Trajectories, vectors and change

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Trajectories, vectors and change: mapping late neoliberal assemblage

Introduction

At the time of writing, a decade has passed since the rising level of defaults on mortgages in the United States precipitated a liquidity crisis in international investment markets, threatening the existence of several major global banks. The reduced levels of capital investment that followed produced a major global recession. The debts of many nations grew rapidly due to expanding structural deficits and the provision of liquidity to banks. Concerns grew about some governments' ability to service national debts, particularly within Europe. Iceland's banking system collapsed in 2008 and its government fell in 2009. Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Spain and Cyprus all required support from international and supranational institutions to remain solvent. In the UK, public policy-making since the crash has, according to official accounts, been based on an 'austerity' strategy of tightening fiscal expenditure on public services as a means of reducing structural deficits. The administrations of cities, which run many public services, have been forced to reduce levels of provision in the face of rising demand. The intensification of social and economic antagonisms of class, race, gender, sexuality, generation and region have produced significant political volatility in formal political processes and on the streets.

In 2011, one of us sat across a table from a youth worker as she cried over the loss of her job running arts-based programmes for young people of colour in a city in the North-East of England. Six months later the same author read a newspaper report about the arrest of another of the participants in his study, for protesting about the closure of the city's crime prevention programme. In 2013, one of us spoke to a community police officer in another major city in the UK about his struggle to deal with new demands to bid for money for youth projects, to organise youth soccer matches on Saturday morning, and to explain to the young people he met that he would still have to arrest them if they broke the law. In 2015 one of us stood outside a branch of a large chain of bakeries in a city in the Midlands of England, offering to buy food for a young woman who had just

been told her benefits had been withdrawn. She was unemployed and eligible for support but was being punished because she had been late to a meeting intended to support her into work. The young person says she can't take our money.

Tears, shouting, locked doors to a youth centre, confusion, arrest, jobs, absence, solidarity, shame, the smell of food, pride, resentment…these are and are not the impossibly complicated effects of this financial crisis. In this chapter, we reflect on our research on the provision of education and welfare services for young people during a period of dramatic change for young people themselves, for the adults providing services, and the apparatus of service provision in cities in the UK. We aim to describe how we have tried to make sense of and write about (we hesitate to say represent) these changes; how we have attempted to adapt, to move with a mobile field. Our prior work has used the conceptual and methodological approaches of critical policy sociology to explore the relations of policy discourse to the subjectivities and practices of youth and education. Broadly speaking, this field has explored the constitution of young bodies as a population through their subjection to government in and through the institutional spaces of youth (Kelly, 2000) – the family, the school, the youth centre, the job centre, the street and so on. The concerns of policy sociological work have centred on the constitution of 'those places where the body and the population meet' (Ball, 2013, loc. 800), and so are methodologically oriented to a particular sense of youth as a category in constitutive relation not only to policy but to a particular "post-welfare" neoliberal institutional territory and modality of capture and regulation. Our focus here is on the need we felt to move on from the established methodological and conceptual approaches of critical policy sociology, as post-welfare institutional territories were subjected to rapid dis- and re-assembly. This was an exploratory kind of moving on, which we undertook through at times excitable and at times ambivalent engagements with 'new' materialism. New materialism has emerged as a loosely organised, diverse field of research interested in exploring the social as constituted in the productive material relations of diverse elements. A new materialist analysis would tend to understand production as the effect of arrangements of discourse, bodies, practices, and the non-human

material (an inevitably incomplete list). In its exploration of the knotty and dynamic relations of elements of different kinds, new materialism is distinguished by its refusal of prior or primary orderings of production (of history, of rationality, of human will, of discourse), or to index any level to the different components of these arrangements (a level of the symbolic and a level of the material for example). Components are only knowable in the contingencies of these relations, and not by some prior categorisation, organisation or territory. This perhaps explains our engagements in this field – that in a territory that was rapidly disassembling, becoming unbounded, and in which points of orientation were losing their significance, here was an approach that moved with a sense of the field as non-unitary, that could allow for a micro-political not totalised or bound in advance by policy or large scale social formations.

Youth service provision in its macropolitical aspect

The international financial crisis has brought change to the lives of young people in the UK, and to young people's education and welfare services. Since 2008, young people have experienced changing patterns of employment, including greater job insecurity, higher costs for education and housing, the reassertion of majoritarian national and class identities that are exclusionary for many, and the popularisation of pejorative uses of the 'millennial' generational label. At the same time that young people in the UK have fared badly economically and culturally, public policy-making has rapidly disassembled the extant apparatus of youth service provision (Youdell & McGimpsey, 2015). However, we argue that this disassembly is one movement in the assemblage of a new late neoliberal apparatus of local social investment with distinct regulatory effects.

In common with other phases of neoliberalism, we argue that late neoliberalism involves the formation of a distinctive means of capture and investment of capital, bodies and affect (McGimpsey, 2017).This late neoliberal public service assemblage consists in the conjunction of discourses of austerity, localism, national citizenship and social investment, and distinctive technologies for the calculation of the return on investment from public funds (Harlock, 2013). The

late neoliberal regime operates with something more like a finance capital imaginary, reconstituting value and knowledge in the public sector through ‘investment’, ‘impact’ and ‘returns’. This has produced significant reforms of local government, that had previously been required to constitute local markets from which it could purchase services from private providers in order to fulfil their statutory duties (Bovaird, 2014). Under later neoliberalism these administrations have been reconstituted with ‘the same capacity to act as an [entrepreneurial] individual’ (Communities and Local Government, 2011, p. 1) and expected to maximise the impact from its investments (Bagwell, 2012; Newman & McKee, 2005; Rocyn Jones, 2013). Neoliberalism has consistently grown private supplier capacity to provide public services. However, under late neoliberalism capital is consistently distributed to for-profit organisations, larger charities and emerging hybrid 'social enterprises'. Smaller not-for-profit and community providers that had previously competed successfully for contracts on the basis of their localised knowledge of and networks are now losing out (Birtwistle & O'Brien, 2015, pp. 10-11, 15). Moreover, central government has diverted capital flows away from city administrations and local government altogether, and formed direct relationships with providers. Notable examples include the rapid expansion of academy and free school programmes that have accelerated the privatisation of schooling in England (R. Higham, 2013; R Higham, 2014; West & Bailey, 2013), and the formation of the National Citizen Service to which the UK government plans to distribute £1billion through a recently established 'social enterprise' organisation called the National Citizen Service Trust (Offord, 2016).

