Jane Wilkinson

Educational Leadership through a Practice Lens

Practice Matters

Educational Leadership Theory

The Educational Leadership Theory book series provides a forum for internationally renowned and emerging scholars whose ongoing scholarship is seriously and consequentially engaged in theoretical and methodological developments in educational leadership, management and administration. Its primary aim is to deliver an innovative and provocative dialogue whose coherence comes not from the adoption of a single paradigmatic lens but rather in an engagement with the theoretical and methodological preliminaries of scholarship. Importantly, Educational Leadership Theory is not a critique of the field—something that is already too frequent—instead, attention is devoted to sketching possible alternatives for advancing scholarship. The choice of the plural 'alternatives' is deliberate, and its use is to evoke the message that there is more than one way to advance knowledge. The books published in Educational Leadership Theory come from scholars working at the forefront of contemporary thought and analysis in educational leadership, management and administration. In doing so, the contributions stimulate dialogue and debate in the interest of advancing scholarship.

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Practice Matters

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To my mother, Becky Monester (1924–2014). She instinctively understood why education mattered. Thank you, Mum.

Series Editors' Foreword

Discussions of educational leadership research are always discussions about theory. Sometimes matters of ontology, epistemological, and axiology are made explicit, other times they are not, but we cannot undertake, dialogue, and debate research without theory. What counts as theory and/or quality research in educational leadership has changed over time. From the influence of sociology and behavioural science in the establishment of university departments of educational administration (as it was known then) through the rise of the theory movement in the mid-twentieth century and subsequent interventions such as Thomas Barr Greenfield's humanistic science, the Critical Theory of Richard Bates and William Foster, and Colin Evers and Gabriele Lakomski's naturalistic coherentism, tensions in educational leadership theory have shaped what work is conducted, legitimised, published, and ultimately advanced. This is all set in a field of inquiry where questions of relevance and/or practical significance remain dominant and enduring. The desire for immediacy and direct translation of research into practice, especially for the improvement of outcomes, means that matters of theory are often seen as peripheral at best and more often marginalised or silenced. Theory, which can unsettle assumptions, ask questions of the status quo, and recast our ways of thinking, seeing, and doing, is perceived as getting in the way of instrumentalist and/or functional prescriptions of how things ought to be.

The *Educational Leadership Theory* book series is explicitly designed to address what we see happening in educational leadership scholarship. That is, an aversion to rigorous, robust, and most importantly, enduring dialogue and debate on matters of theoretical and methodological advancement. To that end, this series provides a forum for internationally renowned and emerging scholars whose ongoing scholarship is seriously and consequentially engaged in theoretical and methodological developments in educational leadership, management, and administration. Its primary aim is to deliver an innovative and provocative dialogue whose coherence comes not from the adoption of a single paradigmatic lens but rather in an engagement with the theoretical and methodological preliminaries of scholarship. Importantly, *Educational Leadership Theory* is not simply a critique of the field—something that is already too frequent—instead, attention is devoted to sketching possible alternatives

for advancing scholarship. The choice of the plural "alternatives" is deliberate, and its use is to evoke the message that there is more than one way to advance knowledge. The books published in *Educational Leadership Theory* come from scholars working at the forefront of contemporary thought and analysis in educational leadership, management, and administration. In doing so, the contributions stimulate dialogue and debate in the interest of advancing scholarship. Specifically, we aim to

- Foreground the theoretical/methodological preliminaries of educational leadership research;
- Sketch areas of relevance and possible theoretical/methodological developments that serve to extend current debates on leadership in education.

We interpret these aims widely, consistent with our goal of promoting dialogue and debate in the field. Importantly, we ask our contributors to respond to the following guiding questions:

1.   What are the theoretical/methodological problems from which educational leadership is based and/or have implications for educational leadership?
2.   How can we engage them?

These questions, we believe, are vital as the field of educational leadership faces increasing questions of its relevance and status within education research and as education research itself faces increasing challenges from beyond in the audit culture of the contemporary academy. Our goal is not to bring a series of like-minded contributors together to outline the virtues of a particular research tradition. Such an undertaking would do little more than provide legitimation of existing theorisations and negate theoretical pluralism. Instead, we seek to bring a diverse group of scholars together to engage in rigorous dialogue and debate around important matters for educational leadership research and practice. This is a significant move, as instead of surrendering our thoughts to a singular, stable, and standardised knowledge base we explicitly seek to interrogate the dynamism of contradictions, multiplicities, and antinomies of a vibrant field of theories and practices.

Most importantly, we want the *Educational Leadership Theory* book series to stimulate dialogue and debate. We are broad in our meaning of the label "theory". The analytical dualism of explanation and description is a poor and weak distinction between what is and is not theory. We too are not against the absence of practical application. However, what we seek are contributions that take matters of theory and methodology (as in theory as method) serious. In short, we are more inclusive than exclusive. This also goes for what is meant by "educational leadership". We do not limit our interpretation to schools or higher education but are instead open to work discussing education in its broadest possible sense. A focus on theory travels well across geographic and disciplinary boundaries. In taking matters of theory serious, we see the *Educational Leadership Theory* book series as a key outlet for stimulating dialogue and debate by recognising the problems and possibilities of existing knowledge in the field and pushing that further. This is an undertaking that we hope

you will join us on—be that as a contributor, reader, or critique—all in the interests of advancing knowledge.

Sydney, Australia   Scott Eacott
                                                                Richard Niesche
                                                                Series Editors

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Chapter 1
Introduction: Educational Leadership Through a Practice Lens

Abstract Covid 19 has ripped apart comfortable assumptions about the world and how we as communities and societies should operate within it. Taken for granted practices have been disrupted such as children attending school in face-to-face settings or groups of people chatting together in comfortable physical proximity. A world-wide social experiment has taken place in inventing, adapting and creating new practices of human sociality with many struggling to keep pace, to adapt and to cope. This book provides the theoretical and analytical resources for an urgent rethinking of the social project of educating and educational leading. Drawing on over two decades of empirical and theoretical inquiry, it argues for a reframing of educational leadership as pedagogical practice/praxis to transform theorising and practice in the field. The book provides a rich account of educational leading through a practice lens, bringing into dialogue the theory of practice architectures with site ontologies, Bourdieu's thinking tools and feminist critical scholarship. As such, it provides a foundation for reimagining to disrupt the drive towards standardisation and performativity endemic in Anglophone educational systems. This chapter posits why adopting a practice lens to educational leading matters.

Keywords Covid 19 · Educational leadership · Practice · Praxis · Pedagogy

1.1 Introduction

I wake in the middle of the night. I hear silence. Silence, I am discovering, is not the absence of sound. It assumes specific textures, distinct feelings and particular shapes. Tonight, it is thick and pregnant with fear and foreboding. This is life in the time of Covid 19 during lockdown.

I commenced writing this book in August 2020 when a second wave of the Covid 19 pandemic crept across my home state of Victoria, Australia. The state was amid a severe lockdown. A curfew from 8 pm at night had been imposed, mask wearing had become compulsory and no one was allowed to move more than five kilometres from home. Melbourne dwellers were sullen but generally accepting of these extraordinary impositions in a democratic society—we needed to get the numbers down as a matter of urgency.

I was a small child in Australia when the 'Hong Kong' flu pandemic erupted across much of the globe. My memories are vague, but I recall lying in my bed unable to move, with my sister who was similarly afflicted lying in a bed next to me. I remember the semi darkness of the room, low voices and my grandmother hovering nearby. She had been commandeered from across town to care for us while my mother as our family's sole breadwinner continued to go out to work. I remember attempting to get out of bed and falling to the ground because I was too weak to manage the physical movement required. And finally, I recall feelings of frustration, helplessness and rage that my body would not obey my mind—it had a will of its own and would not bend to my desires.

As a practice theoretician, part of me observed with fascination the rapid introduction, evolution and disappearance of taken for granted practices throughout the community due to the Covid 19 pandemic. Practices that previously would have seemed unthinkable in Australian culture were widely adopted. Mask wearing became mandatory with fines for non-compliance. Most citizens adopted this new practice, with a flourishing of websites, news stories and photographs of creative innovations to one's mask. Fabric for sewing masks sold out and new mask making businesses rapidly sprung up, often employing refugee and migrant women whose skills in sewing were suddenly in demand. Other familiar, day to day practices were viewed with suspicion. Walking the dog, I was acutely aware that as I passed other pedestrians on the pavement, I must give them a wide berth of 1.5 m or more. Handshakes and hugs were out and I found myself watching films where people displayed physical intimacy with feelings of trepidation. Stop! I wanted to call out to them—it's too risky!

Covid 19 ripped apart comfortable assumptions about the world and how we as communities and societies should operate within it. Taken for granted practices were disrupted such as children attending school in face-to-face settings or groups of people chatting together in comfortable physical proximity. As a scholar I was witnessing a world-wide social experiment in inventing, adapting and creating new practices of human sociality—as a human being I was implicated in these rapidly evolving webs of practice. And like many of us, governments and citizens alike, I struggled to keep pace, to adapt and to cope.

The irruption of Covid 19 into the fissures and cracks of societies across the world is not a new phenomenon. Civil and world wars, pandemics and financial depressions have created previous patterns of upheaval in human lives and societies. We witness these irruptions in the present day. Climate change is impelling us to rethink our relationship to the natural world. The #Me Too and Black Lives Matter movements are forcing institutions and society to interrogate unconscionable and unacceptable practices of misogyny and racism, expressed in daily acts of prejudice, brutality, violence and harassment.

The rapid onslaught of Covid 19 has rendered strange much of what was familiar in our daily lives. In so doing, it affords us an opportunity to pause, to take stock, and to pose different questions of the social experiment that is human co-existence in terms of what we do, how we understand what we do and why we do it. Moreover, it affords us an opportunity to re-examine the institutions that make up the fabric

of our society, and in particular, the *practices* or collective activities that compose them. It is in this pause, in this interregnum that is a collective holding of breath, that I offer this book.

In this book I draw on over two decades of empirical and theoretical inquiry into educational leadership for social justice through practice and critical feminist lenses. Specifically, the aim of the book is to develop insights into how a reframing of educational leadership as pedagogical practice/praxis and the broader conditions or practice architectures that shape it can deepen and transform theorising and practice in the field. In so doing, I invite the reader to rethink with me the ontological project of inquiry that is educational leading. Hence, the book unashamedly sits within, although is not confined to, a critical-emancipatory tradition of educating. Its intellectual roots span critical scholarship within the educational leadership field; the re-turn to practice (and praxis) that marks the first and second generations of practice philosophers and sociologists; and feminist critical scholarship. My evolving conceptualisation of educational leading as practice/praxis reflects these roots but also expands upon them to develop new and fresh insights.

In reconceptualising educational leading through a practice lens, I draw on three distinct but interrelated strands in my scholarship. These include my early research in understanding the intersectionality of gender, 'race' and class in the practices of senior academic women leaders in the Australian tertiary education field, employing critical feminist, Bourdieuian and cultural studies lenses. This work provided me with powerful insights into how practices associated with academic leading were bodily and discursively enacted and mis-recognised through the workings of symbolic violence. The forms this violence took included the interplay between broader cultural-discursive arrangements of the media that (mis)informed social understandings and discourses about diverse women's leadership, and the specific gendered/racialised and classed logics of practice at play within the university field.

A second strand of scholarship on which the book draws is my research in refugee education and educational leadership for social justice, utilising practice architectures and Bourdieuian approaches. The plight of refugees and asylum seekers worldwide is one of the great moral dilemmas of the twentieth and twenty first centuries. Like most research, its foundation is personal. It springs from my own bi-cultural background that spans a family history of anti-Semitism, dispossession, civil war and the search for belonging. A major quest of my research endeavours has been to identify the composition of and relationship between educating practices, including leading, which can orchestrate the necessary pedagogical and educational conditions for children and young people of refugee backgrounds to flourish academically and socially. Chapter 6 draws on this empirical research in terms of educational leading as socially just practice.

A third strand in which the book is rooted is the empirical and intellectual resources gained from my ongoing participation in the Pedagogy Education and Praxis (PEP) Australia and international networks. It is informed by many hours of rich discussion and debate with PEP colleagues, led by Stephen Kemmis, in regional Australia. This scholarly community of practice powerfully modelled for my then Early Career

Researcher habitus, how intellectual enquiry should be conducted, i.e., as collective, ethical, intellectual and moral practice/praxis that crosses disciplinary and national boundaries. Chapter 5 draws on one of the studies my PEP colleagues and I conducted of school and district reform efforts in Australian states over the past decade. These studies were crucial to the development of the theory of practice architectures.

So why study educational leadership/leading from a practice lens? Why does it matter? Equally importantly, should it matter?

1.2 Why Adopt a Practice Lens in Education?

This book is based on the premise that practice/s matters in our attempts to understand educating and educational leading. Early childhood centres, schools, universities and training institutions are not simply composed of bricks and mortar or technological infrastructure—although materiality matters in educating. Nor are they purely made up of individuals whose collective practices daily re-produce the necessarily imperfect enterprise that is educating—although collective human participating matters in educating. These institutions are not only composed of hierarchical structures and systems that delineate role incumbents, rules of conduct and the conditions of labour in which people are employed—although systems and positional authority matter in educating. Nor are they composed only of discourses—although meaning making and the imbrication of power/knowledge are significant matters in educating.

Rather, in this book I view educating and its associated practices, including educational leading, as making up/contributing to the motor of collective human activity that composes educational organising (Wilkinson & Kemmis, 2016). Hence, rather than employing the noun form of words such as education, leadership and organisations, I frequently utilise the verb form in order to shift the meaning from a static view of organisations, education and leadership as end products, fixed states or entities (Wilkinson et al., 2013). The employment of verbs emphasises the dynamic and evolving sets of practices that variously relate to, jostle up against one another, contest and diversely constitute the always evolving and incomplete complex/constellation of practices and arrangements of organising that is educating. Several claims flow from this starting premise of adopting a practice sensibility regarding educating and more specifically, related practices such as organising and educational leading. These will be explored in more detail in Chaps. 2–4, but I sketch them briefly below.

Firstly, despite their seeming ubiquity, *practices matter*. They matter both in terms of their constitutive impact on human life and how we come to know how to go on in the world. As Nicolini (2012), referring to Heidegger observes, our apparently "unhampered dealing with the world" is "both the condition for existence as well as the ultimate source of human delusion" (p. 36). Practices flow quietly and unobserved through our lives, seemingly part of the humdrum of daily living. It is only when there is a significant rupture in our lives such as a pandemic that they announce themselves. It is then that seemingly ordinary practices such as hugging a family

member or how close one stands to a stranger while waiting to be served come to the fore and must be re-examined.

Practices matter then in that they are the fundamental cornerstone of human sociality, i.e., the "site of the social" (Schatzki, 2002). To enter a practice such as greeting a friend or addressing a student assembly is to draw on crucial tacit and bodily knowledge about how to read the play (Bourdieu, 1990) when it comes to the game of friendship or schooling in specific cultures at moments in time. To enter a practice is to draw on specific practice traditions and histories (Kemmis et al., 2014), as well as in relation to educating, organisational memories that are not equally open to all (Schatzki, 2006). How practitioners come to be initiated into and learn how to go on in a practice such as educating or learning is not a seamless, apolitical, uncontested or value neutral process between interlocutors in semantic space, or participants in physical-space time and social space. It may be a collective social achievement (Kemmis et al., 2014) but this achievement involves explicit and "implicit pedagogies" of everyday life (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 94). These pedagogies are neither fairly nor equitably distributed, as documented by many scholars of social justice.

Hence, to apprehend social phenomena such as schooling, educating or leading as practices, that is, "something that is routinely made and re-made in practice using tools, discourse, and our bodies" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 3) is to afford us opportunities to re-view the world in which we live. Understanding historically, materially and discursively how and why certain practices come to be situated, amass weight and unfold in the particularity of educational sites provides opportunities for change and transformation of the conditions under which we practise.

Secondly, *practices do not occur in a vacuum.* They hang together in the teleoaffective intent/project of a practice (Kemmis et al., 2014; Schatzki, 2002). It is this teleoaffectivity that gives a practice its purpose, its *telos,* end point or goal. Moreover, practices are held in place by constellations of spatial, discursive, material and temporal arrangements and histories that orchestrate, enable and/or constrain the production of *these* kinds of practices of organising rather than *those* practices. Thus, the dance between the material, the deceptively "durable features of our world", and practices is a recursive one—arrangements and practices emerge, evolve and dissolve in relation to one another, although not all have equal relevance in sites (Nicolini, 2012, p. 3).

Yet, with few exceptions, educational leadership scholarship has failed to grasp, theorise and empirically document these specificities of practice. Rather, it has tended towards more individualist accounts of educational leading as residing in individual traits, capabilities or competencies, i.e., the 'great man' of leadership or 'turn-around' school leader. Alternatively, earlier forms of leadership scholarship focussed on structuralist and system theories, with "law-like … demand for generalisations" seen as central to the generation of social phenomena (Evers & Lakomski, 2012, p. 60). Through this prism, educational leaders are positioned as role incumbents in a system, thus overlooking the lifeworld and praxis of practitioners (Wilkinson & Kemmis, 2016).

These accounts from mainstream educational leadership/administration scholarship reproduce old dichotomies between actor/system, body/mind, and theory/action. They ignore how social phenomenon such as *organisational knowing* rather than an individuals' knowledge, comes into being, is distributed across time and space, and differs depending on the various fields of practice in which it is enacted (Watson, 2017, p. 176). In contrast, the practice theory approaches I adopt in this book conceptualise organising, power and social change as "rooted in human activity—not in the activity of individuals", nor in generalised, "abstract structures and mechanisms … but in practices, that is, in the organised activities of multiple people" (Schatzki, 2012, p. 13). Practice theory approaches are centrally concerned then with both the "shaping as well as possibility" of and "for action" (Watson, 2017, p. 171). Thus, they provide powerful opportunities to understand and intervene in inequitable educational outcomes for children and young people. The theoretical implications of this shift are teased out in Chaps. 2–4. Their empirical implications are examined in Chaps. 5, 6 and 8.

Thirdly and relatedly, what form and shape practices take and the conditions that orchestrate possibilities for practices to take root, be sustained and/or dissolve in an educational site are *questions that need to be answered empirically* (see also, Kemmis et al., 2014). In other words, gesturing towards explanations like generalising structures or empty signifiers such as 'organisational culture' or 'context' obfuscates the historical and social situatedness of practices. It papers over the dynamic nature of practices as they evolve over time, travel across national and international borders and re-emerge in differing educational sites. *How* they achieve this is an empirical question (Nicolini, 2013).

Fourthly, *sites matter ontologically*. This is a different claim to the well-worn cliché in studies of educational leading and educating that context matters. Precisely how context matters is poorly understood, theorised and explicated, particularly in educational leadership scholarship. In this book I draw on the notion of site ontologies (Schatzki, 2002) to explore how and why sites matter ontologically in the study of educational leading as pedagogical practice/praxis. The notion of the site is crucial in understanding how and why certain human activities (and not others) emerge and are enacted in specific sites of possibility, such as the teaching of reading in a classroom, the chairing of a staff meeting or managing a research institute.

Hence, in this book I deliberately used the term 'sites' rather than contexts, settings or place, for the latter terms are not interchangeable with the former. The notion of the 'site' provides rich theoretical possibilities with which to explore and understand in their particularity how educational leading practices "hang together" to form practice-arrangement bundles" in the complex that is education (Schatzki, 2002). These bundles, in turn form the "'sites' where the lifeworld of educating "transpires" and is remade anew in each moment (Schatzki, 2012, p. 21). Change is only possible by analysing how this process unfolds in its particularity (Wilkinson & Kemmis, 2016).

1.3 Educational Leadership Through a Practice Lens

There are compelling reasons why a practice approach is called for. Firstly, reconceptualising educational leadership/leading through a practice lens is an important *theoretical move*. It assists researchers in undoing the "ontological complicity" (Eacott, 2015, p. 5) that besets dominant approaches to researching in the field. That is, the production of knowledge about educational leading has generally assumed a priori a social phenomenon such as leadership and then has attempted to analyse and understand its workings in organisations. An ontological perspective such as a practice lens allows researchers to unpack the assumptions that concern the nature of the apparent social phenomena being investigated (Cohen et al., 2007).

A practice approach assists researchers in breaking with the "spontaneous understanding of the social world" in many parts of the global north in which administering/managing/leading is afforded central stage (Eacott, 2015, p. 5). It denaturalises the phenomenon under investigation. Simultaneously, it draws attention to how asymmetrical power relations are re-inscribed through these uninterrogated assumptions, for example, the privileging of dominant notions of leadership in terms of white, heteronormative, masculinist meanings and know-how, rooted in the global north. Thus, it provides an opportunity to enrich scholarship and practice in terms of the "meaning, conceptual depth and real know-how that … practitioners have around the work of leadership" (Carroll et al., 2008, pp. 373–373). This includes subjugated knowledges, "cultural contexts and local ways of understanding the world" (Wilkinson & Bristol, 2018, p. 2) that have previously been invisible, misrecognised or ignored. This is particularly the case in relation to subjugated ways of knowing for Indigenous peoples (Baker et al., 2014), Black women and Women of Colour, and women in "economically developing, often faith based nation states" (Shah, 2018, p. 77).

Secondly, the adoption of a practice lens provides *analytical resources* to support this break with the "ontological complicity" (Eacott, 2015, p. 5) that characterises studies of educational leading. Hence, rather than commencing with a notion of leading as residing in individual/s or as role incumbents within organisations, my ontological object of inquiry is how *practices* associated with organising unfold/dissolve/are resisted in the various pedagogical projects of educating. In this book, I examine these projects in varied sites of schooling, but this is not to ignore the crucial role of informal sites of learning (c.f., Wilkinson & Lloyd, 2017; Wilkinson et al., 2017). I examine what these practices are composed of, i.e., their distinctive (cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political) arrangements (Kemmis & Grootenboer, 2008). I analyse whether and if so, how they connect up with one another in ecologies of practices (Kemmis et al., 2012).

Furthermore, this approach provides an *analytical lens* through which to interrogate what these arrangements and connections/disconnections between practices entail. It does so in terms of transformation of educational practices and the consequences of these transformations for participants in the practice, i.e., *praxis* conceived of as history-making action (Kemmis & Smith, 2008). The mobilisation of these

analytical resources allows us to ask questions about how new practices and new conditions can come into being in differing educational sites. For example, how can new ways of thinking about, enacting and relating to the world and one another in terms of more socially just and equitable educating practices be enabled in *this* site at *this* time? What are the conditions, resources and arrangements that can enable these practices to emerge and be sustained? Drawing on a range of practice theories, and in particular, practice architectures, affords an opportunity to "provide not only analyses *of* but also analyses *for*" (Francis & Mills, 2012, p. 3) educational leading as pedagogical practice/praxis. This is crucial in terms of a larger project to reimagine what socially just educating might look like (Wilkinson, 2019, p. 28).

Thirdly, in relation to the *epistemology* of educational leadership, a practice lens affords opportunities to ask fresh questions about how knowledge is produced in the field, whose accounts matter and why. Knowledge production is both "a social and political process involving matters of legitimacy and authority" (Gunter, 2016, p. 18). This process is constituted by specific practices of knowledge-producing that include the initiating of early career researchers in dominant canons of knowledge about school leadership such as the school improvement and effectiveness movement in Anglo-American nations.

Practices of knowledge-producing in the academies of these nations are ontologically complicit in re-producing the very social phenomenon under examination. Questions are rarely asked about what is in essence, a social construction in popular societal discourses in the global north, which is now colonising the global south as a major export industry. (It is worth noting, for example, that in Indigenous Australian languages, one of the oldest living cultures in the world, there is no equivalent word for 'leadership').

The practices of the knowledge industry that is educational leadership (and of which I am a member) prefigure and are prefigured by ways of thinking about and speaking educational leadership into existence, employing bodies of scholarship largely drawn from the field. This in turn leads to a "circular circulation" (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 23) of what constitutes knowledges and knowing in the field, thus contributing to its insular and rather moribund character. This circulation is shaped by specific material arrangements and resources, such as textbooks and curricula that focus on the 'school leader' or systems of administration. It is grounded in frequently uninterrogated assumptions about dominant social-political arrangements between an assumed object of inquiry and its knower, for example, the binary of leaders and followers.

Finally, although I employ the term 'educational leadership/leading' throughout the book, this does not signal an "ontological complicity" with the subject under investigation (Eacott, 2015, p. 5). Nor does it imply an acceptance of its values in mainstream scholarship. Rather it foregrounds through the adoption of a practice lens, an examination of the activities and in particular, practices denoted by the term (Wilkinson et al., 2013, p. 2). It rejects the frequent reification of practices produced in adjectival accounts of leadership, which lack empirical grounding such as transformational leadership (Day & Leithwood, 2007). Such accounts overlook the repertoire of diverse practices formal leaders adopt in their roles (Eacott, 2009;

Wilkinson et al., 2013). Rather, a study of the activities, practices and relationships between educating practices provides "access to the 'heroic work of ordinary … practitioners in their day to day routines'" (Whittington, 1996, p. 734, as cited in Carroll et al., 2008, p. 367).

1.4 Re-conceptualising Educational Leading as Practice/Praxis

In the book, I distinguish between practices associated with formal authority roles and *educational* leading/leadership practices which are dispersed across educational sites and contribute to a collective "thickening" of leadership as shared/collective responsibility (Kemmis et al., 2014; Lingard et al., 2003). Although not mutually exclusive, the latter notion of *educational* leadership/leading has a specific, normative dimension, i.e., a collective, participatory practice/*praxis*, hanging together in a *telos*/aim of transforming for the better, the lives of individuals and society more generally (Wilkinson, 2017).

This definition of educational leadership has resonances and overlaps with other critical scholarship in the field. For instance, Gunter and Courtney discuss the notion of educative leaders, with leading and leadership conceived as a "relational and activist pedagogy" (2020, p. 1). However, my reconceptualisation differs from theirs in terms of its theoretical foundation in a practice lens. The definition has parallels with Foster's (1989, p. 39) conceptualisation of leadership as a "shared and communal concept". However, it rejects his notion of leadership as residing in leaders and followers. Finally, it has echoes with Indigenous scholars' notions of leading as a "participatory, community-based, holistic and interconnected process" (Coyhis, 1995, as cited in Benham & Murakami-Ramalho, 2010, p. 78).

The educational aspect of leading I stress in the book is conceived of as an ongoing, incomplete, dynamic and invariably contested pedagogical project that contributes to the social, academic and moral formation of individuals and society. Thus, it has an explicit normative aim. It captures the more holistic notion of educating in the broader sense of the word in English. Importantly, it is distinct from the formal institutions of schooling, early childhood, training and higher education. The latter typically privilege systems as entities and overlooks the lifeworld of practitioners—educators, students and communities (Kemmis et al., 2014; Wilkinson, 2017). Moreover, this conceptualisation of *educational* leading has several implications in terms of theory and transformation.

Theoretically, rather than being conceived of as a fixed state or entity, educational leadership/leading as practice/praxis is always in flux and cannot be pinned down, measured, quantified or fixed into sets of capabilities or competencies. It is a collective set of dynamic and contested practices both shaped by and shaping the conditions of possibility for transforming educating in sites. Hence, this conceptualisation casts the gaze on the ontological (rather than epistemological) nature

of leading (Wilkinson, 2017). Educational leading, in this sense, consists of both formal and informal practices and concomitant arrangements within and/or brought into organisational sites or informal sites of learning.

Secondly, educational leading practices do not exist on their own. Instead, they form part of a broader set of distinctive ecologies of educating practices which include teaching, student learning, professional learning and researching (Kemmis et al., 2012). Collectively, these practices consist of normativised ways of thinking about, enacting and relating to the human and non-human world that may "hang together" (Schatzki, 2002). They orchestrate distinctive educational projects, for example, practices of enhancing children's reading across differing primary schools or classrooms. Analysing how they come to hang together in all their "happeningness" (Schatzki, 2002) in specific sites is a crucial prerequisite in terms of bringing about change.

Thirdly, practices of educational leading and the conditions that enable and/or constrain their emergence are not the property of individuals. Nor do they spring from individual practitioners' cognition or their occupation of roles of positional authority such as Deans of academic faculties or school principals. In stating this, I do not over-look the crucial role that principals, deans and others may play in transforming the site-specific conditions in which more socially just educating practices may flourish. However, one of the most profound forms of misrecognition within the educational leadership field is the automatic equation between *educational* leading as pedagog-ical practice/praxis and positions of formal authority such as the Dean of a university faculty, a school principal, or a head of a school faculty. The practices/praxis associ-ated with the latter roles are not necessarily educational in the broader sense of the word. Indeed, they may be profoundly anti-educational, concerned with compliance to external indicators and metrics disconnected from the lifeworld of educating as a public good.

This misrecognition has major deleterious impacts. It re-produces 'raced', gendered constructions of leading practices associated with formal authority posi-tions in the global north and constructions of white, male, heteronormativity: individ-ualistic, competitive, 'rational' and 'efficient'. In educational systems in Anglophone nations that are dominated by neoliberal metrics of efficiency and accountability, it privileges the techné of managing educational sites rather than the pedagogical practices of educational leading (Gunter, 2012).

In terms of *transformation*, the practices/praxis and pedagogies associated with educational leading are not exclusively located in formal educational institutions. This is a particularly important point in terms of achieving more socially just outcomes for students stereotyped as 'lacking' or deficit in the capitals they bring to formal learning. For example, research with young people of refugee background and their practices of everyday learning identified a nexus of practice arrangement bundles associated with leading as generative of a sense of collective responsibility for young people's social, religious and academic learning (Wilkinson & Lloyd, 2017). These bundles unfolded within and connected to a variety of sites outside schooling, including church services, youth group activities, sporting events and the home. Taken together, the pedagogical practices and the arrangements that prefigured

them created a collective sense of responsibility for leading and learning, fostering pro-educational niches for *these* learning practices to be enacted rather than *those* practices. Moreover, they played a crucial role in shaping the young people's pro-educational disposition/habitus, which in turn afforded them crucial tacit knowledge of how to 'go on' in the practices of formal schooling (Wilkinson et al., 2017).

Indigenous scholarship provides crucial insights into the collective and relational pedagogies of educating in informal sites in terms of the cultural, historical and spiritual nourishment and re-formation of communities. For example, Indigenous scholars have drawn attention to the epistemology of engaging in leadership through an understanding of "the context, history, and relations of indigenous peoples within their community, and across diverse or dissimilar communities over time" (Benham & Murakami-Ramalho, 2010, p. 82). This includes attention to the lifeworld of community and earth (Wilkinson & Bristol, 2018) and understandings of place, of "land, sky, and sea'" as "fundamentally pedagogical" (Benham & Murakami-Ramalho, 2010, p. 81). Such scholarship foregrounds epistemological, methodological and ontological spaces through which to "pose questions and to speak back to some of the troubling narratives that do not fully account for Indigenous … ways of knowing, acting, and leading" (Fitzgerald, 2010, p. 103).

1.5 Pedagogy and Educational Leading as Practice/Praxis

In terms of pedagogy, I conceptualise the sayings, doings and relatings of educational leading as pedagogical practice/praxis—ongoing and dynamic, not a product or state. They are collective practices, making and remaking history in their daily unfolding—hence the notion of educational leading as *praxis*. The notion of educational leading I have sketched above is *pedagogical* in two senses of the word.

Firstly, it is pedagogical in that it involves the *co-producing* of forms of understanding, thinking about and relating to other humans as part of the intellectual, ethical and social forming of the child and of society in the child. This notion of pedagogical practice is not employed in the narrow sense of teaching and learning as a more instrumentalist form of techné propounded by many neoliberal Anglo-American educational systems. Rather it emerges from Continental and Northern European pedagogical traditions of educating "as a shared responsibility … the moral and social formation of the whole child" (Wilkinson, 2017, p. 167). Or alternatively, as Kemmis, 2008, p. xiii) defines it, "education as up-bringing". These traditions are fluid, dynamic and evolving, for

> depending on one's paradigm or approach ('empirical-analytical, humanistic, phenomenological or critical pedagogy'), different positions in regard to the formation and upbringing of children and youth will be taken … As such, the study of pedagogy allows educators to conceive of and raise debates about how they connect their everyday classroom/school practices ('what *is'*) to normative questions in regard to what they understand to be in the child's best interests ('what *ought to be*') (Ponte, 2013, p. 459, as cited in Wilkinson, 2017).

Secondly, my reconceptualising of educational leading is pedagogical in terms of its emphasis upon the co-producing of educational leading as a "relational and activist pedagogy" underpinned by a "reciprocal access to power". These practices of relationality and reciprocity are themselves pedagogical (Gunter & Courtney, 2020, p. 2).

In sum, to understand educational leading as pedagogical practice/praxis requires rendering the familiar strange. It requires analysing seemingly ubiquitous and taken for granted practices in terms of how they hang together, variously unfold, and relate to other educating practices, brought into or existing within formal/informal educational sites. It is to the ontological specificity of *these* sites, *these* practices and the broader conditions of possibility for transforming educating practices through a practice approach to educational leading that this book calls attention.

This approach is particularly important given increasingly inequities amongst student outcomes in nations such as my home country of Australia; the tightening grip of the Global Educational Reform Movement [GERM] (Sahlberg, 2015) on educational systems; and the reconfiguring of education from a public to a private good, from which only the most advantaged profit. 'Leadership' is not the answer to these inequities. But educational leading reconceptualised as an ethically informed, dialogic practice/praxis is a beginning. As such, this book aims to provide theoretical and analytical resources for such an endeavour.

1.6   Conclusion

Chapters 2–4 constitute the theoretical 'spine' that underpins this book and the empirical studies in the subsequent chapters. In Chap. 2, *Re-conceptualising Practice, Praxis and Pedagogy in Educational Leadership*, I position the preceding claims within a re-turn to practice in the social sciences signaled by Sherry Ortner (1984). This movement, in turn, traces its roots back to key insights from Marx, i.e., it is through action we make the world; and all human action is "inherently political" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 33). I provide a broad overview of how concepts such as practice, praxis and pedagogy are being re-thought because of the practice turn and why these insights matter to studies of *educational* leadership/leading as practice/praxis.

In Chaps. 3–4, I take a 'deeper dive' into the key theoretical resources and concepts that inform the book as part of a "toolkit approach" to utilising practice theory (Nicolini, 2012, p. 16). In Chap. 3, I lay out the key tenets of practice architectures theory in dialogue with practice philosopher Ted Schatzki's notion of site ontologies, the latter of which inspires Kemmis et al.'s ontological approach to the study of educational practices. I argue that understanding how and why sites matter is not only important for understanding practice architectures theory but can make a key theoretical and practical contribution to unpacking the 'black box' of context in educational leadership scholarship.

In Chap. 4, I introduce the final two lenses of my practice toolkit approach to the study of educational leading: Pierre Bourdieu's praxeology and feminist critical scholarship. I contend that reconceptualising educational leadership/leading as pedagogical practice/praxis within a turn to practice requires wrestling with issues of power, gender, 'race', agency, politics and embodiment. These are concepts that are rarely grappled with in mainstream accounts of educational leadership, due to the field's historical roots in the 'rational' science administration movements of the early twentieth century. Yet, they are crucial in coming to grips with the inherent politics of educating as human action, how it results in the reproducing/resisting of asymmetrical relations of power, and how this is exercised through the practices of formal and informal sites of learning.

In sum, Chaps. 2–4 lay down the theoretical foundations for a practice toolkit approach that provides important directions to theorising beyond 'leader-centrism'. Its "embracing … of programmatic eclecticism" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 16) through an intersectional practice theory lens aims to make a distinctive contribution to scholarship in the field. It does so by providing a "thicker account" and "better grasp of the nexus of practices" in which educating and educational leading is implicated (Nicolini, 2012, p. 213).

Chapters 5, 6 and 8 draw on empirical studies of educational leadership as practice to add flesh to the bones of the reconceptualisation of educational leading outlined above. Each empirical study illuminates a different, key aspect of educational leading as practice in the compulsory schooling sectors.

Chapter 5 examines a case study of district and school reform in the Australian state of New South Wales through the lens of instructional leading as a project of educational practice. Drawing on practice architectures and Scandinavian organisational theories, it examines how arrangements of accountability and datafication fostered hospitable niches for new instructing practices in the district and case study school sites to evolve, albeit in conditions of considerable contestation. In so doing, it reveals the subsequent troubling consequences for educational leadership as praxis and pedagogy.

Chapter 6 draws on a case study of a previously monocultural school in regional Australia, utilising a practice architectures and ecologies of practice lens. It explores the orchestration of arrangements in district and school sites which aimed to foster more enabling academic and social conditions for a new demographic of students from refugee backgrounds. It analyses whether and if so how, informal and positional leading as a "practice-changing practice" (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 177) connected up to and shaped other educating practices in the school and education district. It then examines the subsequent implications for *educational* leading as socially just praxis for students.

Chapters 7 and 8 take a somewhat different trajectory. Chapter 7 theorises the question of emotions and affect in practice approaches to educating and leading. It argues that there is a theoretical lacuna in practice approaches, including practice architectures and site ontologies, when it comes to understanding the role of emotions and affect in educational leadership practice and praxis. The chapter aims to deepen and strengthen practice architectures theorising when it comes to the study of emotions

and affect. It does so through drawing together diverse but related bodies of scholarship on emotions: practice approaches, studies of emotions and affect, and feminist scholarship on emotion. In terms of educational leadership, it is informed by feminist critical scholarship and the emotional labour of leading. Chapter 8, co-authored with fellow researchers from the *Leading for social cohesion* studies, develops these theoretical insights through the lens of empirical studies undertaken as part of a broader research program examining the role that schools can play in building more socially cohesive societies.

Chapter 9 draws together the main arguments of the book, examining their implications for theorising and practice. It argues that understanding of educational leadership as pedagogical practice and praxis provides a stereoscopic vision that can disrupt the drive towards standardisation and performativity so common to Anglophone educational systems.

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Chapter 2
Re-conceptualising Practice and Praxis in Educational Leadership

Abstract In Chap. 1, I put forward a case for reconceptualising educational leadership through a practice lens. I argued that a practice approach matters, ontologically, analytically and as a tool for transformation of theory and practice in relation to educational leadership scholarship as a field. I noted a key distinction between *educational* leading as a form of pedagogical practice/praxis and the misrecognition of educational leadership as synonymous with positional authority in formal educational sites. But what do I mean by the concepts of practice and praxis? Why do they matter for research in educational leadership and claims for transformation of educational practice? In this Chap. 1 examine why a re-turn to practice and the re-claiming of notions of praxis matters for the field. I contend that these concepts provide important theoretical and practical resources by which to re-imagine *educational* leading as part of a constellation of educative practices that has the potential to reinvigorate the lifeworld of educating. This is a particularly crucial and timely endeavour, given the current drive for standardisation, normalisation and 'what works' that has so flattened educating as a field and which grows ever more relentless.

Keywords Educational leadership as practice · Practice approaches · Praxis · Aristotle · Marx

2.1 Introduction

In Chap. 1, I posited that a focus on practice matters as part of "endeavours to understand and critique social reality" (Mahon et al., 2019, p. 4), such as educating/educational change and leading. In so doing, I variously referred to a practice lens/approach/perspective. The reality is, however, that there is no one 'practice approach'. Rather, there is a loose family of approaches which has emerged as part of a practice turn in the social sciences (Ortner, 1984; Schatzki, 2001).

The re-turn to practice signals a move by social scientists and philosophers towards a practical ontology, i.e., shifting research and thought beyond the Cartesian binaries that have bedevilled western thinking. For postcolonial, feminist and other critical scholars, it has provided productive lenses through which to surface "non-propositional knowledge and tacit understandings" (Wilkinson, 2015, p. 2) of

leading/administering/managing. In turn, this has led to disruptions of "dominant discourses of leadership and management as rational, orderly and linear processes that reify forms of knowledge" traditionally associated with constructions of (white, heteronormative) masculinities (Wilkinson, 2015, p. 2).

