

Strategic Planning and the Complex Conceptualisation of the City

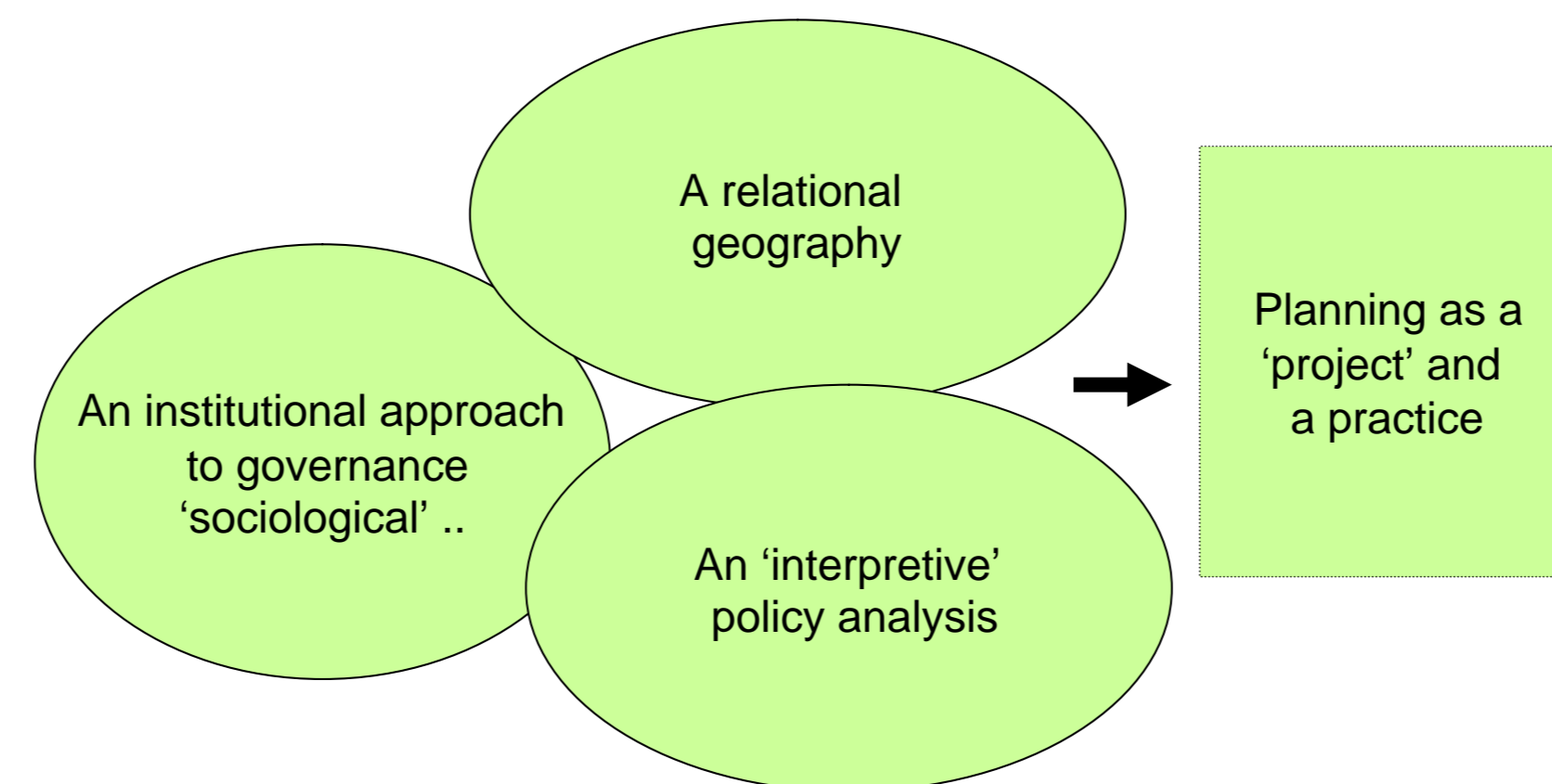
Patsy Healey
Global Urbanism Research Unit
Newcastle University
(patsyhealey@btinternet.com)

Roskilde September 2007

The 'planning project' ...