In writing about these shifts, we have made use of concepts and methodological approaches established in education policy sociology during the 1990s when far-reaching marketizing reforms of education and youth services were being implemented. Foundational research on these processes of policy formation, circulation and influence argued for a rejection of rationalist models of State-controlled top-down policy production and implementation (Bowe, Ball, & Gold, 1992)(Bowe, Ball & Gold, 1992). Policy-making was reconceived as a non-linear, continuous process taking place simultaneously in contexts of policy text production, private political influence and local practice,

with wider social justice effects. Central to this rejection was an application of notions of 'discourse', 'governmentality' and 'subjectivation' (Ball, 1994a, 1994b), terms that have since been widely used for the analysis of neoliberalism as a modality of governance. From this perspective, neoliberal government involves the establishment of a whole series of mechanisms (not simply bureaucratic organisational forms, but markets, contracts, managerialist audit, networks and so on) by which knowledges, logics, performance demands, notions of value, ways of interpreting and judging the self and others, records of performance are circulated, and spaces are created for the inclusion and exclusion, confinement and discipline of young people. These processes are material in the sense that they constitute the objects they describe, the power relations among those objects, and the territories in which these objects and their interactions belong. This is a form of governance in which knowledge is central to a regulatory ordering of local production (Patton, 2006), and whereby the relations of the individual to the state are constituted through a decentralised, distributed, and increasingly global system (Ball, 2013).

The late neoliberal regime constitutes its own territory in which its apparatus of capture develops and functions, distinct from both the bureaucratic welfare state and the quasi-market of prior neoliberal phases. However, this is not a simple, temporally linear transition between states of the order of (1) post-WW2 welfare state to (2) neoliberal market state circa 1979-2007 to (3) the late neoliberal social investment state post-2007. To ‘represent’ the (dis)assemblage of public services and its subjects in such a way risks a textual ordering of neoliberalism as a spatio-temporal unity (Lapping & Glynos, 2017, p. 3), or series of unities that can each be explained according to their difference from the others. Such an approach would set our empirical data in an internal relation to the idea of ‘neoliberalism’. Our analytic approach would then become an effort to show how empirical data at the micro-political level can be ‘explained’ by neoliberalism as an example of the subjectivation of young people. Alternatively where such explanations broke down and risked a disordering of our idea of the macro-political, this would be used to claim the emergence of a new successor state, a new unity capable of bearing the burden of explanation.

Such a representational approach would tend to favour an idea of the social in terms of 'stability and hierarchy' (Patton, 2006, pp. 23-24). Though clearly not the intent of the original Foucaultian theory (Lazzarato, 2006), in its application neoliberalism understood as the exercise of power via discipline and biopolitics can seem to establish its own horizons, and constitute a certain terrain on which 'contemporary disciplinary technologies [appear] as uni-directional in their effects, squeezing the breath out of pockets of resistance' (Lapping & Glynos, 2017, p. 4), denying the possibility of the new. This was far from the 'change' we encountered during this period. This period did involve accelerations of neoliberal processes already in motion, such as the scaling up of services through diverting public capital to a privately owned institutional infrastructure for service provision, and the application of technologies of performativity to regulate the subjects to that provision. At the same time, to the degree that 'austerity' signifies a politically-driven project to reduce the scale of the apparatus of public sector provision that had been expanded during a prior neoliberal phase, recent change involved discontinuity. Though such discontinuity at times seemed like a re-emergence of a longer (neo)liberal continuity (Ball, 2012b), at other moments change would appear to involve greater novelty in the emergence of new technologies for the allocation of capital to provision via social investment, and new representations of the subject of policy through the application of new scientific knowledges of the human capacity for decision-making, our networked behaviours, or our bodies (McGimpsey, Bradbury, & Santori, 2016; Youdell, 2016).

That continuity and discontinuity are each features of the emergence of late neoliberalism suggests why we have been ambivalent in our moving on from established policy sociological approaches. We are convinced that the (dis)assemblage that has accelerated since 2008 requires us to broaden what is sayable and researchable in our work, to establish different research terrains (that no doubt risk their own horizons). And yet some established policy sociological conventions continue to speak powerfully to inequity in the distribution of social goods, identity and the practices of inclusion and exclusion in everyday life, and the technological and discursive means by which relations of power between bodies and the state are constituted (for example, Ball, 2001, 2009, 2012a; Bowe et al.,

1992; Gerwitz, 1997; Levin & Belfield, 2003; Youdell, 2004). As late neoliberalism's subjects, young people are still entered into spaces of enclosure for quantified periods of time, set as individuals in relation to the mass, and so on, and simultaneously the crisis of these familiar territories intensifies (Deleuze, 1992). Rather than overstate the novelty of late neoliberalism, what happens when it is understood as an open series, as a mobile terrain, , as not singular, as sustained contingently, far from stably through constant adaptation, not in a planned way but in the manner of a productive conjunctions of parts. Furthermore, (late) neoliberalism is not the only territory, and is vulnerable not simply to internal weakness, to 'contradiction', but to external effects. To that end, we sought to ask how our encounters with young people in these overdetermined city spaces did not only take place on a policy field in which almost all developments are more or less secretly 'neoliberal'; that there were possible encounters in which subjects of sociological representations are not always trapped in relations of domination and resistance, whether they know it or not; and in which hope is experienced in creativity within the concrete realities of everyday life rather than either technocratic moderations of the extremes of inequalities or the abstraction of an unlooked for utopia?

