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Signposts in 'doing' critical transnational educational policy analysis

Susan L. Robertson

Centre for Globalisation, Education and Societies
University of Bristol, UK

Abstract

In this keynote address I lay out some important challenges in attempting to undertake critical transnational education policy analysis in sectors like adult education. As a point of entry, I reflect upon John Prunty's signposts for doing critical education policy published in 1985, and ask: how have our educational worlds changed since then, and what might be some signposts for our contemporary era? I identify, and elaborate upon, 5 signposts which we might consider: the challenges in conceptualising the global; the significance of new policy actors beyond the state as producers of policy; the state of play in terms of emerging approaches; the transformations in political authority and what that means for policy as contested; and the new challenges in doing critical work when much policy is produced by private transnational actors. In reflecting on these developments for the field of adult education, I suggest that we need an expanded theoretical and methodological agenda in order to enable the field to make contributions to wider debates on the education, politics, and social justice.

Introduction

I am honoured to address this Inaugural Conference of the ESREA *Network on Policy Studies in Adult Education*, and particularly so because of its framing theme; 'the transnationalisation of educational policymaking, and the implications of such processes for adult and lifelong learning'. This is an important work with questions in need of answers. How best to capture the complexities of education projects, policies and programmes that are now increasingly dispersed over what were once tightly managed boundaries around units of social life? How might we generate analyses of the moments and movements of education actors and policies (and their varying forms - ideationally, materially, institutionally) across time and in space that take into account policies as "…a complex, uneven and asymmetrical set of multi-layered cross-cutting processes and nodes of interaction" (Cerny, 2001: 397)?

Yet despite these transformations in education more specifically, and the wider political economies that we inhabit more generally, we are relatively thin in the ground when it comes to conceptualising, theorising and operationalising critical transnational policy analysis. I'll be arguing that this is a pressing issue in areas like 'adult education'. Adult education I take to refer to a particular population, philosophy of development, politics and pedagogy. Adults and their education have increasingly been: (1) incorporated into a 'lifelong learning' policy discourses that have been advanced by transnational agencies such as the EC, UNESCO, and WB; (2) drawn into the international trade negotiation agendas; (3) been the target of a rapidly growing for-profit sector

that is increasingly transnational in character, and (4) financialised in multiple ways, including personal investments in pre-access to formal education programmes, formal education programmes, mobility schemes, employability schemes, and so on – many of which operate in the private rather than the public sector.

Prunty's Challenge

It is now three decades ago since John Prunty (1984, 1985) laid out a set of signposts to generate a conversation around the development of a critical education policy approach. Taking issue with the state of the policy field in general—as dominated by more conservative USA-based policy sciences, Prunty argued that the (i) vagueness of conceptualisation of policy, (2) narrow role of the policy analyst, (3) dominance of functionalist and systems-theory perspectives, (4) the inattention to values and ethical issues, and (5) failure to ameliorate socio-educational problems, common were characteristics in the approach to policy analysis, and therefore also its outcomes.

Prunty's work was highly influential, in part because of the means through which this work was distributed; a left leaning intellectual project whose vehicularity in critical circles was given momentum by Deakin's Open University inspired format and in many cases, adults seeking a second chance education. Suggesting that how we approach the field conceptually – that is the categories we use to frame education policy analytically – has a bearing on what can be seen, and therefore known, critiqued and changed. Doing critical policy analysis work also became the refuge activity for more radical sociologists of education whose projects were increasingly being pointed to as an indulgence not to be funded from the public purse.

Remaking the Worlds/of Education and the Challenges for Policy Analysis

However, Prunty's education worlds in the early 1980s are very different to now. At the time of writing, neoliberalism was an advancing political project whose effects were largely tied to unfolding projects in Chile, the UK and USA.   Globalisation was a set of processes waiting to be named. Internationalisation was at best a trade and foreign affairs language, with higher education institutions 'international' by virtue of their diverse student body and as symbolic virtue. Education policymaking, to be sure was undertaken by some multilateral agencies and international

organisations, but in almost all cases – national and sub-national territorial states were the dominant units within which, and from which, education policy was framed and realised.

