

Reappraising Labour's loss of the North East elected regional assembly referendum: was the 2004 'No' vote a critical juncture in the long-term trajectory of regionalism in the North East's public administration?

Abstract: Using data collected from a series of 24 elite interviews and adopting a process-tracing methodology, this paper assesses if the 2004 rejection of an elected regional assembly acted as a critical juncture in the long-term trajectory of regionalism in the public administration of the North East. The paper finds that the 'No' vote does not appear to have acted as a critical juncture in the trajectories of the political elite's support for a functional regionalism nor in their demand for a more political regionalism. It did, however, act as a critical juncture in the trajectory of the modes that functional and political regionalism in the North East adopt, with both the emergence of a 'bottom-up' functional regionalism and the increased role of local government leaders in regional governance contingent on the 'No' vote.

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Introduction

Drawing on a series of 24 interviews conducted in early 2014 with members of the North East's political elite, this paper will explore whether—in the long-term—the 2004 referendum on creating an elected regional assembly (ERA) for the North East of England acted as a critical juncture in the institutional trajectory of regionalism in the North East's public administration. Such a reappraisal is necessary due to recent developments in the region's governance. The referendum's long-term consequences therefore must be reconsidered in the context of the Coalition Government's 'localism' and 'city-region' programmes, of the Coalition's abolition of regional institutions such as Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) and Government Offices for the Regions (GORs), and of the new institutions that have subsequently emerged in the region.

The North East is a particularly interesting case to study due to its pivotal role in English regionalism, with many prominent regionalists—such as Fawcett (1919), controversial 1960s Newcastle politician T. Dan Smith and academics within Newcastle University's influential Centre for Urban and Regional Development Studies (CURDS)—having close links with the region (CURDS, 2011; Tomaney, 2006). Not only was the North East the first and only region outside London to have been offered elected regional government, but it also has a uniquely longstanding practice of regional economic development, with regional development organisations (RDOs) having existed in the region almost continuously since 1934 due to the region's "enduring... economic underperformance" (Tomaney, 2006, pp. 158-159; Harding, Evans, Parkinson, & Garside, 1996).

Methodology

Path dependence, critical juncture and process tracing

Regionalism spans disciplinary boundaries, intersecting political science, history, economics, economic history, sociology, linguistics and geography. Whilst economists like Krugman (1991) and economic geographers like Martin and Sunley (2006) understand the trajectories of regional economies through path dependence, this paper will adopt such a historical institutionalist approach to analyse the development of regionalism in the North East's public administration, specifically using notions of path dependence and critical juncture.

It is necessary to state what path dependence entails, as despite its frequent use in analyses, "clear definitions are rare" (Pierson, 2000, p. 252). In the broadest sense of Sewell (1996, pp. 262-263)'s "eventful temporality", path dependence means that events matter: "what happened at an earlier

point in time will affect the possible outcomes of a sequence of events occurring at a later point". This, however, is a very "loose" definition and does not involve any "necessary suggestion that a particular path is difficult to exit" (Pierson, 2000, p. 252). The definition of path dependence offered by Levi (1997, p. 28) is stronger, emphasising that institutional arrangements become locked-in: "path dependence has to mean, if it is to mean anything, that once a country or region has started down a track, the costs of reversal are very high", with the "entrenchments of certain institutional arrangements obstruct[ing] an easy reversal of the initial choice". Pierson (2000, p. 252) posits an even narrower definition of path dependence, holding "increasing returns"—where "the *relative* benefits of the current activity compared with other possible options increase over time"—to be a necessary characteristic of path dependence.

There is merit in both Levi (1997)'s and Pierson (2000)'s conceptualisations; this paper will thus distinguish path dependence into 'weak' and 'strong' types. In contrast to Sewell (1996), both types consider necessary the "entrenchments of certain institutional arrangements obstruct[ing] an easy reversal of the initial choice" (Levi, 1997, p. 28). The role of 'increasing returns' differs between 'weak' and 'strong' types: 'weak' path dependence will not treat 'increasing returns' as a necessary condition, whilst 'strong' path dependence will.

This paper will place particular emphasis on the role of critical junctures in order to assess which future developments were contingent on the 'No' vote. Whilst Hogan (2006) rejects the interrelation of 'critical junctures' and contingency, this paper instead considers critical juncture and path dependence as conceptually symbiotic. Critical junctures have two necessary characteristics. Firstly, a critical juncture must be a "brief phase... [when] agents face a broader than typical range of feasible options" with "choices from these options... likely to have a significant impact on subsequent outcomes" (Capoccia & Kelemen, 2007, p. 348). Secondly, "junctures are 'critical' because they place institutional arrangements on paths or trajectories, which are then very difficult to alter" (Pierson, 2004, p. 135). This paper will accept that "change is not a necessary element of a critical juncture" (Capoccia & Kelemen, 2007, p. 348), and that a critical juncture can exist without subsequent change given that the aforementioned conditions are met.

This paper's methodology will clearly be qualitative, but will be approached systematically drawing upon a "process tracing" method of within-case analysis (Bennett, 2010; Collier, 2011; George & Bennett, 2004). Such a methodology emphasises the "sequences and mechanisms in the unfolding of hypothesized causal processes" to establish "causal direction" or, as is more relevant for this paper, whether there is a "causal chain of steps" between two correlated variables and whether other variables may have been causative (Bennett, 2010, pp. 208-209). Whilst "the issue of the

starting point of the tracing process is highly contentious” (Reilly, 2010, p. 734), this paper will trace “backwards from observed outcomes” (Bennett, 2010, p. 209) when exploring the post-referendum development of regional institutions, as tracing forwards from the 2004 referendum may prevent the identification of any potential causal mechanisms in which the ‘No’ vote was not a critical juncture.

It is particularly important to pay attention to necessary and sufficient conditions whilst process tracing (Collier, 2011). This paper will test the hypothesis: ‘that the 2004 ‘No’ vote acted as a critical juncture in the trajectory of regionalism in the North East’s public administration’. When exploring the contingency of later developments in North East regionalism on the 2004 ‘No’ vote, a positive test will—in the sense of being a “plausible” rather than “definitive” test (Bennett, 2010, p. 210)—be sufficient in demonstrating that the ‘No’ vote acted as a critical juncture. However, a negative test will not eliminate the possibility of the ‘No’ vote being a critical juncture, as there may be causal mechanisms in which it acted as a critical juncture that were not identified through this paper’s interviews and process tracing. This test in this process trace is thus sufficient but not necessary for inferring causation, rendering it a “smoking gun” test (Bennett, 2010, p. 210).

Table 10.1. Process Tracing: Four Tests for Causation^a

		Sufficient To Establish Causation ^b	
		No	Yes
Necessary To Establish Causation	No	Straw in the Wind <i>Passing</i> affirms relevance of hypothesis but does not confirm it. <i>Failing</i> suggests hypothesis may not be relevant, but does not eliminate it.	Smoking Gun <i>Passing</i> confirms hypothesis. <i>Failing</i> does not eliminate it.
	Yes	Hoop <i>Passing</i> affirms relevance of hypothesis but does not confirm it. <i>Failing</i> eliminates it.	Doubly Decisive <i>Passing</i> confirms hypothesis and eliminates others. <i>Failing</i> eliminates it.

^a The typology creates a new, two-dimensional framing of the alternative tests originally formulated by Van Evera (1997: 31–32).

^b In this figure, “establishing causation,” as well as “confirming” or “eliminating” an hypothesis, obviously does not involve a *definitive* test. Rather, as with any causal inference, qualitative or quantitative, it is a *plausible* test in the framework of (a) this particular method of inference and (b) a specific data set.

Figure 1: table from Bennett (2010, p. 210)

Elite interviews

Whilst George and Bennett (2004) primarily focus on documentary evidence, Tansey (2007) argues that elite interviewing also provides detailed data in which processes can be traced. From a process tracing perspective, for this paper, elite interviews have three potential uses: to “corroborate what has been established from other sources”, to “establish what a set of people think”, and to “reconstruct an event or set of events” (Tansey, 2007, p. 766). Fourthly, elite interviews can allow for “inferences [to be made] about a larger population’s characteristics/decisions” (Tansey, 2007, p. 766). This paper, however, will not seek to use interviews for the latter purpose, as interviewees were sampled non-probabilistically and are thus not necessarily representative of the wider regional non-political elite or population.

24 semi-structured elite interviews with North East politicians were conducted for this paper, each lasting an average of 20 minutes. A semi-structured format was adopted to balance the need for a degree of consistency with the need for dynamism, with interviewees able “to talk freely, without the constraint of having to answer according to fixed categories” (Tansey, 2007, p. 766). To facilitate an examination of the effects of the ‘No’ vote, four key themes were addressed in all interviews. Interviewees were asked about their stance and personal involvement during the referendum in 2004; their views on the accountability and control of (sub-)regional economic development bodies; their preferred tier of administration for the exercise of strategic functions; and their views on the broader constitutional situation in the UK, particularly now Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish devolution exists.

Interviews were requested from all Members of Parliament (MPs), Members of European Parliament (MEPs), council leaders, directly-elected Mayors, and Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) within the region, as well as from a political party regional officer and a number of members of the House of Lords with an interest in the North East (see Figure 2). Whilst it may appear to be a limitation that other elites were not interviewed for this paper, this was the result of a conscious decision to seek a non-probabilistic sample, as championed by Tansey (2007). Whilst selection bias naturally remains a risk, the decision to target senior politicians was made as politicians are particularly likely to provide rich data, having often had a key role in both the referendum campaign, which—for example—politically-restricted bureaucrats would lack, and in actual decision-making about subsequent institutional change.

	Potential interviewees contacted				
	Lab.	Con.	LD	Ind.	Total
MPs	25	2	2		29
MEPs	1	1	1		3
Council leaders	10				10
Directly-elected Mayors	1			1	2
PCCs	3				3
Members of the House of Lords	4	1	2		7
Party officers			1		1
Total	44	4	6	1	55

Figure 2: summary of interview requests.

24 interviews were successfully arranged. With express consent, 21 interviews were recorded, and all interviews were conducted on an “un-attributable” basis (Pierce, 2008, p. 120), with the source of any quotes not personally identifiable, permitting free and frank responses.

	Interviews conducted				
	Lab.	Con.	LD	Ind.	Total
MPs	11	1			12
MEPs		1	1		2
Council leaders	4				4
Directly-elected Mayors					0
PCCs	1				1
Members of the House of Lords	2	1	1		4
Party officers			1		1
Total	18	3	3	0	24

Figure 3: interviews conducted

Regions, regionalisms and regionalisation reviewed

Literature on regionalism tends towards under-definition, with terms “mean[ing] different things to different people” (Harding et al., 1996, p. 5). It is therefore important to define terminology.

The most vital concept to define is the 'region'. Whilst the 'region' "implies a division of government" (Harvie, 1994, p. 10) intermediating local and national polities, "regions, like nations, are constructs" with varying degrees of cohesion (Stevens & Wright, 2002, p. 1). In some parts of Europe such as Catalonia and Bavaria (Stevens & Wright, 2002), the 'region' can be conceptualised through historical (ethno-)linguistic identity, either with or without "national pretensions" (Keating, 1998, p. 110). Elsewhere, as in Nord-Pas-de-Calais, regions are better characterised through their political institutions, around which communities of identity have formed (Keating, 1998; Stevens & Wright, 2002). Keating (1998, p. 110) also offers a third type, to which he considers many English regions to belong, where regions are merely "administrative" and "have not succeeded in forging a sense of community". There is considerable intra-national variation in the characterisation of regions. In France, Brittany—as a *région* with a distinct ethno-linguistic identity (Keating, 1998; Schrijver, 2004; Stevens & Wright, 2002)—constitutes an example of the first type, whilst others like Centre have a much weaker regional identity (Schrijver, 2004) and thus constitute an example of either the second or third types. Similarly, in England, though not a standard region for statistical purposes, Cornwall exhibits characteristics akin to the first type of region due to its Celtic identity (Willett & Giovannini, 2013), whilst other regions such as the South East represent the third type of region, with one interviewee arguing "[when you get down... into the South East, the concept of regions is much, much more difficult](#)" (Lib Dem interviewee, 2014).