The various approaches that sit under the banner of practice theory "draw on a combination of philosophical and theoretical traditions such as phenomenology, Marxism, pragmatism Lev Vygotsky's social constructivism and Wittgenstein's later philosophy" (Sandberg & Dall'Alba, 2009, p. 1350). In relation to studies of organisations/organising, these approaches can be identified as empirical—relating to the 'what' of using a practice lens; theoretical—relating to the 'how' of using a practice lens; and philosophical—relating to the 'why' of using a practice lens (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011, pp. 1240–1241).

However, these perspectives/approaches share several crucial features which are important ontological foundations for the theorising in this book. Davide Nicolini's introduction to practice theory, work and organisation (2012, pp. 3–6) provides a helpful summary of the key features that characterise the 'family' of practice theories. These features include:

1. "the importance of activity, performance and work in the creation and perpetuation of all aspects of social life";
2. "the critical role of the body and material things in all social affairs";
3. "a specific space for individual agency and agents";
4. radical transforming of "our view of knowledge, meaning, and discourse"; and
5. the "centrality of interest in all human matters and therefore… the importance of power, conflict and politics as constitutive elements of the social reality we experience."

I discuss each feature in more detail below, particularly in terms of educational leading as practice.

2.2   Re-turning to Practice

Firstly, all practice theories foreground the importance of activity, performance, and work in the creation and perpetuation of all aspects of social life (my italics) (Nicolini, 2012, p. 3).

Behind "apparently durable" social structures such as families, organised religions, schools and universities "is always the work and effort of someone" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 3). This is a crucial point in terms of understanding how transformation and change can and does occur in society, and specifically, in this book, in educational leading/organising. To transform the conditions of organising and educating, we need to first understand how these conditions are created and perpetuated "as they happen" (Schatzki, 2006).

Analytically, this requires a focus on the "everyday doings of people and things in organizations" (Sandberg & Dall'Alba, 2009, p. 1350). Training a lens on these "doings" means eschewing explanations of social phenomena based on "irreducible dualisms", such as "actor/system, agency/structure, individual/institutional, social/material, body/mind, and theory/action" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 2). Indeed, a major claim of practice theories is they provide the means by which to steer a 'third path' between dualisms, including the sociological Charybdis of structure and the Scylla of agency (see shared feature (3) below). Explanations for how this move is achieved vary depending on the practice theory which is utilised.

In terms of organisations, a rejection of dualisms means moving away from explanations of organising based on structure, for example, "traditional structural-mechanistic and functional-systemic" theories which reify social phenomena such as management and the managed (Nicolini, 2012, p. 2). Equally, it entails a shift from individualist (as opposed to structuralist) interpretations of social change invested in "sovereign individuals as the primary locus for transformation" (Kemmis et al., 2017, p. 249). Instead, practices are favoured "over individuals or mental structures and processes… as the primary subject of analysis for examining social relations" (Mahon et al., 2017, p. 5).

A practice theory approach is favoured because "*everyday actions are consequential* in producing the … contours of social life" (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011, p. 1241) (authors' original italics). By locating the social in practices, i.e., "in the sense of shared meanings":

> central components of human action and social order, such as body, cognition, things, knowledge, language/discourse, structure/process and human agency are conceptualized and explored through their embeddedness in practice, rather than through mind, interaction or texts (Sandberg & Dall'Alba, 2009, p. 135).

From a practice theory approach, organisational phenomena such as "leadership, strategy … recruitment are not primarily seen as functions or properties of an organization" or as invested in sovereign individuals. Rather, they are "specific social practices in the sense of particular *doings* in which people and things are actively engaged within an historical context" (Sandberg & Dall'Alba, 2009, p. 1350).[1]

Following from Kemmis et al. (2014), I frequently draw attention to this crucial insight into the doings of social life using verbs (action oriented) rather than nouns (signalling an accomplishment, an entity, a completed state), e.g., 'organising' rather than organisations, 'educating' rather than education, 'leading' rather than leadership.

> *Secondly, and strictly related to the above, practice theories bring to the fore the critical role of the body and material things in all social affairs* (my italics) (Nicolini, 2012, p. 4).

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[1] A similar point can be made in terms of studies of organisational learning as phenomena. Theories of organisational learning as "social and cultural phenomenon" arose in the 1990s as part of a critical response to notions of organisational learning as either an individual cognitive process (e.g., Argyris & Schön, 1978); or an entity view, where "organisations are conceived as entities that do the learning themselves … (e.g., Weick, 1991)" (Buch, 2020, p. 71).

A variety of practice theories draw attention to this crucial aspect of social life. For example, in terms of the critical role of the body, Bourdieu's notion of habitus locates the body as a "connection point between the social and the individual" (Sandberg & Dall'Alba, 2009, p. 1353). Foucault constitutes the body within a nexus of culture or discourse/power regimes. As Pierre Bourdieu observes, "what is learned by the body is not something that one has, like knowledge that can be brandished, but something that one is" (Bourdieu, 1990, pp. 72–73). What "one is", bodily, materially and discursively, is a practical accomplishment inculcated from infancy. For example, a crucial aspect of being initiated into formal learning in Anglo-American settings is habituating children's bodies to the discipline of sitting still, being quiet and raising one's hand to ask a question (Nicolini, 2012). Such practices produce a form of tacit knowing that is redolent of symbolic violence and is highly gendered, classed and racialised. Similar processes can be observed about enacting the principalship (see Chap. 5) or carrying out researching practices that are generative of new ways of knowing. In subsequent chapters, I examine in more detail how these processes unfold.

In terms of the role of material things, practice architectures theory (Kemmis & Grootenboer, 2008) focuses on how practices, conceptualised as sayings, doings and relatings, "hang together" in distinctive projects, that lend practices, such as teaching, their characteristic nature (Kemmis et al., 2014). In turn, these practices engage and are engaged with (cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political) arrangements that are brought into or occur in sites (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 30).

For instance, the 'doings' of a practice such as teaching in Anglo-Australian nations are typically held in place by material-economic arrangements, such as the classroom layout of tables facing a single teacher and a whiteboard at the front of the room which directs the children's attention in *this* direction, rather than *that* direction. Thus, material objects such as tables and boards "both participate in the accomplishment of the practice/s" of teaching and learning and establish "connections in space and time" to other practices, such as the cleaning of the room for the next school day (Nicolini, 2012, p. 4). They also connect to historical precedents carried in "practice memories" of educational organisations (Schatzki, 2006) that shape how formal learning in various cultures is enacted (Nicolini, 2012, p. 4).

However, mainstream theories of educational leadership and administration typically ignore the role of the body and materiality in the coproducing and reproducing of educating and administering practices. Hence the accounts they produce (and the methodologies they employ) tend to be reproductive of the (inequitable) status quo, peculiarly disembodied, and lacking a rootedness in the material specificity of the sites under examination.

> *Thirdly, practice theories carve a specific space for individual agency and agents* (my italics) (Nicolini, 2012, p. 4).

In making this claim, Nicolini is not re-asserting the structure/individual binary that besets the study of the social world in the social sciences. Rather, he is responding to a regular criticism of practice theories, i.e., that they exclude space for agency and

agents. This critique arises because practice approaches foreground the study of practices as "basic units of analysis" when it comes to the social world, rather than practitioners (Nicolini, 2012, p. 7).

Not surprisingly, practice theorists refute these critiques in a variety of ways, given their rejection of dualisms and their assertion that practice provides a third path between theoretical binaries. Given this book's focus on a practice approach/conceptual toolkit, and the educational leadership field's 'fatal attraction' to individuals/individuals as the locus of transformation, this is an important point to discuss.

In terms of power, practice theory approaches are "centrally about the shaping as well as possibility of action" (Watson, 2017, p. 171). How these central concerns are theorised differs depending on the approach adopted. For example, Bourdieu's theoretical oeuvre has been accused of producing a deterministic account of social life that overemphasises how human actions are shaped (the interaction of habitus with field), at the expense of considerations of possibilities for action (Jenkins, 1992). As such, Bourdieu's concepts have been criticised for lacking explanatory power regarding how changes to practices evolve, come into being and transform the social world.

Reckwiz's notion of practice (2002) conceives of individuals as "carriers" or "hosts" of practices. The notion of host or carrier can suggest a passivity and determinism in terms of human agency. This is to ignore, however, the "*relationality of mutual constitution*" that always exists between social phenomena in practice theory, such as that between practitioners and practices, be these relationships theorised as carriers/hosts or participants in a practice (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011, p. 1242) (original authors' italics).

The central notion across practice theories is that "social life is an ongoing production and thus emerges through people's recurrent actions" (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011, p. 1240). It is this relational, dynamic and emergent aspect of practice that is crucial, for "practices make agency possible", but equally, "practices do not exist unless recurrently enacted by real-life human beings" (Shove, Pantzar, & Watson, 2012, p. 91). Put differently, carriers may "carry practices" but they also "carry them out", thus leaving "space for initiative, creativity, and individual performance" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 4). Chapter 4, a study of school improvement reform, explores this phenomenon in more detail.

> *Fourthly, adopting a practice approach radically transforms our view of knowledge, meaning, and discourse* (my italics) (Nicolini, 2012, p. 5).

This is a particularly crucial point in terms of creating educational niches that coproduce more socially just and equitable educating, teaching and learning practices. As Nicolini (2012, p. 5) observes, knowledge and knowing from a practice theory perspective is "conceived largely as a form of mastery that is expressed in the capacity to carry out a social and material activity… [it is] … *always a way of knowing shared with others… only partially articulated in discourse*" (my italics). Hence, discourse from a practice theory perspective

becomes itself a practice: discursive practices are not seen as ways to represent the world as much as ways to intervene and act on it … [Thus] … (d)iscursive practices… need to be considered side-by-side with other forms of social and material activity" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 6).

For example, in practice architectures theory, *sayings* and their concomitant cultural-discursive arrangements are "not enough to explain the world in which we live" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 6). Rather, they must be considered in tandem with the *doings* of a practice (that are enabled and constrained by material-economic arrangements); and the *relatings* of a practice (that are enabled and constrained by social-political arrangements). Together, these "individual and collective practices shaped and are shaped by" these arrangements or practice architectures (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 31).

Practitioners' "*shared understanding* of their practice provides direction and a means of organizing" activities such as teaching or learning (Sandberg & Dall'Alba, 2009, p. 1353). These shared understandings involve learning not only how to

act, how to speak (and what to say), but also how to feel, what to expect, and what things mean… (they) impl[y] *accepting certain norms of correctness (what is right and wrong) as well as certain ways of wanting and feeling* (Nicolini, 2012, p. 5) (my italics).

These "norms of correctness" and "ways of wanting and feeling" reflect human's tendency towards normativity but are always open to contestation and differ depending on one's culture, historical and material conditions (Schatzki, 2005).

Schatzki (2005, p. 481) argues the organisation of a practice "can be described as a… normativized array of mental states … understandings, desires, beliefs, expectations, emotions." Hence, mental states from a practice theory perspective are not the individual property of a participant in the practice, but instead are produced by and are social and cultural "features" of such practices. For example, the practices typically associated with educational leading are both "culturally-understandable" routinised activities and have specific "horizons of intelligibility"/meanings/know-how associated with them (Nicolini, 2012, p. 5). These "horizons of intelligibility", i.e., what it means to lead/be an educational leader are shaped by cultural, historical and material conditions that produce certain culturally recognisable practices, emotions and mental states. Importantly, this means that practices rooted in other cultures may be misrecognised, ignored or overlooked, sometimes with disastrous educational consequences, for example, collective forms of organising and shared decision-making, such as those practised by Australian Indigenous communities.

As educators and students, "we know more than we can say… [and] … what we *do* typically means more than we know" (Mahon et al., 2017, p. 5). This tacit know-how located in the lifeworld/everyday world cannot be captured/disciplined through, for example, continua of 'best' teaching/leading practice.

Finally, all practice-based approaches foreground the centrality of interest in all human matters and therefore put emphasis on the importance of power, conflict, and politics as constitutive elements of the social reality we experience (my italics) (Nicolini, 2012, p. 6).

This point builds on Marx's insight of the inherent politics of all human actions. It is a particularly important point in terms of understanding educational leading as practice, and educational change more broadly. To enter a practice requires tacit knowledge, the "socially constituted … feel for the game" (Wacquant, 1989, p. 43). This "sens pratique" (Bourdieu, 1990) is particularly important for entering the formal game of educating. Like all forms of human action, it is "inherently political" and constitutive of social reality (Nicolini, 2012, p. 33). Students' differing access to the "shared know-how" of educating makes it more/less possible for learners to "carry out an array of activities" associated with learning in formal sites such as schooling or higher education (Sandberg & Dall'Alba, 2009, p. 1353).

However, what one learns in terms of know-how is "not the practices as such but how to go on in them" (Schatzki, 2017, p. 34). For children from refugee backgrounds who frequently have experienced highly interrupted or no schooling, learning not only the practices of schooling but how to go on in them needs to be explicitly taught (Kaukko & Wilkinson, 2018). Thus, educating practices are always inherently political and bound up in the circulation and cross currents of asymmetrical power relations. It is a point I return to in more detail later in the chapter.

If we return to the notion of people as carriers or hosts of practices (Reckwiz, 2002), considerations of "power, conflict, and politics" are crucial in understanding how one comes to be recognized as possessing the know-how to become a carrier of particular practices (e.g., those typically associated with managing/administering) rather than other practices (e.g., those typically associated with nurturing and caring, such as primary or early childhood teaching). From a practice theory lens, one also can shift from a focus on the participants in a practice, i.e., how people "become committed to what they do", to a focus on the practices, i.e., "how … practices recruit practitioners" (Shove, Pantzar, & Watson, 2012, pp. 14–15). The latter question foregrounds the "consequences of broader patterns of recruitment and defection for the reproduction of practices across space and time" (Shove, Pantzar, & Watson, 2012, pp. 21–22). Thus, it raises issues as to who gains or loses from recruitment or non-recruitment into certain practices, particularly those practices considered "essential for effective participation in society" (Shove et al., 2012, pp. 97–98).

Questions of power, contestation, conflict and politics are crucial in the study of educational leadership, including who gains or loses from recruitment into practices associated with formal positions of power and authority within educational sites. As Chap. 4 explores, dominant accounts of educational leadership are atheoretical when it comes to power. They tend to reproduce highly functionalist accounts of managing and administering as a highly technicist activity, shorn of any roots in the everyday life world that constitutes *educational* leadership as practice/praxis (Wilkinson, 2017).

Mainstream scholarship in educational leadership foregrounds a centrality of interests that "literally put[s] people (and things) in place, and … give[s] (or den[ies]) people the power to do things and to think of themselves in certain ways" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 6). For instance, certain groups of people are "put in place" by the taken for granted constructions of white, middle class, heteronormative masculinities that underpin dominant accounts of educational leadership research,

leading/managing/administering as practice (Wilkinson, 2008). Moreover, certain forms of know-how are rendered more intelligible when it comes to educational managing/administering (e.g., efficiency, budgetary skills, entrepreneurialism) rather than other forms of know-how (e.g., a pedagogical/educational focus on the formation of the whole person).

The ongoing denial of the role of power, politics and contestation is a central discriminatory practice that constitutes and reproduces the social realities of this field of scholarship. However, practices are "always necessarily open to contestation and … highly situated in historical and material conditions", thus opening the possibility that "given different practices, the world could be different" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 6). It is this contestation and the opportunities for conjuring other possibilities that is captured in the key notions of practice/praxis from which this book draws and which the remainder of the chapter discusses. I first begin with the concept of praxis, through the telling of my own story.

2.3   Re-turning to Praxis

2.3.1   Jane's Story

I was raised by two strong women—my mother and my paternal grandmother. My mother was a secular Palestinian Jew, born in Australia to immigrant parents, but returning to Palestine as a 'toddler' after her mother died. Her grandparents had fled Eastern Europe in the late 1800s as part of an early wave of Zionists seeking to establish a viable livelihood in an ancient land. The irony is clear—one group of dispossessed people dispossessing another, the vicious ramifications of which continue to this day. She and her sister were raised in orphanages and by extended family members. They left Palestine in their early twenties, seeking stability and a country where they were not hostages to civil war and restrictive gendered and classed stereotypes. They were amongst the fortunate few—arriving in a host nation where the White Australia policy remained firmly intact but clutching that most precious of possessions, an Australian passport. It allowed them to vote and have a say in this new land, a privilege denied Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders until many years later after decades of Indigenous activism.

'Nanna' was born at the end of Queen Victoria's reign, the daughter of white Anglo, working-class English immigrants. Like many Anglo-Australians of that time, she referred to England as 'home', even though she had never visited there. Another cruel irony: my grandmother and mother were part of the waves of white Anglo and later post-World War II European immigrants who arrived in a post settler nation characterised by the invasion and dispossession of its Indigenous peoples. Unwittingly, they were part of this dispossession, benefiting from the privilege of their whiteness, as do I.

As a white working-class girl from a mixed Anglo/Eastern European and multi-faith background, sexism, snobbery and religious prejudice were part of my life. Not only was I a "Jew" (which according to some of my classmates was apparently an inferior being worthy of contempt and abuse); I was raised by a sole parent, struggling to raise her three daughters on a factory workers' wage. She was a woman who spoke with a thick, non-Anglo accent and who lacked a man to 'protect her'. This lack of 'protection' didn't seem to make much of a difference to my mother, nor to Nanna, who similarly to my mother, had brought up her own child at a time when divorce was highly unusual, and separated women were referred to as 'deserted wives'. Both were assertive, strong women who taught us girls to be proud, to be independent and to stand up for ourselves, no matter what.

I learned some important lessons from my childhood. I learned that despite persistent stereotypes, women were strong, were breadwinners, could lead families and hold them together, despite highly adverse circumstances. I learned that attitudes of victimhood and pity were disabling, patronising and helped to keep those less well off in what was perceived to be their (rightful) inferior place. I understood that poverty was not a crime but that living with constant precarity undermines one's health and emotional well-being.

I grew up in a household where, despite my mother's lack of formal education, the talk at the dinner table included discussions of politics and the differences government policies could make in the lives of ordinary working people. I learned that politics was everywhere, not confined to parliament, but in the personal actions of ordinary people, be they for good or for ill. I learned that the collective actions of working people on the factory floor could make the difference between employment and the dole queue, between working in conditions of dignity and respect and being just another number to 'let go'. I learned that for poor people and particularly poor women, one's (mis)fortune turned on the flip of a coin.

From my Mum, I learned about the value of education and why it was important to fight sexism, racial and religious intolerance and injustice. These knowledges informed my subsequent trajectory/habitus as a teacher, deputy principal, trade unionist and critical feminist scholar-activist, working with children and young people of refugee background. From my Nanna, I learned about the power of storytelling, understanding one's history and why unconditional love matters in a child's life. From both women, I witnessed the transforming power of love as a reparative practice when it came to the welfare of three little girls. I learned how hard fought-over solidarities could be achieved, despite religious and cultural antagonisms, rooted on my mother's side in "legacies of historical trauma, loss, and suffering" (Zembylas, 2017, p. 33); and on my grandmother's side, through the imbibing of centuries of anti-Semitism.

I tell my story, not because it illustrates the 'miraculous exception' of success against the odds that is used to justify the myth of meritocracy in education (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Rather the reasons are fourfold. Firstly, and most importantly, I am committed as a scholar-activist to an epistemology of praxis, that is, "philosophy and theory embedded in real life and everyday experiences" with an aim to "transform unjust structures and systems and improve people's lives" (Bleazby & Apple,

2018, pp. 48–49). Narrative is a "focal part" of this "critical work" of transformation (Ilmonen, 2020, p. 347) and provides a fuller account of practice for it carries "epistemological weight" (Bleazby & Apple, 2018, p. 45). Thus, it is a crucial part of my everyday political action or *praxis* as a critical feminist scholar-activist.

Secondly, the critical reflexivity potentially engendered by these kinds of autoethnographies can play a crucial part in the production of the "knowing subject" of the educational administration scholar/activist (Reed-Danahy, 2005, p. 23). As such, it is an important political tool in speaking back to educational administration/leadership scholarship, a field which with few exceptions (e.g., Tooms & English, 2010; Wilkinson & Eacott, 2013) is characterised by a lack of scholarly reflexivity, and a "pragmatic and essentially atheoretical tradition" (Gunter & Ribbins, 2002, p. 359).

Thirdly, and relatedly, part of "any critical work" includes explicitly foregrounding through storytelling, the power relations and inherent politics that underpin the social production of the scholarly habitus, including associated practices, i.e., ways of speaking about, conducting and relating to others through practices such as researching. In my case, these researching and scholarly practices include documenting and surfacing subjugated knowledges and practices of leading, aiming for "engaged scholarship" that serves and works with "contemporary social justice projects" (Collins, 2012, p. 22).

Finally, I tell my story, acknowledging its partialities and lacunas, to illustrate that there is nothing 'natural' or taken-for-granted about our formation as individuals. Rather, the particularities of each of our lives reveal how practices, such as researching, and one's scholarly disposition, both shape and have been shaped by broader societal conditions or arrangements. These arrangements include my gender, ethnicity, religion and original class position, as well as community cultural wealth such as aspirational and resistant capital from my childhood (Yosso, 2005). In Bourdieuian terms, this scholarly habitus, and the researching practices it produces, are both the product of my individual family history, lived experiences and material realities; and the "whole collective history of family and class" (gender, ethnicity, race and sexuality) (Bourdieu, 1994, p. 91). It is "habitus, as social life incorporated, and thus individuated" (Bourdieu, 1994, p. 31).

My story illustrates central tenets of neo-Marxist and critical feminist conceptualisations of praxis that underpin a re-turn to practice, explored in more detail in the following section. In terms of neo-Marxism, these tenets include recognition of the inherently political nature of all human action and a rejection of Enlightenment dualisms, particularly those between practice and theory.

In terms of feminist critical scholarship, these central tenets of praxis include "destabilizing of academic/activist binaries" through recalling the "genealogy of public intellectuals … and public scholarship that is anchored in cultures of dissent" (Nagar & Lock Swarr, 2010, p. 18). They include foregrounding my positionality and racial privilege as an author in terms of my white habitus, whilst rendering visible how it has been formed through multiple axes of subordination and infuses my "multiple situated standpoints" as an educator, scholar, parent, daughter, and advocate/activist (Collins, 2012, p. 14). Finally, in terms of an epistemology of praxis,

autoethnographic accounts foreground a major critique of studies of educational leadership scholarship through an intersectional lens. The claim is that such research focuses on the particularities of lived experience of inequities in educational leadership (micro-level analysis) but fails to link these to broader societal conditions and power relations (macro-level analysis) (Agosto & Roland, 2018).

In this book I adopt a stereoscopic lens of praxis that incorporates neo-Aristotelian notions of praxis as morally and ethically informed practice, post-Marxist conceptions of praxis as history making action (Kemmis & Smith, 2008a) and feminist critical scholarship. I explicate these concepts and discuss their utility below.[2]

2.4 Mapping Praxis: A Neo-Aristotelean Approach

A key element of the re-turn to practice in the social sciences centres on notions of praxis. Praxis is "an epistemological commitment—a commitment to theory that is done in relation to its object… in interaction with reality" (Bleazby & Apple, 2018, p. 41). Put simply, there are two distinct ways in which praxis as the study of human phenomena has been understood in western traditions of thought. They are neo-Aristotelian and post-Marxist concepts of praxis.

In terms of *neo-Aristotelian* understandings of praxis, in English we distinguish between *praxis* and *practice,* an etymological distinction that does not exist in languages such as Finnish or Swedish. These differences reveal important differences in "philosophies, histories, and intellectual and practice traditions of research" that need to be surfaced as part of a shared commitment to educational praxis across national and epistemic boundaries" (Kaukko et al., 2020, p. 47).

The neo-Aristotelian notion of praxis in English can be understood as "right conduct" or practical knowledge in social life, i.e.:

> action that is, morally committed, and oriented and informed by traditions in a field… [it] is what people do when they take into account all the circumstances and exigencies that confront them at a particular moment and then, taking the broadest view they can of what it is best to do, they act (Kemmis & Smith, 2008a, p. 4).

This notion of praxis is underpinned by *phronesis*, the flexible and improvisatory disposition or "practical wisdom" so necessary in carrying out a social practice such as educating, teaching or administering. This form of practical wisdom cannot simply be reduced to a formula or forms of rule following (Kemmis & Smith, 2008a). In this definition, not all action is praxis but rather praxis is

> the kind of action humans are engaged in when they think about, in the broadest sense, what consequences their actions might have in both the social and material world (Heikkinen et al., 2021, p. 3).

Hence, praxis can be understood as a key aim of *education/educating* in the broader English meaning of the word (Mahon et al., 2019). As such, it stands in

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[2] See Chap. 4 for a detailed discussion of feminist critical scholarship.

stark contrast to recent attempts by governments in Anglo-American countries such as Australia to homogenise and 'teacher proof' the curriculum and pedagogical practice. Instead, phroenesis and its product in action, praxis, are "to do with *ethical* action, *value-driven* deliberation with regards to practical action in the context of human affairs" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 26) (my italics).

This notion of praxis is implied in Chap. 1, where I make the distinction between *educational* leadership practices and the kinds of technicist management practices or unthinking forms of rule-following commonly associated with compliance with neoliberal and managerialist agendas of educating in Anglophone nations. It is implied in a range of critical educational texts, such as Gunter and Courtney's (2020) notion of a new public educative leadership; or Gert Biesta's notion of educating as a beautiful risk, which foregrounds risk-taking in critical pedagogical practice (2013). In other words, it refers to a disposition to social action which "prioritises the common good for all members of society" (Heikkinen et al., 2021, p. 4).

In Aristotelian philosophy, praxis (and the disposition of phroenesis which guides it) is the third form of knowing that characterises knowledge/reasoning. The first form of reasoning is "*episteme* or the disposition to seek truth for its own sake", resulting in a particular form of action that is "theoria or contemplation" (Kemmis & Smith, 2008b, p. 15). For Aristotle, following in Plato's tradition, episteme or "scientific knowledge" has the highest status in terms of forms of knowing/knowledge (Nicolini, 2012, p. 26).

The second form of reasoning is "techné… guided by the general aim (*telos*) of making or producing something", resulting in a particular form of action that is "*poiesis*… the production of any known product that can be produced by known means using known materials" (Kemmis & Smith, 2008b, p. 15). Techné in this sense in modern English is somewhat akin to "art or skill… craft", guided by an instrumentalist rationality and external ends (i.e., the production of an outcome or object) (Nicolini, 2012, p. 26). Hence, it contrasts with *phronēsis* which is practical disposition oriented to the social world (Mahon et al., 2019).

The notion of techné is captured in Anglo-Australian understandings of teaching, as the art and craft of teaching and teaching methods. Techné is a crucial aspect of learning to become an educator/educational administrator. However, in teacher education studies and educational leadership preparation programs in Anglo-American nations, the study of educating practices has been reduced to the cultivation of techné, divorced from considerations of praxis, i.e., "deliberative action oriented to a notion of the 'good' of the person who is educated, and the 'good' of society" (Heikkinen et al., 2021, p. 4).

In Anglophone nations, curricula which foster debates about what the possibilities for praxis/collective good may be, such as pedagogical studies, philosophy, history and sociology of education have been excised or diluted from teacher education and educational leadership development courses and programs. In these nations, teaching and educational leading practices are often reduced to sets of instructional skills, undergirded by means-end and instrumentalist rationalities. Success for principals and teachers is measured through performance in disciplinary technologies such as high stakes testing regimes (Lingard et al., 2016). Debates and considerations of

what might constitute 'good' professional practice/praxis for students as individuals and as a collective and those who educate and lead them are elided/ 'disappeared'.

This contrasts with Continental and Northern European notions of pedagogy as "practice as upbringing" (Grootenboer et al., 2017, p. viii). This meaning of pedagogy is closer to the broader understanding in English of education/educating discussed in Chap. 1. The praxis of pedagogy in these nations is underpinned by ongoing debates drawn from varying philosophical and historical traditions in which a "child's 'upbringing' into forms of life may be understood in different ways" (Wilkinson, 2017, p. 234). As such, pedagogical studies in these nations are not confined to education but are a crucial component of courses in youth welfare, the law and other disciplines that deal with the formation of children and young people. These studies are an important means by which educational practitioners can conceive of techné as integrally linked to individual and/or collective praxis.

However, there are obvious problems with the derivation of neo-Aristotelian concepts of praxis sketched above. Firstly, it is premised on the notion of an autonomous (masculine, white, high status) individual. Thus, it is highly gendered, raced and classed, excluding slaves, women and all those who did not belong to the Greek city state polity. The forms of reasoning are hierarchical, elevating episteme and its concomitant action, theoria above the other two. Hence, a class distinction is maintained between those who must work for a living and those who have the luxury of money and social status to think. From a Bourdieuian perspective, this "distance from [economic] necessity'" (Turner, 1991, p.517) and the resultant ability to produce knowledge (rather than variously enact it such as in schools) "contributes to the objective relations and social divisions which underlie our everyday lives" (Webb et al., 2002, p. 129). Importantly, however, unlike Plato, Aristotle does afford credence and legitimacy to phroenesis or practical wisdom as a crucial aspect for achieving a complete/full life (Nicolini, 2012).

Other obvious issues arise from this notion of praxis. Questions arise such as, can there ever be such a thing as a 'common good'? How have notions of the common good been wielded as acts of violence against those whose knowledges and practices have been constantly subjugated? The creation of dualisms and resultant hierarchies of knowledge is also highly problematic, privileging Western science as the bastion of reasoning and contemplation, 'good'; against emotions and materiality/action, 'bad'.

While acknowledging these major shortcomings, I have adopted this notion of praxis as "*ethical* action, *value-driven* deliberation with regards to practical action in the context of human affairs" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 26) as a means of foregrounding questions of ethics in educational leading. In so doing, I address the hollowing out of debates in much current scholarship about crucial ethical dilemmas, such as what it means to practise educational leadership, in whose interests, and to what ends. I am not ignoring the corpus of social justice literature which also addresses these issues. Rather, my aim is to help progress this research by utilising a "toolkit" approach that combines neo-Aristotelian, neo-Marxist and feminist critical notions of praxis, so that we can "make new and enlightening connections between things of the world"

(Nicolini, 2012, p. 216). By making such connections, "new opportunities for acting (or not acting) in a more informed way" are opened (Nicolini, 2012, p. 216).

2.5 Mapping Praxis: A Post-Marxist Approach

Post Marxist notions of praxis address some of the key criticisms of neo-Aristotelean notions of praxis noted above. One of the arguments for a practice approach is that "*everyday actions are consequential* in producing the … contours of social life" (Feldman & Orlikowki, 2011, p. 1241) (authors' italics). This is a direct insight from Marx, whose writings on practice and praxis overturned the tripartite Aristotelian hierarchy between different forms of reasoning. Such hierarchies, he argued, were artificial and a "fraud", maintaining the distinction of intellectuals.

Marx rejected neo-Aristotelian categories of distinction between human reasoning and in particular, the reification of the disposition of episteme and its action of theoria or contemplation, expressed in Enlightenment views of science and philosophy as the highest forms of reasoning. As Marx (as cited in Nicolini, 2012, p. 32) stated, "one cannot know the world by observing it from an armchair … the question of truth cannot be solved in theory because this is a practical question". Instead, the object of inquiry for philosophers (and … social scientists) should therefore be praxis, "intended as what men say, imagine, conceive, and produce and think while attempting to carry out … activities (such as) running, fighting, making love, and so on" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 30). Thus, Marx's revolutionary act was to "recover the legitimacy of practice for the Western tradition by giving it primacy over phroenesis and theoria and collapsing these two into an instrument of support of the former" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 33).

One consequence of the above is the collapsing of Aristotelian distinctions between thought and the world, captured in the Enlightenment philosopher, René Descarte's dictum, *I think therefore I am.* Marx argued in contrast to this dictum that the mind was not a "separate entity"; human actions were not the applications 'in practice' of mental categories; but rather that thinking or the "mind is not only social … but manifests itself as a property of action in human conduct" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 31). Thus, praxis in this meaning was a "relatively homogeneous human activity which can take many forms and can range from bodily labour of the most humble sort to political revolutions" (Lobkowicz, 1967, p. 419, as cited in Nicolin, 2012, p. 31).

Furthermore, all human action is praxis, that is, history making (Kemmis & Smith, 2008a) in that it has consequences in the material world. These consequences may be immediately obvious or may not be known for some time (Kemmis & Smith, 2008a). Hence praxis understood in this sense is always contingent, fluid and necessarily responsive to the day to day and moment to moment unfolding of practices such as classroom teaching, the collective praxis of a group of researchers working together on a project, managing a faculty or a school, etcetera.

Several key consequences flow from post Marxist perspectives of praxis. Firstly, an emphasis on praxis-related research shifts the focus of science/social science from "finding new knowledge" to research that "aims at transformation … engaging and changing the life experiences of people in a situation" (Kemmis & Smith, 2008b, p. 32). Secondly, in relation to teacher education or educational leadership development, it shifts the emphasis to assessing the action, or praxis of individuals, "*their conduct and its consequences… not just what they or others say about their conduct*" (Kemmis & Smith, 2008b, p. 32). This stress means that while educators can develop their phroenesis or disposition as an educator through studies and reading, their "*praxis* can only be developed through experience" (Kemmis & Smith, 2008b, p. 33).

Finally, Marx's focus on changing the world, "philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it" (Marx, 1845/1977, as cited in Nicolini, 2012, p. 32) sanctioned the "inherently political nature of human action" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 33). This is because what an individual/group/collective *does* is always and invariably embedded in social relations of power and has consequences for human affairs. Learning one's craft is not purely a technical affair, rather it

> has a *political* dimension; it is not enough to do something in a merely functional, technically correct manner. Rather, actions must be performed appropriately. Appropriateness emerges in praxis, understood as an ongoing attunement of different participants, which is likely to imply conflict and the potential to fail (Alkemeyer & Bushmann, 2017, p. 14) (authors' original italics).

It is this focus on "real-time practices in terms of the inequalities and domination that they embody and perpetuate" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 33), i.e., the *politics* of educating, that we see taken up in the works of educators such as feminists, Freire, Dewey, socially critical pedagogies and postcolonial, Indigenous and Black feminist scholarship.

2.6   Conclusion

The absence of a focus on the politics of practice from dominant accounts of educational leadership scholarship is part of the *doxa* or unconscious beliefs or values of the field. Alternatively, if recognised, it often occurs as a coda or chapter in an edited collection/handbook, thus reinscribing assymetrical relations of power between dominant and subjugated knowledges. In contrast, crucial tenets that underpin this book are the inherent politics of practices of educational leading/leadership, the concomitant social relations of power that underpin these politics, and possibilities for transformation. This leads to the mapping of the other key concept of the book, that of practice, to which we now turn in Chap. 3.

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Chapter 3
Practice Matters

Abstract In Chaps. 1 and 2 I argued that studying educational leadership as practice was important ontologically, analytically and in terms of transformation of educational leadership/leading as practice/praxis. But what do I mean by practice? This chapter brings into dialogue the first two theoretical lenses of practice employed to examine educational leading in the book: the theory of practice architectures and Schatzki's notion of site ontologies. In Chap. 4, I examine Bourdieuian practice theories of habitus, field and capital, followed by a fourth lens, feminist critical scholarship. The latter draws from a range of critical traditions, including Black feminist intersectionality, postcolonial and Indigenous feminisms. Each lens offers significant advantages but has some limitations. In adopting this "theory-method package", I am deliberately "embracing a form of programmatic eclecticism" to "exploit" the advantages that each approach offers while minimising their limitations (Nicolini, 2012, pp. 16, 215). I argue that this approach provides a stereoscopic lens to appreciate in all their granularity how educational leading and organising as practices are accomplished spatially and temporally. Such accounts paint a richer portrait of the sites of such accomplishments and the thicket of practices in which they unfold.

Keywords Educational leadership · Theory of practice architectures · Ecologies of practices · Site ontologies · Schatzki

3.1 Theory of Practice Architectures

The theory of practice architectures has been developed over the past decade and a half.[1] In brief, it is a "contemporary account of social reality that focuses on practice" with a "distinctive ontological view of what practice is, how practices are shaped and mediated, and how practices relate to each other" (Mahon et al., 2017, p. 2). The focus on educational practice as an *ontological* (rather than epistemological) account of social reality is explored below in the section on Schatzki's notion of site ontologies.

Practice architectures differs from other accounts of social transformation that contend that changing the world requires changing practices. Rather than viewing

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[1] For a fuller account of its conceptual progress, including the development of ecologies of practices, see Kemmis & Grootenboer, 2008; Kemmis et al., 2012; Kemmis et al., 2014.

the social realm "through the eyes of individual practitioners who encounter *one another* in their practice", such as in communities of practice à la Lave and Wenger (1991), it argues that individuals in a community of practice "encounter one another in *intersubjective spaces*", i.e., "in language, space–time in the material world, and social relationships" (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 4) (authors' original italics).

Practice architectures theory posits that our encounters with one another are not unmediated but are "always already… shaped … by the arrangements that are already to be found there" in sites of practice (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 4). These arrangements "constitute enabling and constraining preconditions for the conduct of practices" (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 32). They comprise: cultural-discursive arrangements (in the medium of language, and which enable and constrain the characteristic *sayings* associated with a practice); material-economic arrangements (in the medium of activity and work, and which enable and constrain the characteristic *doings* associated with a practice); and social-political arrangements (in the medium of power and solidarity, and which enable and constrain the characteristic *relatings* associated with that practice) (Kemmis et al., 2014). In turn, the *sayings, doings* and *relatings* that constitutes a practice both shape and are shaped by the arrangements characteristic of the practice, the latter of which are brought into or already present in sites of practice such as staff meetings or classrooms.

Although separated for analytical purposes, these sayings, doings and relatings and their concomitant arrangements hang together in the *project* of a practice, that is, what it is that makes the conduct of a practice distinctive, recognisable and characteristic as *this* practice, rather than *that* one. The project of a practice includes the "intention… that motivates the practice; the actions (interconnected sayings, doings, and relatings) undertaken in the conduct of the practice; and… the ends the actor aims to achieve through the practice", even if these ends may not ultimately be achieved (Mahon et al., 2017, p. 8).

In sum, the definition of practice in the theory of practice architectures is as follows:

> a form of socially established cooperative human activity in which characteristic arrangements of actions and activities (doings) are comprehensible in terms of arrangements of relevant ideas and characteristic discourses (sayings), and when the people and objects involved are distributed in characteristic arrangements of relationships (relatings), and when this complex of sayings, doings and relatings 'hangs together' in a distinctive project (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 31).

The theory of practice architectures provides a means by which to "zoom in" to understand the *composition* of practices: the ideas, understandings and thinking that compose a particular practice (*sayings*); the actions, skills and capabilities that typically accompany this practice (*doings*); and the values, emotions and norms that underpin this practice (*relatings*). It allows us to "zoom out" to understand the specific practice architectures that enable, constrain and support the emergence and potential institutionalisation of a practice in a particular site (Kemmis et al., 2014).

In relation to Nicolini's key features of the family of practice approaches sketched in Chap. 2, the theory of practice architectures' notion of *doings* and *material-economic arrangements* specifically draws attention to the materiality of practices,

i.e., "the importance of activity, performance and work in the creation and perpetuation of all aspects of social life", and "the critical role of the body and material things in all social affairs" (Nicolini, 2012, pp. 3–4). In relation to *sayings* and *cultural-discursive arrangements*, the theory has the potential to "transform… our view of knowledge, meaning, and discourse" in the enactment of a practice (Nicolini, 2012, p. 5). In terms of *relatings* and *social-political arrangements*, it specifically draws our attention to the "importance of power, conflict and politics as constitutive elements of the social reality we experience" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 6). Finally, regarding the role of agency and agents (Nicolini, 2012, p. 5), the theory is clear that the arrangements brought into or found in specific sites *prefigure* but do *not determine* a practice. Like a path on which we walk, practices and their concomitant arrangements steer/guide us by providing the "horizon of intelligible action … available" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 5) about how to 'go on' in a practice such as traversing a pathway. The focus remains on the practice, not the individual, but there is always room for innovation and creativity (Nicolini, 2012, pp. 4–5). Moreover, how practices are realised and the discourses, material arrangements/set ups, and relations of solidarity and power that prefigure them will differ depending on the kind of site in which they unfold.