However, three decades on, with neoliberalism the dominant hegemonic project in many parts of the world, it is no longer feasible to think of the 'national' as the sole container of education policymaking, or that the (national) state is the only ensemble of institutions engaged in the 'authoritative allocation of values' (to use Easton's well-known definition of 'policy' published in 1953) (and which has been a central definition in much critical education policy work – see Prunty, 1984). With education policies marshalled to advance the unpicking of the state-education-citizen contract of the post war years, education as a sector (its mandate, governance, capacity) and education policymaking as a set of practices, has been transformed. Whilst not the only outcome, for our purposes here, the most significant is what Dale (2002) has argued to be a new functional and scalar division in the labour of education (Dale, 2002; Robertson, 2002). In other words, education activity and its governance has been reallocated across geographical scales, from the local to the global, and now involve a new array of actors—public and private, including for profit actors.

The gradual nationalisation of political authority, which had characterised development of today's OECD countries, had come to a standstill by the second half of the 20th century, with the 1970s marking a reversal back toward a new denationalisation of authority. The working out of this shift in political authority, and what this means for policy as contested, is an issue I will address later in the paper. And, it the key elements of a critical education policy analysis were under pressure – both in a definitional sense – *as the authoritative allocation of values*; conceptually – such as how to think about education policy as a largely **nation 'state' project**; and methodologically – what and how to study policies which now move across national territorial boundaries, then it stands to reason that the field itself needs critical reappraisal.

Signposts in Doing Transnational Policy Analysis

Signpost 1: conceptualising the transnational

The first challenge we must confront is how to conceptualise education policies that are now no longer made predominantly by the nationally-located Westphalian state – but at multiple levels, that now includes the local, national and 'transnational' and in arenas that are public and private.

So how might we understand concepts such as the international, transnational and global. In political theory, the idea of the **international/ internationalisation** refers to institutions who derive their legal status **from their member state (national),** but their authority can extend across national borders (Genschel and Zangl, 2008: 6). Transnational actors, however, are seen to exercise their authority **beyond** the borders of individual state territories – such as non-governmental organisations, transnational firms, and so on.

However in many circles, these ideas are often confused and therefore confusing, and it is also not clear when the so-called actor is acting based on authority derived from their member states, or when they are exercising authority that is derived from beyond the borders of national states up. As a result of this, and because I think there are particular conceptual dangers in operating with an 'above' and 'below' set of metaphors, I am going to use the geographical concept of the 'global' as a relational concept, and suggest we use it in a more nuanced way than we do.

Why? The above and below, in a very crude, sense, invites us to view it as an 'outside/exogenous' force that acts upon, and shapes, education policymaking on what is described as the 'inside/endogenous', or 'local'. This way of seeing reinforces a view of the global as abstract, homogeneous, structural, and without agents or agency, whilst the local is concrete, diverse, agentic and imbued with democratic notions of bottom-up legitimacy, however tenuous or thin in reality. Instead I will argue that it is more helpful to see the global as a meta-narrative that needs to be picked apart, to see the work that it does in any one context; such as refer to, and be constitutive of - a 'condition of the world', 'discourse', 'project', 'scale', 'the reach of actors' and 'habitus' (see also Robertson 2012).

As a **condition of the world**, this signals an ontological shift – a world that has profoundly changed as a result of neo-liberalism as an organising project, the advance of new technologies, the blurring of boundaries between national territorial states, and so on. As a **discourse** in education policies, the global is invoked as a particular imaginary, often tied to ideas like a ' global knowledge economy', 'global village', 'global social justice', and so on. As a **project** in education policy, it is to propose, and set into motion by extending out into 'global' space, particular ways of framing 'education' problems and their desirable/preferred solutions (such as privatization, decentralisation, 'Education for All', quality, and so on). As **scale**, it is to register the ways in which platforms for action are constructed—in this case the 'global'— from which particular actors, as global actors,

claim the legitimate right to advance ideas, to represent constituencies, and to rule or govern. Viewing the global as **reach** refers the horizon of action of particular institutions and actors engaged in different aspects of education policy work, and to suggest that reach is a dimension of power (Allen, 2004). Not all projects have the same capacity to extend out into space in the same way, and those that do – such as global rankings – are particular kinds of framings of the world that have the capacity to limit the frictions caused by contexts and contestation. Finally, the global as the **habitus** of subjects, as in 'a global citizen', or 'cosmopolitan', focuses our attention on the cultural dimensions and outcomes of globalising processes - and the ways in which, in interaction with social processes, we create meanings in the worlds we inhabit.

These ways of understanding the global in education suggest that we would need to deploy different methodologies in order to make sense of the global in education policy. The global as discourse suggests we use some form of discourse analysis, whilst the global as reach, or spatial extension, suggests we use ways of understanding education policies as they **move** from one point of origin (local) through space to be fixed/altered/ in a new locality, or place. The global as habitus requires us look at the ways in which agents make sense of, and give meaning to their worlds, their place in it, and who they are.