Machinic assemblage

To confront these questions, we used Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the machinic assemblage as a means to depart from representations of the spatio-temporal unity of neoliberalism. The term machinic centres a view of production as taking place through a connective synthesis that is 'at work everywhere' (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004a, p. 1), a synthesis in which material elements or parts connect with flows of energy to produce machines that in turn drive other machines. What is centred in this view of production is the machine in this sense (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004a, p. 21-22), not a thing but a connective synthesis that operates without any necessary reference to a unity or a cause. Those unities - the subject, the state, an ideology, a history – that would capture the field of representation, reconfiguring its elements in fixed relation to itself, are instead all always decentred. . It is this decentring effort that enables assemblage ethnography to attempt a series of departures

from representations in terms of neoliberalism, even a neoliberalism that is dynamic, to consider instead a series of productive dynamics - quasi-marketisation, social investment, bureaucracy…."Series" here carries the sense not of a linear order of succession or hierarchy, but of open-endedness, of coextension, overlap, running in parallel and in conjunction, with the ellipsis a reminder that such a list inexhaustible (an exhausting thought).

Neoliberalism is a means of thinking about the power that consists in a regulatory relation between the practice of everyday life and the state, whereby the local functioning of affinities, desire and habit are constituted and invested through technologies of marketization, audit and performance management. To the degree that neoliberalism totalizes the field, the everyday practices of neoliberal subjects come to be represented in terms of the antagonisms and identifications of the macro-political (Patton, 2006, pp. 28-30). Neoliberalism becomes the state of our affairs, whereby the tears of the unemployed young woman and her refusal of help are an identification with neoliberalism's responsibilised, individualised subject – perhaps the effect of embodying an affect of frustration as misguided self-reliance is thwarted, or alternatively the symptom of a melancholia that results from repressed solidarity and the ungrieved loss of a resistant community. Similarly, the close youth centre doors symbolise the retreating limits of the state and the expansion of the private space for neoliberalism's form of government through investment of individual autonomy. The police officer applying for funding for work with young people figures the entrepreneur prepared to pragmatically cut across institutional lines, the angry and arrested youth workers protesting about the loss of provision engaged in an act of anti-neoliberal resistance and so on. Meaning is fixed and flattened by the primacy of a certain politics, as other ways of knowing these cityscapes fall away (Britzman, 1998).

The machinic assemblage does nothing to disallow such an analysis, but it does trouble it, disrupt it, cut across it, lose interest in it only to bring it back into view at another point. It insists that the arrangements of bodies and their productivities are multiplicitous, realising different productive

capacities outwith their relation to a whole, in movements, flows, and directions that fall back on the arrangements that produced them, and that irrupt in others. As Deleuze and Guattari note:

> 'An arrangement in its multiplicity necessarily works at once on semiotic, material and social flows […] There is no longer a tripartite division between a field of reality (the world), a field of representation (a book) and a field of subjectivity (the author). Rather an arrangement connects together certain multiplicities caught up in each of these orders (G. Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 52).

Late neoliberal assemblage is conceptualised, then, as a series of complex, trans-scalar arrays of components and flows; it does not only describe some emergent effect of complexity at the scale of city, nation, or transnation, but distinct productive dynamics at multiple levels of scale. Further, such arrangements are not material realities in the modernist sense of determinate material objects that we observe (a separate subjective level of reality) and then symbolically inscribe (representation as a third reality). Instead, assemblages are mobile material/subjective/symbolic conjunctions that might always be arranged otherwise; and where assemblage does not so much describe the arrangements themselves, but the dynamics of order (abstract machines) in operation by which, for example, a youth service apparatus is dis- and re-assembled, and the specific quality of balance between these dynamics and their tendency to break down (Patton, 2006).

The late neoliberal public service assemblage should be understood, then, as a mobile arrangement of components and flows that includes economy, money, legislation, policy, institutions, organizations, social and cultural forms, discourse, representation, subjectivities and affectivities. We can acknowledge the molar lines of this assemblage in our ability to distinguish a 'unifiable, totalisable and organisable' (Patton, 2006, p. 28) public service apparatus, or perhaps apparatuses, identifiable as the effect of distinct regulatory means – bureaucracy, quasi-markets, social investments. When things proceed as they 'should', when the sense of the molar assemblage as a determinate arrangement is strengthened through its articulations, change may be everywhere but

as a kind of un-change. In other parts of the public service assemblage, different qualities of productive force are at play that effect different qualities (as distinct from quantities) of change. 'Austerity' has disrupted continuities in the public service assemblage, 'social investment' has undermined a sense of value. The quality of change is one in which there seem to be losses of meaning, disconnections between words and their referents as things seem no longer to exist as they once did. Institutional spaces are dissolved as services are closed and not replaced, leaving what feel like voids not as spaces to be refilled but as a loss of territory, a loss of space itself, a deterritorialization that is experienced even as alternative territories emerge in relation to other productive dynamics (reterritorialization).

