

## **SED06869**

### **Mobile learners: Networked governance and the embodiment of partnership**

Terri Seddon

Faculty of Education  
Monash University

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*Networked governance creates partnership to form nodes for learning that are marked out in policy and practice. These new learning spaces problematise the usual renderings of education and their binaries of centralised and decentralised, authority figure and subaltern subject, teacher and learner. Instead they are premised on difference and its negotiation within horizontal relations and networks that reach across and beyond traditional and emerging learning spaces. They serve as knowledge exchanges where trade and gift manifest as bazaar. This paper considers these new learning spaces as sites where mobile learners, as travellers and strangers, coalesce in vestigial communities. It asks what is being exchanged and what is being learned.*

This paper contributes to a symposium that is looking at the impact of travel, mobility, on pedagogy, on ideas about pedagogy and the implications for us as teachers. It builds on a series of research projects that, since 2001, have focused on social partnerships in education and training. Those increasingly common initiatives in which multiple agencies come together, often with no history of collaboration, to generate an action agenda that supports learning, either through participant's work-based learning (eg. teachers professional development) or through designed educational provision for beneficiaries (eg. students).

My aim in this paper is to focus on partnerships as a way of thinking about mobile learners who move from place to place, and their learning in different spaces constituted within distinct social relations of learning. An example would be a 15 year old moving from school where learning is constituted within bureaucratic relations of learning coordinated through hierarchies, particularly conventional knowledge hierarchies, and into a community-based training program which is constituted through multi-agency negotiations that present the learner with a complex mix of practical knowledges (eg. different working knowledges, relational, emotional and social knowledges etc). By reflecting on the social organization that has constituted partnerships and two specific cases of partnership learning, I take up the theme of the symposium. I begin with some preliminary meditations on partnership and then outline two examples of partnership, both training cafés that we have investigated through interview-based techniques. These initial reflections provide a basis for commenting on the pedagogy or co-production of learning (Lusted 1986) that is negotiated as identities interact with conditions of learning constituted through partnerships. My point here is that learners come to embody partnership and this means that they become mobile learners who take up the knowledge practices that are brought together through multi-agency working. The next section considers the implications of such learning for social structure, what it means for beneficiaries of partnership learning and what it means for teachers.

#### **Meditations on partnership**

##### *Decentred education and networked learning spaces*

Education is a major social institution that has had a particularly strong history of centralisation in Australia. Bureaucratic practice over the last 150 years has realised substantial achievements through schooling, including near universal literacy and numeracy, tolerant communities, and innovative worker-citizens. Yet over the last 40 years education policies and practices have shifted away, in some respects, from bureaucratic thinking and coordination through hierarchy and command.

This 'decentering' of education has been underpinned by the proliferation of horizontal and interactive relationships and interdependencies that extend across and beyond the traditional boundaries of centralised schooling (Ferguson and Seddon, 2007; Considine, 2006). This kind of horizontal networks have long existed beyond the frames of centralised state education (eg. Theobald, 1990) but they have been significantly valorised as governments have endorsed neo-liberal policy agendas. As a result the organization of educational provision has moved away from the idea of closed, hierarchically governed, institutions towards dispersed, open systems coordinated through a variety of transactions. Education as a social institution can increasingly be seen as a network of learning spaces, albeit inflected by the legacy rooted in centralised provision and resource allocations which privileges 'the mainstream' (academic schools, universities) over the 'alternatives' (vocational programs, TAFE Institutes and other RTOs (Registered Training Organisations), community-based initiatives and partnerships).

Commonly, this decentering of education and the emergence of networked learning spaces is described as the marketisation of education (Marginson 1997). Undoubtedly, in the contemporary neo-liberal policy climate the valorisation of education privileges private over public educational provision, but this simple narrative is muddled by further diffractions based in older and newer hierarchies. For example, the hierarchy of academic and vocational education and education and training mean that (at least in the Anglo-Saxon world) private schools are privileged over private RTOs, but across private schools the hierarchy across low-fee religious and ethnic private schools is less clear. Globalisation has valorised international educational provision over that offered in Australia, although this is diffracted both by traditional centre-periphery international relations and also by the newer privileging of global English (Marginson, 2003).