- An idea and a practice
- About knowledge and action in the public domain (Friedmann 1987)
- About spatiality and place qualities
 - Analysing place qualities and dynamics
- About the 'governance' of 'place'
 - Mobilising political/policy attention

Theoretical lenses



A value orientation ...

- Why focus on 'place qualities'?
- The challenge of 'co-existence in shared spaces'
- Tensions and conjunctions between
 - Distributive justice
 - Environmental well-being
 - Economic vitality
- The value of a rich, lively and inclusive 'urban polity'
- A 'daily life' perspective
 - place qualities as experienced in the 'flow of life',
 - as materialities and as 'apprehensions'

Newcastle is .. ???

(Vigar, Graham and Healey, 2005)

- A unitary, internally integrated space, distinct from 'elsewhere'?
- A political jurisdiction?
- A passive container or background?
- A container with assets ('hotspots') and frontier spaces ('flagship projects')?
- A place with socially-differentiated neighbourhoods, some of which need special attention?
- A polynodal place?
- A unitary actor in competition with other cities in Europe?
- A central coalescing idea to create political force and coordinative potential?

Territories, space and place and spatial planning

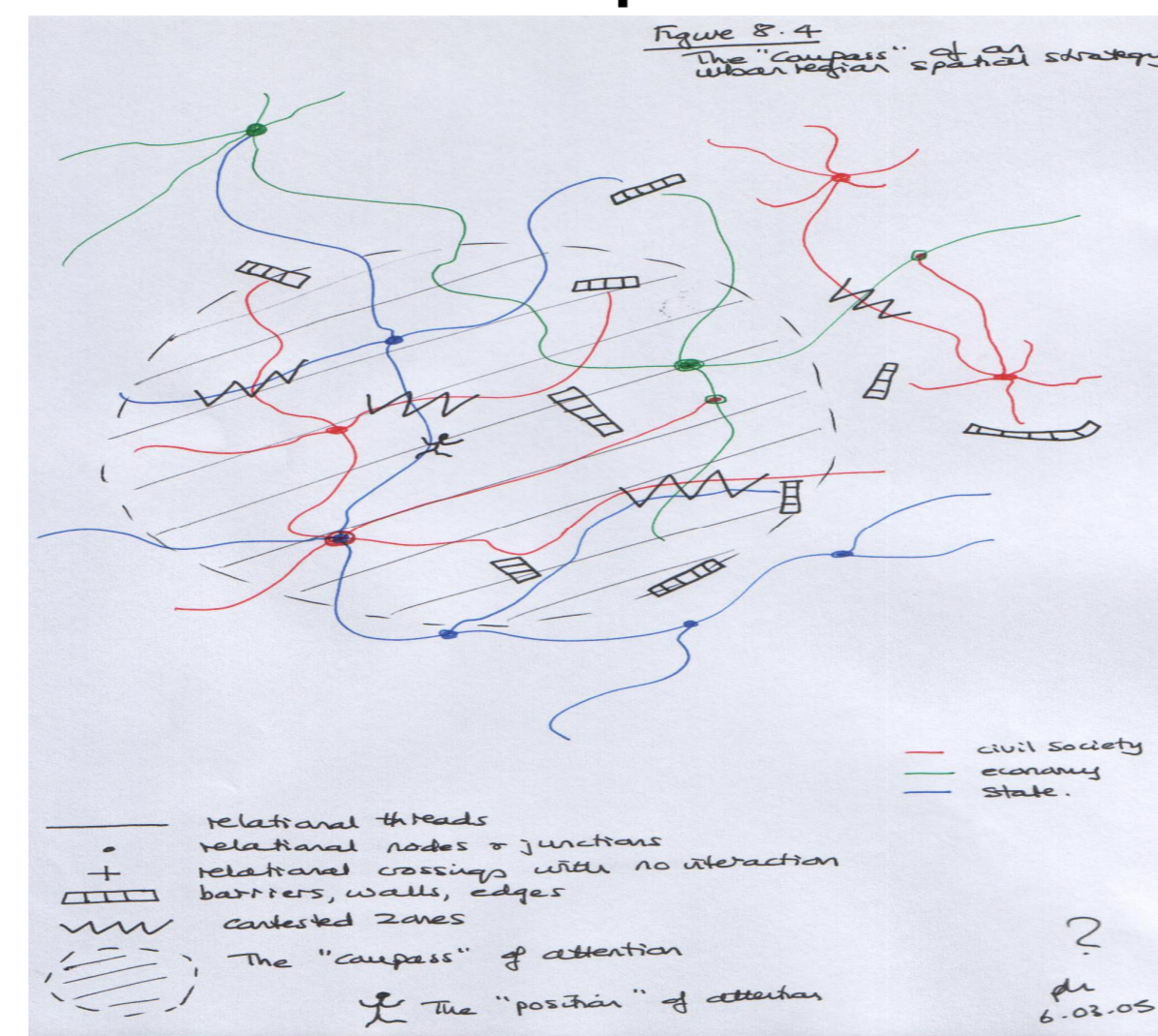
- Contested meanings
- Social constructions
- With material effects ..
- And effects on identities, on politics and policy

