

# STRATEGIC PLANNING AS STRATEGIC NAVIGATION

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## 1. Introduction

Michel Foucault engaged the metaphor of ships and navigation (*pilotage*) on several occasions in his exploration of ideas of spatial planning/town planning and governance.

«[T]he metaphor of navigation [...] comprises several components. Firstly, the obvious idea of a journey (*trajet*), of effective movement from one point to another. Secondly, the idea of navigation implies that this movement is directed towards a certain goal, that it has an objective. [...] During the journey one encounters risks, unforeseen risks which may challenge your course or even get you lost. Consequently, the journey will be one which leads you to the place of safety through a number of known and little known, known and unknown, dangers. Finally, in this idea of navigation, I think that we should retain the idea that this journey to the port, across the dangers, implies – in order to be undertaken well and to reach its objective – knowledge, technique and art. Such knowledge is complex, both theoretical and practical. It is also conjectural, which is, of course, very close to the knowledge of piloting.

The idea of navigation as an art, as a theoretical and practical technique necessary to existence, is an idea that I think is important and which would merit analysis in more depth» (Foucault, 1982, p. 2, my translation).

I argue that Foucault's metaphor resonates strongly with conceptualisations of strategic spatial planning in complex and uncertain circumstances. Equally relevant and echoing Foucault's (1967) suggestion that a boat is «a floating piece of space», Gilles Deleuze and Félix

Guattari also refer to a "maritime model" in which «to think is to voyage» (1987, p. 482). Voyaging, for Deleuze and Guattari is «the manner of being in space, of being for space» (1987, p. 482). This is a conceptualisation of space as a passage: of change; of in-between; as a relation between actual and potential worlds (Deleuze, Guattari, 1994, p. 17).

Traditional forms of strategic spatial planning are increasingly incompatible with the rapid pace of change, complexities and uncertainties of the world which they attempt to plan. There is a need for development of a new, more flexible, form of strategic planning which, «if there is to be one, must advance towards a future which is not known, which cannot be anticipated» (Derrida, 1994, p. 37). Such planning work involves «taking risks, the consequences of which can be thought about, but cannot be known» (Healey, 2008, p. 28).

To me, strategic spatial planning represents an issue of strategically navigated becoming. It evolves, functions and adapts, concerned with what can be done, how new things and connections can be made experimentally, yet still in contact with reality (Hillier, 2007). Spatial planning attempts to embrace a future that is not determined by the continuity of the present, nor by the path-dependent repetition of the past.

I regard strategic spatial planning as concerned with the future transformation of place, incorporating a combination of social, environmental, economic and political values about society. I propose that its practice be concerned with trajectories rather than specified end-points. I see spatial planning as a field of experimentation, where processes are based on

communication and involvement of actors rather than the top-down imposition of goals and policies. In regarding spatial planning in this way as an experimental practice working with doubt and uncertainty, engaged with adaptation and creation rather than scientific proof-discovery, I suggest a definition of spatial planning as strategic navigation along the lines of the investigation of “virtualities” unseen in the present; the speculation about what may yet happen; the inquiry into what at a given time and place we might think or do and how this might influence socially and environmentally just spatial form (Hillier, 2007; 2008a).

The metaphorical ocean which strategic spatial planners attempt to navigate is messy with potentialities, possibilities and uncertainties, mostly beyond their control. The UN-Habitat Report (2009) calls for development of systems of planning which include provision of a flexible, “forward” long-range spatial plan consisting of broad frameworks and principles, with which detailed local plans and mega-projects should mesh. Such a “two-pronged” or, as I suggest, a multi-planar approach facilitates adaptiveness or strategic navigation in environments where futures are complex and uncertain.

My aims, in this paper, are two-fold: to recap briefly theorisation of strategic spatial planning across multiple planes, but primarily to develop a methodology of strategic navigation (comprising questions which strategic planners might address) which could translate the theory into practice. I outline a multiplanar theory (Hillier, 2007; 2008a; 2008b) which explores the potential of Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of emergence or becoming as creative experimentation in the spatial. I then offer a Deleuzian – and Foucauldian – inspired speculation about what strategic spatial planning might become by proposing a methodology of strategic navigation for creative practice.

Referring to Deleuze’s concept of assemblage, and to his cartography of tracing, mapping and diagramming,

I argue that through tracing the relational forces between the elements in an assemblage, one can map and diagram their potentialities to become. I conclude that, rather than adopting pre-determined solutions, strategic spatial planning might offer a “genuine possibility” of experimentation (Houle, 2005, p. 93) in direct relevance to actants’<sup>1</sup> specific understandings and problematics. As Guattari (2000, p. 34) suggests, this might entail «a reinvention of the ways in which we live» and plan: ways in which politics, economics, society and space are not imagined as something “out there” – contexts for different types of activities – but as processes through which relations are constructed, connected or entangled and disconnected/disentangled.