In addition to there being three types of 'region', there are three regionalisms: "functional", "political" and "new" (Keating, 2006). Where regional institutions are organised around elite "policy communities, including some actors, excluding others", and are designed around "specific policies and tasks", a "functional regionalism" exists (Keating, 2006, pp. 143-144). Whilst functional regionalism does not necessarily precede 'political' regionalism, with Germany and Spain—for example—adopting a political regionalism in the aftermath of fascism without a prior functional regionalism (Keating, 2006), there is "a tendency for... [functional regionalism] to lead to [political regionalism]" (Keating, 2006, p. 144). Where such a "political regionalism" prevails, regional institutions are "based on communities of identity and principles of [elected] self-government", with a "broad", not specific, "functional remit" (Keating, 2006, p. 144). In addition, Keating (2006, p. 149) also outlines a "new regionalism", in which "*culture* has emerged as a key element" with a particular emphasis on historic identity.

This paper will focus on political and functional regionalisms, as these are much more pertinent in an English context than new regionalism. Whilst Tomaney (1999) seeks to construct English regions as historically deep-rooted cultural spaces, such attempts to "search for cultural traits that can serve as a unifying theme... sometimes verge on the comical", longing for a non-existent "pre-industrial age

of social integration... skipping the conflicts of industrialism and mining” (Keating, 2006, p. 155). Indeed, in England, and the North East specifically, “there is... no rooting in a rediscovered past”, with ‘new’ regionalism only relevant insofar as “the fact that the absence of a distinct regional culture is being debated” (Keating, 2006, p. 155).

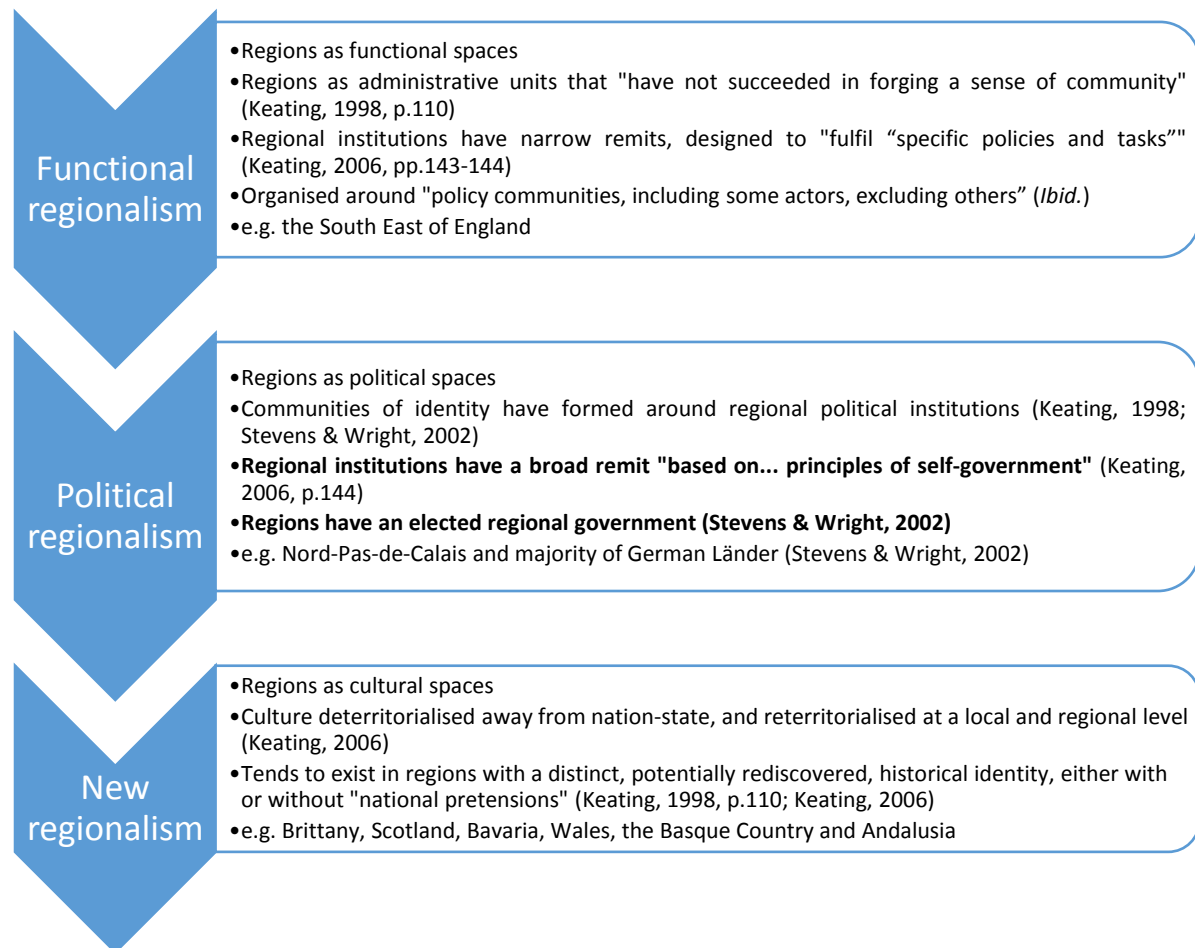


Figure 4: summary of forms of regionalism (Keating, 1998, 2006; Stevens & Wright, 2002)

Importantly, ‘regionalism’ does not equate to ‘regionalisation’. Stevens and Wright (2002, p. 2) perceive ‘regionalism’ as being *bottom-up*, emerging from “mores from below,” in contrast to a *top-down* ‘regionalisation’ “imposed” by and “emanat[ing] from government”. However, Harding et al. (1996, pp. 6-7) instead treat ‘regionalism’ as referring to a “state of mind which sometimes becomes an organising principle”. ‘Regionalisation’, on the other hand, means “any of the processes by which regional autonomy is enhanced”, whether that is through “decentralisation... from the national level”, centralisation “from [the] sub-regional or local level, or the creation of “extra [regional] decision-making capacity” (Harding et al., 1996, pp. 6-7). For consistency and simplicity, this paper will agree with Harding et al. (1996, pp. 6-7); ‘regionalism’ is a “state of mind” characterised by a

belief in the merits of regional structures, whilst ‘regionalisation’ is the process of creating, enhancing or empowering them.

New Labour’s plans for political regionalism

In order to understand the extent to which the ‘No’ vote acted as a critical juncture, it is important to comprehend New Labour’s objectives in seeking ERAs, particularly as these were never fully “clear” (Jeffery, 2009, p. 16). Jeffery (2009) highlights at least four distinct purposes in Labour’s regional policy that emerged around “two independent ‘tracks’” formed during New Labour’s time in opposition in 1995-6 (Harrison, 2006, p. 936). These tracks simultaneously sought “decentralisation, bringing policies closer to the people” and “the “rebuilding [of] accountability” (Harrison, 2006, p. 936).

The first of these “tracks” is “Prescott’s Regional Economics” (Harrison, 2006, p. 936). Whilst Prescott later championed democratic regional structures, in opposition and Labour’s first term, he advocated a more functional regionalism by championing “English regionalism in its *economic* sense” (Harrison, 2006, p. 936). A key purpose of this was an “agenda of regional competitiveness”, with RDAs and regional policy seen as “key instruments” in reducing economic disparities between the North and South of England (Jeffery, 2009, p. 17). The other closely-related objective of this track was “an agenda of economies of scale” (Jeffery, 2009, pp. 17-17), with New Labour believing these—particularly for strategic functions—were maximised at a regional level.

The second of these “tracks” is “[Jack] Straw’s Regional Democracy” (Harrison, 2006, p. 936), a track which sought to introduce a distinctly political regionalism. This track proposed a “two-stage process” (Mawson, 1998, p. 167): firstly the “formation of [unelected] Regional Chambers” to institutionalise and structure “the plethora of pre-existing groupings already operating within the regions”, and secondly, the “establishment... in the future... of directly elected regional assemblies in those regions where [there was] public demand” (Harrison, 2006, p. 936). Straw’s support—as the Shadow Home Secretary—for this ‘regional democracy’ was based on his belief that it would solve two problems: the lack of “regional democratic accountability... of institutions of regional governance” (Jeffery, 2009, p. 17) and the role of sub-national governance in England given “the broader commitments towards Celtic devolution” (Harrison, 2006, p. 936). This paper focuses on the former of these problems, as the latter was not a key theme for Labour in government, with “questions of constitutional balance... never a strong theme in government policy” (Jeffery, 2009, p. 17).

Except in London, where the Greater London Authority (GLA) was created, New Labour's first term saw Prescott's economically-focussed English regionalism predominate, with the "privileging of economic regionalisation over democratic regionalism" (Harrison, 2006, p. 937). Tony Blair and Gordon Brown saw regional policy primarily in terms of 'Regional Economics', and did not envisage regional devolution beyond functional RDAs (Harrison, 2006). Indeed, the failure "to implement Straw's proposed democratic model mark[ed] only one of two election pledges that the Labour Party failed to address in their first term" (Harrison, 2006, p. 936).

The creation of RDAs such as ONE North East posed a "major political headache" for New Labour, as they added to the regional "democratic deficit" (Harrison, 2006, p. 938), contrary to Labour's aim of "bring[ing] institutions of regional governance... within a framework of regional democratic accountability" (Jeffery, 2009, p. 17). Whilst unelected Regional Chambers¹ established during Labour's first term attempted to "inject a degree of associational democracy in the English regions" (Harrison, 2006, p. 938), several interviewees shared Bradbury (2008, p. 14)'s view that these were the "weakest part of a structure of regional governance" (Bradbury, 2008, p. 14). Despite the existence of Regional Chambers, most interviewees felt RDAs lacked sufficient accountability to—and legitimisation by—regions themselves:

"[ONE North East was] accountable in the sense it had an accountability structure set up by government... [but] ONE North East was never accountable to the local area... it never had the democratic legitimacy that those of us in favour of a Yes vote were arguing for." (Labour interviewee, 2014)

This theme—and the broader 'track' of 'Regional Democracy'—became increasingly prominent after the 2001 General Election, growing intertwined with John Prescott's 'Regional Economics'. Prescott came to believe "ERAs were a necessary condition for pursuing the agenda" of regional economic competitiveness and were the best way in which to "realise economies of scale" (Jeffery, 2009, pp. 17-18). ERAs were thus intended to allow the integration of 'Regional Economics' and 'Regional Democracy', permitting the formation of an over-arching "coherent regional policy" (Harrison, 2006, p. 939). However, four Labour interviewees and Jeffery (2009) reported that this attitude was not held by other senior members of the Government, who instead shared Harding et al. (1996, p. 65)'s

¹ In this paper, 'Regional Chamber' refers to an unelected chamber, 'North East Assembly' refers to the North East's Regional Chamber, whilst 'assembly' (n.b. lack of capitalisation) or 'ERA' refers to proposed elected regional assemblies.

view that there was no convincing “economic case for [elected] regional government”, with one Labour interviewee stating: “Tony [Blair] wasn’t in favour of the whole region thing” (Labour interviewee, 2014).

The absence of consensus within central government over the purposes and merits of ERAs led to them receiving only “modest” proposed functions (Jeffery, 2009, p. 13). The fact that neither Blair nor Brown avidly supported the policy allowed Whitehall’s “‘bureau-shaping’ instincts (James, 1995)” (Jeffery, 2009, p. 16) to go unchecked, with central Departments successfully resisting devolution of their functions to ERAs. Instead, the *Your Region, Your Choice* white paper stated that powers were not to be transferred generally from the centre to the region, but from various bodies “already operating in the region” (Cabinet Office & DTLR, Local Government and the Regions, 2002, p. 34). One Labour interviewee stated:

“We as a party simply didn’t commit to it [the ERA project]. I think we left John Prescott out on his own, with no backing, and with no results” (Labour interviewee, 2014)

Whilst ERAs were to “have policy responsibilities in...: economic development; planning; housing; transport; culture (arts, tourism and sport); public health; rural policy; environment; and civil contingency planning” (Jeffery, 2009, p. 12) and fire and rescue services (Harding, Coombes, Jeffery, & Tomaney, 2006)², ERAs’ actual proposed powers within these fields were negligible. Thus in the North East, the ERA would have ‘executive’ responsibility for only 2.2% of the region’s total public expenditure and ‘influence’ as a stakeholder over only a further 3.2%³. Even in the areas in which ERAs were to have ‘executive’ responsibility, their powers were indirect, epitomising a “strategic government... about setting agendas and defining objectives” (Jeffery, 2009, p. 12) with delivery left to separate or arms-length agencies. Furthermore, as a consequence of this lack of central support for the policy, there was a “peculiar randomness” (Sandford, 2004, p. 8) in ERAs’ proposed functions. This is exemplified through the plans to give ERAs responsibility over fire and rescue, despite fire services having “no link whatsoever with the rest of the proposed functions” (Sandford, 2004, p. 8). Whilst such seemingly superfluous functions were proposed, strategically vital ones—such as meaningful transport powers, as one senior Labour interviewee noted—were absent.

