areas such as North and West Grampian and Easter Ross. According to the Tourism Forum Group (1992) there is a need for marketing to establish a unique identity for Grampian.

The regions of Inverness and Nairn, and Ross and Cromarty, (especially the West Coast), are not as reliant on marketing as the Grampian region. The image of the former regions off-set, to some extent the low levels of marketing. Grampian does not have a strong brand image and consequently is more reliant on the marketing efforts of the Local Tourist Board. However, each of the regions suggested that the marketing of their regions is poor (Day and McLennan 2000). The Grampian respondents and the "Others" respondents from Inverness and Nairn suggested that other regions such as the West Coast or the Central Belt tended to benefit from the marketing activities of the STB. Despite this the lesson to be drawn from regions such as the West Coast is that the marketing of these peripheral regions should build on and emphasise the regional advantages associated with each region.

8.14 IMAGE

Image is important because potential visitors to a region must base their buying decisions on mental images of the product. These images are often not objective and are often subjective in nature. Morgan and Pritchard (1998, p 44) suggest that "the ultimate purpose of image creation is to influence the buyers behaviour and manipulate demand." There is a need to develop a strong and appealing image, which needs to be supported by effective marketing structures and distribution channels.

According to the Tourism Focus Group (1992) Grampian has historically had an underdeveloped tourism image and there is an inadequate market focus and resources. Grampian has a number of important gaps, which need to be addressed in order to, provide a more attractive visitor destination. Most significant is the fact that the region has a poorly developed tourism image. This may, in part, relate to the fact that there is no single attraction that provides a focus for marketing. This is in contrast to Inverness and Nairn (the Highlands) and the West Coast who both have strong brand images based on their natural scenery and Scottish Heritage (Highlands and Islands Enterprise, 1998, Scottish Executive-Scottish Parliament, 1999).

Grampian needs to establish an image or a niche for itself. The region needs an image based on the visitor's perceptions of the area. Suggestions have long been muted concerning the possibility of focusing on the region's oil connections (Henry, 1998). A magnet attraction based on the North Sea Oil experience has been discussed and debated on many occasions and in many forums. It is the job of the tourism marketer within a region to mould and project an image. This is an area that is of particular concern to the Grampian region and is one, which has to date not, been successfully addressed. Lessons can be adapted, synthesised or a hybrid can be created from other regions, or countries that have successfully developed magnet attractions.

8.15 COMPETITION

The level of competition facing all three regions is increasing (STB, 1999). Several of the respondents suggested that their main competitors are within Scotland, in particular either the West Coast or the Inverness area. The Grampian region suffered more than the other regions because of its lack of image.

Trends amongst tourists are changing and there is a movement away from the traditional sun, sea and sand vacation towards environmental quality, unspoiled scenery and self-fulfillment. (Middleton 2000, Martin and Mason 1993). These changes provide peripheral areas such as the three case study regions the opportunity to differentiate their product and market their regions based on these changes in the market place. The trends are also towards more breaks and second holidays and these changes provide regions such as Grampian the best opportunities to take advantage of the changing customer demands. An appreciation of Scotland "the Brand" would be useful for all three regions. The emphasis needs to be on attracting tourists to Scotland and keeping domestic tourists in their own country. This is an issue for the National Tourism Organisation, the STB, however, this is an area of concern because the respondents from this research suggested that the STB had low levels of influence and high levels of dissatisfaction are attributed to the STB.

8.16 PERIPHERALITY AND PERCEPTION OF PERIPHERALITY

All three case study regions have been categorised as peripheral by the EU. Each of them are eligible for funding assistance from the European Structural funds and each of them is situated within the North Atlantic Arc which the EC has used to categorise Northern peripheral areas.

One of the main problems facing the demand for tourism in Scotland is its peripherality. In social and economic terms peripherality usually describes areas away from the centre that are considered to have a number of barriers to economic development. Scotland is peripheral to the rest of the UK in terms of remoteness from the main population centres in the Midlands and the South East of England (McLellan 1997). Peripherality is of particular concern for the remote northern regions, where the problems associated with peripherality are exacerbated by the climate. "There is a distinct tendency for the poorest regions to be located on the geographic periphery of the EC" (Armstrong and Taylor, 1993, p 276). Peripheries often do not have the power or importance of the mainstream and decisions about development in these areas are often controlled by outside interests. This is also an issue within the regions themselves where respondents in the more outlying regions have expressed concern about the concentration of power at the core in commercial centres such as Aberdeen and Inverness. The destinations at the periphery experience greater difficulties as a result of their locations, their economic structure and the rural nature of their economy.

There are also difficulties related to their over-dependence on the tourism industry, the scarcity of resources, declining populations, allied to their inability to achieve competitive advantages in other economic activities (Pearce 2000, Buhalis, 1997, Boniface, 1997, The European Directorate General XX111, 1999).

The problems of peripherality are experienced in all three case study regions but they are exacerbated by the perception of peripherality. The respondents from Inverness and Nairn, and Ross and Cromarty, saw their regions as peripheral in terms of perceptions but not necessarily in geographic terms. The respondents from Grampian viewed their region as not only geographically remote, but also as perceptually remote. These issues have been discussed by authors such as Sorenson (1997), Ahmed (1991) and Wanhill (1995 a and b) and are especially important for the region of Grampian in general, and the North and West of Grampian in particular (Henry, 1994, Fisher, 1994). The area is not only geographically isolated from the rest of Britain and Scotland but it is also perceived to be so by respondents in Grampian itself. Grampian is not only peripheral in a European and international perspective but is also internally peripheral within the UK and Scottish context.

8.17 ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

Each of the three case study regions have been categorised as peripheral and low levels of economic activity are common in peripheral areas such as these (Pearce 2000, Scottish Executive-Scottish Parliament, 1999, Scottish Office, 1998, Wanhill, 1995a and b, Henderson, 1993, Gilbert, 1989, Whitby and Powe, 1994, Lane, 1993, Bramwell, 1993, Cavaco, 1994, Baum, 1999, McLellan, 1997, Botterill et al, 1997).

The population is sparser, reflecting a greater reliance on declining industries such as agriculture and these peripheral areas also have declining rural populations, which tend to rely on marginal economic activities.

The rural nature of the local economies is a common element in the three case study regions. The regions are dominated by primary industries such as agriculture, fishing and forestry, all of which are reliant on uncontrollable variables such as the weather. This reliance on primary sector industries is one of the reasons for the involvement of the EU in these (and other) peripheral areas as they attempt to diversify away from dependence on declining industries of agriculture and fishing. It is also one of the reasons for encouraging rural tourism which according to Hoare and Connelly (2000, p 204) "involves farmers and rural people in providing a range of activities, services and amenities for tourism in an attempt to generate extra income." Each of the three case study regions requires assistance from the EU and each has problems associated with declining primary sector industries, which include difficulty in terms of a lack of investment and high overheads (The European Directorate General XX111, 1999).

According to the Scottish Office (1995) agriculture in Grampian is severely limited by the natural conditions and there is a need to consolidate basic agricultural production. The North and West of the region is dominated by a predominantly rural economy, with low levels of economic activity (McCleery, 1991). Peripheral areas often find it difficult to attract investment and jobs because of the disadvantages associated with their location such as low population density or poor infrastructure. In many cases (as is the case in the three case study regions) the decline is connected to the decline in the primary sector industries of agriculture and fishing. It is often these economic problems that lead to the focus on tourism as a means of addressing these issues. Sorenson (1999, p 22) suggests that "tourism is often seen as a panacea for such areas."

Caution has been expressed by several authors (Hovik and Heiberg, 1980, Buhalis, 1999, Cavaco, 1994, Hummelbrummer, 1993, Greffe, 1993, Claval, 1994) about becoming reliant on tourism. In the Highlands and Islands tourism assumes a greater level of importance with 20,000 workers or 13% of the work force employed directly in the industry (Scottish Office, 1998). This dependence has been highlighted by the Highlands and Islands Partnership (1998) as a particular problem for the West

Coast of Scotland where there is a heavy reliance on tourism because of the lack of other industry. Further problems associated with the tourism industry concern the nature of the employment created and the issues of seasonality and sustainable development. On the West Coast the dependence on tourism is reflected in the seasonal nature of their unemployment figures (Highlands and Islands Enterprise, 1998).

The benefits associated with economic integration associated with the EU have not been equitable. They have not been distributed evenly across all areas or regions. According to Armstrong and Taylor (19993, p 281) "benefits have been enjoyed disproportionately by core or central regions." The emphasis has been on benefits at the core as opposed to the periphery. This can be partly attributed to the fact that tourism often reinforces political, economic and cultural dependence of peripheral receiving areas (such as North and West Grampian) upon tourism sending areas at the core (such as Aberdeen or the Central Belt of Scotland).

The Government has recognised the inequities and problems associated with these regions and are attempting to address the fragile nature of these local economies (Scottish Office, 1998). However, despite the commitments from central and local governments to redress the problems associated with these peripheral areas there is still reluctance amongst the private sector to invest in these regions (especially in the Grampian region). Without private sector investment the economic regeneration of peripheral regions such as these will be difficult to achieve.

Problems associated with these often, peripheral local economies are affected by policies made at the core. Some of these policies have severe disadvantages at the periphery. For example, EU Fisheries Policy and amendments to the CAP have had severe impacts on peripheral areas such as Grampian. At the micro level the impacts of decisions made at the core (head office) also impact on the periphery. For example, the with-drawl of flights by KLM from Aberdeen to Stansted, or British Airways with-drawl of direct flights from Inverness to London Heathrow.

8.18 STRENGTH OF STERLING

None of the Grampian respondents suggested this is a problem. The reasons for the differences in responses can be attributed to two factors. Firstly, the national economic situation changed during the course of the data collection. The strength of

Sterling is not a cause for concern during the initial data collection in Grampian however, it became an issue of national concern during the cause of the data collection in the Ross and Cromarty and Inverness and Nairn case studies. Tourism in Scotland and the Highlands suffered as a result of the strong exchange rate (Day and McLennan 2000, STB, 1999). Secondly, both Ross and Cromarty and Inverness and Nairn receive considerably more international visitors (who are the group most likely to be affected by the strong currency) than does Grampian. As a consequence the issue in the former case study regions is more acute.

8.19 SEASONALITY

Tourism in peripheral areas is largely seasonal in nature resulting in a concentration of visitors at peak times of the year (Day and McLennan 2000, The European Directorate General XX111, 1999). The problems associated with seasonality are evident in all three of the case study regions and are even more marked than in Scotland as a whole (Scottish Executive-Scottish Parliament, 1999, HOST, 1997, Scottish Office, 1998). These findings are in line with the literature concerning northern peripheral regions and reflect the problems associated with Scotland in general.

The issue of seasonality is a major national, as well as international problem (Scottish Enterprise 1996, Hassan 2000). Seasonality of demand is not unique to the Scottish tourism industry but presents severe problems of under-utilisation of capacity, poor business performance, inadequate returns for investment and problems of staff recruitment. Baum (1998) suggests that northern peripheral locations (such as the case study regions) are more likely to suffer from the particular challenges associated with seasonality. The impact of seasonality can be seen to operate with especial severity in such locations.