## 2. A multiplanar theory of strategic spatial planning

*voyage[s] in and amongst ideas.*  
(Letiche, 2004, p. 149)

I argue that strategic spatial planning should consider the distribution of longer-term alternative potential futures that may, or may not, be actualised (White, Godart, Corona, 2007, p. 184) in addition to outlining and working towards beneficial short-term goals. I offer a theorisation of strategic spatial planning inspired by the conceptualisation of planes (*plans*) used by Deleuze and Guattari. In French the word *plan* refers to a plane (or *plateau*), a cinematic “shot” (long-shot or close-up) and a plan, scheme or project. Deleuze typically uses the plane for a type of thinking which mediates between «the chaos of chance happenings [...] on the one hand, and structured, orderly thinking on the other» (Stagoll, 2005, p. 204). As such, I find his ideas to be extremely relevant to the praxis of spatial planning.

As Deleuze and Guattari (1987, p. 265) write, «perhaps there are two planes, or two ways of conceptualising the plane» which offer the potential for multiple plans:

- several (or perhaps one collectively preferred) trajectories or “visions” of the longer-term future, including concepts towards which actants desire to navigate, such as sustainability;

- shorter-term, location-specific detailed plans and projects with collaboratively determined tangible goals, for example, for mainstreet regeneration, provision of cultural facilities and so on (Hillier, 2007; 2008a).

Longer-term trajectories resonate with what Deleuze and Guattari (1994) call the *plane of immanence*. This is a plane (or plan) defined not by what it contains. Rather, it maps a realm of potentialities. Such mapping «is at once the act of charting out a pathway and the opening of that pathway to the event of the chance encounter» (Kaufman, 1998, p. 6).

The plan is not something closed or the end of a process with specific targets to be achieved. It is a plane (long-term strategic plan or trajectory) of foresight; of creative transformation, of what might be. However, we should not forget the potential for unforeseen challenges and opportunities to emerge (for example, credit crises, increases in fuel prices and so on). The plane «functions like a sieve over chaos» (Boundas, 2005, p. 273), implying a sort of «groping experimentation» (Deleuze, Guattari, 1994, p. 41) of multiplicities of ideas, many of which never come to actualisation.

Shorter-term plans or project briefs resonate with Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) *planes of organisation* which support day-to-day elements of personal and social life. These planes contain hierarchical power relations which regulate or stratify our worlds (into zones of land uses, for example) and fix identities. This is a plane concerned with the development of forms and the formation of subjects supported by stability of judgement and identity.

The plane of organisation is a master plan with certain goals for development. These goals are predetermined standards (such as land use regulations or a design guide) to which things are submitted in judgement and ordered by forms of representation (whether applications meet the standard criteria etc.). Local area action plans, design briefs, detailed projects are typical planes of organisation. They tend to be relatively local or micro-scale, short-term and content specific. They facilitate small movements or changes along the dynamic, open trajectories of planes of immanence.

The planes of immanence and organisation exist simultaneously and are interleaved; sometimes fairly closely knit together and sometimes more separate. We inhabit both planes at the same time. Multiplanar theory thus comprises broad trajectories or “visions” – such as sustainability, a good place to live, accessibility and so on – as frames of reference which provide justification and navigational context for short- and medium-term substantive actions – such as major projects – which mark small movements and changes.

Navigating strategically across multiple planes requires practitioners to sense and discern connections and patterns in what is taking place, to try to understand the underlying dynamics and interdependencies between elements, to appreciate the diverse possibilities of what is happening and what might happen and to respond by designing actions which align with the intentions and values of the agreed longer-term strategic trajectory (Hames, 2007, p. 114), but which are contextually appropriate, not copy/pastes of other, previous or ‘best’ practices. Short-term and long-term actions are not mutually exclusive. Decisions, therefore, are inherently political, concerned with choices about regulation, or, as Rabinow (2003, p. 361) writes, «how, given a series of elements in a multivalent and transferable cadre, to bring them together such that, in all likelihood, they will prosper in an orderly, efficient, and coherent way». My

next task, then, is to find ways of thinking about strategic planning practices in order to translate my theorisation into a toolbox of questions for practitioners to consider.

### 3. Towards a cartography for multiplanar practice: tracing

*When we navigate our way through the world,  
there are different pulls, constraints and freedoms  
that move us forward.*  
(Massumi, in Zournazi, 2003, p. 1)

I argue for an emphasis on the relational dynamics of forces, such that analysis entails detailed tracing of the conditions of possibility of how things/places/problems came to be constituted as products of particular contingencies through unfolding power-laden relations between elements and of mapping them into the future.

