Chapter 16
Bricolaging Knowledge and Practices in Spatial Strategy-Making

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16.1 Introduction

"[T]here is no 'one best or one single way' to carry out strategic spatial planning. The most appropriate approach depends to a large extent on the challenges faced, the particular (substantive and institutional) context of a place and the values and attitudes of the main actors of the process" (Albrechts, 2006, p. 1150). Consequently, practices and approaches to strategic spatial planning are widely investigated and reveal several diverse traditions and approaches (Albrechts, 2004, 2006, 2007, 2008; Carmona, 2009; Healey, Khakee, Motte, & Needham, 1997; Pugliese & Spaziante, 2003). Literature focuses on processes for developing and formulating strategies, including strategic analysis. Implementation is not investigated with a comparable emphasis and, when this is the case, it is scarcely analysed from the insight of cognitions and practices, and reveals to be much more complex than strategic analysis and strategy formulation in strategy-making.

The complexity of strategy implementation and the failure often associated with implementation can be related to diverse causes. Considering strategy-making as being explicitly concerned with the recognition of the need for a significant change, we can identify for such a failure at least two causes being significant for the discussion in this chapter. The first cause is related to the belief that a needed change can be translated into a whatever endstate spatial strategy. It is already recognised that strategic planning cannot be conceived as oriented to an end-product but rather as a "complex governance processes, through which concepts of spatial organisation are mobilized" (Healey, 2007, p. 527) by and for a "strategic enabling of means-based activity" (Tewdwr-Jones, 2002, p. 278). *The strategy, as an end-product, refers to a fixed form of the future*.

The second cause is related to the adoption of a pre-determined solution as approach to strategic spatial planning (Hillier, 2007). Gunder and Hillier (2007) already criticised the essence of strategic planning: the plan as a statement of what

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the city, the territory "ought to become", or "what ought to happen" (ibid, p. 467). *The strategy is a guide towards an already known future*.

This chapter tries to look at strategy-making by abandoning the vision of strategy as an end-product and also considering that the future is changing along the path from present to future which means that it cannot be known in advance. Therefore the concept of strategy itself needs to be re-framed in order to adapt strategy-making to the dynamics of future.

The attempt to re-conceptualise strategy-making starts from considering modes for complex organisations to develop a strategy by using, producing and appropriating knowledge and practices while composing knowledge and practices in a coherent whole towards the needed change.

The increasing complexity of spatial systems and the speed-up of their dynamics make spatial strategy-making knowledge intensive processes. Increasingly, knowledge is considered the most strategically important resource and learning the most strategically important capability necessary for complex organisations to manage complex issues. Therefore, in strategy-making processes, the way knowledge is managed is crucial to the effectiveness of the processes themselves. Knowledge management becomes crucial when trying to overcome the traditional vision of strategy and to reconceptualise it as a dynamic framework within which an organisation coordinates its activity throughout a needed change.

In the first part, this chapter explores the connection between knowledge and action in strategy-making, recognising that knowledge and action are linked together by a mutual framing dependency. Being embedded in social relations, routines and day-to-day practices, knowledge cannot be moved towards the planning action; it is rather action that needs to be developed inside those spaces of the organisation where knowledge is available for use, that is, is actionable. Referring to strategy-making, such spaces are identified as *strategic episodes* through which organisations appropriate knowledge and practices while testing them against a needed change. Strategy is seen as a dynamic entity evolving together with the organisational structure and is described as the dynamic product of a *bricolage* activity resources for the *bricolage* are knowledge and practices explored and internalised by the organisation with respect to a needed change.

In the second part, the 'story of a strategy' is described and analysed: it refers to the planning experience carried out in Torre Guaceto, a Natural Reserve in southern Italy. This experience shows clearly that strategy is not a predetermined entity and that the organisation does not know a priori what its future will be. The strategy, in Torre Guaceto, is a *bricolage* product of diverse resources: knowledge and practices developed in very particular organisational spaces, defined as *strategic episodes*, where an organisation is forced to re-think itself against and towards a needed change.

Finally, the chapter considers the possibility to look at *strategic episodes* as spaces for the micro-foundation of strategy and opens a small perspective for further research towards other micro-foundational aspects or spaces in strategy-making.

16.2 Bridging Knowledge to Action in Strategy-Making

16.2.1 Knowledge and Action in Planning: A Gap to Overcome

Traditional planning relies on two different categories of knowledge: expert and non-expert (this last having different characterisation: lay, local, common, etc.); expert knowledge has been long considered an object to be owned (by planners) and used together with non-expert knowledge which had to be captured and/or acquired in order to be used. Such a vision of the relation between planning and knowledge is based on two main assumptions: (1) knowledge is additional; (2) knowledge can be moved out of the relational contexts and (world of) practices that produce and share it, and transferred to the planning arena in order to be used by planners. Knowledge is seen as being stable, reducible to a synthetic body (not conflictual, not competitive among components), ready and actionable for action in any place, at any time.[1]

More and more, in the last decades, knowledge in planning is recognised as multiple (Sandercock, 1998) and embedded in social relations; it is 'situated in social context' (Fuller, 2002). It is multiple because it has a variety of sources and takes a variety of forms. It is embedded in social relations and gives shape to the related activity infrastructure (knowledge is the capacity to act, and this is a capacity that 'emerges' from the relationships that exist within organisation; Boer, van Baalen, & Kumar, 2002; Hendon, 2000). In this sense, knowledge in planning is coherent with the 'community view' of knowledge as described by Jakubik (2007). The community or social view assumes that knowledge is not stable, but rather a dynamic and evolving entity and "that it is created in social interactions: knowledge is a social construct" (Jakubik, 2007, p. 14).[2] This vision of knowledge is centred on both process and context and assumes that knowledge is constructed within organisations also through processes of dialogue and interactions, and that knowledge is imbued with routines, standards and with day-to-day practices (Brown & Duguid, 1991).