- Spatial planning: draws on multiple meanings, produces new meanings, and has subsequent effects ...

Imagining the City: (1)

“For (the citizen), evolution is most plainly, swiftly in progress, most manifest, yet most mysterious. Not a building of his (sic) city but is sounding with innumerable looms, each with its manifold warp of circumstance, its changeful weft of life. The patterns here seem simple, there intricate, often mazy beyond our unravelling, and all well-nigh changing, even day by day, as we watch. Nay, these very webs are themselves anew caught up to serve as threads again, within new and vaster combinations. Yet within this labyrinthine civic complex there are no mere spectators. Blind or seeing, inventive or unthinking, joyous or unwilling – each has still to weave in, ill or well, and for worse if not for better, the whole thread of life” (Patrick Geddes, 1915/1968: , pp.4-5)

Spatial dynamics – a relational conception



Imagining the City: (2)

- *'Cities and regions possess a distinctive spatiality as agglomerations of heterogeneity locked into a multitude of relational networks of varying geographical reach. As such, they express, perhaps more than other socio-spatial formations (nations, households, organizations, virtual and imagined communities), the most intense manifestations of propinquity and multiple spatial connectivity' (Amin 2004: 43)*

Three ways in which 'space' is produced

(Lefebvre, 1991, 38-40)

Lefebvre's labels	His definition	ph 'translation'
Perceived (spatial practices)	Daily routines and interactions with the routes and networks of 'urban reality'	Routine material engagement and experience of being in and moving around urban areas
Conceived (representations of space)	As in the conceptions of 'scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers, as of a certain type of artist with a scientific bent' (p.38)	Intellectual conceptions of urban areas, produced for analytical and administrative purposes "Seeing like a state" (Scott 1998)
Lived (representational spaces)	'As directly <i>lived</i> through .. images and symbols' expressed in symbols and signs (p.39)	Cultural expressions of place qualities and spatial meanings

Two geographies

(after Dematteis 1994, p.205)

	Geographies of physical proximity (emphasis on physical proximity, sometimes called Euclidean) (‘physicalist’)	Geographies of connectivity (emphasis on social proximity, connections both physical adjacent and at a distance) (‘relational’)
External analyst (the outsider looking in)	A ‘geography’ of spatial patterns and physical objects	A geography of overlapping socio-spatial geometries
Internal participant (an actor in a situation)	A geography of local cultures determined by physical morphologies	<i>A geography of complex overlapping connectivities with emergent properties</i>

Massey's contrast (Massey 2000)

- Physicalist
 - Space as a surface
 - A continuous material landscape
 - Physical patterns of objects located on a surface
- Relational
 - Space as a 'momentary co-existence of trajectories'
 - A multiplicity of histories in the process of being made
 - Multiple geographies of affiliation, linkage and flow (Amin 2004)