Yet if we can return to the idea of the global as a relational idea, then we must use it to remind ourselves not to essentialize some actors, such as the World Bank Group, located in Washington, USA, as always global. There are many activities of the Bank as an institution that are local, such as 'in-house' organisational policies. It is when the Bank's policies are promoted in distant locations that we might view the Bank's activity as global. This leads us to suggest that rather than see the global as operating in some stratosphere – up there - that we see them as places as made up of a range of spatial relationships – some global, some local and so on.   In other words, place is;

> …a meeting place" of a whole series of complex networks and social relations. Its boundedness is understood not as forming a simple enclosure but as being permeated by the multiple relations that stretch across the globe. The specificity of place is not linked to a place-based identity, for places are traversed by unequal relations of power and struggles to contest these relations (Massey, 1994: 155).

And what of 'education', the education of adults, and policy? It is clear education as a sector, teaching as a profession, and learning as a means of regulation/emancipation, has been radically transformed; the outcome of political projects, like neoliberalism. The division of labour in education that characterised post-war societies has been subject to major efforts, or policies, to

unpick deeply embedded and institutionalised relationships, and to insert new ways of doing education. Not only has the global been invoked as the reason for policy, but education policies have been advanced by actors at new scales, such as the global, the regional, or local, in order to develop very different education sectors, teachers and learners.

Finally, policy is simultaneously medium, message system and process. As medium, policies may take different forms, dependent on what kind of policy arenas we are looking at. As message system, policies are ideational. They have at their heart a set of ideas (values) about what the education as a social institution and set of practices should look like, including who is taught what, how, etc, and how these practices to be governed. With new actors in the education sector (such as for profit firms), with different kinds of aspirations (such as making a profit, realising a different kind of learner), means of accounting (such as shareholders) and scalar horizons, this demands new ways of thinking about education policy. As process, policies are never 'one off' and discrete events. Rather policies are social practices that unfold over time, and in space. However, these policy spaces and times are not *always* or necessarily open to the different publics that might have an interest in them, largely as new enclosures are constructed by private actors around their policy activity (especially venture philanthropists); as private actors construct the policy frames for government (consultancy firms engaged in PPPs), and as the spaces for representing interests are either opaque or too distant. Untangling these analytically and empirically, and with what tools, are clearly challenges we face in doing research.

Signpost 2: global policy actors and governing technologies

Critical transnational education policy analysis, with its epistemologies anchored in the nation and the state, is being challenged to review its implicit methodological nationalist and statist assumptions, to develop a more complex mapping of global policy actors that include the UNESCO/OECD/IMF/WB and their new technologies of rule – AHELO, EBPP, SABER, Impact studies and so on, but goes beyond them? What of the venture philanthropists, or global consultants and how do they influence policy and practice? What of globally connected social movements, such as OCCUPY, who are inventing new forms of learning and the university, and using these to advance different kinds of knowledge spaces and subjectivities? What role is being played by the OECD, the EC, or transnational firms such as i-graduate, with their toolbox of governing technologies, such as scoreboards, barometers, league tables, satisfaction surveys? We need a mapping process that is both extensive in its view of the education sector, and intensive in its gaze.

Common world culture: If Prunty's account of the education policy field in the 1980's was critical of functional and systems accounts that black-boxed state power, viewed power in plural terms, and promoted an input-output model, then (at the risk of offending) I would argue this has its parallel in the sociological institutionalist approach at Stanford as an explanation of the trans-nationalisation of education (see Jakobi, 2009). Whilst its fundamental concern is the right one; how might we explain the diffusion of education policies/practices around the world – such as curriculum categories or lifelong learning, critics argue that its explanatory power is limited by its lack of a theory of agency and contestation, the failure to see meanings as contextually dependent and constituted out of a dialectic between already existing cultures, politics and economies, and trans-border policy flows.

On the other hand, Dale's (2000) seminal contribution to theorising trans-national education policy—as a globally-structured agenda in education rather than a common-world culture—whilst placing political economy and capitalism on the agenda, fails to offer us an approach that enables us to see capitalism and political projects that move across, remove, and remake borders, as more variegated in their geographies, modalities and pathways (Brenner et al, 2010). I will come back to this conceptual challenge in my conclusion, via a detour through new possibilities emerging, but which I think require pushing further. Hence, the capitalised BUT…

Policy mobility/movement/network analysis/borrowing and lending: So, how do education policies travel from one location to the other? Gita Steiner-Khamsi's (2002; 2004), engages explicitly with this question in her work on 'transnational borrowing and lending' (2004: p.1) – and in the process they become 'global'. As she notes, in much of the literature, what motivates the movement of education policies from one location to another is the (normative) view that we can learn from elsewhere.

