Conceptual connections between the clusters are then developed, to begin to develop patterns of relationships between them. This is perhaps most clearly explained by reference to another example. **Figure 2** illustrates three closely related clusters that inform the later discussion of establishment behaviours in the second of the cases, Conference.

As more cluster connections are identified, broader patterns are established which facilitate a more holistic understanding of the situation to be developed, as shown in **Figure 3**, which provides an overview of part of such a pattern. It relates to the discussion of the Conference case, which is presented later in the paper.

Through this process, the inferences that are developed can be seen to be initially and loosely guided by theory, but have a emergent quality in relation to patterns that are derived from the data. The output from the analyses are discussed below.

FINDINGS AND INFERENCES

In this part of the article each of the two collaborations is discussed in turn. The first was a relatively discrete collaboration with a well-specified project, whereas the second was a broader, developmental network;
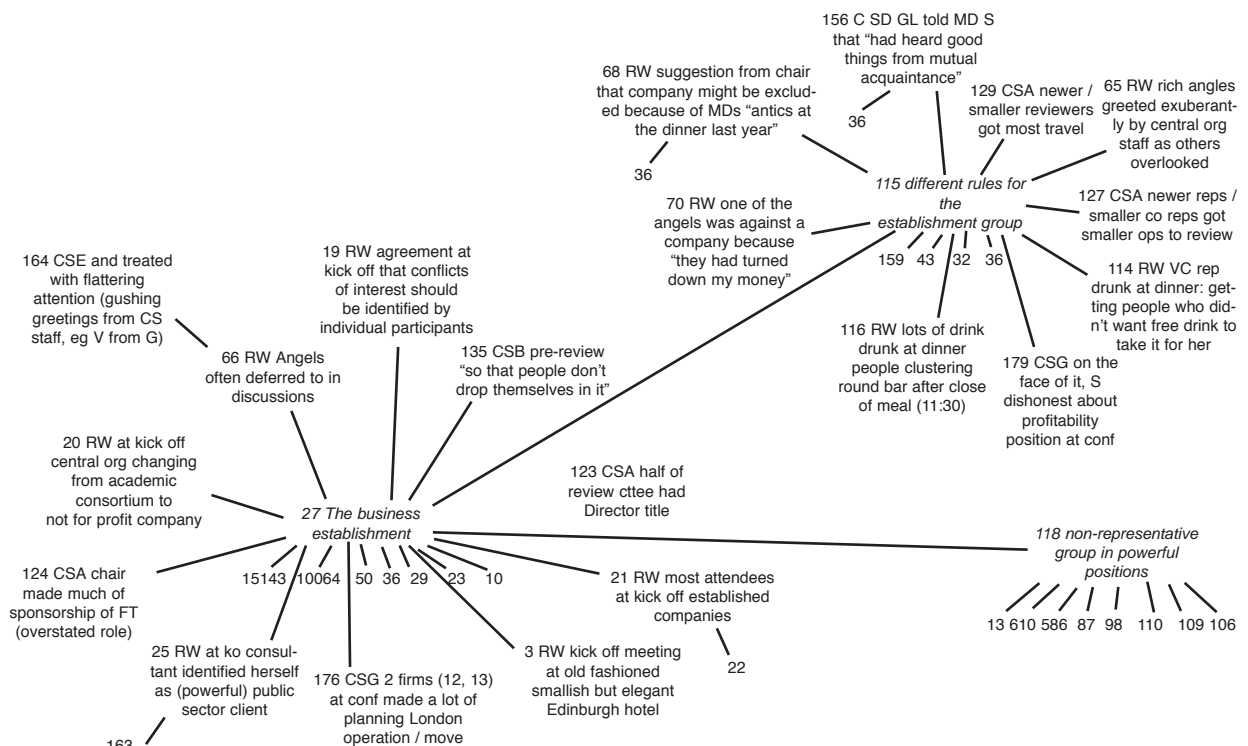

Figure 2. Example Data Clusters, Conference Case

however, both were concerned with supporting small and nascent technology businesses. For reasons of confidentiality these situations are described as Spinout and Conference in this paper. These cases are presented because they relate to the same area of practice whilst allowing us to explore differences relating to scale and complexity that give some feeling for the role of tradition in organisations and collaborations that may be more generally relevant. Here we are thinking particularly of the implications of the presence of traditions rather than the content of particular traditions or organisational contexts.