3.2 Ecologies of Practices

A common critique of practice theories is that they have tended to dwell on the "constitution and trajectories of specific practices", whilst overlooking how "complexes of practices interconnect and how they change or why do they stay the same" (Blue & Spurling, 2017, p. 25). Understanding these kinds of interconnections and transformations/stasis is crucial in our interconnected and globalised societies, for these "interdependencies, connections and configurations… are central to the constitution, reproduction and transformation of social life" in our contemporary world (Blue & Spurling, 2017, p. 25). Hence, the notion of e*cologies of practices* is a related concept of the theory of practice architectures that has tended to receive less attention in scholarly work utilising the theory but is equally important. To create the conditions of possibility for educating, we need to understand not only what educating practices are composed of and what holds them in place, but how these practices connect up to other practices, within and beyond specific educational sites. Ecologies of practices provide a means by which to comprehend this process of interconnectivity, configurations and connections/disconnections between complexes of practices in a globalising world.

Ecologies of practices are "complexes of practices" that "coexist and are connected with one another", adapting and evolving in relation to other practices (Kemmis et al., 2012, p. 36). These interconnections include both the daily interactions within workplaces, families or local communities, and the larger historical sweep of time encompassing the evolution of large global movements such as the rise of mass compulsory schooling systems (Kemmis et al., 2012, p. 36). Ecologies of practices consist of the interdependent relationships that practitioners form with

other practitioners, objects and species who occupy/co-inhabit specific sites. These interdependent relationships are not only about practitioners' own identity formation but also the relationships they form with humans and the material world in and through their practices. Importantly, given it is a practice lens, the interactions "*in and through practices*" are what is being foregrounded in ecologies of practices, not the relationships between practitioners (Kemmis et al., 2012, p. 38) (authors' original italics).

In relation to *educational* ecologies of practices, as part of the rise of compulsory schooling in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Kemmis et al., (2012, 2014) posit that a key education complex was formed that still characterises the connective tissue/configuration of practices within schooling systems and across the globe. This educational ecology of practice or what the authors term the *education complex* comprises five key educational practices: teaching, learning, professional learning, education policy-making and leading and educational researching and evaluating (Kemmis et al., 2012, 2014). The rise of a complex of practices such as mass schooling required that practices (including those already existing such as teaching) be "harness[ed] together" using the tools of policy, administration research and evaluation, in order to "regulate, monitor and evaluate initial and continuing teacher education" (Kemmis et al., 2012, pp. 36–37).

As an analytical resource, ecologies of practices can help scholars and practitioners to comprehend not only what specific educational practices are composed of and what holds them in place in a site (*practice architectures*), but how complexes of practice such as educational administering/leading and policymaking may connect up with other practices in the education complex sketched above (*ecologies of practices*). The significance of these interconnections is that they reveal why and how practices are born, take shape, evolve, transform, dissolve or stay the same. This bifocal analysis therefore allows us to apprehend what else may be thinkable/sayable, doable, and relatable in a site; the *niche* or conditions of possibility that foster new practices in sites (Kemmis et al., 2012); and the interconnections with other complexes of practices that cultivate the conditions for change. For sustained change to occur, we need to apprehend how these practices and concomitant arrangements connect up with other complexes of practices *beyond* schools or other formal educational settings, for these complexes "enable and constrain what can go on *within* them" (Kemmis et al., 2012, p. 37). Importantly however, whether, and if so how, these practices connect up with one another in specific sites such as a school, a faculty of science, or an early childhood centre is a question that needs to be investigated empirically and cannot be assumed (Kemmis et al., 2014).[2]

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[2] As part of the Pedagogy Education and Praxis [PEP] international network, this empirical investigation has been occurring over the past 15 years in Australia and a range of Nordic nations, including education sectors such as early childhood, schools, technical and further education, and universities. For specific PEP research on educational leadership, see, for example, studies of educational leading as a shared, collective practice (Kemmis et al., 2014; Wilkinson & Kemmis, 2016); the practices of middle leading in schools (Edwards-Groves et al., 2018; Grootenboer et al., 2020); educational leading for social justice (Wilkinson, 2018; Wilkinson & Kaukko, 2020; Chap. 6 of this volume); educational leading as praxis (Wilkinson, 2008); educational leading as a travelling

The metaphor of ecologies of practices raises important questions about the power and politics of sites of practice in terms of survival, competition and coexistence of practices. For example, when it comes to struggling over the same habitat, how do educational practices compete with one another? What are the necessary conditions of possibility or niches for practices to take root, survive, thrive or outcompete other practices? These conditions may include: material-economic arrangements or set ups such as the provision of adequate resources, finances, personnel, the layout of buildings, ICT infrastructure; cultural-discursive arrangements such as district and state policies and historical traditions and philosophies that guide educating in a particular state or nation; and social-political arrangements such as relations of solidarity and power between complexes of practices, which together may ensure the survival or partial replacement of particular practices over others. Other questions can be asked such as what are the new bundles and networks of connections between complexes of practices that provide them with a hospitable niche in which to take root and grow in a particular educational site, but not in another?

For instance, the study of instructional leading practices in Chap. 5 explores these preceding questions. It examines a Catholic education district's shift to a policy of instructional learning as seen through the prism of a local secondary school's practices. This policy shift orchestrated the emergence of new sayings, doings and relatings of student learning associated with a new project of instructional learning across the ecosystem of the district and school. The sayings, doings and relatings which emerged included, amongst other things: a new language around 'evidence' and 'data' (sayings); a move to continuous data collection and analysis and classroom walk-throughs (doings); and the elevation of student voice in relation to their learning (relatings). In other words, it created a more hospitable set of conditions or niche for these practices to begin to grow and thrive. In parallel, older practices such as a significant program of activities associated with pastoral caring began to disappear for the conditions or niche for their survival became more inhospitable. One consequence was that over time there were less "cohorts of committed carriers" of pastoral care activities (Shove et al., 2012, p. 90). "Narratives of replacement and substitution" were used by the school principal and district leaders to justify why these practices (and indeed, some of the practitioners who were still wedded to older practices of pastoral caring) were expendable (Shove et al., 2012, p. 90).

These new practices did not evolve in a vacuum. Rather, they emerged from a major new educational district project of instructional learning. This project was composed of new cultural-discursive arrangements such as policy discourses drawn from school improvement literature; material-economic arrangements such as the hiring of personnel who cohered with the new district emphasis on instructional learning; and social-political arrangements including a district shift from a more collegial emphasis on communities of practice networks to a more hierarchical focus

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practice (Wilkinson et al., 2013); educational leading as pedagogical practice (Grice, 2019) and leading as creating a communicative space in early childhood settings (Boyle & Wilkinson, 2018). For an overview of the PEP international research program on educational leadership practice, see Edwards-Groves et al. (2020).

on teacher learning. These new sayings, doings and relating and their associated practice architectures in turn connected up to the educational complex: practices of instructional leading (amongst school executive and middle leaders) linked to teachers' professional learning through classroom walkthroughs and subsequent debriefs with the executive team and/or middle leaders. These leading and professional learning practices connected up to a shift in students' learning practices that emphasised fast student feedback and to teaching practices that included a deprivatisation of practice. Finally, evaluating practices that focussed on analysis of test data were a key underpinning that informed ongoing changes to these new leading, teaching, professional learning and student learning practices. These educating practices in turn connected up to district policies of instruction that reflected a broader practice of 'policy-borrowing' from Britain and the USA—a key trend characterising the contemporary globalised education practice landscape. It is this attention to the specificity of the *sites* of practice in which these new instructional practices took root and the connective tissue of practices and concomitant arrangements that created the conditions of possibility for them to emerge (e.g., via policy texts, classrooms, districts, schools, executive teams) that is one of the hallmarks of the theory of practice architectures.

3.3   Site Ontologies: What Have Sites Got to Do with It?

In Chap. 1 I argued that gesturing towards generalising structures or empty signifiers such as 'context' to explain how sites cultivate hospitable conditions for new educating practices to be nurtured and others to die out or increasingly struggle for survival, obfuscates the historical, material and social situatedness of practices. Instead, I stressed the importance of paying attention to the "'sites' where the life-world of educating "transpires" and is remade anew in each moment (Schatzki, 2012, p. 21).

    This is not to downplay the importance of context in understanding how educational change transpires, such as that of the secondary school noted above. Understanding contexts is crucial. Rather it is to critique how considerations of context are ignored in dominant accounts of school leadership research, particularly in the school effectiveness domain. This is because of the latter's positivist origins in the US theory movement, based on notions of a "value-free science" (Thomson, 2017, p. x). Secondly it is to critique the atheoretical way in which context has been used as an explanatory tool, particularly in, although not confined to educational leadership scholarship. Context is the 'black hole' of educational leadership scholarship and requires demystifying, theoretically and analytically. The theory of practice architectures and ecologies of practices are a helpful means by which to demystify this process. Thus, the notion of site ontologies which inspires the theory of practice architectures view of practice is important to clarify for it provides a crucial theoretical underpinning.

As an *ontological* rather than epistemological approach to the study of practice, a site ontological lens attends to

> the specific content and conduct of practice, its organisation in space and time, the arrangements that make it possible and hold it in place, its transformation, and the sites in which it happens (Mahon et al., 2017, p. 5).

This contrasts with an *epistemological* approach to practice, where the emphasis is more typically on "practical knowledge and learning/knowing processes (i.e., what and how people come to know in a practice) (Mahon et al., 2017, pp. 5–6). In the book I frequently use the term 'site' rather than 'context'. This is to denote the theoretical and analytical approach of practice architectures as part of an ontological, new "societist approach" (Schatzki, 2003) to the study of practice.

In his analysis of organisations as they 'happen', practice philosopher Ted Schatzki defines this new approach to social theory as site ontologies, contending that

> social life, by which I mean human coexistence, is inherently tied to a type of context in which it occurs... Site ontologies maintain that social phenomena can only be analysed by examining the sites where human coexistence transpires. It is by highlighting this type of context that this approach differentiates itself from societist ontologies that emphasize wholes, sui generis facts, or abstract structures (Schatzki, 2003, p. 176).

For Schatzki, the site of social life "is composed of a nexus of human practices and material arrangements", the latter of which shape how practices unfold in specific sites of practice (Schatzki, 2003, p. 176). Importantly, sites are not only spatial, nor are they the context which surrounds a practice. Rather, they are the "*set of conditions* that make the practice possible", although not inevitable (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 14) (authors' original italics). Thus, the *site* is an empirical place "located in the three dimensions of intersubjective space … populated by cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements that pertain there, while the conditions of possibility" that exist at a site are the "'*niche*' for a practice" (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 37).

The arrangements that exist in a site delimit the horizons of intelligibility of a practice, i.e., what is sayable, doable and relatable in order for a practice to unfold in a particular site. Moreover, practices are themselves social sites which organise "*what happens*" in specific locales, for the practice "meshes together a semantic space, a place existing in physical space–time, and social space… a nexus of sayings, doings and relatings" (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 36) (authors' original italics).

Schatzki's (2002) emphasis on the 'happeningness' of human co-existence as it unfolds in sites distinguishes site ontologies from the historically dominant explanations of social phenomena outlined in Chap. 1. The latter explanations typically fall into two 'camps'. The first and most perennial in the social sciences and in educational administration and organisational scholarship is a form of individualism, e.g., Herbert Simon's analysis of 'rational' organisations. In this definition, social facts and phenomena are viewed as "constructions out of, or constructions of, individual people and—on some versions—their relations", i.e., individual mental/cognitive structures or processes (Schatzki, 2003, p. 176). Informal aspects of the organisation

such as educators' know-how and the material aspects of the organisation that shape practices are typically neglected/overlooked by such accounts (Schatzki, 2005).

The second 'camp' is that of societist ontologies where the emphasis is on "wholes, sui generis facts, or abstract structures" (Schatzki, 2003, p. 176). For instance, generalised, reified social structures such as habitus and field located 'out there' are postulated to explain how social practices emerge and are shaped (Schatzki, 2003, p. 176). In contrast, Schatzki's notion of site ontologies is a flat ontology, viewing broad structures such as cognition or domination as not existing at a separate level from practices in the social realm. Rather, they are "constituted in and, in fact, *forms taken by* the web of practice-arrangement bundles" that prefigure practices in sites (Schatzki, 2005, p. 479).

In terms of organisations, rather than being conceptualised as reified entities or the result of the combined actions of individuals, Schatzki's notion of site ontologies places emphasis on three aspects of organisations "as they happen" (Schatzki, 2006). The first aspect of organisational happening is the specific sites in which practices and activities are performed. The second aspect of such happening is the material arrangements that "causally support these activities" and are constitutive of the organisation even if they are not drawn into the performance of a particular activity at the time (e.g., an empty classroom) (Schatzki, 2006, p. 1867). The third aspect of happening is the temporality of an organisation, both in real-time and in terms of "organisational memory", i.e., "memory as a property of a practice or organisation", rather than memory as the property of an individual participating in a practice (Schatzki, 2006, p. 1867).

Hence, organisations "as they happen" (Schatzki, 2006) are engaged in a constant dance between the reproduction of practices prefigured by material arrangements and temporalities, as well as providing space for creativity, innovation and change. In turn this implies a space for formal leading in terms of reproducing and/or changing practices, as well as attending to the spread of leading throughout an organisation, via informal practices such as guiding, steering, resisting, et cetera (Wilkinson & Kemmis, 2016).

Importantly for the study of educational leadership, the notion of site ontologies focuses our attention on the actual practices, "the happeningness" of the site and of organising, rather than individual practitioners, shorn from the arrangements that shape their practices; or more generalised happenings, divorced from the actuality of sites (Wilkinson & Kemmis, 2016). Put another way, site ontologies provide the thinking tools to apprehend in their specificity how educational "organizations and institutions are made and remade thanks to material … discursive [and relational] … work. In so doing … [they] … support a dynamic view of institutions" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 8).[3]

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[3] In scholarship about organisations, there is a significant corpus of work that adopts a more "dynamic view of institutions". In so doing, it raises important questions about the utility of notions of leadership in theory and practice (see, for example, Alvesson & Spicer, 2014; Collinson et al., 2018; Lakomski, 2005; Lakomski et al., 2017). A key strand of this work examines organisations as practice (see, for example, Carroll et al., 2008; Raelin, 2016; Youngs, 2017).

3.4 Differences and Affordances Between Practice Architectures and Site Ontologies Approaches

The theory of practice architectures and Schatzki's notion of site ontologies share much in common in terms of their view of practices. However, there are key differences. The critical one for the theoretical 'toolkit' employed in this book is that Schatzki (2002) refers to practices as composed of doings and sayings only, and not relatings. Although his view of practices implies the political and power dimensions of relationships between people and things, that is, that these relationships are materially and temporally arranged, this aspect is implicit rather than explicit in site ontologies. In contrast, the theory of practice architectures views practices as composed of sayings, doings and *relatings*, prefigured by cultural-discursive, material-economic and *social-political* arrangements that give specific practices in particular sites their characteristic realisation (Kemmis et al., 2014). This is not to imply that power is only located in relatings and social-political arrangements. As Foucauldian and Bourdieuian theories of practice contend, power circulates through bundles of practices and their arrangements, in terms of discourses/knowledge, material and social arrangements. Rather, the purpose is to explicitly foreground the medium of power in which practices as nexuses of sayings, doings and relating unfold in sites, and how these practices are always rendered possible by the (cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political) arrangements of specific sites.

The theory of practice architectures and the notion of site ontologies that inspires its view of practices provide a specific set of thinking tools with which to unpack the black box of context in educational leadership scholarship. They allow us to examine the actual practices of educational organising; the discursive, material, temporal, and social conditions in which these practices are enmeshed; and how certain organising/leading practices orchestrate more/less hospitable conditions in sites for the survival, emergence or dissolution of other educating practices. They assist us in understanding how specific educating practices orchestrate the "horizon[s] of intelligible action" including "how to feel, what to expect, and what things mean", while concomitantly other horizons are rendered less intelligible (Nicolini, 2012, pp. 4–5). It is this power to orchestrate, to render more intelligible and thus potentially change other practices in particular sites that is crucial in understanding educational leading as a practice-changing practice (Kemmis et al., 2014; Wilkinson & Kemmis, 2016) and which is examined in the empirical cases which follow.

Revisiting educational practices and *praxis*, the theory of practice architectures draws our attention to the conditions of possibility that are variably fostered in differing educational sites of practice and the "double purpose" of educating practices (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 27). This "double purpose" of education includes the formation of the individual student or educator through their initiation into diverse sites of practice – sayings ("forms of understanding"), doings ("modes of acting) and relatings ("ways of relating to one another and the world"). These sayings, doings and relatings lay down a path for the realisation of particular forms of life and being in the world (e.g., the educator as 'instructional leader', 'pastoral caregiver', 'entrepreneur';

the student as 'democratic citizen', 'client' etcetera). Simultaneously, practice architectures draws our attention to the social nature of these educating practices, i.e., how arrangements in particular educational sites that prefigure these sayings, doings and relatings can orchestrate the conditions of possibility for both individual and collective "self-expression … self-development … [and] … self-determination" – of communities and societies as well as the individual (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 27).

In Chap. 2, I noted that when it comes to studies of organisational phenomena, the family of practice theories can be classified into three different approaches. These were identified as empirical—relating to the 'what' of using a practice lens; theoretical—relating to the 'how' of using a practice lens; and philosophical—relating to the 'why' of using a practice lens (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011, pp. 1240–1241). These are not intended to be 'neat' categories into which various theoretical lenses can be cleanly slotted. Rather it is a question of the particular emphasis that a practice lens adopts when it comes to studying organisations. As such, these emphases provide a helpful means by which to understand which aspects of practice may be the key foci of an approach and simultaneously, which areas may be left out or shed less light on aspects of organisational phenomena.

Feldman & Orlikowski identify Schatzki's site ontologies as belonging to the third *philosophical* approach to practice, answering the 'why' of a practice lens, i.e., it "sees the social world as being brought into being through everyday activity" (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011, p. 1241). In other words, these approaches argue that "a focus on every day activity is critical because practices are understood to be the primary building blocks of social reality" when it comes to organisations (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011, p. 1241). Similarly, practice architectures theory is underpinned by this philosophical approach in terms of its understanding of practices.[4]

Both site ontologies and practice architectures also address the second, *theoretical* approach to practice, that is, a focus on the 'how'. Their different conceptual tools share a critical concern with specifically explaining the "dynamics of everyday activity, how these are generated and how they operate within different contexts and over time" in organisations (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011, p. 1241). In the case of practice architectures, this concern is specifically focused on the 'how' of activities as "primary building blocks of social reality" in educational organisations (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011, p. 1241).

This twin focus on the 'why' and 'how' of organising through a practice approach is predominant in practice architectures theory (and Schatzki's site ontologies), with a lesser focus on the first *empirical* approach to the study of organising, i.e., the 'what' of a practice lens. This first approach, according to Feldman and Orlikowski, stresses "the everyday activity of organizing in both its routine and improvised forms", with a particular emphasis on "the importance of human agency in producing organisational reality" (2011, p. 1241). As discussed in Chap. 1, there is space for individual agency and agents in practice theories. However, what marks practice theory as different is that the focus is "not on the action of the individual but on the practice, and the horizon

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[4] See Kemmis et al., 2014, for a more detailed explanation of the philosophical approaches that underpin practice architectures theory.

of intelligible action that it makes available to the agents" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 5). As Marx (2009) famous opening to *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* contends:

> Men (sic) make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living.

3.5   Conclusion

I now turn to Chap. 4 to examine how a practice approach to leading needs to apprehend issues of the power and politics of practice, utilising Bourdieuian and critical feminist scholarship lenses. Like the theory of practice architectures, Bourdieu's oeuvre emphasises the second, *theoretical* approach to practice, that is, a focus on the 'how', i.e., the "dynamics of everyday activity, how these are generated and how they operate within different contexts and over time" in organisations (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011, p. 1341). For Bourdieu, the circumstances "existing already, given and transmitted from the past … the tradition of all dead generations" are key theoretical concerns, particularly in his notion of habitus as incorporated history. However, where Bourdieuian and critical feminist scholarship are distinctive from practice architectures and site ontologies theory is their unrelenting focus on power and power differentials, key aspects of studying educational leading as practice.

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Chapter 4
Power Matters

Abstract The primary theoretical lens that I adopt in this book is that of practice architectures. However, one of the key advantages of employing a theoretical tool kit approach is that it can provide complementary theoretical lenses whose ontological similarities and differences can "entail… intervening in the world and giving it a chance of biting back at us, our presuppositions, and our inquiry tools" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 216). When it comes to educational leading as practice, questions of politics and power are central to its study. Historically, however, such questions have been silenced in mainstream educational scholarship, such as the school effectiveness and improvement literature that dominates current thinking. This chapter challenges these silences by bringing practice architectures theory into dialogue with Bourdieuian thinking tools, undergirded by feminist critical scholarship. This tripartite approach opens up crucial questions regarding the power, politics and contestation of educating and educational leading as practices, and how they are accomplished, made durable and/or resisted in the moment-by-moment encounters of diverse sites of education.

Keywords Educational leadership · Politics · Power · Bourdieu · Feminism · Practice architectures

4.1 Introduction

The study of power is critical to Bourdieu's oeuvre. His analysis of institutions as diverse as the church, the state, the arts, media, universities and schools shares a central focus on how "practices and their association perform different and unequal social and material positions", so that to study practice in these organisations entails studying "power in the making" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 214).[1]

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[1] There is a rich body of *critical* scholarship that has examined educational leadership through a variety of practice lenses. These include but are not limited to: Bourdieu (e.g., Eacott, 2010; English, 2012; Lingard et al., 2003; Thomson, 2017; Wilkinson, 2010); Foucault (Dolan, 2020; Gobby, 2019; Gillies, 2013; Heffernan, 2018; Niesche, 2013); and practice architectures (Grootenboer, 2018; Kemmis et al., 2014; Wilkinson & Kemmis, 2016). A range of educational leadership scholars have combined theories of practice such as that of Bourdieu's with feminist critical insights (e.g., Blackmore & Sachs, 2007; MacDonald, 2019, Wilkinson, 2009).

In the theory of practice architectures, the dimension of power is rendered explicit in the notion of a dialectical relationship between the *relatings* of individual or collective practices. The relatings in turn shape and are shaped by social-political arrangements in the medium of power *and solidarity* and in the dimension of social space (Kemmis et al., 2014) (my italics). Kemmis et al. argue that these arrangements enable and constrain the relatings of a practice through

> organizational functions, rules and roles in an organisation, or by the communicative require-
> ments of the lifeworld processes of reaching shared understandings, practical agreements
> about what to do, and social solidarities (Habermas, 1987, as cited in Kemmis et al., 2014,
> p. 32).

The Habermasian emphasis on achieving solidarity in practice architectures through "shared understandings, practical agreements... and social solidarities" stands in stark contrast to a Bourdieuian focus on the interactions between partici-pants in social fields of practice as a constant struggle for dominance and legitimation. Bourdieu's analysis of education, and in particular, the field of higher education as a field of power in which agents are engaged in a constant struggle contrasts with practice architectures' emphasis on achieving social solidarities through educational practice/praxis. This is not to say that one approach is 'right' and the other is 'wrong' but to point out that there are different affordances provided by these approaches. In my toolkit approach, Bourdieu's focus on struggles for legitimation is particularly salient in Chap. 5, the introduction by a Catholic education district of instructional learning in a secondary school. Key concepts of Bourdieu which are helpful in this regard include, but are not limited to, field, capital and habitus.

4.2   Field and Capital

Bourdieu's concept of the field is drawn from Max Weber and seeks to analyse the ways in which Western European societies historically have developed "in terms of the differentiation of distinct spheres or fields of practice, each involving specific forms and combinations of capital and value" (Thompson, 1991, p. 25). Bourdieu has defined the field as

> a structured social space, a field of forces, a force field. It contains people who dominate and
> others who are dominated. Constant, permanent relationships of inequality operate inside
> this space, which at the same time becomes a space in which the various actors struggle for
> the transformation or preservation of the field. All the individuals in this universe bring to
> the competition all the (relative) power at their disposal. It is this power that defines their
> position in the field and, as a result, their strategies (Bourdieu, 1977, pp. 40–41) .

The language in the preceding quotation is striking as it reads like a manifesto for political power drawn from Machiavelli's *The Prince*. Its emphasis is on the clash, contestation and politics of the metaphorical fields of practice in which partic-ipants must engage, "structured … forces … domination … inequality … struggle … completion … power … struggle … strategies". For Bourdieu, humanity is engaged

in a constant and brutal struggle for power, a power *over* others, rather than *with.* However, it is important to remember that the field is a "metaphor for a social site where people and institutions engage in particular activities", rather than a "real or concrete space" (Webb et al., 2002, p. 68). In this sense, Bourdieu's field

> exists only relationally, only as a set of possibilities, or a series of moves; as the site of particular forms of capital and particular narratives; and, especially, as the site of regulatory and coercive discourses (Webb et al., 2002, p. 68).

Bourdieu uses the language of the market to define power within the field. He argues that there are four key kinds of power or capital which individuals bring to a field. These include economic capital, "which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalised in the form of property rights"; and cultural capital "which is convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalised in the form of educational qualifications" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 243). They also include social capital, "made up of social obligations … "connections" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 243); and symbolic capital, "the prestige and honour that is associated with the acquisition of one or more of the other forms of capital once it has been perceived and recognised as legitimate by others" (Connolly, 2000, pp. 124–125).

There is an unequal distribution of capital within the dominant, middle and lower-classes and within different "factions" within a class, for example, intellectuals versus factory owners in the "dominant class" (Turner, 1991, p. 513). As Bourdieu notes, "different fields … are the site of a struggle of interests, between agents or institutions unequally endowed in specific capital" (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 111). Bourdieu observes that it is "the structure of the distribution of the different types and subtypes of capital at a given moment in time … (which) … represents the immanent structures of the social world" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 242).

4.3 Linking Field and Habitus

Like site ontologies, practice architectures and other practice approaches, Pierre Bourdieu's theory of practice attempts to steer a 'third path' between the two 'camps'/explanations of social phenomena noted above, such as structure and agency. The habitus is an attempt by Bourdieu to surmount the sociological dichotomy between subjectivism, in which social practices "can be understood solely in terms of individual decision-making", and objectivism, in which the practice of individuals is solely "determined by supra-individual "structures"", such as class" (Jenkins, 1992, p. 74).

Bourdieu defines the habitus as

> the product of a *practical sense* … of a socially constituted 'sense of the game' … (which) … posits that objects of knowledge are constructed and not passively recorded … the principle of this construction is habitus, the system of structured and structuring dispositions which

is constituted by practice and constantly aimed at the practical—as opposed to cognitive—
functions … when habitus encounters a social world of which it is the product, it finds itself
as 'fish in water' and takes the world about itself for granted (Wacqant, 1989, p. 43).

The role of the habitus is crucial to the concept of the field, as the "habitus realises
itself, becomes active only *in relation* to a field … the same habitus can lead to very
different practices and stances depending on the state of the field" (Bourdieu, 1990,
p. 116). Bourdieu also notes that

(f)or a field to work … there must be stakes, and people ready to play the game, equipped
with the habitus which enables them to know and recognise the immanent laws of the game,
the stakes and so on (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 110).

In relation to tacit knowledge, each field produces its own specific habitus, its
own "(a)ction guided by a feel for the game" (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 11). Bourdieu
also points to the dialectical relationship between a field and the habitus, for

the field structures the habitus, which is the product of the embodiment of the immanent
necessity of a field … On the other side … habitus contributes to constituting the field as
a meaningful world …endowed with sense and value, in which it is worth investing one's
energy (Wacquant, 1989, p. 44).

In other words, in playing for the stakes of a particular field, agents and/or institu-
tions must be convinced that such stakes are worth attaining, otherwise there would
be no point in continuing to 'play the game'.

4.4   Entering the Game of Educating

Education as a field of power plays a central role in society for it has a crucial
sorting and classifying function in terms of reproducing social relations of domination
and subordination (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). The logic of practice of schooling
and universities is based on the reproduction of forms of cultural capital that are
class based. If habitus is the "product of an individual history, but also, through the
formative experiences of earliest infancy, of the whole collective history of family
and class" (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 91), then students from equity backgrounds often
experience schooling and universities as 'fish out of water' in the game of education.
In the encounter between their habitus and the education field, they frequently lack
the kinds of cultural capital, the unspoken, tacit know-how or "*practical sense … a
socially constituted sense of the game*" (Wacqant, 1989, p. 43) of formal educating,
which is viewed by dominant groups as legitimate/valued for the fields of schooling
and university.

This lack of fit, as Bourdieu so powerfully demonstrates, is neither inevitable
nor 'natural'. Rather, it is a crucial aspect of the symbolic violence of "pedagogic
action" that occurs in the home, in religious institutions, with one's peers, and in
formal educational institutions. Pedagogic action "reproduce[es] culture in all its
arbitrariness" and "reflects the interests of dominant groups or classes, tending to

reproduce the uneven distribution of cultural capital… hence reproducing social structure" (Jenkins, 1992, p. 105). Though the occasional 'miraculous exception' (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) may provide the exception to the rule, this is only a manifestation of how notions of meritocracy in the fields of education work through the symbolic violence of pedagogic action to reproduce dominant class relations. Furthermore, the belief in meritocracy that so firmly underpins education as a field reflects the *doxa* of the field, a set of beliefs that justifies the (unequal and rigged) 'game' of educating (Bourdieu, 1977).

Importantly, Bourdieu draws our attention to how this pedagogic action works as a disciplinary mechanism to encode culture on the *body* from infancy (Jenkins, 1992), producing the "values given body" (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 69). Parenting and schooling are crucial aspects of this (gendered, raced, classed, heteronormative) disciplining, via the "hidden persuasions of an implicit pedagogy which can instill a whole cosmology, through injunctions as insignificant as 'sit up straight' or 'don't hold your knife in your left hand'" (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 69). Or, I might add, in relation to schooling, "sit on a mat, girls keep your legs shut and boys cross your arms when school photographs are taken". For Bourdieu, "bodily hexis is political mythology realized, *em-bodied,* turned into a permanent disposition, a durable way of standing, speaking, walking, and thereby of feeling and thinking" (1990b, pp. 69–70). For critical feminist and critical race scholars, this focus on white and non-white women's bodies as 'other' to white, masculinist norms of leading and managing is a familiar disciplining mechanism, a form of symbolic violence, which mainstream accounts of leadership and administration typically ignore (see, for example, Ahmed, 2009; Sinclair, 2005).

For pedagogic action to be successful, it requires pedagogic authority, that is:

> an arbitrary power to act, misrecognised by its practitioners and recipients as legitimate … It is experienced as neutral, or even positively valued, but no pedagogic action is actually neutral or 'culturally free' … Pedagogic authority is bestowed, not earned (Jenkins, 1992, pp. 105–106).

Pedagogic authority includes that which is exercised between parent and child, employer and employee, educator and student. For Bourdieu, such authority is a form of *symbolic violence*, that is:

> a violence exercised … in formal terms, and paying due respect to forms … (it) … allows force to be fully exercised while disguising its true nature as force and gaining recognition, approval and acceptance by dint of the fact that it can present itself under the appearances of universality—that of reason or morality [Bourdieu, 1990a, pp. 84–85].

Such symbolic violence facilitates *misrecognition*, "the process whereby power relations are perceived not for what they objectively are but in a form which renders them legitimate in the eye of the beholder" (Jenkins, 1992, pp. 104–105). It is this process of how unequal power relations are rendered legitimate through symbolic violence that contributes to their perpetuation in sites of educational practice. For example, in leadership scholarship, the emphasis on traits of 'great men' leaders and more recently on 'turn around' school leaders operate as forms of misrecognition which render legitimate notions of leadership as residing in (typically white,

male) individuals, and excludes alternative practices, such as collective or shared leadership.

4.5 Bringing Bourdieu and Practice Architectures Theory into Dialogue

There are clear commonalities and key differences in emphasis between Bourdieu's notions of educational and pedagogical practice/praxis and that of practice architectures. Although coming from different theoretical orientations, commonalities include commensurability between the cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements that occur in sites and Bourdieu's notion of cultural and symbolic capitals, economic capital and fields, and social and political capitals and fields (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 30).

Another commonality includes the notion of learning as practice. For participants in the game of educating, how a learner learns in a site such as a classroom or a senior management meeting involves developing a feel for the game/being initiated into the play of practices. Examples include: refugee background students from strong oral traditions entering the formal practices of Anglo-Australian schooling which are founded on normative assumptions of written language as legitimate cultural capital (Wilkinson, 2018); senior women academics from diverse racial, ethnic and class backgrounds negotiating the gendered/raced and classed dynamics of senior management meetings (Wilkinson, 2009); or the collective orchestration of conditions to nurture more socially just learning and teaching practices in a secondary school's department (Grootenboer, 2018).

Key differences between Bourdieu's notions of educational and pedagogical practice/praxis and that of practice architectures lie in Bourdieu's overwhelming emphasis on power: practices as realised in the encounter between habitus and field, the latter of which is a site of constant contestation, a struggle for power and legitimacy. Practice architectures' stress on solidarity, i.e., reaching "shared understandings, practical agreements about what to do, and social solidarities" is absent in Bourdieu's oeuvre (Habermas, 1987, as cited in Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 32). In contrast to Habermasian and neo-Aristotelian inspired notions of the larger purpose of education and pedagogy in practice architectures theory, for Bourdieu, educational praxis is history making action in the post Marxist sense of the world. That is, rather than reaching solidarity, Bourdieu's distinct emphasis is on the role of educational and pedagogical practices as central to reproducing asymmetrical relations of power within society, through exclusionary strategies.

For instance, what is particularly crucial in Bourdieuian notions of initiation into learning practices is the development of a practitioners' disposition or habitus in terms of situated practical knowledge. In practice architectures language, this can be conceptualised as learning the particular sayings, doings and relatings relevant to a specific site that orient practitioners (such as aspiring leaders) towards what

counts as legitimate and valued knowledge in education as a field (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 60).[2] Another way of putting this is that dispositions/habitus are *situated* forms of knowing how to go in a specific practice setting, such as a classroom, i.e., carrying out the appropriate sayings, doings and relatings in these settings (Kemmis, pers. comm., 06. 08. 20). Moreover, these situated forms of knowing are invariably embodied. But as Bourdieu constantly stresses, such knowings/sayings, doings, relatings and forms of initiation are not seamless and cannot be taken for granted. They are invariably political, highly contested, 'raced', gendered, sexualised and classed. They are unequally distributed between practitioners in a practice such as educational leading, as the small body of educational leadership scholarship which utilises a Bourdieuian lens testifies.[3] Moreover, the habitus as a "collective history of family and class" (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 91) functions most powerfully as a mechanism of "self-exclusion" from a field, as attested to by the overwhelming whiteness of educators and principals from the schooling field in Australia and North America (Wilkinson, 2018).

The theory of practice architectures does not ignore these issues of power, politics and conflict. Its inclusion of relatings and social-political arrangements renders explicit the workings of power through sites of practice. However, its emphasis shifts from the bleakness of Bourdieu's educational sites of practice to a stress on the possibilities for positive transformation through educational practice, i.e., through praxis. Practice architectures enable, constrain and support a practice in intersubjective space, in the medium of language, activity and work, and power and solidarity. The notion of learning how to inhabit the intersubjective spaces created by practices of education is premised on the Habermasian conceptualisation of communicative spaces. These spaces, it is argued, can only emerge when people strive to become involved in collective and collaborative enquiry into human experiences through an emphasis on democracy, equality, diversity and justice, in order to transform the circumstances and conditions under which we live and function (Bodorkos & Pataki, 2009, pp. 314–315; Hyland, 2009, pp. 336–337). In this view of the world therefore, education affords important possibilities by which spaces can be opened for young people to "discuss what it means to live a good and meaningful life and the kinds of people they wish to become" (Stevenson, 2008, as cited in Fielding, 2009). As such,

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[2] The empirical studies of the Pedagogy Education and Praxis [PEP] international research network explore how this process plays out, particularly in relation to the schooling field, but also in relation to early childhood, academia and further education and training (see Mahon et al., 2020, for an overview of these studies).

[3] As noted earlier, there is a small body of critical scholars who have examined the practices of educational leadership utilising a Bourdieuian lens. More specifically, in relation to school leadership, this includes: mapping the history of educational leadership and administration as a field and the various capitals attached to forms of knowledge and knowers (Gunter, 2016); educational leadership as strategic and relational (Eacott, 2018); the formation of a "productive" leadership habitus amongst principals (Lingard et al., 2003); the gendered and classed reconfiguration of what counts as socially just principalship in high poverty locations (MacDonald, 2019); studies of the principalship (Thomson, 2017); and leadership preparation (English & Bolton, 2016). There have been few explorations of leadership in the university field utilising Bourdieu, with some exceptions (e.g., Blackmore & Sachs, 2007; Wilkinson, 2018).

practice architectures theory explicitly offers "resources for a journey of hope" in education (Williams, 1983, p. 268).

In contrast, for Bourdieu, the Habermasian notion of undistorted communication is a rare exception. In an interview he observed that:

> In most fields, we may observe what we characterize as competition for accumulation of different forms of capital, and things being what they are, the undistorted communication referred to by Habermas is always an exception. We can achieve this … [undistorted communication] . . . only by a special effort when extraordinary conditions are fulfilled (Bourdieu & Eagleton, 1992, p. 116).

In the Bourdieuian view of education, the stakes of the game are almost always 'rigged', due to the uneven distribution of what counts as legitimate capital between participants in a practice, the symbolic violence that underpins pedagogical authority, and the *doxa* of the field as primarily a mechanism for slotting different groups of students and practitioners in their unequal place. However, it would be inaccurate to say his work does not offer resources for hope. For Bourdieu, understanding how this process works through the conceptual armoury sketched above, and simultaneously—how our own self-interest functions in sustaining the stakes at play in the field of education—are crucial first steps in resisting, contesting and ultimately transforming the social world.

4.6 Affordances of a Dual Practice Architectures and Bourdieuian Lens

Why bring together practice architectures and Bourdieuian theories of practice? Utilising this dual lens provides several key affordances for understanding educational leading as practice. Firstly, in relation to *change and transformation*, as I noted in Chap. 2, a common criticism of leadership scholarship more broadly is that "leadership has more power as a discourse and identity … rather than a specific or distinctive set of practices or interventions in organisational life" (Carroll et al., 2008, p. 373). A critique of Bourdieu's ontology is that it does not possess sufficient explanatory power in terms of how transformation in social life occurs (Crossley, 2002), particularly in terms of "distinctive set[s] of practices… in organisational life". In other words, it provides us with a theory of how educational practices are reproduced, rather than changed.

Practice architectures theory in contrast provides a lens through which to apprehend the "ragged, fine character of social life" and "how practices in different fields or worlds interweave … how arrangements reach across fields and worlds, often independently of the practices found there" (Schatzki, 2003, p. 24). This is especially important in terms of apprehending how educational change occurs due to transformations of practices in all their granularity, rather than the more reifying/unifying tendency of field and habitus (Schatzki, 2003, p. 24).

However, what Bourdieu's theory of habitus does provide, in dialogue with practice architectures theory is an understanding of how, in terms of sayings, doings and relatings, and their concomitant arrangements, the *dispositions/habitus* of educators is developed or called into being as they come to develop a feel for the game/participate in the cultural, material and social fields of practice such as instructional leading. Bourdieu's emphasis on habitus as history incorporated is crucial for it allows us to understand the formation of specific educational dispositions throughout time, e.g., in relation to one's childhood, one's class/ethnicity, /race' and gender. Moreover, it allows us to examine this formation through history, e.g., in relation to the varying logics of practice within a specific field such as schooling and how these specific histories orchestrate what are valued/less valued ways of knowing, doing and relating to other participants and material elements in terms of practices associated with system roles.