The notion of knowledge as multiple and embedded in social relations gives rise to other acknowledgements. *Knowledge is not additive* (Evans & Marvin, 2006): it is not the result of multiple knowledge combination, it is synergic (Maisseu, 2006). Knowledge is the outcome of continuous, complex, hidden negotiations of languages, visions, world views, meanings, beliefs, claims, values and learning, communicating, reflecting and inquiring modes. *Knowledge is not stable*: it is rather transformative, it is a mutant entity ('knowing') continuously or discontinuously adapting and adjusting; a consequence of the openness and dynamics of the relational context activated by that knowledge and/or using, producing it. *Knowledge cannot be packed*: it never becomes an end-product; it is strongly related to the evolving nature of the relational context which shares, produces and uses it and therefore cannot be moved out from it. *Knowledge is not always actionable*: it is not always ready for use; it is acknowledgeable only through those practices that use it even keeping it in its tacit dimension[3]; knowledge is actionable only when action can make use of it albeit the embedded nature of that knowledge.

As they have just been described, the characteristics of knowledge are challenging for planning activities. The wide reliance on deliberation and communication approaches, as possible answers to this challenge, is showing more and more its weakness (Rydin, 2007): "bringing actors (expert and non-expert) together into the planning action is not enough" (Rydin, 2007, p. 55) and still represents the attempt to move knowledge from its relational context to the context of the planning action.

Making of knowledge a resource ready for action requires that action becomes the frame (with borders of space and time) in which knowledge is mobilised and activated for the action itself. Consistently, with the concept of *Ba* proposed by Nonaka and Konno (1998), action needs to be conceived as a 'shared context' sustaining the knowledge system and keeping knowledge *actionable*.

With respect to such a complexity of knowledge dynamics, planning requires to reconceptualise action as 'situated' (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). The 'knowing in action' (Amin & Roberts, 2008) perspective shows some potential with respect to the situatedness challenge. Amin and Roberts consider 'knowing in action' as a situated practice which:

1. handles the variety of knowledge dynamics;
2. takes into account differences in knowledge and modes of knowing;
3. makes use of portions of knowledge which already exist in and are or can be shared by the relational context through a sort of *bricolage* activity (Lanzara, 1999);
4. takes into account cognitive mechanisms taking places at the periphery of the action context;
5. becomes part of the dynamics of the cognitive organisation of the relational context;
6. is concerned about context dependency of participation and communication rules.

The 'knowing in action' perspective gives emphasis to the situated condition of the planning action which is relevant to preserving the context dependency of knowledge dynamics and to making the planning action part of that dynamics.

The 'knowing in action' perspective also requires a shift of the planning focus to knowledge. In planning, as well as in other domains (mainly the business domains), the crucial issue is no longer that of finding, collecting and making available for use the necessary knowledge (no longer the traditional knowledge management perspective); the most crucial issue is to recognise knowledge, distributed and/or concentrated, explicit and/or tacit, already existing and/or being produced, diverse and/or similar, belonging to individuals and/or to organisations, as an evolving and collective whole, framing the planning action. At the same time, planning action affects the knowledge infrastructure of the relational context: it asks for new knowledge by activating reflection and learning mechanisms (Schön, 1983), it uses knowledge from outside, it produces, collects, shares and manages data and information which affect knowledge.

Bridging knowledge to action in planning means to recognise that knowledge and action are linked together by a mutual framing dependency. In order to make knowledge an effective resource for the planning action and, the other way around, the planning action a resource for knowledge to become *actionable*, planning action cannot be just any complex process of collecting, sharing and using knowledge; it needs to be reconceptualised in strict inter-dependency with knowledge dynamics and the related relational context and needs to intrinsically include the goal to make knowledge *actionable*.

How does this inter-dependency affect strategy-making?

16.2.2 Reframing Strategy and Strategic Action

Generally speaking, a strategy is supposed to lead an organisation through changes and shifts to secure its future wellness and sustainability. Consistently with these general conceptions of strategy, change management becomes a crucial issue of the strategy implementation process. As it is well known, changes are not obvious consequences of decisions, regardless how consistent they may be with the overall strategy. Many problems arise, and many of these are largely associated with knowledge ability and management and with learning mechanisms. This is also evident in spatial strategy-making: Healey observes that "spatial strategy-making activity is taking place in a (…) context in which 'knowledge ability' and learning capacity are emphasised by policy-makers" (Healey, 2008, p. 861). The need for bridging knowledge to action augments its importance in strategy-making.

If we keep on conceptualising strategy-making as a linear sequence of two main activities, strategy formulation and strategy implementation (and change management), the knowledge-action gap stays un-resolved (Angehrn, 2005; Pfeffer & Sutton, 2000). Strategy-making needs to be reconceptualised within the perspective of bridging knowledge to action and making knowledge and action reciprocally shaping entities. This implies that: strategy-making has to be thought of as a process in which strategy is identified and formulated throughout the 'change management' activity; and implementation loses its whole significance. Zeleny with his idea of strategy (2008) makes a significant contribution in this regard.