Stepping aside from this more *lesson-learning* stance, Steiner-Khamsi proposes an analytical way forward; to focus on the 'why', 'how' and 'who' in the transfer of education policies. Whilst noting that this concern might be regarded as 'old hat' (ibid: 4), she points out the 'global', as the 'out-there education policy trend', is now being mobilized by a new 'semantics of globalisation' (ibid: 5) to legitimate the adoption of particular education policies to 'problems in-here'. These policies are not just discourses; rather they are real, and must be understood—not just as something borrowed—but

as discourses that enter into local circuits that are then "adapted, modified and resisted" (ibid: 5). In other words, these policies are discourses that have real effects, though quite what effects cannot be known (only imagined) in advance. Steiner-Khamsi's methodological move is to focus on social networks, and network analysis, and these are clearly promising ideas and ways of viewing the movement of education policy. However, this kind of analysis tends to favour an agency/actor account, and in doing so risks obscuring the complexity of the connections and inter-crossings that engender certain cultural forms and social patterns, and not others. Like network theory in general, with its eschewal of hierarchy (and scale theory), social network theory tends to assume a flat ontology of social sites. And in flattening out space, we then do not see the ways in which key actors concerned with education policy, the state and non-state actors (such as the World Bank Group [WB], the European Commission [EC], the Organisation for Economic and Cooperative Development [OECD]), **mobilise hierarchy** as a means to claim, and legitimate, rule. In other words, as Amin and Thrift observe: "…those concerned with the politics of regulation and governance associated with globalization are right to note the very real and felt contest of jurisdiction between local, national and global state and non-state organisations" (2002: 396). What is important, however, is not to view scales as fixed, but as mutable; they are produced and reproduced by socio-economic processes and political struggles, with education policies selectively and strategically advanced to do precisely some of this kind of work. In other words, global education policies may well move along social networks, but they are also mobilised by social networks, as well as hierarchically organised actors—such as the state and non-state actors—to advance projects of governing and rule.

The vertical case: If hierarchy can be shown to be ontologically important in social space, then to what extent do Vavrus and Bartlett's (2006: 95) **'vertical case'** help us understand global education policy. Their approach is epistemological; that is, it is animated by a concern about what can be known about the world, and how. They argue that epistemologically, the aim of the vertical case is to; "…grasp the complexity of the relationships between the knowledge claims among actors with different social locations as an attempt to situate local action and interpretation within a broader cultural, historical, and political investigation". They are particularly concerned with the importance of 'context', but unlike case studies whose context is regarded as 'local' and 'situated', their context extends out to "take account of historical trends, social structures, and national and international forces that shape local processes at this site" (Ibid: 960). In other words, their extended view of context includes 'the global'. Bartlett and Vavrus (2011) suggest that the vertical case makes three important contributions. First, it insists on simultaneous attention to the micro, meso, and macro-levels to enable 'vertical comparison'. Second, it emphasizes the importance of historically-situating

processes under consideration to enable comparing across time, or 'transversal comparison'. Third, it emphasizes the importance of comparing how similar processes unfold in distinct locations in space – or 'horizontal comparison' (ibid: 1-2).

There is much we can work with here. However, the implicit assumption in the idea of 'vertical comparison' is that the global is equated to the macro, and structural; a social force that the local (or micro) must face. Here we have an unhelpful pitting of structures (as global/macro) against agents (as local/micro). As I argued earlier (following Massey) it is important to see places as made up of actors with combinations of local *and* global horizons of action. That we have a way of viewing the 'global' is simultaneously lived, concrete and local is important for it emphasises locality and place as a meeting point for complex networks and social relations that stretch out into global space.

Scopic systems and the global: In a rather different contribution Sobe and Ortegon (2009) draw attention to the work of Knorr Cetina (2008) and her problematisation of networks for understanding currency markets. Knorr Cetina's argument is the ideas of the network does not capture the totality of what is at play, including the significance of heightened moments of reflexivity when multiple forms of information is presented simultaneously, then aggregated, articulated and projected, and in doing so, giving it new meaning. She refers to these processes as 'scopic systems'; that is, "…ways of seeing the global that tends toward a single collective" (Sobe and Ortegon, 2009: 58). Sobe and Ortegon make use of this suggestive idea to think of the way in which education, historically and in the present, has been projected globally, as well as *projecting globality*.