Thirdly, Bourdieu's stress on the politics of the *body* as practice made corporeal in this process of being and becoming a participant in the 'game' of educating is a salutary reminder of how practices work to *embody* specific ways of knowing, doing and relating in relation to educational leading. Bourdieu's notion of bodily hexis foregrounds how these forms of embodiment are a form of mythology that is always and invariably political. This is an insight that Black feminist critical scholars have stressed over decades (c.f., Hooks, 1997). For example, this scholarship has examined how symbolic violence works to differentially position (black and white) women's bodies in educational leadership/leadership as 'too visible' and 'other' to the 'neutral, rational' and invisible (white, heteronormative) male (c.f., Mavin & Grandy, 2016; Safia Mirza, 2006). As Gherardi (2017, p. 43) observes:

> the centrality of bodies in approaching practices is self-evident, yet it has been overlooked even when humans are considered the carriers of practices… one reason… may be the Cartesian and idealist tradition that undervalues the sociomateriality of human bodies.[4]

Fourthly, a dual practice architectures/Bourdieuian lens allows us to apprehend more fully the valuable distinction that practice theorist Alasdair MacIntyre makes between the *external and internal goods* of a practice. For MacIntyre, the external goods of a practice are those which, "when achieved are always some individual's property and possession" and are "therefore characteristically the outcome of competition to excel" (MacIntyre, 1981, p. 190). We see this notion of the external goods of practice foregrounded in Bourdieu's stress on the hypercompetitive struggle for domination that characterises education as a field.

In contrast, the internal goods of a practice, although also "the outcome of competition to excel... [have a] … characteristic … that their achievement is a good for the whole community who participate in the practice" (MacIntyre, 1981, p. 190). It is this notion of the "internal goods" of a practice that is downplayed/relegated to the

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[4] The theory of practice architectures is evolving. The latest version stresses that individuals' sayings, doings and relatings are "bundled together in the projects of a practice … their agency and dispositions (habitus) to act, enabled by their situated knowledge (how to say and do and relate in this practice")" (Kemmis, pers. comm., August, 2020). This inclusion of "situated knowledge" explicitly opens the door to a consideration of the body in practice.

private sphere in Bourdieu's theories,[5] but which is foregrounded in practice architectures theory in relation to educational practice. Understanding the internal goods of a practice, i.e., the "good for the whole community who participate in the practice" (MacIntyre, 1981, p. 190) is crucial for educational leading as practice/praxis as discussed in Chap. 2. It links educational practice to the possibility of virtue, for virtue

> is an acquired human quality the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such goods (MacIntyre, 1981, p. 191) (Author's original italics).

If we are to conceive of educational practices as providing resources for hope, then reclaiming this distinction between the internal and external goods of a practice is critical, theoretically, practically, and in terms of transformation of practices.

Furthermore, the distinction between the internal and external goods of a practice is helpful in highlighting the *double purpose of educating and pedagogical practices* in forming the individual and society. Put another way educating and pedagogical practice have a 'Janus-like' quality.[6] A dual practice architectures/Bourdieuian practice lens allows us to apprehend these contrasting purposes of educating and pedagogy and how the differing goods of these practices constantly play out in a dialectical dance in specific sites. For instance, we can see how this interplay unfolds in terms of the external goods of educating and pedagogical practices (e.g., the conditions that foster symbolic violence and the competitive cut and thrust of struggles for what counts as legitimate stakes in the education game)—and their internal goods (e.g., how educational and pedagogical practices, depending on the conditions of specific sites, may have the potential to foster more socially just and equitable ways of knowing, doing and relating to each other and our social and natural worlds).[7]

The key point is that a dual lens fosters a dialectical interplay between the differing goods of a practice that gives us a stereoscopic view of how educating and pedagogy as practices play out in differing sites and the role of specific practices in orchestrating the conditions that foster/inhibit these goods. It prevents an overly deterministic view of educational and pedagogical practices, something for which Bourdieu has often been criticised. On the other hand, it provides a useful check to an overly rosy perspective, which may downplay contestation and struggles for what counts as legitimate stakes in a field such as education (Nicolini, 2017).

However, there are important limitations in bringing together these two lenses. A key limitation resides in how practice theorists make sense of macro issues, such as education systems and climate change, and large-scale phenomena such as social

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[5] For instance, when pressed about other forms of action that are "less antagonistic", Bourdieu argues, "Where this happens, it is the exception based on what Aristotle called... 'philia'—or friendship... an economic or symbolic exchange that you may have within the family, among parents or with friends" (Bourdieu & Eagleton, 1992, p. 116).

[6] The Roman god Janus was depicted as having two faces, one which looked to the future and one to the past. In English, it means to look or act in contrasting or opposite ways.

[7] For a fuller explication of the interplay of the internal and external goods of educational leading in academia, see Wilkinson (2010).

classes, inequality, gender, 'race', leadership and discourse, et cetera. Ontologically, the two approaches are markedly different in their approaches to these issues, due to their differing ontological foundations.

To this end, Nicolini (2017, p. 99) makes a key distinction between what he terms "flat ontology" approaches to making sense of large-scale phenomena (a descriptor which includes practice architectures and site ontologies approaches); and "a more traditional layered view of the social" (which describes Bourdieu and Giddens' approaches). From a flat ontology perspective, "it is practices all the way" (Nicolini, 2017, p. 99). Social reality has "no levels", with large-scale phenomena such as gender, 'race', the market, the state etcetera, "constituted by and emerg[ing] through the aggregation of interrelated practices and their regimes of reproduction" (Nicolini, 2017, pp. 99–100). Hence, from a practice architectures and site ontological perspective, large-scale phenomena such as that noted above should not be granted causal power as autonomous entities. Rather, they are viewed as "emerg[ing] from and transpir[ing] through connections between practices", with large phenomena variously described as "textures, nexuses, meshes… assemblages" (Nicolini, 2017, p. 102), or in practice architectures language, arrangements and ecologies of practices.

In contrast, Bourdieu posits the existence of different levels of social reality to explain how large-scale phenomena help to constitute society, employing concepts such as habitus, field, logic of practice and symbolic violence (Nicolini, 2017). For Bourdieu, practices are not a sufficient explanation for the emergence of large phenomena. From a Bourdieuian perspective, macro social phenomena such as class, gender, capitalism and the market, constitute "far-reaching social processes" that structure our "daily conduct" and need to be treated as "self-subsistent entities" (Nicolini, 2017, p. 100). As such, Bourdieuian concepts such as 'field' presuppose that practices are "always and already structured" by entities that are beyond our individual grasp (Rawolle, Wilkinson, & Hardy, as cited in Wilkinson, 2010, p. 42). The key point is that in adopting this dual lens, Bourdieu's conceptual armoury can provide important theoretical insights, while not signalling an agreement that macro social phenomena such as leading or organising should be granted entity status or abstracted from "the living and pulsating connections among practices" (Nicolini, 2017, p. 102).

4.7 Feminist Critical Scholarship

The final theoretical lens which complements the study of educational leading practices in this book is that of feminist critical scholarship. Feminist critical scholarship, informed by Black feminism, Indigenous, postcolonial, Black intersectional research, anti-racism and critical race theories has provided a diverse and rich range of educational scholarship rooted in a variety of emancipatory social movements, many of which had their origins in the nineteenth centuries. These movements include anti-slavery, Black, Indigenous and First Nations struggles for civil rights, anti-racism, land rights, first, second and third wave feminism. They encompass in more recent

years, the Black Lives Matter and #Me Too Movements. This range of scholarship provides a crucial understanding of post Marxist notions of praxis as transformation and activism. It has inspired a critical scholarship tradition of progressive education in educational leadership and administration that offers "radical challenges to the normally accepted ideas of leadership and who can engage in it" (Apple, 2017, p. 249).[8]

The inclusion of a feminist critical lens that draws for inspiration from this diverse body of scholarship is a crucial foundation to studies of educational leadership/leading. It is particularly important given that for Bourdieu, class was viewed as the primary category through which inequities of power were reproduced, with little consideration until later years of how gender and other social relations of power, such as 'race' and ethnicity were implicated. However, how can a feminist critical lens be reconciled with practice approaches that reject "substantialist ontologies" which conceptualise gender as a fixed, static biological or social entity? (Welch & Warde, 2017, pp. 183–184) In other words, how do we conceptualise gender, 'race', ethnicity as practices, and the experiences, understandings, material and constitutive effects associated with them which critical race and gender theorists have mapped so powerfully?

From a flat ontology practice theory approach, gender, 'race', ethnicity, culture, class and sexuality are viewed as "processes of enactment and (specific) social practices" (Welch & Warde, 2017, pp. 183–184), i.e., fluid, dynamic and embodied. Within the broad umbrella under which diverse practice approaches are located, there is a variety of perspectives. For instance, from a post-humanist practice approach, Gherardi (2017, p. 44) describes gender as

> a performance playfully and cannily enacted, that changes from context to context, and from day to day, as men and women adjust their idea of themselves to fit changing sociomaterial circumstances.

But is the notion of gender as a performance sufficient to capture the peculiar combinatory quality of a social practice such as gendering, i.e., how it combines with other practices such as racialising to shape persistent "inequities in access and participation" for students (and educators) of colour? (Shove et al., 2012, p. 89).

Practice architectures theory reminds us that 'performances' of practices never occur in a vacuum. Rather, they are "culturally and historically situated" and are "unlikely to be integrated in identical fashion in every setting" (Shove & Pantzar, 2005, as cited in Shove et al., 2012, p. 89). Given the "changing socio-material circumstances" in which practices must be performed, the question arises as to who gets to qualify "as an actual or potential practitioner" (Shove et al., 2012, p. 89), or performer of practices such as those connected with educational leading? This is a question which Black, postcolonial and feminist critical scholars in educational

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[8] Examples of scholars whose work has inspired Black and Indigenous feminist critical educational leadership scholarship include (but are not limited to) Gloria Ladson-Billings, Patricia Hill Collins, bell hooks, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Heidi Safia Mirza, Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Gayatri Spivak, Linda Tuhiwai Smith and Aileen Moreton-Robinson.

leadership have examined in some detail.[9] From a Bourdieuian lens, one can argue that the chance of an individual/group becoming participants in such practices is

> closely related to the social and symbolic significance of participation and highly structured and vastly different opportunities to accumulate and amass the different types of capital required for, and typically generated by participation. *Whether framed from the point of view of practice or practitioner, inequities of access and participation are cumulative* (Shove, Pantzar, & Watson, 2012, p. 89) (my italics).

Where practice theory can make a significant contribution to feminist and other critical bodies of scholarship is in understanding how these "inequities in access and participation" differentially accumulate in ways that "combine to define the trajectories of practices… trajectories that are, in turn and again in combination, relevant for future patterns of participation, experience and commitment" (Shove 2012, p. 89). For example, ecologies of practices provides one means by which to tease out and map how such practices intersect and accumulate over time in different sites of practice, and how these practices draw on practices from beyond a site, in ways that accumulate inequities of access and participation.

In relation to educational leading, practices associated with formal roles of educational authority or more informal forms of leading cannot be analysed in isolation from "a wider texture of practices" (Gherardi, 2017, p. 44). Nor can they be apprehended in isolation from the racist, sexist, heteronormative and classed arrangements with which they are enmeshed. In turn, these practices and their arrangements connect the "situatedness and everyday encounters of embodiments to … macro-institutional context[s]" (Gherardi, 2017, p. 44). In this sense, educational leadership understood from a dual practice and feminist critical approach provides us with deeper understandings of its "relational" nature. As a relational practice, it is always embedded in

> unequal relationships of power informed by multiple intersectionalities of gender, race, class, ethnicity, religion and sexuality and enacted into practice that is situated within a conjecture of particular historical, social, political and economic movements (Blackmore, 2018, p. 208).

4.8 Feminist Critical Scholarship in Dialogue with Practice Approaches

I noted in Chap. 1 that from a practice theory approach, concepts such as leading/organising should not be granted status as entities in their own right. These notions are abstractions, a "convenient summary" that takes the gaze away from how social phenomena, be they large or small scale are "produced in practice and through practice" (Nicolini, 2017, pp. 112–113). However, what we cannot ignore is that such representational practices produce constitutive, material effects on practitioners in

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[9] See, for example, Blackmore (2010); Douglass-Horsford and Tillman (2012); Gaetane et al. (2009); Watson (2020); Wilkinson & Bristol (2018).

sites, in terms of what comes to be recognised and valued forms of knowledge and knowing, leadership and leading.

Practice architectures theory draws our attention to what is present in a site, such as newly evolving, existing and dissolving practices, how they are held together, how they connect up with other practices in and beyond sites, and the forms of intelligibility and understandings of the system roles and lifeworld relationships that they engender. Feminist critical scholarship, informed by Black, Indigenous, postcolonial, Black intersectional research, anti-racism and critical race theories draws our attention to what is not there, i.e., the "*absent presence*" of sites (Macherey, 2006). It invites us to ask questions such as: which practices associated with leading are not fostered in educational sites and why? How may the conditions for certain educational practices and practice architectures to take root and grow be rendered less hospitable in sites, and how we can understand these silences, gaps and lacunas? From a practice theory lens, we can ask, what is rendered unsayable/incomprehensible, undoable and unrelatable in educational sites? Which sayings, doings and relatings and concomitant arrangements/ways of knowing about, performing in, valuing and experiencing the world are absent, silenced or marginalised? How and why? What are the symbolic, material and political effects of these erasures?

In other words, it is as important to understand which practices and arrangements come to exist/dominate in a site and which do not, the process by which this occurs, and the material, constitutive effects that are produced when certain practices are deployed/not deployed. These questions and issues allow us to "question regimes, ask how they were established, what different arrangements are possible and what would it take to transition to them" (Nicolini, 2017, p. 111). It is in this sense that a feminist critical lens in dialogue with critical bodies of scholarship brings an invaluable and salutary perspective to practice architectures, site ontologies and Bourdieuian approaches. It serves as a salutary reminder that "what is not there is often just as significant as what is there" (Apple, 2017, p. 251).

Moreover, a feminist critical lens in combination with insights from Black, Indigenous, postcolonial, Black intersectional research, anti-racism and critical race theories foregrounds subaltern practices and knowledges/ways of knowing in sites. Critics of Bourdieu have noted that there is an over emphasis on predominant practices (c.f., de Certeau, 1984). They argue that Bourdieu's theoretical apparatus is less able to deal with "micro-tactics of resistance, local deformations, and reinvention that both habitus and discourse undergo in the act of every day practical consumption" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 65).

In relation to practice architectures and site ontologies, critics of these flat ontological approaches have argued that when "large phenomena are built from the bottom up", little space is left for "contradictions, conflicts and tensions in the study of practices" (Nicolini, 2017, p. 112). Yet it is precisely through rendering visible this contestation that feminist critical, Black, intersectional, Indigenous, postcolonial and other scholars have been able to document the subaltern practices and knowledges of educational leading in a range of different cultural and historical contexts, coupled with "micro tactics of resistance" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 65).

In addition, a focus on competition and struggle for the stakes of the field, or alternatively, an erasure of "contradictions, conflicts and tensions" can be viewed as forms of symbolic violence. As noted in Chap. 1, a constitutive effect of a Bourdieuian emphasis on conflict is that it may misrecognise other forms of practices associated with educational leadership, such as collegial, collective, caring and/or spiritual practices. Thus, it can contribute to reproducing ways of knowing about and practising educational leadership in Anglophone nations as a highly masculinist and heteronormative practice, embedded in and reproducing white privilege and racial oppression. In nations such as Australia, the practice architectures with which these practices are enmeshed include a taken-for-granted white middle class location that is "constituted by and constitutive of colonisation" (Moreton-Robinson, 2020, p. viii).

Finally, it is claimed that Schatzki's theory of site ontologies fails to directly address issues of power (Watson, 2017). In relation to sites, Watson contends that site ontology "quickly moves to reduce any sense that one site has determinative influence" (2017, p. 179), given that "the progression of social affairs is thoroughly contingent" (Schatzki, 2015, as cited in Watson, 2017). While not disputing the contingency of social affairs, feminist, Foucauldian and socially critical approaches have clearly documented that

> not all practices are the same … only some enable the aggregation and alignment of the resources necessary to assemble, maintain and exert some degree of control via technologies of governing (Watson, 2017, p. 179).

Hence, whilst recognising the contingency of social affairs, practice approaches need to grapple with the reality that

> some sites, some organisations and some people are clearly situated in systematically advantageous positions … such that they have distinctive capacity to act purposively in ways which shape action over distance and across locales of action (Watson, 2017, p. 179).

This is where analysis employing a practice lens in combination with Bourdieuian and feminist critical bodies of scholarship is crucial. It allows us to grasp

> how arrangements and associations of practices and the heterogeneous flows they are bound with are produced through, and reproduce, systematic inequities in capacities to act, including to act in ways which shape others' capacities to act (Watson, 2017, p. 179).

4.9 Conclusion

Practice theory is not and cannot profess to be a theory of everything (Schatzki, 2018). As sketched above, there are aspects of social life that currently may escape its grasp, such as power, power differentials and the politics of social relations of power based on and constituted by practices associated with gender, 'race', ethnicity, sexualities and class. I have argued that when it comes to understanding practices described as leading, this requires conceptual tools that can form alliances with a practice approach, whilst adhering to its foundational tenet that practices are a "basic

reality" of the "frontiers of human life" (Schatzki, 2018, p. 163). In Chaps. 5–8, I flesh out this theoretical toolkit, drawing on a range of studies of educational leading conducted over the past two decades. In so doing, I examine how these "frontiers of human life" play out in diverse educational sites. I commence in Chap. 5 with an analysis of a major trend in contemporary education settings in OECD nations as part of school improvement efforts—the turn towards instructional leadership—exemplified in a case study of a major reform undertaken by an Australian regional educational district.

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Chapter 5
Instructional Leading Through a Practice Lens

Abstract This chapter examines the symbolic violence that can ensue when system and instructional practices are adopted that emphasise technicist approaches to the 'wicked problem' of educational disadvantage at the expense of lifeworld relationships. It does so through the lens of a case study of a major school improvement initiative adopted by an Australian rural Catholic education district, aimed at lifting poor and declining results for its learners. A key aspect of this reform was the wholesale embrace of new instructional and systemic leadership practices at district and school level. The chapter extends and deepens practice theorising on educational reform utilising a practice architectures lens, combined with insights from Scandinavian organisational studies on how practices travel.

5.1 Introduction

A major shift in the logic of practice of school reforms in OECD nations in the past two decades is an emphasis on narrowing achievement gaps between groups of students and a related focus on enhancing student outcomes, as measured by external outputs. These "'measuring sticks' of educational achievement" (Mills et al., 2018, p. 5) typically include international and national standardised testing regimes, such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). In Australia, they include National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)—a high stakes annual testing regime administered across all education jurisdictions. Along with PISA, it has played a key role in reconstituting Australian educators' practices and steering principals' work at a distance (Heffernan, 2018; Niesche, 2011).

In relation to educational leading research, there has been a marked shift in the past decade from more collegial and collective notions of leading practices, e.g., teacher leadership and professional learning communities (cf., Hargreaves, 2007; Lingard et al., 2003) to principal and district/system-driven notions of leading and managing. Prominent drivers of this trend include instructional (Bendikson et al.,

2012) and more recently, system leadership scholarship (Hopkins & Highman, 2007; New South Wales Department of Education, 2020; Shaked & Schechter, 2020). This corpus of research typically focuses on the school principal as instructional leader, along with narrow measures of outputs, as evidence of efficiency and effectiveness in achieving school improvement goals at school, district, system and national levels.

Such approaches to research and practice are part of a growing trend towards technical 'solutions' to lifeworld problems of increasing inequities amongst societies (Bauman, 2004), reflected in diverse educational outcomes (Mills et al., 2018). In Anglophone nations, they are typically premised on neoliberal notions of the marketplace and economic standards ("inputs, outputs, targets and investment") as the principal raison d'etre for what constitutes the 'good' for children, for education and for societies more broadly (Mockler & Groundwater-Smith, 2018, p. 64).

This chapter examines the symbolic violence that can ensue when system and instructional leading practices are adopted that predominantly emphasise technicist approaches to educational disadvantage at the expense of lifeworld relationships. It does so through the lens of a case study of a major school improvement initiative adopted by an Australian rural Catholic education district. The reform was aimed at lifting poor and declining results for its students[1].[2] The district embraced new practice architectures of instructional and systemic leadership which in turn orchestrated major changes in the practices of leading, teaching, professional learning, research and student learning in the secondary school site under examination. However, the durability of these changed arrangements and practices remained an open question (Wilkinson, et al., 2019).[3]

Part One employs a practice architectures lens complemented by insights from Scandinavian organisational literature on how practices and ideas travel. It examines how the education district orchestrated new educational practices, which "hung together" (Schatzki, 2002) in the project of an ambitious whole school improvement reform of local secondary schools. It explores a key aspect of this agenda: how practices emanating from school improvement and effectiveness research were translated and carried into the district and secondary sites as part of a global movement of what has been described as a transnational leadership package (TLP)[4] (Thomson et al.,

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[1] I would like to acknowledge and thank my fellow researchers in this study, Christine Edwards-Groves and Stephen Kemmis, Charles Sturt University, and in the second parallel study, Peter Grootenboer and Sherilyn Lennon of Griffith University.

[2] Data were gathered from 2015–2016. Data included semi-structured interviews and focus groups conducted with teachers, school executive, students and district personnel, along with observations of classroom walkthroughs and coaching conversations. See Wilkinson et al. (2019) for further details of data collection and analysis.

[3] See our previous study of school improvement in Catholic education districts. The study revealed contrasting local site-based responses to system-wide reforms – one in which there was a tight coupling between district and school reform agendas (the rural case) – and a second in which there was a much looser coupling (the urban/regional case) (see also, Wilkinson et al., 2017; Edwards-Groves et al., 2016).

[4] Thomson et al. (2013) argue that the TLP:

brings together concepts and practices that were formerly confined to particular localities and institutions into a 'saleable' form … The product is … constantly repackaged … [and] consists

2013). It analyses how these bodies of research were "translated" into objects such as texts and school improvement tools, "travelled" to the diocese via human carriers (e.g., key district personnel) and recruited willing hosts (Czarniawska & Sevón, 2005; Wilkinson et al., 2013).

By "zooming out" (Nicolini, 2012) utilising this dual theoretical lens, I reveal how practices such as instructional and system leading cannot be understood in isolation from other educating practices and practice architectures brought into or existing within local sites. I explore how new webs of connections were formed in the district between key educating practices (i.e., teaching, learning, professional learning, leading, and researching and evaluating) as part of the district's quest for school improvement.

As part of these explorations, I also explicate how broader practice architectures of school improvement and effectiveness research prefigured educating practices in the district, rendering some educating practices less possible and realisable and enabling new practices to emerge and dominate. This process of prefiguration was not inevitable but instead unfolded as part of a dynamic interplay between the (cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political) arrangements and practices of the local education district and the case study site and vice versa. I examine the material and constitutive consequences of these relationships and the connections/disconnections between new educational ecologies of practices that enabled their emergence.

In Part Two of the chapter, I "zoom in" (Nicolini, 2012) to examine at the granular level, how new teaching and learning practices associated with instructional leading were carried into the secondary school via a suite of professional learning practices, such as coaching conversations. These sites of practice were aimed at creating new intersubjective spaces for educators—transformed language, work and relationships—through which changed sayings, doings and relatings regarding teaching and learning as instructing could be accomplished. As the conversations unfolded, I reveal how these practices encountered "faithful" and less "faithful servants" as their carriers and the subsequent consequences for transformations to teaching and learning (Shove, Pantzar, & Watson, 2012, p. 91).

In utilising the lens of coaching conversations, I explore the attempted orchestration of transformed knowledges of what constituted 'good' leading, teaching, learning, professional learning, researching and evaluating practices in the school site. This orchestration occurred through a variety of practices, for example, leading practices of instructing carried by a new principal and newly created middle leaders whose role it was to implement teaching and learning reforms. It unfolded via professional learning and researching and evaluating practices, for example, classroom walkthroughs, school and district improvement plans and teacher professional learning plans, regular student learning surveys and coaching conversations.

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of three mutually supporting strands: 1. A set of policy prescriptions based on the experiences of consultants … 2. A series of meta-analyses and effectiveness studies … 3. A cultural professional deficit where the identification of problems, agenda setting and strategizing is perceived as rightly located outside the school and where notions of professional agency are reduced to tactical, localized delivery" (pp. xi-xii).

Specifically, I reveal through the lens of coaching conversations how an ecology of instructional practices in the school was cultivated in which there was tight alignment between the education complex of practices of the district and the school. Creating new relations of power and solidarity in the school site, this ecology began to outcompete long held practice traditions associated with Catholic communitarian values and secondary school independence from education districts. However, this process was neither seamless nor uncontested, with clear disconnections emerging between new educating practices. In large part this was because of a disjuncture between on the one hand, new leading practices of instructing and demands for systemness, and on the other hand, the lifeworld experiences of some practitioners in the rural secondary school site—a disjuncture which technicist approaches to educational change tend to ignore or downplay. In Part Three, I tease out the theoretical implications of the above.

5.2   Part One: Mapping the Practice Architectures of Big River Catholic Education District[5]

One of the key thrusts of international school improvement reforms has been to address rising levels of concern in education systems across the world about inequitable outcomes between various groups of students (OECD, 2011). Located in a rural Catholic Education diocese in Australia, *Big River Education District* suffered from poor and declining education retention and outcomes at primary and secondary levels. In comparison to the public education system in the district, its student demographic was less diverse—predominantly white Anglo-Celtic, from a mix of middle and low SES backgrounds, with small pockets of students from Indigenous and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds [CALD]. In relation to its poor educational outcomes, it was like many other rural districts in Australia and internationally (Halsey, 2018). As a senior member of the education district bluntly observed:

> the high schools do NAPLAN and mind you our results in the high school were atrocious – over the last five years they have gone from bad to worse.

Lower levels of school engagement and outcomes in rural, remote and regional Australia are connected to decreased participation rates in vocational and higher education, lower annual income, poorer health outcomes and shorter life expectancy rates (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020; Department of Education, Skills and Employment, 2019). Thus, the district's desire to improve the educational outcomes of its students was underpinned by a powerful moral purpose and recognition of the socially unjust outcomes that were being perpetuated amongst its students.

Despite pockets of excellent practice across the diocese, according to senior district personnel, educational practices in secondary schools[6] across the district

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[5] All identifying details have been removed and pseudonyms are employed throughout.

[6] In Australia, children aged between five-twelve years of age attend primary schools. Secondary schools cater for children and young people aged between 12–18 years.

typically focussed on teacher-driven learning rather than learning-driven teaching. The problematic teaching and learning practices they identified included: educational *sayings* predominantly associated with disciplinary content and ideas with less of a focus on student learning; teacherly *doings* anchored in the transmission of curriculum content that overlooked the rich funds of knowledge students brought to school; and a set of *relatings* where teacher and students were isolated in the classroom from other teachers or students. The practice architectures that prefigured these practices of teaching and learning included (but were not limited to): *cultural-discursive arrangements* centred on specialist discourses of subject content expertise in the secondary curriculum, many of which emanated from the Year 12 senior certificate; *material-economic arrangements* such as classroom set ups of students arranged in single desks with the teacher at the front; and *social-political arrangements* such as asymmetrical relations of power between teacher and student that positioned the teacher as the all-knowing centre of subject expertise.

Most importantly when it came to educational outcomes, senior district personnel contended that teaching and learning practices were underpinned by deficit notions of rural students, accompanied by lowered expectations of their learning. As one district officer argued:

> One of the greatest problems we have in a rural diocese is the rural nature of the remote people staying in places long times, the horizon dropping, expectation dropping … So one of the things we have to do is try and get people to … get out and hear things at conferences and things like that so to raise their expectations of themselves in terms of the delivery of curriculum and pedagogical change.

In addition, there was a range of other practices transforming the stakes of the field and the quest for legitimacy in the game of educating in Big River Catholic Education District. These included national annual tests and examinations administered across all school systems, both government and non-government, e.g., NAPLAN, the state's senior school certificate, and internationally, PISA. They included the federal government's practice of publicly sharing all schools' NAPLAN results on the government's *My School* website. This revealed the underperformance of the local education district's schools and potentially threatened their valued market share of middle-class students and families. Relatedly, heightened practices of accountability in teaching and leadership experienced for the past two decades by Australian state education systems were now belatedly travelling to Catholic educational jurisdictions. These practices included increased demands by government for accountability of funding.[7] The demands were affecting the local Catholic district's principals, who were experiencing new and intensified forms of labour. As one of the district officers wryly observed:

> 80% of our funding is from government sources so are they just going to say well thanks very much, here's 59 billion dollars a year and off you go? They used to but not anymore. So I am thinking when principals are saying that they're stressed and they have never felt like

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[7] Despite their 'non-government' status, the majority of funding for Catholic education comes from Australia's commonwealth government. Government schools are administered by the various state and territory governments and the bulk of their funding comes from these jurisdictions.

> this, I think it's around that local and worldwide … accountability for them and their work. I think that's been made explicit to them over the last five years in ways that has never been made explicit to them before, and *they know that everybody is watching.*

Since changes to non-government funding and policies of schools in the 1980s were brought in by a conservative federal government, Catholic education in Australia has generally been perceived as possessing more valued capitals than government education systems. Moreover, an increasing emphasis on the "quality and quantity of human capital" as part of an "economisation" of education policy was considerably altering the purpose of and logic of practice in Australian schooling as a field (Lingard et al., 2016, p. 2). Big River Catholic Education District was not and could not afford to be impervious to these shifts.

Finally, a significant set of practice architectures prefiguring a move towards school improvement practices in the district was a shift towards network governing in Australian education bureaucracies over the past two decades (Ball & Junemann, 2012). Manifested in "new accountability relations based on performance data between central state and … departments of education and schools", the "datafication of schooling and comparison" via testing regimes and *My School* websites have become key practice architectures of "evidence-informed policy" in Australian education systems (Lingard et al., 2016, p. 2). They have considerably altered the practice landscapes (Kemmis et al., 2014) of state education bureaucracies across Australia. Importantly for this case study, they cultivated the (cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political) conditions for *potential* receptivity to carriers of school improvement, system and instructional leading practices into the educational district. Whether and how such transformations to practices occurred in situ, however, is an empirical question to which I now turn.

5.2.1 Orchestrating School Improvement: A Case of Travelling Practices

Annual test performances revealed the lack of success of existing practices adopted by the district office to improve student outcomes. As one district officer recounted:

> Five years beforehand I visited [a school] and results in NAPLAN are crap. And I gave a big squeeze and they went up for one year and then down again. So I thought okay the squeeze effect … doesn't work.

The new leading, learning, professional learning, teaching and researching/evaluating practices and their arrangements subsequently adopted by the district in response to these ongoing poor results "hung together" in an ambitious new district project of school improvement (Schatzki, 2002). This project, in turn, heralded a seismic shift in the district and its schools' practice landscapes with major consequences for its educators, students and communities. The transformation was particularly acute for local secondary schools that up until that time had operated independently from the district, with principals enjoying

great autonomy. In Wilkinson et al. (2019), these changes in practices and practice architectures in the district office and their corresponding unfolding in one secondary school site, *Ringtail Catholic Secondary School* have been mapped in some detail. Below I re-examine these findings via a process of "zooming out" (Nicolini, 2012): examining how system and instructional leading practices 'travelled' via particular carriers and in turn created the practice architectures by which hospitable conditions or "niches" (Kemmis et al., 2012) were cultivated in the district office and Ringtail Catholic Secondary School. In so doing, the soil was 'tilled' for receptivity to the growth and uptake of these practices. I then trace how the school improvement reforms unfolded (not without considerable contestation) in situ at the school through the lens of a new professional learning practice of 'coaching conversations' carried into the school by *Wayne*, Ringtail's principal and instructional leader.

In terms of new *cultural-discursive arrangements* unfolding in Big River Catholic Education District, recent research flowing from school improvement and effectiveness, system and instructional leadership was critical in providing district personnel with new forms of knowledge, ideas and thinking about students' learning. Layered onto the district's historical embrace of learning communities and practitioner enquiry as part of past school improvement efforts, they focused on the importance of placing students' learning at the centre of all district and school reform efforts. How student learning came to be defined was narrowly circumscribed, drawing principally on the strong positivist traditions of school effectiveness research. In many ways however, this was unsurprising given the trends towards datafication, comparison and accountability in Australian education systems noted above.

A new set of *sayings* in district office emerged from these new cultural-discursive arrangements. They encompassed notions of system leadership, the key instructional role of the principal or senior executive member in leading the focus on students' learning, and frequent references to data and its objectivity as a key means to support this learning quest. This was accomplished via a range of *doings*, for example, the sharing and comparison of individual school test results across all the district's schools, which subsequently impacted on *relatings* between district and schools, principals and teachers, and teachers and students. For example, in interviews with district personnel, frequent sayings occurred around 'systemness', 'joint responsibility' for students' learning and 'outputs' in relation to student outcomes. This emphasis on secondary schools being part of and answerable to the Big River educational district contrasted with a previous era when secondary schools were independent from the district and ultimately accountable only to their religious orders. As one senior district officer observed:

> so we need to embrace this [reform] as a *whole system* with *joint responsibility* around students learning which means it's about our learning effectively …and this is where we're going around the *system responsibility for each other's learning* because until that happens *students' outcomes* won't follow.

In terms of sayings associated with datafication, comparison and principal's instructional practices, the same officer argued that

[The data] … can be anything from *these gigantic NAPLAN analysis and senior school certificate analysis* to the *nominal data* that you collect around how students actually articulate around their learning. It adds a very important picture *in terms of what we really know instead of what we think we know*. The *principal* in here has *as much responsibility for the students in the diocese as anybody else.*

These sayings travelled into the language, knowledge and educational understandings of instructional leading as a practice, exemplified by the new principal at Ringtail Catholic Secondary School. Princpal 'Wayne' asserted that

it's not good enough to run a good school or it's not good enough to run a school that you're trying to improve – *you've got to be part of a bigger team and you've got to be just as concerned about what is happening in each of our schools* and on a bigger philosophical level about bigger than our diocese and that's the type of thinking that led [our district] into a *much more productive time.*

These instructional leading practices did not appear from the ether. Rather, they were prefigured by cultural-discursive arrangements—ideas and understandings about educational reform garnered from school effectiveness and improvement, system and instructional leadership bodies of scholarship. In turn, these practice architectures cultivated a more hospitable niche in terms of the conditions for their travel and subsequent take up in local sites of practice such as Ringtail Catholic Secondary School. Concepts such as "transnational leadership package" (Thomson et al., 2013) are useful in pointing towards the global nature of the take-up of certain bodies of educational leadership research and their interconnections/fusing together with edu-business in terms of 'what works' packages. But understanding how such packages originate, and whether and how the "enduring features" of the package's "daily being in the world" may be "produced, kept in place, and reproduced" in specific sites of practice as part of its movement and potential take up is another matter (Nicolini, 2012, p. 41).

Insights from Scandinavian organisational literature provides useful directions in regard to these issues. They posit that scholarly ideas and knowledge typically travel across institutional fields via a process of "dis-embedding" from their original institutional environment (e.g., the university or research institute from which they originated), and "re-embedding/translating" into texts (e.g., research publications in academic leadership journals, professional journals, conference and consultancy presentations) (Erlingsdóttir & Lindberg, 2005, p. 48). In the case of Big River district, the knowledge, ideas and understandings gleaned from school improvement and effectiveness, instructional and system leadership literature travelled to the district via an enthusiastic carrier, 'Stan', who occupied a newly created senior district office position, entitled "Assistant Director, School and System Improvement". The title of the new role and its inception were part of a broader orchestration of practices by the district that included the creation of new cultural-discursive arrangements and sayings gleaned from these bodies of scholarship. It was the language and ideas carried from this research into the district that was credited by a senior district officer as crucial to the district and Ringtail school's reform efforts:

[The principal of Ringtail] had to make all that – language comes into this (school reform) at every stage – the *language of learning*. Until the (teachers) could understand what he

was talking about they couldn't get what change he was driving and the *language is critical* everywhere along the line. So in terms of *systemness that language of the system is huge* … the Assistant Director started that and that's continuing on.

The preceding cultural-discursive arrangements and sayings were bundled with new material-economic arrangements and *doings* as part of the overall district project of school improvement. Examples of material-economic arrangements included the creation in district office of two new senior roles. These included one in school and system improvement and a second position of data officer, responsible for district-wide data collection and analysis. Other new district office material-economic arrangements that also proved to be crucial included district investment in upgrading ICT platforms and Google Docs across all schools so data could be shared within and across schools and with the district. Collectively, these material-economic arrangements in turn enabled the emergence of new doings in the district. For instance, investment in the new role of school and system improvement officer led to major changes in how the district conducted professional learning with middle leaders from the various secondary schools. Normally the coordinators of the various Key Learning Areas [KLAs][8] would come together with a district officer every term and focus on the administrative aspects of their roles. These meetings transformed dramatically with a new emphasis on student learning at the centre of all their work. In the meetings they were introduced to professional readings provided by the Assistant Director, School and System Improvement, which prefigured new sayings (doings and relatings) associated with the language of systemness, evidence and data. These new doings of professional learning were part of an attempted district wide "collective translation process" (Czarniawska & Joerges 1996, p. 25). Via literature and meetings with principals, KLA coordinators and thence school educators, the ideas and practices associated with professional readings were "translated/un-packed" (Erlingsdóttir & Lindberg, 2005, p. 48) for the local school sites. Like all processes of change, however, the emergence of these new practices and practice architectures involved varying degrees of contestation: creation, negotiation and imposition (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996, p. 25). We witness this below and in Part Two.

According to a senior district officer, a crucial new material-economic arrangement for the district's project of reform was the school improvement tool carried by Stan, the Assistant Director, School and System Improvement, from his previous education district to Big River District Office. Ideas and practices can travel not only via research and professional readings but may assume "object-like attributes" as part of an ongoing process of disembedding from their original context to translation in new sites of practice (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996, p. 25). The school improvement tool had travelled to the Assistant Director's old district via another diocese, thus undergoing successive processes of disembedding, unpacking and translating.

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[8] In most state and territory education systems, all secondary schools (including those which are 'non-government') will typically have a number of compulsory Key Learning Areas [KLAs] or broad areas of learning that translate into syllabus. There are important state variations but typically these include some combination of the following learning areas: Mathematics, English, Science, Creative Arts, Technologies, History, Geography, Social Sciences, and Languages other than English. In the senior years, Vocational Education and Training [VET] is also an option.

In the new district site, it took on new form as a material artefact, bundling together sayings and doings gleaned from school improvement and effectiveness research with an emphasis on data collection and analysis. This bundling together in turn presaged new social-political arrangements between district personnel, principals, teachers and students. As the senior district officer explained:

> I was going, oh, what are we going to do? We need to begin system improvement … [the Assistant Director] knocked on my door and he said, I can do that because I have done it in [my previous education district]. System improvement is *my thing* and I've used *whatever tool* they had there … Stan began to use parts of that system improvement tool in conversations but pooled in the *most contemporary research* that he could find in education. So *he began that process of giving – yes it was the language of school improvement and basically [the language was] "What do you know? How do you know? And what are you going to do about it?" That's where the data thing comes – "How do you know?"* And so it was this *continual mantra* for two to three years around system school improvement *tools*.

Other significant new doings emerged from changed practice architectures of governing. Specifically, a new district governance policy brought formerly independent secondary schools and their principals under the jurisdiction of the district. Previously, Big River District's secondary schools had been founded and governed by a range of different Catholic religious orders, with a proud historical tradition of independence from Catholic education districts and from one another. However, in the 1990s, this governance structure began to change across Catholic education dioceses in metropolitan areas of Australia. By 2015, at the time this research was first being conducted, these changes were reflected in Big River Catholic Education District. Thus, for the first-time secondary schools and their principals were held directly accountable to the district and not to their religious orders. This new form of accountability was particularly significant when it came to the district office measuring and tracking progress in students' learning outcomes across all schools, both primary and secondary.