The problem of implementation is described by Zeleny, 2008; (see also Chapter 15, this book) as the *Cloud Line* problem. The 'cloud line' is a real phenomenon well known in nature: from above the cloud line you cannot see below. Zeleny transfers the concept to strategy-making and observes the same phenomenon: operators of strategy implementation do not understand what is being asked and how the strategy has to be implemented (ibid, p. 66). "Everything above the cloud line is just a symbolic description of the intended future action. Everything below is only pure action, no descriptions. These are two separate domains: (1) description of action and (2) action itself. They can and do differ; very rarely do they meet – unless the description refers to the 'actual' action, present or past, not the intended action of the future"

(ibid, p. 66). Till strategies prevail in describing the future, the eternal problem of implementation remains unresolved. How can a strategy be implemented?

Zeleny suggests that strategy be reconceptualised as it is about doing and not about saying, thus making of implementation an 'uninteresting' issue. He considers that the notion of strategy abandoned the 'mission-vision' paradigm and reinstated action in the centre: *an organisation's strategy is what the organisation is doing and not what it is saying* (ibid, p. 65).

"What we want is not implementing a description but changing the strategy itself: changing from one form of action into another" (ibid, p. 66). Strategy-making starts with action, with current action, not with the identification of a mission or vision formulation; its product is a mission or vision derived from the action itself.

According to Zeleny, the problem originates from keeping knowledge and action as different and distinct concepts. Viewing knowledge and action as mutually framing entities, as envisaged in the previous paragraph, is consistent with the Zeleny's idea of knowledge as action: "knowledge is a purposeful coordination of action" (ibid, p. 66).

Knowing is acting and acting is knowing. When this gap is bridged a different approach to strategy-making is possible. The problem in spatial strategy-making, and in general in spatial planning, is that the relation between knowledge and action has been often looked at as a gap. Shifting the point of view to the knowledge-action relation implies that strategy-making can be reconceptualised and looked at as a complex activity of knowledge management by coordinating action towards a necessary change.

When coordinating action in complex systems such as spatial organisations, the action space is not completely known a priori; action is carried out within high uncertainty and many risks are envisaged. In such systems, action coordination asks for an exploratory approach in order to guarantee the systems from irreversible organisational, social and environmental consequences. Some authors discussed this problem in terms of micro-action or micro-decision (Barbanente, Borri, & Pace, 1993; Zeleny, 2002). For similar reasons, although concerning the business organisational world, Johnson, Melin and Whittngton (2003) discuss the issue of micro-strategy. Having an exploratory approach to action coordination requires that an empirical value be assigned to knowledge and practices until these are acknowledged of any strategic shared value for the organisation and also for its related environment. Strategy-making has to be conceptualised as complex framing of 'empirical spaces' where cognitions and practices are explored thus enabling the new strategy to take shape together with the new developed knowledge ability.

The idea of 'strategy-as-practice' (Jarzabkowski, 2003, 2004; Johnson, Langley, Melin, & Whittington, 2007; 2003; Whittington, 1996) is consistent with the conceptualisation of strategy just discussed. The 'strategy-as-practice' idea is derived from the need to look at strategies with a deeper focus "on the processes and practices constituting the everyday activities of organisational life and relating to strategic outcomes" (see www.strategy-as-practice.org quoting Johnson et al., 2003, p. 3).

The notion of strategy developed by the 'strategy-as-practice' approach depicts strategy as an activity undertaken by people who are components of the organisation (Carter, Clegg, & Kornberger, 2008) asked to respond the needed changes. According to Whittington (2004), the innovation of 'strategy-as-practice' is to treat strategy as important organisational practice. Trying to clarify the distinction between actions and practices in the 'strategy-as-practice' approach, Carter et al. (2008) observe: "we should forget (for a moment, at least) the word strategy and see which practices produce endurable or recurring events that eventually turn into 'things' or 'events' that are then addressed as 'strategy'. Hence, we have good reason to assume that strategy does not exist independently of a set of practices that form its base. In fact, strategy might happen (. . .) in different circumstances and different contexts; however, only a small percentage of actions that occur will be called 'strategic' because they revolve around a set of practices that constitute what is formally acknowledged to be strategy. From this perspective, a strategy as practice approach would research those practices that constitute the (. . .) 'strategy'" (Carter et al., 2008, p. 92).

Following Carter et al.'s definition and considering that practices and knowledge are strictly inter-related and reciprocal, we can consider strategy-making as the search for those practices and knowledge which are consistent with the needed change. In a certain sense, strategy can be looked at as an exploratory learning process where practices and their related knowledge undergo an 'appropriation' process: knowledge and practices become properties of the organisation and are kept as new actionable resources for the organisation itself and for its strategy.

16.3 Strategic Episodes in Strategy-Making

Strategy-making needs to have an appropriative nature. It has to be developed around one or more values/needs for change and the whole organisation needs to develop an appropriation of that/those value/s by empirically testing knowledge and practices consistent with that/those value/s. These tests can be intended as laboratories of knowledge and practices activated by *strategic episodes*. S*trategic episodes* are defined by Hendry and Seidl (2003). Hendry and Seidl look at 'episode' as providing a mechanism by which a system can suspend its routine structures and thus initiate a reflection on and change of these structures.[4] They define *strategic episodes* within the idea that strategic changes need modification of communication structures for new strategic discourses (Hendry & Seidl, 2003, p. 185).