Aberdeenshire Council (1998) and the STB (1994) also suggest that seasonality remains an issue. They suggest there is a clear need to ensure a spread of visitors throughout the season. The case study regions suffer more with the problem of seasonality, than most of the rest of Scotland, because of the area's remote northerly locations. According to HOST (1997) and Clarke (1999) the problems are very acute in the Highlands and Grampian with as much as 40% of all domestic trips taking place between July and September. This compares with the national average for Scotland of 32%.

8.20 COSTS TO VISITORS

The Grampian region in particular suffers from the same problems associated with other peripheral areas for example visitors face higher fuel costs. But the problems are exacerbated by the impact of oil on the local economy, especially around Aberdeen City. One of the most often suggested problems is the increased costs associated with getting to, and staying in, the area as a result of the oil industry pushing up the costs of accommodation and transport. These increased costs are not so evident in the Inverness region where there are several different accommodation options available for visitors. The Inverness region seems to have adapted to the demands of visitors to their region by providing services for the budget visitor as well as for the business visitor. This is not the case in Aberdeen.

8.21 OIL

In the more peripheral areas of the three case study regions the local economies still tend to be dominated by the declining industries of agriculture and fishing. As a consequence the oil industry tends to have a reduced impact in these areas (Scottish Office 1994). In contrast the city of Inverness, the region around Nigg and Invergordon and Aberdeen city benefited as a result of the business generated and oil is considered to be important for the local economy. According to Highlands and Islands Enterprise (1998) unemployment trends in the region to the north of Inverness (Nigg and Invergordon) reflect a more industrial pattern due to the influence of oil. Hotel occupancies in and around Inverness and Aberdeen cities are higher than in the rest of the regions. However, the prices charged for accommodation (especially in Aberdeen) are considered to be expensive and several of the respondents thought that the prices charged are kept artificially high as a result of the business demand generated by the oil industry. Other respondents also suggested that the local labour force had also been negatively affected by the high wages offered to staff by the oil industry.

Despite the fact that oil is important for the local economies, there are some concerns about the costs associated with the tourism product (as a result of the influence of oil) and also on the type of visitors attracted to the regions. This is certainly true in Grampian where there is a higher than national average number of tourists who are categorised as VFR (visiting friends and relatives). The concern is that although these tourists contribute to the local economies they tend to stay with their friends or relatives and as a consequence do not spend as much as those visitors who stay in commercial accommodation. In Grampian the average spend for visitors tends to be consistently lower than the national average (Clarke, 1999, Grampian Enterprise 1994, Henry 1994, STB 1994).

8.22 HOSPITALITY, SERVICE STANDARDS AND TRAINING

The standards associated with the hospitality product are rated as high on the West Coast. This is unusual, in both a peripheral and a national context and conflict with the established literature. However, the findings do support the STB (1999) contention that Scotland's greatest asset is its staff and (the former Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning) Henry McLeish's belief that quality standards have improve dramatically (Scottish Executive-Scottish Parliament, 1999). Unfortunately, this is not the case in peripheral areas in general or in the other case study regions, where the findings suggested that levels of service and hospitality are poor. It is the latter findings that support the current literature concerning the standards of hospitality provision in Scotland. These are problems for peripheral areas in general but are also problems for the three case study regions, especially Grampian. Middleton (2000, p 36) suggests that "the high costs associated with these areas means that the standards of service and value added need to offset the high costs." Unfortunately this is often not the case in relation to service standards.

The problems of poor standards of accommodation and service standards are evident in the three case study regions (with the possible exception of the West Coast) but they are not unique to the cases studied. In general the standard of accommodation and the levels of service and training in Scotland are inconsistent and often poor (Day and McLennan 2000, Go and Govers 2000, Crawshaw, 1996, Peel, 1996, Smith, 1996). According to HOST (1997) accommodation and other tourism services often fall below acceptable standards and are often expensive. Poor product standards and service levels have been highlights in other peripheral areas by commentators such as Cavaco (1994, p 140), Hummelbrunner (1993, p 3), Greffe

(1993, p 30), Dredge (1999, p 781) amongst others. They suggest that the level and quality of the local staff is often associated with a lack of adequately trained personnel and high staff turnover rates.

According to the Scottish Office the North of Scotland in general (which includes all three case study regions) requires staff training for customer care and other specialist skills, and there is a need to improve the quality and standards of accommodation, catering and facilities (1994). HOST (1997) also suggests that there are varying standards of quality and service and enhancing the skills, increasing training opportunities and improving the professional standards of those working at all levels (including management) in the tourism industry is critical (Scottish Hospitality Industry Congress 1999, Aberdeenshire Council 1998).

Baum (1997) suggests that seasonality (which is a problem for all three case study regions) is partly to blame for the poor level of hospitality and service, which are often associated with peripheral regions. The seasonal nature of the industry means there is often only limited investment and returns. The quality of product and service delivery is also variable and there is an inability of the sector to attract quality young recruits. Aberdeenshire Council suggested that given the investment that is required in terms of staff development and training, seasonal closure is liable to have a negative effect on staff recruitment and retention (1998). The Scottish Office (1998) suggested that the image of tourism is poor. A substantial part of the work-force in the tourist industry does not have any education or training related to their industry. Training is needed in areas such as customer care and economic management.

The staffing problem is exacerbated by the variable quality of service standards and the lack of investment in training by many hospitality operators and by the frequent changes of ownership, lack of capital and low profitability. This is often the case amongst the private sector in the more peripheral areas (such as North and West Grampian) where the return on investment and the margins between profit and loss are quite low (HOST 1997). Standards of service remain variable and improvements rely on a commitment to training and staff development. This has to date generally been weak in the industry. The high level of seasonal and part-time work and the generally poor employment image of tourism businesses compound this weakness.

In Inverness and Nairn the responses concerning the levels of service and hospitality are better than the Grampian responses but are not as high as the West Coast. The

Grampian region is the region that that had the most problems concerning the standard of its accommodation and the quality of its service standards. These issues remain have been a problem for some time (Clarke, 1999) and have yet to be resolved.

8.23 ATTRACTIONS

There is a move towards more environmentally based tourism activities, which is of benefit to peripheral regions in general and to the Highlands and West Coast of Scotland in particular. (Hassan 2000, Dredge 1999, Powell, 1995, Lane, 1993, ETB, 1993, Gannon, 1994, Sisman, 1990, Hummelbrunner and Miglbauer, 1994, Young, 1995, McDonald, 1987, Crouch, 1993, Cavacao, 1994, Greffe, 1993, Claval, 1994, Townsend, 1990, Muheim and Salant, 1994, Stevens, 1995, Snowdon et al, 1998, suggest that despite the disadvantages associated with these peripheral and remote areas their locations are often an advantage for tourism. The quality of the natural environment can often offset the disadvantages (Hassan 2000, Pearce 2000, Middleton 2000). This has certainly been the conclusions associated with the west Coast region of Ross and Cromarty where the respondents suggested that their region has a strong image based on its natural environment that serves to counteract the problems associated with its location.

The primary function of attractions is to "stimulate the local economy and support the local tourism industry by aiding in the dispersal of visitors throughout the region" (Aberdeenshire Council 1998, p3). The Grampian region had more problems associated with its attractions than the other two regions. Some of the respondents from Grampian suggested that the region has no magnet, no tourist focal point or event and has a poor range of wet weather facilities. Other Grampian respondents suggested that there may be too much emphasis on heritage based attractions, especially those part funded by the EU. The region has several heritage theme attractions, which do not necessarily appeal to the repeat customer or children.

The public sector tends to dominate the provision of attractions in peripheral areas although there are some commercial attractions that are run at a profit. There are many run by the National Trust and Local Authorities at a loss (ETB 1993). This presents a problem for all three areas but especially for Grampian because many of the present attractions in the region are run by bodies such as The National Trust for

Scotland. The bulk of the attractions in the Grampian region tend to have considerable Local Authority involvement. This is a cause for concern given the problems of poor quality and poor management in Local Authority run attractions in the region, which are highlights by Aberdeenshire Council (1998). The issue of Local Authority direct involvement in tourism attractions is a cause for concern, especially in Grampian where is also some concern that the current focus on heritage in the region is not the correct focus.

Heritage based projects have a different perspective than the commercial operations. They tend to see their aim as being to expose as many people as possible to their cultural heritage. Wanhill (2000) suggests that 70% of all attractions are not built for tourism purposes, for example stately homes and castles. As a consequence many of them may not be commercially viable and will be unlikely to attract private funds. These issues are of particular concern to Grampian where the region lacks the natural attractions of the other two case study regions. HOST (1997) and Aberdeenshire Council (1999) suggested that the key issues for the sector are their quality, interpretation, and financial viability. In general terms the management of attractions also needs to be improve.

These problems are exacerbated in Grampian because of the region's comparative lack of natural attractions. In Grampian the current thinking amongst the public sector is in favour of the "string of pearls" approach or a focus on a large number of small-scale attractions. However, ETB (1993) point out that there is a limit on the possible returns and attainments that can be achieved by built attractions without the assistance of a region's natural advantages. The current strategy is not working for Grampian as the year 1998/99 saw further declines in visitor numbers.

The natural attractions of the Inverness and Nairn, and Ross and Cromarty, regions are considered to be of a higher standard than the built attractions, which need to be, improved (HOST 1997). It is the natural attractions of these regions that are the major draws for visitors (Hassan 2000). According to the Scottish Office (1994) the principal attractions of the Highlands and Islands area for tourism are its scenery, wild life and open spaces. For the majority of visitors the environment is the sole purpose of their visit. This is not the case in Grampian, where few of the attractions are performing at the levels originally envisaged (Aberdeenshire Council 1998).

8.24 INFRASTRUCTURE

In common with other peripheral areas infrastructure is considered to be poor (Day and McLennan 2000). This is more of a problem for Grampian than it is for either Inverness and Nairn, or Ross and Cromarty, where the infrastructure, in some ways suited the image of their regions.

The development of good infrastructure is a critical issue in terms of developing tourism and the local economies of these peripheral regions (Robbins 2000, Dredge 1999, The European Directorate General XX111, 1999). Unfortunately, the infrastructure in all three regions is considered to be poor. This supports the literature and is a problem because of the extra costs associated with transport to these regions and their consequent reduction in competitiveness (The European Directorate General XX111, 1999). The improvement of communication and transport are vital to reduce the economic barriers imposed by the region's peripherality and insularity (Scottish Office, 1994). There is a need for government assistance in upgrading the strategic transport network in all three regions (HOST, 1997, Scottish Office, 1998, STB, 1999). The inadequacies in the transport and communications infrastructure have combined with the perception of remoteness (especially in Grampian) to limit development (Highlands and Islands Enterprise, 1998).

The problems associated with poor infrastructure are common to all three case study regions and leads to problems in trying to attract visitors to the regions (especially from the important South East of England market). One of the reasons is because tourists seldom have strong commitments to particular destinations and they are likely to be put off by the problems associated with transportation to and within remote areas (Robbins 2000, Hovik and Heiberg 1980).