Yet while the commodification of education clearly drives some of these emergent hierarchies, this is not the only explanation for networked provision. Networks have long existed and have not always operated as markets. For instance, the Mafia is bound through much more than exchange relations. Professional networks offer forms of relationships and build capacities for action that do not hinge just on capitalist commodification. As Gibson-Graham (2002) argues, there are lots of different decentred networked organisations besides capitalist markets. Reducing all of these to markets closes off ways of thinking about contemporary education, the work of teachers, and the implications of education in terms of social justice. For instance, the commodity market that rests upon scarcity has different implications to the bazaar, which rests upon abundance.

#### *Decentred voices and multi-agency partnerships*

One of the key features of this decentring of education is the disruption of voices in educational decision-making. In a simple sense, neo-liberal policy has pressed government towards steering rather than defining and commanding patterns of educational provision and practice. The *basso profundo* of public authority is now mediated through a variety of agencies with different voices. The effect of these processes is to create a condition where government is becoming governance, or decision-making in contexts where there is no privileged or sovereign authority but, rather, multiple voices, considerable cultural diversity and a variety of decision-making centres which are networked together (Jessop 1998; Rhodes 1996). These trends mean that, more and more, decision-making occurs in multi-agency partnerships in which government plays a contradictory and often inconsistent part as both partner and sovereign government (Seddon, Billett and Clemans 2005).

This process of decentering decision-making which underpins the emergence of governance began before market reform in education. Its precursors are evident in the mobilisation of teachers, parents, ethnic communities and others in the 1970s, which was formalised through agencies like the Commonwealth Schools Commission, and are foreshadowed in earlier configurations, like the State Board of Education in Victoria. Yet since the 1970s the shift in voice in school education has been less overt than in adult education. In schools, State authorities continue to define curriculum frameworks and specify learning outcomes through their statutory curriculum and assessment bodies. In the vocational

education and training sector this kind of public authority mediated substantially through public sector professionals has been largely displaced by 'national' training bodies, which include industry representatives but exclude professional vocational educators. Arguably, this difference has been significant in accelerating the commodification and marketisation of VET, while continuing to protect school education as a less commodified realm of educational provision (Seddon and Anderson 2006).

The trajectory of neo-liberal reform since the 1980s has also driven the proliferation of partnerships. Economic and cultural globalisation, expanding people flows and greater interconnectedness that have accompanied the accelerated internationalisation of capitalist accumulation have created significant challenges of economic and social adjustment. Governments have become increasingly enmeshed in these developments and the search for solutions to 'wicked' policy problems. These problems, like regional de-industrialisation, structural unemployment, crime, youth disengagement and the challenges of social inclusion associated with disability and cultural marginality, are intractable consequences of economic and social adjustment that are not amenable to easy solutions available through single portfolios or organizations. As a result governments have encouraged collaborative arrangements, which knit agencies together in ways that support knowledge flows and innovative problem solving at the local level. The early emphasis on the free market as a means of increasing efficiencies has been tempered by the recognition that policy solutions and provision depend on cooperation. However, the persistence of contractualist and market technologies, particularly within new public management, has militated against effective cooperation because agencies are positioned in competitive relations. In this contradictory situation, governments and local policy actors have pursued partnership initiatives as ways of addressing social needs within contractually constrained conditions. Practice is therefore running ahead of policy and the structuring of institutional rules and resource allocations. It means that people confront and take on burdens arising from these contradictory workplace structures, leading to rising levels of individual pathologies including stress, burnout and mental health consequences.

