

The Case for a Pragmatic Qualitative Appraisal Framework for Local Economic Development

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Received 16 April 2014; revised 16 May 2014; accepted 30 May 2014

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Abstract

This paper develops a theoretical framework and rationale for an alternative post-structuralist approach to assessing economic development strategies. This research applies Deleuzian philosophical concepts in order to address the limitations of current assessment methodologies. The paper explores the history of and the reasons for the perceived failure of the Auckland Regional Economic Development Strategy (AREDS). This perceived failure led to the total de-territorialisation of the organisation tasked with implementing the strategy. Deleuzian spatial concepts, such as flows, plateaus, rhizomes and lines of flight, are employed to develop metaphorical tools for assessing economic development strategies, initiatives and programmes. The framework developed is tested against AREDS. The paper concludes that such strategies and local initiatives should be assessed based on performance predicated on becoming instead of performance-measured outcomes.

Keywords

Deleuze, Economic Development, De-Territorialization, Lines of Flight, Performativity

1. Introduction

Economic development strategies, such as the Auckland Regional Economic Development Strategy (AREDS), usually define goals and objectives that cannot be adequately measured and what can be measured often does not reflect the success or failure of the strategy. This paper asserts that the causal relationship between the economic growth of an area and economic development strategies (and the best efforts of the local practitioner) is weak or non-existent. The lack of causality results from *folding*¹ the forces of globalisation, international corpo-

rate location decisions, federal or central government tax and labour policies, and interest rates into the mix of factors that strongly influence the discipline but are out of the control of the local practitioner. In order to address the problem, this paper applies Deleuzian² philosophy to develop a framework for appraising economic development strategies, initiatives or programmes (see Hillier [1] for a similar application for strategic spatial planning).

I argue that despite all the sophisticated quantitative and qualitative techniques of forecasting and evaluating programmes, the available tools for the most part fail to prove causality or explain why the desired outcomes are often not achieved³. It is also apparent that there is a poor correlation between economic development strategies and real-world economic events. Therefore innovative action orientated tools predicated on becoming⁴ need to be developed that consider the relationship between the drivers of new economic activity with the strategies and initiatives implemented by the practitioner. In essence, this writer is arguing that a local economic development practitioner “needs tools for understanding and practising (in a) complex and elusive” ([2], p. 404) discipline. Deleuzian philosophy may provide the way forward that will create an “open set of critical tools, ...evaluations and ...creations” ([3], p. 27) in which challenges are “viewed as *multiplicities*⁵ of differential relations which stimulate creative thinking and innovation” ([4], p. 313).

In traditional social science research, case studies are chosen to demonstrate a particular line of reasoning and to defend arguments with empirical evidence. Deleuze argues that empiricism offers an opportunity to transcend the quantitative by envisioning the experience as a *becoming*. For Deleuze, empiricism of pragmatic experience is more important than a positivistic empiricism of quantitative measurements. This enables Deleuze to test ideas with no preconceived conclusions and challenges readers to think and experiment because Deleuzian theory maintains that becoming is practicably combinable ([5], p. 172). Becoming, in this sense, is a movement between things, disrupting current meanings and the basic understanding of the contemporary practice of economic development.

Under a Deleuzian lens (see [6]), local economic development processes are shown to be fluid, folding across and into each other and are often conflicting. What is important is the creative possibilities produced by the interconnection and folding of concepts (synthesis) from the various contributing disciplines⁶. Thus, a practitioner should view economic development and the economy as a network of diverse and multiple forces interacting with each other, expressed as *lines of flight*^{*} or *assemblages*^{*} that are constantly being *reterritorialised*^{*}. In this sense “an assemblage of practices, relations, products and institutions, which do not add up to one single whole. Components parts of this assemblage—and assemblages themselves—are the populations of private funding initiatives” which can be conceptualised as a nested *assemblage* because of the way it “relates to other *assemblages*, fixing and destabilising relations/processes in complex, non-linear modes” ([7], p. 158).

Following this same line of thought, a practitioner can strive towards *immanence*⁷ by implementing a new initiative which challenges the *striating*^{*} forces which seek to *de-* and *reterritorialise* space and by regulating its chaotic *multiplicities* through striation ([8], p. 738). Crafting an economic development strategy, such as AREDS, is a *becoming* because it promotes new trajectories, ideas and innovative solutions ([9], p. 101). In this case, one could strive toward immanence by channeling *smooth space* into the mix of striations to create a becoming: a *becoming-developed*.