8.25 SUSTAINABILITY

There is an increasing awareness of the damage done to the environment by tourism (see table 6).

Table 6: Authors commenting on the damage to the environment caused by tourism

Hassan 2000, Clancy 1999, Bridger and Luloff 1999, Day 1998, Thibal, 1996, Hunter, 1995, Slee et al, 1994, Bryden, 1995, Altman and Finlayson, 1993, Brown, 1995, Aronsson, 1993, Hunter, 1995, Lane, 1994, Travis, 1992.

As a consequence there is also an increased interest in sustainable tourism developments. In terms of the Scottish perspective there is also an increasing awareness of environmental issues and sustainable tourism developments are seen by many as the way forward for tourism in peripheral locations (Bryden, 1995).

Sustainability is rated as an issue in both Ross and Cromarty and Inverness and Nairn. However, the responses from both the Grampian and the West Coast region of Ross and Cromarty did not reflect the current literature concerning the issue of sustainability. Although the Ross and Cromarty region in general suggested sustainability is an important issue the West Coast respondents did not. This is surprising considering the region's dependence on its natural environment for tourism (see sustainability discussion in Ross and Cromarty regional findings and analysis). However, it is supported by the ETB (1999) which suggests that although there is widespread concern regarding the environment the public do not perceive tourism as being a particularly harmful industry. Day and McLennan also suggest that sustainability does not appear to be a major concern for the Scottish Parliament because "it is largely omitted from the vision for Scotland Tourism Strategy document issued by the Scottish Executive" (2000, p11).

8.26 CONCLUSIONS

Definitive conclusions cannot be drawn from the primary data generated as a result of the three case study regions alone, because, in most cases the number of respondents were insufficient, to be able to draw substantive conclusions. However, in the case of the public sector respondents the data does represent all the local public sector organisations involved in the three case study regions and, as a consequence, the data from this research could be said to be representative of the public sector respondents interviewed.

Whilst the generation of conclusions based on the primary data collected from this research was not the primary aim of the research, the data collection process did elicit considerable amounts of information concerning tourism provision in the three peripheral areas studied (especially in relation to the public sector). These findings tended to be supportive of the established literature on peripheral.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSIONS

The major objective of this study is to evaluate Causal Networks as a methodology and the value as well as the limitations of the approach in helping to elucidate the issues associated with peripheral region tourism. Complementary to this, Lesson Drawing methodology is also evaluated in terms of its effectiveness and application for tourism research. Causal Streams identified by using the Causal Network approach are used to highlight and evaluate where Lesson Drawing is applicable and where it is not. The variables identified through the application of Causal Network methodologies are used as a means of illustrating where Lesson Drawing is applicable and where it has more limited value.

9.1 CAUSAL NETWORK METHODOLOGY

9.1.1 DIAGRAMMATIC MODEL

Miles and Hubermann (1991, p 132) suggest that the Causal Network models provide a logical, transferable, flexible and comparative diagrammatic model, which clearly outlines the links between variables.

The evidence from this study suggests that to some extent this is true. If the empirical data were not consistent with either the literature or other empirical data then this would suggest that there are difficulties with the interpretation of the question or inconsistencies between the respondents' views and the established literature. For example, if marketing is rated as high and both the STB and the ATB were rated as low then there would be an inconsistency, because it is these two bodies who are responsible for marketing. Each variable links to another variable in a logical way and each variable would be a progression from one to the other.

However, there are some inconsistencies in terms of establishing definitive links between variables. The linkage between the variables is a matter of individual interpretation and in some cases can be based on subjective interpretations. For example, the variables of marketing and image are closely related and in many cases the image of a region can offset (to some extent) poor or ineffective levels of marketing. In common with many peripheral areas, some of the respondents suggested that their areas (West Coast) had a good image. The image associated with their area remained positive despite the relatively poor levels of marketing associated with HOST. Whether or not HOST did a good job of marketing is not the issue for this research; the issue is that the links between the two variables of marketing and image are not clearly defined.

In other cases such as the levels of leadership associated with a particular area, the linkages between the variables may also prove to be spurious. Respondents suggested that the low levels of co-operation associated with an area meant in some cases that the level of leadership was also going to be poor. This does not necessarily follow. Low levels of co-operation are not always going to be a pre-requisite for low levels of leadership. Indeed, some of the respondents from Ross and Cromarty suggested that leadership was good despite some low levels of co-operation.

If a variable is missing then progression to the outcome variables should not be possible or logical. However, this is an issue of concern because the variables could link to other variables in the causal Streams and effectively omit variables that are not apparent. For example, a common Stream associated with peripheral areas would be remoteness; seasonality and low visitor numbers, the linkage between the variables in the causal Stream could be represented as a Stream involving only the variables of peripherality and low visitor numbers. This does not mean to say that seasonality is not an issue for peripheral areas, indeed it is. What it does suggest though is that a peripheral area could have low visitor numbers simply because of its peripherality (which it certainly could). The issue of interest in relation to Causal Network methodology is that the variables and the Streams identified can vary and differ depending on the individual researcher, their bias and their interpretation of the same situations. As a consequence the logical flow from one variable to another may not be as apparent or as transparent as Miles and Hubermann suggest.

9.1.2 INDIVIDUAL CAUSAL NETWORK MODELS

Individual interview-based Causal Network models are constructed and these are used to construct models for cognate groups such as commercial and non-commercial and regional respondents. However, this can prove to be very time consuming and labour intensive work that in many cases can prove to have little value. During the initial stages of this research (in the Grampian case study region) each respondents interview was represented with a Causal Network model and a brief narrative. This involved transcribing the interview data twice, once in written format during the interview and a second time after the interview and into a model and narrative format. Although this served as a cross-checking device for the completeness of the data, in some cases the respondent's feedback was lost when the data was aggregated in cognate groups such as commercial and non-commercial sector respondents. As the research progressed and interviews were conducted in the second and third case study regions the practice of constructing individual Causal Network models for each of the respondents ceased.

The construction of individual respondent's Causal Network models proved to be unnecessary. It is the models for the total number of respondents that proved to be useful for cross-site comparisons between different case studies. However, it is the Causal Streams that prove to be of most value in terms of this methodology. The direct comparison of whole models does not serve to highlight the areas in which Lesson Drawing may prove to be applicable. The identification of these areas involves looking at each variable (such as visitor numbers) and examining for each case study region the Stream of variables leading to or determining that outcome. "Streams that are similar or identical across sites, and that differ in some consistent way from other Streams, can then be extracted and interpreted" (Miles and Hubermann, p 197).

9.1.3 CAUSAL STREAMS

It is the Causal Streams that are the most appropriate means of highlighting the potential for Less Drawing between the case study regions. The individual variables and Causal Network models in their entirety do not suggest where lessons could be drawn. For example, the identification of a common Steam that would be associated with peripheral areas would be the Stream that includes the variables of hospitality, service standards and training. This Stream could serve to highlight the different levels of satisfaction associated with these variables in all three case study regions. The important point is that the Models themselves will not be the same because there will always be different issues impacting on each case study region. So it is the identification of shared variables between the case study regions that is important for transferring lessons and the lessons to be learned will increase as the variables link with other variables to form a Stream that is consistent with Streams in the other case study regions.

Causal Network models may be difficult to use in research where there are significant numbers of case studies. The identification of Causal Streams becomes more difficult the larger the number of cases included in the study. In this research the three case study regions meant that identifying Causal Streams was manageable. However, as the number of models constructed increases the likelihood of comparing Streams' decreases. Indeed in this research models were constructed for each individual interview (32) during the Grampian case study. This number of models meant that identifying Streams between the models was complicated. On this basis the use of Causal Network methodology is more appropriate where the number of cases being studied are limited and their use for individual interviews was not found to be effective. It could be said that Causal Networks provide a descriptive framework for the analysis of respondent data from a discrete population (case study) where the number may be insufficient for valid statistical treatment.

9.1.4 DATA DISPLAY

Causal Networks can be an effective method of displaying data. Comparing narrative text is difficult when attempting to make direct comparisons between regions. This is especially the case in qualitative research where large quantities of narrative text are likely to be generated. A model format aids in direct comparisons and the consequent identification of similarities and differences in both variables and categories associated with these variables.

According to Miles and Hubermann (1991, p 21) "humans are not very powerful as processors of large amounts of information; the cognitive tendency is to reduce complex information into selective and simplified Gestalts or easily understood configurations." They go on to suggest that "looking at displays helps us to understand what is happening and to do something about - further analysis or action - based on that understanding. Better displays are a major avenue to qualitative analysis." The use of Causal Network models did serve to reduce the vast quantities of interview data into a model format but the models themselves can prove to be difficult to assimilate. They contain a large amount of data that includes not only the relevant variables, the linkage between them but also their relative importance or categorisation. As a consequence the models are not as easily assimilated as Miles and Hubermann suggest. However, many of the variables associated with peripheral areas such as, seasonality, rural economy, economic activity, infrastructure and image are common to other peripheral areas. As a consequence the generation of models for many peripheral regions will exhibit certain consistencies. This means that despite the difficulties associated with assimilating the large quantities of data, the models for peripheral areas are likely to have many similarities in terms of consistent Streams and variables that could make the information more easily assimilated.

However, despite the difficulties associated with interpreting and understanding the models, the generation of large amounts of difficult and unwieldy data is an issue that concerned Yin (1994, p 98). He suggested that "innovative forms of presentation should still be sought. The most desirable innovations should deal with a major disadvantage of the written case study – its bulkiness and length." Despite the problems noted above the model format associated with the Causal Network methodology could be said to be one of the advantages associated with the approach.

9.1.5 NARRATIVES

Allied to the diagrammatic advantages associated with the Causal Networks, Miles and Hubermann suggest that the format also allow for some narrative associated with the diagrams. They suggest that this extra narrative is an advantage. This is certainly true in cases where variables are dealing with relatively complex issues such as economic statistics associated with the case study regions being studied. The variable of economic activity could be better supported by the inclusion of statistical data to accompany the variable that would illustrate the differences between the peripheral areas' local economic performance. In this research each model involves a narrative that provides more detail and support information that represented the respondent's views. Miles and Hubermann suggest that this means the method used has the advantages of both narrative based text as well as the model format. They suggest that it is a unique approach that allows for comparisons of respondent's feedback in a format that is easier to assimilate than large pieces of narrative text. However, the problems associated with assimilating the large amounts of information contained in the models has been described above and these problems are increased by the fact that they are not stand-alone models and they do require some form of narrative data to support and supplement them. This serves to increase the amount of information that needs to be included and interpreted with each model. This is especially the case where detailed narrative is necessary in research that relies on depth interviews and the collection of rich data. This proved to be a difficulty in this research because of the depth of responses required from the respondents.

9.1.6 QUESTIONNAIRE FOCUS

Miles and Hubermann suggest that Causal Networks provide distinct categorisation of variables and causal inferences, associations or connections. They highlight the Causal Streams or links between the variables, which assist in the identification of linked variables that can then be used to focus and select questions to be included on the questionnaire. This means that the construction of the questionnaire is logical in its flow and progression. Variables that are linked become questions that are categorised according to their cognate groups. For example, the variables of service standards, hospitality and training became questions based on the cognate group of hospitality. Similarly the variables of co-operation and integration come under the cognate group of co-operation and peripherality. Rural economy and economic activity are grouped under peripherality. There is a logical inclusion of the related issues and variables that are associated with one another.