There are a burgeoning array of scopic systems that gather together, place in hierarchies, and project globally, a singular education world—from the OECD's Programme in International Student Assessment (PISA), or their Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS), to global university rankings (Shanghai Jiao Tong, Times Higher, U-Multi-Rank), the World Bank's Knowledge Assessment Methodology (KAM) (Robertson, 2009), and the recently launched SABER system to assess and rank school and teacher performance globally (Robertson, forthcoming). What is significant about these scopic systems, argues Sobe and Ortegon (2009: 62) is "…the extent to which they function like an array of crystals that collects and focuses light on one surface".

Yet it is important that we note how scopic systems in global education policy take fragments (partial understandings) of knowledge about complex education processes, yet present them as fractals (a smaller version of a whole). In doing so, the complexity and diversity of education

systems, and their need for diverse policy solutions to complex (and different) policy issues, also disappears. Fractals (disguised fragments) act as a proxy, shorthand, and lever for education policy problems/solutions; a 'one-size fits all' diagnosis and solution. Their power as levers of policy reside in their capacity to project a singular solution to an imagined single problem (competition, efficiency, world class), and in doing so, diversity is made absent. Scopic systems in education are also forms of power in that they simultaneously frame education problems, offer a desired re/solution, project outward with considerable spatial extension, reinforce new social practices over time because of further rounds of data gathering and projection, tap into emotions (shame, pride) that change behaviour – deep inside national territorial states (Robertson, 2011). These are powerful systems, which both state and non-state actors have mobilised as a new means for governing education systems.

Policyscapes and the global as 'optique': A rather different approach is Steve Carney's (2009; 2011) concept of 'policyscapes'. Using what he describes as an optique of globalisation, Carney advances "an experiment in method" to derive accounts of the experiences of different countries in the production of globalisation. In doing so, he aims to focus attention on the constitutive moment of globalisation in particular places which he argues are being deterritorialised as a result of global processes. What is central, Carney argues, is the need to theorise the dynamics of space, and bring to the fore the specificities of education, and the implementation of education policy in particular places. Drawing from the work of Tsing (2005), Carney explores the "'friction' of global connectivity between these imagined worlds where 'heterogeneous and unequal encounters' share 'new arrangements of culture and power'" (p. 7). However, though Carney aims for an approach that he describes as "mutually constitutive and dialectically constructed" (p.7), he does not go far enough because of the limitations imposed by this particular conceptualisation of globalisation; one that tends to privilege, and thus fetishise, flows, motion, instabilities and uncertainty, without attending to the new ways in which processes of fixity, reterritorialisation, rebordering, and reordering, are at work (cf. Robertson 2011). I doing do, it also fails to draw attention to the transformations in the nature of the state, the rise of **private authority**, and the consequential implications for social justice.

Signpost 4: transformations of the state and political authority

One outcome of the shift from government to governance is the outsourcing of a considerable amount of work done by the state, including policy and research. The more recently invented PPPs

agenda has hastened, rather than curtailed this process, and as firms have developed specialist education units dealing with various aspects of state-funded, privately provided education provision, management, research and policy, they have begun to scale up, selling their expertise, policies and programmes around the world. It is these economies of scale, in areas of education that are potentially profitable, that have made it an attractive investment area.

For example, a cluster of large, powerful, global management firms have large interests in education (see also Ball, 2007). These firms provide expertise on a range of aspects of education, from undertaking major policy and research work for governments (following much of this work being outsourced as a result of NPM reforms), to strategic management and quality assurance. Five large companies (KPMG PricewaterhouseCoopers, Deloitte, Grant Thornton, Ernst and Young) are engaged in PPPs, and who control almost half of the world management consulting market (Saint-Martin, 1998: 329; Hodge, 2006: 100). They also have major education portfolios. "For sheer expertise in the development of the legal frameworks concerning PPPs and the actual practice on the ground in leading countries, the global consultancy firms, given their superior knowledge of how PPPs are progressing, have few rivals" (Greve, 2010: 506).

Cutler's work on the legal implications of the blurring of the separation between private and public authority is compelling. Not only does she argue, like Gill (2003), that privileged rights of citizenship and representation are conferred on corporate capital, but that as the state divests itself of activity we traditionally associate with the public sector and in the public interest, we can see an upward trend in the management of national, regional and global affairs by economic and not state/political actors (Cutler et al, 1999). Cutler calls this the rise of 'private authority'; that is when an individual or organisation has decision-making power over a particular issue (p. 5).