Austerity is, in a sense, a negative term signifying a withdrawal of capital, a shrinking of the apparatus. It foregrounds losses, breaks with welfarist values, closures of welfare institutions, the erasure of public service roles. Austerity seems to refer to deterritorializations as it consigns to history while providing no means of saying what is coming to be. Social investment, on the other hand, seems to reterritorialize, creating different spaces, subjects, meanings and value; while at the micro-political there is an ongoing dynamic of departure from these spaces of old and new, of externality, of not belonging to either the old or newly emergent youth service apparatuses. And alongside change in the sense of loss of what was and the emergence of what is to come, there has been a sense of un-change felt when we travel off local high streets, out of community centres, away from local authority offices and into schools and job centres. That is, in exploring the late neoliberal assemblage we travel among spaces being disassembled as organisations disappear, buildings close and sometimes lie empty, staff lose jobs and are not replaced, young people go elsewhere, and among the recently opened offices of the new and growing private social enterprises. And alongside these voids and new places we also travel to recognisable places that look much as they always did. However, being in the school makes or job centre is not to experience a time of 'no change'; rather teachers or job coaches feel the anxiety of the pace of change in their work as new performance measures replace old, inspection regimes are altered, curriculums reformed, professional

development training provided, new demands made regarding client compliance, data recording and management, healthy eating, emotional well-being, sexual health…the time of un-change involves a certain kind of mania, a freezing of a moment of crisis, in which subjects seem haunted by the very real losses elsewhere in the assemblage, and where huge energy is invested in keeping still, in 'the fixing of presents, and the assignation of subjects' (G. Deleuze, 2004).

Doing assemblage ethnography

There is a growing body of work that puts assemblage theory to work in interrogating a range of substantive contemporary social phenomena. In the field of education, assemblage theory has been used to conceptualise and research areas of education practice and curriculum, notably Maria Tamboukou's (Maria Tamboukou, 2008; Maria Tamboukou, 2010) 'art education assemblage', Deana Leahy's 'pedagogical assemblage' (Leahy, 2009), as well as Webb's 'teacher assemblage' (2009). Our contribution (McGimpsey, 2013; Youdell, 2011, 2014) has been to suggest a methodology of 'assemblage ethnography' as a means to investigate together economic, structural, spatial, temporal, representational, discursive, relational, subjective and affective orders as these play out at macro, meso, and micro scales. In terms of method, assemblage ethnography builds on existing assemblage mapping (DeLanda, 2006; Maria Tamboukou, 2009; Webb, 2009) as well as developments in social science research that work across orders and scales (Jessop, Brenner, & Jones, 2008; Sheppard, 2002) and the material and representational (MacLure, 2010) and that ethnographically map policy networks (Ball & Junemann, 2012; Howard, 2002) and civil society organizations (Soteri-Proctor, 2011). In a sense, then, assemblage ethnography is a kind of pragmatism, itself a multiplicity actualized in relation to the formation it engages with.

‘Assemblage ethnography’ anticipates mapping the arrangement and effectivity of productive forces of specific assemblages in these orders, where ‘mapping’ takes on a particular meaning with respect to the dynamics of machinic assemblage. Education sociological engagements with post-structural theory have typically examined the regulatory production of the modernist dimension of being (Ball, 2003, 2013; Davies, 2006; Laws & Davies, 2000; Ringrose, 2011), and often sought to explore the limits of being, reconceptualising (’revealing’) seemingly abiding subjects and spaces as ‘events’, persistent ‘becomings’ to which difference and change are inherent. However, at this juncture we have felt pressed to take seriously the reforming force of austerity policy which foregrounds the contingencies of being in the violence of its decodings and deterritorializations. The public service assemblage is undergoing a conversion that we mark symbolically as ‘late neoliberalism’, with new productive dynamics emerging through and from changing conjunctions, producing new arrangements, reconstituting micropolitical externalities. Researching this conversion involves mapping the action of specific productive forces, charting the changing articulations of components and flows of the public service assemblage: fiscal tightening married to financialised notions of social investment; the widespread application of impact and outcome measures through service contracts and evaluation toolkits; networked technologies of control including the quantification of ‘dividualised’ (Gilles Deleuze, 1992a) subjects; the reconstitution of the civic as ‘investment ready’ through hybrid organizational forms such as social enterprise and so on. In other words, this is a *mapping* of the productive dynamics by which an arrangement is constituted, by which that arrangement constitutes a departure from something that no longer quite exists and a movement towards something not yet actualized, and by which its own breakdowns emerge. This is a mapping that proceeds from the demands of a significant change of phase, or rather a ‘phasing’, of the public service assemblage effected by a change in the quality of governance within it.

Our aim in using assemblage *ethnography*, then, is to reach across government and policy networks; institutional and professional forms, practices and subjectivities; and the civic and social practice of people engaged in their everyday lives. A mutation of the ethnographic study, we seek to use

assemblage ethnography to analyse, interpret and represent the production of public services in the transcalar application and effects of the productive forces listed above. That is, we do not move in a linear way from macro scales of organisation, to meso, to micro, but anticipate transcalar relations, for example, forces of policy that are active in local subjectivations. As such, assemblage ethnography aims to account for the detail of the components of assemblages, the nuances of the productive relations between these components, the multiple conjunctions that take place in different arrangements, and the far-reaching assemblages that these relations produce. Crucially, in these accounts we seek to make possible the production of accounts not of deterministic relations of cause and effect, but of productive dynamics based on the patterns of variability in the effects of productive forces. It is these productive dynamics and their relative co-extensions and varying im/balances that ultimately enable the exploration of territories, the apparatuses of capture, and the micro-political practices of externality to these territories. Central to our use of ethnography is the importance of the micro-political in driving the ongoing dynamic of change; ethnography is a term that anticipates the researcher as plugging into the assemblage, and implicated in the intersubjective processes of being and becoming of the assemblage.