Although the Causal Networks can assist in the cognate groupings and the categorisation of questions for the questionnaire they do not necessarily assist in the inclusion of questions on the questionnaire. The choices of questions are dependent on the rationale for the study and the type of information that the questionnaire is attempting to elicit. *However, as the research progresses Causal Networks can assist in highlighting areas of importance that the questionnaire should be addressing.*

9.1.7 DATA REDUCTION

Miles and Hubermann (1991 p 21) suggest that Causal Network models can prove to be an effective method of categorising qualitative information into useable data, based on the ordinal scale suggested. During the interviews the respondents are encouraged to respond using this ordinal scale of low, moderate and high. One of the major problems associated with qualitative research is how to turn the data into a useable comparative format. The use of Causal Networks meant that ratings could be attributed to the respondent feedback. This rating or labelling of respondent feedback is a valuable and important component of Causal Networks. The use of gradings, or rankings associated with the ordinal scale suggested by Miles and Hubermann (low, moderate, high) does also tend to limit the response opportunities for the respondents and can also lead to a loss of the richness and detail involved in the responses. The ordinal scale only allowed for three categories of response. The options for response had to be increased during the data collection in this research because the limited response options did not allow for the adequate representation of the respondent's views.

The Causal Network variables can prove to be effective as a means of data reduction both during the interviews and also at the conclusion of the interviews in conjunction with the interview transcripts. During the interviews the respondents are asked to categorise or grade their responses using the variables and the ordinal scale suggested. The use of variables means that the respondent's feedback is related to specific questions and cognate groups. For example, questions on marketing or hospitality are asked using these specific headings and within the cognate groups associated with marketing and hospitality. Rankings or categories are assigned to the data in an effort to make the data manageable and meaningful. However, because respondent feedback is encouraged in terms that are useable within the methodology the feedback may not represent the respondent's views accurately. For example, the labelling process may not allow for the respondents to accurately express their views. For example, a variable such as sustainability may be used to represent responses such as environmental awareness, eco tourism, green tourism or environmentally friendly development.

Further examples, relating to the categorisation of respondent information, emerged with responses such as weak, poor, adequate or good that may be the chosen terms of the respondents. These responses, then, have to be interpreted and re-categorised into the low, moderate or high scale suggested by Miles and Hubermann. In many cases this should be a relatively straightforward process in that weak or poor would be represented by low and responses such as good would be represented by high. However, it is never the less an interpretation of the respondents data by the researcher in a way that may not represent the respondent's views. There are also categorisation issues relating to responses such as very good, very poor or better or improving. It is difficult to attribute meanings and values to respondent's comments without introducing value judgements based on the researcher intuitions or bias. This is certainly a weakness in the Causal Network categorisation process.

In an effort to strengthen the process the original interview questionnaire data could also be used in cases where further identification and elaboration of rankings may have been required at the later stage of drawing conclusions. This would involve comparing the original data with the Causal Network models to ensure the data is represented accurately. However, whilst the process of secondary categorisation of the data did prove to be a method of checking data for consistencies it did involve a duplication of effort. According to Miles and Hubermann (1991, p 21) "the researcher's choices of which data chunks to code, which to pull out, which patterns summarise a number of chunks, what the evolving story is, are all analytical choices. Data reduction is a form of analysis that sharpens, sorts, focuses, discards, and organises data is such a way that final conclusions can be drawn and verified." They suggest that Causal Networks are a unique and effective method of recording and reducing the large amounts of qualitative information gathered during the interviews, without losing the richness of the data.

9.1.8 AGGREGATION

However, any form of aggregation (such as this) can lead to an over simplification and a loss of representation of the respondent's views, as well as a loss of the individual richness associated with qualitative interviews. In the case of research where opinions and views of respondents are sought then there is bound to be a loss of the quality of response required. Whilst the quality may be there as a result of the interview it is likely to be lessened as the data is reduced or aggregated. The larger the number of respondents and the greater the amount of responses aggregated the greater the likelihood for a loss of richness and local applicability. This is an issue of concern because the aggregation process attempts to make issues more applicable to more cases. *Much current tourism policy (such as the EU) involves a focus on local needs* and initiatives but each of these local areas *will have individual issues and problems that* are likely to be different to other local areas. As a consequence aggregation of data serves to widen the number of responses included and comparatively weaken local applications.

9.1.9 CONTINUOUS TESTING

Miles and Hubermann also suggest that Causal Networks allow for the continuous testing and, where appropriate, the modification of models as part of the ongoing and evolving nature of the research. Miles and Huberman (1991, p130) point out that "the first attempt to take in and piece together local maps is usually jumbled and vague, and sometimes plain wrong. By the forth or fifth attempt, however, things look brighter - and clearer." However, because of the relatively subjective nature of researchers interpretations the models developed may appear logical and clear but they are still be subjective interpretations that may not be interpreted in the same way by other researchers. Indeed Miles and Huberman suggest that parts or all of the networks could be dead wrong (1991, p 142). They also state that "two analysts, working independently with the same data set, even with the same matrices and variable list, would probably not draw quite the same network. Feedback and revision may help, but essentially we are operating at a higher level of interpretative inference" (Miles and Huberman, 1991, p 140). This is a major limitation associated with the use of causal networks and the issue of replicability. The procedure appears to be more suggestive than totally objective or definitive.

They also enable conclusions to be drawn, tested and verified on an ongoing basis as other respondents data is collated. The data is continually up-dated and compared as the process evolves. They suggest that qualitative data analysis is a continuous, iterative process. According to Miles and Hubermann (1991, p 22) "from the beginning of data collection, the qualitative analyst is beginning to decide what things mean, is noting regularities, patterns, explanations, possible configurations, causal flows, and propositions." They suggest that even though final conclusions may not appear till the data collection is complete, they are often prefigured during the research.

However, there is a cause for concern in that the drawing of conclusions on an on-going basis can lead to bias in terms of subsequent data collection and respondent interviews. The issue of concern is based on the possibility of formulating conclusions before the data collection is complete and the consequent leading of respondents to support the researchers evolving theories. In this research patterns, associations, and in some cases causality, began to emerge early in the data collection. For example, as the number of responses increased patterns associated with poor levels in relation to the variables of co-operation, leadership and marketing began to emerge. It is possible that the establishment of trends such as these could be used as the basis for research in subsequent case study areas. The model developed as a result of the Grampian case study (and any other initial case study using the Causal Network models) is used in subsequent case studies (such as Inverness and Nairn and Ross and Cromarty). Although the three regions involved in this study shared many similarities associated with their location and peripherality, some of the issues and factors that were important to one region may not be issues of concern or relevance to the others. Simply by using the models developed in other cases the researcher must accept the fact that there has been some early conclusion drawing because the models are being tested or modified in another setting. This can be seen as an issue in the Causal Network method.

The Grampian region was the first region to be studied and several Causal Networks were generated as a result of the data collected from this case study. These Causal Network models were then modified and tested in the regions of Inverness and Nairn, and Ross and Cromarty. The on-going testing of the Causal Network models is part of the evolving nature of the research in that each respondent interview is a test of the model generated by the preceding interviews. Each individual respondent interview is input into a model based on their relevant cognate grouping. For example, respondents are categorised according to either their geographic location or whether they are members of the commercial sector or the non-commercial sector.

9.1.10 EVOLVING STRATEGY

The models evolved and changed as the research progressed from Grampian to Inverness and Nairn, and Ross and Cromarty. This is expected as part of the nature of the research because different issues are important to a greater or lesser degree to different respondents in different areas at different times. For example, the issues of sustainability or the strength of Sterling were not included in the Grampian case study because they were not considered to be important by the Grampian respondents. However, they were considered to be important issues in the subsequent case study regions of Inverness and Nairn, and Ross and Cromarty, and so they were included as variables. The inclusion or exclusion of variables dependent on the responses from each case study highlights the fact that the Causal Network models in each case study region are likely to be different. The models are comparative tools that should allow for cross-site comparisons. However, in cases where the issues (and consequently the variables) differ largely between cases the comparative elements associated with the models would be negated. In this research the issues and variables were broadly consistent between cases and as a consequence comparisons were applicable and appropriate. However, in cases where the variables differ markedly, the ability to compare across sites is seriously reduced and this is a serious limitation in the use of Causal Network methodology. For example, the issues concerning northern peripheral areas, such as those involved in this study, are likely to be different than some of the issues concerning southern peripheral locations such as some Greek islands or parts of Spain and Portugal.

Miles and Hubermann suggest that one of the strengths of Causal Networks is that they allow for on-going testing and development of the models. In this research the models tended to be modified and tested as the case studies progressed. There was an on-going modification to the Causal Network models as the issues and the variables changed between the case study regions from the initial Grampian case study. As each respondent's views were input into a model format the views tended to support the content and structure associated with the models. This did serve as a continuous test for the models developed and modifications to these models were on-going throughout the research. However, the changes tended to be more modifications to the existing models as opposed to fundamental changes to the content and structure. This goes someway to supporting Miles and Hubermanns contention that the method does allow for continuous testing and development.

9.1.11 IDENTIFICATION OF PROBLEMS

Causal Networks allow for the identification of problems and issues associated with tourism provision in all three case study regions. These issues and concerns often have application to other peripheral regions. The methodology should ensure that all variables and issues are included in the study and that there is a logical progression from one variable to another. "The process of drawing inferences from non-experimental data is usually one of slowly elaborating a relationship between two variables, testing that it contains no spurious component, due to the operation of a prior variable, and testing to see if one can pin down whether the cause influences the effect" (Marsh, 1989, p 235). It was partly for this purpose that Causal Networks are used in this research. For example: one of the initial models involved a causal fragment based on the sole antecedent variable of Peripherality. The Grampian respondents suggested that this left gaps in the model concerning the provision of tourism in the region. Consequently the next model reflected the views of the respondents and included the antecedent variable of tourism provision.

A further example involves the variable of oil in the Grampian case study where initially, although the links from one variable to another reflected a logical flow and progression, the outcome variables did not represent the actual situation in Grampian, as reflected in the literature search and subsequent respondent feedback. This was due to the omission of oil and its cushioning influence on the economy of the region. As a consequence the variable of oil was included in the Causal Network model for the region.

However, as the research progressed the variables included in the models became set and respondent's views tended to be input into the models using the variables already identified as opposed to including new variables that may not support the earlier models. If respondents suggested that a particular variable was not important, then it would be graded using the ordinal scales and included in the model as "low". If only one respondent suggested that an issue, such as a lack of qualifications at a senior level was a problem then that issue did become a variable on the individual respondent Causal Network model. However, it may not feature on the amalgamated models representing regional or cognate group views because it was only considered to be an issue by one respondent. So although Causal Networks may provide the opportunity for the identification of issues that are important to each respondent the individual responses and issues may get lost in the process of amalgamation. As a consequence Causal Networks may not include all responses and the use of Causal Networks may not allow for the full inclusion of respondent views and concerns.