I offer a methodology (a Deleuzian-inspired cartography) for translating multiplanar theory into strategic planning practice. Deleuze and Guattari (1987, p. 146) describe their cartography or “pragmatics” as comprising four components:

- the generative component – the *tracing* of concrete semiotics and pointing towards the potentiality of what might emerge;
  - the transformational component – making a transformational *map* of the regimes and their possibilities for translation and creation;
  - the *diagrammatic* component of the relational forces that are in play “either as potentialities or as effective emergences”;
  - the machinic component – the outline of programmes of what new assemblages/*agencements* might emerge?
- The term “assemblage” indicates a network of generally non-directional, disparate groups of actors. *Agencement*

implies that a network of actants generates agency and strategy. An *agencement* is thus a process of “agencing” (Bogue, 2007, pp. 145-6) in which the constituent elements interact and transform themselves and each other, thereby opening up and/or closing off potentialities.

A cartographic method would first make a tracing. It would then put the tracing on a transformational map of potentialities, making diagrams of the relational forces that play in each case. It would finally outline a programme of what might take place. This programme then functions as a point of support for the task of strategic plan- and policy-making.

To trace entails looking back retrospectively, often from above, in a systematic manner. Tracing “how did something come to be” involves asking questions such as “what knowledges, emotions or desires drove this situation?”, “what relations existed between which actants?”, “what games of power played between actants” and so on. This is an investigation concerned with path-dependencies, transformations and ruptures, exploring how elements and processes (such as actants involved in policy-making for energy infrastructure provision) respond to both their own logics and to external pressures and *stimuli*. Central to Deleuzian thinking is the need to investigate the «conditions of the relationships of macrolevel structures and microlevel movements and flows» (Eriksson, 2005, p. 603). It is an exploration of the relations, associations and encounters between, for example, private infrastructure capital, national and international agencies of governance and interest groups, scientists, environmentalists and so on, and flows of information, actualised in materialities and discursivities such as texts, meetings, demonstrations etc. It is an «analysis of how forces of different types come to inhabit the same field» (Due, 2007, p. 145). The lines of power rather than the points.

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Tracing overlays the product of something (what happened) onto the process of its production (how it happened). Tracing can be performed at the micropolitical site level, analysing the unfolding state of affairs within which situations are constituted. Assemblages/networks continuously change as relationships fold and unfold, compose and decompose in the play of internal agonisms and antagonisms. Conflicts tend to arise over the relations and connections which control framing and also about which elements and issues are included in connections and conjunctions<sup>2</sup> and excluded through disjunctions.

Deleuzean tracing resonates with that of Michel Foucault's concept of genealogy in that it asks «what is the nature of our present?» (Foucault, 1984, pp. 34-7)<sup>3</sup>. Researchers look not only at what actants may have said,

written or performed, but also at conditions of possibility of *why* they said, wrote or performed it in such a manner. The aim is to cut through established layers of coding of relationships between subjects, objects and words to work through why and how events came to actualise as they did.

Appropriate to the development of a new methodology, I offer a detailed explanation of how tracing might be undertaken. Accepting the resonances between Deleuzean and Foucauldian concepts, in the following subsections, I briefly introduce Michel Foucault's conceptualisation of the *dispositif* and its elements of power, knowledge and subjectivity, together with Deleuze and Guattari's two axes of materiality/expressivity and territorialisation as the assemblage of tracing methodology.



#### 4. Dispositifs

A *dispositif* refers both to the ways in which elements (such as practices) are deployed or arranged (disposed) and to the attitudes, knowledges and discourses which both realise the practices and are themselves supported and realised by the practices (disposition). *Dispositifs* thus have a strategic function. They are often associated with control and the maintenance and enhancement of power relations.

Foucault (1980, pp. 194-5) described a *dispositif* as «a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions» – in short, the said as much as the unsaid. Such are the elements of a *dispositif*. The *dispositif* itself is a network of relations that can be established between these elements. Secondly, what I'm trying to identify in this *dispositif* is precisely the nature of the connection that can exist between these heterogeneous elements.

The key points here are that Foucault is specifically interested in the connections and relations between elements; in both discursivities and materialities; and both the included and the excluded.

There can be many different sorts of *dispositifs*: of safety/security, of environmental sustainability and so on. Several different *dispositifs* are present simultaneously, often in tension, in spatial planning decision making. *Dispositifs* are not fixed, but are responsive to an interplay of shifts of position and modification (Foucault, 1980, p. 195). For instance, the *dispositif* of environmental sustainability has displaced that of social justice or unfettered development in many countries.