² See Appendix 4 for a detailed list of proposed functions.

³ Percentages exclude fire service expenditure and are for year 2001-2. Calculated using Cabinet Office and DTLR (2002, p. 44) estimates and calculations by HM Treasury and ONS (2007, p. 114) of total identifiable expenditure in the North East.

The referendum reviewed

In the months leading up to 4 November 2004, the Labour Government took these proposals to voters in the North East. Those voters, on a 47% turnout in an all-postal ballot, decisively rejected an ERA, with 78% voting ‘No’. Voters in the Tees Valley and Tyne and Wear were asked one question: “should there be an elected assembly for the North East region?” (Electoral Commission, 2005, p. 16). Voters in County Durham and Northumberland were asked a further question, about how—in the event of a ‘Yes’ vote in the ERA referendum—local government should be reorganised in their county. It was initially intended that referendums would subsequently be held in the North West and Yorkshire & Humber, but these plans were abandoned shortly after the North East ‘No’ vote (HC Deb, 8 November 2004, c587-9; Tickell, John, & Musson, 2005).

	Number of electors ⁴	Valid votes (valid % turnout)	Yes (% Yes)	No (% No)
Should there be an elected assembly for the North East region?	1,899,742	893,829 (47.1%)	197,310 (22.1%)	696,519 (77.9%)

Figure 5: North East-wide results of the ERA referendum (Electoral Commission, 2005, p. 10; Norton, 2008, p. 461; Sandford, 2009b, p. 193)

		Number of electors	Valid votes (valid % turnout)	Option A - unitary county	Option B - 2-3 unitary districts
Which of the following options for single tier local government do you prefer?	County Durham	388,233	176,199 (45.4%)	89,149 (50.6%)	87,050 (49.4%)
	Northumberland	243,009	117,700 (48.4%)	51,560 (43.8%)	66,140 (56.2%)

Figure 6: Results of referendums in County Durham and Northumberland on unitary authority configuration (Electoral Commission, 2005, p. 10; Norton, 2008, pp. 462-463; Sandford, 2009b, p. 194)

With Labour backing the ‘Yes’ campaign (Denver, 2005), its failure was described as “an unmitigated disaster for the [then Labour] government” (Tickell et al., 2005, p. 488). As late as 2003, opinion polls showed over 70% support for an ERA (ICM Research, 2003), and—during the referendum itself—the ‘Yes’ side outspent ‘No’ campaigners by 158% (see Figure 7). This rapid reversal in public opinion,

and the success of the 'No' campaign against a better-resourced 'Yes' campaign, led to the result being somewhat unexpected, particularly in its magnitude, with one Labour MP describing it as a “[reality check](#)” (Labour interviewee, 2014).

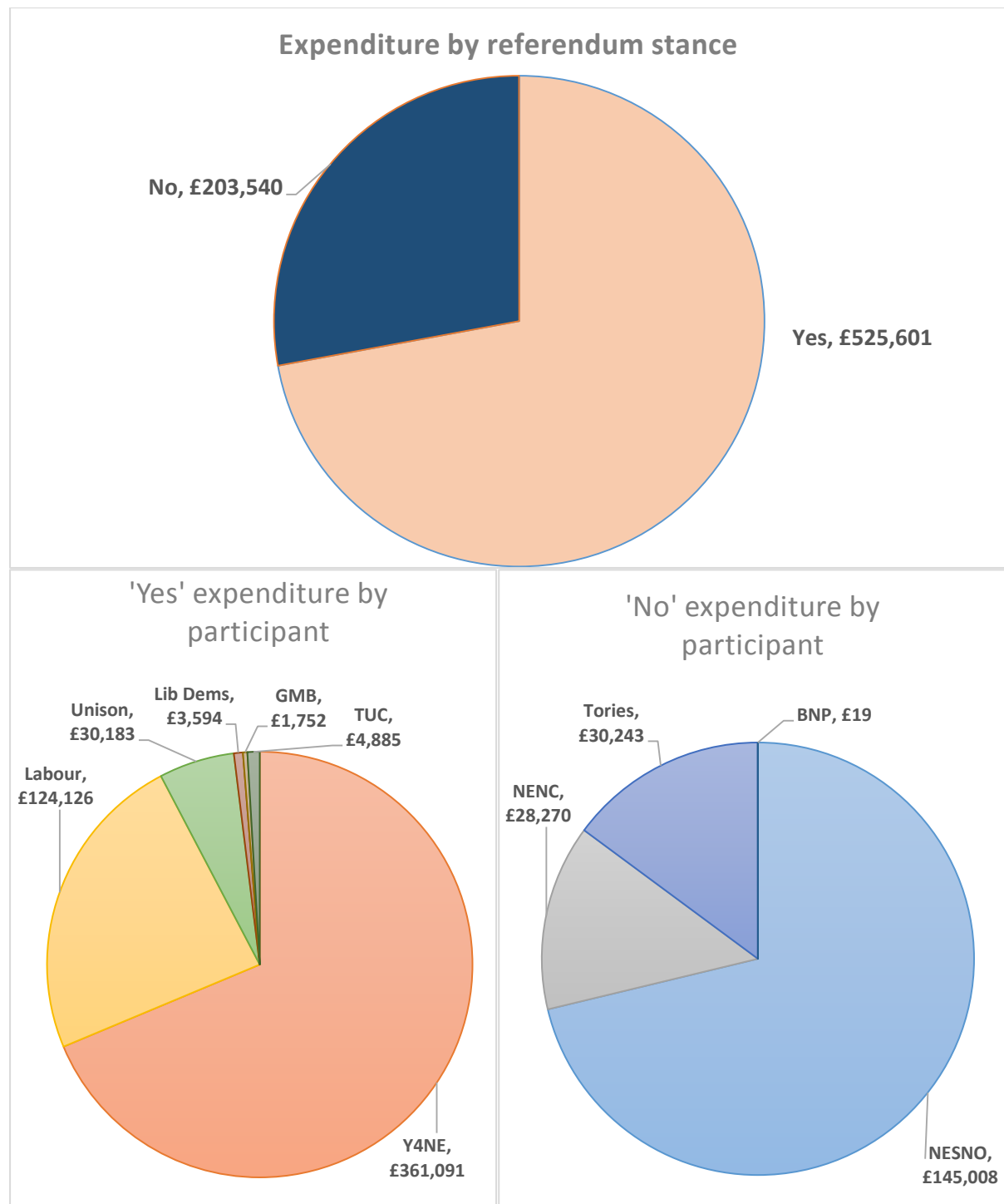


Figure 7: expenditure by referendum participant. Data from Electoral Commission (2005)

Whilst this paper does not start its process trace at the hypothesised critical juncture, it is nevertheless vital to understand what occurred at that point of time, so as to contextualise later

developments. Thus, six potential explanatory factors as to why the North East said ‘no’ will be briefly outlined: concerns over powers and costs (Rallings & Thrasher, 2006); the tactics of the NESNO and Y4NE campaigns (Musson, John, & Tickell, 2009; Tickell et al., 2005); the ‘elite’ focus of the ‘Yes’ (Willett & Giovannini, 2013); concerns over consequent local government reform; intra-regional tensions (Rallings & Thrasher, 2009; Shaw & Robinson, 2007); and the relative unpopularity by 2004 of Blair’s government.

Referendum on an Elected Regional Assembly

This ballot paper is beige

You can help to decide whether there should be an elected assembly in the North East region.
If an elected assembly is to be established, it is intended that:

- the elected assembly would be responsible for a range of activities currently carried out mainly by central government bodies, including regional economic development; and
- local government would be reorganised into a single tier in those parts of the region that currently have both county and district councils.

Should there be an elected assembly for the North East region?

Vote (X) for one option only

Yes	
No	

YOUR VOTE IS PERSONAL
COMPLETE IT YOURSELF AND IN PRIVATE

Figure 8: ballot paper sent to all North East electors. (Electoral Commission, 2012)

The proposed ERA’s lack of powers and the closely-related fears over costs are a recurring explanation for the ‘No’ vote (Interviews, 2014; Musson et al., 2009; Jeffery, 2009; Rallings & Thrasher, 2005, 2006, 2009). One Conservative interviewee claimed they opposed the creation of the ERA due to its “**miniscule**” powers, believing the costs exceeded any benefit “**in creating another tier of elected government**” (Conservative interviewee, 2014). A Labour interviewee expressed a similar view, holding the weak powers in 2002 white paper as the death knell for ERAs:

"The referendum was lost not in November 2004, but in May 2002, when the Government published the Your Region, Your Choice paper." (Labour interviewee, 2014)

With the proposed ERA not to be directly involved in service delivery, and with its intended role largely only consultative, voters perceived it “as being ‘just another expensive talking shop’” (Rallings & Thrasher, 2006, p. 234). Although some ERA advocates sought to portray a ‘Yes’ vote as the “the

first step” towards greater devolution (Musson et al., 2009, p. 78), this was an incoherent case of “jam not even tomorrow, but the day after tomorrow” (Labour interviewee, 2014), further confusing the ‘Yes’ campaign’s overall message (Shaw, Robinson, Davidson, & Hopwood, 2006).

Whilst Rallings and Thrasher (2006, p. 934) dismiss the ERA’s lack of proposed powers as an explanation for its rejection, noting that, in their sample, “only 3% of actual or putative ‘No’ voters spontaneously mentioned a ‘lack of power’ as the reason for their decision”, a more nuanced interpretation of their data suggests this is an overly simplistic conclusion. Rallings and Thrasher (2009, p. 68) find that a belief that an ERA would be a “waste of money” was significant in voting decisions at the 0.01 level, and—amongst the six potential explanatory factors they explore—had considerably the largest odds-ratio coefficient (15.0). However, contrary to Rallings and Thrasher (2006, 2009)’s implication, concerns over costs and powers are in fact interrelated. NESNO, for example, chose to juxtapose the lack of ERAs’ powers with its supposed costs (see Figure 9), with their campaign adopting “an anti-politician stance to **stress the expense** of paying the salaries of 25 assembly staff who... would be **powerless**” (Werbner, 2004)⁴. Whilst it is possible that greater powers may not have been sufficient in overcoming concerns about cost, Rallings and Thrasher (2009) err in implying that salient and significant concerns about an ERA being a ‘waste of money’ relate solely to costs, when realistically this represents a conclusion reached by voters after a cost-benefit analysis, with any benefit minimal due to the ERA’s relative impotence.

⁴ Emphasis added.

REGIONAL ASSEMBLY – AN EXPENSIVE TALKING SHOP

- **NO POWER** to create jobs
- **NO POWER** to improve healthcare
- **NO POWER** to improve our schools
- **NO POWER** to make our streets safer
- **NO POWER** to upgrade the A1

What an Assembly will do:

- **PAY BIG SALARIES TO POLITICIANS.** In Scotland each gets £49,315, in Wales each gets £43,283 and in London each gets £45,000 – AND add-on the cost of their pensions and expenses.
- **PUT UP COUNCIL TAX.** We will have to pay.
- **BUILD ITSELF A NEW PALACE.** The new Scottish Parliament cost £431 MILLION (the politicians said it would cost £43 million).

Who benefits?

- Politicians
- Spin doctors
- Cronies

Who loses out?