Synthesis

In researching and representing assemblage, Deleuze argues that we must work both 'analytically' and 'diagnostically' to:

> 'distinguish what we are (what we are already no longer), and what we are in the process of becoming: *the historical part and the current part…*[To do so we must] untangle the lines of the recent past and those of the near future…that which belongs to history and that which belongs to the process of becoming' (Gilles Deleuze, 1992b, p. 164)

This is a careful job of drawing what we are ceasing to be, and a creative task of sketching what is emergent in the changing process of assemblage, the patterned mobility of its articulations. The key here is not to describe what is, but to trace the diagram by which the process of becoming is/will be

taking place. In the change by which a different dynamic of productivity, different multiplicities, becomes operative, 'Nothing happens, yet everything changes because becoming continues to pass through its components' (Giles Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 158). We cannot look at what is, look to understand the essences of objects on the basis of what they have done, or to understand the relations of parts to understand a whole; we must attempt to read the trajectory of changing relations, the competence of parts, and the productivity of breaks. The challenge is to engage in an interpretive, not predictive, task of mapping a terrain in motion, tracing productive movements not as causal interactions of bodies but as trajectories and accelerations.

The plane on which these movements take place is not flat. Rather there are planes of organisation, strata on which desire is channelled, movements regularised and directed, their productivity captured and invested in the reproduction of the apparatus of organisation. There is also a plane of immanence, of intensities, desire, affect, of synthesis in the conjunction of parts. Production might be understood as a dynamic of movement between these planes (Fuglsang & Sørensen, 2006, pp. 2-5); a dynamic of ordering and the breakdown of order. Assemblage ethnography seeks to understand territorialisation as such a dynamic, to discuss how populations, subjects, institutions come to be, on the understanding that multiple dynamics of order exist, and that the dynamics of desiring production, of that which remains external to the territory, cut across striations, destabilising its apparatus.

We take up a Deleuzian language of 'lines' in the representation of assemblage on the understanding that components and flows in machinic production (Gilles Deleuze & Guatari, 2004a) are not fixed in purpose or singular in their connections and productive potential, but variables in the actualisation of productive possibility in multiple and temporally non-linear relations. Further, lines in this sense describe movement - direction, velocity – that may evade the extant striations and in their extension articulate a future in the present; the actual produced in the distance between what we have already left behind and what we are not yet (Gilles Deleuze, 1992b).

Lines are a means of referring to specific components and flows of particular assemblages, and conveying the temporal without recourse to list-like arrangements of components seemingly frozen in a present moment. Yet immediately there is a danger. Lines might be understood as straight, hierarchized, moving up and down, connecting point A to point B and fixing both points and the shape of the whole. That is, they might be understood in terms of deterministic relations of past cause and present effect, or a form of 'tracing' from 'deep structure' (Gilles Deleuze & Guatari, 2004b, pp. 13-15) (of discourse, of economic logic, of principle of government) to their effects. In other words, lines are not straightforwardly a means to circumvent the conventions of modernist assumptions about 'society'. Our sense of 'lines' is as trajectories of variance rather than the outline of a shape (Gilles Deleuze, 1992b). The idea of the rhizome, which posits social formations as multi-directional and never ending, is useful for thinking about movements of assemblage: '[t]here are no points or positions in a rhizome, as one finds in a structure, tree or root. There are only lines' (Gilles Deleuze & Guatari, 2004b, p. 9). An assemblage is not hierarchically organized with 'macro' elements such as the state, economy or policy at the 'top', dominating productive forces and bearing down on the 'micro' elements below. Instead, productive forces and the productivities of the relationships between them are undecided and mobile – an assemblage in particular temporal and spatial arrangements may successfully repress other potentials, but given the machinic quality of material production break down and creativity seem inevitable and perhaps 'escape' is also possible, though it may well not be an escape to somewhere but a departure whereby that which 'escapes' is reconstituted in its movement.

We follow named 'lines' as 'ways in' to the map of the assemblage, to see what happens, what changes, what hits a dead end, what might be, and what sense of the assemblage emerges not from a centre but from multiple positions. Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the 'line' helps us to think about the ways that assemblages move. By drawing on their work in the construction of a methodology, we suggest three functions a line can describe:

- the molar lines that convey the outline of a social formation, as relatively rigid striations working as a 'plane of organization' (G. Deleuze & Parnet, 1983, p. 80); they trace the sensible order of being
- flows that convey a potentiality within a particular named order, which in their interaction with the components of the assemblage are engaged in processes of machinic production (Gilles Deleuze & Guatari, 2004a); that is, flows relate to actualizations that always carry the potential to be otherwise or multiple according to the articulation of the assemblage
- variables which are curves that describe distributions of those actualizations; that convey populations and the variations among them; this function concerns the patterned nature of productions in the light of potential for variance and multiplicity.

By identifying, following, mapping and finally overlaying these lines of differing function, we seek to interpret late neoliberal assemblage. Any map is a snapshot of a dynamic, mobile situation. To mitigate against such limitations, we further seek to interpret and represent the sense in which these lines intersect and fold together. We deploy a further three kinds of intersection, that collectively produce:

- traces of the existing 'molar' structure, reinscribing and deepening striations, segmenting territory;
- the 'molecular', supple and creating thresholds, flows and flux; and
- the 'line of flight', described as a line of 'becoming' (Gilles Deleuze & Guatari, 2004b, p. 305; G. Deleuze & Parnet, 1983, p. 80).

The notion of a pattern of intersection, of folding, is of course one of continuing movement. The attempt is not to measure the object of public service, but to map public service assemblage, here drawing on one city-region, in the UK in which the late neoliberal regime is active as a force of

reform. Thus, we are invited to remain aware of the immediacy and indeterminacy of the movements of these lines.