Foucault (1984) suggested that the *dispositif* implicates three fundamental elements of experience: relations

of power, a game of truth or knowledge, and forms of relation to oneself and to others (subjectivisation and subjectification)<sup>4</sup>. As Pløger (2008) indicates, a *dispositif* comprises both discursive and material forces, which, in certain relational configurations develop the power to regulate, govern and/or empower specific entities. In a spatial planning *dispositif*, for instance, development management case officers produce reports recommending acceptance or refusal of a development application.

Such power is intrinsically and extrinsically linked to knowledge. Foucault and Deleuze agree that knowledge is discursive. It is justified, not by truth *per sé*, but by claims that are accepted as being valuable or true. In turn, these claims are justified by other claims. Knowledge rests on justification. Knowledge is a series of contingent networks of mutually reinforcing justifying claims. For example, evidence-based strategic policy-making may lead to requirements for x nuclear power stations on the basis of mutually justifying claims about future levels of electricity usage, resource availability, price and so on. Tracing involves unfolding the sets of claims which have had important inferential roles in particular discourses and the generation of knowledge, such as with regard to power infrastructure.

*Dispositifs* are also "lines of subjectivation", or the actualisation of the subject. They perform a mediating role between actants and their "environments" of forces and relations. Planning practitioners' subjectivisations of themselves (for example, as experts, facilitators, mediator etc.) and their subjectifications of other actants (as "greedy" developers, "NIMBY" residents etc.) often contrast markedly with other actants' subjectivisations (as rate-paying citizens) and subjectifications (of planners as political "puppets" or remote bureaucrats out of touch with reality).

We can devise several questions for tracing *dispositifs* (after Foucault, 1978; Mormont, 2003): what was the



strategic imperative on which the *dispositif* was/is constructed? What were the main internal and external power relations at work? How did these power relations make discourses possible? How were discourses used to support or undermine power relations? What forms of subjectivisation and subjectification performed? How were power relations strategically linked? How was the action of power relations modified? By what connections, conjunctions and disjunctions?

Whilst tracing Foucauldian *dispositifs* is clearly valuable, Deleuze and Guattari complement the *dispositif* by defining the concepts of assemblage/*agencement* along two axes.

## 5. Axes

One axis defines the *roles* which components or elements may play, from the purely material to the purely expressive (Deleuze, Guattari, 1987, pp. 503-4). The material parts of a social assemblage, such as an interest group or a strategic planning advisory panel, consist of the energy and labour involved in «maintaining its relations, patching together provisional coalitions, negotiating which of the numerous agendas brought forward by the participants will be mounted as action and hiding internal struggles from public view» (Hillier, Van Wezemael, 2008, p. 167). Material components include elements such as bodies, time, energy, buildings. Expressive components include texts, such as reports and petitions and nonlinguistic visibilities such as gestures and charisma.

The second axis concerns the reterritorialisation/deterritorialisation or stabilisation/destabilisation of assemblages. Territorialisation<sup>5</sup>, or stabilisation, acts to sharpen borders and homogenise components. Deterritorialisation, or destabilisation, acts to free up relations. Territorialisation – as land use regulations,

development plans and so on – is a form of action on, or capture of, individual or social forces which seeks to limit or constrain their possibilities for action. An assemblage can have components working to stabilise or territorialise it at the same time as other components work in the opposite direction. The axis of territorialisation is concerned with *process*; the provisional ordering of chaos through laying down a frame (Grosz, 2008).

The key benefits of tracing are an increased understanding of how a city, a neighbourhood, a policy etc. got into its present situation. Tracing uncovers the main drivers of what took place and especially the power relations between actants. I suggest that many strategic planning practices may look historically at what happened – in terms of trend series of unemployment figures, housing starts and so on – but few look genealogically at the conditions of possibility of how and why things happened. If planners are to think about what might take place in the future, I argue that they need to ask different questions about the past which will lead to asking different questions about the future.

## 6. Towards a cartography for multiplanar practice: mapping and diagramming

*to map is to experiment.*  
(Coonfield, 2008, p. 83)

To map involves discovery and perception of landmarks, useful for orientation purposes as something to head towards. Rather than its popular usage as depicting what exists, a map in its Deleuzean sense is oriented toward experimentation: «a way of marking out the territory on the road» and «a furtive glance sideways into an undecidable future» (both quotations of Bosteels,

2001, p. 895). Deleuzean maps are concerned with creative potential. The issue is not to attempt to define long-term detailed programmes of action, but to raise questions of potential agency and of socio-economic-political and institutional conditions of change.