These trends towards decentred education, networked governance and multi-agency partnerships constitute learning spaces as partnerships. Sometimes these collective capacities take the form of market actors (Seddon 2002); they also take other forms, closer to public sector agencies or community networks. The following typologies have been helpful in distinguishing some features partnerships. The first categorization (Billett, Clemans, Seddon 2005) rests upon the impetus for partnership formation:

- *Enacted partnerships*, which are initiated by external agencies, but whose goals are of relevance to, or are shared by, the community.
- *Community partnerships*, which originate in the community to address local concerns, but work with external agencies to secure adequate resources and support for dealing with identified problems and issues.
- *Negotiated partnerships*, which are formed between partners with reciprocal goals to secure a service or support and depend on effective negotiation of interests and agendas.

The way in which interagency networks work together also differentiates partnerships. (Mandell 2006) describes:

- *Cooperative networks*: focused on sharing information and expertise but only on an *ad hoc* basis (eg. as in professional networks). Partners remain independent and there is little risk attached to joined-up working;
- *Coordinative networks*: focused on working together to integrate activities for mutual benefit (eg. coordinated service delivery) by information sharing and coordinating activities better. Partners remain independent and modify processes at the margins of their activities;
- *Collaborative networks*: focused on complex problems that cannot be solved by any one partner working alone (e.g. the Local Learning and Employment Networks in Victoria). Partners are interdependent, and know it. They must rely on other partners to achieve outcomes and engage in high risk collaborative work, which involves partners developing new ways of

thinking, new types of relationships and be willing to develop new systems and ways of working

The research on which this paper is based has focused largely on enacted and community partnerships that take the form of collaborative networks. The Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLEN) enacted in Victoria since 2001 are a good example. Professional experience in Australian higher education also offers insights into partnerships because it is increasingly premised upon different forms of networks. In some cases these networks are longstanding features of our academic community (eg. like AARE) while others are more recent developments associated with market reform and funding constraints (eg. international education provision, fee-for-service partnership programs with other agencies). The point is that partnerships are an increasingly familiar feature of contemporary education and training, taking the form of stand alone initiatives or embedded within larger organisational arrangements based on market or bureaucratic coordination.

#### *Mobile bodies that learn*

Partnerships are nodes within networks. Bodies move into and between them, particularly if they are positioned lower in the academic-vocational, international, global-English, core-periphery hierarchy. These mobile bodies contribute to governance. In forming and sustaining a partnership they negotiate particular interests and values in the process of consolidating a collective capacity for action through localised networked governance. Through this partnership work, they create a steering capacity that can pursue goals, dreams and outcomes in terms of activities, including service provision, learning programs, etc.

These partnership nodes also constitute learning spaces in which mobile bodies encounter each other as 'cultural strangers'. This means that learning in partnerships is premised upon the recognition that difference is not temporary, something that will be eventually assimilated, but a permanent feature of social engagement (Kostogritz, 2006). This learning is not about cultural domination or appropriation, or confrontation based on conflicting positions or turf wars. Rather, it is about recognising each others differences as resources for generating new practices and systemic improvements, finding ways of communicating across cultural differences and working together to achieve preferred goals. This significant cultural work involves a kind of 'netiquette' that embraces: good communication, respect for other's autonomy, limiting claims on scarce resources, reciprocity and negotiation, dialogue and conflict resolution (Mandell, 2006). In particular, this learning entails knowledge sharing, which generates novel meanings, ways of understanding, and solutions to problems.