The Spinout situation was concerned with the collaboration between a commercial consultancy, a regional development agency and a small scientific service group within an academic institution, formed to investigate whether the service group could approach full commercial independence, and develop a business plan to support this. We particularly focus on elements in the data related to conflicts and differences related to identity; reflecting differences between the commercial language and orientation of the development agency, and the strong academic tradition within the scientific group.

The academic tradition of the scientific group was manifested in a number of ways, as shown in the example data cluster provided earlier as Figure 1, for example:

— a strong desire to continue to publish in academic journals (particularly expressed by senior members of the group);

— providing extensive free technical help on the telephone to third party that was known to be their only significant competitor, for the same range of very specialist services;

— expressing a wish to not formally record customer contact details, or to send marketing information to them, because they were also friends within their research networks;

—prominence given to publications and a library of academic references on the group's website, rather than to the commercial services that were provided.
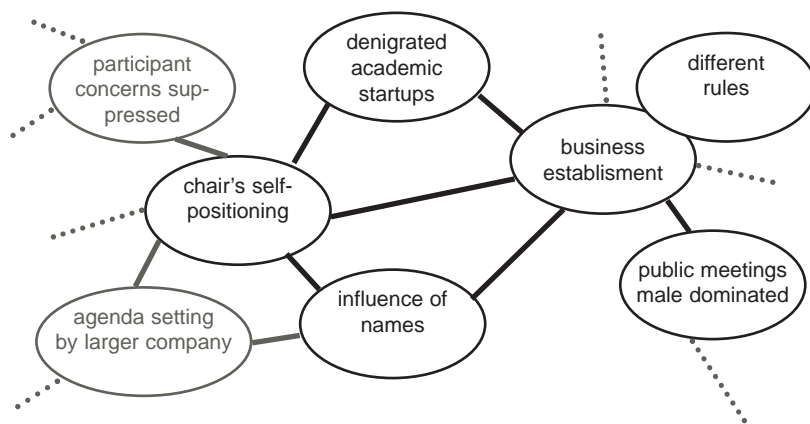

Figure 3. Emerging Pattern of Clusters, Conference Case

All of these features would not be problematic, it might be argued, were it not for the fact that the group was dependant upon commercial income for its existence, and was intended to become independent and therefore fully exposed to business risks. From the perspective of the development agency the group was unsustainable, and was not protecting its intellectual property. For the agency, this was not just a philanthropic interest —it was a government performance criteria for the agency to help develop and grow new and emerging businesses. From this we might draw two inferences: firstly, at an early stage the perspective of what the scientific group was and should be differed in relation to the views of the collaborating parties; secondly, the practices of the scientific group suggested an unchallenged continuity of reasoning from the past.

It should be stressed that the scientific group did have an excellent academic record and the team were at the time the leading specialists in their particular niche; this reasoning and academic identity could be connected to a substantial history in the field. As the project continued, there was evidence of changed views as some members of the scientific group began to take a commercial perspective in line with the development agency, whilst on the other hand some wished to re-integrate the group into its erstwhile academic parent. Some individuals seemed to become increasingly isolated, as they remained committed to what seemed to be insupportable positions. We see this polarisation as being symptomatic of the authority and non-falsifiable nature of tradition (discussed earlier); if the situation is perceived to be incompatible with the agent's tradition, it is either abandoned (for an alternative, more useful tradition?) or the individual retreats into a kind of fundamentalism —as Giddens (2002: 41) has put it, «for someone following a traditional practice, questions don't have to be asked about alternatives.»

There were also patterns in the data that suggested implicit power relations and unchallenged instances of 'domination' in the different levels of influence seemingly exerted by the two representatives of the development agency. The member most involved with the project (A) contributed throughout, and was supportively both challenged and challenging. Her colleague (B) however emerged unexpectedly at the last meeting of the collaboration, criticized liberally, sought to impose faster deadlines and specified more demanding targets —and was not challenged by the other participants. Whilst the development agency had a funding role (an obvious source of power), and this applied to A as well as B, the previous funding of the group was signed off by B, who was more senior than A.

There may also have been a gender issue; in the scientific group, all of the junior (front-line, service providing) staff were female, and the senior (advisory/consultant) staff were male —echoing the gender division in the development agency representation. However, we do not wish to assert these options as explanations, but merely to raise them as possibilities, in relation to the inferred power differences and different potential views about the reference groups connected to these differences.