This paper considers why AREDS not only failed to accomplish the goals set by its members, but also was later abandoned altogether. I believe that employing Deleuzian concepts could explain the failure in ways that not only

¹“The French noun for fold ‘*le pli*’ has a philosophical lineage in a family of words such as *complication*, *implication*, *multiplication*, *replication*, suggesting that multiples are folded in complex ways rather than simply added on. Similarly, to explicate is to unfold or explain, while something pliant is foldable. Folding brings new connections as once-distant entities are now juxtaposed. It generates new energies as folds are never pre-formed or given.” ([2], p. 60)

²Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995) was one of the most influential philosophers of his time ([10], p. 97).

³Most qualitative and sophisticated quantitative methods provide useful indicators to a region’s economy but often do not address issues of (or prove) causality or if the programme initiatives actually created any jobs or increased wealth in the community. In support of my argument, Storper and Manville ([11], p. 1252) have stated that “correlation is not causation”.

⁴“The Deleuzoguattarian concept of becoming implies the pathways along which an entity or concept may be transformed whilst retaining some resemblance to its former self. Becoming is linked rather to the unpredictable, indeterminate, never accomplished actualisation of virtualities.” ([12], pp. 280-281)

⁵The * indicates that a Deleuzian term is introduced for the first time in the text and a concise definition can be found in Table 1.

⁶Local economic development is an interdisciplinary field of study influenced by geography, economics, planning and regional science.

⁷Immanence is a concept in the Deleuzian sense which is a way of connecting new ideas and possibilities for thinking and new styles of thought.

better account for shortcomings, but also offer practitioners insights about how to better comprehend and prepare economic development strategies [13]. Consequently, in this paper, I advocate for the adoption of Deleuzian inspired assessment tools instead of the traditional performance-measured assessment criteria. The proposed tools may help practitioners to be able to conceptualise the key components of AREDS through the use of rhetorical metaphors [14]. The value of performance-based criteria will be further refined and developed below.

2. The Need for an Alternative Appraisal Methodology

The need to develop an effective assessment framework for economic development has been identified as a key priority since the late 1980s ([15], p. 47) and subsequently, as a result,

State and local governments have increased their focus on investments in economic development in recent years. With increased effort comes increased desire to determine the quality and results of that effort. Managers need to be able to regularly identify the strengths and weaknesses of individual program[m]es. Yet, effective means for assessment of program[me] quality and outcomes are lacking (Hatey *et al.* as quoted by [16], p. 3).

It has also been shown that the lack of a robust theoretical understanding of the economic development discipline “leads to a weak intellectual basis for the development of new strategies” ([2], p. 75). Traditional evaluation frameworks have attempted to measure the effectiveness of economic development programmes or strategies by measuring the relative improvements over time in several key economic indicators such as the growth in new jobs ([17], pp. 14-15). Subsequently, economic development strategies and initiatives are often considered successful if they appear to have a positive effect on the business climate ([18], p. 197) underpinned by the general belief that more jobs must be good ([19], p. 285). However, “simple job counting is hardly an adequate evaluation technique, and will not ensure that these efforts retain support” ([20], p. 25). Some cynics have even argued that many economic development programmes are not rigorously evaluated because they are designed to be visible but not necessarily to enhance the local economy ([21], p. 85).

A key question to be addressed in any evaluation is if the benefits of a programme or initiative outweigh the costs incurred ([22], p. 249). Other questions are whether the programme goals were accomplished and what would have happened in the absence of the programme [23]. Such questions are designed to address causality or to measure the effectiveness of a programme, but in this writer’s opinion, traditional evaluations have become a “quagmire of good intentions and bad measures” [24]. Deleuze would have suggested that without proof of causality, statistics used as measures are just “random influxes of chaotic data” ([25], p. 79). In a similar vein, Latour ([26], p. 35) believes that practitioners should be more concerned about “associations which allow connections to be made” then attempting to prove causality. This is important because most measures fail to prove causality and location decisions are based on many factors that are out of the control of the local economic development practitioner.

According to Flyvbjerg [27] the practice of economic development is, at best, a social and not a natural science. Consequently, this writer argues that because of the difficulties of measuring the success of various initiatives, it would be more appropriate to use Deleuzian metaphors for understanding and dealing with dynamic complexity and chaos than traditional methodologies [15]. In my opinion, the demands for performativity accountability are a meaningless process that negates the intangible benefits of the practice of economic development. As a consequence, the development of new pragmatic qualitative appraisal framework derived from alternative philosophical viewpoints may have some merit.