One of the consequences of these changes in work organization and work practices is that participants in partnerships engage in 'self work', becoming different kinds of practitioners who change their identity at work. They develop different relationships with learners, with their organization, with their knowledge base and how they perform it. They shift their sense of who they are at work and in the wider institutional context of education so that the challenge becomes not 'who one is, but creating who one might become' (Tennant et al, 2004, p. 23). As Mandell (2006) suggests this participation in partnerships leads to a distinctive embodiment of partnership:

... working in collaborative networks requires partners to demonstrate a distinctive mind-set that is open to power sharing and learning. Partnering means having a commitment to the whole collaborative agenda, despite conflicts between partners and partner's organisations. It also means respecting and recognising partners equal right to speak, and the need to develop new ways of behaving and dealing with one another. Learning to work together in these ways requires time, trust, effort and the establishment of norms of flexibility and reciprocity. (Mandell, 2006)

#### **Approaching learning spaces**

Before moving to the specific case examples that have informed this paper, let me give a practical example of a partnership and how it operates as a strategic alignment of partners, a steering and learning structure, and a service delivery space.

Between late 2000 and 2001, the Victorian State Government established Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLEN) on an area or regional geographic basis. The establishment process occurred in two phases culminating in the formation of 31 LLEN covering the whole of the state. The LLEN were charged with two key responsibilities. They were required to engage in community building through reinvigorating local co-operative approaches to planning, community renewal and effective service delivery. They were also required to support and build shared responsibility of, and ownership for, post-compulsory education and training, especially for 15-19 year olds.

Early on, the Minister, Hon. Lyn Kosky, described the introduction of these networks as 'a new way of working in education and training' (Kosky, 2001) which would be focused firmly on the learner rather than being primarily concerned with the need to maintain a large organization like a school, TAFE Institute or State-based system of education. Interested individuals and agencies came together to form a governance structure within the guidelines established by government. Their legal format, Chair and committee of management, representation, funding and reporting arrangements were all specified. Each LLEN received \$400,000 per year and with this hired an executive officer and supported the preparation of an environmental scan, strategic planning process and documentation, and other activities. Partnership was encouraged because the LLEN depended upon participating organisations and individuals to support and resource (through money, labour and other non-commodified resources) activities. The outcomes of this process of partnership formation has been (1) a strategic alignment of partners, (2) steering and learning structures, and (3) distinctive service delivery spaces. But there was little guidance in relation to the work of forming, maintaining and sustaining a multi-partner network with the capacity to address local problems and realise innovative solutions that would make a difference for young people. Despite the challenges of this work, it seems that 'helping young people' provided a significant mobilising focus and encourages participation in partnerships (Seddon et al. 2002).

The LLEN are one example of the kind of horizontal and interactive relationships and interdependencies that are currently constructing learning spaces underpinned by networked governance arrangements that mobilize a steering and learning capacity. Such spaces have proliferated as governments and communities have worked to address changes in the youth labour market, patterns of school provision and retention, and policy imperatives that have endorsed learning and earning. There are many other examples of such networked arrangements around Australia, including school-industry partnerships, community initiatives and industry innovations aimed at addressing skill and recruitment challenge (Seddon and Billett 2004).

While there is evidence of significant work-based learning through participation in partnerships (Fennessy, Billett and Ovens, 2006), networks like LLEN also support the design and implementation of learning initiatives for beneficiaries (eg. students). The following profiles portray two learning initiatives within partnership learning spaces (Ferguson, 2006). They provide a basis for considering the nature of learning further.

## **Café learning**

### **Site 1**

The first site is picturesque, an Adult and Community Education (ACE) centre at the entrance of a playing oval, the building opens out to the small car park. Already 'outside' of the commercial vectors of the surrounding area and sealed off, too, from the rows of comfortable, outer suburban houses that face the park, the community centre is situated in a public/private space – the park and oval is common space. The café is bright sunlit area, filled with natural light from full length windows. It is a space of

care – people with acquired brain damage are taught hospitality skills and employed in the café, their slow movement and speech inculcates a different kind of time, time that cannot be rushed.