9.1.12 COMPLETE RECORDING

The Causal Network method should allow for the complete recording of all the respondents interview data. One of the main difficulties associated with qualitative data reduction is that the methods chosen can omit some respondent feedback. Individual causal networks may contain a site, or individual, specific variable. In the process of aggregation according to Miles and Huberman (1991, p 137) these variables "will be dropped (with an explanation) from the sites at which they contribute little to the analysis." This is an issue of concern in relation to the transparency associated with the process of causal network development, because there is little guidance on the procedures relating to the appropriate dropping of these variables. As a consequence it raises questions of researcher subjectivity and individual bias and interpretation. The use of an ordinal scale during the interview stage assists in reducing what can be large amounts of qualitative data at the data collection stage. Whilst this method can result in assisting in transcribing interview data there may also be a loss of accuracy associated with this method. The ordinal scales may not represent the respondent's views and may lead the respondents to respond in a way that is suitable for the interviewer but not the interviewee.

9.1.13 ANALYSIS

Causal Networking is used for this research because of the level of analysis permitted. The construction of the Causal Networks utilises pattern matching, which involves the coding and segmentation of data, which are given labels, names or codes. (Turner, 1994, p 196). As a result of the generation of themes and configurations there is greater validity of data generation and it allows for a more inferential level of analysis. Hall and Hall (1996, p 147) suggest that "the Causal Models help us sort out our ideas logically and aids in making sense of data." For example, themes or Streams that emerge as a result of the Causal Network linkage between variables included co-operation, integration and leadership, marketing, image and competition and hospitality service standards and training. Miles and Hubermann go further and suggest that "The Causal Network is the analyst's most ambitious attempt at an integrated understanding of a site" (p 142).

Each variable is linked or associated with the other variables to form these Streams and it is the generation of these Streams that demonstrated association or causality and it is these Streams that are partly responsible for the unique approach adopted by this research. This can be attributed to the generation of groups or Streams of associated variables that serve to identify several issues as Streams of variables. This means that they can be highlighted and addressed as a Stream instead of being looked at as individual and unrelated issues or variables. For example, a lack of co-operation may be identified as a problem in an area such as Grampian but it is not generally linked or associated with the issue of leadership. In this research the respondents suggested that there is a link between the two in that a lack of co-operation can result in difficulties of leadership and poor leadership can result in problems of co-operation.

The Causal Networks highlight the links or association between variables which allows for the identification of Streams or linked variables which can be isolated for further analysis. The Streams can be used in analysis between sites and areas and, where commonalties exist, can be used for Lesson Drawing between different cases. It is the generation of the Streams that are perhaps the most effective way of identifying common problems between the locations involved in this study and also between other peripheral regions. The use of an entire Causal Network model for cross-site comparisons between the three regions and other peripheral regions is difficult because of the likely differing problems and issues between the sites. For example, issues that differed between the locations or regions in this research (and are also likely to differ from other peripheral regions) included the levels of leadership and levels associated with service standards. These Streams involve a group of three or four variables that are linked or causal in relationship. The Stream of service standards includes peripherality, hospitality, training, service standards and visitor numbers. This was a common theme in all three case study regions and could be extrapolated from the Causal Network models for direct comparisons between case studies. The direct comparison of complete models can prove to be difficult and in some cases unproductive because there may be many differing variables in each region that consequently reduce the validity of direct comparisons between sites or cases. This would not be a problem when using Streams.

However, there are some concerns about the levels of association, causality or connection associated with the development of the causal network models. In this research the association between variables was, in many cases suggested by the respondents. However, there were cases where the association or connection needed to be inferred retrospectively or as Miles and Huberman (1991, p 193) put it making "connections that seem sensible. It helps to make simplifying assumptions about what leads to what." They suggest that these connections or associations are considered legitimate and are part of the on-going process of analysis. Although Miles and Huberman support this process of inferential retrospective analysis it does leave the methodology open to criticisms in respect of introducing associations or connections that are not directly suggested by the respondents. In this research in cases where the association was inferred at a later stage the connections were based on secondary data such as minutes, archive files and printed sources as well as from other respondent's data. Whilst this system was not totally satisfactory it did provide some framework on which to proceed. The weakness with the methodology however, still persists and is related to the process of retroductive reasoning after the original data collection, in an effort to construct meaningful models. Indeed Miles and Huberman suggest that the rudiments of a cause map are that they "contain guesses about directions of influence among sets of variables. Operationally however, these are little more than informed hunches about covariation" (Miles and Huberman, 1991, p 135).

9.1.14 TRIANGULATION

The use of Causal Networks could identify problems associated with a particular site or case and the issues being studied in these cases, but the data generated in any research will be more valid if it is supported by other means or triangulation. In this research the information gathered during the primary data collection is supported by secondary data that relates to peripheral regions in general and the three case study regions in particular. The information is also supported by minutes, reports and archive material gathered during the respondent interviews. The use and access to support information such as this is an issue for this type of research. The findings have greater applicability when supported by other sources and depending on the cases being studied this may not be forthcoming. This was not the case in this research but it may be an issue for research utilising the methodologies in this research.

9.1.15 TRANSPARENCY

Causal Networks did provide an effective means of establishing a level of transparency associated with the research protocol. This was achieved by establishing a chain of evidence, linkage or association between variables. According to Yin (1994, p 98) the aim of such a chain of evidence is to "follow the derivation of any evidence from initial research questions to ultimate case study conclusions." He goes on to suggest that an external observer should be able to trace the steps in either direction, either from conclusions backwards or from questions to conclusions. However, there is some cause for concern in relation to establishing the level of transparency. According to Miles and Huberman (1991, p136) "if two variables covary and are related but seem only to have a tepid or oblique influence on one another, there is probably another, latent varaiable that needs to be invented to join the two." This causes some concern in relation to the research protocol because it involves the inclusion of a variable or a linkage between variables that may not have been mentioned by the respondent. This increases the subjectivity associated with the analysis process and means that the method is open to criticism on the grounds of attributing to respondents' variables that they may not have suggested. In this research no variables were introduced that were not suggested by the respondents but in many cases the association or linkages between the variables were inferred after the respondent interview.

Another cause for concern involves what Miles and Huberman call generating a full set of network variables. They suggest this is an exercise in brainstorming. "The idea is to list all the events, factors, outcomes and processes and so on that seem to be important, then to turn them into variables. Once a full set of variables is down, the list should be combed for redundancies and overdifferentiation" (Miles and Huberman, 1991 p 136). The suggestion is that if variables appear to be redundant or similar to other variables, then they should be combined together to form a composite variable. This may be viewed as part of the iterative process associated with the on-going analysis. However, it does involve a loss of rich data as a result of the aggregation process and again opens the method to claims of increased subjectivity and researcher interpretation. There is also little in the way of procedure or guidance as to how or when the process involved in discarding variables should be utilised. There is no real suggestion as to what the cut off points for inclusions of variables should be. This leaves the methodology open to criticisms related to replicability.

The diagrammatic and linking nature of the Causal Networks allows an observer to trace the stages in the Causal Network development. For example, the marketing variable links to the image variable which in turn links to the competition variable. The levels of marketing in a region such as Grampian are linked or associated with that region. The region may have a poor or low profile image, which makes the marketing of the region difficult. This in turn means that the level of competition facing the region is likely to be high because the regions major competitors (such as the Highlands and the West Coast) have stronger images and are therefore easier to market. A further example is the variable of peripherality, linking to rural economy, which links to economic activity. This Stream of variables is common to many peripheral regions and is common to Grampian, Inverness and Nairn, and Ross and Cromarty. They are each predominantly rural in nature and as a consequence have a relatively high degree of dependence on agriculture. This dependence on an agricultural based economy means that the level of economic activity in these regions may often be low because of the problems associated with agricultural decline in many peripheral areas.

The use of the sub-groups also assisted in establishing reliability associated with the research protocol. They served as a crosscheck for the categorisation of the respondent's data. The respondents were classified into commercial and non-commercial sectors and also by regions (either 2 or 3). The classification into commercial and non-commercial sectors is of importance to peripheral area research because the importance of the public sector tends to increase in proportion to the degree of peripherality. They were then also discussed in total in the third section of each case study. Each of the classifications would have to come to the same total (32 in Grampian, 17 in Inverness and Nairn and 19 in Ross and Cromarty). Each variable was categorised according to the ordinal scale of low, low/moderate, moderate, moderate/high and high. Each of the responses attributed to the ordinal scales had to match the number attributed to that same scale in the other sectors. For example, In Inverness and Nairn the number of respondents were 17 and the number of respondents in each of the three sectors would also need to total 17.

A variable such as private sector could be categorised as high by 5 commercial sector respondents and 6 non-commercial sector respondents and as moderate by none of the commercial sector and by 6 of the non-commercial sector, a total of 17. The regional sector responses would therefore need to match these responses for example the responses could be 7 of the Inverness respondents rating them as high and moderate by 4. The "Others" respondents could rate them as high (4) and moderate (2). The number of responses for each of the ordinal scale categories needs to match. That means there must be 11 high and 6 moderate. This would also need to match up to the responses in the total number of respondent's section, that is 11 high and 6 moderate. This would be the process for all the variables in all three case study regions.

The construction of Causal Network models was the first stage of this research. It involved using the Causal Network models in an attempt to produce an analysis of processes in a particular setting which according to Mason (1996, p 153) "demonstrate at the very least that it is possible for such processes to work in a specified way. You may try to widen the resonance of your explanation by asking questions about the lessons for other settings. This form of generalisation is therefore based on the idea that you can use your detailed and holistic explanation of one setting, or set of processes, to frame relevant questions about others." The identification of common problems associated with tourism provision in peripheral areas, such as the three case study areas is crucial because the first stage in solving any problems is the identification of the problems, or issues. Following on from this, solutions to these problems can be suggested. The identification of the problems and the transferability of the models are fundamental for the second stage of this research, which involves Lesson Drawing between peripheral regions.

As a result of using Causal Networks several models are created representing the respondent's views as to the levels of tourism provision in all three regions and using several different respondent groups. One of the aims of the Causal Network approach is to isolate causes as variables and to construct a transferable, diagrammatic and comparative model of the problems associated with tourism provision in Grampian, Ross and Cromarty and Inverness and Nairn. The use of Causal Networks involved the construction of models that were used to identify problems, and or good practice, associated with the peripheral regions involved in the research. For example, problems highlighted included the issue of seasonality, levels of leadership and perceptual problems of peripherality. Examples of good practice included the levels of co-operation in Inverness and Nairn and the standards of service on the West Coast.

The Causal Network approach is a unique way of looking at tourism and its provision. To date there has been little in the way of comparative tourism research and comparability is an integral part of tourism policy formulation and the Causal Network method developed in this research. The problems or issues associated with each region were identified using Causal Networks. The aim of the second stage of the research is to evaluate the applicability of Lesson Drawing in the three case study regions.