Projected trajectories cannot guarantee actual progression, however. Massumi (1992, p. 103) suggests that «[t]he most that can or should be done is to enumerate ways in which becoming might be mapped». These “ways” might be democratically and inclusively negotiated and agreed strategies, or «pragmatic guidelines serving as landmarks to future movement» (*ibid.*). This means that planners might trace networks, actants, power plays, subjectifications/subjectivizations, discourses and so on, and notice where any oppositions or resistances affect policy decisions and implementation. These tracings then become part of the map, together with «the complexities of the social» (Wise, 2006, p. 187) – the ideological mentalities, assumptions, and so forth – underlying actants’ knowledges and actions. Mapping complexities involves locating diagonals or transversals (Deleuze, 1988b) across elements and the possibilities they open up (see Bogue, 2007). It is a question of mapping the trajectories to see whether they might be capable of acquiring enough agency «to turn around a situation» (Guattari, 1986, p. 102), or, as Healey (2009) suggests, what kind of “opportunity structure” they offer for actants to influence outcomes.

Mapping generates «a set of various intersecting lines» (Deleuze, 1995, p. 33) or diagram expressing immanent relations of power. A diagram allows evaluation of the organisational potentiality of various strategic *agencements* to actualise and facilitate or obstruct planning practitioners’ ideas.

Deleuze describes a diagram as being «suggestive» of «possibilities of facts» (Deleuze, 2003, p. 101), containing «a germ of order» of what might be

(Deleuze, 2003, p. 102). Deleuze (2003, pp. 137-8) also suggests that in activities which oscillate between the “beforehand” and an “afterward” (such as strategic spatial planning), there is a need for diagrams as stopping or resting points. Diagrams (strategic plans), lie in a zone of indiscernability between two forms, a form-that-is-no-longer and another form which does not yet exist (Bogue, 2003, p. 156). They act as intercessors between ideas and what may become. Diagrams create possibilities; imaginary alternative worlds which promise something new; a hope of living otherwise (Bogue, 2003, p. 177). Through the creative use of diagrams, strategic planners may be able to cast aside the habits or clichés of practice, to «destroy the figurative coordinates of conventional representations and to release the possibilities of invention» (Ambrose, 2006, p. 207): to think contingency, difference and relationality creatively. By mapping connections between different relations of force onto a diagram, one may be able to anticipate the potential power of force relations between the various actants and what they might become capable of achieving.

Cartography as a process would request strategic planners to diagram and engage the interconnections between elements, to experiment with them and anticipate potential tensions and conflicts. What new assemblages might eventuate; what strategic *agencements*? As Bogue (2007, p. 10) describes, this is «both a process of exploring and hence constructing connections among differences, and a process of undoing connections in an effort to form new ones». A practical “thinking otherwise” in an experimental activation of potentiality. A “what might happen if...?” approach, not so much to predict, but to be alert to as-yet unknown potentialities (Deleuze, 1988b, pp. 1-2). As such, Deleuze (1988b, p. 44) also emphasises that, in addition to relational connections, diagrams should also include non-connected points of «creativity, change and





resistance»; points which may come from the outside to surprise us.

Planning analysts might think about which actants may have potentially what kinds of relations with which others and which may be excluded. Who and what might be power-full agents of de- and re-territorialisation? Who and what might form likely alliances? Why? What knowledges might be important? Could strategic agency/*agencement* generate? What tensions and antagonisms might occur? Over what issues?

Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) fourth cartographic, or machinic, component concerns the evaluative study of assemblages/*agencements* and their potentialities, with a view to intervening strategically. This component would entail attempting to select and to facilitate, or

strategically navigate towards, potentially "good" encounters and to avoid "bad" ones. This is an exercise in which strategic planners would attempt to intervene and manipulate relational forces and their potential connections, conjunctions and disjunctions, their possible trajectories. In other words, to diagnose becomings (Bergen, 2006, p. 109).

The above raises several ethical issues. Who gives planning practitioners the authority to "judge" which are "good" and which are "bad" actants, encounters and potentialities? Whose definition of "good" or "bad" is employed? Deleuze and Guattari stress the need for openness and the exploration of potential without limit. But limits will (and must) be imposed for strategic planning to operate. How might practitioners perform ethically, inclusively and democratically?

One way of introducing potentiality to strategic spatial planning could be through the use of prospective or strategic foresighting techniques. Albrechts (2004; 2005, p. 255) describes prospective-building as deriving from the observation that, given the impossibility of knowing how the future will play out, a useful strategic trajectory would «play out well across several possible futures». Prospectives offer a way of attempting to make visible the potential forces which could lead the future in a range of desirable or undesirable directions. «By exploring what places/institutions might do if certain circumstances were to arise; they enable us to reflect on a series of “what if” stories» (Albrechts, 2005, p. 256).