Lines of late neoliberalism

Assemblages defy easy description. They are simultaneously arrangements of heterogeneous elements that only exist in as far as they actualise something, but only actualise in as far as these arrangements are mobile, articulating and changing. Assemblages, , are 'effervescent, disappearing in years, decades' (Rabinow quoted in Marcus & Saka, 2006, p. 104)(Rabinow quoted in Marcus & Saka, 104); our task is to convey them as processes by which arrangements come to be stabilized or transformed (ibid., 4).

Representation of an assemblage is difficult, and we would not suggest any single way to do it. Here we suggest visual expression as an analytic tool that could demonstrate the heterogeneous combinations of elements, their proximity and potential for multiple conjunction, without losing a sense of the openness of the field, or leaving it flat, that is conveying the sense of overlapping territories, and of the macro- and micro- as embedded in each other. We are aware of both the potential of a diagram to give an appearance of fixity, to lack movement, and to flatten the rich materiality of elements, and we would note the limited nodal language of network diagrams as an indication of these difficulties (Latour, 2010) Nevertheless, here we try a map of the late neoliberal assemblage composed of an overlaying of three sets of lines - of molar inscriptions, of flows, and those that describe the distribution of variables. We include below a sketch of each of these sets of lines as an invitation to the reader to imagine an analytic in which these contours are overlaid, and perhaps animated, as a representation of the emergence of the public service assemblage in a regime of austerity.

This invitation is explicitly given in light of the history of use of diagrams in the social sciences to reduce productive interactions to fixed categories and simple linear causation; purporting to describe the properties of objects and how they relate in bounded spaces to produce patterned social action. Our goal is not to compose a bounded field of problematization over which we have achieved an impossible social scientific mastery (de Freitas, 2012; Latour, 1990). Rather this mapping 'is an experiment, inventing lines of flight…[operating] through potentiality and possibility' (de Freitas, 2012, p. 563) and it is intended to fuel rather than foreclose experimentation. We seek to express the sense of the dynamic between strata and immanent desire; to potentially expand readers' senses of how conjunctions of heterogeneous elements are located, concrete productions *and* simultaneously accelerations, foldings, conjunctions creating new possible movements.

These sets of lines have not been produced through quantification or systematic analysis of data sets pertaining to productive forces. Rather they have been produced by one of us experimentally, and somewhat intuitively, in response to and informed by the Deleuzian framing we set out here and as an effort to give some form to the complexities of assemblage that we have been describing. The diagrams were sketched initially in pencil and children's coloured pens as drafts attempting to name components and map connections in machinic assemblage in ways that would convey at once non-unitary systematicity, movement and force and fit onto the page. As they were rendered digitally the decision was made to not edit or alter the original drafts. Diagram 1 was suggested by roots, routes, paths, threads, strings, grass. Diagram 2 was suggested by the spyrograph. Diagram 3 was suggested by nail and thread art. Each was imagined as overlaid, three dimensional, animated and vital.

This expression flows from the diverse methods of our ethnographic work. This diagram, its labels, its distinctions of layers that overlay and fold into each other, are traced movements (backwards and forwards) from participant observation of educational spaces in the city, of bureaucratic meetings in city administration offices, of interviews with practitioners, with mangers and service auditors, policy texts, contracts, and demographic data regarding service users and their outcomes. This tracing

backwards and forwards is a means of exploring and expressing how ‘becoming continues to pass through its components’.

Diagram 1. Molar inscriptions

This set of lines represents the organization of public services as it has been but no longer quite is (Deleuze, 1992b). Such molar lines act to guide flows and hold components in their place, but also provide the reference points from which departures and innovations become obvious.