For the purpose of the present discussion, I will consider *strategic episode*s assigning a larger meaning, reducing the communicative dimension crucial in the Hendry and Seidl's definition, keeping their idea that a strategic change is a change of the context from which the organisation is observed[5] and shifting the concept towards the spatial strategic action. A *strategic episode is a any condition for the routine knowledge and practices constraints in spatial management and transformation to be suspended and alternative knowledge and practices to be explored.*

By assigning significance to *strategic episodes*, an organisation can distance itself from itself thus allowing itself to observe itself and, from this position, to start a change. The activated exploration represents one, possibly additional, step forward into the strategy-making activity and can be seen as the place in which knowledge and practices are specified, transformed and finalised thus becoming an internalised and shared property. The exploration, in fact, enables the appropriation of knowledge and practices which therefore become resources embedded in social relations and able to shape action. In a sense, knowledge and practices are explored and transformed till they become collective *actionable* resources. Only in this way, knowledge and practices can be seen as responsible for strategic changes, in the organisation.

Strategy-making is explicitly concerned with the recognition of the need for a significant, often radical change. Processes of change can obviously be activated unintentionally, incrementally or through organisationally distributed bottom-up processes. More often they are auspicated by a managerial or institutional intentionality. If we agree to abandon the image that strategy is a starting point (thus overcoming the idea to run strategy-making by first developing visions and formulating strategy), a key issue for starting change is starting managing knowledge by coordinating action along strategic episodes. Action coordination in strategy-making can be coherently conceptualised as capturing opportunities for strategic episodes and activating or managing them as a coherent whole towards the needed change.

Activating strategy-making, both when it is a bottom-up or top-down approach, requires capturing of 'strategic episodes'. Strategic episodes enable the appropriation of knowledge and practices that are tested and specified/developed hopefully in line with the needed change. The knowledge and practices which are acknowledged to be consistent with and appropriate for the needed change can be referred to as composing the strategy.

16.4 The *Bricolaging* Character of Strategy-Making

16.4.1 *Actionable Knowledge and Practices in Strategy-Making*

The concept of 'actionable knowledge' is well known in the domain of knowledge management and it is considered as the knowledge that is *ready-to-use*.

Actionable knowledge, as opposed to information or other types of knowledge, refers to knowledge that is useful in guiding behaviour in that it tells us how to create or produce something we believe has external validity (Argyris, 1993, 1996 quoted in Adams & Flynn, 2005). For example, knowing that the use of chemicals in agriculture affects ground water depending on specific draining characteristics of soil is information with external validity: it can be used for choosing one or more fertilisation methods in agriculture among diverse alternatives. Knowledge that informs cultivators how to quantify chemicals depending on soil's draining characteristics

in order to avoid groundwater pollution is actionable knowledge because it provides the link between the general knowledge and setting specific knowledge to make draining mechanisms knowledge externally valid.

Actionable knowledge and practices are reciprocally shaping and cannot be disjointed: Chris Argyris clarified that actionable knowledge is not only relevant to the world of practice, it is the knowledge that people use to create that world (1993).

In strategy-making, this implies that an organisation needs to be the owner of actionable knowledge and related practices in order to be able to conduct the organisation itself towards the needed change. The appropriation process requires the acknowledgement of general knowledge or information with external validity as well as the test/development of actionable knowledge for linking that external validity to practices.

Therefore actionable knowledge in strategy-making can be defined as an organisational cognitive property developed throughout strategy-making and, at the same time, shaping the strategy itself through its related practices.

Knowledge is made 'actionable' for strategy-making, when strategy-making is considered to be an exploratory 'social/organisational activity' enabling the appropriation of knowledge, that is, making actionable knowledge produced and/or revealed, tested and therefore shared as a common good.

As they have been defined above, strategic episodes enable the appropriation of knowledge ready for shaping action towards the needed change, that is, for shaping strategy.

Actionable knowledge for strategic changes is a product of the system itself but not necessarily within evolutionary mechanisms. Strategic episodes, by suspending the routine cognitive and practice mechanisms, can activate practices and actions which are inconsistent with the pre-existing mechanisms but at the same time consistent with the new values empirically explored within strategic episodes. The mechanism can be continuous (Weick & Quinn, 1999) or episodic (Ford & Ford, 1994), or evolutionary/revolutionary (Weick & Quinn, 1999), that is, in continuity or discontinuity with the pre-existing structure of practices, but nevertheless manageable by the organisation because the knowledge supporting change has been internalised by the organisation itself through an appropriation process.

In a certain sense, strategic episodes can be considered as *Ba* (Nonaka & Konno, 1998) environments where knowledge and practices are created and transformed into available and actionable resources for organisations.

16.4.2 Bricolaging Knowledge and Practices

The question is: what makes and how to make actionable knowledge and practices, that have undergone an appropriation process throughout strategic episodes, compose a strategy?

Relying on the definition of strategy-making presented in this chapter, strategy is not a starting point; it is framed throughout the strategy-making process and has

a retrospective dimension: in order to acknowledge and frame the strategy we need to look backward, on what has already taken place, searching for actionable knowledge and its related practices, possibly consistent with the needed change. It is not feasible that all the available actionable knowledge and practices appear promising with regards to the needed change: those being promising have to be sorted out of a chaotic set currently composing the whole organisational action and framed together. It is a *bricolage* activity and does not have an end. Strategy is dynamic: it evolves together with the dynamics of activities carried out by the organisation; the more experimental these activities are and the more empirical nature they have, the more the strategy is changing.