Conceptions of space/place/spatiality

- **Traditional**
 - Objects on a surface
 - Hierarchical ordering
 - Linkages as material movements (transport)
 - Physical determinism
 - The planning task: 'arranging a spatial order'
 - The planner as external manager, 'outside' the relations
- **Social-relational**
 - Relational webs with nodes
 - Layering, transecting and intersecting
 - Variable boundedness
 - Multiple driving forces
 - Non-contiguous proximities and connectivities
 - Struggles over place qualities and accessibilities
 - The planner as one among many actors, 'inside' the relations

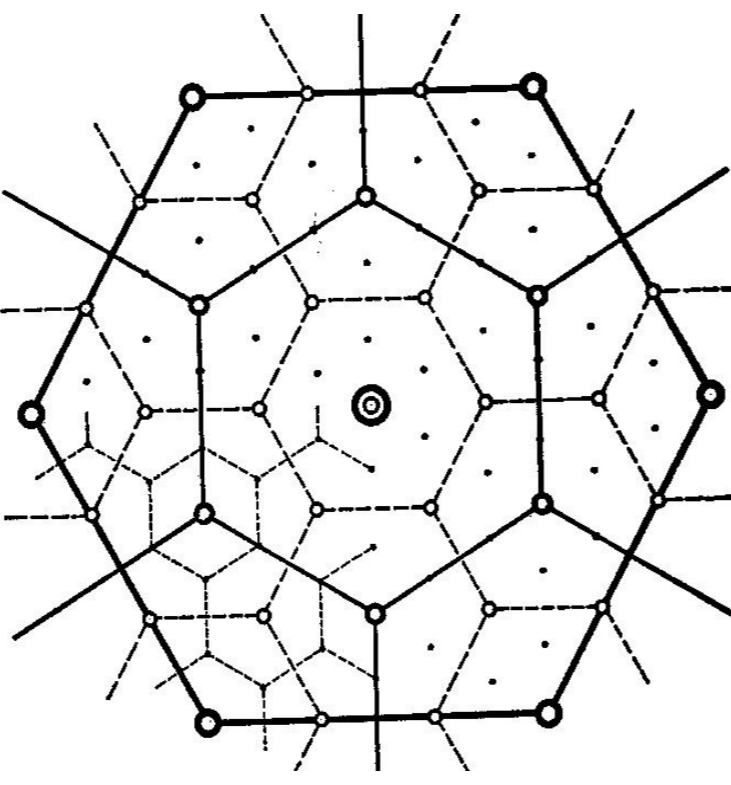
Images of the city and planning practices

- City images – always present, always simplifying, but can do valuable governance work
- There is no 'objective' base on which a city image can 'rest'
- Issue set 1: What images, whose images to mobilise in spatial planning work
- Issue set 2: When and how to express and 'fix' images of the city in spatial planning work.

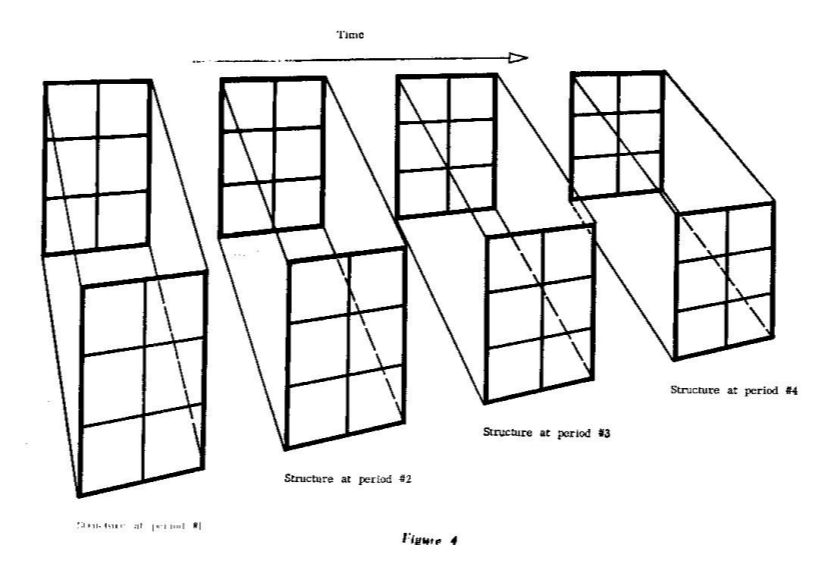
Some physicalist conceptions!