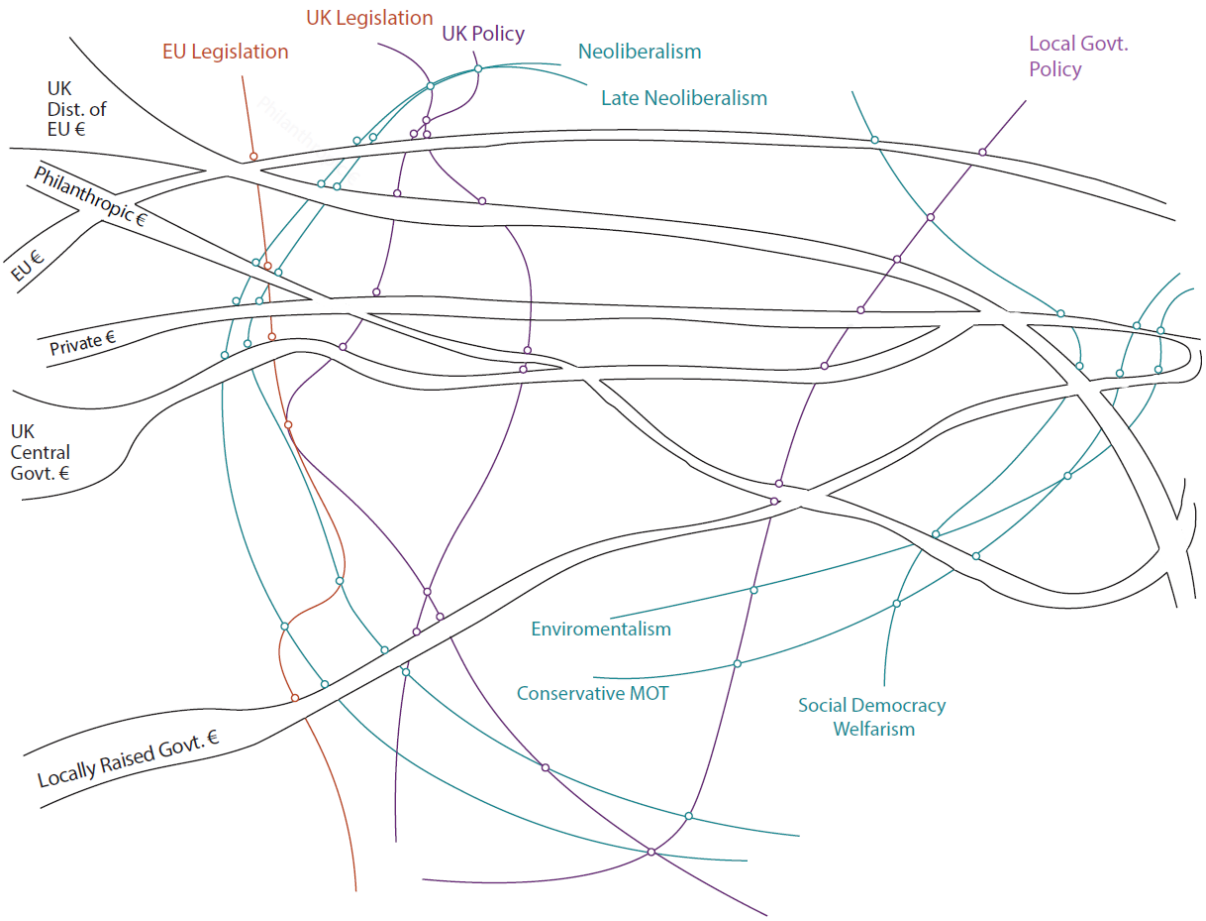


Diagram 2. Flows

These lines describe inputs of energy, potentialities in various orders that interact with components to animate machinic production, and which work multiply according to those interactions. For example, ‘money’ is a flow that changes its form and its effects according to the contractual components through which it is distributed, according to organisational apparatus in and between which it circulates, the timing of its circulation and so on. And indeed, we see such arrangements change in the emergent public service assemblage of austerity.

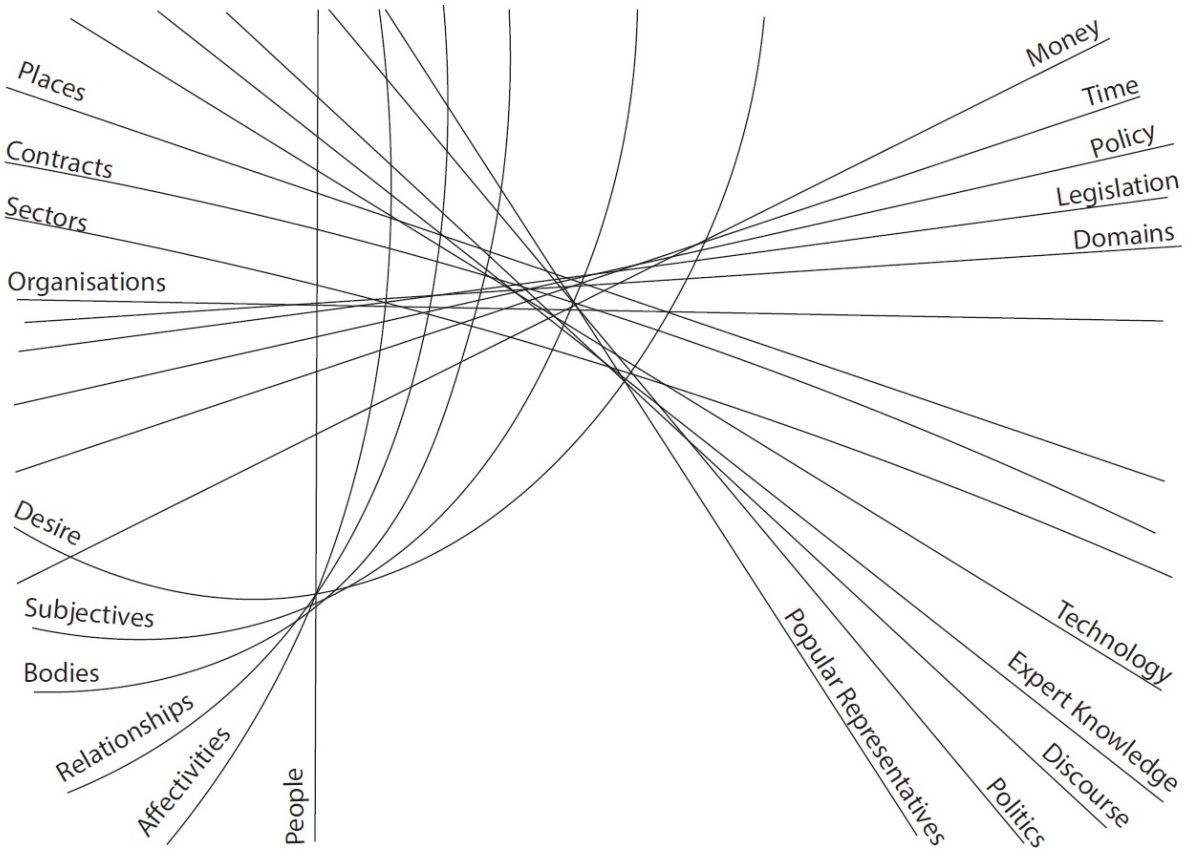
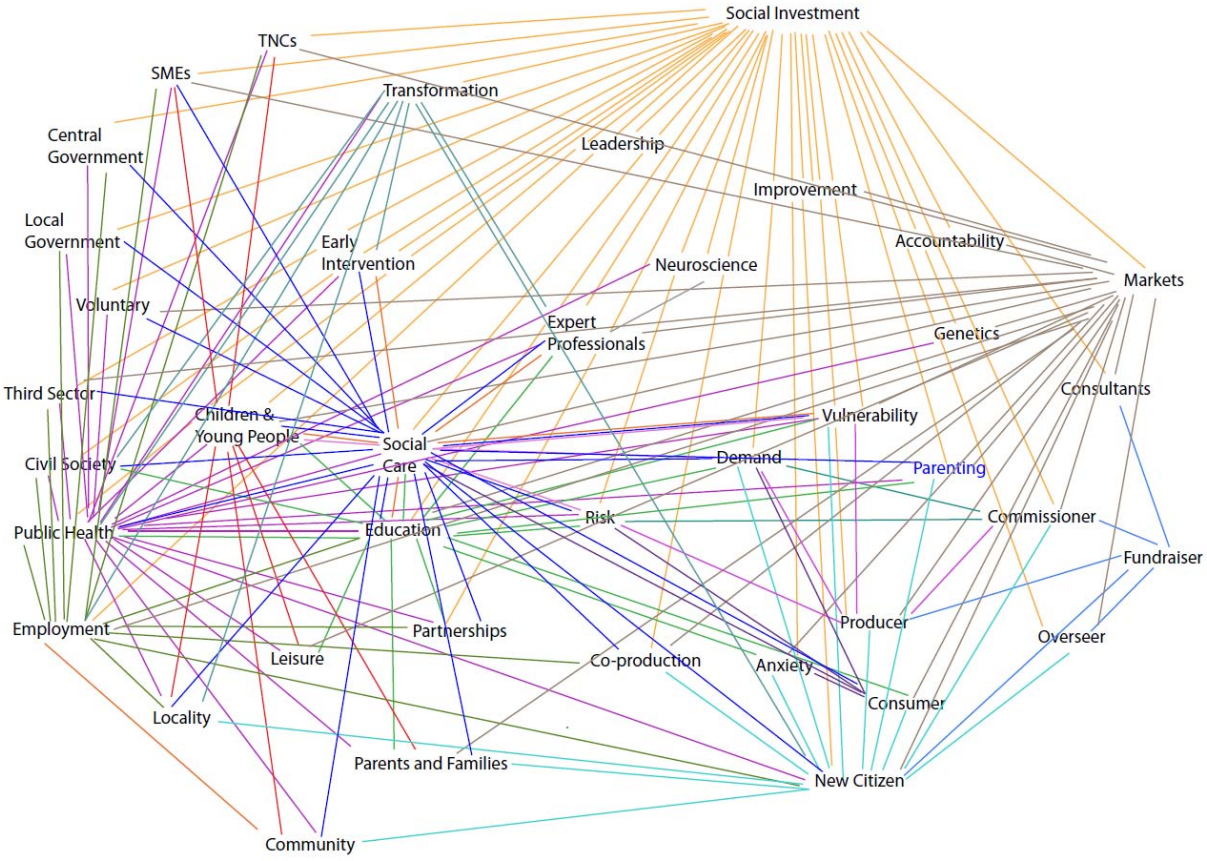


