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PAPERS

‘Empty, Swept and Garnished’: the Public Finance Initiative case of Throckley Middle School

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Abstract

As spaces of complex layering of multiple relations, each with their own space–time dynamics and reach, policies of urban governance and their tangible outcomes can be materially experienced as conjunctions of multiple meshworks of assemblages with different scopes and different systems of values. This paper investigates a case example of a Private Finance Initiative for the construction of Throckley Middle School in Newcastle upon Tyne. Completed in 2003, Throckley school closed in 2005. A Deleuzean-inspired tracing of several Throckley assemblages is presented and the paper concludes by discussing the challenges of adopting a Deleuzean perspective for analysis of urban governance and infrastructure development.

Notes

1. Alan Milburn MP, July 1997.

2. In March 2001, Partnerships UK became a PPP with 51per cent stake sold to the private sector.

3. The first ‘round’ of PFI funding, which NCC terms PFI1.

4. The second ‘round’ of PFI funding.

5. At this point, the irony of the ‘sufficiency’ criterion was far from apparent.

6. We make no comment on the financial viability of the PFI compared with the ‘traditional’ route of NCC borrowing money from the Public Works Loan Commissioners or as credit approvals under the 2003 Local Government Act.

7. The decision could have been reversed as from 2006 under the School Standards and Framework Act, 1998, schedule 6§5.1–8.

8. As of March 2008.

9. Although in this paragraph we retain Kwa's (2002) terminology of ‘looking down’ and ‘looking up’, our Deleuzo Guattarian rhizomic view rejects these imaginaries in favour of an ascalar, flat ‘looking among’ (see Marston et al., 2005; Jones III et al., 2007; Marston et al., 2007).

10. We distinguish between subjectivisation as self-actualisation, or taking on a subject-position, and subjectification as the subjective identification of others, or accordance of a subject-position.

11. An assemblage including Parsons Brinckerhoff, Sir Robert McAlpine, McGrigors, Bevan Brittan, Roberston Capital Projects and Ryder architects.

12. One interview is acknowledged (in NCC, 2002b, p. 3).

13. Suffice it to say that in 2005 South Gosforth had the highest gross weekly income (£680) of all Tyne and Wear wards, while Newburn and Denton ward incomes were £370 and £360 per week respectively (TWRI, 2006).

14. See Browning and Kilmister (2006) for explanations of classical, critical and post-critical political economy, while Castree (2008) examines the broadness of institutional political economy.

15. We do accept that several authors (such as Ian Buchanan, 2008; Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, 2000; and Eugene Holland, 1999, 2006) recognise an articulation of aspects of Deleuze's thinking with, and going beyond, political economy, especially in Anti-Oedipus (Deleuze and Guattari, 1972/1984).

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