The Centre's mission statement is: 'To offer a friendly, supportive and welcoming environment for all people in our community and to promote personal growth through social, recreational and learning opportunities which are accessible to all'. One of the ways that this is achieved is through the provision of workplace training and rehabilitation through work for people who live in proximity to the café. Of the five days a week that it is open, including evenings on Thursdays, it is staffed by participants from 3 different groups – Mondays have workers with acquired brain damage from Eastern Access Community Health (EACH) and the rest of the week is divided between two different 'Work for the Dole' programmes, serviced by Central Victoria Group Training (CVGT) and Esperance Course and Career Opportunities (ECCO). Participants from both these organisations fulfil their 'mutual obligation' task by working in the café for 6 months at the end of which they will have attained a TAFE certificate in food handling which should help them find work in the hospitality industry. Some of the full time workers who assist at the café found their position through the 'Work for the Dole' scheme, several of the unemployed workers are on their second or even third session at the Café, some return voluntarily and some make a point of visiting as customers in order to maintain the social bonds they've made there.

The running of the café is fully accountable, necessarily open to all and functioning on the basic market economy of goods and services re-sold at a (slight) profit. Still this feels like a domestic space. Even the trainers in the kitchen seem a bit wary of new customers, more comfortable with the fabric of their domain but happy enough to talk about the fabric of their space. The domestic motif continues. One describes the work as a 'bit like being a mother' – making sure people are ok, getting things organised. She notes, the partnership arrangement could be viewed as a contractual one 'but we don't'. The monetary economy is present in the café, but is subsumed within an economy that focuses on labour as a gift, on resources as shared and on a familial way of operating. As a communal space the Café is a success; as a commercial venture, it appears to just break even

## **Site 2**

Situated along the foreshore of a coastal town, the second site looks out from a curved balcony and big windows, across the inlet towards a steelworks and oil refinery (both subject to workforce reductions). The training café was developed by the local council, in an attempt to re-vitalise the area's economy and offer some form of skills training to the young people in a region with above average unemployment. The café was established in 2003 when the Council received \$238,050 from the State Government through the Community Jobs Program to conduct a 15 week project with 30 participants. It now employs people of all ages (in line with the Shire's casual employment guidelines), although predominantly under 25 and serves an average of 380 people per day. At any given time there are approximately 20 training participants, both 'back and front of house'.

The majority of the participants are under 25, sourced from programs for the long term unemployed and predominantly from the region, although a small number commute from Melbourne. There are 2 Schools Based New Apprenticeship positions, limited to kitchen operations, with one of those positions being designated for intellectually or physically disabled participants. The café can take place with up to 15 groups at a time, from various skills employment networks, and are also joined by students affiliated with the local TAFE, who choose to complete their course in the practical working environment, rather than in a theory-based, institutional setting. These courses include Certificates 1 – 3 in Food Handling and Hospitality, Bar Tending, Occupational Health and Safety and Coffee Making, as well as the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning and Schools Based New Apprenticeship.

The courses take up to 6 months to complete and still include a written component and an exam, which is facilitated by one of several accredited trainers who work in the café, along with 4 professional chefs. It is important to note that none of the students are directly involved in cooking. They make and serve

coffee, prepare food and clean-up, but the menu and its assembly is the preserve of the chefs. Chefs are not directly required to provide training to the participants and may be seen as observational guides, while the trainers encourage a more participatory role in other processes.

While limited local transport makes participation difficult for some, there is sufficient demand for places in the café that work experience beyond the 6 month period is not encouraged. After this period, trainees have their hours reduced or are 'let go'. The café is acknowledged as an outstanding success. Participants speak of being 'put on their feet'. One trainee notes:

*You gain hands-on experience which is better than doing mostly theory at TAFE. While I've been here, I've learnt that you can't do it all by yourself, when you start, it's an I-thing. "I want to do this..." and you soon realise, if you want it done quickly and well, you have to work as a team. Personal presentation is important. You learn that there are ways of dealing with people. Now, when I'm a customer in places like this, I can see what they're doing, I can say, "I know this."*

### **Implications for learning**

In her analysis of these cases, Kathleen Ferguson (2006) makes the point that it is possibly just a coincidence that these two social partnerships are both commercial kitchens in which the provision of services leading to employment in the hospitality industry is the primary, tangible goal of training programs. There are many other partnerships with learning initiatives that do not involve focus on food. Yet their focus on the production and consumption of food reveals things about the learning that take place in these spaces.

