De/territorialization in Assemblages: Negotiating the space for Emancipatory Democratic Assemblages

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What is an assemblage? It is an analytical tool that reflects an entanglement of matter and discourse, human and non-human actants, that stabilize and destabilize over space and time. They allow us to see "politics in all its fine capillaries: on the docks, in the walls, as we text or surf the Web, debated in technical subcommittees, discussed in boardrooms, and decided in engineering labs".[1] In short, it does a fine job of *describing* the associations between diverse actants. But what about explaining *why* an assemblage emerges and operates in a specific manner?[2] In other words, what are the relations of power? What is the power equation of and between the actants? Can an assemblage only be understood through small-scale, local relations? What happens to the macro factors? There is also the challenge of political responsibility. Assemblage theory promoted by Jane Bennett opens the political world to non-humans but when it comes to political responsibility- it is also portrayed as being shared! States get to claim – 'we cannot be solely blamed for our actions.' These questions reflect limitations in the assemblage theory, but they are not intrinsic to it. One merely needs to look elsewhere within the assemblage tradition.

Studies that associate democracy with assemblage show a way in this endeavour. The scholarship highlights the heterogeneous participants of democracy and, the complex and contingent nature of its functioning. Importantly, it also shows that a democratic assemblage can reinforce and perpetuate an unjust and unequal status quo. Describing the assemblage characteristics of democracy can open the range of actants but it does not necessarily influence the existing power dynamics. The scholarship is conscious of the fact that the concept of assemblage, in itself, is politically promiscuous – it can support both the existing power dynamics and be a challenge to it. It just opens the possibilities and sheds light on the existing power dynamics and working arrangements.

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[1] Mark B. Salter, *Making things international, 2. Catalysts and reactions*, Catalysts and reactions, (Minneapolis: Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press, 2016), vii.

[2] Colin Flint et al., "Reading Jason Dittmer's "Diplomatic Material", Duke University Press (2017)," *Political geography* 69 (2019), https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2018.08.016.

In this paper, I build on the democratic assemblage scholarship by answering the questions raised above on assemblage theory. I argue that assemblages emerge and operate to fulfil 'desires' produced out of other assemblages. In this respect, assemblages can be status-quoist or rebellious. In the former case, it is not merely various human institutions that participate to perpetuate the power dynamics but also numerous non-human actants that are coerced, shaped, or directed to attain those desires. Hence, it is necessary to understand the 'desire' that produces democratic assemblages to probe whether they are anthropocentric or not.

It is this probe that opens the emancipatory, non-anthropocentric side of assemblages. They are never merely serving anthropocentric desires but function beyond them, sometimes even subverting and challenging anthropocentric interests. In other words, there is an inbuilt force of disruption and resistance in assemblages. Assemblages can not only work against anthropocentric desires, but they can also dissolve the anthropocentric assemblages and build something new. The paper will demonstrate the challenges posed by material and discursive forces to anthropocentric democratic assemblages and how harnessing these forces can produce a non-anthropocentric and ecological democratic assemblage.

Democratic Assemblages

There is a nascent literature in the deliberative democracy scholarship which has made attempts to view democracy as an assemblage. Andrea Felicetti, who first made this intervention, has argued that existing approaches, such as the systems theory, have not been able to adequately identify and connect with all the participants of a democracy. He is of the view that there is 'no fixed core' of democracy and hence democracy should be seen as an assemblage- an analytical perspective that offers a more holistic picture of what a democracy is.[3] Democracy as an assemblage better reflects the co-existence, complexity, unpredictability, contingency, non-linearity, and chaos of a society. Such a framework recognizes and accommodates the co-existence of a heterogeneous range of actants and the uncertain processes of change in the functioning of democracies.

While Felicetti does not explicitly talk of the non-humans, Hans Asenbaum, building on his work, argues that democracy as an assemblage "is a moment in which material objects, sentient

[3] Andrea Felicetti, "Learning from Democratic Practices: New Perspectives in Institutional Design," *The Journal of politics* 83, no. 4 (2021).

bodies, and performative expressions align in a manner that affords freedom and equality."[4] It is ontologically inclusive as it sees actants coming together through natural forces, affect, and cognition. In other words, 'nature' binds the actants, affect generates connective bonds, and cognition or 'subjective interpretations' bring everything together in our minds.