(from Webber1964)

Christaller's imagination



Comparative statics



'Summoning up' a conception of an urban area ..

cities and regions as spatial formations
'must be summoned up as temporary placements
of ever moving material and immanent
geographies, as 'hauntings' of things that have
moved on but left their mark .. as situated
moments in distanced networks, as contoured
products of the networks that cross a given place'
(Amin 2004: 34)

Probing conceptions of space and place in spatial strategies

- What 'space' is being referred to?
- How is it 'positioned'?
- How is it 'bounded' and what are its 'scales'?
- What are its 'front' and 'back' regions?
- What are its key descriptive concepts, categories and measures?
- How is the connection between past, present and future established?
- Whose viewpoint and whose 'perceived and lived' space is privileged?

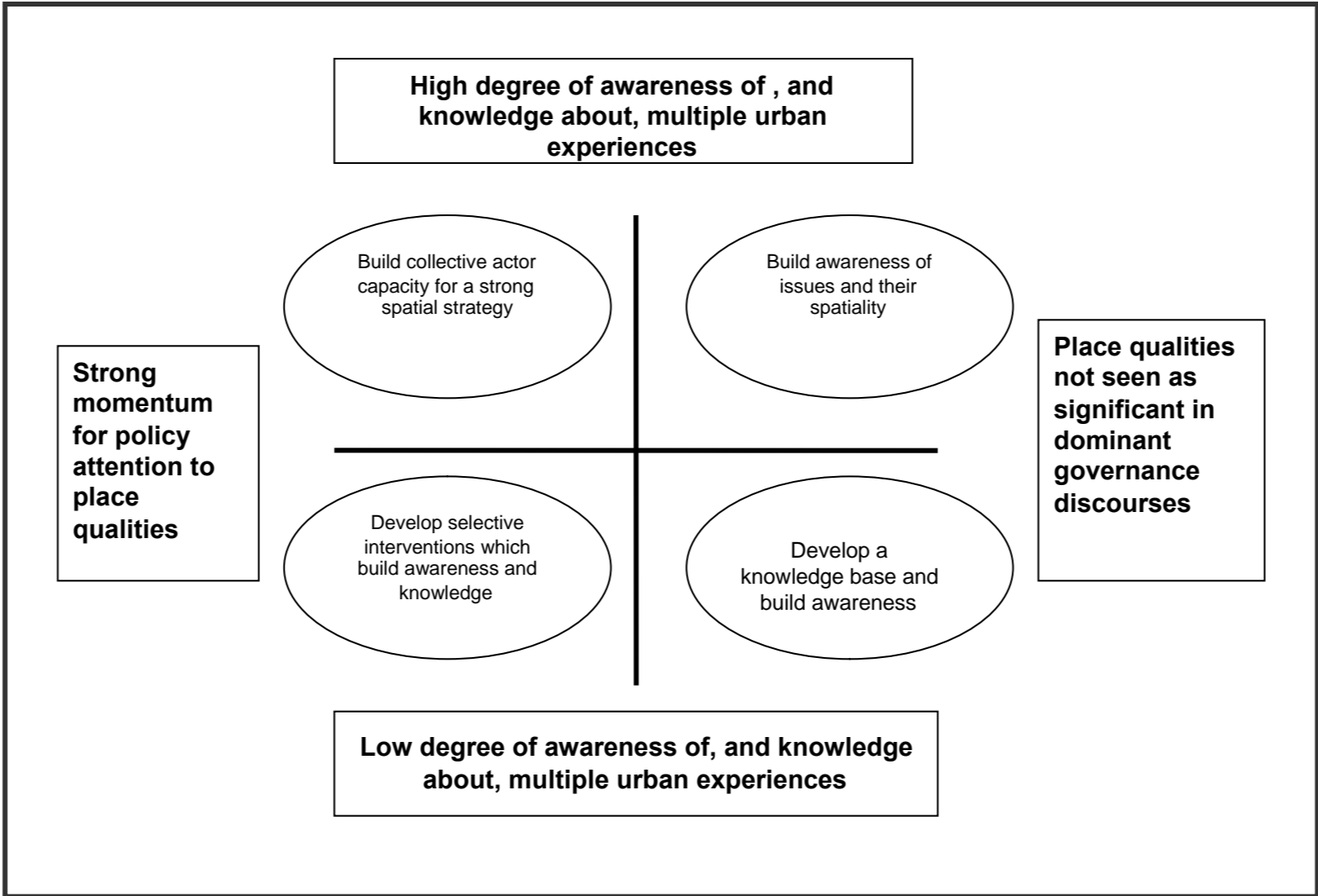
A relational approach

- Interactions versus objects
- Relational webs and layers, not physical patterns as such
- Structure and agency, not opposed
- Institutions and individuals
- Dynamics not statics
- Embedding and emergence
- Multiplicity of relations not homogeneity
- The friction of conflict, not equilibrium

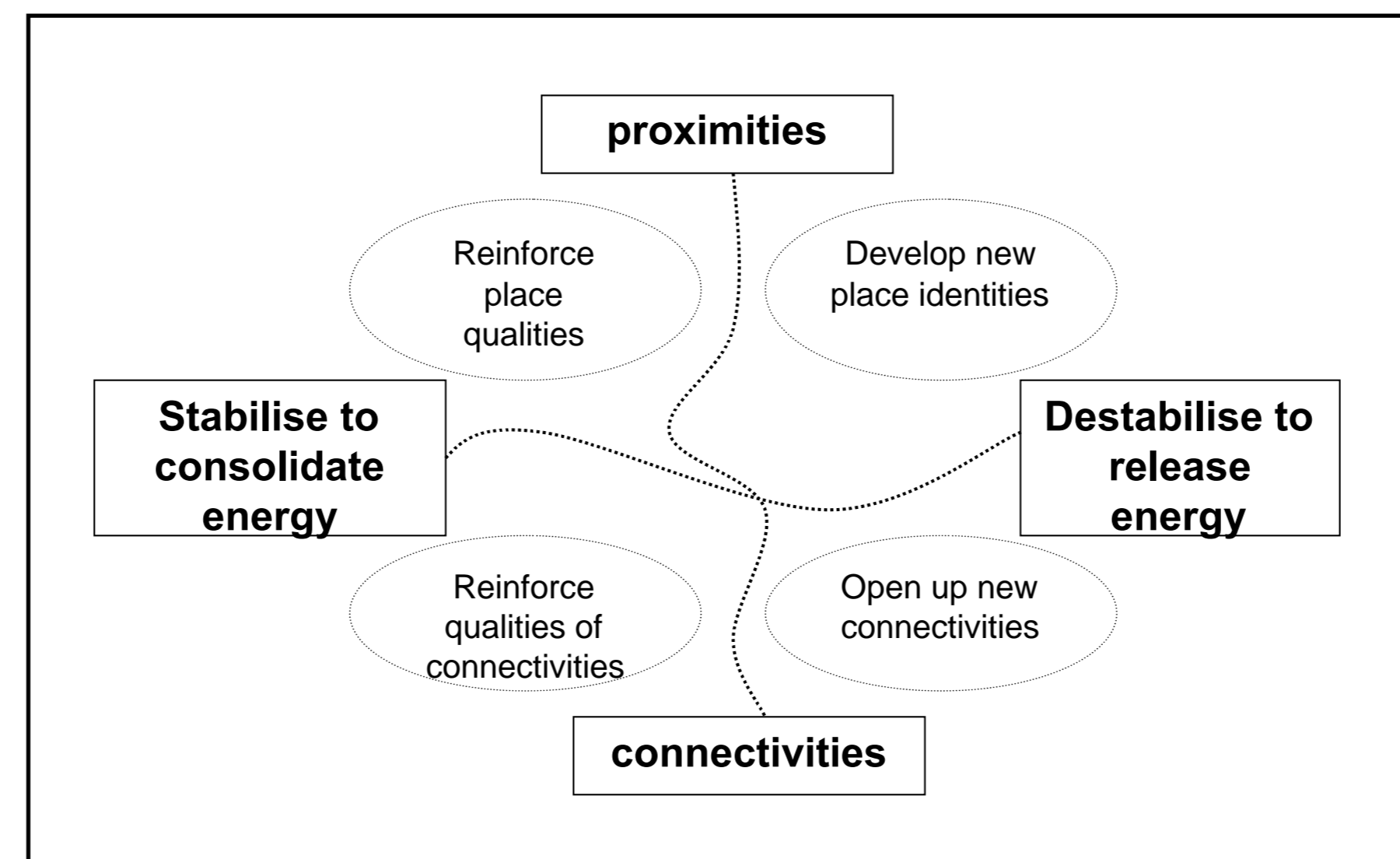
Dynamics not statics Embedding and emergence