9.2 LESSON DRAWING: AN EVALUATION

Lesson Drawing was tested as a methodology, because it could suggest solutions to the problems of the three case study regions, highlighted using the Causal Networks. This section is concerned with whether or not lessons (projects, programmes or best practice) can be transferred from one case study region to another. The focus on the use of Lesson Drawing is primarily on its applicability and relevance to the public sector. This is because there was a focus on public sector respondents during primary data collection and also because the contingent influences involved in Lesson Drawing tend to be more applicable to the public sector, because there is a policy focus in Lesson Drawing. The variables identified using the Causal Network method are discussed and the opportunities for Lesson Drawing are evaluated.

In creating a conceptual model of how programmes deal with specific problems the Causal Network models should not describe a lesson's "attributes using words that are nation-specific. A model should be generic, specifying the basic elements in clear concepts" (Rose, 1993, p 29). In this, and in similar peripheral area research, one of the difficulties associated with Lesson Drawing is the suggestion that words should not be nation-specific. As the increasing effects of regionalism become more apparent in Europe there will be an increase in European jargon associated with the European bureaucracy. This may be a limiting factor in terms of the use and application outside of Europe and serves to limit the transferability out-with a regional context.

The starting point was to diagnose the cause of complaint, or issues of concern to the respondents in the three case study regions, through disciplined inquiry. This involved the construction of models for all three case study regions, that included all the relevant issues, or variables that were considered to be of importance to the respondents. "The meaning of variables needs to be defined subject to analysis. The stipulation of variables or concepts, particularly in the diagnosis of what the problem is and for which a solution is sought, should guide the collection of data" (Rose, 1993, p 13). This is an issue for this research and can be seen as a limitation for similar research. The issue is based on defining the original variables. In this case the Causal Network variables. A difficulty associated with research such as this that seeks to use one methodology to build on another (Lesson Drawing building on Causal Networks) is that the second methodology is limited by the success of the first. If Causal Networking was unsuccessful then the use and application of Lesson Drawing is also likely to be unsuccessful.

A major task in Lesson Drawing is to identify the contingencies that affect whether lessons can be transferred from one place to another. The fungibility or transferability of programmes is a matter of degree. In Lesson Drawing there are seven contingent influences (see research method section) and the most likely cases for Lesson Drawing would be those which shared these contingencies. The seven contingent influences are evaluated in turn.

9.2.1 THE CASES SHOULD NOT BE UNIQUE IN THEIR ELEMENTS

The greater the number of similarities that are shared between the regions the greater is the likelihood of transferring lessons between the regions. In this research cases were chosen because of their similarities to the region of Grampian. The suitability of lessons, and their level of transferability, can be gauged according to the comparability of programmes, resources, institutions or outcomes, all of which were broadly comparative between the cases chosen for this study.

However, despite the large number of similarities shared by the regions there are also differences that limit the opportunities for the transferring of lessons between the regions and this is a weakness with comparative methodologies such as Lesson Drawing. Some of the differences to emerge from this research related to the image associated with each of the regions, perceptions of the regions, the levels of leadership and co-operation, the type of tourists attracted, and the degree to which seasonality and accessibility affected the regions.

One of the difficulties associated with Lesson Drawing is the establishment of cases or boundaries that limit the research. For the successful transfer of lessons between the case study areas the boundaries limiting the areas should be as consistent as possible. Whilst the boundaries associated with this research attempted to establish similar limitations for each case study region, there were difficulties inherent in trying to do so. This is a limit for Lesson Drawing as a methodology in social science research. In social science research the boundaries are often going to be different and distinct from one another and the possibility of transferring lesson between the cases will consequently be reduced or de-valued.

The more similarities between the cases studied the greater is the possibility of transferring lessons between them. By contrast the less the similarities shared between regions the fewer the opportunities for Lesson Drawing. This is an obvious limitation in identifying suitable cases or regions in terms of applying Lesson Drawing.

9.2.2 THEY SHOULD NOT BE DEPENDENT ON THEIR DELIVERY ON INIMITABLE INSTITUTIONS

Although these arrangements are often common there are obvious differences in terms of local arrangements and local implementation strategies adopted by these institutions that tend to limit the opportunities for Lesson Drawing, and these need to be considered and contextualised when attempting to draw any lessons.

9.2.3 THE GREATER THE SIMILARITY OF RESOURCES THE MORE FUNGIBLE A PROGRAMME IS

Despite the similarities in terms of general resource allocation there are differences in terms of funding and funding cutbacks, as well as in the actual amount of money available to each region for tourism provision and the conditions placed upon financial assistance, dependent on its source.

In this research whilst there are similarities in terms of the administration of the resources there are distinct differences in the allocation of funds and the prioritisation of funds for tourism initiatives. This is always going to be an issue for Lesson-Drawing because each region will have different funding priorities based on local economic and political considerations. Even relatively small differences in the allocation of funds or resources can have major impacts on small-scale local initiatives. There will rarely be total fungibility between cases and in many cases the degree of funding will be the main limiting factor. Certainly many of the issues identified by this and other tourism research identifies the lack of funding as the single most important issue. As a consequence the issue dealing with the similarity of resources is a major obstacle to effective Lesson Drawing.

9.2.4 THE CASE SHOULD HAVE A RELATIVELY SIMPLE CAUSE-AND-EFFECT STRUCTURE

This is an area where this research fits well with Lesson Drawing. Many of the lessons to be imported or exported from within the regions do have relatively simple causes and effects. For example staff recruitment problems, although they may vary dependent on local economic circumstances, are relatively easy to identify. Related to the staff recruitment issues are the problems associated with the levels of service associated with the industry. The relatively low standards of service can be linked to the problems in recruiting the right number and quality of staff and also to the training offered to the staff. Further examples of simple cause and effect structure include seasonality of tourism in the three case study regions as a result of their northerly peripheral locations. The reluctance of the private sector to invest in some areas is also a common feature that is linked to the peripheral location of certain regions. The lack of funding associated with public sector organisations such as the Area Tourist Boards can be directly related to the cut in funds from the Local Authorities.

9.2.5 THE SCALE OF THE CHANGES SHOULD NOT BE TOO LARGE SO AS TO LIMIT IMITATION

For a lesson to be easily imported or exported the changes need to be within cost, resource, and physical constraints. If one of the regions were allocated a substantial grant for the construction of a magnet attraction then this type of replication would not be feasible for another area unless a similar grant were forthcoming. The lesson also needs to be physically possible. For example, a lesson relating to the image of one destination may be difficult export to another region that may not have the same physical or cultural assets of the exporting region. If the image is based on the natural environment then the opportunity to import such a lesson, may be limited by the natural environment of the importing region.

The stipulation regarding their size is an obvious limitation associated with Lesson Drawing. On some occasions large-scale changes may be the only way for a region to improve the problems facing them and the changes may be part of a larger scale programme or adjustment. The larger the scale of the changes, the more unlikely they are to be applicable for Lesson Drawing. This emphasis on smaller scale changes limits the use and application of the theory of Lesson Drawing, because many of the issues involved in tourism policy formulation, at national and regional levels tend to focus on larger scale developments.

9.2.6 THE GREATER THE INTER-RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DIFFERENT REGIONS THE MORE FUNGIBLE THE LESSON

The inter-relationship between the three regions is an area in which the theory of Lesson Drawing has considerable relevance to the three regions. This is especially true of the public sector involvement in the regions of Inverness and Nairn and Ross and Cromarty who are both represented by the Highland Council and the Highland of Scotland Tourist Board. However, the need for inter-relationships between importing and exporting areas is a major limitation for any comparative social science research such as Lesson Drawing. Whilst there may be areas in which lessons could be learned in the three case study areas these lessons may be limited in terms of their application to a wider audience by the needs for inter-relationship with the three case study regions. This can serve to limit Lesson Drawing to specific regions.

9.2.7 THE GREATER THE SIMILARITY BETWEEN THE PROGRAMMES AND THE POLITICAL VALUES IN BOTH THE LESSON EXPORTING AND THE LESSON IMPORTING REGIONS THE GREATER THE LIKELIHOOD OF FUNGIBILITY

This is an area in which the three regions share many similarities, especially in relation to public sector provision.

However, there are different local economic and political issues involved in the three regions and the party representing the regions in the Scottish Parliament may differ and each party (both local and national) will have different policy priorities. However, in terms of tourism the political values and the availability of public sector programmes in all three regions tend to be similar at national and regional levels. The issues tend to become more complicated at a local level where the local issues and concerns may lead to different local priorities. For example, the development of the Cairngorm Chairlift in the Cairngorms has provoked local controversy. This is an issue that is likely to limit the use and application of Lesson Drawing dependent on local (as well as national and regional) priorities and differences.

Distance is not supposed to be an obstacle or limitation to effective Lesson Drawing (Rose, 1993). However, the effects of distance are well documented in terms of peripheral areas and whilst many of these effects are common to peripheral areas on a world-wide basis many are geographically specific. In reality distance is a major obstacle to effective Lesson Drawing. It may not be the actual distance associated with the regions but it will have effects on the macro environment in which tourism operates in each specific area. For example, issues impacting on peripheral areas in the UK presently include falling visitor numbers, countryside access difficulties and the strength of the national currency. These issues may not affect other peripheral destinations in places like Canada, Australia or New Zealand. Indeed the issues impacting on these latter locations are likely to be very different. Despite the contention that distance is not an obstacle to effective Lesson Drawing, the issues associated with increasing expansion of the EU, and the increasing regional influences associated with European regionalism, mean that lessons will be more effectively drawn from areas that are geographically closer to Scotland.

It is important for this research (and any other comparative research) that the cases share as many similarities as possible. However, despite the similarities that were shared between the regions. It must be accepted that there are different issues and constraints acting upon each of the three individual case study regions. There can never be total fungibility or transferability of lessons or programmes between areas. There must always be some degree of contextualisation associated with the lessons. It is the degree of contextualisation that must be accepted as a limitation of Lesson Drawing.

There are five ways of creating these lessons copying, adaptation, making a hybrid, synthesis and inspiration.

9.2.8 COPYING

Copying is the simplest way to draw a lesson and is involves copying more or less the programme or lesson as it is in operation in the exporting region. It is the simplest and most likely form of Lesson Drawing to emulate. However, the degree to which programmes that are copied can be transferred directly to other regions is limited by the need for contextualisation. Each region will have distinct local and regional issues and factors that will impact on the effectiveness of lesson drawing. Any lesson will have to be contextualised as a result of these local issues if it is to be imported to another region and as a consequence the opportunities for copying a lesson for use in tourism research is severely limited.

It is often the impacts of enacting the lessons, such as the Fisheries Policy, as opposed to the actual copying of the lesson that will have the major implications for lesson importing regions. It is the evaluation of the impacts of lessons on receiving areas that is an issue that is not adequately dealt with by Lesson Drawing theory (see prospective evaluation). However, it is unusual for legislation at any level to be copied and enacted exactly from one area to another and the direct copying is more limited in its applicability. The use of copying as a method of Lesson Drawing tends to be more of a theoretical proposition than a practical solution.