The background of the case study begins from an historical perspective in order to gain insights into the reasons behind its formation, governance, stakeholder support and resourcing. It will be examined and presented as a descriptive narrative largely from an insider’s practitioner’s viewpoint.

3. The AREDS Case Study

This section introduces the Auckland region from a geographic, economic and historical viewpoint. The Auckland region comprised seven territorial authorities: Rodney, North Shore, Auckland, Manukau, Waitakere, Papakura and Franklin⁸ (see **Figure 1**). The region is the main commercial centre of New Zealand and home to one third of its population.

⁸The seven territorial authorities were amalgamated into the Auckland Council on November 1, 2010 [32]. The new council has largely ignored the lessons learned from AREDS and has since developed its own Economic Development Strategy.

Auckland, like similar dominant cities, is the locomotive of the national economy and is the site of dense masses of interrelated economic activities that have high levels of productivity by reason of jointly generated agglomeration economies and innovative potential ([28], p. 581). As a result, it generates over one third of the nation's income. Since Auckland is the dominant economic and demographic centre in New Zealand, it will likely continue to increase its dominance at the expense of the rest of the country ([29], p. 196). Nonetheless, political leaders have concluded that Auckland's relative economic performance compared to other Pacific Rim cities needs to be improved or at least maintained. At the time, Auckland's, economic performance was not positively reflected in the statistics ([30], p. 3).

In the late 1990's a large number of high profile New Zealand entrepreneurial leaders, professionals and skilled workers were migrating from New Zealand to Australia⁹ and other areas seeking better employment and life style opportunities. As a result of the challenge of the perceived loss of human capital, a group of like-minded business people established "Competitive Auckland" in 1999 and embarked on a campaign to alert the public to this loss of economic leadership and of Auckland's slipping international competitiveness. Based on a very well-crafted communication strategy they were able to engage effectively with the news media and the wider public ([31], p. 65). Their key message was Auckland's comparative economic underperformance (see Figure 2). The group advocated for the establishment of a regional economic development agency.

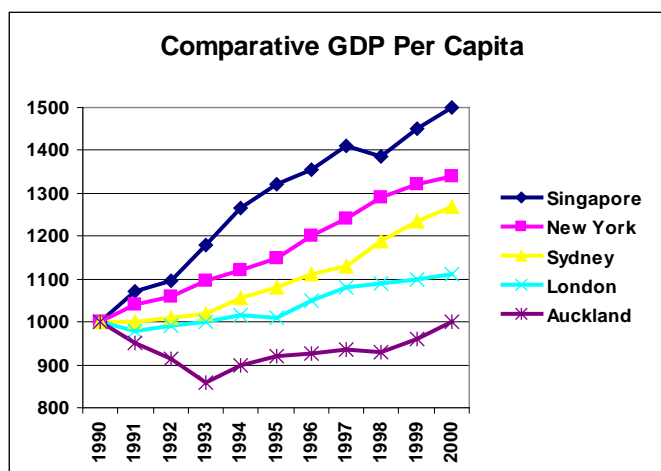
At about the same time, the Auckland region had the opportunity to bid for a large Motorola research and manufacturing facility (the identity of the company was not known until after the location decision was announced). With no central clearing house, each of the territorial local authorities (TLAs) submitted competing bids through the consultant for consideration by the Motorola management team. At the time, the local governments were unprepared and most did not have the professional expertise to prepare a proper presentation. Perth finally won the corporate location with the aid of a \$25 million assistance package. The Motorola experience can also be related to the metaphorical analogy of municipalities chasing footloose industries (smokestacks).



Source: AREDS.

Figure 1. Map of the Auckland region 2010 before amalgamation.

⁹The average number of people relocating to Australia has increased to almost 2800 per month since AREDS has been established (Statistics New Zealand).



Source: Competitive Auckland.

Figure 2. Comparative gross domestic product (GDP) per capita for five cities between 1990-2000.

As a response to the lost opportunity, the seven Auckland councils agreed to cooperate in economic development in areas such as advocacy, major events, establishing industry clusters and promoting the region to potential investors [33]. The process was started by signing a Memorandum of Understanding for regional economic development in 2001.