Signpost 5: on ethics, locatedness and policy analysts

Given the privatised, corporatised and transnationalised nature of greater and greater amounts of education policymaking, several questions arise. One concerns how to access the sites of policymaking, in the face of anxious venture philanthropists who do not want their CSR agendas tarnished, firms whose first responsibility is to shareholder capital and the bottom line, or transnational agencies—such as the OECD, Standard and Poors, or the Times Higher, whose technologies are opaque, distant and poorly understood, and knowledge management technologies, such as evidence based policy and practice.

What are the ethical issues involved in doing such research, the political issues in managing careers when things go wrong, the cultural issues when one is also 'inside', and the economic issues when one is also on the payroll as a consultant. How can we really know what is going on, and use this to act in critical and political ways?

Notes Toward Critical Transnational Education Analysis

In this section I want to draw these insights together, and look at what more we need to do in order to advance this research agenda. Whilst social networks give us new insights into how education policies move through space, we need to keep in view claims to hierarchical power, such as states or education policymaking actors, such as the European Commission or the OECD , and the ways these actors both produce and strategically use scale to enable them the advance education projects, policies and practices. Similarly, whilst the idea of flows as a metaphor helps us to grasp hold of the movement of education policies around the global, it is clear that we must also be attentive to the new forms of bordering that are also at work. These re/bordering processes are the object and outcome of education policies, They are also centrally involved in the making of new orders and identities.

Sassen (2006) argues that new bordering practices are taking place within a context of dissolving or weakening boundaries. In his paper, 'Europe as borderland', Balibar argues that, far from being at the outer limit of territories, "…these borders are dispersed a little everywhere, wherever the movement of information, people, and things is happening and is controlled – for example in cosmopolitan cities" (Balibar, 2002: 71). In other words, when we conceive of globalisation as partly enacted at various sub-national scales and institutional domains, we can see a proliferation of borderings deep inside national territories.

In their different ways these different analytical approaches raise both direct and indirect questions about the sub/national state and its role in global education policy. For instance, how is sub/national state power challenged by scopic systems, or networks? And, whose interests are advanced by these different representations of education, whose framings count, and with what consequences for fundamental questions that state education policy has historically been asked to account for (such as social justice, legitimation, issues of redistribution, the state-citizen contract, and so on)? What is

entailed in the decentering of the national state as a result of these new modes of governing? Furthermore, whereabouts is state power if education policy is dispersed over scales, and how might we locate the new sites of power, authority and decision-making, and contest their outcomes? And if policy is the authoritative allocation of values, but that authority is increasingly being privatised, what does this mean for arguments that policy is contested and struggled over?

As a way of resolving the stand-off between network versus hierarchical accounts of governing, Allen and Cochrane (2010) argue for a topological account of state spatiality, arguing that "what is politically at stake…is that such an approach is able to show how the state's hierarchical powers have not so much been rescaled or redistributed as reassembled in terms of spatial reach" (2010: 1073). Drawing on Sassen's (2006) work, and her use of 'assemblage' to signal a new geography of state power, they suggest that different bits and pieces of institutional authority are drawn within reach of one another. State hierarchies, together with private agencies, partnerships and supranational institutions may, in that sense, be seen as part of a geographical assemblage of distributed authority in which power is continually being renegotiated. Public private partnerships are one example of this reworking of institutional boundaries, sectors, and the redistribution and reassembling of authority. Yet this highly suggestive idea – assemblage- has a sense of bricolage to it, diverting us from asking questions about the new geometry of state power in education governing that has been redistributed vertically and horizontally.

For a transnational adult education studies policy agenda, there is a great deal of work to do, and a growing social justice imperative to deliver on this. Many adults have been historically short-changed as learners, not just pedagogically, but because they often come from less privileged circumstances, and where learning opportunities and education outcomes are constrained by their cultural, political and economic circumstances. It is this group that as I see it that are prey to the for-profit sector who have sensed that aspirations to do better, can be mined as a basis for a sale, and who were delivered far less than was promised. But adult education could benefit from looking at, and learning from, the innovative pedagogical responses emerging from the challenge to global corporate capital, and recover for itself some of its own epistemological roots; an approach to the education of adults that tips the line between regulation and emancipation in a more socially productive direction.

Thankyou.

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