The second case, Conference, involved twenty-four collaborating commercial organizations. These organizations were the sponsors of a not-for-profit company, which administered a network in which the sponsors participated. The network was intended to help emerging technology companies —startups, in the main— to prepare for engagement with commercial venture capitalists, most particularly at a major investment conference. As with the Spinout situation (above), some of the most interesting findings related to identity.

In particular the Chair of the network (and of the non-profit company sponsored by the members) was assertive and (seemingly) self-consciously businesslike; at times he ridiculed academics (as did others —he led a chorus of sniggering about a company with a university management team). This was intriguing as the non-profit company had been formed from, and was designed to support, to support a network involving universities amongst its clients and was based in a university building. Most interestingly of all, the Chair himself was an accomplished former academic, and was always dressed less formally than sponsor company representatives from large, influential firms. We suggest that this indicates a transitional situation in the chosen identity of the Chair as academic tradition is rejected in order for him to position himself within (join the sniggering chorus) of the business establishment —or perhaps (deliberately or otherwise) associate himself with the traditions of a more powerful reference group[1].

The possibility of tradition linking identity and power in this situation was also suggested by the role of names in the discussions at the meetings of the collaboration and the final investment conference; where startups had attracted interest from famous establishment individuals (either as investors or potential leading members of their management teams), the mention of these names seemed to be a justification of the strength of the startup, and rational judgements were pushed to the background. This was most strongly exemplified by a startup (K) that had gained the interest of a particularly famous name that was part of the conference buzz. The other 22 startups bidding for funds at the conference were represented by a smartly-dressed manager, making a sober presentation that concentrated on financials. A founding member in a crumpled t-shirt, making a fun presentation with no numbers at all, represented K. This had no effect on the buzz around the startup, which seemed to be on the way to becoming a name itself.

We also noted that differences in expectations of behaviour seemed to delineate the identity of a privileged class. This was most apparent in the criteria for inclusion at the conference. One startup was excluded from consideration for the conference, because of the reported bad behaviour of its manager at an earlier conference —a kind of behaviour that didn't sound very different from the exuberant drunkenness of some of the serious venture capitalists and sponsors observed at the conference dinner at the close of this research. The division in gender roles was equally stark: all the presenters, guest and dinner speakers from all of the startups at the conference were male; the only formal visible role undertaken (almost exclusively) by women was in operating the registration desk and handing out conference packs.

[1]. This connects with Weber's (1978: 246) comment that, «it is necessary for the character of charismatic authority to become radically changed. Indeed, in its pure form charismatic authority may be said to exist only in statu nascendi. It cannot remain stable, but becomes either traditionalized or rationalized, or a combination of both.»

We have only touched on parts of the data for the Conference situation, but these data are indicative of a range of other observations describing the way interactions and events proceeded in this case. The data seem to suggest the existence of a privileged establishment group; this group seems to have been able to implicitly dominate other parties with an interest in events; reserve certain behaviours to itself and govern the futures of others through the use of (and participation as) seemingly mythical names. These names in particular seemed to be given authoritative significance in judgement processes. We recognise, in the implicit domination exercised in this way by this group —which seems to be a rather loose and ill-defined network— the operation of a tradition.

To conclude the findings, we suggest that features observed in both of these two cases conform with the lines of enquiry set out in the methodology, and that traditions have been noted in apparent modes of reasoning, identity issues, power relations and the operation of authority in collaborative settings.

DISCUSSION

Huxham and Vangen (2005) describe three purposes of power: power *over* focussed on gain for the individual or organization; power to, focussed on mutual gain; power *for*, to allow others to gain. They also characterise power in terms of three asymmetries: in the resources controlled by each partner; in the value placed upon the relationships by each partner; and in the structural positions of the partners. We have discussed how tradition is manifested in issues of power and identity in the situations described earlier in this paper, and has indicated its influence in patterns of reasoning from the past. The findings also suggest the hidden presence of authority in the situations of domination that have been alluded to.

We would argue that the exercise of the power in an organization or collaboration cannot properly be understood without reference to tradition. This may particularly be the case regarding the value placed on relationships by each partner; which is fundamental to understanding the purposes for power that individuals and organizations enact in collaboration. An inability to find organizational language to describe this may leave it unaddressed and hence it may remain another irritant or inertial force upon collaboration.

There is room for extension and challenge of these findings, however. First, for collaborations involving organizations of very similar traditions, the power and identity issues might not arise (or may not arise so markedly) — or alternatively be derived from different causes. Second, there needs to be some thought about whether it is the particular agent (and/or their communities of practice [Lave and Wenger, 1991]) or the particular organization that belongs to the kinds of traditions observed; the discussion set out earlier in the article leads us to expect to encounter multiple, intertwined traditions (West-Turner, 1997, Dobel, 2001; Giddens, 2002).