A second and related doing which flowed from these new practice architectures of governance was a new practice of principal appointments, illustrated in the district's decision to employ new secondary principals who shared the district's overall project of enhancing students' learning. As one senior district officer noted in relation to the new basis for principals' appointments:

> It was around [appointing] a principal who was a *system thinker and not just an insular school thinker* … the ability to *think as part of a system rather than in an independent school* and everything that goes with that which is *inclusion and not exclusion.* So in terms of the strategy of our work … *we appointed system thinking people … very deliberately.*

What is striking about the preceding quotation is the automatic equation that is made between the appointment of "system thinking" principals and the implicit assumption drawn from knowledge and ideas associated with system and instructional leadership research that this will lead to better educational outcomes for students. The district officer's sayings are posited in binary terms, "system/independence", "our/my", "system thinker/insular school thinker", "inclusion/exclusion". This tendency to "describe the world in terms of irreducible

dualisms" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 2) and the automatic assumption of the dangerous "we" ("our") (Lingard et al., 2003) is part of a larger seductive narrative of school effective-ness and improvement research and its offshoots (Mockler & Groundwater-Smith, 2018). Appointing "system thinkers" as principals as part of school improvement efforts is "treated as beyond question" in the above quotation, for it has become part of the doxa of the Australian schooling field (Bourdieu, 1977). In other words, it forms part of the "common sense" of school effectiveness and improvement research encap-sulated in the district officer's sayings, a "default 'picture that holds'" many such educators "'captive'" (Wittgenstein, 1968, as cited in Stickney, 2015, p. 488). One of the effects of such sayings is that "anyone who raises doubts about it is regarded as either mad or bad" (Hammersley, 2009, as cited in Mockler & Groundwater-Smith, 2018). In this case, Catholic educators who aspire to principalship but retain the prac-tice memories of independence of secondary schools from the district are discursively located as not worthy of appointment, for they are "insular school thinkers".

Thus, the preceding quotation reveals changing *social-political arrangements* of power and solidarity in the education district. The locus of power shifted strongly towards the district office, in contrast to the previous autonomy enjoyed by inde-pendent secondary schools, their principals and the religious orders that employed them. These transformations in power relations in turn enabled changed relatings between schools and the district to emerge. For example, as part of the school reform agenda, the district took the bold step of introducing a new practice of sharing all schools' NAPLAN results with all primary and secondary principals. This also had the impact of further breaking down the independence of secondary schools as part of fostering new practice architectures of "think system, act system" (district consul-tant). The initiative formed part of a new set of district-wide practice architectures of accountability and responsibilisation of principals for the learning of all students.

A dramatic district action encapsulated this shift in power. As a member of the district executive explained:

> This year *every principal saw every school's data* … [When this occurred] there was *absolute silence in the room*. However, we took the plunge, explained why we were doing it and away we went … So Number One, it established the fact that *we were talking about our students in our diocese. It wasn't just this little pocket of students I'm responsible for* …
>
> And the [data officer] put several lenses over the results. [In relation to the highest SES school in the diocese], once you put an SES lens over that school, *it was middle to bottom in terms of what they really should be doing comparatively.*

New *relatings* between district and principal stakeholders are clearly emerging here. We sense new solidarities forming between new, "system thinking" principals and senior district personnel. They are on a shared, collective 'mission' – part of a joint district wide telos/overall project of practice to improve students' learning outcomes. Old hierarchies of power are dissolving, such as those between economically priv-ileged and less privileged schools, independent secondary schools, their religious orders and the district. New hierarchies are forming and the changing practice archi-tectures and practices of district educating reflect this power shift. The district's adoption of a new practice of comparing schools' data whilst placing an SES lens

over the results exposes an 'objective' reality, which renders principals "silent". And finally, new relatings between districts and schools are emerging around the responsibilisation of principals and teachers as the district asserts its newfound surveillance powers through the use of comparative data sets.

In Part One of this chapter, I have examined the orchestration of new instructional and systemic educational practices and arrangements by the district that hung together in a broader project of school improvement reform for the education diocese. I have traced how a new ecology of system and instructional educating practices was emerging as the district built a tighter nexus between leading, professional learning, researching and evaluating, teaching and learning practices in schools. They did so through a range of practice architectures of datafication, changed forms of governance and a range of disciplining and responsiblising technologies. The district's mantra of 'systemness' which travelled into Principal Wayne's sayings signified this key shift towards a tighter coupling between district and schools, compared to its historically far looser coupling. However, how did the district's orchestration of new practices and arrangements travel to Ringtail Catholic Secondary School? What forms of life did these practices assume, depending on the particularities of the practice architectures in the secondary site? Moreover, given that the take up of new practices is a "collective translation process", which needs to be "created, negotiated or imposed" (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996, p. 25), what were the struggles, negotiations and possible impositions within this process? With what material consequences for its various stakeholders? The second part of this chapter examines these questions through the lens of another travelling practice, the tool of coaching conversations adopted by the district and utilised in Ringtail Catholic Secondary School. However, I first set the context by mapping the changing practice landscape of the school.

5.3   Part Two: Mapping the Changing Practice Landscape of Ringtail School

Ringtail Catholic Secondary School drew on a largely monocultural student demographic, albeit with small numbers of students from Indigenous and CALD backgrounds. This contrasted with public secondary schools in the district that had larger numbers of CALD and Indigenous students, although still fewer than Australia's highly multicultural large urban centres. Ringtail's monoculturalism was reflected in its staff demographic, which, including the principal, were predominantly white and Anglo-Celtic background. Students were from a mix of middle and low SES backgrounds, with a leaning towards a more professional, educated demographic of parents. Unlike public schools, as a non-government school, Ringtail had the 'luxury' of selecting their student clientele and was not required to accept all students. Like other secondary schools in the district, Ringtail's educational outcomes were consistently lower than metropolitan schools, as measured by NAPLAN, senior school certificate results and students' projected learning growth from Years Seven

to Twelve. The average age of staff across Big River's Catholic Education district was 48 years. This compares to 42 years across Australia more generally, although 30 per cent of Australian teachers are aged 50 and above (OECD, 2018, p. 2).

There were several major concerns expressed by Principal Wayne when he first arrived at the school. These issues had driven the district's decision to appoint him and other like-minded "system thinkers" to the secondary principalship of the schools in the district. These concerns were echoed in senior district staff's sayings in Part One regarding the poor performance of its secondary schools.

For instance, in terms of professional learning practices, the principal argued there was a lack of exposure to up-to-date professional readings; staff was taking part in professional learning that did not have as its key focus, students' learning; and professional learning when it did occur, was an individual pursuit, rather than a collegial practice. In relation to teaching practices, the principal critiqued: didactic teaching practices; an overemphasis on the practice architectures of summative assessment; an incoherence of practice across the school; and a lack of reflection on teaching practices via diagnosis of data. When it came to students' learning practices, he observed there was an over reliance on the teacher as 'expert', a lack of engagement with students' voice, poor student behaviours, and poor learning outcomes as measured by performance in NAPLAN testing and senior certificate results. Disciplinary issues led to teachers employing largely didactic methods and being wary of using more collaborative and group learning practices for fear of student misbehaviour. In terms of researching and evaluating practices, there was no school-wide comprehensive analysis of available data such as NAPLAN and senior certificate test results to identify possible areas of weakness. Instead, the principal contended that teachers relied on individual "hunches" unsupported by data. Staff was not being exposed to the latest research ideas via further study or school provision of professional readings. Finally, when it came to leading practices, the principal strongly argued that there was an overall lack of focus on student learning as part of the overall project of educating in the school. Rather, the school's emphasis on pastoral care and wellbeing, befitting the Catholic ethos of *caritas* was reflected in its material-economic arrangements. For instance, children were in pastoral care groups with the same coordinator responsible for their pastoral care and wellbeing from Years 7–12. Middle leadership structures reflected traditional Australian secondary school divides between pastoral care and academic outcomes, with separate roles for each function. The deputy principal was responsible for discipline.

The traditional practice architectures of 'doing the principalship' in independent secondary Catholic schools was reflected in the "fiercely independent" stance adopted by previous Ringtail principals when it came to dealing with other secondary schools and the district education office (Ringtail English teachers' focus group). In the principal's words, although the school under previous principals did have an "education focus" to a certain extent, this was not informed by evidence. Instead, according to Principal Wayne, the principals "just made it up as they went along and were quite skilled at getting their own way". Accountability was primarily to the school's religious order. In sum, for the principal and the district, the 'old' practice architectures that privileged secondary teachers' solidarities in one's subject area, the 'sacred'

private space of the classroom and principal autonomy from broader architectures of accountability mapped in Part One, were to be swept aside for a new, scientifically replicable project of school improvement reform. As Wayne observed:

> *Similar things have been found all around the world in similar education settings.* It means you've got to take notice, and that whole notion that schools tend to *look inwards* just doesn't work. So it's *looking outwards* and I think anyone who looks outwards will come to the conclusion if they keep looking that *lots of our practices in schools are just, had their time.*
>
> The big issue for me [when I first became a principal] was understanding that *you've got to have coherence first*. Teachers have got to *give up that idea that I can do whatever I like inside my classroom* and if you don't get rid of that, then … we're just *sub-contractors* who come in, do our work with no connection to others and leave.

5.4 Coaching Conversations as a Site of Travelling Practices for Whole School Improvement

Coaching conversations were part of a suite of professional learning practices by which the project of school improvement could be carried into and translated in the site of Ringtail Catholic Secondary School. Travelling from business leadership literature into Anglophone education systems, this professional learning practice is part of a broader assemblage of a travelling caravan of tools, concepts, activities and policy levers that compose the "Ikea flat pack" of the Transnational Leadership Package [TLP] (Thomson et al., 2013, p. xi). Adopted by anxious, risk averse governments and school systems (Thomson et al., 2013, p. xi), it stands in contrast to the practices and praxis of *educational* leading as discussed in this book and mapped in a previous study of educational reform practices in a school district (c.f., Kemmis et al., 2014).

In relation to Big River Catholic Education District, coaching conversations were part of the repertoire of new professional learning practices that hung together in the district project of enhancing students' learning outcomes via school improvement reform. This professional learning practice connected up with other educating practices in the school and district sites, i.e., teaching, learning, leading, researching and evaluating, which together form the education complex of modern compulsory education systems (Kemmis et al., 2014). It is unclear how coaching conversations were first carried into the district, but it appears that 'Stan', the district's first Assistant Director of School and System Improvement was its initial carrier and translator. Whatever its inception, a previous study of school reform in the district (Kemmis et al., 2014) revealed that three years before the secondary study was conducted, coaching conversations were a new living practice that was being carried into primary schools via a group of district officers who had been trained as growth coaches. In one primary school site, this practice became part of broader practice architectures of professional learning which prefigured significant changes to teaching and learning practices (c.f., Chapter Six, Kemmis et al., 2014; Wilkinson, 2018a).

However, there was one crucial difference. In the prior study, how these conversations were translated in different school sites was part of a process of negotiation between the various schools and their district coaches. In other words, the district recognised the unique conditions of each school site and principals and schools were afforded considerable professional autonomy to implement coaching conversations in ways that they felt best fitted their school. In the current study, however, the possibilities for this kind of school autonomy appeared to have diminished as part of the district's broader mantra of "systemness".

As practices travel across time and space and unfold in differing sites of practice, they metamorphose. They are shaped and reshaped by consecutive processes of disembedding, translating, unpacking and re-embedding across varied sites and fields of practice (e.g., from the logic of practice of the field of business to schooling); and the conditions of receptivity in specific sites (i.e., the new practices' "degree of 'fit' with existing practices") (Powell et al., 2005, p. 239). Furthermore, as ideas or practices change in the process of translation, so too does the translator (Czarniawska & Sevón, 2005). I now turn to Ringtail Catholic Secondary School to examine this process in more detail. To do so, I draw on a range of data including: observations of two coaching conversations conducted on the same day with a group of teachers from the school's English Key Learning Area [KLA] and led by 'Wayne', the instructional principal; individual interviews conducted on the same day with the KLA's head teacher; a focus group consisting of the majority of English teachers who had participated in the morning's coaching sessions; and a range of one to one interviews conducted throughout the 18 months of the study with the principal, Wayne.

5.4.1   Coaching Conversations at Ringtail Catholic Secondary School: Setting the Scene

Designed to assist teachers' research and reflection on their teaching practices, coaching conversations were part of a broader district and school orchestration of professional learning, teaching, learning, researching and leading practices that hung together in the project of school improvement at Ringtail Secondary School. They were part of a suite of new professional learning practices that included classroom walkthroughs to affect significant changes in teaching and students' learning practices.[9] There was tight coupling between these two professional learning practices,

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[9] A report on the district's school improvement reform efforts noted the following, "In 2015, College leaders introduced teachers to an additional professional learning practice of classroom observation through *formative learning walks*, also known as *classroom learning walkthroughs*. In these walkthroughs, a group of teachers visited a classroom for a short time, with the aim of observing how students were learning. The focus of the walkthroughs was intended to be on how students were learning, rather than on observing teachers' teaching. The teachers held a debriefing meeting after the walkthrough. Several teachers volunteered to have other teachers visit their classrooms for formative learning walks; other teachers volunteered, or sometimes were selected by College or KLA leaders, to participate in the walks" (Kemmis et al., unpub.).

with classroom walkthroughs of teachers' practices viewed as an important means by which to deprivatise classroom practice, break down barriers between discipline areas, and focus on the learning of students. The coaching conversations took place after some (but not all) English teachers had been involved in classroom walkthroughs. They were viewed as an important step in embedding changed teaching and learning practices across the whole school. The conversations thus hung together with classroom walkthroughs as a crucial part of the new practice architectures of professional learning unfolding in the school, and in turn, enabling potential changes to learning and teaching practices.

A key aim of the conversations was to "stir" reluctant staff into new practices of instructional teaching and learning (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 58). Such staff (often older members of staff who had taught under the previous administration and enjoyed far greater teacherly autonomy) had proven resistant to the changes in the school. Two main areas of resistance included the perceived loss of teacher autonomy in the classroom and the school's shift in emphasis from a pastoral care to an academic learning focus (primarily, although not exclusively measured by test results and students' learning growth). This new stress on academic outcomes had been accompanied by a suite of other doings. These included, amongst other changed practices: the deprivatisation of classroom practice via classroom walkthroughs; the sharing amongst teachers of senior students' essays in a range of discipline areas so they could gain a better understanding of what constituted quality writing at senior level; and the analysis by KLA coordinators of individual class results to identify areas of weakness regarding teaching quality. As Mick, the coordinator of the English Key Learning Area [KLA] observed with some irony after the English coaching conversations:

> this [focus on coherence in teaching practices across all teachers in the school] is *from the top down* … the song and dance and the *hard push* and the reinventing of it and the refinement of it is because *so many of the staff don't see value in it*…. So if you repeat it often enough then in theory it'll work its way in, won't it?
>
> *That side of the English table* have variously worked together [to make changes] and that's been going on for about eighteen months. But then *this side of the table* go to their rooms and close their doors and so the PD goes on because there isn't evidence of it going on in all classes. *The practices don't change.*

Thus, coaching conversations, along with classroom walkthroughs, were viewed as a key means by which to change such 'resistant' practices (and the professional habitus or situated sayings, doings and relatings of their "faithful" adherents) (Shove et al., 2012, p. 91).

The practice of coaching conversations had travelled into Ringtail Catholic Secondary School via Principal Wayne as its major carrier. However, other members of the school staff were being trained in this practice by Wayne and Stan, with costs subsidised by the district. There was strong district and school alignment between this and other professional learning practices, with, for example, coaching of all teachers across the district tied to their individual professional learning plans, which in turn were aligned to the school's annual plan and thence to the district's (Wilkinson et al., 2019). What is of particular interest here is the attempted recruitment of a group of Australian secondary English teachers to new and changed ways of knowing, carrying

out and relating to one's subject area as part of a whole school improvement agenda. In other words, it involved the teachers having to rethink what constitutes 'good' English pedagogical practice as part of a broader project of developing secondary teachers' pedagogical practices that crossed over discipline boundaries. Hence, I use the lens of coaching conversations to apprehend in their granularity, the attempted institutionalising of new practices of English teaching and learning via instructional leading and professional learning practices, as part of a whole school project to solve the "perceived problem" of low and declining rural student outcomes (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996, p. 25).

The selection of coaching conversations involving English teachers as a lens through which to view the dynamic process of creating, contesting and negotiating in regard to changing teaching and learning practices is due to the nature of their professional habitus, or situated knowings, doings and sayings (S. Kemmis, personal communication, August 2020). English teachers' pedagogical praxis in Australia (and previously in England) is traditionally prefigured by a critical tradition of immersion in literature derived from an arts/humanities background, a privileging of discipline-specific content and pedagogy, a nuanced understanding of language, along with independence of thought, reflexivity and critique (Diamond, 2020; Gibbons, 2013). This habitus is allied to now threatened practice traditions in Australia of secondary content teaching as autonomous work—a proud (and some would say stubborn and outmoded) tradition of 'my class', 'my subject'. This highly individualistic tradition was being swept away by an insistence on systemness, coherence of pedagogical practice and all teachers being responsible for students' learning across all subjects (e.g., 'every teacher is an English teacher'). As principal Wayne explained in an earlier interview:

> We would always say we need better classroom practice as a persistent focus on improving teacher practice *but not individually – [it needs to occur] in teams.* We're very blunt about that saying if you're an outstanding teacher … we're happy for you but *it doesn't do much for it in terms of improving student learning outcomes* [for all children across the school].

This was to be the English teachers' first set of coaching conversations, in contrast to some other discipline areas which had already participated in three, all led primarily by Wayne. What marked these coaching conversations as significant for subject teachers is that the sessions were led by Wayne (who came from a different disciplinary background to most educators); were directed specifically at each KLA; and were focused purely on gaining consistency in key pedagogical practices across the whole school.

Prior to these sessions and Wayne's appointment as principal, the practice of professional learning had tended to be highly individualised and autonomous (e.g., a teacher deciding to attend a professional association conference in their subject area) or via whole school development. However, things had changed in the professional learning practices of the school as Wayne bluntly explained:

> **We'**re *not interested* in any professional learning *unless it improves student learning outcomes*… if it's not about *improving classroom practice … and student learning*, then we're not interested.

In terms of cultural-discursive arrangements, the principal's sayings about professional learning noted above were prefigured by what appeared to be narrowly conceived, reductionist and uncontested/uncontestable forms of knowledge and ideas about what constitutes "improved" student learning and the professional learning practices that would achieve this. These narrowed understandings of what constituted 'good' learning in turn shaped the doings of professional learning, i.e., which staff were identified and supported in gaining access to professional learning. The principal explained:

> So things are *by invitation* … a willingness to read … to *look outwards* can be really, really quickly identified. Once **we** identify people who are going to have a read of things, **I'll** give them a subscription to *simple things like educational leadership, the Australian Council of Educational Leadership [ACEL] journals.*

In turn, the social-political arrangements that shaped these narrowed versions of student learning and professional learning resulted in new relatings emerging within staff and between staff and the principal. These new power relations resulted in new solidarities and exclusions; explicitly described by Principal Wayne as those "who think the way you do" and by implication, those who do not. As Wayne remarked when he was asked to give an example of what he saw as important professional reading for staff:

> wrong drivers, right drivers scenario [by school improvement guru Michael Fullan] … That's a really good read … because it makes clear what **we**'re doing wrong … and after that **you're looking for people who think the way you do.** I mean it*'s bad luck but that's the way **it** is.*

In terms of *sayings*, it is interesting to see how Wayne's adoption of personal pronouns shifts across the interview. It moves from the lofty subject location of "we" when it comes to general pronouncements about what constitutes good professional learning ("**we**'re not interested, **we** identify people"; "what we're doing wrong"); to ownership of these actions when it comes to the concrete specificity of handing out funding to professional learning readings ("**I**'ll give them a subscription"); to the third person pronoun ("you … it"), which places the speaker at increasing arms' length from the consequences of the actions. Thus, the language implies a devolving and absolving of responsibility for one's actions ("**you're** looking for people who think the way **you** do … **it**'s bad luck but that's the way **it** is). We see similar discursive moves in the coaching conversations below using material artefacts and appeals to the objectivity of science and research.

The aim of the coaching conversations for all subject teachers was to build a shared language, set of understandings and coherence of teaching practices across the whole school. As an English teacher explained in a focus group held after the coaching conversations:

> This is a refinement of a process that was begun when Wayne first sort of stepped in here and started *challenging practice* with the *latest readings* on pedagogical practice … [It was then followed by a] good two years of trying to get down to *what's language and a process and a graphic representation* of how we want to go about our teaching practices in classrooms … a *model* that … is accessible for *all KLAs and for all teachers* regardless of experience or the content that you're trying to deliver. So I think this is … back to this *coherence* idea.

The notion of coherence of pedagogical practice across the secondary school, a model that is accessible for all subject areas and teachers no matter what their experience or content—pointed to significantly changed sayings, doings and relatings at Ringtail school regarding secondary teaching practices and in particular, discipline-specific pedagogies. These new demands for changes to teaching practices to support a focus on students' learning connected up as an emerging ecology of instructional practice to new professional learning practices such as the coaching sessions and carefully curated school improvement and effectiveness professional readings provided and translated by the principal. They linked up to the introduction of new schoolwide researching and evaluating practices, such as KLA coordinators' analysis of student data. Finally, they clearly linked to new instructional leading practices, such as the abolition of middle leaders whose chief focus was on welfare and pastoral care and the creation of a new set of middle leading roles, which combined academic learning and welfare.

Unsurprisingly, given that all major reforms encounter resistance and contestation, staff divisions had emerged. As Mick, the English coordinator observed, "You can see the alienation … in staff movements … because it's not a shared vision."

In terms of instructional leading practices, it is striking in a relatively large (by Australian standards) secondary school, that principal Wayne, a chief carrier of school improvement and effectiveness research into the school, led these coaching conversations. Typically, in secondary schools, they would be led by a senior member of the school, such as the director of teaching and learning. Although the director was present in the sessions, Wayne's presence and active control of them suggested the high stakes of this reform, both in terms of district investment in his appointment and his own reputation. His head was potentially "on the block" (Thomson, 2009). As one English teacher commented in the debriefing focus group:

> our previous principal maintained a fierce independence … from other schools … and the Catholic Schools Office … Wayne has said, "I got appointed to the job on the basis that I would do what CSO says" … it is a quite radical change from the previous [principal].

Leading, be it invested in the system roles of the principalship, a formally designated middle leader or the more informal influences of respected teaching colleagues, is a social and collective accomplishment. It involves the performance of activities in collaboration with human actors (in this case, teachers, middle leaders, district staff and research observers) and non-human actors, such as material objects—the table at which the coaching was conducted, chairs, the layout of the meeting room, professional readings etcetera. It is these entanglements of human and non-human that I now explore.

5.4.2 Orchestrating New Practice Architectures of Instructional Leading and Professional Learning Through Coaching Conversations

The performance of coaching conversations took place in a meeting room close to Principal Wayne's office. Most English teachers attended, including Mick, the head of English, a newly appointed district consultant (an ex secondary principal) who had been assigned to support Ringtail school's reform efforts, the deputy principal, Principal Wayne, the school's director of learning and teaching, and two researchers as observers (this author and a second colleague). In total there were 14 attendees at the first session. Seated around a long, polished conference table, the principal occupied the apex of the table, where traditionally in Anglo-European societies, the white patriarchal or 'father of the house' would sit.

The first conversation began with the principal introducing the telos/aim of the sessions, i.e., for English teachers to learn how to provide "fast feedback" in the classroom to students on the "performance" of their learning to improve students' understandings (quotations from Wayne). This move to "fast feedback" as formative assessment marked a considerable shift in assessment practices for English teachers. The latter practices were characterised by Wayne as "putting written work under your arm and you going away and you are [providing] … feedback for that individual kid, it takes you hours" (extract from first coaching conversation). A coloured booklet entitled "Ringtail formative practice coaching" and compiled by Wayne was distributed at the start of the session to all participants. Its front cover contained quotes from a number of researchers on the topic of formative coaching. Below are extracts from my observations of the two sessions that give a flavour of their unfolding. I begin with the first coaching conversation.[10]

5.4.2.1   Observations of English Coaching Conversation: First Session

10.20am: Wayne intro: "We're here to look at notions of formative practice. We've separated that out from assessment".

Jane and Chris (researchers) introduce themselves.

Wayne works through "Ringtail S C formative practice coaching" ***booklet*** (given out to all). Teachers listen silently.

10.35am: Wayne: "In sum, this is about the rise in understanding of the importance of teacher feedback to kids. We want two things—*decrease in teacher talk and increase in kids' talk* plus a *golden opportunity* for kids to redo work to increase understanding.

We started with formative classroom walks to look @ egs of formative classroom practice."

Wayne keeps lecturing from booklet.

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[10] I have transcribed my observational notes exactly as I had written them at the time in order to provide the 'flavour' of these observational note-taking practices.

10.45am: Wayne referred to **2nd booklet**, "Formative classroom walkthoughs: How prins & teachers collaborate to raise student achievement".

Wayne then continued summing up key points from Hattie, 2015, "What works best in education: The politics of collaborative expertise".

Wayne lectured them—took them thro' 9 Hattie tasks. Teachers mainly listened.

11.10am: *1st teacher interruption.* (took 30 min. from start of conversation for first interruption to occur). Male teacher, 'Frank' intervened, "teachers don't have expertise in diagnosis—they need it."

Wayne agrees and promises extra pd resources to help them.

2nd (female) teacher, 'Helen', then intervened and asked about lesson planning and support for beginning teachers because Wayne's mantra, "plan less, teach more" can cause confusion.

Extract from transcript: Exchange between Wayne and Helen:

> M: "So I'll modify my statement because when I do say [that], I'm anticipating that people understand I'm talking about fixing my content in my head. I keep always saying that the planning of our practice is critically [important]-
>
> F: I'm not sure that everybody understands that though.
>
> M: Thanks Helen, you and I will sit down and modify, we'll come up with a clearer statement-
>
> M: As a team."
>
> (All laughing).

At end: Wayne repeated that teachers need to talk less to big class & more to small groups or individuals (But he talked @ them for 50 min).

11.20: End of first coaching session.

In this first coaching session, we see a range of practice architectures prefiguring teachers' professional learning at Ringtail school. In terms of cultural-discursive arrangements when it comes to learning and teaching practices, the language and ideas about students' learning delivered by Wayne in his lecturing and the booklets draw on a range of pedagogical research around the importance of formative assessment and student collaboration and dialogue to enhance their understanding. The principal's sayings encapsulate this research in a series of mantras and clichés, "plan less, teach more … golden opportunity … talk less".

In relation to professional learning practices, Wayne's monologue of close to 50 min with turn taking initiated by him ensures he maintains the 'upper hand' in the exchange between teachers and principal. He performs his institutional identity as the 'head' of the school through a range of practices, including the adoption of the discursive genre of a lecture. The performance of this mode of discourse stands in contrast to the knowledge and ideas around dialogic learning that inform student learning extolled above. They also contradicted adult learning principles and the practices of growth coaching in which Wayne had trained. This irony was not lost on some participants. As one longtime English teacher, 'Aine', observed in the debriefing focus group held with the English teachers after the coaching conversations where only the two researchers were present:

there is an irony in what Wayne says … it may be a conversation but it's *much more one way and the opportunity to discuss* the ideas are *extraordinary finite* … And I'm a big believer in the role of bringing ideas to a meetings … that's a *massive change* [from the previous administration].

'Frank', who was the first participant to interrupt Wayne in the first coaching session, agreed. Pointing to the first booklet, he remarked:

We're encouraged to have the students reflect upon their learning and to give them a voice; [yet] we *as staff don't have that voice* or alternatively– and maybe this something that's worth thinking about – we don't choose to take a voice. Certainly, I agree that the *opportunity is rarely there.*

In terms of ecological relationships between educational practices, there was a clear disconnect between the leading practices adopted by Wayne (monologic, didactic) and his sayings regarding teaching practices, with teachers being urged to "reduce the talk to the whole crowd but increase the talk to the individuals" (first English teachers' coaching conversation). The preceding sayings of Aine and Frank point to other disconnections. These include an observed disjuncture between relatings of leading that reinscribe the positional authority of the principal and reduce teachers' collegial (shared responsibility) for leading, "*the opportunity to discuss* the ideas are *extraordinary finite* … I'm a big believer in bringing ideas to a meetings … that's a *massive change* [from the previous administration]" (English teachers' focus group). They also suggest a disconnection between sayings that extoll the agency and collaborative practices of students' learning, whilst simultaneously critiquing these qualities in current teaching practices, "as staff we don't have that voice".

The preceding disjunctures were enabled by the material-economic arrangements prefiguring the first coaching session—the objects, set ups, spatial and temporal arrangements—which emphasised relatings of leading as the exercise and reasserting of positional authority. This contrasts with notions of *educational* leading as pedagogical practice/praxis in the neo-Aristotelean sense of the word, as discussed in Chapters One and Two.

For instance, the material set ups of the room in which the coaching took place literally placed other participants 'offside' and 'off site' compared to more comfortable and familiar sites of practice, such as the classroom or staffroom. The set-up of the room, dominated by a long, rectangular and imposing table with the principal located at its apex, forced all participants to gaze at the principal, who was seated at the 'head' of the table. That the choice was made to locate the 'conversations' in a formal meeting room close to the source of positional authority—the principal's office—rather than in a classroom or a more neutral space—foregrounds the social-political arrangements of the Australian secondary principalship, characterised by top-down, hierarchical relatings between principal and staff, principal and students. This exercise of positional authority by the principal compares to other possibilities for professional learning practices, e.g., cultivating alternative practices of teacher dialogue located in lifeworld relationships, where a potential 'niche' could be fostered for alternative social imaginaries of what constitutes 'good' learning and teaching (and educating) practices.

In terms of social-political arrangements, we can see how notions of leading as the exercise of white, masculinist authority over other participants come to be associated with instructional leading practices. This is accomplished by: the choice of the room, its location and set ups; the dominant practices of professional learning which are adopted (lecturing by one white male authority figure); and the attempts to control what counts as legitimate knowing in practice via the distribution of material artefacts, such as booklets in which are distilled research by a small number of largely white, male, Anglo-American researchers.

It is noteworthy that it was an older male teacher, 'Frank', (and not the newly appointed middle leaders such as the coordinator of English or the Director of Teaching and Learning), who subverts Wayne's performance. He interrupts to express his (and other's) lack of expertise in student diagnosis. The principal is on familiar ground here—offering to deliver more professional training and support for staff in diagnosis of students' learning issues, and then returning to monologic practices.

The second subversion to the unfolding of the monologue comes from an older, female teacher, 'Helen'. She reminds the principal of the lifeworld of the school experienced by young teachers, arguing that "plan less, teach more … causes confusion" for beginning teachers. Wayne breaks his monologue and enters a more open dialogue with Helen. For the first time in the session there is a move from relatings associated with positional authority to a humorous acknowledgement of shared responsibility for improving practice. We catch a glimpse of what could be possible here for the participants in this professional learning practice, i.e., fostering coaching conversations as communicative spaces that "promote explicit dialogue between teachers and leaders' interpretive categories" and thus, *educational* leading as praxis (Wilkinson et al., 2019, p. 501). The moment passes. The exchange ends with Helen being 'put in her place' as Wayne humorously signals to the audience (whose laughter reveals they are in on the joke) that he knows the game Helen is playing (she is one of the identified 'resistors' who operates as a sole player) and he is equal to it:

> "You and I will sit down and modify, we'll come up with a clearer statement-
>> (All laughing).
>> As a team."

In this first coaching session, a range of leading practices emerge, prefigured by the practice architectures noted above and in Part One. They include instructional leading practices into which Wayne has been recruited. These practices (and their evolving connection to other practices, such as enacting particular kinds of white masculinities of leading) are part of the performative logic of practice which characterises contemporary Australian schooling systems and constitutes the subjectivities of secondary principals (Heffernan, 2018). They are a hallmark of enduring practice traditions of leading in the secondary school principalship in Australia that privilege largely white, individualistic, heteronormative and masculinist forms of power 'over' rather than 'with' others (Wilkinson, 2018b).

One clear characteristic of such practices is the confident, authoritative allocation of values about 'what works' when it comes to secondary teaching practices, based on a narrow reading and curating of the school effectiveness and improvement

literature. In the mission to achieve whole school teaching and learning 'coherence', other forms of knowing in practice such as that which is "sensible" (Gherardi & Rodeschini, 2016), tacit and discipline-specific is excluded or rendered inferior. It is no coincidence perhaps that these latter forms of knowing in teaching practice are typically associated with a highly feminised English teaching profession in Australia.

In terms of social-political arrangements, we appear to be witnessing a shift at Ringtail in predominant notions of masculinity connected to 'doing the principalship' as these notions come to be associated with performances of instructional leading. These features include: the authoritative allocation of values regarding 'what works', claims to education as a rational, evidence-based 'science', and a delegitimising of previously valued discipline-specific knowing in secondary teaching practice in the pursuit of teaching and learning 'coherence' across as well as within all subjects. In the first session of the coaching conversation, "different ways of knowing" in practice emerge as being "in conflict" and a "clear hierarchical priority" between them is being established (Nicolini, 2011, p. 614). The result is not only which practices will ultimately prevail but also the "identity and power of all" participants (Nicolini, 2011, p. 614).

The coaching conversation reveals that a "vast repertoire of latent knowing" is always present within sites (Nicolini, 2011, p. 613). However, these forms of knowing are "silenced and automatically excluded by the conditions of possibility" or practice architectures "generated by the extant regime of engagement and accountability" that exist within a site (Nicolini, 2011, p. 613). These "repertoires of knowing" typically only become visible when "one of the elements of the practice changes" (Nicolini, 2011, p. 613), such as a move from discipline-specific knowing to teaching coherence. When this occurs, "the resulting regime of knowledge/power is weakened and alternative hierarchical relationships", such as that associated with whole school coherence "becomes plausible" (Nicolini, 2011, p. 613).

Another instructional leading practice that emerges in this first session is that of *translating*—an attempted unpacking, re-embedding and potential institutionalising of "fast feedback". These attempts at translating unfold via: the distillation of "what works" research into artefacts (e.g., Wayne's carefully curated research booklets) that are reconfigured to suit the conditions of the local site; and by the coaching conversations, which at least in the first instance, are characterised by monologic, rather than dialogic professional learning practices. I now turn to observations of the second coaching session to examine its ongoing unfolding.

5.4.2.2 Observations of English Coaching Conversation: Second Session

11.50am: Wayne began again talking about formative learning cycle from Ringtail coaching handout.

11.55am: *1st teacher interruption* (took 5 min from start of session for it to occur—contrast to previous session where it took a lot longer). Mick (English coordinator)

asks on behalf of Aine (experienced female teacher)—"how can English teachers give fast feedback on a paragraph with 30 kids?"

11.55–12.05am: "You need to create an environment where it's safe to turn your back on kids" (Wayne).

Suggestions from teachers follow on from question. Give peer feedback. Also teaching kids to self-assess. Wayne mainly listens.

12.05 pm: Wayne did brief summary of discussion. Threw out challenge—Year 12 kids need to understand diffs b/w writing demands in Yr 12 Religious Ed and Yr 12 English.

12.07 pm: Discussion of creating an English policy on how much drafts to give feedback on. All teachers join in.

Mick—"I'm not clear from Wayne about giving feedback on English drafts. Where does that stand?"

Aine—"But historically it's been highly valued in English that teachers given lots of feedback on drafts".

12.12 pm: Wayne—"it's clear we need a drafting policy".

Wayne and district consultant raise issue of teacher malpractice—teachers basically writing students' scripts for them—this is not permissible but constant feedback on scripts can blur the line.

More discussion from teachers.

12.20 pm: Wayne draws attention to ***booklet***, "Teach more, manage less". Frank, same male teacher who interrupted previous session suggests changing word "teach" in the booklet to "educate".

Extract from transcript: Frank and Wayne.

Frank: "If you changed the mentality of 'teach' to 'educate', it's actually doing all the things that we've been talking about here … It's a small term but it's a philosophical basis from which you come and that fits with that." (Talking over each other).

Wayne: (continues on and does not respond to above comment) (referring to research quotation in Ringtail booklet): "It's essentially saying then that collective inquiry in teams [matters] … Essentially by getting into schools and *looking and replicating those findings in multiple settings, what a wonderful thing, education's being treated like other areas of research.*

I just wanted to *show you that **survey*** that's there, so that *you can use it if you want to.*

And we would say *use those **splotches** in your own practice.* Where are you going in terms of your classroom practice? Where are you now? What have you got, what would you like to do next and if you're learning for it?"

12.25 pm: Wayne wants teachers to articulate in their prof learning plan: "What's the professional learning target that allows me to focus more leading to new and improved student learning?"

12.30 pm: Session finishes.

There are some significant differences as well as commonalities between the first and second coaching session. In both sessions, we see a deliberate orchestration of professional learning and researching and evaluating practices to transform teachers' sayings, doings and relatings when it comes to formative assessment and pedagogical practices more broadly. There is a repetition of sayings drawn from sports coaching metaphors such as those which reference teamwork, be it for teachers or students, e.g., "we need to have a culture where that membership of team is our first work" (Wayne, extract from second coaching session).

In terms of instructional leading practices, the translating of research into practice continues apace via monologues explicating carefully distilled extracts from research, and encouragement for teachers to utilise student learning surveys and "splotches" on classroom walls to encourage greater reflective practice, "Use those splotches in your own practice. Where are you going in terms of your classroom practice? Where are you now? What have you got, what would you like to do next and if you're learning for it?" (Wayne, extract from second coaching session). The emphasis is on the technical, functional aspects of pedagogical practice. Moreover, there is no indication that such reflection should be a collective endeavour that includes the principal or senior executive's lifeworlds as pedagogues.

There are some clear differences, however. The first potential opening for dialogic, collegial discussion and professional learning occurs five minutes into the session. Mick (the new English coordinator appointed by Wayne who has the positional, masculinist authority and social capital) asks a question on behalf of Aine (a female, highly experienced English teacher). This question stimulates the first discussion amongst teachers in the sessions thus far about the specificities of pedagogy in a subject such as English. It is facilitated by Mick, who as a middle leader exercises his power to act as a bridge builder and translator of pedagogical practice between senior executive and the English teachers. He gently but insistently educates Wayne, pointing out the difference between providing "fast feedback" in a subject such as Drama versus English. In so doing, the potential for a dialogue between teachers is enabled. For instance, Mick observes:

> I know with performance [in Drama] and stuff the kids will do something and we can come and talk straightaway with them which is good, but with writing … it takes time for me to read your one paragraph and then while that's going on I've got to get [around to the other kids] …
>
> I actually need to do more of this where I say, "If you two were there and you give us your essays and we give us yours, and the two of you mark our essays and we're going to mark yours."
>
> F: That's what we do. So once they, once they've marked their own we say-
>
> M (Wayne): Right, that's good.
>
> F: That's good, now pass it off to somebody else and the feedback that we want you to give is something that, that need to work on.

In Wittgenstein's terms, we see Mick, Wayne and the female teacher entering a different kind of 'language game' to those that have been present up until now in the

coaching sessions. Exercising his "power of judgement", Mick's intervention reveals an awareness of the type of language game that they have thus far participated in (didactic, top-down, monologic); and the different game which he is attempting to engender, namely "developing [English teachers'] thinking and action" regarding formative feedback, i.e., their praxis (Lund, 2008, p. 188). Thus, in this exchange, their interactions suggest possibilities for their professional learning to become part of a collective, intersubjective achievement of shared meaning-making, rather than an individualistic, cognitive endeavour, imposed from the 'top down'. In turn, the former approach has far greater potential to enable transformed sayings, doings and relatings of pedagogical practice on an ongoing basis. Indeed, a significant difference between the sessions is the far greater level of interaction between participants and the content of that interaction in the second coaching session, compared to the first (i.e., drilling down into the specificities of *English* pedagogical and learning practices and later discussing the importance of peer-to-peer feedback and how to develop this learning practice). At key points, we see Principal Wayne exercising his "power of judgement" to enable a different language game to emerge that allows for a potential space for dialogue and teacher reflection (Lund, 2008, p. 188).

However, the potential for participants to move beyond reflection upon the techné of their practice is severely limited. This is exemplified in the exchange between Frank and Wayne. Frank suggests that the word "teach" (as in Wayne's saying of "teach more, manage less") be changed to "educate", signaling the different philosophical underpinning of the latter word. Rather than engaging in a shared process that opens possibilities to explore what educating as English praxis might look like in the local sites of Ringtail's classrooms, the two men literally talk past one another. Rather, Wayne in fact does respond to Frank, but indirectly, noting his "frustration" at people's resistance to "overwhelming data" that challenges long held pedagogical assumptions:

> Now I read that paragraph up the top (referring to a researcher quote) every week. I have to because it explains to you why it's a frustration that (quoting from the researchers), "We don't do what's necessarily right in classrooms, we do what we believe is right".
>
> Our assumptions are so strong that even, even when faced with "overwhelming" data that our assumptions at least should be challenged or questioned we still proceed. And [the quote] is essentially saying then that collective inquiry in teams [helps to foster professional learning and growth].