- Social relations, cities, governance processes
 - In evolution
 - The future: not a blue-print destination but an open horizon of potentials
- Evolutions shaped (embedded in) but not determined by their contexts
 - Continual 'struggles' in all kinds of institutional sites
- New phenomena, values, ways of thinking and ways of acting, are continually emerging
 - The creative energy of agency-in-relations
- Complexity is normal
- Strategic spatial planning: an effort to shape emerging relations; inherently simplifying

**Scoping the potential moment of opportunity
for explicit spatial strategy-making**



Focusing strategic attention in spatial strategy-making ..



Territorial Governance

- 'Urban areas' cannot be known objectively; they are imaginatively created, 'summoned up'
- Governance focused on 'urban areas' involves developing the collective power to imagine an urban area and act on this conception
- Most jurisdictions are not co-terminus with 'functional' areas or areas of cultural association
- Strategic spatial planning: involves 'summoning up' an idea of territory and then acting on this idea, to change materialities and meanings
- This 'summoning up' is done from 'within' and not from 'without'

Practical suggestions ...

- Imagining the urban
- Creating arenas for strategy formation and review
- Creating frames of reference and specific strategies
- Generating mobilising force
- Nourishing strategic understanding
- Nourishing a vigorous public realm

References

- Amin, A. (2004) Regions unbound: towards a new politics of place. *Geografisker Annaler*, **86B**, 33-44.
- Dematteis, G. (1994) Global and local geo-graphies, In *Limits of Representation*(Eds, Farinelli, F., Olsson, G. and Reichert, D.) Accedo, Munich, pp. 199-214.
- Friedmann, J. (1987) *Planning in the Public Domain*, Princeton University Press, Princeton.
- Geddes, P. (1915/1968) *Cities in Evolution*, Ernest Benn Ltd, London.
- Gualini, E. (2004) Integration, diversity and plurality: territorial governance and the reconstruction of legitimacy. *Geopolitics*, **9**, 542-563.
- Healey, P. (1998) Building institutional capacity through collaborative approaches to urban planning. *Environment and Planning A*, **30**, 1531-1456.
- Healey, P. (2004) Creativity and Urban Governance. *Policy Studies*, **25**, 87-102.
- Healey, P. (2007) *Urban Complexity and Spatial Strategies: towards a relational planning for our times*, Routledge, London.
- Lefebvre, H. (1991) *The production of Space*, Blackwell, Oxford.
- Massey, D. (2000) Travelling thoughts, In *Without Guarantees: Essays in Honour of Stuart Hall*(Eds, Gilroy, P., Grossberg, L. and McRobbie, A.) Verso, London, pp. 225-232.
- Paasi, A. (2001) Europe as a spcial process and discourse: considerations of place, boundaries and identity. *European urban and regional studies*, **8**, 7-28.
- Scott, J. C. (1998) *Seeing Like a State: How certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London.
- Vigar, G., Graham, S. and Healey, P. (2005) In search of the city in Spatial Strategies: past legacies and future imaginings. *Urban Studies*, **42**, 1391-1410.
- Webber, M. (1964) The urban place and the non-place urban realm, In *Explorations into urban structure*(Eds, Webber, M., Dyckman, J., Foley, D., Guttenberg, A., Wheaton, W. and Wurster, C.) University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, pp. 79-153.