Deleuze and Guattari (1987, p. 251) suggest that tentative criteria may be developed from practical experience and judgement in order to foresight potential becomings. However, the range of potentialities that can become actualised is constrained by «an ordering and filtering system» (Due, 2007, p. 9) which imposes determinate structures on the socio-economic-political processes with which thinking and foresighting are entangled and which may block creative transformation. Powerful entities with a desire for constancy and stability can block change. Deleuzean poststructuralism does not mean without structures, but it denies a primordial role for structures in determining events.

Massumi and Manning (2007) argue that constraints on mapping are inevitable, but that we should seek out those which are enabling, rather than disabling. Enabling constraints could facilitate positive connections between actants and help them to think and act creatively in spaces of possibility. One therefore makes progress not by avoiding conflicts, but by “playing with” them (Massumi, in Zournazi, 2003). The aim is to challenge institutional and other structures which trap actants into persistent behaviours and to turn potentially disabling constraints into enabling ones.

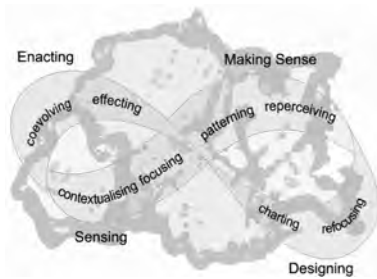
## 7. Strategic navigation

*Conventional strategic planning is dead!  
In a world where strategy is a commodity,  
navigation and imagination become  
the critical factors.*  
(Hames, 2007, p. 229)

Strategic planning is dead! Long live strategic planning! Returning to Michel Foucault's (1982, p. 2) theorising about “pilotage” and his use of the metaphor of navigation, I develop the concept of strategic spatial planning as strategic navigation, adapting the term from Richard Hames' work on organisational management.

Hames (2007, pp. 228-9) defines strategic navigation as «the art of confidently and ethically finding viable paths into the future, negotiating unknown terrain and unprecedented complexity while retaining integrity and relevance»; a definition which meshes well with the practice of strategic spatial planning. Hames advocates a methodology of “strategy-as-process” – «a continuous braiding of intelligence creation with insightful action» (Hames, 2007, p. 81) – based on appreciation of a “system's” (e.g. a city or region) past, present and potential futures. This resonates strongly with Deleuzean-inspired tracing and mapping cartography.

Strategic navigation is a conversation that weaves between specific episodes or events and local or micro stories, the networks and coalitions, assemblages and *agencements* of governance processes, and the macro of governance cultures. Whilst Hames (2007, p. 253) depicts a conversation of sensing (similar to Deleuze's tracing), making sense and designing (Deleuze's mapping and diagramming) and enacting as a strategic-learning spiral, comprised of eight elements, I prefer a rhizomic metaphor which emphasises the non-linearity and con-



nectedness of the constituent elements (fig. 1).

Hames suggests that practitioners ask strategic questions aimed at uncovering not only the driving

forces in play behind different behaviours, but also why actants see and explain the world as they do (elements of *Contextualising* and *Focusing*). The element of *Patterning* integrates the different perspectives and knowledges derived from Contextualising and Focusing into understandings of what is happening and what might happen if... *Reperceiving* and *Refocusing* would entail *scenario* or foresight-based diagramming of issues and implications, from which "leverage points" are identified and pertinent responses are designed in a strategic "plan" component (*Charting*). The rhizome incorporates continuous reflexion, reperception and revision of information, ideas and intentions as new knowledges emerge, circumstances alter and decisions change the context and issue focus (*Effecting* and *Co-evolving*).

In relation to these elements, I offer some possible questions for consideration in tab. 1, drawn from Richard Hames' work (2007) and those suggested earlier in this paper as the methodology was developed.

Strategic navigation involves monitoring and analysing the structures, links, relationships and information flows which «really matter to different people, in different geographies, over time», in which actants agree what is and may become significant, or less so, in collaborative creation of «pathways into sustainable "preferred" futures» (both quotations of Hames, 2007, p. 121). Continuous monitoring is also required to ensure both that shorter-term plans and projects (the plane of

organisation) do not "veer off" the broader trajectory of the longer-term vision (the plane of immanence), "seduced" either by conventional thinking and inertia or «the latest flavour of the month» (Hames, 2007, p. 250), perhaps for yet another iconic building or retail centre. Monitoring should also ensure that the longer-term vision remains relevant. Practice thus proceeds more or less by «groping in the dark, experimentation» (Deleuze, Guattari, 1987, p. 461) rather than by adhering rigidly to some predetermined, but rapidly irrelevant, masterplan or over-defined targets.