YOU
THE TAXPAYER

POLITICIANS TALK – WE PAY
YOU HAVE A CHANCE TO SAY
‘NO’
VOTE NO

For more details call FREEPHONE 0800 107 0304

Promoted by Philip Cummings on behalf of North East Says No Ltd, both of Owengate House, Owengate, Durham DH1 3JB, and printed by Metromail, Whitehouse Park, Peterlee, County Durham SR8 2RT

Figure 9: NESNO mailshot sent to households throughout the North East, reproduced from Norton (2008, p. 312)

Another key explanation was the sheer effectiveness of the NESNO campaign. “In referendums, campaigns are central to the outcome and are often seen as more important than those run in ordinary partisan or candidate elections” (Knock, 2006, p. 688). NESNO’s campaign was perceived as strong by even its opponents:

“I think the No campaign was clear, I think it was simple, and I think it was effective.”
(Labour interviewee, 2014)

The “campaign stunts” (Denver, 2005, p. 2) employed by NESNO, such as its use of a giant inflatable white elephant to represent concerns about the cost and powers of the ERA, are widely noted in literature (Denver, 2005; Game, 2005; Knock, 2006; Norton, 2008; Rallings & Thrasher, 2005) and were held as efficient by interviewees:

"I knew we lost on the day the inflatable white elephant appeared on Palace Green [in Durham City]" (Labour interviewee, 2014)

These stunts attracted a “great deal of publicity from the regional media” (Musson et al., 2009, p. 78), with the message of the ‘No’ campaign being “hard-hitting, [and] media-friendly” (Musson et al., 2009, p. 80). In contrast, NESNO referendum agent Norton (2008, p. 470) asks “where was the Yes Campaign’s equivalent of the NESNO White Elephant?” The ‘stunts’ attempted by Y4NE, such as describing their “NESNO counterparts as ‘RATS...[:] Rather Arrogant Toff Southerners’” (Knock, 2006, p. 690), were not memorable, having not been referred to by interviewees, and were held by Denver (2005), Rallings and Thrasher (2006) and Knock (2006) as actually counterproductive.

A closely related explanation was the perception that “[pro-ERA] regional campaigns were predominantly elite-led and had little connection to the concerns of the general public” (Sandford, 2009a, p. 26). Whilst the Campaign for a Northern Assembly (CNA)—founded in 1991—attempted to be a grassroots organisation (Sandford, 2009a), their “strong bottom-up approach to regionalism... came to a halt soon after 1997 general election, as a sister movement gained predominance in the North-East” (Willett & Giovannini, 2013, p. 9). This sister movement, the North East Constitutional Convention, eschewed the grassroots-orientated approach championed by the CNA, choosing to focus on “signing up MPs and regional elites to the idea of an elected assembly” (Sandford, 2009a, p. 33). Y4NE followed a similar approach to the NECC, prioritising “endorsements from trusted individuals” (Denver, 2005, p. 9). This elite focus led to a “gap” (Labour interviewee, 2014) between the ‘Yes’ campaign and the public, resulting in a campaign that **“operated onto a different level as us... they treated it as a foregone conclusion, but couldn’t articulate a vision for normal people”** (Labour interviewee, 2014).

Sandford (2009a, p. 26) argues that the elite-driven and top-down nature of the campaign for an ERA may have led to a Eurosceptic opposition “in some quarters” (Sandford, 2009a, p. 26), particularly from the fringe NENC led by ‘metric martyr’ Neil Herron (North East No Campaign, 2004; Norton, 2008). Whilst this may have been an issue for a small minority of voters, and despite one interviewee arguing that Conservatives treated regionalism as **“synonymous”** with the EU (Labour interviewee, 2014), the majority of interviews and Norton (2008)’s account suggest that Eurosceptic

concerns were peripheral, with the majority of the ‘No’ campaign—NESNO and the Conservatives—largely not intertwining the issues.

Three interviewees raised the inclusion of a proposed local government reorganisation into the ERA referendum as a potential explanatory factor for the ‘No’ vote (Labour interviewees, 2014; Lib Dem interviewee, 2014). Contingent on a ‘Yes’ vote, County Durham and Northumberland would have been reorganised into unitary authorities. In addition to the ERA referendum, voters in County Durham and Northumberland also voted simultaneously on the configuration of these unitary authorities, with an example County Durham ballot paper shown in Figure 10. In neither County Durham or Northumberland was the retention of the pre-existing district councils an option in the event of a ‘Yes’ vote; three interviewees argued this decreased the likelihood of a ‘Yes’ vote.

“There was great dissatisfaction about the idea of losing district councils, particularly in the more rural parts of Northumberland. Berwick is about 55 miles away from Morpeth, and the idea that all local government was going to go 55 miles away was an absolute anathema to them.” (Lib Dem interviewee, 2014)

However, it is not empirically evident that this hindered the ‘Yes’ campaign. On the contrary, the ‘Yes’ vote-shares in both County Durham and Northumberland were higher than the regional average (see Figure 11 and Appendix 4), and Rallings and Thrasher (2009, pp. 57-58) find in their regression analysis a statistically significant positive relationship between a district facing reorganisation and the ‘Yes’ vote-share in that district. Thus, it may have actually helped, with voters potentially accepting the Government’s case that **“In order to make the argument that we weren’t going to increase cost of politics, we were going to reduce the number of councils”** (Labour interviewee, 2014), despite Leach (2009, pp. 9-10) finding that this argument is “not justified by evidence”. Similarly, there is no evidence to suggest it “confused people” (Interviewee, 2005, quoted in Musson et al., 2009, p. 86); if it had, it would be reasonable to expect a depressed turn-out, yet Rallings and Thrasher (2009) find no such relationship. Councillors, however, **“had their fiefdoms and they wanted to keep them”** (Labour interviewee, 2014). The maximum adverse effect of the proposed local government reorganisation, though difficult to quantify, was that it may have distracted some “Labour activists away from the main fight over the Assembly” (Norton, 2008, p. 466),

Referendum on Options for Single Tier Local Government

This ballot paper is lilac

If an elected assembly is established for the North East region, it is intended that local government will be reorganised into a single tier in those parts of the region that currently have both county and district councils.

Your part of the region currently has both county and district councils. You can help to decide how local authorities in your part of the region will be reorganised into a single tier. There will be no such reorganisation if an elected assembly is not established.

Which of the following options for single tier local government do you prefer?

Vote (X) for one option only

Option A	One single tier local authority (see map for Option A)	
Option B	Three single tier local authorities (see map for Option B)	

YOUR VOTE IS PERSONAL
COMPLETE IT YOURSELF AND IN PRIVATE

Figure 10: additional ballot paper sent to electors in County Durham. (Electoral Commission, 2012)

Intra-regional tensions were an additional potential reason for the scale of the defeat (Interviews, 2014; Rallings & Thrasher, 2009). Several interviewees stated there was particular hostility to the ERA in the “**extremities**” (Labour interviewee, 2014) of the region—the Tees Valley and Northumberland—suggesting those areas felt that they were Tyne and Wear’s “**poor relations**” (Labour interviewee, 2014). Whilst opposition was greater than the regional average in north Northumberland, the county’s overall ‘Yes’ vote (23.0%) was marginally higher than the regional average (22.1%); each district in the Tees Valley, however, had a ‘Yes’ vote-share considerably lower than the regional average.

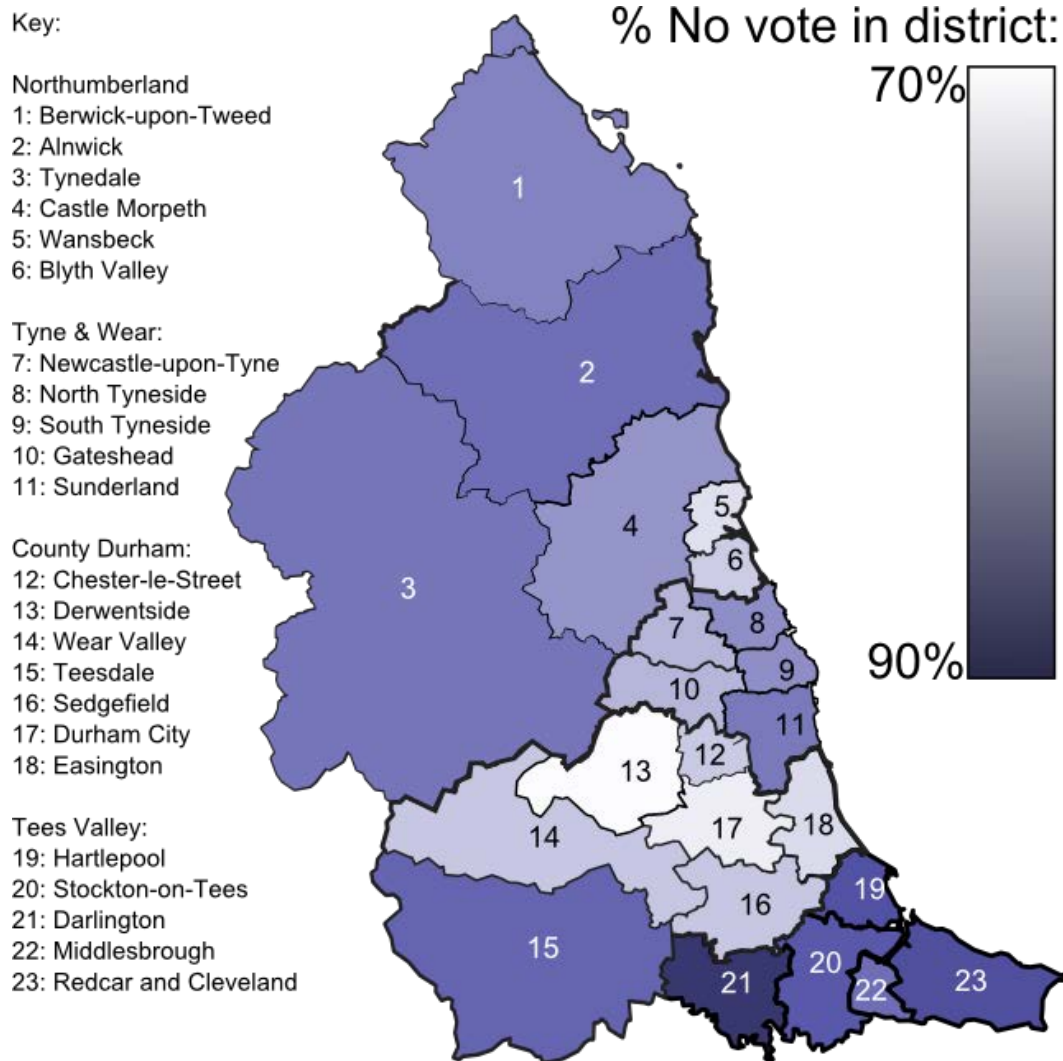


Figure 11: choropleth map of % 'No' vote by district.

There are numerous potential causes for this sentiment in the Tees Valley. In addition to fears that an ERA would have neglected the Tees Valley, this particular hostility may be “**partly historical**” (Lib Dem interviewee, 2014) due to a traditional association with Yorkshire, or more functional, with the Tees Valley potentially constituting a separate “**functional economic area**” (Labour interviewee, 2014). Regardless of why this sentiment exists, it was effectively used by the NESNO campaign:

“They took their argument to play the South of the region off against the North. There's a strong UDI [unilateral declaration of independence] spirit on Teesside. The 'No' campaign played that very well.” (Conservative interviewee, 2014)

Whilst this antipathy from the Tees Valley was clearly significant in the magnitude of the defeat (Rallings & Thrasher, 2009), it was unlikely to have been pivotal in the overall outcome. Although the five Tees local authorities were particularly opposed to the proposals, all districts in the region

decisively rejected an ERA, with the highest 'Yes' vote-share of any district being a mere 29.8% in Derwentside (Sandford, 2009b, p. 198).