Subsequently, the AREDS organisation was established for the purpose of elevating the region's economy in order to compete with other Pacific Rim cities/regions. The underlying goal was to enable Auckland to become a global city. The issues involved in the various stakeholders' lack of political, financial and theoretical buy-in will be explored below. The evolution of AREDS, its governance structure, stakeholder support, and limited successes (and failures) will also be examined and evaluated through a Deleuzian lens.

4. AREDS Governance

In this section, the processes through which AREDS governance was being transformed at the time will be investigated. A constant theme of Deleuze's work has been concerned with the conditions under which new institutions such as AREDS take shape ([34], p. 3). Central government policy is designed to intervene and produce desired outcomes, however these experiments often do not produce the predicted results because "it is along the different lines of complex *assemblages* that the powers [to] be carry out their experiments, but along [with] them also arise experimenters of the different kind¹⁰, thwarting predictions, tracing out active *lines of flight*" ([35], pp. 145-146) as quoted in ([2], p. 228). The various AREDS governance models were considered to be experiments as the stakeholders sought "the test path that allows collective experimentation to explore the question of common worlds; it is procedural and not substantive" ([36], p. 242).

AREDS was governed by the Establishment Group (EG), comprising elected representatives from the TLAs, which was responsible for all governance and funding arrangements. The Implementation Leaders Group (ILG), comprising appointed business leaders, was responsible for implementing the strategy. Nonetheless, because of *arborescent** thinking, the AREDS staff and ILG failed to effectively communicate the importance of regional cooperation to its stakeholders. This writer observed that several TLAs and EDAs continued to follow their own *line of flight** by pursuing policies and initiatives without consideration of or consultation with AREDS (patch protection). Several local government officials perceived AREDS as a challenge to their authority and pursued their own agendas. These uncoordinated trajectories only increased the already *striated space* of local and regional economic development. Others perceived AREDS as an impediment to regional growth instead of an enabler because they didn't *see the big picture*. In Sydney, forging general aspirations into a common agenda characteristic of stabilised governing regimes has proved difficult ([37], p. 212). I believe that the same could be

¹⁰There were a number of actants, such as Auckland City's former Economic Development Manager, who actively sought to undermine AREDS governance proposals by advocating against regional cooperation.

said for Auckland.

While the future governing structure was still being debated in 2003, the TLAs floated the idea of transferring AREDS to the ARC because of wavering political support to continue funding the organisation and its initiatives (this is a key event in the AREDS genealogy). With the prompting of the TLAs, consultants recommended that the ARC provide the leadership role for the AREDS strategy and form a new organisation under the auspices of the ARC. Subsequently, after a relatively short three years (because of declining political support), the TLAs ultimately beseeched the ARC to take over the leadership for the strategy. The ARC acquiesced and as of 1 July 2005 assumed the stewardship of the strategy. Once adopted and incorporated into the ARC, the EG and the ILG were disestablished. The AREDS staff employment contracts all terminated on or before 30 June 2005 in line with the official ARC takeover date. AREDS as an organisation ceased to exist (a total *deterritorialisation*) but the strategy was continued and was promoted by a standalone business unit within the ARC known as Auckland Plus.

5. Reflections on AREDS

The original delivery organisation was perceived as a failure because it lost the support of some of its stakeholders, argued about governance structures instead of implementing the plan, non-cooperation between various TLA officers and it did not build the institutional capacity to deliver solid results. Consequently it could not demonstrate any correlation between economic growth of the Auckland region and the strategy. In practitioner terms, it could not prove to its financial stakeholders that the strategy was having any effect on the local economy and, as a result, lost its political support and was transferred to the ARC. Upon reflection, the original AREDS organisation did not meet expectations because it was hampered by the lack of a clear mandate and sufficient resources. Stronger political leadership would have provided certainty and the situation could have been quite different.

The strategy as conceived was innovative and, if fully implemented, had the potential to be an attractor that could transform the region. The original organisation that was established to deliver the strategy ceased to exist but the strategy lived on under the untested stewardship of the regional council. Subsequently, in order to reinvigorate the process and to garner renewed support for AREDS, the ARC initiated the Metro Project [38]. The objective of the Metro Project is to transform the current vision and platform by developing a set of action plans to move Auckland toward world class city status. The Metro Project Action Plan was officially launched by the Prime Minister on 6 October 2006.