9.2.9 ADAPTATION

Adaptation involves making adjustments to the lesson based on contextual differences associated with a programme, process or policy already in use or operation effect in another region. This is more appropriate and is consequently the most likely method to be used, and incorporated in comparative tourism research. Adaptation makes allowances for differences (such as differing institutional arrangements, different geographic attributes and accessibility and possibly differing attitudes) and rejects copying every detail of a programme. For example adapting policy and consultation forums in an attempt to improve levels of communication and co-operation or introducing marketing initiatives, which would need contextualisation as a result of transferring from one region to another. This form of Lesson Drawing is of considerably more use to tourism related research than copying. This is could be especially appropriate in areas, such as northern peripheral regions, where the degree of contextualisation could be relatively small.

9.2.10 HYBRID

A hybrid involves combining the elements of programmes from two different regions. For example, combining and transferring programmes associated with training methods or instances of institutional or administrative best practice from Ross and Cromarty and Inverness and Nairn to Grampian. A hybrid lesson based on the practice associated with the former two regions could be developed for use in the Grampian case study. This could take the form of encouraging the involvement of the private sector, involving local communities, establishing local tourism agendas and objectives, establishing and encouraging membership of tourism forums co-ordinating tourism initiatives under a nominated leader. However, the use of the hybrid is likely to be limited. It is rare and complicated to take two lessons in their entirety from two different cases and combine them together to form a lesson that could be implemented in another area that has different local issues and constraints. However, the use and application of a hybrid is likely to be considerably improved when elements of a lesson are taken and combined with other elements from another lesson to form a hybrid lesson. Such an example would be the creation of a hybrid lesson based on the variable of co-operation as identified above.

9.2.11 SYNTHESIS

Synthesis involves combining elements of a lesson from more than two different places to create a new lesson or programme. This involves the same process as in the hybrid but takes account of more cases. This would be applicable if lessons are to be imported from out-with the case study regions themselves. For example, the re-organisation associated with the STB (now called Visitscotland) provides the opportunity for lessons to be developed based on synthesis. One of the current tasks being addressed by Visitscotland is to conduct a global search for a leader for its National Tourism Organisation and to look at best practice elsewhere. However, as with a hybrid the creation of a lesson based on two or more lessons is likely to be problematical. The combination of best practice elsewhere is likely to be piece-meal instead of a truly synthesised lesson. For example, elements of best practice could be taken from National Tourism Organisations elsewhere and adapted and modified for use and application in Scotland. However, this would be a series of individual lessons as opposed to a truly synthesised lesson.

9.2.12 INSPIRATION

Inspiration involves using lessons from other regions as a stimulus for developing new or novel lessons or programmes. This is usually the most difficult method to use and is consequently the least likely to be applicable because "experience elsewhere cannot be used to evaluate an inspired programme. It is less a form of lesson-drawing than of speculation" (Rose, 1993, p 32). The first time a programme such as this is used would be the inspired programme and other programmes that followed would be copies of the original, for example Band-Aid.

This form of Lesson Drawing involves inspiration as opposed to Lesson Drawing. The very nature of inspiration means that this form of lesson is the most unlikely method to be appropriate for this and any other comparative research. Lesson Drawing involves taking a lesson from one place and transferring it to another place. Inspiration does not lend itself to this process since the nature of inspiration involves developing a new and inspired programme that has not been done before.

For practical tourism applications the use of Lesson Drawing is limited to adaptation, hybrid or synthesis. There will rarely (if ever) be total fungibility between exporting and importing regions so the possibility of copying is very limited. As discussed above the use of inspiration does not conform to the basic tenets associated with Lesson Drawing. The easiest and most likely scenario for Lesson Drawing involves adaptation. In cases where a hybrid or synthesis are used the lessons would have to involve some form of adaptation to the conditions in the lesson-importing region. As a consequence much of the theory of Lesson Drawing is limited in its application to adaptation.

9.2.13 THE APPLICABILITY OF LESSON DRAWING TO THE VARIABLES IDENTIFIED USING CAUSAL NETWORK METHODOLOGY

The Causal Network variables are described in relation to their applicability to the theory of Lesson Drawing in the table 7.

TABLE 7: THE APPLICABILITY OF LESSON DRAWING TO THE VARIABLES IDENTIFIED USING CAUSAL NETWORK METHODOLOGY

Variable	Exported from	Imported to	Lesson	How
Private sector	Inverness and Nairn and Ross and Cromarty	Grampian	Improve the level of private sector involvement	Hybrid
Others	Inverness and Nairn and Ross and Cromarty	Grampian	Increase the level of involvement of the others sector	Adaptation or a Hybrid
Funds	Inverness and Nairn	Grampian and Ross and Cromarty	Increase the level of funds available to the ATB by making LEC funding conditional on ATB membership	Adaptation
Co-operation	Inverness and Nairn	Grampian	Improve the levels of co-operation	Adaptation
Leadership	Inverness and Nairn and Ross and Cromarty	Grampian	Improve the level of private sector involvement in tourism initiatives	Hybrid
Marketing	Outside the three case study regions	All three case study regions	Improve and focus marketing initiatives	Adaptation, a Hybrid or Synthesis
Image	Inverness and Nairn and Ross and Cromarty	Grampian	Using the location as an advantage and improving or establishing an image	Adaptation, a Hybrid or Synthesis
Perception of peripherality	Inverness and Nairn and Ross and Cromarty	Grampian	Change the perception of peripherality amongst Grampian tourism providers	Adaptation or a Hybrid
Costs to visitors	Inverness and Nairn and Ross and Cromarty	Grampian	Reduce costs of accommodation and provide more services for the budget traveller	Adaptation or a Hybrid
Hospitality, service standards and training	Ross and Cromarty	Grampian	Improve the standards of service and the levels of training	Adaptation
Attractions	Inverness and Nairn and Ross and Cromarty	Grampian	Improve image and awareness of natural attractions	Adaptation or a Hybrid

In Lesson Drawing a form of prospective evaluation is needed to "estimate the consequences of adopting the lesson, drawing on empirical evidence from elsewhere, and speculating about what will happen in the future if the lesson is applied" (Rose, p

27). There are four methods of prospective evaluation involved in Lesson Drawing (see research methods)

- Comparing present performance of existing programmes with current aspirations.
- Evaluating a programme, performance or project with its past performance or trend analysis.
- Comparing existing programmes or projects in one area with what is done in another area or comparative studies.
- Evaluating current practice elsewhere in the hope that it will lead to lessons for changing the future in other comparable areas or comparative dynamics.

However, the first three methods of evaluation are not so much forms of Lesson Drawing as opposed to means of establishing the state of play of the programmes or projects. They are not methods that evaluate lessons and this is a weakness in terms of suggesting these methods as forms of prospective evaluation. Rather they establish comparative facts about performance of the issues being studied, whether it is the performance of an organisation (such as the STB) or a programme or project. The third method, comparative studies is also the only one of the three methods that actually offers the opportunity to draw lessons from one region to another. The other two methods simply establish the level of performance as opposed to offering any opportunities for Lesson Drawing.

The final method of evaluation is comparative dynamics. It is this method that appears to be the only one that involves any form of prospective evaluation as to the likely implications of importing a lesson from elsewhere. It is the only one that looks to the future in an attempt to evaluate the likely impacts of lessons. However, the estimating of consequences is an issue of concern in relation to the Lesson Drawing process. As with any form of social science recommendations there is a certain amount of speculation as to the outcomes associated with introducing lessons from elsewhere. There is no guarantee that the lessons will work as they are intended or that the outcomes will be those that are desired. Just because a programme or lesson works in one area there is no guarantee it will translate to another area. The likelihood for success is increased as the number of contingencies that are shared between the case study areas are increased. However, this does not remove the speculative aspects associated with the theory and it is an area that presents very real issues in the acceptance and application of Lesson Drawing.

Caution needs to be exercised when trying to draw lessons between regions (including the three case study regions in this study) because there is no certainty that just because a programme works in one area that it will work in another area. The European Commission Directorate General XX111 (1999, p 9) states that "although there are great similarities between the causes and consequences of problems affecting peripheral areas throughout Europe, it would be wrong to assume that the same package of measures can provide a blanket solution to all their problems." The transferability of any given programme is affected by both its "specific context as well as by generic attributes" (Rose, 1993, p 14). There will not be total fungibility between regions or programmes nor is there likely to be total blockage to transfer of lessons from one area to another.

9.3 POSSIBILITIES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

9.3.1 ISSUES IN APPLYING THE METHODOLOGIES

This research has evaluated the effectiveness of both methodologies in terms of tourism research. The methodologies developed and evaluated in this research can be used and modified for use in further research. There are certain aspects and components associated with Rose's theory of Lesson Drawing and Miles and Hagerman's Causal Network methodology, that could be modified for the most effective use of both methodologies.

Despite the limitations associated with Lesson Drawing the approach could be appropriate to most comparative social science research. It lends itself to tourism research and the establishment of circumstances in which lessons can be imported or exported between regions or countries. The seven contingent influences suggested by Rose provide a very useful framework for any further application of this methodology. They are a means to establish the likelihood of success of importing a lesson from one case study to another. The greater the similarity between the lesson importing and the lesson exporting case study region the greater is the likelihood of successful lesson transfer. The establishment of the case study boundaries is fundamental to comparative research and the more of the contingencies identified by Rose (see below) that the cases have in common the more effective will be the research. At the outset of any research using lesson drawing it is essential to ascertain the extent of the similarities between the case study regions. If there is a large degree of fungibility then the likelihood of success is considerably greater. The seven contingent influences provide a useful framework for this process.

Rose suggests that there are five ways of creating a lesson. In reality the most likely method to ensure a successful transfer of a lesson would be adaptation. This involves taking a lesson and adapting it to accommodate the differences between the case study regions. Two other options (hybrid and synthesis) although useable, are more complicated than adaptation because of the greater number of issues that need to be considered when creating these lessons.

One of the most useful components of causal network methodology is the identification of the causal streams. It is these streams that prove to be the most useful means of identifying issues and variables that can be highlighted and used for use between different case study regions. It is suggested that construction of complete models is a useful means of identifying issues within a case study but the comparison between case study regions is best done using the streams of associated variables.

The method does provide a useful and original way of categorising and displaying data. It does provide a means of reducing qualitative data into useable quantitative variables and an ordinal scale. However, there are issues associated with the aggregation of data. Aggregation of data is a problem for most social science research and this was certainly the case in this research. If the aggregation process can be reduced then the respondent data will provide more distinct feedback. In situations where causal networks are to be utilised again then the methodology would be more effective when looking at smaller scale cases where the number of respondents could be limited and the process of aggregation reduced.

The use of the ordinal scale was also relatively effective in terms of reducing qualitative data into a useable quantitative format. Miles and Hubermann suggested a scale of three, low, moderate and high. In this research the ordinal scale was enlarged to five with the inclusion of low/moderate and moderate/high. For future research the categories to be used would be dependent on the type of research but the ordinal scale could certainly be enlarged and could also be adapted to provide some more meaningful categorisations or scale.

The methodology has severe limitation in terms of its replicability. The identification of variables can lead by the researchers own bias and subjectivity and in many cases the association between the variables has to be induced retroductively. This is a weakness and means that two researchers using the same variables could develop two different models each representing the same data. This issue could be partly overcome by using a confirmatory panel or discussion between the researchers involved in the research. However, the method is still dependent on individual researchers subject knowledge, bias and interpretation. As a consequence any further use and application of causal network methodology is limited to use by one single researcher. The method does not lend itself to use by more then one researcher.