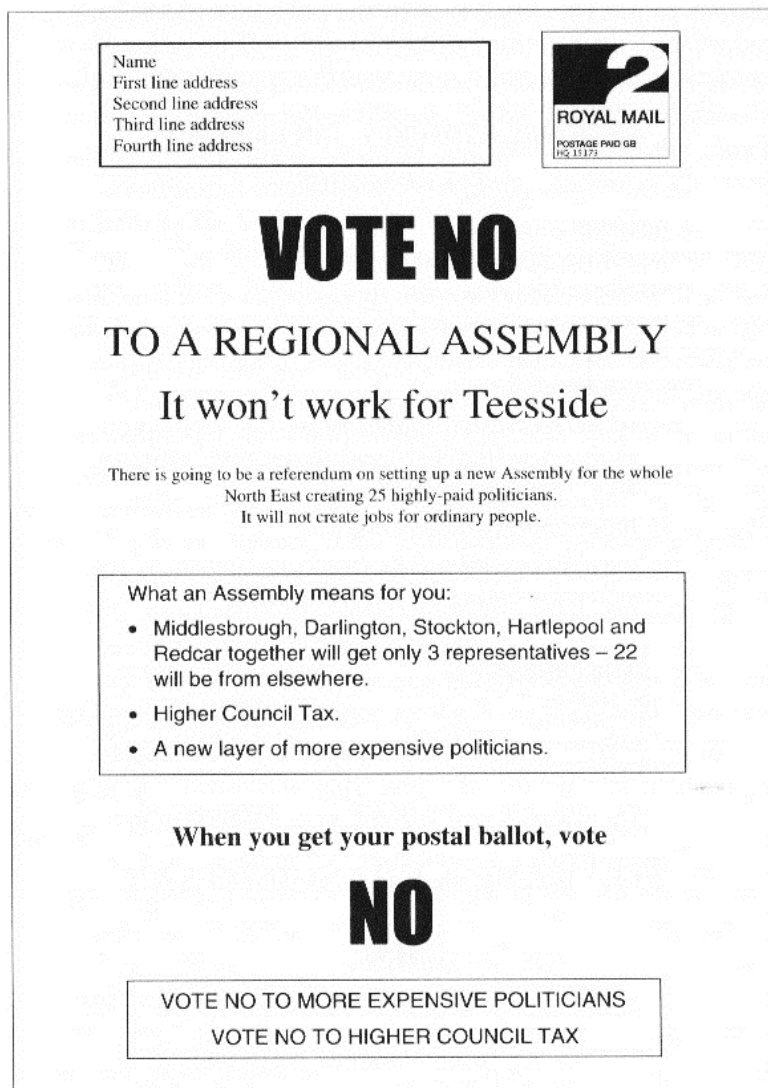


Figure 12: Mailshot sent to households in the Tees Valley by NESNO. Source: Norton (2008, p. 311)

A final potential factor was the relative unpopularity of the Labour Party in 2004 (Rallings & Thrasher, 2005, 2006, 2009), as expressed by one interviewee who claimed:

“Amongst other factors, the major one [behind the ‘No’ vote] was the Labour government was going through a very traumatic time. It was post-Iraq, the Government was very unpopular, and this was a Labour government referendum. That certainly didn’t help us.” (Labour interviewee, 2014)

Labour’s relative lack of popularity in the region at this point is evident through several elections that occurred in 2004. In May 2004, Labour not only saw its regional European Parliamentary vote-

share reduced by 8.1%, but experienced a landslide defeat on Newcastle City Council, losing 44% of its councillors. Furthermore, the September 2004 Hartlepool by-election saw Labour's majority cut from 38.3% to 6.5%, with voters defecting from Labour primarily to the Liberal Democrats (Mellows-Facer, Cracknell, & Yonwin, 2004, p. 14; Newcastle City Council, 2013; Young, 2005, p. 14).

However, whilst Labour support was a positive and statistically significant factor in the likelihood of an individual voting 'Yes' and in the size of a district's 'Yes' vote-share (Rallings & Thrasher, 2009), only 38% of even Labour partisans said 'Yes' (Rallings & Thrasher, 2009). Furthermore, voters who abandoned Labour in the aforementioned elections largely switched to the Liberal Democrats, a party who also supported ERAs and whose leader—Charles Kennedy—even joined Tony Blair in a visit to Stockton-on-Tees to support the 'Yes' campaign (BBC News, 2004). Labour's relative unpopularity, if at all useful as an explanatory factor given the Liberal Democrats' support for an ERA, is thus more likely to explain the scale of defeat rather than the defeat itself.

Assessing the long-term consequences of the 'No' vote will be complicated by the fact that the 'No' vote—and its magnitude—was evidently multi-causal. The most decisive factor in determining the referendum's outcome, however, appears to have been the view of the ERA as "waste a money" (Rallings & Thrasher, 2009), a sentiment that existed due to both its perceived costs and lack of powers. The campaigns themselves also appear to have played a key role in the outcome; whilst difficult to quantify, interviews suggest NESNO was particularly effective in its simple messaging, use of media and campaign stunts, something which Y4NE—with its 'elite' focus (Musson et al., 2009; Willett & Giovannini, 2013)—struggled to counteract. Interestingly, and contrary to several interviewees' beliefs, the proposed local government reorganisation did directly reduce the propensity of voters to support an ERA. Other factors, however, did. The particular hostility of the Tees Valley to an ERA—whether that be for historical, cultural or economic reasons—contributed to the scale of its rejection, as did the relative unpopularity of the Labour government in 2004, though even a clear majority of voting Labour partisans opposed the ERA proposals (Rallings & Thrasher, 2009).

Consequences on the North East's regionalism

Whilst there are plentiful analyses into the causes of the 'No' vote, analyses into the effects of the referendum are relatively limited (Game, 2005; Humphrey & Shaw, 2006; Pearce & Ayres, 2007; Shaw & Robinson, 2007, 2012; Shaw et al., 2006). Of these, the overwhelming majority were published very shortly after the referendum, unable to explore its longer-term effects. Whilst Shaw and Robinson (2012) was published more recently, its focus was on the effects on the region not of

the referendum, but of the Coalition Government's localism policy. This lack of focus on longer-term consequences of the referendum is particularly problematic given the post-2010 "abolition of regional government" (Sandford, 2013, p. 1). Post-2004—and, indeed, post-2010—developments in both the North East's functional and political regionalism must therefore be explored, and it must be questioned whether the 2004 'No' vote acted as a critical juncture in the institutional trajectories thereof.

Developments in functional regionalism

A resilient functional region

Whilst the decisive 2004 'No' vote may have reduced support for functional regionalism elsewhere in England, somewhat counterintuitively, the referendum does not appear to have acted as a critical juncture in the trajectory of the North East political elite's belief in—at the very least—a functional regionalism.

For most of England, Hazell (2006, p. 233) appears to have erred in his "prediction... that functional regionalism will continue for some time to come, and possibly for ever". Since 2010, the Coalition government has pursued a functional sub-regionalism rather than a functional regionalism, abolishing regional institutions such as RDAs and regional policies like Regional Spatial Strategies (RSSs) (Sandford, 2013), with interviewees reporting that "**region is now a banned word**" (Labour interviewee, 2014). Instead of having 9 RDAs, the Coalition has mediated the creation of some 39 generally sub-regional Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), most of which have much smaller boundaries than RDAs, and have emphasised 'City Deal' urban development policies rather than regional policies (DCLG, BIS, & DfT, 2013; Deputy Prime Minister's Office & Cabinet Office, 2013). This general shift can be traced back partly to the 2004 'No' vote, with Conservative Local Government Secretary Eric Pickles (2010) directly referring to the "democratic deficit" left by the 'No' vote when detailing his reasons for "rolling back regional government".

In contrast, North East political elites still generally consider the 'North East' to be—at the very least—an identifiable functional region, albeit with a slightly smaller geographical area than previously. Furthermore elites continue to engage—as they have for many decades—"in consistent and often effective attempts at regionwide coordination" (Anderson, 1992, p. 101). Whilst "the Region 'formerly known as the North East'... has, effectively, been split into two" (Shaw & Robinson, 2012, pp. 233-234), with two LEPs—the North East LEP (NELEP) and the smaller Tees Valley Unlimited (TVU)—now existing (DCLG et al., 2013), this new arrangement nevertheless primarily exemplifies a functional regionalism rather than a sub-regionalism. Whilst the exit of the Tees Valley

from the region cannot be ignored and will be discussed later, the Tees Valley forms only a small part of the 'old' region, constituting a mere 26% of its population and a fraction of its area (see Figure 13). Furthermore, there is a traditional "lack of co-operation between the south of the region, based on Teesside, and the Newcastle conurbation" (Keating, 2009, p. 59)⁵. NELEP, on the other hand, has a distinctly more regional footprint, with three cities—Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Sunderland and Durham—and three entire counties—County Durham, Northumberland and Tyne & Wear—within its boundaries. Furthermore, by naming itself the '*North East* Local Enterprise Partnership', the body adopted a distinctly regional focus, in continuity with many preceding North-Eastern RDOs (see Figure 14).

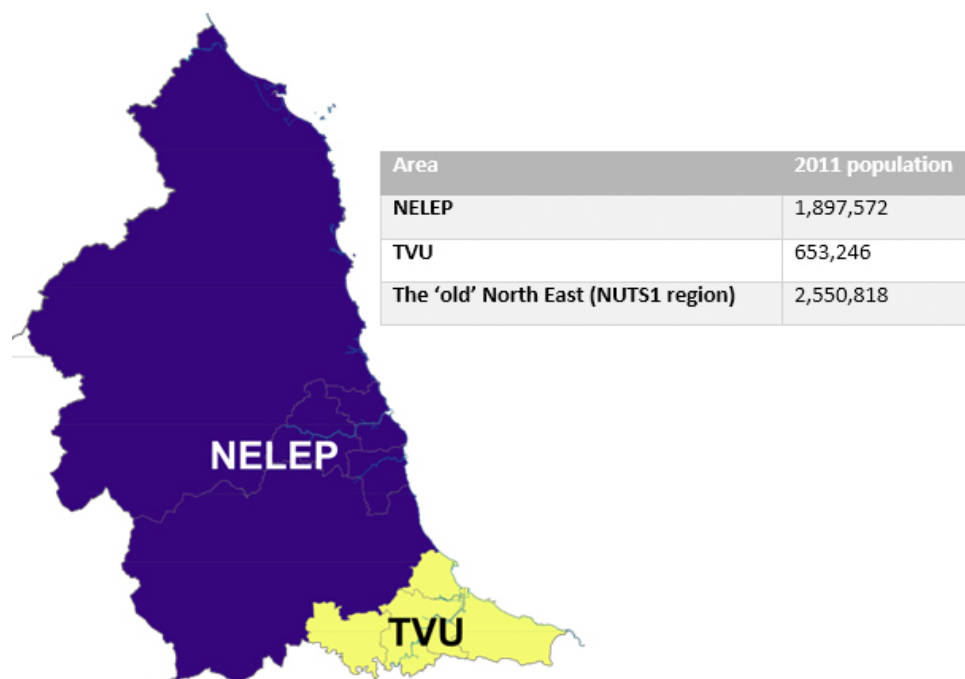


Figure 13: Map and populations of LEPs in the 'old' North East in the 'old' North East (ONS, 2011)

⁵ For example, most of the Tees Valley was not covered by the Special Areas (Development and Improvement) Act 1934 that led to the NEDB's creation. Similarly, in the late 1960s, Teesside withdrew from the RDO after internal disagreements (Anderson, 1992).

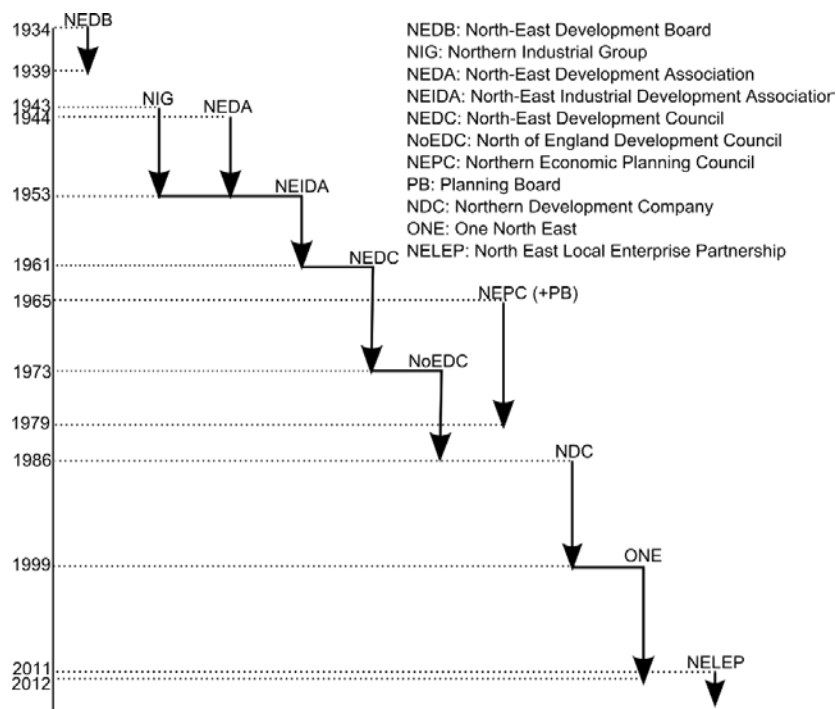


Figure 14: A schematic history of North East RDOs, adapted from Tomaney (2006), Cousins, Davis, Paddon, and Waton (1974), Anderson (1992) and Oliver (1975)

In addition to ‘North East’ formal structures continuing to embody regionalist modes of economic development, the overwhelming majority of interviewees—particularly within Labour—still accept the benefit in regional economic cooperation:

“The more within the North East we can cooperate and have a shared approach... then we can hopefully take decisions to ensure parts of the North East aren't in competition with each other. We can have an approach that utilises all the strength and assets of the North East.” (Labour interviewee, 2014)

“I know that we never would have had something like Nissan come to Sunderland if each local authority had been competing against each other. It needed a body to come together on behalf of the region.” (Labour interviewee, 2014)

Whilst this represents continuity, continuity is insufficient in demonstrating that the 2004 ‘No’ vote did not act as a critical juncture in the trajectory of the political elite’s functional regionalism, as change is not a necessary condition thereof. It must be therefore questioned whether the ‘No’ vote increased the cost of divergence from such regional modes of economic development. Interviewees offered several potential explanations as to functional regionalism’s resilience, though in none of these explanations did the ‘No’ vote act as a critical juncture.