Diagram 3. Distributions

These distributions refer to the actually existing components of the assemblage; not the shape of the assemblage, but the populations of its components in articulation with each other. Thus we see, for example, the assemblage incorporate, sustain and reproduce ‘social enterprise’ entities in

greater numbers in their associations with money (for example as investment capital), expert knowledges and service areas.



These three sets of lines, overlaid, describe a methodological experiment in the representation of the always emergent public service assemblage in late neoliberalism. It is offered tentatively as an expression of intent, rather than a developed analysis. As far as it goes at this stage, it suggests economic, political, legislative and policy tendencies that embed the national, and more tenuously the local, state as an investor in service supply, and as securer of a market for investment. As flows of monetary capital are reconstituted and an array of new and existing organisations take over delivery of those welfare services that will remain, the public and voluntary (or 'third') sectors are remade and, perhaps, rendered unrecognisable. The primacy and responsibility of the citizen-subject

is foregrounded, addressed (subjectivated) in addition or even as an alternative to the (indebted) state or the consumer-subject. Such a subjectivating move shifts the social and economic, and ultimately governmental, focus from sites of consumption (public service supply) to life in local neighbourhoods and communities.

Conclusion

The event of the financial crash of 2008 continues to powerfully condition reform of the public service assemblage, including education and youth services. 'Austerity' has involved a programmatic, sustained divestment of public services. Spaces of care and support for young people have closed, and voids opened up. Based on our research in English cities since 2008, neoliberalism and austerity are not analytically sufficient to express the changes by which the 'disassembled city' has emerged. Late neoliberalism describes a conversion of the public service assemblage through the conjunction of heterogeneous discourses of national citizenship, financial capital imaginaries by which value is reconstituted, and techniques and mechanisms for the distribution of capital as investment and return.

Thus, we have sought to develop a means of analysis, of diagnosis, of late neoliberal assemblage as the dual movement of dis- and reassembly. We take up the Deleuzian language of 'lines' and suggest the lines may be understood to have three functions – tracing molar forms, the injection of flows, and the curve of variables - and three types of pattern – inscribed striation, differentiation from recognisable patterns, and more radical departure and disruption of the assemblage. These are intended as something like a heuristic tool, a means of reading a movement, interpreting the moment of a distance between a past we are already no longer and that which we are becoming.

In doing so, we hope to make more possible understandings of the specific reforming operations of power that include but are not limited to austerity, and to experiment with these arrangements, to

understand how young people's lives are productive in the voids, and escape emerging planes of organisation.

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