The social practices of dealing with food codify social norms and relationships, establishing hierarchies, patterns of inclusion and exclusion, and boundaries across which transactions occur (Douglas, 1972). The learning subject being formed in these cafés is marked by the production and serving of food. What is transacted is not just food but the performance of service, and the bonhomie, the emotional and symbolic work that distinguishes the servant from those who are served, those who eat in restaurants and those who work in them. Consumption frames the identities and behaviours of both learners who wait (at table) and those they serve as customers.

Both cafés offer credentialed vocational training but they do more than transfer conventional knowledge and skills. Indeed, the credential, and the training on which its award is based, seems almost insignificant compared to other pastoral, emotional, rehabilitative and relational learning that is going on. The training relationship is not centred on a teacher as source and learner as subaltern subject, but is a kind of socialised learning which embraces relations between all who use the sites. The emphasis is more on learning to be, and be in relationship, than to know. It is realised through learning relationships that respect difference, that embody care and a kind of love. While such learning is seductively soft compared to training imperatives that stress control and the attainment of pre-specified objectives, it also works against the affirmation of learning subjects as knowers with capacities to act, and hence authority, as a result of their knowing. They can train to wait but not design menus or be chefs. The pastoral and performative dimensions complement each other, encouraging, indeed, disciplining learners towards the sort of service behaviours expected in consumer societies (Clemans, 2006).

Learning spaces like the cafés are seen to be particularly relevant to young people who are disengaged from school and as a way of addressing skills shortage in areas of economic transition. Yet the kinds of working lives being made available to these young learners at the café are different to working lives of those who work across the water at the steelworks and oil refinery, perhaps their parents of the café's labour force. In the industrial sector, strong unionisation, set job tasks and duration persist to a large extent. Those who service the café and consumer society confront the dual labour market that renders

such working conditions like another world, only discernable at a distance across new divisions of class and culture.

The cultural consequences of this dual labour market are, of course, contested. Consumption framed working lives leads to a 'corrosion of character' (Sennett 1998) and the loss of a secure axis to fix self-definition that anchors ethical society (Bauman, 2000: 139). The fear is of cultural disintegration which will undercut collective capacity for living shared lives. Yet, both cafés define themselves as actors in the creation of a sense of local identity. Students perform this agenda, building community with the café clientele and, in turn, sustaining a larger group, a community of consumers who visit the venues to be part of a social milieu as well as to eat. As participants in this consumer partnership they also learn, drawn perhaps to the rehabilitative experience of these cafés and the opportunity to learn how to consume, materially and socially. Is this limited community nothing but people who pass through? Or is the anchor point for other experiences with food, talk, and connectedness that provide echoes of 'authentic' social citizenship echo? What politics might this echo rekindle based in a sense of social clusters which build up, evolve and dissipate with only the barest of common interests?

It is tempting to see the decentring of learning and work as the point at which 'community' collapses. Yet this conclusion falls into the trap of disconnecting and abstracting deinstitutionalised learning spaces, like the cafés, from the wider learning spaces embraced by the social institution of Education. Partnership learning spaces exist in relation to learning spaces framed by the social relations, traditions and contested narratives of compulsory and post-compulsory education and training. Many young people experience learning and earning through café work and report that this provides ways of building their sense of self while they also contribute to and sustain the youth economy (Dwyer and Wyn 1998). Their movement is seen as an opportunity to experience different social spaces their enrich their learning careers that form them as learning subjects. Yet which bodies are learning and earning through the cafés and which are moving between part-time work and the established learning spaces of education and training? And how do these learning and earning 'pathways' articulate with different knowledge practices, rules and resource investments to support identity formation and the crafting of workable lives?