Another reason for the perceived failure of AREDS and the loss of local government support is the inherent political weakness that is caused by the region's fragmentation. In order to be successful, AREDS needed the seven TLAs and the ARC to work together. The support for AREDS varied across the TLAs. Waitakere City Council supported AREDS but has not endorsed the Metro Project. At one meeting attended by this writer, a senior officer stated that: "the Metro Project does not align with Waitakere's sustainability goals nor does it support a second airport—therefore it cannot be endorsed". This dissension had impacted the relationships between officers working in the coalface of regional economic development within the AREDS officer support group. Dissatisfaction was not limited to officers and soon spread throughout the region. As of early 2007, the *flows** were becoming more *striated* and muddled by the day because the TLAs and the ARC have been unsuccessful in advocating to Central Government for a unified governance model¹¹.

Making Connections with the Business Community

A highly important criterion for any economic strategy is its level of engagement with the business and investment communities. Overall, given the ambition of AREDS to alter the *lines of flight* of the regional economy, it had surprisingly few connections with investors in the private and public sectors. For example, big infrastructure organisations such as Auckland International Airport and Ports of Auckland were not involved with the AREDS process [39]. Equally, no *assemblages* of small investors were mobilised in any significant way.

¹¹ AREDS was plagued by stakeholder dissension over governance models from the outset. Central government in a bid to overcome the ongoing governance debate requested council stakeholders to present a unified position so that enabling legislation could be passed before the forthcoming local elections. The position paper presented was anything but unified and as a result, Wellington has requested the councils to reconsider their submission. The second rendition was also considered inadequate so a royal commission was convened to resolve the situation. The newspaper columnist, Brian Rudman ([40], p. A2) has quipped that asking the TLAs and the ARC to agree on a unified position is like requesting the lunatics to reform their own asylum.

Striations channel the creative flows of *immanence* and include rules, guidelines and measures such as those used to construct evaluation frameworks. *Striating space* attempts to inscribe some form of fixity into flux, to draw lines and situate the local by delineating aspirations (in the form of goals, actions and, new initiatives), yet often fails “precisely because it aspires to a certain rigour or rigidity, is vulnerable to forces beyond the control of the local” stakeholders ([8], p. 218). Paradoxically, AREDS had become a constraint on achieving *immanence* through the creation of an entrepreneurial environment because of the restricting *striating* forces that the strategy imposed.

A bottom-up, institutional evolutionary framework for economic development for a reasonably large city in the age of globalisation proved to be inadequate in Auckland because it failed to garner the political will and financial resources needed to implement AREDS. Upon reflection, there was a series of key events that fostered the growing perception of failure. The Pacific leadership started the process by taking their complaints to the newspaper. This led to councilors voicing their exasperation over the lack of progress and limited success in garnering Major Regional Initiative (MRI) funding. These councilors were being advised by disenchanted planning officers and their local EDA's that AREDS was failing to deliver results. A short time later, major TLAs began to publicly question the value of funding AREDS which finally led to off-loading the strategy to the ARC. Metaphorically, by *thinking outside the square* and *seeing the big picture*, the leadership should have been aware of the necessity of developing the institutional capacity and adequately resourcing the organisation in order to ensure its long term success. This may even be an example of the leadership just *muddling through* and initiating AREDS to be *seen to be doing something*¹².

One could argue that the political leadership and their economic development practitioner advisors should have engaged in more *rhizomatic* thinking because new ideas and initiatives may have emerged. This is important because there is no blueprint for crafting effective economic development strategies because different solutions are required to suit different contexts [41]. The key requirements for a successful collaborative regional strategy are a unified vision expressed as policies and processes, strong local leadership, and inter-agency collaboration. If this is achieved, the focus of key agencies should be developing the processes and structures that support capacity building, trust, cooperation and information sharing. This did not happen in Auckland because of silo (parochial) and *arborescence* thinking and the lack of the political will to succeed.

This section has described the AREDS experience. The AREDS governance structure, lack of stakeholder support and its perceived failure were delineated in order to help the reader to visualise the complex forces at play in the Auckland region. In the next section, AREDS will be assessed by applying a Deleuzian appraisal framework.

6. A Deleuzian Appraisal of AREDS

This section establishes a set of criteria (metaphorical tools) that may assist in developing a performance based assessment framework for local economic development programmes or initiatives. This writer suggests that these tools can enhance one's understanding by helping the practitioner to visualise novel approaches to local challenges and as a consequence, open new possibilities that lead “to new understandings and the appearance of new meanings” [42] as cited by [2] (p. 269).