Hans views democratic assemblages as "both a state and a becoming."[5] Democratic assemblages are a 'state' that recognizes the participation of various kinds of material objects and sentient beings- from banners in protests to microphones in citizen assemblies. It includes a wide range of actants beyond the humans such as rivers, viruses or wolves' that impact and influence the working and functioning of democracy. In this flat ontology, Hans emphasises the importance of human agency as a critical force in achieving freedom and equality, ensuring that political responsibility is not abdicated by humans. However, he avoids giving primacy to the humans, arguing that human agency should build and not control the participants. Hans also views performative expressions as actants that create some 'things':

> "Their words, sounds or gestures become objects of contention or agreement. Their performative acts, their sighs, nods, silences, chants, songs, dances, artistic articulations, the clothes they wear, the images they share on social media all become part of democratic assemblage. This also goes for the performative expressions of non-humans. The rainfall, bird song, and smartphone notification all affect the constellations of engagement. Democratic assemblage, then, goes beyond intentional design. It highlights the many things that rearrange democratic formations often in unforeseen ways."[6]

Democratic assemblages are constantly 'becoming' in the sense that they consist "of ever changing constellations of sentient bodies who are themselves constantly changing."[7] They are never stable and stagnant, rather they reflect a sense of contingency, consistently changing and transforming. From bodily actants such as muscles or bones to social discourses like gendered body language or cultural customs, a democratic subject can be influenced by many sources. Hans argues that these influences can usher in transformations, not only in an individual but also in the identity of larger assemblages, including democratic assemblages. This cyclical

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[4] Hans Asenbaum, "Democratic Assemblage," in *What Makes an Assembly? Stories, Experiments, and Inquiries*, ed. Anne; Jeanpierre Davidian, Laurent (London: Sternberg Press, 2022).
[5] Asenbaum, "Democratic Assemblage."
[6] Asenbaum, "Democratic Assemblage."
[7] Asenbaum, "Democratic Assemblage."

process ensures that assemblages are viewed as temporary arrangements that are evolving over space and time; there is a continuous circulation and removal of things and ideas.

How to explain the temporariness and contingent nature of democratic assemblages? Will Eadson and Bregje Van Veelan use the concept of (de)territorialization from Deleuze and Guattari's corpus of assemblage theory in order to explain the contingent nature of assemblage-democracy, arguing that 'deterritorialization' is democratisation.[8] For them, deterritorialization is "a loosening of ties that seek to bound or limit connections between different entities", it promotes "mobility, removal of fixed ideas and habits, with concomitant emphasis on continual remaking of connections."[9] Deterritorialization is followed by reterritorialization which aims to stabilize and homogenize an assemblage that has been destabilized. Contending that the concept allows them to see the porosity, heterogeneity, and flexibility in democracies, Eadson and Veelan argue that democracies have a constant "desire to *deterritorialize*" – to challenge, debate and overturn social and political norms. The question this raises is how to utilize deterritorialization to usher in democratic experiments that create more just democratic spaces and practices. What will be the normative tactics and strategies that contest and defy established norms of democracies, opening spaces of conflict and negotiations to bring about a change?

They propose an emphasis on multifaceted recursive loops of 'materiality, publics, and scale' to understand these (de)territorializing processes and how such spaces can be democratically constructed. For instance, they view "energy not as a pre-existing resource 'waiting' to be governed, but as brought into being as a governable object through an amalgamation of matter, publics, and geographic constructs."[10]

Firstly, "materiality produces democratic dispositions in assemblages."[11] Matter has the capacity to act, become 'material', and influence democratic activities. Materials aid and support or obstruct the democratic processes by creating different possibilities for stagnation or change. However, their effect cannot be seen in isolation. These material dispositions function along with social actants, leading to the emergence of a particular kind of 'publics.' At the same time, these publics also shape and influence matter. In other words, both materials

[8] Will Eadson and Bregje Van Veelen, "Assemblage-democracy: Reconceptualising democracy through material resource governance," *Political Geography* 88 (2021/06/01/ 2021).
[9] Eadson and Van Veelen, "Assemblage-democracy: Reconceptualising democracy through material resource governance," 3.
[10] Eadson and Van Veelen, "Assemblage-democracy: Reconceptualising democracy through material resource governance," 9.
[11] Eadson and Van Veelen, "Assemblage-democracy: Reconceptualising democracy through material resource governance," 9.

and publics are entangled and co-constituted. In this loop, non-human matter such as objects and natures are political actors that produce 'things' and publics, but they are also influenced by these different 'publics.' Here, what is significant is the arrangement of matter and publics – it determines the shape of the assemblage. These new productions of matter and publics produce certain inclusions and exclusions that generate conflicts and negotiations and carry the potential for deterritorialization when harnessed strategically. A focus on the potential of materials and production of publics can open possibilities for deterritorialization that results in more just and equal democratic assemblage.