I have the preceding quotation from the coaching booklet in front of me. What is omitted in the above account is the section that stresses the importance of leading a "learning community into 'genuine doubt'—a cognitive state of dissonance" (Moss & Brookhart, 2015, p. 30). Leading the English teaching community into "genuine doubt" is a crucial aspect of beginning critical inquiry into individual or collective praxis, but is not modelled by Wayne's coaching practices, at least in these sessions. And the "overwhelming" data that Wayne refers to is in fact "overwhelming evidence" (Moss & Brookhart, 2015, p. 30). Such evidence can come from a range of sources, including the tacit know-how or "sensible knowing" of highly experienced English teachers. Such situated knowings (doings and relatings) are "perceived …

judged … produced and reproduced through the senses" (Gherardi & Rodeschini, 2016, p. 270). In other words, "sensible knowing" is a site-specific practice, a feel for the game of English teaching at Ringtail site. As such, it "evades" the "logical-analytical and scientific formalization" (Gherardi & Rodeschini, 2016, p. 270) of researching practices that we see eulogised in the coaching sessions, "replicating those findings in multiple settings, what a wonderful thing, education's being treated like other areas of research" (Principal Wayne).

Moreover, these assertions discursively perform a particular kind of knowing, i.e., an "Anglophone sensibility regarding science and society" (Blackmore, 2021, p. 1) which reproduces "different hierarchies of knowing and associated patterns of relationships" (Nicolini, 2011, p. 613). These forms of knowing are closely implicated in other practices, such as mobilising white, heteronormative masculinities, and in turn, producing differing regimes of empowerment/disempowerment. For instance, traditionally feminised fields of research and practice in Australia, from which English teaching emanates are accorded lower "epistemic status" compared to Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths and Medicine (STEM) (Blackmore, 2021, p. 2). In turn, this leads to a reconstituting of new forms of "epistemic injustice" (Fricker, 2007) as part of new governing practices at school, district and national levels.

5.5 Orchestrating School Improvement: Educational Leading as Pedagogical Praxis/Practice

For the English teachers at Ringtail Catholic Secondary School, participation in a professional learning practice such as coaching conversations afforded them a *potential* opportunity to collectively and collegially master a broader range of language games. There was potential for their "creative and reflective capacities" to be fostered as part of developing their praxis, be it cultivating a greater range and richness of depth of formative assessment practices in English classrooms, or other pedagogical endeavours (Lund, 2008, p. 189). As Wayne rightly notes, such practices can only be developed through collegial reflection on one's own and other's practice, with professional readings and questioning as important resources in developing such praxis.

However, for such practice/praxis to emerge requires educational leading as pedagogical practice/praxis, enmeshed with professional learning and researching practices that foster communicative spaces characterised not by coercion from above, but by "authenticity, respect and trust, a willingness to be present and listen, in order to promote perspective taking and learning from one another" (K. Ronnerman, P. Salo, D. Santos, J. Wilkinson, personal communication, 24.09.2014). And these practices can only emerge when new (cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political) arrangements are in place that foster conditions such as democracy, equity, diversity and social justice in order to improve and transform the circumstances and conditions of educating for all stakeholders, educators, students and their communities (Bodorkós & Pataki, 2009).

Zooming into the site of practice that are the two coaching conversations, we see that despite opportunities for dialogic enquiry, professional learning practices dominate that privilege monologue over dialogue and teacher compliance rather than collaboration.[11] We observe a lack of criticality and little or no problematising of key terms, for example, an unexamined assumption that pedagogical "coherence" across subject areas entails sameness of practices. Thus, rich historical traditions of discipline-specific pedagogies informing the pedagogy of English and the lifeworld of its subject teachers are ignored. We witness instructional leading practices that focus on the techné of teaching, emphasising pedagogies of low risk, high structure and explicit instruction rooted in the mantra of the "systemness" of teaching as a technical function—rather than the lifeworld of educating. This, in turn risks the growth of "bare pedagogies" (Giroux, 2010, p. 184) focused on increasing the market share of students for the school. Simultaneously, the potential for new critical pedagogical practices withers on the vine, e.g., to ask questions about what constitutes educating as praxis in the sites of English teaching in Ringtail school. Instead, although there is more interaction in the second session, the practice architectures of instructional leading that the principal deploys do not foster the conditions for leading a learning community into "genuine doubt" about their pedagogies. Largely the conversation becomes focused on compliance and the functional and technical aspects of pedagogical practice, e.g., how many drafts should English teachers comment on? Let us create a policy on feedback that satisfies senior English authorities at board level.

The researching practices carried into the school site and which prefigure the teachers' professional reading foster cultural-discursive arrangements that nurture a monoculture of pedagogical sterility in the local site. There is a worship of 'objective' science that ignores the site-specific funds of knowledge that exist within the room amongst the practitioners. Hence, researching practices in the local site appear to be confined to consuming and using artefacts (e.g., booklets with research excerpts) authorised by white 'father-figure' researchers. These artefacts constitute "active mediators of knowing" that are translated into the site of coaching (Nicolini, 2011, p. 610). The knowing that emerges from these artefacts lies in their practical use, "spring[ing] to life" in their "actual real-time practicing" in the coaching site (Nicolini, 2011, p. 610). The types of knowing that emerge stand in contrast to teacher initiated and led researching in dialogue and engagement with a range of educational research beyond school effectiveness and improvement. Furthermore, there is a eulogising of those who look "outwards" rather than "inwards" (Principal Wayne). This ignores the reality that the two are mutually constitutive, for in order to look "inwards", one must look "outwards" simultaneously, and vice versa.

The challenge the English teachers are left with at the end of the second session is primarily functionalist—what is the professional learning target that allows them to focus more on leading to a new and improved student learning? While not denigrating the genuine attempt here to reflect on one's pedagogical praxis, there is no

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[11] I would like to acknowledge and thank my fellow researchers (Stephen Kemmis, Christine Edwards-Groves, Peter Grootenboer and Sherilyn Lennon) for these collective insights, which emerged as part of ongoing, collaborative analysis of the data.

problematisation of what kinds of learning, for what kinds of students, to what end or broader purpose for the individual and the forms of life into which they are being inculcated? (Wilkinson et al., 2017)

In sum, in these two sessions there is an orchestration of professional learning, researching and instructional leading practices that is prefigured by amongst other things, a larger constellation of practice architectures of testing regimes, performative pressures upon the principalship from the district, and a cherry picking of narrow bodies of educational scholarship from the school improvement and effectiveness research corpus. Practices of professional learning and development and researching and evaluating have in turn become practice architectures of instructional leading. The desire to achieve "systemness" appears to be leading to a devaluing of teacherly autonomy and the discipline-specific funds of knowledge of KLA teachers.

The question then arises: how to achieve a balance between the two projects—one that does not deprofessionalise teachers, turn them into operatives or technicians of the system and dishonor their praxis (Kemmis & Smith, 2008), whilst simultaneously honouring the crucial social justice telos that underpins the district's school reform efforts? Furthermore, to achieve the above balance, what does this imply in terms of the sayings, doings and relatings of *educational* leading as pedagogical practice/praxis and the practice architectures that can foster niches for such conditions to emerge? In Chapter Six, I explore these questions through the lens of leading for social justice when it comes to students of refugee background.

There was clear evidence of increased satisfaction about the new direction of the school from newer teachers, students and parents at Ringtail. After we completed our study, student enrollments continued to increase and students' NAPLAN and senior certificate results accelerated, thus apparently justifying the district's investment in this changed direction. Moreover, many of the teachers expressed considerable satisfaction with how new ecologies of instructional practices evolving in the school were supporting and guiding their leading and pedagogical practices. As one younger, female English teacher observed during the post coaching conversation debrief:

> As the Assistant KLA Coordinator, [I asked] Wayne, could you direct me towards some readings in contemporary pedagogy and assist me in my new role … So I have found that personally very, very important as a new emerging leader to have that direction.

A new teacher observed:

> I love … the idea of the coaching conversation… challenging what you believe but also reflecting on your own practice and asking questions - not saying you're doing it wrong but how can I go better?
>
> [When you start teaching] you're on your own so coaching conversations are fantastic – and just saying, "Yeah okay I want to get better.

Furthermore, highly experienced educators reflected positively on the significant shifts in the practice architectures of educating that had evolved in the school, for instance, in terms of creating a common language of pedagogical practice. One teacher remarked:

After Wayne pointing and directing us to a [range of readings such as the formative practice document], I think it encourages informal, professional conversation in the staffroom … It helped us [as an English KLA] frame a lot of our meetings; we were a little bit more directed in how we [proceeded].

5.6   Drawing the Threads Together

I have examined the school and district's school improvement practices, not to castigate either in their genuine attempts to ameliorate the learning conditions for the students in their care. There is no argument that educational practices needed to be transformed across the district and its schools. The district and the principal's fierce and driven commitment to achieve this telos are admirable. Rather, what I have attempted to sketch is twofold. Firstly, in terms of *educational leading as pedagogical practice and praxis*, I have examined through the particularities of Big River and Ringtail's sites, how the doubleness of educating and educational leading as practice and praxis plays out in the tension between lifeworld and systems in contemporary Australian schooling. Kemmis et al. (2014, p. 25) argue that educating serves a double purpose, that is, to "help people to live well in a world worth living in". The sustained upturn in students' results and parental and student satisfaction surveys that continued post our study means that as measured by the "regime of numbers"—the new forms of governing knowledge on which fields of government rely—Ringtail is indeed an improving school (Ozga, 2008, p. 264).

However, questions remain. What forms of learning do the particular kinds of instructional leading practices sketched above privilege in the district's and Ringtail's "learnified" school environments (Biesta, 2010)? What other forms of learning may be marginalised as part of the relentless drive towards improving student outcomes? Are there ways in which distinctly different approaches to leading school change can be brought together to achieve the "promise of equal educational opportunity" and honour the diversity of populations and contexts served by schools such as Ringtail, the district and their leaders? (Wilkinson et al., 2017)

Borrowing from Habermas, in terms of educational leading as pedagogical praxis, how can *educating* practices be cultivated in sites such as Ringtail and Big River district? These are practices that remain sufficiently anchored in and sensitively attuned to the lifeworlds of practitioners (i.e., students, educators, parents, communities), and the conditions of life and work in which they engage. Simultaneously, they recognise the necessities and imperatives that drive education systems, particularly in terms of aims to achieve an overall greater good for the students in their care. In the final part of this chapter I utilise the lens of practice theory to 'zoom out' on the preceding case study and tease out its practice theory implications.

5.7   Part Three: Theoretical Implications

There are several important theoretical considerations in understanding educational leading through a site ontological practice lens, which are foregrounded by the preceding case study of school improving and instructional leading.

Firstly, all practices, be they existing, dissolving or new, require a performance of practical understandings, that is, knowing what sayings, doings and relatings are appropriate as a learner or educator in a site of practice such as a classroom. This "sens pratique" or "feel for the game" (Wacquant, 1989, p. 43) is always prefigured by the intersubjective spaces of language, activity and work, and power and solidarity existing within a site (Kemmis et al., 2014). However, what a site ontological lens such as practice architectures adds to Bourdieu's notions of "sens pratique" is the insight that all practices are organised by a "specific horizon of intelligibility", that is, "a certain way of understanding oneself, others, and the events that occur as part of the practice" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 5).

Site ontological scholarship, such as that of practice architectures, would also add that these "certain ways of understanding" that practices are composed of are, in turn, prefigured (but not predetermined) by the (cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political) arrangements brought into or existing within a specific site of practice. Thus, in terms of practice theory, the role played by intelligibility or "active understanding at the point of action" is a crucial marker of difference between practice theorists. Put crudely, Bourdieuian scholarship tends towards a more deterministic view of human agency, believing that "people respond more or less blindly to the objective conditions carried by the habitus in the form of dispositions" (Rouse, 2006, as cited in Nicolini, 2012, p. 164). However, ontological approaches to practice such as Schatzki's site ontologies and practice architectures theory view intelligibility as "central" to practice, for "practices are carried out by humans", albeit it "within a constellation of objects" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 164).

In this chapter, I "zoomed out" to examine how new "horizons of intelligibility" of what it means to be an educator and educating as practice were emerging as part of a collective process of translating in Big River Catholic Education District. These ways of understanding oneself, others, and the events that occur as part of educating were enabled via broader practice architectures of school improvement and effectiveness research, datafication and testing regimes that formed part of a wider "plenum" (Schatzki, 2017, p. 26) of practices, or ecologies of school improvement practice brought into the district. We saw how new practice architectures of governing—appointing new principals, investing in new technologies and steering schools and principals' work at a distance via comparison of school results, tools of school improvement and the language of systemness—enabled new understandings, knowings and doings about teaching, leading, student and professional learning and researching practices to emerge. These practice architectures and the practices they prefigured in turn recruited new practitioners as part of a district-wide collective translation process. In this process of translation, practitioners such as the senior

district officer who embraced the reform efforts, new principal Wayne and some Ringtail educators were 'remade'.

I then "zoomed into" a specific site of professional learning practices, the coaching conversations of Ringtail Secondary School, to reveal how this process was neither inevitable, seamless nor uncontested. I examined how new practice architectures in turn formed district ecologies of school improving and instructing practices that cultivated the (cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political) conditions and hospitable niches for the emergence of new understandings of teaching, learning, professional learning, researching and leading in Big River district and Ringtail Secondary School. Yet old understandings endured, jostling up against newer practices as they variously competed, collaborated and potentially created new hybrid practices in response to the specificity of the local site, e.g., in terms of a variety of practices for assessing students' written work due to the nature of English as subject discipline compared to Drama or other, 'performance-based' subjects.

As part of this process of zooming in, a crucial theoretical point emerges. That is, how individuals or groups such as the English teachers who participate in the coaching conversations come to understand, know, do and relate within a practice such as instructional teaching or leading is not an individual cognitive action. It is "*not [the] propert[y] of individual practitioners but of the practice itself*" (Schatzki, 2005) (my italics). This is a particularly important theoretical and practical point for scholars of educational leadership. It requires us to shift our gaze from the study of the individual/groups in the leadership practice (e.g., Stan, Wayne, the senior district officers, the English teachers) to the "horizons of intelligibility" prefigured by the cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements of practices, such as instructional or system leading. It invites us to investigate through a practice such as coaching, which "normatized array[s] of understandings, desires, beliefs, expectations, emotions, and so on" (Schatzki, 2005, p. 451) are participants being enrolled in that compose the "horizons of intelligibility" of school improvement in Ringtail? Which "horizons of intelligibility" are being constrained? What forms of situated knowing about, performing and relating to the lifeworld relationships and system roles of educating do such "normatized understandings" admit and which do they preclude? What are the consequences for student/teacher/school executive/parent/community lifeworld relationships in a site of practice such as Big River Education District or Ringtail Secondary School? What other forms of life might be re-imagined as possible given other arrangements and other "horizons of intelligibility"?

How this is achieved in practice is particularly important to examine and comprehend, given the totalitarian "social imaginary" that underpins practices of instructional and systemic reforms in education systems such as England (Gunter, 2016; Skerritt, 2020) and Canada (Stickney, 2015) and into which district and school principals are potentially recruited as they carry out these practices. We see similar totalitarian impulses emerging in the process of school reform adopted by Big River Education District. The school principals are shocked into silence as without warning their schools' test results are compared (and found wanting). The investment in new

technologies increasingly steers at a distance principals and teachers work under the colonising and performative language of systemness.

In the coaching conversations, we see evidence of similar totalising practices of instructional leading emerging as part of the "normatized array[s] of understandings, desires, beliefs, expectations, emotions, and so on" (Schatzki, 2005, p. 451) that is re-forming the principal's educational habitus and is prefigured by the practice architectures of school improvement and effectiveness scholarship. The desires, beliefs, expectations, and emotions we see emerging and are associated with dominant forms of instructional leading practices include: driving ambition, a desire to succeed, a genuine care and commitment to improving the quality of student learning, coupled with a relentless imposing of what is 'right' and 'wrong' when it comes to being a pedagogue at Ringtail Secondary School. What we do not see is an engagement with the complex lifeworld of English teaching practice, despite moments where a discursive space opens for such engagement. These "normatized array[s] of understandings, desires, beliefs, expectations, emotions" enacted from top down by the principal and the district emerge from the "will to centralization" of modern bureaucracies and the "root metaphors" of consensus and alignment embedded in the sayings, doings and relatings of school improvement and effectiveness (Stickney, 2015, p. 488). In turn, these practices 'hang together' in the site of coaching at Ringtail, in ways which render certain pedagogical practices as "necessary" and "inevitable", for example, providing fast feedback on students' writing, despite the temporal rhythms of English classrooms which privilege extensive time for discussion and written critique.

Simultaneously, other pedagogical practices are re-fused/rendered less possible, for example, co-constructing with teachers "value schemes and methods for assessing improvements to learning conditions in schools" (Stickney, 2015, p. 488).

5.7.1 Being Recognised as a 'Competent Participant'

A further theoretical consideration when it comes to understanding the emergence of new practices such as instructional educating and leading, is that it is a collective and dynamic accomplishment of including/excluding, enabling/constraining. In other words, being recognised as meeting the normative expectations associated with a practice, and thus judged as a "competent participant" is as important as knowing how to go on within it (Alkemeyer & Bushmann, 2017, p. 19).

Moreover, "[a]longside *what* one is learning, one also must learn *how* to act to be recognisable as a competent participant" (Alkemeyer & Bushmann, 2017, p. 19). Yet, as critical and Black feminists remind us, learning *"how* to act" and thus being judged as competent in instructional leading practices is a privilege frequently denied to Black peoples, women of colour, Indigenous, and others outside the white, masculinist malestream. Thus, examining how new practices emerged in specific sites of practice such as Big River Education District and Ringtail Secondary School reveals that learning how to act and being recognised as competent in practices is not an individual cognitive accomplishment. Rather, it is a social, site-specific

accomplishment orchestrated to exclude as well as include. How instructional leading practices emerge and orchestrate individual educators' and groups' "understandings, desires, beliefs, expectations and emotions" (Schatzki, 2005, p. 451) is a crucial aspect of the symbolic violence of pedagogic action associated with entering a practice such as instructional leading and school improving. It is part of the symbolic violence of misrecognising as a pedagogical practice (see Chapter Three for more detail).

Hence, the contribution that this chapter makes to understandings of instructional leading/educating as practice is to reveal in their concrete specificity, the site-practices and arrangements through which the symbolic violence of such pedagogic action occurs. It thus affords opportunities to (re)imagine how discursive, material and social-political conditions for educating can be orchestrated otherwise, with different practice architectures, and different situated knowings, doings and relatings.

5.7.2   Contestation Matters

An additional theoretical consideration in the chapter lies in relation to *contestation* of practices, an aspect of flat ontological theories that is often backgrounded or overlooked as per Nicolini's (2012) and Watson's (2017) critique noted in Chapter Four. Yet, as Shove et al. (2012, p. 91) have observed, contestation and agency are inevitable elements of social practice, for not all carriers of new practices can be counted on to be their "faithful or reliable servants" (Shove et al., 2012, p. 91).

Moreover, even if practitioners are "enrolled" in and performing competently new practices of instructional teaching and learning, such as the coaching conversations at Ringtail Secondary School, they may not be fully recognised as so doing. There may be lingering suspicions that some carriers recruited to school improvement practices are "(un)faithful and (un)reliable servants" to its underlying project, i.e., its desired ends (Shove et al., 2012, p. 91). Given that being "absorbed in a practice, also implies accepting certain norms of correctness (what is right and wrong) as well as certain ways of wanting and feeling" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 5), what of those who do not adhere to/fully absorb such norms and feelings? The response of the Ringtail principal to this question is illuminating. It reveals how new surveilling practices of middle leading have emerged as part of the project of school improvement. The carriers of these practices, i.e., KLA Coordinators and Assistant Coordinators are required to

> run the KLA meetings in teams, to identify the people who aren't [acting as team members] … We're reaching a point where we say listen if you're not in teams you probably might need to get out of the game, it's too important.

As Watson (2017, p. 179) reminds us, "some sites, some organisations and some people"—including those who occupy systems roles such as principals or leaders of learning in the district case study—are "clearly situated in systematically advantageous positions … such that they have distinctive capacity to act purposively in ways which shape action over distance and across locales of action". This shaping of

action via practice architectures or "technologies of (instructional) governing"—such as teacher performance plans, learning surveys of students, testing regimes, classroom walkthroughs and surveillance—presages the act of recognising some (but not others) as competent performers of new practices such as teaching or leading for whole school improvement (Watson, 2017, p. 179).

Moreover, these acts of (mis)recognising that form part of the practice architectures of new modes of governing and regulating (Ball, 2003) have material and constitutive effects. For enterprising new KLA coordinators and middle leaders such as Mick, it affords opportunities for success. For others such as Aine, it requires they take even greater care to construct and maintain a fabricated self, one that performs the acceptance of the norms associated with instructional teaching, whilst simultaneously wrestling with conflicts, feelings of inauthenticity and as we see in the coaching conversation, small acts of resistance such as questioning some aspects of the new instructing practices.

The acts of recognising/not recognising/misrecognising also draw attention to the changing *relations* between new and old practices that have emerged in the Ringtail site. This is because in "competing and collaborating with each other, certain practices" (such as instructional leading, or governing by numbers which fail to take into account local conditions) "have "establish[ed] the terms and conditions in which others interact" (Shove et al., 2012, p. 68). In sum, not all practices are created equal as the study of Ringtail and Big River district reveals. However, it does not follow that agency is precluded.

For instance, contestation to dominant practices may frequently evolve in the form of overlooked, but crucial "minor practices" that constitute "micro-tactics of resistance, local deformations, and reinvention" (de Certeau, 1984, as cited in Nicolini, 2012, p. 65). For educators, the classroom may be the site where these "micro-tactics of resistance" are played out, thus making the move towards the deprivatisation of classroom practice via student surveys and the sharing of lesson plans on google docs an even more fraught affair. Contestation to these practices is increasingly risky, albeit necessary business.

5.8 Conclusion

Utilising the flat ontology of practice architectures theory, fused with insights from Scandinavian organisational literature and Bourdieuian scholarship, this chapter examined the fraught issue of district and school transformation. In so doing, it deliberately eschews the turn-around literature of school improvement which focuses on 'heroic' individuals/groups of individuals or how leading is (re)distributed across organisations. Instead, the chapter examines attempts at organisational transforming through a practice lens: tracing the progressive disembedding, travelling, translating and re-embedding in the local site of ideas and practices adopted from research texts and objects such as school improvement tools, and their carriage by enthusiastic hosts.

The adoption of a dual practice architectures and Scandinavian organisational research lens allowed me to "zoom out" from close analysis of practices. This zooming out included observing and tracking "trails of connections" between the wider context and the "then and there" of practices associated with international educational effectiveness and improvement research and global regimes of testing and datafication. It also encompassed their manifestation and travel into new instructional and systemic educating practices and arrangements, i.e., the "here and now" of district and secondary school reform (Nicolini, 2012, p. 230). It revealed the brutalising nature of such reforms, and the symbolic violence inherent within the totalising practice architectures that prefigure the emergence of dominant practices of instructional leading and pedagogy in the varied sites of practice that compose Ringtail Secondary Catholic School.

However, what I have attempted to suggest through this necessarily imperfect and incomplete disentanglement is the possibility for *praxis* and other ways of imagining educating. In rendering visible how instructing practices are enabled, I have attempted to disrupt the *doxa* of such practices, i.e., the siren song of "universality and triumphalism" that accompanies dominant accounts of "system alignment techniques" (Stickney, 2015, p. 488). Such an analysis reveals that what is made through practices and the arrangements that prefigure them is never inevitable and can be unmade.

Practice theory approaches have the potential to allow us to understand how practices emerge, how connections form between them, what enables and constrains them, what keeps them together and how new practice architectures and practices connect to the "wider picture" of educating (Nicolini, 2012, p. 230). As such they permit us to begin to sketch potential answers to crucial questions about the broader project of educating in nations such as Australia, namely: "How did we get to where we are? What are the interests, projects, hopes, and manoeuvres, etc., that led us to the current state of affairs?", and thus, "How could the world be otherwise?" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 230)

I leave the final word of this chapter to Aine, the highly experienced English teacher at Ringtail Catholic Secondary School. I wrote to her several months after the conclusion of our data gathering to inquire about the progress of the reforms and whether, and if so how, her views of them had changed. The terrors of teacherly performativity (Ball, 2003) shine through her carefully worded email below. However, in the concluding line, she poignantly gestures towards the bigger questions sketched above as part of an ongoing project of re-imagining educational leading as pedagogical praxis/practice.

Email from Aine

Hi Jane, in asking the question, "Are you able to say where your attitude has changed?" I would briefly say, given this is a work email:

One becomes familiar with the consistent message. There have been extraordinary results in last year's senior school certificate so something has worked that which is way beyond anything that was achieved before (in English, in particular). The focus is very much on the strategies to achieve senior certificate success (learning) and

as part of the system, since I am accepting the pay, I need to support the school's direction. In that sense, I have put any personal views to the side so I am not constantly wrangling with them. That does not prevent private thought! However, acceptance does make work life easier and we will see over time what the long term consequences are for a broad based education, wellbeing and more.

Best wishes,

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Chapter 6
Leading as a Socially Just Practice

Abstract In Chap. 5, I examined how trends towards school improvement, redolent of the performance pressure placed on schooling systems from increasingly anxious governments, played out in a case study of practices of major district reform undertaken by a regional Catholic education district and its 'flagship' secondary school. This chapter takes a different, albeit related turn. Employing a practice architectures lens, it analyses the implications for socially just practices of educating and leading as a regional government school grappled to integrate students of refugee background into its monocultural student demographic. The chapter foregrounds a major moral issue for educating in our super-diverse times. It examines how educational practices were orchestrated in site-specific ways that did not 'other' refugee background students as deficit or construct them as the eternally grateful recipients of a host nation's largesse.

Keywords Practice architectures · Social justice · Socially just educational leadership · Refugee education · Regional education · Rural education

6.1 Preamble

As "micropublics" and sites of "everyday multiculturalism" (Ho, 2011), formal educational sites such as schools, early childhood centres and higher education play a crucial role in fostering children and young people's sense of connectedness to community and society, engagement and overall wellbeing. This is particularly the case for students from refugee background (Arar et al., 2019; Kaukko & Wilkinson, 2020). However, this process cannot be taken-for-granted. Equally, the practices of formal educating and the arrangements that hold them in place can be uneducational and (mis)leading (Brooks, 2012). They can foster disengagement, reproduce disadvantage and prejudice and exacerbate inequalities (Dunwoodie et al., 2020; Major et al., 2013; Matthews, 2008). Hence, the integration of refugee

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background students in settler nations raises major ethical questions about contemporary practices of schooling in reproducing or transforming disadvantage and the arrangements/conditions that make these practices more or less possible.

Utilising the lens of practice architectures and ecologies of practice, this chapter analyses (informal and positional) leading as a "practice-changing practice" (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 177). It examines whether and if so how, a variety of leading practices connected up to and shaped other educating practices in the practice landscape of *Regional High School*[1] and its education district, in ways that fostered niches more hospitable to the emergence of *educational* praxis as "right conduct" for students of refugee background (Kemmis & Smith, 2008, p. 4).[2] It is this latter aspect of *educational* leading which is the key focus of the chapter.

In examining these issues, the chapter foregrounds problematic silences in the doxa of school improvement and instructional leading embraced with such fervour by Anglophone education systems, such as Big River Catholic Education District (see Chap. 5). These silences include: a lack of consideration in dominant scholarship of issues of social justice and equity when it comes to understanding how to create conditions for educating practices to emerge that are site-responsive to the needs of students from varied equity backgrounds. They include a devaluing of educational leading as a "praxis-oriented practice" (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 177) that is ethically and morally informed and rooted in socially critical practice traditions in the education field (Kemmis & Grootenboer, 2008). One characteristic of such praxis is attention to context, i.e., the nurturing of site-based *education* development rooted in responsiveness to the conditions that are found in local sites. As this chapter reveals, this responsiveness is particularly important for students from refugee backgrounds. Yet, a major appeal of school improvement efforts is their characterisation of leading and system practices as generalisable forms of techné that can be unproblematically transplanted into nation states, educational districts and schools characterised by very different practice landscapes and traditions.

In addition, these silences include a lack of understanding of the crucial role played by broader practice architectures of schooling systems in enabling and constraining the conditions for more socially just, site-specific educating practices to emerge. In ignoring how these practice architectures distort the field of schooling, through, for example, persistent problems of maldistribution in school funding in Australia (Cobbald, 2020), scholars are persistently misrecognising these forms of injustice in ways that reproduce the inequitable doxa of the field.

In relation to issues of social justice and equity and silences within educational leadership scholarship, the most up to date figures reveal that in the past decade the world has experienced the largest number of displaced peoples since the Second World War—79.5 million (UNHCR, 2019). An estimated 40% of this population (30–34 million) are children under the age of eighteen (UNHCR, 2019). These trends raise serious moral dilemmas for how settler nation states and their education systems can support the young people in their care. Yet there has been little research conducted

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[1] All names are pseudonyms and identifying details have been anonymised.

[2] See Chap. 2 for a detailed discussion of this concept.

on the implications of this global movement for educational leadership practice, particularly in terms of more socially just praxis.[3] This lacuna reflects a key blind spot in contemporary narratives of school improvement and effectiveness, which despite their insistence on the 'moral purpose' of educating, ignore issues of social justice. Their underlying assumption of a scientifically rationalist paradigm eschews considerations of context and equity for an insistence on a one size fits all, generic formula of leading as "transmissive pedagogy" (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 177).

In terms of the refugee education literature, although there has been an emerging body of research that has examined issues of refugee student resettlement, it has typically focussed on urban settings. Yet, living in a regional town for many years, my co-researcher[4] and I witnessed major shifts in the locale's dominant white, Anglo-Celtic Australian demographic. These changes reflected a key change in the practice architectures of federal government immigration policies, whereby refugee settlement was being steered from populous urban centres to regional Australia. There were clear implications of this new policy for education districts and schools, and, for educators' practice in rural and regional centres. However, these were not being explored in the refugee education literature (Major et al., 2013).

Most importantly, the social justice impacts of changes to Australian settlement policies were poorly understood when it came to changing educational practices to better support students of refugee background. We resolved to redress this imbalance, with a particular focus on mapping potential changes to *practices* of regional educators, (including informal and positional leading practices); the implications for

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[3] There are some exceptions to this lacuna. See, for example, Arar (2020). *School leadership for refugees' education: Social justice leadership for immigrant, migrants and refugees*. Routledge. Arar et al. (2019). Refugees in their own land: The challenge of managing a school in a Palestinian refugee camp in the divided city of Jerusalem. In K. Arar, J. S. Brooks, and I. Bogotch (Eds.), *Education, immigration and migration: Policy, leadership and praxis for a changing world* (pp. 191–212). Emerald Publishing Limited. Bogotch & Kervin (2019). Leadership and policy dilemmas: Syrian newcomers as future citizens of Ontario, Canada. In K. Arar, J. S. Brooks, and I. Bogotch (Eds.), *Education, immigration and migration: Policy, leadership and praxis for a changing world* (pp. 33–52). Emerald Publishing Limited. Faubert & Tucker (2019). Leading K-12 refugee integration: A GENTLE approach from Ontario, Canada. In K. Arar, J. S. Brooks, and I. Bogotch (Eds.), *Education, immigration and migration: Policy, leadership and praxis for a changing world* (pp. 53–72). Emerald Publishing Limited. Norberg (2019). Business as usual or a state of emergency? School leadership during an unprecedented increase in asylum-seekers. In K. Arar, J. S. Brooks, and I. Bogotch (Eds.), *Education, immigration and migration: Policy, leadership and praxis for a changing world* (pp. 267–284). Emerald Publishing Limited. Wilkinson, J., & Kaukko, M. (2021). How to support students of refugee background in your school. In J. Brooks, & A. Heffernan (Eds.), *The school leadership survival guide: What to do when things go wrong, how to learn from mistakes, and why you should prepare for the worst*. Information Age Publishing. Wilkinson & Kaukko (2020). Educational leading as pedagogical love: The case for refugee education. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, *23*(1), 61–76. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2019.1629492. Wilkinson & Kaukko (2019). Leading for praxis and refugee education: Orchestrating ecologies of socially just practices. In K. Arar, J. S. Brooks, & I. Bogotch (Eds.). *Education, immigration and migration: Policy, Leadership and Praxis for a changing world* (pp. 109–130). Emerald Publishing. See also a special issue of *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 23*(1) devoted to refugee education and leadership.

[4] I would like to acknowledge and thank my co-researcher for this study, Dr. Kip Langat.

educational *praxis*; and how changes to educating practices such as teaching, professional learning, leading and researching potentially connected up to transformations in students' learning practices. The chapter arose from this larger research program.[5]

6.2   Introduction

Leading practices—be they formal or informal, school, district or central office based—both shape and are shaped by, transform and are transformed by the site-specific practice arrangements with which they are enmeshed. Leading *as a socially just practice* is composed of a set of practical and political actions, that is, actions which cannot be foretold or steered at a distance by central policies, implementation plans, or accountability mechanisms. Such practices are struggled over, hard-won, constantly contested and must be interactionally secured in the moment-by-moment 'happening-ness' of practices within specific sites (Kemmis et al., 2014; Schatzki, 2002).

In this chapter, I examine this contestation through the lens of leading practices at Regional High School, a largely monocultural secondary school in Australia which had become increasingly multicultural due to the arrival of refugee origin students from diverse African nations including South Sudan, Sierra Leone and Liberia. Unlike Ringtail Catholic Secondary College in Chap. 5, Regional High was part of the state government publicly funded education system. No school fees were required to be paid by families and enrolment was open to all students. Hence Regional High School's changing demography more accurately reflected broader trends of growing ethnic diversity in urban and regional locations in OECD nations (cf. Major et al., 2013; Makwarimba et al., 2013; Whiteman, 2005). It was also typical of comprehensive public schools which in Australia disproportionately bear the greatest load when it comes to educating students from equity backgrounds, albeit with less federal government resourcing compared to non-government schools (Cobbald, 2020). In this chapter, I examine how changes in the cultural-discursive, material-economic, and social-political conditions for leading and professional learning practices at

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[5] See, for example, Major et al., (2013). Sudanese young people of refugee background in rural and regional Australia: Social capital and education success. *Australian and International Journal of Rural Education, 23*(3), 95–105. Santoro & Wilkinson (2015). Sudanese young people building capital in rural Australia: The role of mothers and community. *Ethnography and Education*, *11*(1), 107–120. https://doi.org/10.1080/17457823.2015.1073114. Wilkinson (2018). 'We're going to call our kids "African Aussies"': Leading for diversity in regional Australia. In J. Wilkinson & L. Bristol (Eds.), *Examining leadership as a culturally-constructed practice: New directions and possibilities* (pp. 54–74). Routledge. Wilkinson & Langat (2012). Exploring educators' practices for African students from refugee backgrounds in an Australian regional high school. *The Australasian Review of African Studies, 33*(2), 158–177. Retrieved from http://afsaap.org.au/assets/ARAS_Vol_XXX III_2_Wilkinson_Langat1.pdf. Wilkinson et al. (2017), Sudanese refugee youth and educational success: The role of church and youth group in supporting cultural and academic adjustment and schooling achievement. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 60*, 210–219. https://doi. org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2017.04.003.

the school fostered the emergence of transformed sets of discourses, activities, and relationships. These changes suggested that some educators and students were experiencing a growing sense of shared responsibility for socially just practices.

Like Ringtail Catholic Secondary School, these changes did not occur in isolation from the broader practice landscape in which the school was embedded. For instance, leading practices within the lifeworld of the school site 'travelled' out to, and connected up with, regional and state offices of the Department of Education responsible for schools in the state.[6] They connected to discourses emanating from specific state education department equity and anti-racist policies, via funding and resourcing arrangements linked to these policies, and in the relationships between practices that were shaped by these discursive and material arrangements. I argue that these arrangements supported more receptive conditions for fostering socially just and inclusive educational practices in the school […].

In this chapter, I distinguish between the positional leading practices of those participants who hold formal positions of authority—such as the principal and deputy principal of Regional High School, Regional District's equity officer and regional director—and the informal leading practices of practitioners at Regional High School, such as its counsellors, English as an Additional Language or Dialect [EALD] teachers, and School Support Officers (Ethnic).[7] In making these distinctions, I draw on Northern European pedagogical understandings of leading practice as a shared responsibility—in the more holistic sense of the moral and social formation of the whole child—that is, "education as up-bringing" (Kemmis & Grootenboer, 2008) (see Chap. 2 for more detail).

In the remainder of this chapter […] I examine how the leading practices of the school, district and central office, along with other educational practices such as enacting policy and professional learning, connected up in ways that supported the creation of conditions of receptivity for this new cohort of students. I also sketch disconnections between leading practices and other crucial sites of practice – teaching and students' academic learning—which hindered a greater movement of shared responsibility for socially just practices. I conclude with a discussion of the theoretical and practical utility and limitations of practice architectures when it comes to examining leading practices as sites of and for social justice.

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[6] Unlike Catholic education districts and schools, in Australia all government schools are funded and regulated by various state governments. They are steered by state government education policies and are ultimately accountable to these jurisdictions.

[7] 'School Support Officer [Ethnic]' was the formal title employed by the Department of Education and Training at the time this study was conducted. Hence, I have elected to use this title.

6.3   Mapping the Practice Architectures Reshaping Regional High School

In 2004, in response to declining populations and labour market shortages in regional Australia, the Australian Federal Government enacted a change to refugee policy. It declared that up to 45% of all humanitarian settlers should be located in the regions (Withers & Powall, 2003). As a result, the previously monocultural face of a number of regional centres began to alter. Settlers who were 'visibly different' from the largely white population arrived and took up residence in local communities, shopping, attending schools, worshipping in churches, participating in sport and attending schools and community colleges. For instance, between 2003 and 2011, humanitarian entrants from a variety of African nations were settled in significant numbers in New South Wales, the state in which the case study was located. The figures for primary settlement of African origin refugees at the time of the study included a total of 1505 refugees distributed amongst four regional cities in New South Wales. In terms of Sudanese-born people (the group which were predominantly represented amongst the students in the case study school); the 2006 census recorded 19,050 Sudan-born people in Australia, an increase of 287.7% from the 2001 census (Department of Immigration and Citizenship [DIAC], 2011).

Yet, despite this changing demographic for Regional High School and other similar public schools located in regional settings, little research had been specifically conducted on the implications for *educational practices* (teachers, administrators, district staff, and students) of this shift in previously more monocultural locations. This is even though access to services, as well as knowledge and expertise about EALD students, was limited in regional and rural Australia, with the exception of a handful of culturally diverse regional locations. Hence, the case study of Regional High School, *Examining school leadership and pedagogical practices in an ethnically diverse school in regional New South Wales* attempted to fill this gap. It examined the changes which may have occurred in the leadership and teaching practices of the school in response to increasing student diversity (cf. Wilkinson & Langat, 2012; Wilkinson et al., 2013).

The case study was conducted from 2009–2010 and consisted of interviews with the principal and two deputy principals; careers counsellor; Maths and EALD head teachers; School Support Officer (Ethnic), and the region's equity coordinator. Two focus groups were also held with mainstream classroom teachers from the following faculties: Technology and Applied Studies [TAS], Physical Education, Mathematics, English/History, Science, and Visual Arts. Focus groups were also conducted with the school's two welfare counsellors; the EALD teachers; two focus groups with EALD students; and a focus group with students from ethnic majority backgrounds.

Analysis was initially conducted through the use of NVIVO software in order to code, categorise and link ideas, and accurately annotate each transcript. Three themes emerged from this analysis: (1) the challenges for EALD students and educators when it came to students settling into a previously monocultural school; (2) the development of whole school practices for social justice and inclusion; and (3) the

role of teaching practices in enabling and/or constraining students' ethnic diversity. In this chapter, I focus on the second of these themes.