One explanation emphasises the role of regionalised interest representation in sustaining the 'region'. "**Businesses understand the boundaries of the region and work within the boundaries of the region**" (Labour interviewee, 2014). In the North East, groups such as the TUC, the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), the North East Chamber of Commerce (NECC) and the North East Process Industry Cluster (NEPIC) organize regionally to best facilitate engagement with RDOs. This contrasts with other parts of England, where such interest group are not as regionalized, with the FSB and Chambers of Commerce, for example, operating on sub-regional rather than regional bases outside the North East (BCC, 2014; FSB, 2014). Due to the long-standing tradition of North East RDOs, and interest group organisation around those RDOs, (Anderson, 1992), interest groups have become 'locked-in' to functional regionalism, with costs of any interest group internal de-regionalisation increasing with time. This incentivises regionally-organised interest groups to sustain regional institutions, as does the self-interest of their employees whose continued employment depends on the existence of regional institutions. Whilst such an explanation exhibits increasing returns and thus strong path dependence, there is no evident causal mechanism to suppose this path dependence is contingent on the 2004 referendum.

An alternative explanation is the sociological argument initially developed by Cousins et al. (1974). RDO boards have "a solid and relatively slowly changing core", with board members' social status dependent on regional institutions (Cousins et al., 1974, p. 142). This argument remains relevant today, with one interviewee stating that the ONE board "**looked like the recycling of the same old faces... [with] board-level sinecures for the same old faces, recycled time and time again**" (Labour interviewee, 2014). At the very least, this demonstrates weak path dependence; after the initial creation of such regional boards, it becomes difficult for the political elite to reverse their support for them, as many members of the political elite will depend on those very boards for their social status. Nevertheless, once again, it is not evident how such a path dependence would be strengthened by the 2004 'No' vote, as these non-democratic boards would have continued to exist regardless of the referendum's outcome (Harding et al., 2006).

An alternative reason for the resilience of functional regionalism particularly advocated by Labour interviewees is that 'region' is simply the optimal "**governable area**" in which "**economies of scale**" and cooperation are best delivered (Labour interviewees, 2014). To an extent, such a view may be path dependent, having been increasingly normalised since the 1930s, when the Bureau of Trade and Ministry of Heath sought the creation of regional structures to avoid "government largesse" and "counterproductive competition" between local authorities (Anderson, 1992, p. 103). If such an opinion exhibits strong path dependence, the uniquely long history of regional economic cooperation within the North East would at least partially explain why North East functional

regionalism has remained resilient unlike other regions'. Regardless, whilst it cannot be stated with total certainty, the 'No' vote does not appear to have acted as a critical juncture in the trajectory of these beliefs, neither weakening nor strengthening them. The 2004 referendum was neither intended nor portrayed as a referendum on the merits of functional regionalism. Indeed, had a 'Yes' vote occurred, functional institutions—whilst having different board appointment mechanisms and different scrutiny arrangements (Harding et al., 2006)—would have remained largely unaltered:

“Had there been a regional assembly, the RDA would have come within the assembly structure, but... it would have operated very much as it operated without the regional assembly, except that the assembly would have had some greater control over aims and objectives... The RDA would have carried on.” (Lib Dem interviewee, 2014)

A 'bottom-up' functional regionalism

Whilst the political elite's commitment to functional regionalism in much of region has remained resilient, that functional regionalism has in recent years adopted a distinct mode as a consequence of the 'No' vote.

Although still requiring the consent of central government, rather than being centrally proposed, boundaries of economic development are now increasingly set according to locally-determined functional requirements and voluntary arrangements between local actors. Whilst in most of England, this led to the end of the 'region', this did not occur in the North East. Although the Tees Valley largely abandoned regionalism under this 'bottom-up' approach, seemingly due to the belief that doing so meant that the Tees Valley would get the **“better of the deal”** (Labour interviewee, 2014)⁶, in the remaining three-quarters of the region, a more voluntary, “pragmatic, ‘commonsense’ regionalism” emerged (Shaw & Robinson, 2012, p. 243). Although one interviewee argued regional decision-making **“cannot just be voluntary”**, believing that **“the Government... [must] drive the agenda”** (Labour interviewee, 2014), the voluntary arrangements that have emerged since 2010 have thus far been able to withstand internal conflict (Shaw & Robinson, 2012; Tallentire, 2014). Furthermore, whilst interviewees were divided on whether North East RDOs should include the Tees Valley, even those who felt the Tees Valley should have been included within NELEP that Tees Valley should not be forced to join by central government, as **“it [would be] really difficult to have unwilling partners working together”** (Labour interviewee, 2014).

⁶ Interestingly, interviewees did not cite the particularly large 'No' vote in the Tees Valley as the basis for its withdrawal from the 'old' North East.

This development can be understood through the Conservatives' policies; the referendum had the effect of solidifying Conservative opposition to top-down regionalism, so the election of the Conservative-led Coalition government in 2010 saw a more 'bottom-up' economic development policy arise. Under New Labour, "devolution to the English regions was unambiguously top-down" (Bache, 2007, p. 99). The powers and geographic boundaries of regional institutions were designated by central government. There was a feeling, particularly from the political right, that government regions were "arbitrary" (Conservative Party, 2001; Pickles, 2010), with one interviewee critical of Labour's attempts to "impose a regional body... and force... [areas] into a place where they're not comfortable" (Conservative interviewee, 2014). Whilst such concerns clearly existed within the Conservatives before the 2004 referendum with the 2001 Conservative manifesto pledging to abolish regional structures (Conservative Party, 2001), the 'No' vote acted as a critical juncture in the Tories' policy, reinforcing the Conservatives' opposition to 'top-down' regional structures, as it would have been difficult to portray them as imposed or arbitrary had they been directly democratically legitimated.

Developments in political regionalism

One of the key aims in New Labour's proposals to create ERAs was to significantly enhance "regional democratic accountability" of "institutions of regional governance" (Jeffery, 2009, p. 17). Yet the 2004 'No' vote did not reduce the regional political elite's belief in the need for a more democratic and political regionalism. It did, however, act as a critical juncture through creating an "institutional incoherence" (Streeck & Thelen, 2005, p. 31) in how this desire could be realised, necessitating the emergence of alternative solutions.

The North East Combined Authority: a pervasive political regionalism?

Whilst the introduction of LEPs by the Coalition government, initially without a parallel democratic accountability structure, may have appeared to constitute a retreat to a more functional regionalism, the majority of interviewees appear unwavering in believing there to be a need "to get the balance right" between business leadership and strong "democratic oversight" (Labour interviewee, 2014).

One of the main ways that the region's political elites have expressed this continued desire for a more political regionalism is through the creation of the North East Combined Authority⁷ (NECA) in the NELEP area. NECA was constituted in April 2014 by secondary legislation (SI 2014/1012) that was introduced following a governance review conducted jointly by and at the initiative of the seven councils⁸ in the NELEP area (LA7 Leadership Board, 2013).

Whilst the DCLG (2013) specifically referred to the 2004 'No' vote in its consultation on whether it would facilitate the creation of NECA, overwhelmingly positive consultation responses allowed the DCLG (2014) to overcome its concerns that the 2004 referendum represented a "clear expression of widespread opposition among local residents for new governance institutions" (DCLG, 2013, p. 4). The 'No' vote therefore did not preclude as an option the continued pursuit of a more political regionalism, with creation of NECA constituting an example thereof for three reasons. Firstly, NECA has a relatively broad functional remit a combined authority covering the seven councils in the NELEP area responsible for exercising concurrently with those councils various economic development and regeneration, employability and skills and transport powers, with the powers and assets of Tyne and Wear Integrated Transport Authority also transferred to NECA (North East Combined Authority, 2014a). Secondly, it hopes to act as "a strong and sustainable platform for the area to obtain devolved powers and resources from Government" (North East Leadership Board, 2014). The third, and most important, factor is its governance, with local government leaders occupying all but one place on the NECA board (North East Combined Authority, 2014b), leading to a much greater sense of democratic accountability:

"Combined authorities are made up of leaders of councils who are elected at the ballot box, who are accountable to their local areas, and that [accountability] is not there at the moment with local enterprise partnerships and it was not previously there with RDAs." (Labour interviewee, 2014)

⁷ NECA's statutory name is "the Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle Upon Tyne, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside and Sunderland Combined Authority" (SI 2014/1012). However, this paper will use the name the body itself uses: the 'North East Combined Authority' (NECA).

⁸ There are now 7—rather than 20—councils in the NELEP area, because Durham and Northumberland became unitary counties in 2009, despite the 2004 referendums. Whilst this must be noted, the causal mechanisms underlying this development will not be explored, as this paper's focus is on the effects of the 2004 referendum on regional—not local—governance.

Whilst NECA has no formal role in scrutinising NELEP, its creation was as an attempt to introduce some form of a regional democratic structure to countervail the business-led LEP:

“Because NELEP is business focused, I think, there still isn’t broad democratic scrutiny, and I think the fact that we are now getting the combined authority argument shows we’re still trying to grapple with this question of the democratic role at a regional level.”
(Lib Dem interviewee, 2014)

The desire to tackle this question is not, however, peculiar to the NELEP and NECA, but represents instead a long-standing continuity in the region. For example, when introducing the “twin ‘poles’ of national and local democratic oversight” over regional institutions in 2008-09, Ministers cited their desire to combat the regional “democratic deficit” (HL Deb, 17 December 2008, c855), whilst the 2007 Sub-National Review (HM Treasury, BERR, & DCLG, 2007) also implicitly recognised the importance of the role of democratic accountability at the regional level through identifying the need to improve it. Furthermore, the creation of NEA in 1999 and the proposals for an ERA also represented an attempt to address this question.

However, continuity is insufficient in proving that the ‘No’ did not act as a critical juncture. It is thus necessary to discuss the potential causal mechanisms for this continued belief in political regionalism that were raised by interviewees. Interviewees offered no causal mechanism in which the ‘No’ vote either reinforced or weakened the desire amongst political elites for a more political regionalism. Indeed, the most recurrent explanation amongst interviewees does not appear to be at all contingent on the ‘No’ vote, but instead depends on a long-standing socialist suspicion towards business leadership of RDOs. Whilst all interviewees agreed business leaders have a role at least as consultees, several interviewees expressed concern about—as Shaw et al. (2006) highlighted—the calibre and motivations of businesspeople in leadership roles in regional governance:

“If there were experts [on business development], I don’t think these would be... the people that we are given on the different boards we have, like the LEPs.” (Labour interview, 2014)

“I’m not convinced that the current model of democracy... is sufficient, but that’s better than a situation where decisions are taken by unelected business people, who are often motivated by a very specific business interest of their own” (Labour interview, 2014)

The increased role of local government leadership

Whilst there is little evidence to suggest that the 2004 ‘No’ vote was a critical juncture in the trajectory of the political elite’s demand for a more political regionalism, the ‘No’ vote did—however—act as a critical juncture in how that demand was to be met.