The dynamic view of strategy has been envisaged and analysed by many authors (Johnson et al., 2003; Regnér, 2008; Whittington, 2003). Regnér, among others, emphasises the view of strategy "as something immanent in purposive action that draws on tendencies and predispositions, rather than as individual purposeful action, as traditionally conceived" (Regnér, 2008, p. 575).

Generally speaking, we could say that *bricolaging* can be intended as 'creating order out of whatever resources are at hand'. In this sense, "*bricoleurs* act in chaotic conditions and put order out of them" (Weick, 2001, p. 110). Guiding a strategy-making process means managing actionable knowledge through the coordination (based on the exploration and capture of capabilities) of action in order to *bricolage* a coherent whole towards a needed change. Regnér defines this approach to strategy as *inductive strategy-making*: "strategy [is] developed through [...] exploratory activities involving trial and error, informal contacts and noticing, experiments and heuristics" (Regnér, 2003, p. 77); in these conditions new knowledge and practices that can enable significant changes are created and developed. There is a great focus on capturing opportunities from available resources, which is the basic assumption in the concept of *bricolage*.

In strategy-making, *bricolage* refers to a creative and adaptive management of knowledge/practices resources towards a needed change: it can be seen as a practical adaptation/composition of knowledge and practices.

Many authors already observed the use of knowledge artefacts as an activity grounded in the *bricolage* involved in everyday strategy-making (Chia, 2004; Jarzabkowski, 2004; Whittington, 2003; Jarzabkowski & Wilson, 2006; Wilson & Jarzabkowski, 2004). Great emphasis is given to the idea that knowledge artefacts are already existing, thus augmenting opportunities for easy use and reducing the demand for learning. "*Bricolage* is inherent in the practical use of knowledge, utilizing those knowledge artefacts that are at hand (...) about future strategy. Practitioners act upon future strategy without accurate foresight. Strategy artefacts assist in this process not as rational tools for diagnosing future action, but as tools that may be fashioned to effect current actions in ways that may bring about future actions. Rather than seeking new knowledge, in *bricolage* the use of an existing, well-known tool that is readily to hand is likely because such tools may be more easily fashioned to the (...) intent. Strategists continue to draw upon established artefacts (...) because these have technical, cultural and linguistic legitimacy that makes them easily appropriable" (Jarzabkowski & Wilson, 2006, p. 361).[6]

Considering actionable knowledge and practices developed in strategic episodes as resources to be *bricolaged* into a strategy means that the strategy adaptively comprises things that the organisation is already familiar with (it has already undergone an appropriation process) and that are ready to become routine, because they have been already tested against the needed change by the organisation.

16.5 The Story of a Strategy

16.5.1 The Experience of Torre Guaceto in Italy

The case we present here refers to one of the planning activities carried out by the Park Agency of the Torre Guaceto wetland, a Natural Reserve in Southern Italy.[7] Torre Guaceto is located in the Apulia region, on the Adriatic coast, about 15 km north of the city of Brindisi. Among others, including greater natural value, the Natural Reserve covers a large area used for agricultural activities: mainly olive trees and vegetables cultivation. The agricultural area was included in the Natural Reserve because its environmentally oriented management is committed to the protection of wildlife environments.

The Natural Reserve is managed by the Park Agency which is responsible for the Land Use Management Plan (LUMP). The LUMP is considered one of the available means to develop a change in local agricultural practices towards natural production; therefore, according to national laws, it includes regulations for the agricultural practices.

In 2000, the Park Agency started working on the LUMP and, in early 2002 presented the plan to the agricultural community. With respect to agricultural practices, the LUMP prescribed a shift from current practices towards biological ones. The way of shifting agricultural practices from the standard ones to natural was not explicitly defined in the LUMP. The underlying strategy of the LUMP was centred on the idea that changes in practices are possible if you change rules. Obviously, the constraints imposed on land use practices activated strong reactions by the agricultural community.

Faced with a conflict the Park Agency decided to adjust the norms by introducing less restrictive rules but this effort was not enough to reduce the conflict, and consequently the LUMP was adopted without an agreement with the agricultural community, although in its less restrictive version.

A short time later, the Park Agency was involved in a wetland project for introducing participatory practices in wetland management. This was considered an opportunity to manage the conflict, but the structured participatory protocol tested by the project resulted in the escalation of conflict. Eventually, attempts to communicate and interact with the agricultural community were abandoned by the Park Agency.

Some months later, the Park Agency hired a consultant to contact and interview the farmers cultivating land on the Natural Reserve in order to develop a

financial and economic program of the Reserve. The interviews were conducted in a face-to-face fashion. Farmers began to cooperate and communication between the Park Agency and the agricultural community resumed: the Park Agency realised that communication needed to be managed within a more dialogic and individualistic mode. In the same period, the Park Agency was invited to join an Interreg project[8] under which incentives for testing innovative and environment friendly practices were available to farmers who wanted to participate. However, only eight farmers accepted to be involved in the project and test new practices for olives cultivation and olive oil production ('The Park Gold' project within the Interreg project).