6.4   Developing Whole School Practices of/for Social Justice and Inclusion

For Regional High School, increasing numbers of EALD students, and those from refugee backgrounds from a variety of African countries, posed a number of significant challenges and opportunities for administrators, teachers, and students (both of refugee origin and non-refugee origin). Although these issues may have been familiar to many schools in urban environments, they were new to the region. In the past, a small number of EALD students came to Regional High School, including refugees from the former Yugoslavia and Iran. However, the larger numbers and increased learning and behavioural complexities associated with this new group of EALD students from diverse African nations posed new issues with which the school initially struggled.

A number of students were not literate in their first language and, due to civil war and long periods of time spent in refugee camps, had either interrupted or no schooling, prior to arrival in Australia. The cultural-discursive conditions of learning and teaching practices in Australian classrooms are still largely predicated on the discourse of the literate learner, that is, constructs of the Anglo-Australian student who has had years of continuous formal schooling based on engagement with written texts. In contrast, many of the students were illiterate in their first language but came from backgrounds where oracy and narrative were valued forms of cultural capital. Hence, many of the teachers struggled to shift from a deficit view of the students as learners, to an asset approach which focused on the multilingual and oracy strengths this new cohort of students brought to the classroom (Wilkinson & Langat, 2012).

Moreover, a number of the students suffered from a range of traumas as a result of their experiences living in high conflict zones prior to arrival in Australia. The combination of these major literacy demands, lack of familiarity with formal school settings, along with high levels of personal trauma, created a new set of circumstances in regard to EALD students. The most urgent need identified as a result of this new cohort of students was in terms of material-economic arrangements to support their language learning, for instance, creating an intensive English class, rather than students immediately being located in mainstream classes with very little extra support. Funding for English as a Second Language [EALD] teaching in Australia is based purely on numbers of students. As urban centres tend to attract far greater numbers of students of refugee origin, the region did not have an Intensive English Language Centre into which students could be placed in order to cater for their specific learning demands.

Other pressing needs in terms of material-economic arrangements that both teacher focus groups and the executive team identified were: developing a more

positive and reflexive welfare system which was proactive, rather than reactive; and providing professional learning activities which would support mainstream teachers catering academically and socially for the diverse range of learners in their classrooms (Wilkinson & Langat, 2012). However, both the school's executive team and the teachers identified one of the most urgent projects of their practices in terms of social-political arrangements, that is, nurturing a socially inclusive culture that would welcome this new group of students in a positive, affirming and ongoing way.

Both the principal and the deputy principal responsible for students of refugee origin articulated this *telos* or aim as a major project of the school, that is, that it was an inclusive school which welcomed and catered for students of a wide range of abilities, skills, and backgrounds. These included Indigenous, Gifted and Talented students, and students with intellectual and physical disabilities. This telos appeared to create a niche, that is, a more hospitable set of practice conditions with which to receive students of refugee origin (Kemmis et al., 2012a, b), in that the language and activities of the school executive were framed in terms of the opportunities provided by the students' arrival, rather than as 'problems' to be solved. Critically, both members of the executive team recognised early on that nurturing such a culture in their previously monocultural school would require not only changes to material-economic arrangements such as extra EALD resources and upskilling of all staff, but changes to how staff *thought* about diversity; and shifts in *relatings* between staff and students, and between students and students (…).

6.5 Transformations in Practice Architectures of/for Socially Just and Inclusive Practices at Regional High School

Both the principal and the deputy principal designated as responsible for the welfare of students of refugee background recognised the power of discourses such as 'African' to frame students as 'other' and subaltern to a taken-for-granted, Anglo-Australian mainstream student. The principal engaged in a range of formal and informal practices to influence the language of staff in relation to students. These included raising staff awareness of the deleterious material effects of homogenising and essentialising students of refugee background as 'African', thus flattening out the rich cultural, linguistic, and historical diversity between the students' nations. He commented:

> There's a huge diversity in the kids we're getting … we had to avoid or try … to discourage people … in conversation or at meetings … from saying things like you know the African kids do this or the African kids think this way… You can't simply lump them all under the one group … we had quite a number of people from the Sudan, I mean their literacy background will depend very much on which way they got out of the country. If they went through Egypt and were in camps in Egypt then they come from an Arabic background as well as their own Indigenous language or languages, you know in some cases …

But, and that was another thing that we had to get the staff to realise … what it was like in their country and what their experiences were, and also their …own relationship with their country … with the colonial background of their country, so there's a whole range of issues.

In order to challenge these kinds of essentialising discourses, the executive team ran a number of awareness-raising activities at staff meetings, led by various educators including the deputy principal and the School Support Officer [Ethnic]. The deputy principal described one such session:

We ran a session just on information about Sudan … just explaining to people that you know Sudan is a huge nation, nine borders, different populations, this is the nature of the kids, this is the education system they would have come from, these are the cultural expectations so there was a whole lot of information that was provided …

It broke down one of the really critical things that teachers here needed to start thinking about and that was: 1. If you are from Africa, Africa is a continent; it's not a country. 2: that the cultures in Africa are as complex—if not more so than say in Europe—and that somebody from the Sudan is as different from somebody from Sierra Leone as say somebody from Germany might be from somebody from England … we're talking about … twice the area and all of those sorts of things …

The preceding sayings and doings of the principal and deputy principal are in contrast to the actions of many school leaders who frequently may be '"colourblind"' in their approach (Santamaria & Santamaria, 2015, p. 24). Principals may leave the onus of responsibility for raising awareness of cultural responsiveness to EALD teachers or individual staff. Further, the executive team's responses suggest that both individuals possessed a critically conscious habitus, that is, a "heightened and critical awareness of oppression, exclusion, and marginalization" (Brooks, 2012, p. 23). For instance, the deputy principal spoke passionately about his abhorrence of racism and his despair at the racism he perceived in the school when the first family of students from Sudan arrived. He described his reaction thus:

There were a couple of kids who were from a … family who seriously I would suggest Mum would have been a clan leader if we were living in the States … They were just disposing the most appallingly inappropriate racist comments when the first family, African family arrived … I was really distressed about it …

I spoke to the school counsellors about ways forward and I decided I'd talk [at school assembly] … about the good old days … in Washington DC in the 1960's … The only African Americans I ever saw were the ones that were working for white families in our street … [I explained that] racism was a way of life … when some of their parents were alive or just growing up and that's no longer acceptable. This is where I took a chance … and I asked them to stand up if they felt that racism was wrong and that we should fight against it.

… All but one person stood … the girl of the family that I was referring to. Now they stayed in the school for another three months and left and I think it was because of the sort of pressure that was now being placed on them. So there was this turnaround [in racist attitudes amongst the students]. So if you talk about student leadership in a sense I would even argue that there were a number of students that would have taken a chance that day and said I'm going to stand up – this is wrong.

One way to conceptualise the preceding actions would be to read it through the lens of the heroic leader, turning around (at least temporarily) students' racism through consciousness-raising and peer pressure. However, the reason I cite this incident is

not to fetishise the deputy principal's individual leadership per se. Instead, I draw attention to the deliberate *orchestration* by the principal and deputy principal of practices in order to change students and staff sayings, doings, and relatings in regard to students of refugee origin. These practices included policy enacting (e.g., changes to how anti-racism and welfare policies were enacted at the school); professional learning (e.g., awareness-raising sessions amongst staff; challenging of stereotypical language) and students' learning (e.g., the deputy principal's anti-racist actions at school assembly).

These practices connected up together to inform the overall school telos or project of leading, teaching, and learning in inclusive and socially just ways. In turn, these practices were enmeshed with and enabled by specific cultural-discursive arrangements brought into the site from regional and state office, such as the NSW Education Department's anti-racism policy. They were enmeshed with particular material-economic arrangements. For instance, the state-wide funding arrangements for EALD students were based on a critical mass of students at designated low levels of literacy. After much discussion, the public schools and regional education office came to an agreement that new arrival students of refugee origin would be solely enrolled in Regional High School, rather than sent to different schools in the town, thus garnering sufficient numbers and funding to create an intensive English class.

These practices were enmeshed with specific social-political arrangements. For instance, the principal and deputy principal donned aprons and cooked food at a welcome barbeque for students of refugee background, their Anglo-Australian friends, and their families in order to demonstrate their delight at welcoming these new students. Traditional hierarchical distances between students and large high school leadership teams were deliberately subverted through the democratising practices of the principal and deputy principal. In turn, this had a significant effect on the relatings between students of refugee origin and the executive team. As one EALD teacher later remarked:

> the kids were astonished that ... [the principal] ... and ... [deputy principal] ... came down and served the sausages. They were just astounded that the leader would be serving, little things in some ways but that spoke enormously to kids that they were valued, important and that someone in that position would actually serve sausages.

These leading practices were not singular actions, but indicative of a deeper, whole-school leadership project to growing a greater sense of responsibility for socially just practices of leading across all staff and students. One of the school counsellors summed these practices up thus:

> [The executive team demonstrate] … a willingness to support getting these kids included. And to me it starts at the top, if you have that kind of attitude at the top, and I believe it has trickled down … that's a very strong characteristic and not being afraid to model compassion either.

6.6   Transformations in Practice Architectures of/for Socially Just and Inclusive Practices at Regional Education Office

The sayings, doings, and relatings of the school's executive team were nested in broader discourses, activities, and relationships of leading practices for social justice travelling from regional and central office sites. These interconnected practices evolved and travelled over space and time and, given the right conditions, 'hung together' in Regional High School to create a distinctive educational project focused on leading for more socially just practices (Schatzki, 2002; Wilkinson & Langat, 2012; Wilkinson et al., 2013). For instance, at the time of the study, the NSW Department of Education and Training [DET] had a series of policies specifically framed around equity, inclusion and citizenship (including anti-racism, cultural diversity, and community relations, along with implementation guides for teaching EALD). The importance of these policies and their accompanying implementation plans was that they provided significant material-economic resources to schools such as Regional High School. They signaled that socially just practices of educating were paramount and discursively signified to schools that students of refugee origin 'counted' in NSW public education (Niesche & Keddie, 2012). As the regional Equity Coordinator remarked:

> I certainly know that my role is the practical side of the coin, that if I'm not driving that, then it's not necessarily going to happen. You might get a school leader who does it intuitively, but it's very definitely something where the DET policy is the driver.

The existence of such policies and plans is crucial, as the coordinator notes. Indeed, moves to greater school autonomy in states such as Queensland suggest that removal of targeted funding for equity groups can lead to marginalisation of equity considerations when individual principals overlook or are ignorant of the specific needs of students of refugee background (Keddie, 2015).

For instance, the New South Wales DET policy, *Cultural Diversity and Community Relations Policy: Multicultural Education in Schools* stated in Objective 1.5 that "schools will provide specific teaching and learning programs to support … students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds" (Department of Education & Training, 2010). It was compulsory for schools to develop their own anti-racism policies and appoint an anti-racism officer who underwent regional training. Schools which received funding for EALD support were held accountable for ensuring the money was spent directly on this area rather than on more general initiatives (E. Brace, pers. comm., 27.02.15). Each regional office had an equity portfolio with consultants whose brief it was to provide training and support for schools and staff who worked with students of refugee origin. Hence, these policies did not operate only at an espoused level but functioned as policies-in-use, that is, with specific resources, funding, and accountability mechanisms tied to them (Walker, 2004).

The significance of these material-economic arrangements in enabling (although not guaranteeing) more socially just and inclusive practices at Regional High School

was outlined by the regional office coordinator responsible for delivery of equity programs:

> At a state level there is an EALD consultant who has responsibility for rural and regional NSW … I have someone obviously with expertise who I liaise with quite regularly … As well as that … they have created positions that their title is EALD Teacher Mentor. They've been a huge benefit to our region. They are trained EALD teachers who … work directly with the teacher who is responsible for the EALD new arrivals program … An example, we have a family arriving … and there will be three children … it will increase the amount of time that they're entitled to, and that's for twelve months … the EALD teacher mentor will make immediate contact with the teacher who is allocated, and make sure that they have the professional support that they require …

There is a major difference, however, between policies-in-use and the lifeworld of regional offices, schools, and their leading practices of/for social justice and inclusion. At the time of the study, the NSW Education Department was composed of a 'top-down', bureaucratic and highly centralised set of social-political arrangements that prefigured relatings between central and district office on the one hand, and Regional High School on the other hand. However, there was evidence of more democratic, collaborative, and consultative practices of leading for/of social justice emanating from the Regional Office that connected up with more socially just and inclusive practices of leading in the school. The regional equity coordinator described these practices as follows:

> [T]he only way that the EALD teacher mentor would work with those teachers is that we have established EALD information networks, so that regularly, each term in our designated EALD areas, there are EALD information network meetings … All of the EALD teachers come together at those meetings, and they are generally coordinated by the EALD teacher mentor, and it's a shared agenda, so the teachers have a say into the agenda and there's a lot of professional sharing and professional learning that occurs at those meetings …

These more collaborative practices appeared to be the hallmark of equity initiatives in the region. Such practices were in turn prefigured and enabled by the distinctive nature of the site in which Regional High School was located. That is, as a regional town, there were shared understandings, activities, and relatings amongst educators and agencies about the realities and vicissitudes of working in a non-urban locale where scarcity of government funds and lack of trained personnel prefigured relations of solidarity between agencies, when it came to best meeting the interests and needs of families and students. However, though there may be more conducive conditions for practices of solidarity in regional settings, these cannot be presupposed or taken-for-granted. Rather, they needed to be advocated for and struggled over in order to be realised.

For instance, the regional office equity coordinator described how when the first group of families from Sudan and other African nations arrived, the town and education agencies were unprepared and thrown off balance. However, drawing on the partnerships and collaborative practices which regional office personnel had built between intergovernmental agencies and non-government agencies responsible for refugee settlement, a more hospitable niche was fashioned in which students and

their families could be welcomed and integrated in the local schools. The coordinator described the creation of these more socially just conditions of practice as follows:

> And our schools at the time—it probably was confronting for them because these students arrived with backgrounds that were totally unfamiliar—totally unfamiliar—we were ill-prepared, not just as a school system but as a community in terms of the needs that they had. In some ways we were fortunate that the enrolments tended to be at two schools [Regional High School and one of its feeder primary schools]. [T]hat was by design, as much by chance, because we realised that it would be far better to have a concentration of those students in two schools, because with a concentration of students comes additional resourcing, rather than having them scattered …
>
> And I guess the whole nature of the ability to support schools has been very much strengthened by our experiences in [Regional High School]. So, as a region we've been much better prepared; you know what to expect, you actually know what resources a school needs, you know how to prepare the school and provide the support, almost before the students arrive. And that's very much a model that I use now ... And again, that comes through developing your partnerships with different inter-agencies and groups who have that responsibility. So, now, with the Multicultural Council, they will let me—I have a lot of warning, as to when a new family is arriving.

These increasingly collaborative practices were underpinned by the shared goal of the regional equity coordinator and the regional office's director when it came to prioritising equity initiatives in the region. Like the principal and deputy principal of Regional High School, these formal leaders appeared to have made the decision to "race themselves outside of Whiteness and work to benefit systematically under-served learners" (Santamaria & Santamaria, 2015, p. 30). The regional coordinator observed:

> So, I think that my role is critical, so that if I were not as proactive as I am, I think the level of the support we can give to schools could be negligible. But because I see it as very important and because [the regional director] knows that it's very important that, as far as the region goes, we've put it as a high priority … So, whilst you understand that obviously, the focus of our support is for the students, we're in these roles because we realise the students aren't going to achieve, unless the teachers and schools are well supported.

The more consultative and inclusive practices of relating at regional office level connected up to and with, attempts to build more democratic leading practices of/for social justice at Regional High School. These practices included a range of doings including school executive designating two positions on the Student Representative Council [SRC] for students of refugee origin, in order to ensure greater visibility in a positive sense and build students' leadership skills. It also included running a series of focus groups with Learning Support Officers (Ethnic) and key members of the refugee community in order to discuss the key issues for students of refugee origin arriving at the school. These focus groups resulted in changes to practices in the school—such as transforming the welfare system to focus on positive rewards as opposed to a previously more punitive approach. As one of the school's counsellors observed:

> We've had a series of focus group discussions with key members from the African community to talk about what the kids are experiencing and what can we do as a school. Because I

remember being at … meetings at such level and that was when we were having a lot of conflict with kids getting settled and teachers understanding kids … Kids would … arrive in Australia on Monday and they're in school on Wednesday. And with very little orientation and feeling lost and confused and unsettled.

… There were different people from the multicultural community … support people … churches or organisations that sponsor them … mentors and Learning Support Officers (Ethnic) …

Our welfare policies have changed … we offer a lot more positive reinforcement to students and encouraging them to achieve, like Honours Award and Principals Award, there's been a lot of prestige attached to students striving for these …

These consultative practices are bundled together with what Santamaria and Santamaria have termed "Applied Critical Leadership" [ACL] practices (2015, p. 28). These practices included, for instance, a willingness to "initiate and engage in critical conversations" with staff about the racist implications of their language; and the deputy principal's actions in "leading by example to meet the unresolved challenges" (Santamaria & Santamaria, 2015, p. 28) of racism within the school. The practices in turn fostered and rendered visible previously hidden and more informal leading practices, that is, forms of leadership practice devoid of managerial authority.

For instance, EALD teachers at Regional High School often taught their students' parents at the local Technical and Further Education (TAFE) college, bumped into these families in the supermarket and assumed the role of cultural mediators and advocates, taking students to after-school sport and advocating on their behalf to other teachers and the executive team (Wilkinson & Langat, 2012). They were a critical source of expertise and support in the executive team and teachers' professional development. Their intercultural knowledge meant they played a key brokering role at Regional High School between home, family, and school (Matthews, 2008). Rather than the reported hostility, which characterises relatings between mainstream teachers and EALD staff in urban schools (Major, 2006), Regional High School staff were highly appreciative of the EALD teachers' skills and intimate knowledge of the students. Moreover, there was evidence that informal professional learning was occurring as a result of some teachers learning new teaching practices through working with EALD staff. Thus, traditional hierarchies of power were subverted between the secondary subject teachers as 'experts' and EALD teachers as 'helpmates', serving teachers. For example, a mainstream teacher noted how she would voluntarily ask the EALD teacher's advice, remarking:

I might say to ... [the EALD teacher] ... I want to do this ... what's the best way to approach this? ... I've written very explicit ... instructions how to do these certain things and with both of us there ... hopefully we can try and get them to achieve things or you give them things to model off.

6.7 Leading as a Socially Just Practice: A Contested Practice

Leading as a practice needs to be situated in ecologies of practices that have a "common commitment to an overall project of education development" rather than

> the command and control view of leading which seems … to underlie many programs of school improvement around the world – and which may often take a technical and managerialist view of the process of educational change (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 176).

In this chapter, I have attempted to capture this insight by focussing on the site-distinct particularities and 'messiness' of leadership practice as a previously mono-cultural secondary site wrestled with the unique opportunities and challenges faced in integrating a new and 'visibly different' student cohort. The issues faced by this venture cannot be assuaged by prescriptions, rule-following, or practice orientations to leadership which focus on it as a technical activity only. Rather, I have attempted to draw attention to how the creative problem-solving displayed in the leading practices of Regional High School staff (principal, deputy principal, EALD staff) and regional office personnel was underpinned by a fundamental ethical, moral, and political commitment to education as a socially just form of practice. In other words, a praxis-oriented disposition informed their actions, suggesting that these were 'morally-informed' leading practices that were part of a "socially-critical practice tradition in education" (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 177).

Hence, one of the major contributions of a site ontological view of leading practice is that it foregrounds not only the inherent sociality of leading practices in the particularities of a site, but the profoundly moral and ethical situatedness and history-making (Kemmis & Smith, 2008a) dimension of the day-to-day practices enacted in classrooms, staff meetings, and playgrounds. This is a contribution which more technicist-oriented interpretations of leadership ignore or downplay.

However, one of the critical components of leading praxis as history-making action is that we cannot foresee its material consequences or implications. On the one hand, there was evidence that certain leading practices for social justice had had positive material impacts on some Regional High School staff and students' sayings—understandings and thinking—actions and relatings when it came to more socially just educational practices. On the other hand, there were suggestions of the limitations of current forms of leading practices as they were enacted at Regional High School. These limitations can be analysed in two ways: firstly, in terms of the practice architectures that continued to prefigure secondary traditions of pedagogical practice at Regional High School; and secondly, in terms of ecological *disconnections* between leading as a socially just practice and teaching practices.

Through a practice architectures lens, there was evidence that teaching practices had remained stable and resistant to the increasingly diverse learners in Regional High School classrooms (cf. Wilkinson & Langat, 2012; Wilkinson et al., 2013). As noted earlier, these teaching practices were prefigured by practice traditions in secondary schools in which largely Western bodies of knowledge (cultural-discursive arrangements) were organised in subject-specific disciplines (material-economic

arrangements) prefigured on a normative assumption of the white, literate student who possessed the cultural capital of uninterrupted literacy learning that allowed them to learn from largely white teachers' practices (social-political arrangements). Despite laudable attempts to challenge teachers' discourses in relation to students of refugee origin, the practice architectures of teaching at Regional High School remained largely intact. For instance, staffrooms were arranged in subject disciplines and teacherly discourses focused on the 'mainstream' learner, with corresponding assumptions of the illiterate learner as deficit. In essence, as a 'traditional' Australian secondary public school, there was a different logic of practice operating in terms of its more hierarchical and discipline-based teaching and learning practices. This was a logic that is detrimental to not only students of refugee origin, but Indigenous and other students. It was a logic which the executive team's attempts did not challenge, despite their attempts to change practice architectures that constrained more socially just practices (Wilkinson et al., 2013).

Focus groups with Regional High School teachers suggested that the sayings, doings, and relatings of their teaching focused on an uncritical and unexamined privileging of the literate mainstream learner as opposed to students of refugee origin as the deficit 'other'. Yet, Regional High School was changing. The evidence from its classrooms suggested that the normative assumption of an ethnically and educationally homogenous cohort of students was no longer viable. As one teacher remarked:

> I just reckon it puts a lot of pressure … about three years ago, I had a Year Eight class and I had about six Sudanese in there but I also had about six major learning difficulties … I couldn't get anything done. I felt bad for the kids who knew how to read and write because you just spent so much time just with the basics and there was no support and I just thought that was ridiculous—that was allegedly a mainstream class.

In making this critique, I am not ignoring the very real pressures faced by educators in catering for the increasingly diverse learners in their classrooms, particularly in the face of insufficient material and economic support. In terms of distributive injustice (Olson, 2008), the preceding quotation reveals the glaring inequities in the practice architectures of federal government funding of state schools in Australia which favours resourcing non-government schools at higher rates than government schools. This is despite the reality that students from equity backgrounds are overwhelming located in government schools. Moreover, funding inequities have increased since this study was conducted.[8]

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[8] Australian federal government funding of non-government schools has been rising at a faster rate than for government schools. This is despite the fact that state systems educate the majority of students, and in particular, those from varied equity backgrounds, thus placing increasing demands for resourcing on those systems (Cobbold, 2020). Nationally the Australian federal government funds Catholic systemic schools (20% students) and independent schools (14.5% of students). State governments are responsible for public schools that comprise the remaining 67% of students and cater for 85% of all students who experience some form of disadvantage (Cobbold, 2020). The percentage of federal government funding for private schools also "increased from 33 to 45% for independent schools and from 72 to 75% for catholic schools between 1994 and 2010" (Chesters, 2018, as cited in Larsen et al., 2020, p. 4). However, analysis of National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy [NAPLAN] tests reveal no differences between government and

Rather, what I am pointing to is the ecological disconnections between attempts to enact more socially just practices of leading and other forms of practice in the school, such as teaching. For instance, I have documented how particular leading practices undertaken by the executive team (as well as EALD and Learning Support Officers) clearly connected up to policy-enacting and professional learning practices in the lifeworld of the school in ways that suggested positive changes to staff practices of and for social justice. However, there are limitations of professional learning practices which remain at the level of consciousness-raising alone. These practices did not equip teachers to teach in more pedagogically appropriate ways, nor did these sessions engage teachers in deeper forms of reflection upon their teaching practices, for instance, engaging in "critical conversations" around challenging topics such as "race, language, culture, difference, access, and/or educational equity" (Santamaria & Santamaria, 2015, p. 28). This is an aspect of leading as a socially just practice that appeared lacking at Regional High School and which might not have been much different from many other secondary schools in the state or nationally.

Initiating and engaging in difficult conversations such as examining the privilege that whiteness bestows upon one's practice is an important characteristic of applied critical leadership (Santamaria & Santamaria, 2015, p. 28). I do not wish to take away from the significance of what was achieved at Regional High School. However, the fundamental lack of change in teaching practices does reveal the limitations of leading practices in which social justice remains something that is 'done' for or to the 'other', rather than critiquing how one's own privilege (e.g., as a male, as white, as literate, as middle class) may be holding in place the very practice architectures that one is attempting to challenge. Furthermore, if constructions of the white, 'mainstream' learner remain at the centre of teaching practices, then one might well ask, how much that mattered had genuinely changed in the school? This is a valid question. However, what it overlooks is that there is more to schooling and educational change than formal classroom practices alone—an insight which the executive team recognised and which I have attempted to outline in this chapter.

6.8   Conclusion: Towards Researching Educational Leading as a Socially Just Practice

The theory of practice architectures foregrounds the social and political nature of attempts to enact leading as a socially just practice. One of the clear contributions that theory can make to leading as a socially just practice is to firstly, foreground and render visible the inherently *political* nature of leading, that is, as a practice that is enmeshed in the culture, discourses, and material and economic arrangements that prefigure educational practices. This is a critical point, for too often

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non-government funded students' outcomes between Years Three and Nine (Larsen et al., 2020). This dispels a key argument of neoliberalism that increased competition provided by private schools would "drive improvement in education quality" (Larsen et al., 2020, p. 2).

mainstream analyses depoliticise and neuter the power relations inherent in educational leadership practice, despite acknowledging that positional leading operates as a practice-changing practice (cf. Kemmis et al., 2014; Wilkinson, 2008).

Secondly, the theory provides a set of conceptual tools for empirically tracing connections and disconnections between leading as a socially just set of practices and other educational practices such as enacting policy and professional learning. It does so in ways that can reveal the gaps and inconsistencies that may lead to potentially deleterious teaching and learning practices.

Thirdly, the theory of ecologies of practices in particular draws attention to the inherently *relational* nature of leading practices as a process of "interpersonal and mutual influence that is ultimately embedded within a collective" (DeRue & Ashford, 2010, p. 629). However, ecologies of practices and a site ontological view of leading practices suggest that rather than "mutual and interpersonal influences" within a collective of participants, it is the connections or lack of connections between practices as part of a larger Education Complex of practices (c.f., Kemmis et al., 2012a, b) that are critical to examine.

In this chapter, I have attempted to highlight that educational leading as a socially just practice, and socially just (and unjust) educational practices more broadly are not tangential concerns for those of us engaging with the theory of practice architectures. Rather, they are fundamental to questions of how new intersubjective arrangements and ways of being, doing, and relating in the world can be shaped in ways that support the aim of building a world worth living in. Moreover, I have attempted to render visible how the social-political conditions shaping sets of leading practices are intrinsically enmeshed with and 'bleed into' the cultural-discursive and material-economic arrangements of schools and related sites. This is not a new insight and is indeed one that has been stressed throughout the ongoing development of the theory of practice architectures (cf. Kemmis & Grootenboer, 2008; Kemmis et al., 2014). However, I raise the point as anecdotally my research experience has been that although we may separate out cultural-discursive, material-economic, and social-political arrangements in our analysis, the broader challenge remains how to analyse educational practices (and the conditions that shape them) in ways that recognise how they are "bundled together" (Schatzki, 2002), while simultaneously holding each up to the light of critical analysis. In this sense, a fruitful area for enquiry may be to examine the kinds of sense-making practices that we engage with as researchers when analysing data using these theories as our key lenses (cf. Pennanen et al., 2017).

Finally, I suggest that researching of and for morally informed educational practice and praxis, should by its very nature, entail a range of socially just researcher practices, including reflexively examining the practice traditions and histories that we bring to our practices of researching and analysis. This would entail engaging in critical conversations about how these traditions may influence our ways of working with and interrogating—or failing to interrogate—aspects of the data, that is, in terms of the kinds of questions we may or may not ask about practices.

For instance, as a critical feminist scholar, my doctoral training in Bourdieuian analyses of field, capital, and habitus shaped my disposition to ask questions of the

Regional High School study in regard to not only existing sayings, doings and relatings, but also the 'raced' nature of silences; for example, how particular teaching practices positioned refugee youth as other to a mainstream (white, Anglo-Australian) learner. It trained my gaze on how particular leading practices of and for social justice may be prefigured by gendered, 'raced', or classed social-political arrangements that render as illegitimate, assets Sudanese students bring to their learning, such as their oral capacity.

Moreover, I am acutely aware that there may well be other questions or areas of leading as a socially just practice that I have failed to engage with as part of this analytical process. This is where bringing practice architectures into conversation with other theoretical lenses such as critical feminism or Bourdieu is a crucial part of this book's scholarly commitment to stimulating "new beginnings for education in and against an era of schooling" (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 22).

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Chapter 7
Emotions Matter: Theorising Emotions in Practice

Abstract This chapter takes a different trajectory from the book thus far. It shifts from ontological questions of the constitution of educational leading as practice, how it shapes, enables and constrains, to epistemological questions of how we come to know in a practice such as leading. In so doing, it addresses a major silence in practice approaches, namely the crucial role that emotions play in the unfolding, evolution and transformation of educational practice. The chapter brings practice architectures theory into dialogue with theorising on emotions and affect in the social sciences, feminist scholarship in gender and organising, and the concept of emotional labour. It extends and deepens recent theorising of emotions and affect in practice theory, including practice architectures theory and site ontologies. As such, it addresses the vexed question of how and why emotions matter for practice, pedagogy and praxis in educating and leading.

Keywords Educational leadership · Emotions · Theorising emotions in practice · Site ontologies · Emotional labour of leadership · Feminism and emotions · Practice architectures

7.1   Introduction

Every practice contains a certain practice-specific emotionality (even if that means a high control of emotions). Wants and emotions thus do not belong to individuals but—in the form of knowledge—to practices (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 254).

Our first aim has been therefore to change "care" from a dyadic interpersonal relation—between patient and professional caregiver—in which care competence is identified in attentiveness, responsibility, and responsiveness, to an organizational context where caring practices are sites of knowing ... performing a collective know-how and a common orientation to a matter of concern (Gherardi & Rodeschini, 2016, p. 280).

Practice architectures theory, like other theories in the family of practice approaches, employs an ontological lens to its study of practice. That is, its "main concern is with what practices are, how practices happen; how they are shaped, constrained, and enabled; and what practices do. These are ontological questions"

(Mahon et al., 2017, p. 17). More recently, however, practice architectures theory has begun to ask epistemological questions of practice, i.e., how we come to know in a practice. The notion of learning as a process of being 'stirred into practices' is one such example (c.f., Kemmis et al., 2012, 2014).

This chapter continues this recent epistemological shift. Whilst the book maintains its primarily ontological orientation, this chapter and Chap. 8 incorporate theorising from other practice approaches to examine emotions as "sites of knowing" (Nicolini, 2011) and "knowing-doing" (Gherardi & Rodeschini, 2016) in the unfolding of leading in diverse educational sites. In so doing, it addresses a major lacuna in practice approaches and, until recently, educational leadership scholarship—the role of emotions and affect.

7.2 Emotions Matter: Theorising Emotions in Practice

Emotions matter in educating and educational leading. Managing one's emotions and that of others is a key part of the emotional but largely invisible labour (Hochschild, 2012) that is bundled into practices of organising, including educating. To paraphrase Gherardi and Rodeschini (2016), practices associated with educational leading such as caring, disciplining, influencing, administering and managing people and their emotions are sites of knowing. These sites of knowing consist of knowing both *what* to do and *how* to do it. A crucial aspect of performing this know-how is the *practice-specific emotionality* contained within practices (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 254, my italics). Both knowing-*what* and knowing-*how*, and the accompanying emotions of this "knowing-doing" (Gherardi & Rodeschini, 2016) are not solely the properties of an individual. Rather, the emotionality of a practice forms part of the collective know-how of organising. It is characterised by a "common orientation on the 'way of doing things together' with other practitioners" and the "non-human elements" of a site, such as the physical layout of classrooms in a university campus (Gherardi & Rodeschini, 2016, p. 281).

Emotions do not purely reside in the individual but form part of the affective repertoire of all practices. This means that not only does it make sense for participants to carry out a practice in a certain way, but also to *feel* in certain ways when one is participating in that practice. In other words, when performing a practice certain feelings are rendered as 'common sense', they just 'feel right', whilst others may feel wrong and be "outlawed" (Jaggar, as cited in Boler, 1999, p. 12). Importantly, which feelings are permitted when performing a practice and which are proscribed is culturally specific, gendered, racialised, sexualised and classed (Boler, 1999, p. 12). For example, feelings of sadness whilst attending a loved one's funeral are part of the expected emotions in Anglo-Australian culture. However, experiencing joy would contravene the "feeling rules" (Hochschild, 1979) of mourning unless there were particular circumstances, such as a long period of suffering or celebrating an elderly person who had lived a long and good life.

Moreover, the affective dimension of practice is not confined to those practices which are more obviously emotionally laden, such as mourning the loss of a loved one or falling in love. Instead, they encompass all practices, including the most ordinary, such as getting up in the morning or waving one's hand when spotting someone who is familiar to us.

The affective dimension of practices is captured in practice architectures theory and site ontologies. I explore these aspects in more detail in the following sections. Suffice to say, that in the theory of practice architectures, the *relatings* of practices (which are always bundled with sayings and doings in the project of the practice) foreground this affective aspect as evidenced in participants' values, feelings and emotions. These relatings (to other participants in a practice, both human and the material world) in turn are enabled and constrained by the (social-political) arrangements of system roles and lifeworld relationships present in sites (Kemmis et al., 2014).

Equally, the central role emotions play in practice is foregrounded in Schatzki's concept of site ontologies in which he posits that

> the organisation of a practice is not a set of properties of specific individuals. A practice is organised by an array of intelligibilities, rules, ends, projects, and the *way things matter* (my italics). This array is distinct from, and differentially incorporated into, the minds of participants (Schatzki, 2003, p. 19).

But how and why do certain practices and their practice-specific emotionality come to matter and others less so? Hochschild (1979) posits the concept of "feeling rules" in social practices. For instance, there are highly gendered expectations that caring about one's students is part of the expected repertoire of emotions that accompanies teaching in contemporary societies in the global north. Caring is a "site of knowing" and in its performing it contributes towards the "collective know-how" of the modern profession of teaching, including its "common orientation" towards students as a "matter of concern" (Gherardi & Rodeschini, 2016, p. 280).

For practice theorists Weenink and Spaargaren (2016), the "way things matter" in a practice is "provided by the "positive and negative valences" of "emotions-in-practices" and their practitioners (2016, p. 62). These valences, they argue, help explain why certain things come to "matter to individuals and how they are set into motion by emotions" (Weenink & Spaargaren, 2016, p. 62).

How and why things come to matter in a practice is a collective social accomplishment that is always precarious and contingent. We witness this in Chap. 5 when a Catholic education district embraced instructional leading via an orchestration of new practice architectures of educating. The positive emotional valences contained within instructional leading as a site of knowing gradually began to usurp a previously common orientation in the secondary school towards pastoral caring as a separate and valorised *mattering* within this site.

Until the past two decades, little attention was paid to the role of emotions in studies of organising, managing and administering—related bodies of work from which mainstream educational leadership scholarship typically draws. This is hardly

surprising given the dominance of 'scientific' principles of rationality that have characterised North American and Anglophone notions of educational administration. The long shadow of administering as a rational science and its subsequent eschewing of emotions can be seen in Taylorism's principles of efficient management in the early twentieth century; Herbert Simon's notions of bounded rationality in the 1950s; and the recent exultation of narrow measures of evidence in instructional leadership. Yet, these accounts are "abstractions … from the *fuller* reality" of organising, for they exclude the "informal know how" or practical understandings/tacit knowledge of managers and workers (Schatzki, 2005, p. 478, author's original italics).

From the 1960s onwards, the feminist critical refrain that the personal is the political has consistently drawn attention to the *politics* of emotion (Boler, 1999). This insight reveals how binaries of rationality/emotion relegate certain emotions, such as caring, to the domestic labour of the feminised private sphere of home (and by extension to 'caring' professions such as teaching and nursing). Simultaneously, rationality was valorised as part of the (white, middle class) masculinised public sphere (Boler, 1999). As such, women as a group (and in particular, Black, Brown and Indigenous women) are discursively and materially positioned as 'other' to the white, masculinised subject of leadership (Blackmore, 1996).

Similarly, until recently there has been little attention paid to the role of emotions in theories of practice. Consequently, until the past few years, there has been little dialogue between the turn to practice and the more recent turn to emotions and affect in the social sciences (Gherardi, 2017a). However, this has begun to change.

7.3 Emotions in the Social Sciences: The Return of the Repressed

Practice theorists have long decried the hyperrationality that characterises modern social theory and philosophy, particularly when it comes to explanations of human agency and the social order (Reckwitz, 2002). For Bourdieu, the development of the notion of habitus as a "feel for the game" was a means by which to explain how and why humans carry out social practices, such as greeting a friend, without resorting to structuralist explanations such as the "language of rules" and "rational calculation" which characterised traditional social science theories (Bourdieu, 1994, p. 76). The "practical sense" of humans, Bourdieu argued, was particularly important for understanding the operation of pre-modern, less industrialised societies in which "very few things [are] codified … [In those cases] … you have to suppose that they obey a certain 'feel for the game'" (Bourdieu, 1994, p. 76).

Bourdieu's emphasis on strategic action as a "product of the practical sense … for a particular, historically determined game … acquired in childhood, by taking part in social activities" (Bourdieu, 1994, p. 62) stands in contrast to the "express, explicit norm, or the rational calculation" which dominant social science approaches employed to explain "what people do" (Bourdieu, 1994, p. 76). It stands in clear

contrast to twentieth century management and administration's eulogising of the "disengaged subject" (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 258) that is the rational man(ager). The latter's diminishing of human agency and the social (Reckwitz, 2002) sidelines the importance of practical understandings when it comes to comprehending how "organizations and institutions are made and remade thanks to material and discursive work" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 8).

Many (although not all) classical social science theories posited agency and human understanding as residing in cognition: a "calculating agent" whose cognitive toolkit reflected a "formally rational", mental machine (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 258). This cognition included "strategic design … rational computation and a "conscious positing of ends" (Bourdieu, 1994, p. 108). Hence, Bourdieu's (and other practice theorists') re-centring of "bodily movements, things, practical knowledge and routine" (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 259) brought an overdue recognition of the importance of *practical* understandings to human agency and the social world. In other words, it emphasised the connectivity of thought and the world through human activity or *praxis* in the neo-Marxist sense of the word (Nicolini, 2012, p. 30) (see Chap. 2 for a more detailed discussion of this point). Moreover, practice theory's emphasis on theory and science as *instruments* serving the practical and material (Nicolini, 2012) contrasts with the contemporary valorisation of 'best' practice in education systems. Such practice is frequently shorn from its cultural, political and material contexts.

As part of an endeavour to reclaim emotions in the social sciences, some sociologists have turned to a re-reading of Marx. They point to his insistence that "human 'passions' and 'emotions' are fundamental, integrative aspects of our social nature and our human capacity for 'free conscious activity'" (Weyher, 2012, p. 341). However, a key critique of classical social theories—including that of Marx, prominent sociologists such as Weber, Adorno, Parsons and earlier practice theorists such as Bourdieu, Habermas and Foucault—is that they all "proceed… from the basic assumption that modern society, its actions and social spheres are characterised by rationalisation" (Reckwitz, 2012, p. 245). Rationalisation in industrial societies is theorised as "increasingly supplant[ing] all affective elements" of human sociality (Reckwitz, 2012, p. 245). In contrast, so-called "pre-modern or traditional societies" are "held to be closer to nature" and thus "affective elements" are seen to flourish there (Reckwitz, 2012, p. 245). This can be seen in the preceding quotation of Bourdieu where he argues that practical knowledge, i.e., the "feel for the game" resides more clearly in so called traditional or pre-capitalist societies (Bourdieu, 1994, p. 76).