These Deleuzian metaphorical tools will be used to assess AREDS from a performance becoming-understanding perspective (see **Table 2**). The criterion delineated in **Table 1** were chosen because practitioners can easily visualise concepts such as *flows*, *plateaus** and *territorialisation* since they are derived from geologic and geographic physical features ([43], p. 2). Other concepts such as *nomadic** flows of skilled workers moving into the *smooth space* of an entrepreneurial community are also easy to visualise. These visual images resonate with the goals and objectives of most economic development strategies. This requires imagination, new and different thinking (*out of the square*). This writer suggests that, if embraced, this framework and the criteria delineated has the potential to assist practitioners to be able to appraise local initiatives and as a result, will enable the practitioner to garner new insights into the discipline.

Deleuzian appraisal frameworks employ metaphors as tools which are used for visualising real world spatial events. The framework also enables one to use metaphors to describe these events. For example, key concepts such as *smooth* and *striated space* are important for understanding the connection between Deleuzian philoso-

¹²A former Director of Economic and Community Development at the Manukau City Council and an early advocate for AREDS, once stated to this writer that the councils established the organisation in order to be seen as proactive.

Table 1. Key Deleuzian metaphorical tools for an assessing economic development strategies, initiatives and programmes.

Deleuzian Terminology	Concise Definition ¹³	Example of Application
Arborescence	Refers to structured and hierarchical thinking.	This writer uses the term to describe traditional structured patterns of thinking that inhibit innovative thought.
Assemblage	The process of creating a grouping or collection of anything ¹⁴ .	A network of branch manufacturing plants can be considered an assemblage.
Flow	A movement of ideas, concepts or people.	Richard Florida [44] used the term to describe the movement of knowledge workers to cities that have Bohemian lifestyles.
Line of Flight	Refers to the direction of a movement, marketing programme or one's personal ambitions. The key question is "towards what destination" ([35], p. 120).	For instance, if one wants to become a professional, he or she will have to channel their line of flight (career path) by entering and completing the appropriate university programme.
Multiplicity	Based on Bergson's philosophy. Bogue ([45], p. 9) used the term to describe a nomadic multiplicity as "an unlimited and undivided space or a metamorphic flux and also as a qualitative multiplicity with an identity that is irreducibly plural".	Colebrook ([25], p. 59) applied Deleuze's concept of multiplicity with the following analogy "If I have an extended collection of red objects, I can add or subtract one or more things and still have a set of red objects. This is an extensive multiplicity".
Nomad	A nomadic thinker wanders about a topic just as a nomadic herdsman moves from one oasis to another.	Jeanes [46] used the nomadic metaphor to show how such thinking opens new connections, experiences and thus, produces innovative thought processes.
Plateau	It's an elevated natural feature of the landscape and metaphorically it can be a goal, a new level of understanding or an objective that one strives to achieve.	The term can describe a series of concepts such as globalisation that a practitioner has to understand in order to develop an effective strategy [47].
Reterritorialisation	Amin [48] uses the term to describe the changes in governance brought about by the reconfiguration of regions as a result of devolution.	A good analogy would be the changed boundaries after a local government amalgamation.
Deterritorialisation	Deterritorialisation is movement that produces change.	O'Neill and McGuirk [49] used the analogy of deterritorialisation to describe the changing economy and institutions in the Sydney basin.
Rhizome	A rhizome can be likened to the interconnections of the internet.	Rhizomes are used by this writer to visualise new business parks, warehouses or shopping centers popping up on the landscape like flowers in the spring.
Smooth Space	Refers to an easy flow between ideas or concepts. It is also the non-structured nomadic space between points.	A good analogy is to imagine the smooth space of the globalised economy as chaotic or a complex web of divisions and confluences.
Striated Space	Refers to structured or rough space. It can also be considered space structured to channel actants via lines in the achievement of one or more given end states.	Striating space can be visualised as attempts to inscribe some form of fixity into flux, to draw lines and situate the <i>local</i> by delineating aspirations, goals and actions in the form of new initiatives.

phy and the AREDS case study. According to Patton ([34], pp. 111-112) *smooth space* indicates "the heterogeneous space of qualitative multiplicity, while *striated space* is the homogeneous space of quantitative multiplicity". *Smooth space* can also be considered "*rhizomatic space*... in which local regions are juxtaposed without reference to an overarching" ([34], p. 112) economic development strategy. In the above quotations, Patton was referring to the inherent tension between *smooth* and *striated space*.

An economic development strategy is usually designed as a striated structure with specific actions plans to address each goal. Paradoxically, a key objective of most economic development strategies is to create the

¹³See Parr [50] comprehensive definition of the various terms.