The project 'The Park Gold' was a great success. Although very small in terms of the number of participants and land, it gained a symbolic value for the agricultural community: many other olive trees farmers expressed interest in being involved, although the Interreg project could no longer support them. Those who had joined the 'The Park Gold' project decided to set up the Torre Guaceto Association of Biologic Olive Oil Producers. The Statutory Rules of Association contain mainly prescriptions for olive oil production, and these rules are much more restrictive than those related to the same production and initially contained in the LUMP.

The Park Agency assigned strategic value to this result especially considering the main goal of shifting towards biologic production the cultivations in the area and decided to announce to the agricultural community that the olives farmers joining the new Association could benefit from using the Park Label on oil packaging.

The success of 'The Park Gold' initiative triggered additional experiments devoted to innovative biological methods of vegetable cultivation. The first one was a special cultivar of tomato (*fiaschetto*) that, in the past, was grown in Puglia in dry-cultivation. Dry-cultivation makes products more resistant and less demanding of chemicals. Farmers started different parallel tests in different areas of the Natural Reserve using different protocols to find out which protocol works best for strengthening the product and increasing productivity. The development of *fiaschetto* production has been and still now is supported by Slow Food[9], an international organisation founded to counteract fast food, fast life and the disappearance of local food.

In order to commercialise the *fiaschetto* effectively, some tests were set up to transform the *fiaschetto* into tomato sauce to be produced in very traditional manner (the way the sauce was produced in the local families' tradition) by involving women (the wives of the cultivators) and also a national organisation (Libera Terra[10]) which in Puglia is managing the (properties of) ancient farms confiscated from the local mafia.

Similar tests are currently carried out with lettuce and other vegetables. All the experiments are collaboratively designed by the Park Agency and the agricultural community. New practices for agricultural production are being developed and transformed into new routines.

Crucial to the discussion in this chapter is the following: the Park Agency abandoned the idea to handle a strategic change by carrying out the adoption and implementation of the LUMP and developed a sort of a strategic ability to coordinate

action along strategic episodes and *bricolaging* knowledge and practices towards the needed change.

16.5.2 Analysing Strategy-Making in Torre Guaceto

16.5.2.1 Strategic Episodes

Strategic episodes can be identified with reference to four different fields of practice: 'spatial plan design', 'communication', 'agricultural practices', 'community and organisational management'. In particular, as it is visualised in Fig. 16.1, strategic episodes can be clearly identified in the last three fields of practice and refer respectively to: the exploration of communication practices (the participatory models proposed within the framework of the Wetland project and the face-to-face communication model adopted by the consultant hired by the Park Agency to develop a financial and economic program); the exploration of biological agricultural production practices (olive oil cultivation, *fiaschetto* tomato cultivation and transformation, traditional vegetable cultivation); and the exploration of alternative dynamics of the organisation (involvement of external actors).

It is evident from the story that the identified events are strategic episodes clearly approached with an empirical approach by components of the organisation who felt
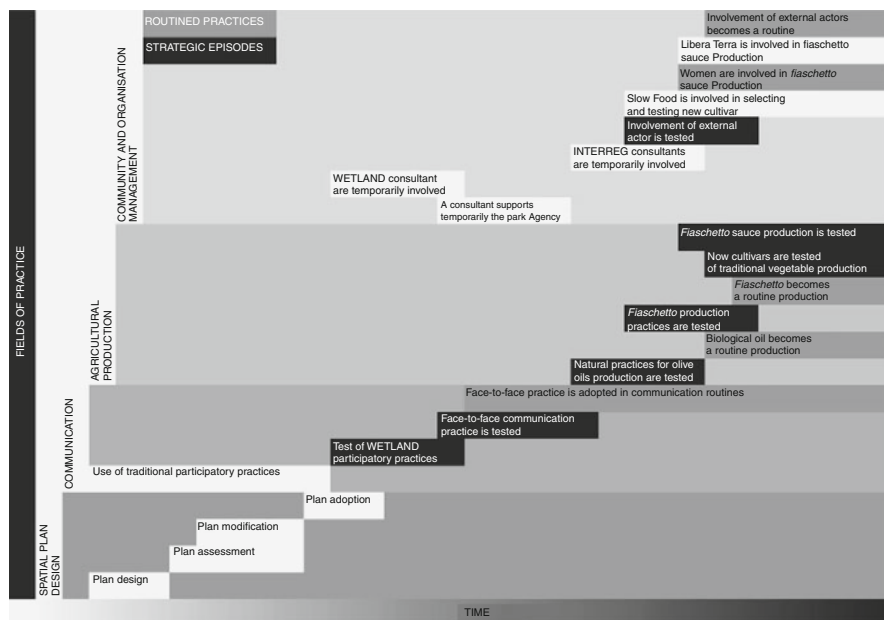

Fig. 16.1   Strategy-making in Torre Guaceto

themselves engaged in the need for change. Strategic episodes represent an intentional opportunity for the organisation to look at itself 'from outside' and reflect on itself with regards to the needed change.

An interesting episode, not indicated in Fig. 16.1, is the one related to the spatial plan design. The activity carried out at the time when the LUMP was being developed, did not have any empirical end, at least not determined by any intentionality. The failure of any attempt by the Park Agency to begin a dialogue with the agricultural community made the Park Agency search for opportunities to engage cultivators, even if only few, in collaborative initiatives. Moreover, this episode made the Park Agency abandon the idea that the LUMP could be of any value in moving towards a change. The Agency also learned/realised (and learn) that the agricultural community would never accept any modification of cultivation practices outside of practice itself.