## 8. Conclusions: strategic spatial planning as strategic navigation

*Offerings of ways to think, and ultimately to act [...] move us in the direction of possibilities that had before been beyond our ken.*  
(May, 2003, p. 151)

Strategic spatial planning is concerned with learning something new and providing the opportunities for the emergence of "people-to-come" and the "not-yet". I regard planning as speculative and creative, yet structured, experimentation in the spatial. As such, long-term strategic planning – planning on the plane of immanence – could be a more inclusive, democratic, open and creative imagination of the past-present-future where there is foresighting of potential future *scenario* and collaborative, critical discussion in ongoing conversations about their potential consequences for different actants. Planes of organisation contain hierarchical power relations which temporarily both regulate our worlds and fix identities as they support the everyday segmentarities of life. These are planes which tend to be relatively local or micro, short-term and relatively content-specific. They facilitate small

**Table 1. Thinking spatial planning as strategic navigation: some questions for consideration**

*Contextualising* performs understanding of the context in which strategic planning is to take place; a sensing of what is going on and how things came to be. Questions include:

- What are the key characteristics of the socio-economic-political environment? In what materialities and discursivities are they actualised?
- What are the critical relationships between these characteristics?
- What were their conditions of possibility? How did they come to be? What did actants say, write, perform? Why? What were the impacts on other actants?
- What were the dynamics of force relations between actants? Power, emotions, desires etc revealed by discursivities and materialities. What *dispositifs* prevailed?
- What changed? Why?

*Focusing* arrives at an initial, shared understanding of critical issues. Questions include:

- What are the most strategically significant issues requiring attention? Why? What *dispositifs* prevail?
- What are the relationships between these and other *dispositifs*/issues?
- What relationships matter most? Why?
- What most concerns key decision makers? Why?
- What control or influence can planners exercise over these issues and their relationships?
- What assumptions lead us to these conclusions? How do planners subjectivate themselves and other actants?
- Do other actants share these conclusions? What are their subjectivations?

*Patterning* integrates different perspectives and new knowledges into planners' understandings of what is happening and might happen in the future. Questions include:

- What patterns of change can we identify? Are force relations changing between actants? Are *dispositifs* changing?
- How and why are these patterns changing? What connections, conjunctions and disjunctions are occurring? How are changes manifest by discourses and materialities?
- What are the gaps in our current thinking and knowing?
- Where can we get the information from?
- Are there other ways of perceiving the issues which raise different questions, problems, opportunities?

*Reperceiving* involves deepening awareness and understanding through finding new ways to view issues. Foresighting or prospective exercises can offer multiple perspectives on alternative futures. Outcomes can significantly change beliefs about what is important to actants. Questions include:

- What new insights can be gleaned from the various prospectives? What might happen if ...?
- What are the conditions of possibility of the various prospectives? What ideological commitments, assumptions, blockages, oppositions might actualise?

- What are the key relations between actants?
- How may force relations play out in the future?
- What changes might there be and why?
- What implications do these insights have for strategic planning?

*Refocusing* examines what, from the prospectives investigated, could be more or less likely to take place and could be more or less strategically important and why. Refocusing filters attention. Questions include:

- What are the most significant issues requiring attention?
- What specific factors make these issues critical and why? What force relations are important?
- How might these issues be addressed?
- Does the planning system have the capacities to address these issues?
- What other actants should be involved?
- What should plans address in the short-term (plane of organisation) and long-term (plane of immanence) and why?

*Charting* involves preparing appropriate plans. Questions include:

- What strategies are possible?
- What strategies might become possible in the short or longer-term future, how and why?
- What are the possible consequences, risks and opportunities of these strategies?
- How can strategic plans be prepared so that the local planning authority remains responsive and adaptive?
- How can the linkages between the components of the strategic plans be described?
- Do the strategies address key leverage points?

*Effecting* implements the plans. Questions to consider before implementation include:

- How will we know if the plans are effective in navigating towards our strategic intentions?
- What would be an appropriate monitoring system?
- How would we accommodate requirements for systemic change in the plans?
- What are we unaware of that may cause problems in the future?

*Co-evolving* enables adaptation of practice and plans in the light of changes caused by those practices and plans. Questions include:

- What signals will indicate that a fundamental change is occurring in the context from which we defined the strategic plans?
- What may be the critical, unintended consequences of our plans?
- Do we need to think differently about our strategic intentions?
- Are we ignoring any force relations, connections or actants that might be critical?
- Do our plans need to change?

*Source:* adapted from Hames (2007).







movements (action plans, major projects) along the dynamic trajectories of planes of immanence.

