

:: Notes for Strategy (BUS 204) Seminar:: Session 1::

1. Introduction / overall structure of seminars

2. Reading for this week

3. Assessment / seminar journal

What is strategy? Where is strategy? Where are strategic decisions made?

- “overall emphasis in our research and teaching across all our programmes is on developing the ability to make *relevant critical analyses and evaluations*” (emphasis added)
- through the term being confronted with many ideas, materials, etc... that probably were not what you expected in this class, might be difficult / hard to understand: that’s OK / roll with it, do your best, and it will be fine
- Talking about the development of capitalism
- Forms of socialization, patterns of decision-making and organization

Kazem Chaharbaghi “The problematic of strategy”

- the problem of a one-dimensional reading / usage of strategy
- “Strategy has now become the new mantra of contemporary organizations, an inert term with no substance and meaning... It is taking over meeting rooms and corporate documents like a virus.” (328)

Class composition, the reversal of perspective

- Assumption of the passive subject; narrative of victimization: you’ve been strategized / you are the locus from where strategy emerges
- Forms of resistance as the determining factors in the history of capitalist development: “We too have worked with a concept that puts capitalist development first, and workers second. This is a mistake. And now we have to turn the problem on its head, reverse the polarity, and start again from the beginning: and the beginning is the class struggle of the working class. At the level of socially developed capital, capitalist development becomes subordinated to working class struggles; it follows behind them, and they set the pace to which the political mechanisms of capital’s own reproduction must be tuned.” – Mario Tronti
- Technical composition / political composition

Opening up the Everyday

- Considering the everyday borrowing from Michel de Certeau’s book (1984) *The Practice of Everyday Day*. Trans. Steven Rendall. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- The everyday not as a background, but as locus of activity and focus, where methods, categories, perspectives, and understandings emerge from
- “the goal is to perceive and analyze the microbe-like operations proliferating within technocratic structures and deflecting their functioning by means of a multitude of ‘tactics’ articulated in the details of everyday life... to bring light to the clandestine forms taken by dispersed, tactical, and makeshift creativity of groups or individuals already caught in the nets of ‘discipline.’” (xiv-xv)
- “multiform, resistance, tricky and stubborn practices that elude discipline without being outside the field in which it is exercised, and which should lead us to a theory of everyday practices, of lived space” (96)
- To consider: “the relations between a certain kind of *rationality* and an imagination... [and] the difference between, on the one hand, the tentative moves, pragmatic ruses, and successive *tactics* that mark the stages of practical investigation and, on the other hand, the *strategic* representations to the public as the product of these operations.” (xxii)

Strategies

—Defined as “the calculus of force-relationships which becomes possible when a subject of will and power (a proprietor, an enterprise, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated from an “environment.” A strategy assumes a place that can be circumscribed as *proper* (*proper*) and thus serve as the basis for generating relations with an exterior distinct from it (competitors, adversaries, “clienteles,” “targets”, or “objects” of research”). Political, economic, and scientific rationality has been constructed on this strategic model.” (xix)

—Strategy “postulates a *place* that can be delimited as its *own* and serve as the base from which relations with an *exteriority* composed of targets or threats... As in management, every “strategic” rationalization seeks first of all to distinguish its “own” place, that is, the place of its own power and will, from an “environment.”” (36)

Inquiry

—Use of sociological tools as a part of working class struggles

—Not to treat the labor force as a mere means of production / input into a labor process

—Inquiry into forms of labor, their operations, solidarity between workers, etc...

—Kolinkos inquiry into working in call centres as one example of a workers inquiry

Overview of the Seminars

—Week 2: Midnight Notes, New Enclosures

—Week 3: Tiziana Terranova, free labor

—Week 4: Mute magazine, questions around debt, finance, and crisis

—Week 5: Summary / Stefano’s materials

Assessments

—Seminar Journals