The episode described above does not constitute a strategic episode as defined it in the early paragraphs; still it represents a key episode through which the Park Agency started developing the strategic ability to recognise opportunities for activating strategic episodes, conceptualised as laboratories of practices. The idea that the strategic episodes identified above are really strategic is also indicated by the fact that they are not only referred to as changes in the agricultural practices (being the main focus of the needed change) but also as other dimensions of the whole organisation of the Torre Guaceto wetland.

Strategic episodes in the 'agricultural production' field of practice take place in connection with strategic episodes related to the 'communication' and 'community and organizational management' fields of practice. Starting from the 'communication' field of practice, we can observe that strategic episodes in 'agricultural production' occur within a face-to-face communication framework: this confirms that testing face-to-face communication is a strategic episode with regards to the needed change; in fact it proves that face-to-face communication can become a routine practice in the interaction between the Park Agency and the agricultural community.

Similarly, strategic episodes in the 'agricultural production' can be observed as related to one single or more portion/s of the whole organisation, or to some portions of the organisation including other new-coming actors considered relevant to the outcome of a specific strategic episode. Each of them required adjustments of the structure and composition of the organisation: initially the interaction was limited to the Park Agency and the cultivators; slowly the larger agricultural community became involved (women were mainly represented by cultivators' wives who were acknowledged as key actors in the traditional transformation of the agricultural products); later on external actors and organisations were also included in or connected to the organisation consistently with the acknowledgements of new opportunities for starting strategic episodes. The whole organisation stopped thinking of itself as a closed entity and developed a capability to re-conceptualise itself as a pulsating entity, able to maintain strong geographic identity.

This analysis shows that the key issue for activating change in Torre Guaceto was starting coordinating action along strategic episodes. This experience of

strategy-making shows/indicates that action coordination can be easily recognised as capturing opportunities for strategic episodes and activating or managing them as a coherent whole towards the needed change.

16.5.2.2 Actionable Knowledge and Practices

The Torre Guaceto strategy-making reveals what I mean by 'actionable knowledge' and how this knowledge is produced by strategy-making and, reciprocally, how it provides structure to strategy-making for governing the Torre Guaceto territory.

In the Torre Guaceto experience knowledge isn't *actionable* until the entire organisation is in agreement as to what that knowledge really is. The knowledge becomes actionable through collaboration in experimental forms of land use and is kept actionable by turning related practices into routines of the organisational activities. In terms of Argyris' definition (1993), actionable knowledge in this experience is the knowledge that the Torre Guaceto organisation used to create its new strategy, that is, its new world of practices.

In this sense, the activation of change started when the action coordination along strategic episodes enabled consistent (with the needed change) knowledge management or, reciprocally when the coordination of action along strategic episodes started to be structured by knowledge management.

It is possible to identify actionable knowledge and practices relevant for the Torre Guaceto strategy-making. Looking at the organisation as a whole (the Park Agency, the cultivators and their families the agricultural community, external actors or consultants), some examples of knowledge and practices which shape strategy-making in Torre Guaceto can be identified:

1. the knowledge activated to keep communication and collaboration active and used by the Park Agency in face-to-face communication routines;
2. the knowledge embedded in organic olive oil production practices;
3. the knowledge embedded in *fiaschetto* organic production practices;
4. the knowledge activated to involve external actors in strategic episodes.

These examples of knowledge and practices are knowledge artefacts provided to a new shared context, an empirical context, and developed collaboratively within the shared context itself. They frame strategy-making and are, at the same time, products of strategy-making itself: such knowledge artefacts found their way to practice and within practice: they are the actionable forms of knowledge.

It is interesting to observe that these knowledge artefacts are not only useful to the routine they are embedded in and responsible for: they are also used, although differently, while developing and carrying out other, subsequent strategic episodes. These knowledge artefacts are characterised not only by a dimension specifically related to the practice but also by a more general dimension related to the modes (communication and collaborative mechanisms) and conditions (success or failure of the strategic episodes) necessary to develop the artefact till it becomes actionable.

This second body, more abstract, is responsible for the *bricolaging* activity, that is, the way knowledge is managed by action coordination.

16.5.3 Discussion

The Torre Guaceto experience shows how a strategy-making process works as *bricolaging* knowledge and practices towards a needed change.

Initially, the Park Agency presented its own vision of the future by the means of the LUMP, imagining that the change could be achieved by LUMP norms implementation. The change could start when the Park Agency stopped describing its future vision and started managing and *bricolaging* knowledge by coordinating action through strategic episodes and towards a coherent change. In the Torre Guaceto experience, strategic episodes represented a lens through which actors could look at their environment and consider different ways to interact with it. In this way there was no need to extract knowledge from its relational context because that relational context is the context carrying on the strategy-making through practices within an empirical approach.

Strategy-making became a social practice, not necessarily intentional, carried out throughout the 'collaborative exploration of practices'. At the same time strategy is operationalised by recognising and *bricolaging* 'actionable knowledge' and related practices within a sort of knowledge governance framework. Here, by knowledge governance I refer to what is widely shared (Foss & Michailova, 2009): learning, creating and managing knowledge crucial for the future of the organisation that becomes a space where modes for creating and modifying the organisational reality are discovered.

The Torre Guaceto organisation gained a cognitive and relational dimension where knowing is *knowing in action*, that is, running the multiplicity of opportunities and modes for building its own world of practices within its specific spatial, environmental and organisational constraints.