Improvisation is important in forms of strategic planning practices which would be performative rather than strictly normative/prescriptive, concerned with strategically navigating “journeys rather than destinations” and with establishing the conditions for the development of alternatives. This would be a pragmatic approach in which «policy plugs into production, and production into policy» (Wise, 2006, p. 191). It would be bureaucratically and politically unsettling and “risky”, for, as Wise (*ibid.*) explains, it will not only apprehend the probability of «opportunities that are unforeseen», but simultaneously accept that policy outcomes are experimental and unpredictable. I offer Deleuzian cartography as an “anexact” practice of strategic navigation, «open and connectable in all its dimensions» (Deleuze, Guattari, 1987, p. 12), for those «who want to *do* something with respect to new uncommon forces, which we don’t quite yet grasp» (Rajchman, 2000, p. 6).

By investigating specific stories about specific situations (the micropolitical) and tracing relationalities (the connections, conjunctions and disjunctions between elements), by making visible the various *dispositifs*, de- and re-territorialisations, the discursivities and materialities, the power-plays and subjectivizations/subjectifications, we can develop an understanding of the roles of actants (both human and non-human) in what took place. Looking at the relations between elements (the Deleuzian lines) rather than at the elements themselves (the points), would be relatively new practice for most spatial planning practitioners, but by tracing the multiplicity of ways in which actants attempt to generate and express power through subjectifying others (e.g. through constraining their choices, their self-subjectivizations etc.), through organisation (actions, laws, decisions) and through signification

(discourses) we can begin to unfold the contingent systems which were actualised.

Tracing – Hames’ sensing (contextualising and focusing) – offers us a temporarily stabilised grid of reference for understanding what took place, which practitioners can then make sense of through patterning and re-perceiving issues, deepening their awareness and understanding. Emphasis then shifts to designing – mapping the diagonals or transversals across lines, to diagram potentialities. Planners would «map out a range of circumstances» (Deleuze, 1995, p. 26), situations and relations or lines (strategic plans) representing desired virtualities of future development. Then comes experimentation, in respect of which I noted the potential of prospective or foresighting. Creativity is experimental, testing out relations, recognising the limitations of particular constraints and attempting to work with enabling constraints where possible: refocusing. Planners have to operate through some reductive, perspectival stabilisation of difference simply in order to cope. Some territorialisation is inevitable (charting) as plans include «just a little order to protect us from chaos» (Deleuze, Guattari, 1994, p. 201). Even so, no matter how much we map, diagram and chart spaces of possibilities, there will always be the unknown. Enacting (effecting and co-evolving) becomes reflexive and adaptive as changes in context, agents and structures occur.

A Deleuzian-inspired practice of strategic navigation would perform «an art of inhabiting the intervals, where new foldings arise to take our forms of inhabitation in new and uncharted directions» (Rajchman, 1998, p. 32). Strategic navigation is potentially an inclusive, democratic “what might happen if...?” approach which allows disparate points of view to co-exist; which has a concern for indeterminate essences rather than ordered ones; for emergent properties rather than fixed ones; and

for intuition and uncertainty, multiplicity and complexity rather than systematic predictabilities. Strategic spatial planning by strategic navigation is a performance of risk-taking, of not being in total control, of transcending the technicalities of planning practice which demands that strategic spatial planners «step outside what's been thought before, [...] venture outside what's familiar and reassuring, [...] to invent new concepts for unknown lands» (Deleuze, 1995, p. 103) and to allow possibilities

for something new to emerge. As Rajchman (1998, p. 33) suggests, «the aim of the game is not to rediscover the eternal or the universal but to find the conditions under which something new may be created».

*In civilizations without boats, dreams dry up,  
espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police  
take the place of pirates.  
(Foucault, 1967)*

## Notes

- 1 An actant, after Greimas (1966) and Latour (1996) implies either a human or non-human entity. The term conjoins actors and agency.
- 2 Conjunction refers to the joining of elements or processes such that one or some become dominant to the detriment of others.
- 3 See also Foucault's chapter *Method* in *The Will to Knowledge* (1978).
- 4 I distinguish between subjectivization as self-actualisation, or taking on a subject-position, and subjectification as the subjective identification of others, or accordance of a subject-position (Hook, 2007, p. 31).
- 5 Territorialisation describes «the creation of meaning in social space through the forging of coded connections and distinctions» (Brown, Lunt, 2002, p. 17) such as laws, symbols, slogans or concepts. Deterritorialisation involves the destabilisation and ultimate removal of codings that confer fixed meaning. However, deterritorialisation does not take place without some form of reterritorialisation, the establishment of new rules and ideologies (Deleuze, Guattari, 1994).

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