Thirdly, "assemblage-democracy is necessarily spatially oriented in its ontological implications."[12] Space is constructed and deconstructed in the (de)territorialising process. When territorialising, assemblages spatially organise activities to either strengthen or find support for their territorial acts. When deterritorialising, assemblages attempt scalar jumps to remove hierarchies and unbind spatial territorialization. (De)territorialisation in assemblage-democracy raises the normative question of 'where' of democracy, opens deliberations that critically scrutinize the given spatial logics that reinforce power and control, and defy them to correct the imbalance.

Democratic assemblages pave a path for conceptualising a just, equal, and emancipatory democracy through deterritorialization. To attain justice and equality, harnessing and building 'deterritorialising' forces is essential. However, various conceptual loose ends remain unaddressed, posing a challenge in developing a normative vision of democracies through assemblage: *Why do democratic assemblages emerge? Do they have boundaries? If yes, how are they determined? How are its participants selected? What do these assemblages produce? Most importantly, what are the emancipatory potential and possibilities?*

One way to offer answers to these questions is by undertaking a theoretical dialogue with the composers of assemblage theory: Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Manuel DeLanda, Jane Bennett, and Bruno Latour. There are differences and divergences in the writings of these scholars but a creative and robust engagement with their work allows me to sketch the contours of assemblage theory more comprehensively. It also enables me to identify the emancipatory forces that can be consciously harnessed to work towards a normative goal, which in this case is a more just and equal democracy.

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[12] Eadson and Van Veelen, "Assemblage-democracy: Reconceptualising democracy through material resource governance," 10.

Assemblage Theory

Flat ontology forms the basis of assemblage theory. Latour's idea of flat ontology gives a '2-D projection' of reality, allowing us to see all beings and things as having the same ontological status, and trace every association they build.[13] It is "a kind of naïve openness to connection between all kinds of different actors, human and nonhuman – including objects, ideas, and out-of-scale processes such as geological time or subatomic forces".[14] It allows us to locate the trails of numerous 'actants', who have been absent from social analysis. What matters here is not the properties of the actant but their relations. It does not matter if an actor has will or intentionality, if it has a 'capacity' to interact, to enter a relation, it is an actor. Agency does not lie with actors or any rational beings, it lies in the relations.

Working through these assumptions, Bennett suggests that assemblages "are ad-hoc groupings of diverse elements, of vibrant materials of all sorts. Assemblages are living, throbbing confederations that are able to function despite the persistent presence of energies that confound them from within."[15] The reason why Bennett considers assemblages as ad-hoc is because she sees them as a part of complex systems that are "always dynamic and interacting in ways that defy attempts to model them. Small deviations or mutations at the micro scale can resonate with other events and lead to new, unexpected outcomes."[16] Moreover, such relations do not develop among homogenous objects, rather they are formed "among wildly diverse things" ranging from humans to non-human things to emotions and so on. They are heterogenous. Such relations are not between discrete and absolute 'wholes,' rather they are between ever-evolving, continuous beings and things.

However, this raises the question of what constitutes an assemblage? Is an assemblage linear, carved out by flattening everything onto a flat plane and combining them in an additive fashion: "people + insects + odours + ink + electrical flows + air currents + caffeine + tables +chairs + fluids + sounds + so on without limit"?[17] Is an assemblage coming together of any and every actant? Can every collection or arrangement of actants be called an assemblage? Is an assemblage always an unintended product?[18] While Bennett appears to suggest so, Ian

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[13] Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social : An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 7.
[14] Salter, *Making things international, 2. Catalysts and reactions*, xii.
[15] Jane Bennett, *Vibrant matter: A political ecology of things* (Duke University Press, 2010), 23-24.
[16] Jason Dittmer, "Geopolitical assemblages and complexity," *Progress in human geography* 38, no. 3 (2014).
[17] Ian Buchanan, *Assemblage theory and method* (London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021), 117-18.
[18] Joris Van Wezemael, "The Contribution of Assemblage Theory and Minor Politics for Democratic Network Governance," *Planning theory (London, England)* 7, no. 2 (2008): 172.