9.3.2 POSSIBLE RESEARCH THEMES

The peripheral areas in Europe consist of locations within "the Atlantic Arc running from the Outer Hebrides in Scotland through to the tip of Portugal, then along the Mediterranean, north along the Eastern European borders and then across the sparsely populated areas of Sweden and Finland" (Wanhill 1995b, p 1). "Community policies start from the assumption that programmes in effect in one country can be transferred to other member states" (Wanhill 1995a, p 70). This view of the member states of the EU as being the next most obvious choice in terms of similarity is backed up by Thibal (1994, p 6) who states that "Europe's villages and rural communities are opening up to tourism in their efforts to achieve sustainable development. This is further illustration of the natural, historical and cultural links which can draw European countries together in joint initiatives transcending beyond regional characteristics."

The three case study regions share many commonalities with other peripheral regions within the EU. The establishment of commonalities between the case study regions to be included in any future study is a crucial element in the likelihood of success of the research. Outside of the UK the degree of compatibility and transferability of this research is likely to be greater within the EU than out with the EU because of the common institutional arrangements shared by member states. Outside the UK the next most obvious regions to benefit would be peripheral areas in northern Europe.

One research theme to emerge from this research would be peripheral area research, especially within the European Union. There are many different issues involved in peripheral regions that could form a basis for further research, but the issues relating to Northern peripheral areas offer a distinct opportunity to focus on commonalities. In many cases the issues relating to Southern peripheral areas in Europe are not shared with the Northern regions. The two main reasons for this are the climatic differences and the issues of seasonality associated with their location and the perceptions of these destinations by visitors to the regions. The North is often perceived as more peripheral than the South simply because of the perceived connection between the more inclement weather. These differences offer the opportunity for further comparative research between these two distinct geographic regions.

There is a policy focus implicit in Lesson Drawing. As a consequence an obvious future research opportunity would be to further develop the approach taken by this research and conduct research into the public sector. This is an area that fits well with the methodological framework established in this research and is an area that could bring benefits to area that are lagging behind others. One case study that was suggested by several of the respondents from this research was the country of Ireland. This was because Ireland shares many of the same peripheral issues as Scotland and also because Ireland has been relatively successful in terms of recent tourism developments. It was suggested that Ireland may be able to offer the opportunity to import lessons to many other peripheral areas. As an example, there could be lessons related to the effective use of EU funding for tourism developments

Within the Northern peripheral regions possible research themes could relate to comparative research involving the regions suffering economic decline as a result of declining primary sector industries. Further research into the differences associated with agricultural decline and the decline of fishing would be appropriate within a given case study region, such as South West England, coastal areas in Scandinavia or areas in

North America such as Nova Scotia (some work has been done in this area by Baum 1999).

Comparative studies could also be conducted between inner city case studies that have suffered economic decline and regeneration. The theme could be further developed to compare regions that have been dependent on a specific single industry such as oil. As an example the region of city of Aberdeen currently has a strong dependence on oil, but there is concern about the future after oil. The region of Fort Worth in Texas has had to face up to a decline in the oil industry and may offer opportunities for lesson drawing between the two areas. In terms of international comparability "the critical step in undertaking a prospective evaluation is not learning how a foreign programme works but applying knowledge gained abroad to one's own national circumstances" (Rose, 1993, p 115).

Further comparative studies could also involve areas that have a similar dependence on tourism and leisure pursuits. Typical pursuits and regions could be skiing and alpine sports in places such as Aviemore (Scotland) and Whistler (Canada). Further examples could relate to typical sun, sea and sand destinations around the Mediterranean Sea.

Regionalism is important to peripheral regions in Europe and has changed political and economic involvement in these areas. In many cases peripheral regions will benefit from the categorisations of the European Union. In its report on tourism in the European Union the former European Commission Directorate General XX111 (1999, p 12) suggested that codes of conduct and good practice should be drawn up for the tourism industry for individual areas. They also suggested that it would be desirable to set-up a European inter-regional network to deal with and highlight common problems associated with peripheral areas (1999). Both of the suggestions provide the opportunity for the further development of the methods used in this research.

Tourism development and policy tends to focus mainly on economic issues, however other areas of concern include environmental, cultural and social issues. Whilst much of tourism policy is dominated by economic considerations the identification of specific issues such as cultural or social impacts may provide an opportunity for further developing these methods.

Changes that have occurred in relation to tourism demand include an increased interest in the environment, rural and peripheral areas, activities and individual pursuits. Research into these changes could utilise the methodologies used in this research and could indicate changes to the marketing and promotion of peripherality and peripheral areas. This approach could be usefully adopted in further research into marketing practices in different areas.

The trends associated with the increased interest on activities within the natural environment can be encouraging for peripheral regions (including the peripheral regions within Scotland). The use of Lesson Drawing in importing lessons from other regions that have adapted to these changes and trends could be another focus for future research. The obvious region to look for examples of countries that have adapted and utilised the focus on the natural environment would be the Australia and New Zealand; however, the more favourable climatic conditions in both these countries would need to be considered.

The Causal Network approach is also useful to social science researchers who are seeking to identify causes, issues or variables that are involved in a given outcome, such as, problems associated with tourism in a given region. Miles and Hubermann (1991) have used causal Networks in cross-site comparisons of health institutions and their use can be extended to other institutional comparisons and other city, regional or national issues that seek to identify causes of dissatisfaction or problems. This research points to the conclusion that the primary use of Causal Networks however, would be more appropriate in situations where the number of cases are limited. Causal Network methodology seems more appropriate to smaller-scale research projects such as public sector arrangements within a given case study region or population. The methodology could be applied for use within the private sector (such as hotel chains) but its application would be more effective in the public sector arena.

This was the first time that either of the methodologies had been used and evaluated in tourism research. As a consequence there was little in the way of guidance or assistance in the use and application of the methodologies. However, if further research were to be conducted then any future researcher would have the advantage of using and building on this research.

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APPENDIX 1

KEY INFORMANTS

These experts included:-

- a member of the research supervisory team,
- a retired head of Grampian Enterprise,
- a current tourism officer in Grampian Enterprise,
- the chairman of the Aberdeen and Grampian Tourist Board (formerly chairman of NESCOTT),
- The head of Environmental Strategy for Aberdeen City Council (who was the person responsible for the formation of the Grampian Tourism Development Task Force).

These experts provided written feedback as to the suitability of the original list, plus information on other organisations and individuals that would be useful to the research. The process was repeated in both Inverness and Nairn and Ross and Cromarty.

This form of feedback from the respondents led to the inclusion of several other important sources of information including:

- Baxters of Speyside;
- Landmark Visitor Centre at Carrbridge;
- Aden Country Park at Mintlaw (and Aberdeenshire County Council, for which the same respondent was responsible).
- The Waterside Inn at Peterhead,
- Michie's Chemist in Aberdeen,
- Aberdeen Airport
- Moray, Badenoch and Strathspey Enterprise.

APPENDIX 2

QUESTIONNNAIRE

WHERE RESPONDENTS ARE ASKED FOR A QUANTIFIED RESPONSE THE CATEGORIES OF LOW, LOW/MODERATE, MODERATE, MODERATE/HIGH AND HIGH ARE USED.

A. PERSONAL DETAILS

NAME:

POSITION:

ORGANISATION:

B. TOURISM PROVISION

How would you rate the standard of tourism provision in the region?

How many agencies/organisations are involved in tourism provision in the region?

How would you rate the influence of the following sectors over tourism provision in the region?

Private Sector -

Public Sector -

European union -

Others (pressure groups, voluntary organisations etc).

How would you rate the level of influence of each of the following?

STB -

ATB -

Scottish Enterprise -

LEC -

Highland Council -

Local Authority –

C. FUNDING

How is your organisation funded?

To what extent are your funds sufficient to implement the strategies necessary to meet your organisations objectives?

To what extent do you think the funds allocated to the public sector agencies/organisations sufficient to achieve their objectives?

D. CO-OPERATION

How would you describe the levels of co-operation amongst tourism providers in the region?

To what extent is there an integrated approach to tourism strategy developments in the region?

How would you describe the levels of leadership amongst tourism providers in the region?

E. MARKETING

Do you think that the region is marketed effectively?

If not how do you think it could be improved?

How would you describe the level of competition facing the region and who do you consider to be the region's major competitors?

F. **PERIPHERALITY**

How would you describe the geographic location of the region.

How would you describe the economy of the region?

What problems/benefits can you attribute to the region's location?

Is seasonality a problem for tourism in the region?

If so how big a problem do you think it is?

How would you describe the impact of oil on the region's economy?

G. **HOSPITALITY**

How would you describe the level and standard of the hospitality product in the region?

How would you describe the level and standard of attractions in the region?

How would you describe the standards of service and the levels of training amongst the regions attractions and hospitality operations?

How would you describe the infrastructure of the region?

H. TOURISM DEVELOPMENTS

What do you consider to be the main constraints on tourism development in the region?

How do you think these problems could be overcome?

How do you see tourism developing in the region in the future?

I. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Is there a country, region or organisation that you feel could provide lessons useful to the region?

If so who/where?

What lessons do you think could be learned?

Do you have a contact name or number?

Do you have any questions or comments you would like to make concerning any issues of importance that i may not have asked you about?

Do you have any suggestions as to who else I could contact to help me with this research?

APPENDIX 3 INVERNESS AND NAIRN MATRIX

	inv.area.la	hc	i.n.ent	hie.ent	inv.tic	host	inv.air.	snh.inv	nts.inv	t.e.p.inv	hs.fort g	nairn.tic	hhh.inv	jc.inv	ect.inv	gv.nairn	dw.kess	0	low	mod	high	0	low	mod	high	0	low	mod	high	0
TP																													
DI																													
private.sec																													
public.sec																													
EU																													
others																													
STB																													
ATB																													
SE																													
LEC																													
HC																													
LA																													
your.funds																													
pub.funds																													
co-op																													
int.app																													
leadership																													
mkt																													
comp																													
location																													
economy																													
probs/bens																													
seasonality																													
oil																													
hosp																													
att																													
service/tr																													
inf																													
constraints																													
probs																													
future																													

APPENDIX 4 ROSS AND CROMARTY MATRIX

	Rc.la	hc	race	hie.ent	Dor.tic	ull.tic	host	snh.ding	Nts.inv	Hs.fort	Ull.mus	d.hot.ross	Cal.mc.ross	Nwf.ross	e.hot.dor	Rg.hot.dor	Castle.gol	Dist.tain	0	low	mod	high	0	low	mod	high	0	low	mod	high	0
TP																															
DI																															
private.sec																															
public.sec																															
EU																															
others																															
STB																															
ATB																															
SE																															
LEC																															
HC																															
LA																															
your.funds																															
pub.funds																															
co-op																															
int.app																															
leadership																															
mkt																															
comp																															
location																															
economy																															
probs/bens																															
seasonality																															
oil																															
hosp																															
att																															
service/tr																															
inf																															
constraints																															
probs																															
future																															