¹⁴An assemblage is not just a random collection of things ([51], p. 77).

Table 2. A Deleuzian metaphorical assessment of AREDS.

Evaluation criterion	Evaluation	Comment
Arborescence—seeing the big picture and arborescence thinking	☒	The political will to “make it happen” was lacking as exemplified by the failure for the region to present a unified proposal to Wellington for future governance. Interim structures were unwieldy. The original AREDS organisation never had the political support because of silo structures to ensure its long-term success.
Assemblage—creating desiring machines	☑	The strategy rhetorically articulated the desire to become a global city as per Jessop and Sum [52].
Flow—a flow of nomadic workers	☒	The organisation failed to develop the institutional capacity to be successful because of questionable hiring’s and poor staff retention.
Line of flight	☑	The metro project developed a trajectory and time table to move toward global city status.
Multiplicity of initiatives ¹⁵	☒	The original AREDS organisation had an assemblage of 24 different actions—instead of focusing on several the organisation attempted to concurrently undertake more than it could successfully deliver.
Nomad—think outside the square (nomadic thought)	☑	The Metro Project proposed that the region develop a one plan approach as a guide for future development and to approach the 2011 Rugby World Cup as an excuse to build infrastructure instead of just being a sporting event.
Plateau of funding	☒	Funding for AREDS was low by international comparisons—local authorities wanted to be <i>seen as doing something</i> to address the regional issues but did not commit to long-term sustainable funding.
Reterritorialisation	☑	The new Economic Development Forum radically reterritorialised the previously existing structures for economic development delivery.
Deterritorialisation	☑	The process resulted in the creation of an enhanced Greater Auckland Council by the amalgamation of the seven local Councils.
Rhizomatic links	☒	The original AREDS organisation had no direct links to the business community; however links were developed by Auckland Plus.
Smooth space	☒	A good example is the tension that occurs between the striated space of the regional strategy
Striated space	☒	and its stated goal of creating the smooth space of an entrepreneurial global city.

smooth space of an entrepreneurial culture. In the case study, the strategy and its action plan failed to meet the expectations of the region because it did not create entrepreneurial *immanence* nor demonstrate a correlation to or influence on real world economic activities (the organisation could not show concrete results to its stakeholders).

In **Table 2**, AREDS is appraised from a performance understanding perspective using the criteria developed above. The results indicate that the picture is mixed, with “ticks” in the areas of *lines of flight*, thinking outside the square and *re- and de-territorialisation*, and “crosses” (illustrating poor performance) in the *smooth/striated space*, institutional attitudes, *arborescent* thinking, *plateaus* of funding, *rhizomatic* links to businesses, *multiplicity* of initiatives and the *flow of nomadic* workers boxes. As these criteria demonstrate, sufficient resourcing, connecting with businesses, *multiplicity* of initiatives and failure to develop institutional capacity are fundamental prerequisites for any economic development organisation. The AREDS organisation failed to develop the institutional capacity to deliver the multiplicity of divergent initiatives in the original statement of intend. The TLA officials wanted to dominate the organisation at the exclusion of essential business leadership. The unimaginative leadership of the TLA’s failed to understand the growing discontent because of silo structures within their own organisations.

On a positive note, the evidence indicates that AREDS articulated global aspirations as advised by Jessop & Sum [52]. The strategy also has clearly delineated a *line of flight* designed to move Auckland toward global city

¹⁵Real world economic development strategies have to restrict action plans to fit available resources and by doing so creates a tension between Deleuzian smooth space of multiple trajectories and the striated space of limited budgets, staff capabilities and stakeholder expectations.

status by initiating the Metro Project one plan and rugby world cup work streams. Finally, as a result of the Royal Commission, Auckland has undergone a radical *detritorialisation* with the seven TLAs being amalgamated into one super-Council—the new Auckland Council [32].

The positive appraisals are off-set by the ever-present tension between *smooth* and *striated space*. This tension has been exasperated by Auckland's lack of political leadership on regional development issues caused in part to poor advice from planners and practitioners. The same leadership failed to adequately resource the original AREDS organisation and did not see the need to involve business leaders in the decision making process. Significantly, the expectations of key stakeholders such as the Pacific and Maori communities were not properly managed. The poorly managed expectations triggered a cascading deterioration of relationships that started with the Pacific community and ended when the TLAs could not muster the political will to continue funding the original AREDS organisation.