### **Implications for structure**

Shifting scale, to consider Education as a social institution, it seems that decentralisation has facilitated the diversification of learning spaces by encouraging partnerships formed by localised relationships. Schools have community-based school councils as their governing bodies, albeit still tied into the bureaucratic embrace of public authority and articulated through the voice of a professionalised workforce. Learning spaces like the cafés have local partnerships based in localised agencies as governing bodies but these partnerships lack the *basso profundo* of public authority. Instead multiple voices speak into the organisation of learning, negotiating influence through claims to knowing, capacity for action and force of character. In these horizontal interactions the negotiation of hierarchies turn the din into a choir that chooses the song to sing. Yet these processes are themselves framed by discursive hierarchies rooted in gender, class, age, and traditionalist moralities – what resurfaces is all those age-old politics that had been displaced by universalistic rule-governed bureaucratic and professional discourses (Johnson 1989).

Yet public authorities endorse these horizontal networks and partnerships. State assent is relayed through policy imperatives, funding and accountability measures, and the use of qualification frameworks, but the relationship is at arms length, contractualised. In contrast to the past, government entails less an encompassing normative embrace and more a prudential monitoring. Public authority seems less weighty, less concerned with which identities are formed or what is known, and more focused freeing up self-work, on enabling movement from space to space, between learning and work and, for those who chose, from work to learning.

Partnership learning spaces do seem to have differences from the learning spaces within established education and training institutions, even recognising the shifts that have occurred in the social and symbolic practices that currently constitute schools, TAFE Institutes and universities. There are differences in rhythms and time: short placements keep people on the move whereas 12 years of schooling, even moving between classes and teachers, are framed by the practices and culture of a professionalised workforce underwritten by public authority. There is a different emphasis on public knowledge. In school learning spaces curriculum, assessment and qualifications define the meals that mobilise learning and becoming a knower. They develop and publicly recognise the learning subject and, as a consequence, they authorise that knower as someone worthy of respect.

It is easy to see the diversification of learning spaces as a post-modern re-creation of stratified schooling structures that, as Williams (1976: 145) said, provide 'this amount [of learning], for this period of time, to this or that group'. In many ways this diversification can be seen as a rational strategy in a knowledge economy and innovation society era (Brine 2006). Diversified spaces, like the old structures of schooling, sort and select youth in line with labour market segments and the welfare periphery where churning means mobility between insecure part-time work and unemployment. The emphasis on relationality in the learning spaces that are differently positioned from bureaucratic pastoral obligations provides an alternative way of addressing the issue of sociality in communities that are becoming dispersed, technologically mediated and interpersonally vestigial.

Yet equally such interpretations rely on normative positions that echo back a romantic notion of public authority, the myths of nation and hopes of active citizenship in ways which seem difficult to sustain in today's globalised world in which transnational experience is shaped by consumerism, terror and sometimes brutal inclusions and exclusions. Rather than stratification, perhaps diversified learning spaces provide a structure for the formation of knowing and self-regulating identities in line with other forms of 'graduated or variegated sovereignty', providing differentiated 'sites of entitlement' differently invested with economic and political resources (Ong 2006).

While globalisation diffracts educational provision to accommodate internationalisation and employers receive subsidies to support work-based learning, the powers of the national state to assert and drive learning as normative identity formation have not been diminished but dispersed and diversified. There is no justification for assuming any reduction in Education's normative power, which remains underpinned by the resources and rule making powers consolidated in state formation and anchored in national jurisdictions. Acknowledging that Education provides a means for governments to manage populations under stress from economic and social reform, presents the fracturing of what was centred as a reorientation with intended and unintended effects. Partnership learning spaces encourage us to recognise the probability of re-stratification and also the importance of relationality, the normative significance of education and the challenges that accompany the assertion or dispersal of public authority. Such decentering could mark the further collapse of community and corrosion of character or, it could become the point where working up a co-relational ethics in the sites of work and learning can develop.

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