Buchanan raises a provocative challenge. He says that if every collection of things is an assemblage, then why call it an assemblage at all and not a system of things or "some other kind of collection of things?"[19] He further adds to it by saying that "[t]o say that a bureaucratic structure of authority was constituted by and ultimately transformed by myriad individual acts says nothing but the obvious. One does not even need a concept to make this claim."[20]

This is what the concepts of 'strata' and 'desire' in Deleuze and Guattari's assemblage theory seek to avoid – illuminating the concern of *why* an assemblage emerges. In short, assemblages emerge on strata to attain or create desires.

Buchanan reads strata as "the conceptual means of transforming that which seems to have been given either by god or nature into something that is the product of multiple processes and forces over time."[21] A strata gives form to matter, imprisons chaos and creates order. On a flat ontology, there exist three kinds of strata, geological, biological, and linguistic, that are formed and evolve differently but are not hierarchical. But when it comes to understanding the 'social' – in its broadest sense, Deleuze and Guattari locate it on the linguistic strata.

Linguistic strata are notoriously anthropocentric because of their characteristic feature of 'translation,' which is their ability to articulate other strata. Quoting Deleuze and Guattari, Adkins argues that translation is: "the ability of language, with its own givens on its own stratum, to represent all the other strata and thus achieve a scientific conception of the world. The scientific world….is the translation of all of the flows, particles, codes, and territorialities of the other strata into a sufficiently deterritorialised system of signs, in other words, into an overcoding specific to language".[22] The linguistic strata, just because of its ability to interpret other strata, seeks superiority over others and that often leads to the perpetuation of anthropocentrism. Assemblages that emerge on the linguistic strata cater to its 'desires' and hence have a strong inclination towards being anthropocentric.

However, an awareness of this anthropocentrism can open the possibility where political responsibility of humans and their institutions is not flattened, rather it is deciphered and put on trial. Such awareness can also counter the illusion, of discursively reimagining other non-linguistic strata, created by the linguistic strata.

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[19] Buchanan, *Assemblage theory and method*, 3.
[20] Buchanan, *Assemblage theory and method*, 17.
[21] Buchanan, *Assemblage theory and method*, 26.
[22] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 62.

Deleuze and Guattari argue that an assemblage is much more than a collection of actants, it is an arrangement, a composition of *desire*.[23] I see it as the *desire* of either 'strata' or other assemblages. It is desire in its 'machinic modality'.[24] This is the reason why Deleuze and Guattari had earlier referred to assemblages as 'desiring machines'. But what do they mean by desire? Desire is a productive force present in actants and assemblages. It is not a lack of something that emerges out of wants or needs, rather it is a productive force. A force that produces 'actual' wants and needs, both material and non-material. A force that always wants more – more relations, more assemblages. A force that seeks to broaden and strengthen the power of its strata or assemblage to which it belongs. Buchanan contends that "*Desire is primary; it is desire that selects materials and gives them the properties that they have in the assemblage*. This is because desire itself is productive."[25] Desire offers a reasoning, a rationale, and a selection criterion that forms the basis for the emergence of an assemblage and selection of components to produce an event. In the absence of a rationale for selection, the list of components continues to increase. It offers a diagram, a mechanism through which matter becomes material and words become expression. This desire is not an anthropocentric conception by Deleuze and Guattari. Desire is a free-flowing force that predates human organization. For them, the capture of desire is what produces and guides life. Hence, it is not just assemblages with the human presence that possess desire but also entirely non-human assemblages that are on different strata that produce desire.