Nevertheless, we would argue that while it may be difficult to identify particular traditions, the role of the tradition as —or in— processes is clearly significant in relation to the engagement of the agents in the interpretation of events and relationships. Specifically, it seems that this interaction and engagement can be considered as operating in relation to tradition in two interfacial modes, as illustrated earlier in Figure 1. Firstly, there is the moment of engagement in events, which can be construed as interpretive events: «Someone who understands is always already drawn into an event through which meaning asserts itself» (Gadamer, 1998: 490); this means that there can be no complete freedom from the prejudices —the authority of our traditions— within an individual's process of understanding. Secondly, there is the process of interaction; the encounter with others from differing perspectives in the enactment and creation of structures of collaboration, which seems to present new and challenging problems to the participants. A reflexive engagement at the structural level can therefore allow new understandings to be incorporated.

As the instances of views in transition described earlier (in the Spinout situation, particularly) suggest, this adoption of new (elements of) tradition(s) is through taking up a new vocabulary that provides more useful descriptions (or redescriptions [Rorty, 1989]) of the situation. Understanding interorganizational collaboration therefore requires an appreciation that new sets of terms can help practitioners to engage reflectively within these challenging situations and to consider that they are problematic in part, perhaps, because of their own traditions. There is a need to be able to see and reflect upon the reference groups that are important traditional resources for our assumptions and practices (Kelley, 1952; McCabe and Dutton, 1993; Jones and Ryan, 1997; Tinson and Ensor, 2001) and the conceptualizations of our (individual or organizational) identity that are affected by the ways in which we relate to these groups (Fiol and O'Connor, 2002; Hatch and Schultz, 2002).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

As Hatch and Schultz (2002) have suggested, identity rests upon both inward facing and outward facing moments of construction. We are in agreement with this analysis, and our work here suggests also that the internal dialogue of identity may be seen as interpenetrating aspects of tradition (which we use to explain the continuity of our own construction of the past into the future) and culture (which we use to explain the connectivity between our own and community understandings) —as indicated in **Figure 4**.

Our findings also suggest that this inward-facing dialogue may support or undermine collaborative, outward-facing dialogue. However, through constructing a set of terms that are immediately recognisable in events (perhaps identified in event talk), but having explanatory value in the context of structural engagement —such as the conceptual handles described by Huxham and Vangen (2004)— there is a possibility of connection, of the fusion of horizons, amongst practitioners employing these

vocabularies and hence the possibility of change. We do not argue that this redescription is of itself an overcoming of the problems associated with collaboration in general, and the role of tradition in particular; but perhaps it is a way of beginning to develop better questions.

In fact, we do not foresee or wish for any final overcoming of all tradition for others or for ourselves. As Caputo (2004: 35) has remarked: «Where would I be without my tradition? (…) I would not know what questions I would ask, or what texts I would read, in what language I would think, or in what community I could move about.»

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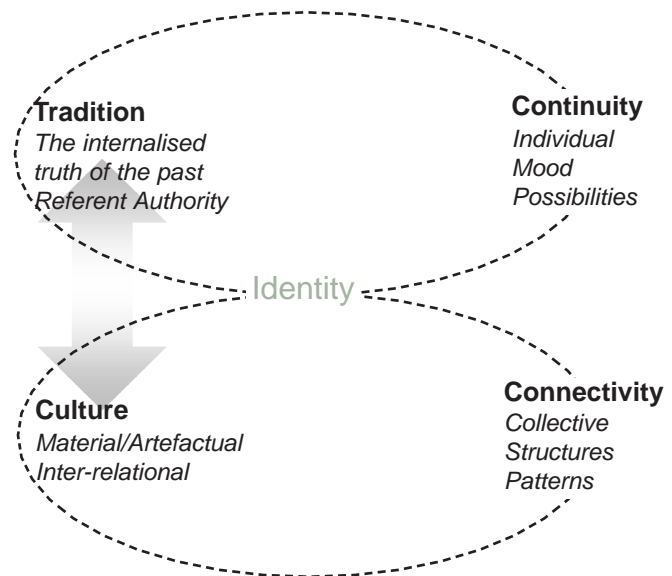
Figure 4. Internal Dialogue of Tradition, Culture, and Identity

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