One of the key characteristics of NECA, as outlined above, is that local government leaders occupy 7 out of 8 places on its board. Similarly, the board of NELEP contains—alongside appointees from the private sector and other public sector bodies—all local government leaders within its area, as—incidentally—does TVU. This contrasts with ONE, which had proportionately fewer local government board members (see Figure 15), with its local government board members appointees of the Secretary of State rather than representatives of local councils. Indeed, the ONE board in 2010-11 contained no council leaders or even any councillors with executive portfolios (ONE, 2011). Locally accountable local government leaders are therefore not only at the centre of NECA, but increasingly at the centre of regional governance more generally, with one interviewee arguing:

“Leaders are on the LEP boards, whereas the leaders weren’t on the RDA board... When you have the leaders of the seven councils on the board, as in the case of NELEP, that’s how the councils are tied in. I think that is more democratically accountable.” (Lib Dem interviewee, 2014)

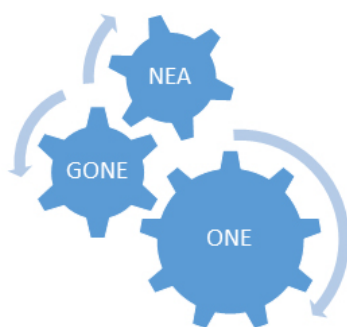
	Local government members	Private sector members	Trade union members	Housing association members	Other public sector members	Total
NELEP	7 (38.9%)	9 (50.0%)	0	0	2 (11.1%)	18
	<i>Of which leaders: 7</i>					
TVU	5 (35.7%)	7 (50.0%)	0	0	2 (14.3%)	14
	<i>Of which leaders: 5</i>					
ONE	3 (25.0%)	5 (41.2%)	1 (8.3%)	1 (8.3%)	2 (16.7%)	12
	<i>Of which leaders: 0</i>					

Figure 15: composition of boards of NELEP, TVU and ONE. Accurate as of 29 April 2014 for NELEP and TVU (NELEP, 2014; TVU, 2014), and for year 2010-11 for ONE (ONE, 2011).

However, this increased role for local government leaders in regional governance did not only emerge with the election of the Coalition Government, commencing instead under Gordon Brown's premiership. Whilst prior to 2009, regional governance was characterised by a "troika" system (Pearce & Ayres, 2007, p. 700), comprising an unelected regional chamber (the NEA), an RDA (ONE) and a Government Office for the Region (GONE), the Brown Government replaced this with a system of "twin 'poles' of national and local democratic oversight" (HL Deb, 17 December 2008, c855), abolishing regional chambers like the NEA. At the national pole, GORs continued to exist, with Regional Ministers and House of Commons' Regional Grand and Select Committees also introduced, whilst at the local pole, local authority leaders' boards—comprising each region's council leaders and directly-elected Mayors—were created through the *Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009*.

Although the institutions of this 'twin poles' system were abolished following the election of the Coalition Government (Sandford, 2013), to use the "displacement" type of "gradual transformation" outlined by Streeck and Thelen (2005, p. 31), the creation of the leaders' boards saw the "activation of dormant or latent institutional resources", with local government leaders discovering their potential central role in regional governance. This cultivated a "new 'logic' of action" (Streeck & Thelen, 2005, p. 31), with local government leaders subsequently—and, indeed, consequently—continuing to situate themselves at the centre of regional governance.

The 'troika' system 1999-2009



The "twin poles" system 2009-2010

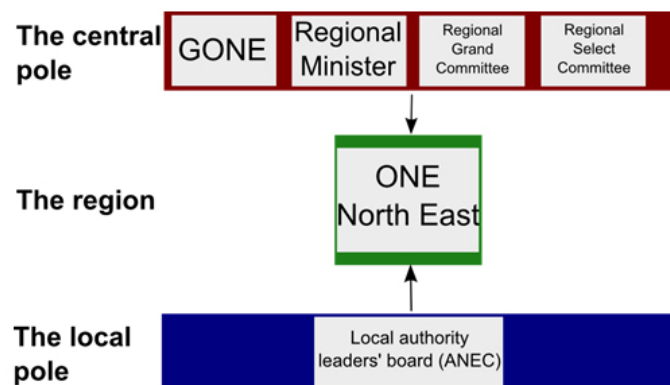


Figure 16: the two systems of regional democratic oversight under New Labour

In order to assess whether the 'No' vote was a critical juncture in the trajectory that led to the emergence of this 'twin poles' system and the subsequent increase in the role of local government leaders in regional governance, it is necessary to ascertain what factors led to this change.

In large part, the *Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009* and the creation of Regional Ministers and regional Parliamentary committees was the implementation of recommendations made in the 2007 Sub-National Review (HM Treasury et al., 2007), with the review stating that “given the absence of directly elected regional assemblies, democratic accountability for the regional tier needs to be based on a combination of central and local government” (HM Treasury et al., 2007, p. 94). Although this superficially appears to demonstrate that the ‘No’ vote was a critical juncture, this cannot be stated with any certainty unless it is understood why “the absence of directly elected regional assemblies” necessitated this shift to accountability based on “a combination of central and local government” (*Ibid.*).

An institutional incoherence: why local government leaders’ roles increased

As outlined earlier in this paper, New Labour had a “two-stage process” (Mawson, 1998, p. 167) to further an agenda of “Regional Democracy” (Harrison, 2006, p. 936). In the first stage, unelected regional chambers were established, scrutinising—to an extent—RDAs and developing certain regional strategies within a “troika” of regional governance (Pearce & Ayres, 2007, p. 700). In the second stage of Labour’s ‘Regional Democracy’, ERAs were to be formed.

With 78% voting ‘No’ in 2004, interviewees reported that elected “**regional assemblies are not an option**” in the North East for the foreseeable future (Labour interview, 2014), as creating one would be to ignore a recently- and clearly-expressed democratic view. For example, in Wales, after the four-to-one 1979 rejection of a directly-elected assembly, it took nearly two decades for it once again to become a feasible option (Davies, 2009). In the North East, if directly-elected regional institutions are ever to re-emerge as a possibility, it may take even longer, with the renewed possibility of Welsh devolution aided by the relative salience of the Welsh national identity (Davies, 2009). In this regard, the ‘No’ vote acted as a critical juncture, significantly increasing the political cost of any attempt to create directly-elected regional structures, “plac[ing] institutional arrangements on [a]... trajector[y], which... [is] then very difficult to alter” (Capoccia & Kelemen, 2007, p. 348) for at least a generation.

The elimination of ERAs as an option proved particularly problematic as regional chambers like the NEA were never intended nor fit to be a permanent solution. In particular, interviewees, Shaw et al. (2006), the LGA (2006) and Pearce (2008) expressed doubts as to the longer-term sustainability of the NEA. The NEA faced significant “fall-out” from the referendum, with the public confused “as to why a [unelected] regional assembly still existed when it ha[d] been rejected in a referendum” (Sandford, 2006, p. 21) and with the Conservative Shadow Secretary of State tabling an EDM

(Spelman, 2005-06) calling for the “abolition of regional assemblies”, arguing that the referendum meant they had “no accountability, no mandate and no legitimacy”. Whilst—unlike the issue of legitimacy—accountability was not necessarily worsened by the ‘No’ vote, interviewees and the Local Government Association felt the NEA did not offer sustainable democratic accountability in the long-term:

“There were lots of checks and balances in the system... [but] was the democratic accountability to the level that it should have been? The answer to that question is no.”
(Lib Dem interviewee, 2014)

“The current situation, which involves a plethora of regional Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) and quangos which are unaccountable to the region, is unsustainable in the long-term.” (LGA, 2006)

Concerns also existed about the capacity of Regional Chambers to provide **“systematic scrutiny”** (Lib Dem interviewee, 2014). The LGA (2006) argued that “Regional... [Chambers] themselves lack the capacity and resources to make full use of their role in strategy-making and scrutinising regional quangos”, with Regional Chambers having only small workforces and small incomes (Pearce, 2008; Pearce & Ayres, 2007).

The NEA simply **“wasn’t an alternative to a directly-elected assembly”** (Labour interviewee, 2014). In the long-term, it was not fit-for-purpose. It lacked sufficient institutional capacity and democratic accountability, and was also delegitimised by the rejection of an assembly. As there was no “plan B” in the event of a ‘No’ vote, the 2004 referendum therefore acted as a critical juncture through leaving a “‘void’ or ‘vacuum’” (Shaw et al., 2006, p. 14). From this “institutional incoherence” (Streeck & Thelen, 2005, p. 31), the increased role for local—and, indeed, central—government oversight emerged.

The 2004 ‘No’ vote: a critical juncture in North East regionalism?

From interviews conducted for this paper, it can be inferred that the 2004 ‘No’ vote did not change the majority of the North East’s political elite’s belief in regionalism. Interviewees were largely resolute in their commitment to both a functional regionalism, sharing a “strong sense of regional economic interest” (Keating, 2009, p. 62), and to a more political regionalism, believing there to be a continued need to **“grapple with this question of the democratic role at a regional level”** (Lib Dem interviewee, 2014). Whilst continuity is in itself insufficient in asserting the absence of critical juncture, this paper’s process tracing identified no causal mechanisms through which ‘No’ vote acted

as a critical juncture in the trajectory of the political elite's support for functional regionalism or for a more political regionalism. Instead, the post-2004 continuity in support for functional regionalism is better understood through much longer path-dependent processes, such as the increasing returns faced by interest groups. Similarly, the continuity in the demand for a more political regionalism is perhaps best understood through a long-standing socialist suspicion of business leaders.

The 'No' vote did, however, act as a critical juncture in the trajectory of how both a functional and a more political regionalism would—and could—be realised.

The emergence of a 'bottom-up' approach to functional regionalism was contingent on the 2004 'No' vote. This is due to the 'No' vote's effects on the Conservative Party's stance towards regionalism, with the 2004 referendum acting as a brief moment where there was a "broader than typical range of feasible options" (Capoccia & Kelemen, 2007, p. 348) in the trajectory of the Tories' policies towards regionalism. Counterfactually, had a 'Yes' vote occurred, regional structures would have been democratically legitimated, with Conservative claims that regional institutions were "arbitrary" (Conservative Party, 2001, p. 45; 2005, p. 21; Pickles, 2010) rendered almost wholly untenable. Indeed, this could have led to a reversal in Tory policy, as seen with Celtic devolution (Curtice & Seyd, 2009). In reality, however, a 'No' vote transpired, significantly increasing the costs of any Conservative deviation from their view of regions as 'top-down' and imposed. From this opposition, a more voluntary 'bottom-down' approach to economic development emerged within the Conservatives. Upon the election of a Conservative-led government in 2010, this was realised through the creation of LEPs, with political elites in the North East—except the Tees Valley—adapting accordingly and pursuing functional regionalism through this new approach.

Similarly, the 'No' vote acted as a critical juncture in the trajectory of how North East political regionalism is expressed, seeing the movement of local government leaders from the periphery to the centre of regional governance. The 'No' vote acted as a critical juncture through creating an "institutional incoherence" (Streeck & Thelen, 2005, p. 31) from which this change in trajectory emerged. This incoherence was not only the result of the NEA being delegitimised by 'No' vote, but also due its design as a transitional body to exist prior to the introduction of an ERA, with the NEA lacking sufficient democratic accountability and institutional capacity to serve as a permanent solution in its own right.

Looking to the future of English regionalism, the September 2014 Scottish independence referendum—regardless of its outcome—poses particular challenges as to how England will be governed. The pressure for further devolution within England will almost certainly increase should Scotland gain independence or have its autonomy enhanced, as is likely in the event of a 'No' vote.

In the bordering North East, this pressure will be most acute, with ANEC having already commissioned a report that explores how the North East and Cumbria can “benefit from greater Scottish autonomy” (Shaw, Blackie, Robinson, & Henderson, 2013). Furthermore, should a Labour government be elected in 2015, additional reforms in England’s sub-national governance are likely. Whilst Labour remains committed—like the Coalition—to a primarily city-regional model of economic development within England, and is set to retain LEAs and Combined Authorities, it has announced plans to reintroduce Regional Ministers (Dugher, 2014). Furthermore, Labour leader Ed Miliband has expressed his intention to “end... a century of centralisation [in England] by at least doubling the level of devolved funding” (Labour Press, 2014). Whilst there are no noteworthy moves presently to seek again the introduction of ERAs, it remains to be seen whether this likely increase in devolution within England will be sustainable without a directly-elected tier of government between Westminster and local government.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: List of interviews

1. The Rt. Hon. the Baroness Armstrong of Hill Top, PC (Labour; member of the House of Lords; former MP for Durham North West, 1987-2010; former Local Government Minister; former Chief Whip). Interview conducted in Westminster on 19 March 2014.⁹

⁹ Due to a software fault, this interview did not record. However, comprehensive notes of the interview were taken.