What is an assemblage? DeLanda, borrowing from Deleuze and Guattari, states that "[a]ssemblages are characterized along two dimensions: along the first dimension are specified the variable roles which component parts may play, from a purely material role to a purely expressive one, as well as mixtures of the two. A second dimension characterizes processes in which these components are involved: processes which stabilize or destabilize the identity of the assemblage (territorialization and deterritorialization)."[26] The first dimension of an assemblage reflects the *nature* of the components - the continuum of material and expressive components within an assemblage which may reflect tendencies of both. The second dimension

[23] Tom Roberts, "A constructivism of desire: Conceptualising the politics of assemblage with Deleuze and Guattari," *Area* 53, no. 4 (2021).
[24] Deleuze and Guattari, *A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia*, 22.
[25] Buchanan, *Assemblage theory and method*, 56.
[26] Manuel DeLanda, *A new philosophy of society: Assemblage theory and social complexity* (London: Continuum, 2006), 19.

is the *relations* of these components that provide stability to an assemblage or plunge it into destabilization.

For Deleuze and Guattari, the components are not necessarily divided based on matter and discourse but based on what they call 'forms of content and expression.' 'Form of content' is "equivalent to the internal limit of the assemblage".[27] In it there occurs a selection of matter precisely because not all that is matter is made into material, some are purposefully kept out while others are brought in. The choices are not accidental. It allows us to observe what the components of an assemblage are, and how have they been selected. And what guides this process? It is 'desire' that selects. Selection of materials is followed by ordering of the anarchic materials – giving them a 'form'. They are arranged, organized, and connected in a specific way, a statistical order, to provide coherence and logic to the arrangement. This process of logic and reasoning has been termed as coding. It allows us to make sense of how 'words become expression', how assemblages get consistency. Deleuze and Guattari say that the "form of content is reducible not to a thing but to a complex state of things as a formation of power (architecture, regimentation, etc)".[28]

Deleuze and Guattari use the example of the phalanx to explain this process. The phalanx is composed of many components such as soldiers, spears, daggers, chest plates, shields and so on. However, this is not an additive collection of components, there is a reason a spear becomes a part of the phalanx – that is where selection happens. The 'form' in this context is the material choices of the soldiers – "[i]n order to hold tight in phalanx formation the soldiers had to forsake mobility, they had to put their life on the line….they had to be prepared to step into the breach….and most of all they had to hold their nerve…".[29] Together, this is what would be the form of content of the assemblage. Another example is of music given by Buchanan. He says that music as a form of content selects "highly specific variety of sounds" and then undertakes an "ordering of those sounds into notes and chromatic scales".[30]

The second articulation – 'form of expression' – firstly puts the ordering done in the first articulation into functional structures – solid, stable identities through the process of coding. Secondly, it constructs rigid, material actualizations of these structures through territorialization. Deleuze and Guattari contend that "[a]lthough the first articulation is not

[27] Buchanan, *Assemblage theory and method*, 33.
[28] Deleuze and Guattari, *A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia*, 67.
[29] Buchanan, *Assemblage theory and method*, 32.
[30] Buchanan, *Assemblage theory and method*, 43.

lacking in systematic interactions, it is in the second articulation in particular that phenomena constituting an overcoding are produced…".[31] On the linguistic strata, "it operates with symbols that are comprehensible, transmittable, and modifiable from outside". What some call the properties of human beings – technology and language, tool and symbol, free hand and supple larynx, "gesture and speech" – are in fact properties of this new distribution".[32] For Deleuze and Guattari, "the form of expression is reducible not to words but to a set of statements arising in the social field as a stratum (that is what a regime of signs is)."[33] It is the second articulation where overcoding is produced in the form of totalization and unification, that even affects first articulation.

Continuing with the example of phalanx, Buchanan says that "one must also inquire as to what kind of society wants or needs not merely a standing army (for purely defensive purposes), but an expeditionary army formed with the intent of attacking and conquering other countries and peoples?".[34] This is the 'form' of expression – where values such as imperialism, militarism, etc have a dominating presence. The material manifestations of this are the 'substance' of the form of expression. With reference to Buchanan's example, music only attains its form when the "notes and scales are in turn used as the building blocks to create complex compound sounds, that is, sounds that do not occur in nature and cannot occur by accident".[35]

How does an assemblage operate? This can be understood through the second aspect of assemblages i.e. the *relations* between the components. Assemblages are not static and fixed but constantly changing and evolving, always in flux – "becoming and unbecoming at once".[36] They reflect spatial stability but also temporal fluidity at the same time.