Consequently, this writer concludes that the AREDS organisation was perceived to be a failure because it could not prove to its stakeholders that it was making a difference and was worth the investment needed for continued funding. Hence, the perceived failure led to the total *detritorialisation* (disestablishment) of the AREDS organisation and the transfer of the regional strategy to the ARC. However, subsequently having learned from the mistakes of the original organisation, the ARC initiated the AREDS Metro Project. This project reinvigorated the strategy with active engagement with the business community and some high profile initiatives. On a positive note, the new organisation was larger and significantly better resourced than the original. Overall, the AREDS story has received mixed reviews. Despite its many lessons and hard fought battles, AREDS was replaced with a completely new economic development strategy by the new Auckland Council in early 2012.

7. Conclusions

This research offers an alternative methodology for appraising economic development initiatives, strategies or programmes. Deleuze suggests that one should view the problem beyond the immediate situation (an Archimedean point of reference) by *seeing the big picture* and then design an appropriate plan of action. He also cautions that a practitioner should not be afraid of trying new and innovative ideas because there is no guarantee that any one initiative or best practice model will work. His message is very clear—learn how to deal with chaos and to be innovative by thinking *out of the square* ([47], p. 107).

From a Deleuzian perspective, one may conclude that economic development strategies and initiatives should be based on performance predicated on becoming instead of performance-measured outcomes because *performativity*¹⁶ accounts for the “unfolding creation of happenings in everyday life as we encounter, relate to and negotiate [with] other agents in the world” ([53], p. 352). As a result, Dewsbury ([54], p. 488) argues that performativity comes through convergences and ruptures and “often it is our surroundings that appropriate what we do... such that we are forced into ‘never-before-occurring’ situations that ‘become us’”. This means that any action orientated becoming an assessment tool has to be designed to consider the context, constraints and the unique local conditions faced by practitioners. According to Dewsbury ([54], p. 475), “general performance, practice... is constituted in the performance”. Carrying this thought further, Crouch ([55], p. 1946) suggested that there should be “a focus on the nuances and facets of performativity, and the uncertainties and possibilities that performativity may produce; using the notion of [performance based criterion]... in a Deleuzian sense of folds, complexity and possibilities”. Thus, performance based on the Deleuzian concept of becoming would create criterion¹⁷ that would be concerned with their “transcendence, converting constraints into opportunities, and inventing new trajectories, new responses of unheard-of futures” ([9], p. 101). Therefore, a practitioner can begin to convert constraints into opportunities by using the techniques developed in this paper.

This suggests that “attempts to evaluate or measure performance or performativity¹⁸ are fated to be problematic snapshots or precarious stabilisations of inherently unstable and dynamic conditions” ([2], p. 296) because

¹⁶Performativity can be considered part of the spectrum of connecting or associative practices which might affect difference and movement towards alternatives ([56], p. 225). For further discussions on performativity see [57]-[60].

¹⁷Tentative criteria may be developed from practical experience and judgement in order to anticipate potential becoming ([2], p. 252). These criteria may be applied as part of one's daily practice and the wisdom garnered from one's professional experience may be able to provide insights for crafting an appropriate appraisal framework. According to Schön ([61], pp. 42-43) this process includes experience, trial and error, intuition and muddling through.

¹⁸“Performativity provides a particular focus to the possibility of opening up, in a Deleuzian sense, to the unexpected and the divergent in the ‘excess’ of multiple possibilities of what people do” (Dewsbury as quoted by ([62], p. 1949)).

performance evaluations are always open to *de-* and *re-territorialisations of lines of flight*. As a result, establishing indicators against which an economic development agency's performance can be measured and evaluated are difficult. To put this into perspective, Albrechts *et al.* ([63], p. 293) stated that the purpose of assessing economic development is to “develop a quality portrait or profile giving a deeper insight into the qualities [of an initiative or an EDA] and to create a language for discussion and negotiation, and finally, to provide a sound... basis for a decision” to continue funding.

Nevertheless, many government agencies are still endeavouring to establish performance standards in an attempt to measure the effectiveness of economic development agencies and programmes despite knowing that there is an inherent tension between measurable goals and Deleuze's call for unpredictability. The effectiveness of a local economic development agency or practitioner is especially difficult to measure because of the macro factors that drive the economy ([16], pp. 6-25). Consequently, in order to account for the inherent unpredictability of the discipline, one should consider appraising economic development strategies by employing Deleuzian tools of understanding and not performance-measured criteria.

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