16.6 Conclusions: Towards the Micro-Foundation of Strategy

This chapter explored spatial strategy-making as a process based on knowledge management and coordination of action towards needed changes, thus trying to reduce the gap between knowledge and action.

The knowledge–action gap has been analysed within two different domains: spatial planning and strategy-making. With regard to the first domain the analysis of this gap shows that knowledge has long been considered as a resource for planning to be captured and made available to the planning action. The idea that knowledge is not additive, not stable, not available to be packed and not always actionable, suggests that knowledge be kept within the relational context, where it is used, produced and shared and modes and opportunities for creating spaces where knowledge is actionable be explored.

With regard to strategy-making, the analysis shows that while keeping conceptualising strategy-making as a linear sequence of two main sequential activities, that is, strategy formulation and strategy implementation, the knowledge–action gap still represents a problem. Reconceptualising strategy-making as a process in which strategy is identified and formulated throughout the 'change management' activity makes knowledge and action reciprocally shaping entities, and the gap a non-existing issue.

Adopting a knowledge/practice-based perspective in strategy-making in order to make the gap between knowledge and action not a critical issue with regard to the planning effectiveness, strategy-making is proposed as an exploratory knowledge management process keeping knowledge within the relational context and continuously re-aligning it and the strategy itself within an empirical approach. When moving knowledge out from its socio-relational context, it is not possible to consider it in its actionable dimension and the social structures and interactions appropriate to the strategy cannot be formed.

Taking the above into consideration strategy-making is described as a *bricolaging* activity, capturing actionable knowledge and related practices as resources shaping the strategy and being shaped by the strategy-making process. When strategy-making is conceived as producing an end-product, it destroys the intrinsic idea of the *bricolage* concept: various elements and components are used and adjusted into the *bricolage* products when they are recognised as effective and consistent with the context evolution and requirements. The *bricolage* product evolves together with the context producing/using it. *Bricolaging* in strategy-making can be one of the possible ways to make strategy a vehicle for enabling knowledge to be activated as a resource for action.

Actionable knowledge and related practices are considered knowledge artefacts of the strategy-making process and, in particular, of *strategic episodes* activated as empirical spaces where the organisation that is making strategy can suspend its routine practices and explore new ones which are eventually recognised as consistent with the needed change.

Strategic episodes, as spaces where new actionable knowledge and related practices are developed as a dynamic whole coherent with the needed change, can be considered spaces for the *micro-foundation of strategy*.

The term micro-foundations is well known in economics and refers to the micro-economic analysis of individuals' behaviour that underlines macro-economic theory.[11] More generally, "[m]icro-foundations refer to the micro-level activity that underlies a macro-level phenomenon" (Stoker, 2008, p. 3). Strategic episodes represent only one of the possible micro-foundational spaces for strategy. Micro-foundations of strategy can be related to any opportunity or space indicating how actors, activities, practices and organisational structures are related towards strategic outcomes (Regner, 2008) consistent with the needed change.

Considering strategy-making as an exploratory process, the search for micro-foundations can be conceived as a process aimed at identifying any/all possible micro-organisational-level mechanisms which bring about aggregate organisational outcomes, which are key for the strategy. In strategy-making as described in this

chapter, the organisational outcome, that is, the phenomenon at the macro-level can be related to the organisational dynamics observed through changes in practices. Micro-foundations can be intended as providing basic understanding of micro-mechanisms in the organisation that helps to guide the *bricolaging* activity towards the strategy.

Notes

1. "When dealing with tangible resources, it is possible to manage those resources by distributing them efficiently according to functions and goals. Knowledge is not a tangible resource. It is rather intangible, boundary-less, dynamic. If it is not actionable at a specific time in a specific place, it is of no value for action" (Nonaka & Konno, 1998, p. 41).
2. See also Searle, 1996.
3. Zeleny (2008, p. 66) considers that "there is no other knowledge than tacit". See also Zeleny, 1987 with regard to this concept.
4. Hendry and Seidl refer great part of their reflection on episodes and strategic episodes to the Luhmann's model of social systems change (Luhmann, 1990).
5. In these conditions, novel combinations of routines are made possible by reflections of actors on existing routines (Feldman, 2000).
6. The author wants to make the reader aware that Jarzabkowski and Wilson (2006) refer to actionable knowledge assigning to this a different meaning than that assigned by this chapter. Jarzabkowski and Wilson assume actionable knowledge as distinct from theoretical knowledge; it includes tools, techniques, models and methodologies developed by theory. Although this difference their quotation helps in clarifying the implications of a *bricolage* approach.
7. The planning experience of Torre Guaceto has been already analysed in other publications by the author (Celino & Concilio, 2006; Celino, Concilio, & De Liddo, 2008).
8. The Interreg project 'TWReferenceNET: Management and sustainable development of protected transitional waters' is designed to improve and reinforce conservation of natural heritage in protected transitional ecosystems and to enlarge their sustainable fruition. The project is financed by the Community Initiative INTERREG III B (2000–2006) CADSES.
9. Slow Food is an international non-profit, eco-gastronomic member-supported organisation founded in 1989 to counteract fast food and fast life, the disappearance of local food traditions and people's dwindling interest in the food they eat, where it comes from, how it tastes and how our food choices affect the rest of the world (http://www.slowfood.com).
10. See: http://www.liberaterra.it.
11. See Barro, 1993.

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