Once an assemblage comes into being, it may or may not follow the 'desire' that produced it. Instead, it produces its own desire which may function beyond the previous one, sometimes even subverting and challenging the existing desires. In other words, there is an inbuilt force of disruption and resistance in assemblages that emanates out of the creativity of 'desire'. This volatility is further strengthened by the fact that "[o]ne and the same assemblage can have components working to stabilize its identity as well as components forcing it to change or even transforming it into a different assemblage. The same component may participate in both

[31] Deleuze and Guattari, *A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia*, 41.
[32] Deleuze and Guattari, *A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia*, 60.
[33] Deleuze and Guattari, *A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia*, 66.
[34] Buchanan, *Assemblage theory and method*, 32.
[35] Buchanan, *Assemblage theory and method*, 43.
[36] Salter, *Making things international, 2. Catalysts and reactions*, xviii.

processes by exercising different sets of capacities".[37] This is what Latour refers to as the 'mediator' capacities of the actants. Latour says that actants are mediators that "transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry".[38] Interactions in an assemblage result in actants undergoing internal changes while also affecting the properties of other actants involved in an interaction. Actants do not remain the same throughout, rather are constantly reinventing themselves – having a constant space for change. These processes can either lead to territorialization and coding or deterritorialization and decoding of an assemblage.[39]

For Deleuze and Guattari, territorialization is a process of composing or arranging a territory of an assemblage by incorporating elements and organizing them in a specific order. Territory is a concept that intends to offer stability, a refuge against chaos. Territory deals with the material and bodily aspects of an assemblage. It allows the assemblage to occupy a state of affairs and maybe a physical territory too. Buchanan says, "The territory transforms not only the elements constituting it but its inhabitant as well (as both the territory's creator and primary beneficiary). We not only act differently in our territory from the way we act outside it, but we effectively are different and derive a specific surplus value from being this way."[40]

When they speak of deterritorialization, it is the cracks in the coherence and consistency of an assemblage. An assemblage is constantly confronting internal and external pressures of deterritorialization. These can be big external influences, incremental internal changes, or 'clean breaks' within. In this phase, actions break down and chip away stable territories. This disruptive process disassembles a part or the whole of an assemblage.[41] Buchanan, borrowing from Deleuze and Guattari, speaks of three forms of deterritorialization: negative, positive, and absolute. "The negative deterritorialization is one that is overlaid by reterritorialization, which amounts to saying it is a form of change one undergoes in order to remain the same. The relative deterritorialization overcomes the inertia of reterritorialization, but can do so only in an ad hoc way, which means it never entirely escapes reterritorialization and sometimes ends up in a black hole all over again. Deterritorialization is absolute when it succeeds in creating a new earth, a

[37] DeLanda, *A new philosophy of society: Assemblage theory and social complexity*, 15-16.
[38] Latour, *Reassembling the Social : An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*, 39.
[39] DeLanda, *A new philosophy of society: Assemblage theory and social complexity*, 17.
[40] Buchanan, *Assemblage theory and method*, 95.
[41] Greg Thompson, Sam Sellar, and Ian Buchanan, "1996: the OECD policy-making assemblage," *Journal of education policy* 37, no. 5 (2022).

new beginning, one that does not lead back to old territories."[42] To avoid chaos, such territorializations are usually followed immediately by processes of reterritorialization.

Deleuze and Guattari make a clear distinction between territorialization and coding. Coding is related to 'forms' in assemblages. It is concerned with discursive, semiotic processes just like territory is concerned more with material aspects. "Processes of coding and decoding designate the processes by which meaning is ascribed to assemblages or by which they become less laden with meaning – this meaning could be discursive or otherwise".[43] It entails expressions of norms, ideas, beliefs, customs, rules, and regulations that guide and dictate the practices of an assemblage. For instance, the propagation of an ideology, such as hyper-nationalism, is expressed through political and cultural means like cinema, media, and elections to strengthen the geopolitics decisions of the state. Speaking of state as an assemblage DeLanda says that it "performs coding operations that affect an entire territory and all the communities and organizations that inhabit it. The more despotic a state apparatus, the more everything becomes coded: dress, food, manners, property, trade."[44] When these expressions promote disruption or dismantling of the assemblage, it is considered as decoding.

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[42] Buchanan, *Assemblage theory and method*, 89.
[43] Jason Dittmer, *Diplomatic material : affect, assemblage, and foreign policy* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), 10.
[44] Manuel De Landa, *Assemblage Theory* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 22-23.