2. The Lord Bates (Conservative; member of the House of Lords; Lord in Waiting; former MP for Langbaugh, 1992-97). Interview conducted in Westminster on 13 March 2014.¹⁰
3. Councillor the Lord Beecham, Kt DL (Labour; member of the House of Lords; member and former Leader, Newcastle City Council; former Chair, Local Government Association; Shadow Minister for Justice). Interview conducted in Westminster on 12 March 2014.
4. The Rt. Hon. Mr Nick Brown MP (Labour; MP for Newcastle upon Tyne East; former Chief Whip; former North East Regional Minister). Interview conducted in Westminster on 4 March 2014.
5. Mr Martin Callanan MEP (Conservative; North East MEP). Interview conducted by telephone on 11 February 2014.
6. The Rt. Hon. Mr Alan Campbell MP (Labour; MP for Tynemouth; Opposition Deputy Chief Whip; former Minister). Interview conducted in Westminster on 4 March 2014.
7. Ms Jenny Chapman MP (Labour; MP for Darlington; Shadow Minister for Justice). Interview conducted in Westminster on 4 March 2014.
8. Mr Barry Copping (Labour; Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland). Interview conducted by telephone on 6 March 2014.
9. Mr Alex Cunningham MP (Labour; MP for Stockton North; former board member, One North East). Interview conducted in Westminster on 4 March 2014.
10. Ms Julie Elliott MP (Labour; MP for Sunderland Central; former GMB North East political officer). Interview conducted by telephone on 5 March 2014.
11. Councillor Nick Forbes (Labour; Leader, Newcastle City Council; Lead member for transport, North East Combined Authority). Interview conducted by telephone on 18 February 2014.
12. Ms Pat Glass MP (Labour; MP for North West Durham). Interview conducted in Westminster on 24 February 2014.
13. Ms Fiona Hall MBE MEP (Liberal Democrat; North East MEP). Interview conducted by telephone on 6 March 2014.
14. Councillor Simon Henig (Labour; Leader, Durham County Council; Chair, North East Combined Authority). Interview conducted by telephone on 24 February 2014.
15. Ms Sharon Hodgson MP (Labour; MP for Washington and Sunderland West; Shadow Minister for Equalities; former Assistant Whip). Interview conducted in Westminster on 13 February 2014.

¹⁰ At Lord Bates' request, this interview was not recorded. However, comprehensive notes of the interview were taken.

16. Mr Ian Jones (Liberal Democrat; Chair, North East Region Liberal Democrats). Interview conducted by telephone on 20 February 2014.
17. Mr Ian Lavery MP (Labour; MP for Wansbeck; former President, National Union of Mineworkers; former Deputy Leader, Wansbeck District Council). Interview conducted in Westminster on 18 March 2014.
18. Councillor Iain Malcolm (Labour; Leader, South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council). Interview conducted by telephone on 27 February 2014.¹¹
19. Mr Andy McDonald MP (Labour; MP for Middlesbrough). Interview conducted in Westminster on 12 February 2014.
20. Mr Ian Mearns MP (Labour; MP for Gateshead; former Deputy Leader, Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council; former Chair, Campaign for a Northern Assembly). Interview conducted in Westminster on 4 March 2014.
21. Mr Grahame Morris MP (Labour; MP for Easington). Interview conducted in Westminster on 26 February 2014.
22. The Lord Shipley OBE (Liberal Democrat; member of the House of Lords; former Leader, Newcastle City Council; former board member, One North East). Interview conducted by telephone on 28 February 2014.
23. Councillor Paul Watson (Labour; Leader, Sunderland City Council; Chair, Association of North East Councils; Lead member for economic development and regeneration, North East Combined Authority). Interview conducted by telephone on 7 February 2014.
24. Mr James Wharton MP (Conservative; MP for Stockton South). Interview conducted in Westminster on 27 February 2014.

Appendix 2: the Referendum Questions

The questions are taken from the Electoral Commission (2005) and Sandford (2009b).

Voters throughout the North East were asked:

“You can help to decide whether there should be an elected assembly in the North-East region.

If an elected assembly is to be established, it is intended that:

¹¹ Due to a software fault, this interview did not record. However, comprehensive notes of the interview were taken.

- The elected assembly would be responsible for a range of activities currently carried out mainly by central government bodies, including regional economic development; and
- Local government would be reorganised into a single tier in those parts of the region that currently have both county and district councils.

Should there be an elected assembly for the North-East region?”

Furthermore, in County Durham and Northumberland, voters were asked:

“If an elected assembly is established for the North-East region, it is intended that local government will be reorganised into a single tier in those parts of the region that currently have both county and district councils.

Your part of the region currently has both county and district councils. You can help to decide how local authorities in your part of the region will be reorganised into a single tier. There will be no such reorganisation if an elected assembly is not established.

Which of the following options for single-tier local government do you prefer?”

In County Durham:

- “Option A: one single-tier local authority (see map for Option A)
- Option B: three single-tier local authorities (see map for Option B)”

In Northumberland:

- “Option A: One single-tier local authority (see map for Option A)
- Option B: two single-tier local authorities (see map for Option B)”

Appendix 3: ERA referendum results by district

	District	Turnout	Yes	No
County Durham	Chester-le-Street	49.0%	5,487 (26.0%)	15,610 (74.0%)
	Derwentside	48.7%	9,718 (29.8%)	22,888 (70.2%)
	Durham	47.7%	9,791 (28.9%)	24,106 (71.1%)
	Easington	42.0%	8,065 (27.3%)	21,520 (72.7%)
	Sedgefield	47.7%	9,040 (27.7%)	23,583 (72.3%)
	Teesdale	55.3%	2,020 (18.4%)	8,972 (81.6%)
	Wear Valley	49.1%	6,131 (25.8%)	17,635 (74.2%)

	District	Turnout	Yes	No
	County Durham total	47.5%	50,252 (27.2%)	134,314 (72.8%)
Northumberland	Alnwick	57.3%	2,771 (19.2%)	11,666 (80.8%)
	Berwick-upon-Tweed	50.3%	2,230 (20.7%)	8,597 (79.3%)
	Blyth Valley	44.9%	7,523 (26.2%)	21,170 (73.8%)
	Castle Morpeth	56.6%	4,776 (22.0%)	16,952 (78.0%)
	Tynedale	55.0%	5,146 (19.5%)	20,975 (80.3%)
	Wansbeck	46.0%	5,947 (27.7%)	15,503 (72.3%)
	Northumberland total	50.7%	28,393 (23.0%)	94,863 (77.0%)
Tees Valley	Darlington	48.7%	4,784 (12.9%)	32,282 (87.1%)
	Hartlepool	42.4%	4,887 (16.8%)	24,250 (83.2%)
	Middlesbrough	41.2%	7,997 (19.2%)	33,543 (80.8%)
	Redcar & Cleveland	49.9%	8,493 (16.4%)	43,250 (83.6%)
	Stockton-on-Tees	47.5%	11,050 (17.5%)	52,040 (82.5%)
	Tees Valley total	46.2%	37,211 (16.7%)	185,365 (83.3%)
Tyne and Wear	Gateshead	48.3%	17,011 (24.5%)	52,459 (75.5%)
	Newcastle-upon-Tyne	45.6%	19,984 (24.5%)	61,477 (75.5%)
	North Tyneside	50.1%	15,203 (21.6%)	55,121 (78.4%)
	South Tyneside	45.8%	11,329 (21.6%)	41,029 (78.4%)
	Sunderland	42.9%	17,927 (20.0%)	71,893 (80.0%)
	Tyne and Wear total	46.2%	81,454 (22.4%)	281,979 (77.6%)
North East	Regional total	47.1%	197,790 (22.1%)	696,521 (77.9%)

Data from Sandford (2009b, p. 193) and Norton (2008, p. 461).

Appendix 4: proposed functions of ERAs

From Harding et al. (2006, pp. 15-16):

Policy area	Proposed ERA functions. ERAs were to:
Economic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have financial control and veto power over RDAs, with RDAs remaining operationally independent and in control over Regional Economic Strategies. • Appoint Chair and Board of RDAs (subject to conditions)

<u>Policy area</u>	<u>Proposed ERA functions. ERAs were to:</u>
Business support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be consulted on national Small Business Support (SBS) strategy, Business Link contractors' annual business plans and Business Link contracting. • "Play a role in monitoring the performance of Bus[iness] Link contractors" • "Work closely" with other stakeholders on SME development • Be involved by central Government "in dev[elopment] of business support policy"
Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Draw up FRESAs [Frameworks for Regional Employment and Skills Action]" • Appoint 2 members of Learning and Skills Council (LSC) boards (subject to conditions). • "Be consulted on other appointments" to LSC boards • Be consulted by local and national LSCs
Europe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assume responsibility for "any structural fund expenditure in future programming periods"
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare and issue Regional Spatial Strategies • Have ability to request the Secretary of State's call-in of strategic planning applications
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Prepare and publish a regional housing strategy" • "Allocate housing capital funding"
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Be responsible for Regional Transport Strategy" • Advise Government on local transport scheme funding • "Propose schemes of regional importance to Highways Agency and Strategic Rail Authority" • "Allocate Rail Partnership grants" • "Be consulted by national transport infrastructure providers"

<u>Policy area</u>	<u>Proposed ERA functions. ERAs were to:</u>
Arts, culture, tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Fund, sponsor and lead Regional Cultural Consortia, which will draw up regional cultural strategies for agreement with and publication by the ERA” • Regional arts and sports functions to be devolved by central government • Fund and sponsor “regional tourism programmes”, certain museums and a regional agency for libraries, museums and archives. • Appoint members to National Lottery regional awards committees
Public health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Have duty to promote public health” • Support “the development and implementation of regional health improvement strategies”
Rural policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Be responsible for delivering rural regeneration programmes” • Engage with Rural Affairs Forums • Be “a lead partner” in regional aspects of the England Rural Development Programme • Have responsibility for addressing rural issues in regional strategies
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint members to Environment Agency regional committees • “Prepare and implement” regional biodiversity strategies • “Prepare and oversee implementation of the waste element of regional spatial strategies” • “Be consulted by/consult” Environment and Countryside agencies and English Nature
Crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Be consulted on local Crime and Disorder Partnership strategies”
Civil contingency planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordinate, alongside Government Offices for the Regions.
Fire services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Oversee the activities of new [regionalised] regional fire services bodies” created via an “amalgamation” of local bodies.

Appendix 5: list of abbreviations and acronyms

- **ANEC:** Association of North East Councils

- **BERR:** Department for Business, Enterprise & Regulatory Reform
- **BIS:** Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
- **CBI:** Confederation of British Industry
- **CURDS:** Centre for Urban and Regional Development Studies
- **DCLG:** Department for Communities and Local Government
- **DfT:** Department for Transport
- **DTLR:** Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions
- **ERA:** Elected regional assembly
- **EU:** European Union
- **FSB:** Federation of Small Businesses
- **GLA:** Greater London Authority
- **GONE:** Government Office for the North East
- **GORs:** Government Offices for the Regions
- **HMT:** HM Treasury
- **IoD:** Institute of Directors
- **LEP:** Local Enterprise Partnership
- **LGA:** Local Government Association
- **MEP:** Member of European Parliament
- **MP:** Member of Parliament
- **NDC:** Northern Development Company
- **NEA:** North East Assembly (unelected Regional Chamber)
- **NECA:** North East Combined Authority
- **NECC:** North East Chamber of Commerce
- **NEDA:** North-East Development Association
- **NEDB:** North-East Development Board
- **NEDC:** North-East Development Council
- **NEIDA:** North-East Industrial Development Association
- **NELEP:** North East Local Enterprise Partnership
- **NENC:** North East NO Campaign
- **NEPC (& PB):** Northern Economic Planning Committee (& Planning Board)
- **NEPIC:** North East Process Industry Cluster
- **NESNO:** North East Says No
- **NIG:** Northern Industrial Group
- **NoEDC:** North of England Development Council
- **NUTS:** Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
- **ODPM:** Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
- **ONE:** ONE North East
- **PCC:** Police and Crime Commissioner
- **RDA:** Regional Development Agency
- **RDO:** regional development organisation
- **RSS:** Regional Spatial Strategy
- **SNR:** Sub-National Review ((HM Treasury et al., 2007)
- **TUC:** Trade Union Congress
- **TVU:** Tees Valley Unlimited
- **UKIP:** UK Independence Party
- **Y4NE:** Yes4thenortheast