Put another way, whether agreeing or disagreeing with this position, dominant social science theorists including Bourdieu and Foucault work from the basic premise that formal rationality is a key feature of modern societies (Reckwitz, 2012). Hence, until recently the social sciences predominantly viewed emotions as having been "by and large neutralised in … spheres of social action" in modern industrial societies (Reckwitz, 2012, p. 245). This was due to the increasing "rationalisation of action and of social spheres" that accompanied the rise of capitalism (Reckwitz, 2012, p. 245). The spread of compulsory and post compulsory education systems and the development of the 'science' of educational administration with its repudiation

of emotions were manifestations of this "rationalisation" as part of an increasing codification of what counted as formal and valued knowledge.

But where does this leave the emotions? As social phenomena, emotions in dominant accounts of social theory and philosophy are then "pushed away into the realms of the individual, of biology and of pre-modern peoples. They form the constitutive outside of affect-neutral modern sociality" (Reckwitz, 2012, p. 245). As "properties of the individual", emotions are thus

> excluded from sociological generalisation or seen as natural, biological dispositions and drives belonging to the pre-social body. In both cases they are placed beyond the rational, regular and predictable social order (Reckwitz, 2017, p. 117).

The above then suggests a key role for compulsory education systems and schooling as practice in terms of pastoral power (Foucault, 1987), that is, the disciplining of children and young people's emotions, bodies and minds so they may join the "rational, regular and predictable social order" as productive participants in a capitalist workforce (Boler, 1999).

The elevation of reason as a primary source of authority in philosophy and the social sciences in the nineteenth and well into the twentieth century arises from enlightenment ideals of liberty, progress, tolerance, fraternity, constitutional government and separation of church and state. It also operates as a primary form of symbolic violence. For instance, as part of the privileging of reason in approaches to social sciences that came to dominate in the twentieth century, emotions were relegated to a "second, inferior pole of dualisms" (Reckwitz, 2017, p. 118).

The "suppression of dangerous emotions" may have appeared to be a progressive move in terms of enlightenment ideals of rationalism as a form of "enlightened understanding" compared to "mere feeling" (Reckwitz, 2017, p. 118). Such a move, however, echoed and justified the entrenchment of dualisms in western social science theories. These binaries included: the opposition of the "social to the individual … natural or biological; the rational and irrational" (Reckwitz, 2017, p. 117); masculinity and femininity; reason and emotions; mind and body; modern, 'civilised' society and 'premodern' societies; white and black.

In turn, these binaries index women, Black, Brown and Indigenous groups, their bodies, minds and forms of knowing on the "second, inferior pole" of such dualisms (Reckwitz, 2017, p. 118). As such, they are discursively located as closer to "dangerous emotions", nature, the 'uncivilised' and the "premodern" (Reckwitz, 2017, p. 118). This move thus has major constitutive impacts in terms of epistemic injustice (Fricker, 2007). For instance, which and whose emotions are privileged as sites of knowing or forms of "enlightened understanding"? Which and whose emotions are excluded, silenced, dismissed or misrepresented as "mere feelings[s]" (Reckwitz, 2017, p. 118) and therefore sites of 'unknowing'? Equally, it justifies a range of economic, representational and recognitive injustices (Fraser, 2008) as documented by Indigenous, postcolonial and Black feminist bodies of scholarship (c.f., Chap. 4). These forms of injustice then perpetuate the ongoing exclusion of these groups from educational leadership scholarship and practice. Moreover, they facilitate the ongoing whiteness of the field (Wilkinson, 2018).

The dominant theoretical premise of the social sciences that modern capitalist societies were "affect neutral" justified the exclusion of emotions from sociological generalisations and the social order (Reckwitz, 2017, p. 118). It thus led to key conceptual gaps in social theorising that "blind[ed] out affectivity and emotionality" (Reckwitz, 2012, p. 245). These conceptual blind spots apply to much of the earlier theorising of 'second wave' of practice theories including site ontologies à la Schatzki and to some degree, practice architectures. However, these lacunas are now being acknowledged as examined in more detail below.[1]

So what does this return of the repressed mean for studies of emotions in educational leading and administering? Why do emotions as sites of knowing matter for the practice and praxis of leading? In order to explore these questions, I now turn to a mapping of some of the key concepts and debates that underpin the practice turn to emotions. I begin with practice approaches more generally, then 'hone in' on site ontologies and practice architectures theories.

7.4 Emotions in Practice

A key tenet of practice theory since Marx is the attempt to overcome sociological dualisms: between the social and the individual/biology/nature; between the mind and body; and structure and agency (see Chap. 3 for more detail). As noted above, Reckwitz claims that a major "blind spot" of practice theories, including that of Bourdieu, however, has been the role of "emotional and affective phenomena" in the reproduction and transformation of social life (Reckwitz, 2012, p. 243). But what do more recent developments in practice theorising posit in relation to the role of emotions and/or affect?

Given that practice theory is an umbrella term that covers a wide range of approaches, it is not surprising that practice theorists approach the study of emotions in a range of distinctive ways. However, there now appears to be common agreement that firstly, emotions matter in human sociality. Precisely *how* and *why* they do so is less clear. Nonetheless, it is contended that all practices carry with them "certain affective tones" (Weenink & Spaargaren, 2016, p. 66) that determine what makes practical sense to do in the moment-by-moment happeningness of practice. Put another way, emotions determine action because "moods, emotions, feelings, affects and passions" provide a crucial barometer of "what matters… [or does not matter] … to people" (Weenink & Spaargaren, 2016, p. 67). They thus provide us with the "feeling, sense or urge … to do something, to perform an action" (or not as the case may be), as a matter of "practical intelligibility" (Weenink & Spaargaren, 2016,

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[1] Reckwitz's account of the purging of emotions in social sciences—like much of contemporary social science theories that have 'rediscovered' affect—tends to silence or downplay the role of feminist critical scholarship since the 1960s in reclaiming emotions and the body as key sites of political knowing. It is these feminist bodies of scholarship from which much of the recent 'turn' to emotions and affect derives, even though the latter scholarship may be silent about these origins (Boler & Zembylas, 2016).

p. 67). Hence, emotions play a crucial role in determining what is "teleologically signified as the thing to do" (Schatzki, 1996, pp. 122–123), including "the sequence of actions she performs and which practices she carries on" (Schatzki, 2017, p. 39).

Secondly, some practice theories claim that emotions belong exclusively to practices and not to the individuals who participate in a practice (see, for instance, Reckwitz's opening quotation to this chapter). For example, ambition and a desire to improve students' standards are part of the affective attunement of performing instructional leading in contemporary Australian schools. We witness this phenomenon in Chap. 5. All new principals are subject to the subtle (or not so subtle) pressure of these "feeling rules" as part of their participation in the practice of instructional leading.

There is some disagreement about this claim, i.e., whether emotions are the exclusive province of practices. Schatzki provides a more subtle distinction, noting the deep imbrication between emotions and practices. He argues that "people do not have emotions in a vacuum. Emotions are tied to the situations in which people act, thus to the practices and bundles through which they proceed" (2017, p. 40).

The claim that emotions are *exclusively* the property of practices is overreach. Firstly, it ignores the "complex neuro-endocrinological processes" that individuals experience as they participate in practices (Weenink & Spaargaren, 2016, p. 66). Secondly, as Schatzki observes:

> the fact that people have emotions is not a product of participation in practices. Instead, emotions seem to be a basic feature of human lives with which the edifice of practices and bundles is interlocked (2017, p. 42).

Most importantly, however, the claim can be read as overly deterministic. In homogenising the affective dimension of practices, it suggests that all participants equally incorporate the affective attunement of a practice when they perform it (Weenink & Spaargaren, 2016, p. 66). The notion of a "practice specific emotionality" (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 254) as a form of knowing when one enters a practice foregrounds important "linkages between emotions and power" (Weenink & Spaargaren, 2016, p. 66). However, it overlooks agency, i.e., variations in how participants "perceive of, feel about and react upon feeling rules" (Weenink & Spaargaren, 2016, p. 66). This is a particularly important point because an ongoing criticism of practice theories is they lack explanatory power when it comes to how social change occurs. How certain practices come to *matter* to their participants; and why these practices come to possess a stronger affective attunement or positive valence than others (e.g., the current attraction of populist rather than liberal democratic parties in the global north) raises crucial questions of agency and social change (Weenink & Spaargaren, 2016, p. 61). These are important questions with which the theory of practice architectures and other practice theories such as site ontologies continue to grapple.

Whatever may be the case, practice theorists appear to be in broad agreement that emotions are primarily *social* in nature rather than subjective and are *activities* rather than emanating from individual cognition (Reckwitz, 2017). As Reckwitz observes:

> The practice theory approach brings about a fundamental change of perspective. It approaches affects not – as the terms emotions or feelings have traditionally observed – as interior properties of individuals only accessible to an introspection plumbing the depths of the psyche, but places them on the level of social practices themselves. Affects are then properties of the specific affective 'attunement' or mood of the respective practice. As soon as a person is competent to perform a practice and is 'carried away by it', she incorporates it and actualises its mood (2017, p. 119).

Finally, as discussed in the introduction to this chapter, practice theorists share the view that emotions are a crucial aspect of how people come to know in a practice. Emotions provide a particular way of understanding the world that forms a "collective shared knowledge" that is not the sum total of individual minds but a "non-subjective pattern" (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 254). Hence, these approaches to understanding the role of emotions form a stark contrast to Goleman's work on emotional intelligence in leadership (1995) which decontextualises and depoliticises emotions. Moreover, it situates such 'intelligence' as generic assets unique to certain individuals, such as 'high performing' CEOs in North America (Blackmore, 2010).

7.4.1 Emotions, Affect and Practice: Humanistic and Posthumanistic Approaches

In examining the role that emotions play in educational leading as practice, I employ the terms 'emotions', 'feelings' and 'affect' somewhat interchangeably. In so doing, I reveal theoretical roots in a humanistic tradition, whilst also gesturing towards post humanistic approaches in the study of emotions. These theoretical tensions are revealed in the differing ways in which notions of emotions and affect are deployed in practice theories. In turn, these varying trajectories arise from distinct theoretical lines of inquiry in the humanities and social sciences.

On the one hand, there are practice theory approaches which adopt a more humanistic understanding of the formation of the human subject, i.e., "in which agency is attributed" to people alone (Gherardi, 2017a, p. 349). Materiality, though crucial, remains "part of the context but has no agency" (Gherardi, 2017a, p. 349). For instance, in contrast to actor network theory, site ontologies and practice architectures theories share a common premise in "agential humanism", i.e., that "only humans carry out practices" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 171). This does not mean that these theories dismiss the crucial role that materials exert on human actions and the "entanglement between human and non human performativity" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 171). These are crucial aspects of practice theories. Rather, it is a question of intelligibility, i.e., recognising that "only human actions can attribute intentionality and affectivity", whilst simultaneously accounting for the central role that artefacts play in human activity (Nicolini, 2012, p. 171).

In Schatzki's later discussions of human sociality (e.g., 2010), the role of emotions in determining action becomes prominent (Weeningen & Spaargaren, 2016). The vocabulary used is that of emotions, rather than affect but the affective dimension

plays a crucial role in "signifying what matters to people … by "affecting what is tele-ologically signified as the thing to do" at a certain moment (Weenink & Spaargaren, 2016, p. 66).

On the other hand, there are practice theory approaches which adopt a post human-istic understanding of agency, the human and material worlds. These approaches draw on studies of affect which first emerged in the 1990s. A critical distinction these approaches draw is between affect as "firmly rooted in biology and in our physical response to feelings" (Gherardi, 2017b, p. 210), i.e., in biology and the precultural, and emotions as "the cultural and social expression of feelings", i.e., situated in the social (Gherardi, 2017a, p. 349). A key practice theorist, Gherardi employs this notion of affect in examining the practices of caring in telemedicine (2016). The account draws heavily on post-Deleuzian notions of affect and re-fuses the dualism between ascribing agency to the human and not to the material world. This distinction between emotions and affect is not drawn in practice architectures and site ontologies approaches.

Affect studies have typically pursued several key trajectories that seek to radi-cally decentre the human subject of humanistic traditions. The first trajectory draws on psychoanalytic traditions. For instance, philosopher, Judith Butler's earlier work "seeks to make visible "'passionate'" and "'melancholic attachments' which stabilise or disrupt social order" (Reckwitz, 2012, p. 247). In education, Sara Ahmed's (2004) psychoanalytical notion of affective economies has been influential, particularly in relation to students from non-dominant host populations. Ahmed examines "how emotions of hate and fear become attached negatively to the bodies of certain racialized people" (Pullen et al., 2017, p. 112).

A second, post-Deleuzian approach derives from Spinozian philosophy and subse-quently, Brian Massumi, Deleuze's English translator (Boler & Zembylas, 2016, p. 22). It is this approach with which practice theorist Gherardi engages. The emer-gence of feminist new materialist approaches such as that of Rosi Braidotti (2019) and agential realism (Barad, 1998) are also crucial to note as part of the affective turn (Boler & Zembylas, 2016).

The adoption of postmodern and more recently, posthumanist epistemologies, e.g., Braidotti (2019) form part of a radical critique of humanism. In these approaches, the human subject is increasingly decentred as the sole source of agency. This move is part of a bid to move beyond the old dualities of "human/non-human, nature/culture, mind/body, etc." (Gherardi, 2017a, p. 347) which exclude racialised and sexualised others (Braidotti, 2019). Notions of affect as distinct from emotions are crucial as part of these postmodern and post humanist moves.

Andreas Reckwitz is another key practice theorist, who has explored the links between emotions and practice. For Reckwitz, the distinction between terms such as emotion and affect need not be so strict. Rather he argues a preference for the term "affect", observing that in its verb form, "to affect and 'to be affected'" signifies the "dynamic and interactive dimensions" of feelings (Reckwitz, 2012, p. 249). This contrasts with the terminology of 'emotions' which, he contends, "implies the static notion of having an emotion 'deep inside'" (Reckwitz, 2012, p. 249).

So why adopt a practice lens for the study of emotions, affect and educational leading? Firstly, a praxeological approach provides a 'third way' in which to conceptualise the emotions of leading beyond the binaries of the "inside" (as the "inner possession of individual" educators) or the "outside" (as "mere outward signs, 'expressive' gestures made in public") (Reckwitz, 2012, p. 251). In so doing, a practice lens reveals how emotions are integral to coming to know how to go on in a practice such as educating, administering and leading, for emotions and affect are part of social practices, which "all contain their 'fitting' perceptive and affective elements" (Reckwitz, 2012, p. 251).

Secondly, and most importantly, leading as a practice is intimately bound up with questions of power and authority. Hence, a praxeological approach grounds studies of emotions, affect and educational leadership in the material world, for emotions and affect are "bodily reactions and they are enabled/restricted by interpretative schemes" (Reckwitz, 2012, p. 251). This is a crucial move in terms of foregrounding the politics of emotions, and relatedly, questions of power and agency in organising, leading and administering. As feminist critical scholars of organising observe, the vagueness of the concept of affect and its location in the biological and precultural, conveniently sidesteps questions of the politics of emotions, affect and the gendering of organising. In so doing, it evades a "detailed treatment of embodied and lived experience" and "cloaks what is at stake" in questions such as "How does the gendered organization oppress us by seeking to capture and exploit our affects?" (Pullen et al., 2017, p. 112).

Put another way, the concepts associated with affect are "sufficiently open-ended, and bordering on poetic, to enable scholars to interpret/riff on these sexy themes without pushing the more demanding socio-political implications of such accounts"[2] (Boler & Zembylas, 2016, p. 22). A praxeological approach, combined with feminist critical insights from studies of practice, organising and educational leading can provide the conceptual tools by which to "push" these implications. I now turn to an exploration of site ontologies and practice architectures theories, followed by feminist critical scholarship, to explore *how* they do so.

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[2] There is not sufficient space or necessity to engage with the full body of scholarship in these bodies of work. Suffice to say that in foregrounding practice architectures theory as the major lens through which to understand educational leading as practice, I adopt a primarily humanistic approach to studies of practice, agency, the formation of the human subject, and questions of agency when it comes to the human and the material. This is not to dismiss the claims of the preceding lines of inquiry, particularly that of feminist post humanism. Hence, whilst employing the terms emotions/affect interchangeably, like Boler & Zembylas, (2016), I remain mindful and open to developments in the feminist post humanist space that suggest compelling political lines of inquiry into our understandings of agency, materiality and subjectivity. This is particularly the case for previously subjugated ways of knowing, such as Indigenous systems of thought, ontologies and epistemologies in terms of people's relationship to the land and its spirituality (c.f., Moreton-Robinson, 2020).

7.5 The Place of Emotions in Site Ontologies

In relation to more humanistic orientations in the study of practice and emotions, Schatzki's later work has increasingly theorised emotions as playing a crucial role in practices. Given that his account is one of the few in the practice field that provides a "more elaborate treatment" of emotions (Weenink & Spaagaren, 2016, p. 66), and it has some resonances with practice architectures theory, it is worthwhile examining his arguments in more detail.

For Schatzki:

> the site of the social is composed of nexuses of practices and material arrangements…
> Social life inherently transpires as part of such nexuses … The set of actions that compose
> a practice is organised by three phenomena: understandings of how to do things, rules, and
> teleoaffective structure (2005, p. 7).

These "understandings of how to do things" consist of: "*practical understanding* … knowing how to carry out desired actions through basic doings and sayings"; *rules*—"an explicitly formulated directive, remonstration, instruction or edict"; and *teleoaffective structure*, "a set of teleological hierarchies (end-project-activity combinations) that are enjoined or acceptable in a given practice" (Schatzki, 2012, p. 16) (my italics).

To illustrate, Schatzki provides examples of how the actions that comprise North American educational practices are organised by: "*understandings* of how to grade, teach, mentor, supervise … perform administration"; *rules* such as "instructions, requirements, guidelines, and rules of thumb" such as the governing of syllabi or exam timing; and *teleoaffective structure*, that "embraces such ends as educating students, learning, receiving good student evaluations … and acceptable uses of such equipment as computers" (Schatzki, 2005, p. 472) (my italics).

Crucially, however, these organising phenomena of practices are not the sole "dimension of the site of social life" (Schatzki, 2003, p. 195). They are always bundled together with "material arrangements" which include people (and their bodies), "artefacts, organisms, and things" including the human body (Schatzki, 2003, p. 195). Schatzki stresses this point repeatedly, noting that the "intimate … relationship between practices and material entities" renders "the notion of a bundle of practices and material arrangements" as "fundamental to analyzing human life" (2012, p. 16). Similarly, the theory of practice architectures emphasises that practices cannot be understood in isolation from the discursive, material and social arrangements that prefigure them. Thus, some practices are more likely to be realised in specific sites than others, but this is not a predetermined 'fate'.

In terms of emotions, the ends or projects of the teleoaffective structure include all those that are "acceptable or prescribed for participants in a practice" (Schatzki, 2003, p. 192). These normativised understandings of what it is acceptable include the affective dimension—which "embraces the emotions and moods that people carrying on a practice should or may acceptably express" (Schatzki, 2012, p. 16).

Put another way, the teleoaffective structure is what makes activities recognisable as practices, i.e., as "organized activities of multiple peoples" (Schatzki, 2012, p. 2).

An example is the practice of putting one's hand up in an Anglo-Australian classroom when someone wants to speak. Australian students come to learn that there is an "oughtness" to this practice, that is, the practice unfolds "according to a specific direction" of how it "should be carried out" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 166). Students learn that putting their hand up when assembled in a classroom is part of this "specific direction". Accompanying this "oughtness" is "a set of emotions and moods that connote ends and project affectively (we feel happy when we win)" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 166). Alternatively, we experience a sense of satisfaction when we put our hand up and are rewarded with being asked to respond to a teacher's question.

As novices, we learn "this internal structure and affective colouring … through instruction and corrections", i.e., when we are "socialized into a practice and taught how to see and make sense of things" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 166). "Repetition, sanctions, and peer pressure" are crucial means by which practices are reinforced and … are what gives practices their "strong normative flavor" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 166). For instance, Australian students are corrected by teachers if they shout out instead of putting their hands up. The affective colouring that accompanies this practice may be a sense of satisfaction (we may feel pleased when we comply with instructions), or rebellion (we may bridle at having to obey such a rule). Either way, the affect we experience still arises from or in opposition to the desired ends or project of the practice.

There are two key points that arise from the notion of the teleoaffective structure. Firstly, it is not the property of participants, but instead is part of the "features of the practice" (Schatzki, 2005, p. 481), expressed in the sayings and doings that accompany it. For example, when individuals enter the principalship, caring for students is part of the teleoaffective structure of educational leading practices. It is expressed in varied *sayings*, e.g., 'all children matter', and *doings*, e.g., the push towards instructional leading that Principal Wayne in Chap. 5 so vigorously prosecutes as part of the new collective know how that has been orchestrated in the Catholic education district. There are particular "affective colourings" or "feeling rules" that are part of the expected "end" or telos of the practice, e.g., a sense of warmth towards students; passion and dedication to the task of improving the teaching practices of a school.[3]

Secondly, despite the apparently deterministic flavour of the teleoaffective structure, Schatzki notes the importance of agency, arguing that practices

> do not cause the actions of their participants. At best, the versions that participants possess of the mental states that organise practices help determine what they do (Schatzki, 2003, p. 194).

This is where *practical understanding* is a crucial aspect of practices, that is, the 'knowing how' and 'knowing that' which accompanies being a "competent member of a practice" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 165). Put another way, "actions within a practice are linked by a practical understanding when most participants agree on what it

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[3] Caring for students is a key telos that exists as a goal in and of itself in the contemporary teaching profession. As such, it renders problematic neoliberal comparisons to positions of authority in non-educational sites (e.g., the CEO of a bank where caring for employees is a means to an end, such as making a profit for one's shareholders).

makes sense to do" or "tacitly understand that there is one particular way to go about it" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 165). This practical understanding is not predetermined by habitus but is part of the practical intelligibility, "what it makes sense to do" at the time (Schatzki, 2010, p. 118). This practical intelligibility is in turn, in part prefigured by emotions.

In sum, if practising is a "form of emergent coping guided by intelligibility", then humans exercise agency as "active carriers" of practices (Nicolini, 2011, p. 166). Because practical understanding "only executes the actions that practical intelligibility singles out" (Schatzki, 2002, p. 79), then "practice is never decided ahead of time, and action is never directly governed by habitus, norms, or systems of belief" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 166).

But how do emotions "help determine" what it may make sense to do? Emotions matter in determining action in three ways. Firstly, they are crucial in shaping practical intelligibility, i.e., "what it is that a person does next in the flow of conduct" (Schatzki, 2010, p. 118). They do so by "selecting and lighting up what matters in a specific situation" (Weenink & Spaargaren, 2016, p. 67).

Secondly, they indicate "which specific actions it makes sense to do, given these states of affairs and ways of being" (Weenink & Spaargaren, 2016, p. 67). This includes doing things that may not seem to be in a person's best interest, but the action makes "emotional sense" to do so at the time (Weenink & Spaargaren, 2016, p. 67).

Finally, there are some instances where there is a direct causality between emotions and actions, such as slamming on the brakes if a child runs in front of one's car (Weenink & Spaargaren, 2016, p. 67). However, this is the only time when there is direct cause and effect. In the first two cases, emotions foreground what may be relevant to do, but what people actually do is only settled "the moment people act" (Weenink & Spaargaren, 2016, p. 67).

The key point that is stressed above is the relationship between agency and emotions. Schatzki's theorising of the teleoaffective structure of practices foregrounds the major role that emotions play in bringing about, but not determining, the "actions of individuals who are always caught up in teleologies" (Weenink & Spaargaren, 2016, p. 68). As noted earlier, Schatzki emphasises the importance of agency repeatedly, for example, when he observes that

> a practice is organised by an array of intelligibilities, rules, ends, projects, and the way things matter. This array is distinct from, and *differentially incorporated* into, the minds of participants (2003, p. 19) (my italics).

There are critiques of Schatzki's work in relation to the teleo-affective structure. For instance, "determining which ends, projects, and emotions are obligatory or mandatory is open-ended" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 167). In this sense, "discussion, contestation, and a certain level of conflict" are normal aspects of practice for this is how they evolve in response to changed circumstances (Nicolini, 2012, p. 167). For example, the shutdown of Australian schools due to Covid 19 led to a rapid evolution of new teaching and learning practices, accompanied by considerable contestation and debate about how best to support students who required higher levels of caring.

Secondly, the teleoaffective structure can be viewed as foreshadowing a more individualistic and cognitive notion of emotions that is psychologically located, less social and less intersubjective (S. Kemmis, personal communication, 11.08.20). This is where the theory of practice architectures to which I now turn, can be useful in foregrounding the inherent sociality and intersubjective aspect of emotions in educating, and educational leading.

7.6   The Place of Emotions in Practice Architectures Theory

Like all theories, the theory of practice architectures continues to evolve.[4] More recently, the sayings, doings and relatings that hang together in the project of the practice have been expanded to encompass feelings and emotions (S. Kemmis, personal communication, 20 August, 2020). Practices, it is argued, are interactionally secured in "participants' relatings ... the *affective, evident in participants' values, feelings, emotions*" (S. Kemmis, personal communication, 20 August 2020) (my italics).

Clearly there is more work to be done to explore theoretically and practically the role of emotions and affect in the theory of practice architectures.[5] However, there are several points that can be made in terms of how the theory lends itself to an embrace of emotions and affect in educational leading as practice. Firstly, it does so through its emphasis on the *intersubjective* and *relational* nature of human sociality. Practice architectures emphasises that as participants in the practice of educational leading (or any other practice), we do not encounter one another in "unmediated ways" as sovereign individuals or aggregates (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 4). Rather, via a lifetime of "inhabiting the social world", we encounter one another in intersubjective spaces, that are "already arranged in particular ways" and which "shape our knowledge, skills and values, memories and desires, and our identities" (Kemmis et al., 2014, pp. 4, 6). These encounters are realised via shared language (semantic space), interlocking spaces (physical space–time) and interconnected relationships (social space). They are marked by a constant human striving towards sociality, which is rendered visible by the 'relatings' of a practice, as evidenced in our emotions, feelings and values.

Our encounters with one another in the intersubjective space/medium unfold as part of this human desire for sociality, rather than solely a wish to satisfy one's individual needs as the psychological sciences posit. For example, the smiling infant who leans towards a carer for an embrace is not only asking for its immediate psychological needs to be met but is also signifying the human need for communication

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[4] For a more detailed explanation of the theory of practice architectures, see Chap. 3 in this book and Kemmis et al., (2014).

[5] This is not to say that emotions have been completed overlooked in the theory. For example, Edwards-Groves et al. (2010) coined the term "relational architectures" to foreground the relational aspects of educating that are at risk due to the emphasis on systems at the cost of the lifeworld aspects of educating. Santos & Soler (2021) conceptualise pedagogical practice as 'feeling-thinking praxis' in higher education in Colombia. Kostogriz, Adams & Bonar (in press) theorise the affective architectures of international schooling as sites of practice.

and social solidarity (S. Kemmis, personal communication, 20 August 2020). This Habermasian-inspired emphasis on intersubjectivity is what sets the theory of practice architectures apart from more bleak accounts of human sociality in the contemporary world such as Bourdieu's (see Chap. 4). The emphasis also lends itself to critically transformative theories of education by stressing the relational and intersubjective nature of educating (and hence, leading) as a practice and their double purpose of achieving human solidarity, i.e., living well in a world worth living in (Kemmis et al., 2014). This contrasts with the current stress in Anglophone educational systems on educating and educational leading as technical pursuits emptied of their moral and ethical purpose.

Secondly, the relatings of a practice are evident in participants' emotions and feelings. These relatings are prefigured by (discursive, material and) social-political arrangements, such as the system roles which participants inhabit along with the lifeworld relationships of a site of practice. For example, the emotional management demands of performing the principalship or the role of a university dean of a faculty are prefigured by this dialectical interplay between lifeworld and system roles and the affective attunement that accompanies this interplay. In neoliberal education systems, such as Australian academia, the terrors of performativity are part of the project of academic leadership practice. They are coordinated by a set of emotions and moods that "connote ends and project affectively" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 166). For instance, a dean may experience 'terror' when their faculty fails in gaining the expected quantum of research funding as measured by university metrics, or temporary relief when they do.

Finally, recent critical accounts of educational leading stress that it is a "collective social practice immersed in relations of interdependence and intersubjectivity" and under "constant re/negotiation" (Blackmore, 2018, p. 208). This is a welcome shift in the conceptualisation of leading. However, talking about leading as relational work can conceal its intrinsic relatedness to other educating practices in the education complex and re/train the gaze on leadership as between sovereign individuals or aggregates. Instead, practice architectures theory posits that these "relations of interdependence and intersubjectivity" are not the properties of individuals as such but are between *practices* of leading and other practices such as teaching, learning, professional learning and researching/evaluating (c.f., Kemmis et al., 2014, pp. 3–4). Moreover, this relationality is always mediated through practices and their arrangements as part of our coming to know in the world.

However, the role that emotions and affect play in this coming to know is not distributed equally amongst participants in a practice. This is where feminist insights on emotions and educating/educational leading are crucial.

7.7　Emotions as Sites of Knowing in Feminist Scholarship

Practice theorists have only recently engaged with conceptualising emotions and affect in human sociality. However, emotions have long been a source of interest

in feminist scholarship more broadly, and more specifically in feminist studies of organising, including educating. This is due to the crucial links that exist between "affect and gendered, sexualized, racialized and classed relations of power" (Fotaki et al., 2017, p. 10). In educational organising, feminists contend that emotions play a crucial role, both as a site of social control, as well as a "potential site of critical inquiry and transformation, both of the self and of the culture" (Boler, 1999, p. xiv).

In relation to emotions as a site of social control, education in modern societies has a primary assimilationist function, "shaping our values, beliefs, and who and what we become" (Boler, 1999, p. xiv).[6] Emotions play a central role in the forming of the child/young person. They are "inseparable" from the sayings, doings and relatings of practices, and are situated in our "lived experience … [and] … power relations", including relations of gender, class and 'race' (Boler, 1999, p. 2).

For instance, injunctions such as 'boys don't cry' or ('nice', middle-class, white) 'girls don't get angry and yell/hit' remain part of the teleoaffective structure of socialising practices that Anglo-Australian children absorb from a young age. These include the affective attunement that reinforces the telos of these practices. Hence, young children may be verbally shamed or derided if they do indeed cry (boys) or strike a friend (girls). Many children quickly learn to absorb the affective colouring that accompanies these practices (e.g., shame, self-disgust etc.).[7] These socialising practices, although arbitrary and varying between cultures, are a means by which humans come to "feel power" (Boler, 1999), i.e., to internalise and enact societal divisions and hierarchies. Such practices have major material repercussions, including systematically enforcing

> acceptance of gendered divisions of 'private' and 'public', of women as emotional and men as rational. These divisions justify social stratifications and maintaining power in the hands of an elite few (Boler, 1999, p. xvii).

Educating practices can play a critical role in reproducing and/or challenging this 'know-how'. For instance, the reproductive function of educating can be seen in the highly gendered ways in which nurturing and caring are mobilised as the natural possessions of particular forms of femininity. In practice terms, caring in teaching

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[6] For instance, in Australia, as with many other colonising nations, there is a violent history regarding the assimilationist functions of formal education. Along with the forced removal of Aboriginal, 'mixed-race' children from the nineteenth century until the 1980s, public education was seen as an important instrument to "de-Aboriginalise" children (Heitmeyer, 2004, p. 224). For instance, although public schooling technically was open to all children in the Australian state of New South Wales from its inception in 1880, the "Clean, Clad and Courteous" Policy of 1884 meant Aboriginal children could be excluded from public school attendance (Heitmeyer, 2004, p. 224). No other ethnic group was subjected to this policy. In 1902, the Exclusion on Demand Policy stated that "no Aboriginal child could attend school if **one** non Aboriginal parent objected". This policy was "not removed from the NSW Teachers Handbook until 1972" (Heitmeyer, 2004, p. 225). There were similar policies across Australia.

[7] As the section on Schatzki reveals, contestation and dispute is a normal part of how one comes to know how to go on in a practice. Practices do evolve and these kinds of sexist stereotypes in Australia are now subjected to considerable dispute and contestation. Nonetheless, they still have a powerful sway as we see in the virulent backlash that accompanies schools' attempts to instill more socially just, gender equal practices.

becomes a "site of knowing", performing highly gendered "form[s] of collective know-how" (Gherardi & Rodeschini, 2016, p. 280). This also applies to educational leading as I explore in the section on emotional labour below.

As the predominant carriers of the know-how of caring, women educators as a group typically will absorb "normativised understandings of what it is acceptable" when it comes to teaching and educating (Schatzki, 2012, p. 16). These understandings are highly gendered, raced and classed. For instance, educators learn which "emotions and moods" can be "acceptably express[ed]" (e.g., nurture, concern, affection for pupils) and which are specifically proscribed (e.g., hatred, anger, disgust or sheer lack of interest in a child).

In addition, the practice architectures which prefigure educating practices, including discourses such as professionalism, provide a bulwark against unacceptable or "outlaw" emotions. The latter feelings may include "pain, despair, uncertainty and so on, feelings which would otherwise interfere with the professional relationship" of teacher and student (Sachs & Blackmore, 1998, p. 271).

In education, women as a group have long been subjected to "[c]ontradictory rules of emotional conduct and expression [which] … function to uphold the dominant culture's hierarchies and values" (Boler, 1999, p. xiv). For instance, historically women were excluded from the public sphere of formal education "on the grounds of their irrationality" (Boler, 1999, p. xiv).[8]

Simultaneously, in education, they have been positioned as upholders of dominant culture's hierarchies and values, i.e., as moral guardians of virtue and care. In this sense, their role has been to prepare moral citizens and … be the "guardian against the irrational" (Boler, 1999, p. 32). In so doing, they must vigorously shape and police the emotions of the children in their care, to support the internalising of ideologies as 'common sense' (Boler, 1999). They must also police their own emotions, including not expressing anger. Such emotions are "outlawed" as part of the "oughtness" or gendered and racialised teleology of the gendered project of educating as caring.

Before turning to Boler's second interpretation of "feeling power" in education as a site of resistance, it may be helpful to illustrate how caring as a 'naturalised' practice in educating can operate as a source of "feeling power" in Boler's (1999) first meaning of the term, i.e., educating as a reproductive practice.

When it comes to understanding how caring practices function as sites of collective knowing, his/herstories of specific sites matter. To illustrate, the historical construction of white middle class femininities in Australia was as the guardians of white values and moral authority. These practices included the carrying out of missionary/ "God's police" work to convicts, working class settlers and Indigenous peoples (Summers, 2016). The white race privilege of this 'civilising mission' was "intimately linked" in Australia to "racial oppression" and was "constituted by and constitutive of colonization" (Moreteon-Robinson, 2020, p. viii).

Hence, in Australia, the 'civilising' function of educating as a (white, middle class, feminised) practice of care carried with it a significant legacy of symbolic violence

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[8] In modern day politics, females are similarly subjected to these "contradictory rules", facing accusations that they are overly emotional (Gillard & Okonjo-Iweala, 2020).

towards Indigenous peoples. Yet, this has been typically misrecognised due to the positive valences that accompany notions of caring in educating as an unalloyed 'good'.

These highly gendered, raced and classed affective attunements of educating as caring are forms of pastoral power. Put another way, when it comes to Indigenous students, the practice architectures of Australian educational sites prefigure (but do not predetermine) caring as a practice, including prefiguring (white, female) carriers who enter such practices as the "caring police" (Boler, 1999, p. 21). Moreover, these practice architectures form a crucial aspect of the collective practice memories that have orchestrated dominant practices of Australian educating as a 'colonising' mission and site of oppression (Moreton-Robinson, 2020).

Postcolonial, African American and Indigenous scholars have provided similar accounts of the policing function of educating as caring (c.f., Chap. 4). Their work reveals how crucial links between "affect and gendered, sexualized, racialized and classed relations of power" are continuously made and remade in everyday educating practices (Fotaki et al., 2017, p. 10). Hence, any account of emotions and educating requires examining how these sites of knowing evolve, unfold and are prefigured by the practice architectures of their site-specific "local and global historical context" (Boler, 1999, p. 19).

However, emotions not only play a role in reproducing asymmetrical relations of power but are also a "potential site of critical inquiry and transformation, both of the self and of the culture" (Boler, 1999, p. xiv). Feelings such as anger and injustice can provide a powerful basis for "feeling power" in its second emancipatory sense, i.e., as the "basis of collective and individual social resistance to injustices" (Boler, 1999, p. xviii). Examples include social movements such as civil rights, second wave feminism, land rights, Black Lives Matter and #Me Too—all of which have arisen from "politicized anger" (Boler, 1999, p. xviii).[9]

In education, emotions are "critical to both teaching and learning" (Blackmore, 2011, p. 220) and to acts of resistance to injustice that are carried out by educators, both individually and as collectives.[10] Boler's (1999) notion of pedagogies of discomfort attempts to tap into emotions as a powerful collective resource for educational transformation. It draws on a long history of feminist pedagogies and consciousness raising which located emotions as an important site of political resistance. As such, pedagogies of discomfort act as both "an invitation to inquiry as well as a call to action" (Boler, 1999, p. 176). They emphasise "collective witnessing" as opposed to "individualized self-reflection", with a "central focus" on recognising "how emotions

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[9] We have witnessed this kind of collective resistance to injustice in 2021 in Australia. The alleged rape of a federal government staffer and a litany of reports of misogynist behaviours towards (white) women staffers and politicians led to mass demonstrations which have impelled Australia's #Me Too Movement. Simultaneously, a related movement has sprung up which is protesting misogynistic behaviours and a 'rape culture' mentality in elite private boys' schools.

[10] For example, there is a long history of scholarship in socially just educational pedagogies and leadership in which emotions of anger, frustration and passion act as a deep wellspring for transformative education (see Chap. 4).

define how and what one chooses to see, and conversely, not to see" (Boler, 1999, p. 176).

However, where is educational leading as a practice located in these notions of emotions as political, as sites of knowing and of reproduction and transformation of human relatings? This is where the final concept of educational leading as a form of emotional labour is crucial.

7.8   Educational Leading as Emotional Labour

Arlie Hochschild's pioneering book, *The managed heart: Commercialization of human feeling*, conceptualises the notion of emotional labour, that is, a form of labour which

> requires one to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others—in this case, the sense of being cared for in a convivial and safe place. This kind of labor calls for a coordination of mind and feeling, and it sometimes draws on a source of self that we honor as deep and integral to our individuality (2012, p. 4).

Through her studies of air hostesses in the USA in the 1980s, Hochschild (2012) observed how a crucial aspect of their work involved what she came to term emotional labour. These acts of 'emotional management' were not private or isolated within the individual; rather they operated under the guidance of "feeling rules", or "standards" which determined the appropriate uses of feeling (Hoschschild, 2012, p. 27). Such labour requires participants to engage in surface and/or deep acting, while simultaneously these forms of work remain largely invisible and unrecognised, albeit increasingly exploited.

Increasingly this commodification of feelings is an integral aspect of service work—the work required to please others, behave in ways that are deemed to be professionally appropriate, or in the case of mainly male debt collectors, to curb one's empathy and act aggressively to collect debts (Hochschild, 2012). Such labour is a major feature of twentieth and twenty first century societies (Hochschild, 2012). Work related to a dominant aspect of the service industry, i.e., pleasing others, is typically dominated by women. This is because the management of emotions in the home is "one of the offerings … [women have traditionally] … traded for economic support" (Hochschild, 2012, p. 6). Such work is also classed as well as gendered. For instance,

> especially among dependent women of the middle and upper classes, women ha[d] the job (or [thought] they ought to) of creating the emotional tone of social encounters: expressing joy at the Christmas presents others open, creating the sense of surprise at birthdays, or displaying alarm at the mouse in the kitchen (Hochschild, 2012, p. 12).

Emotional labour is largely invisible work. It is guided by "feeling rules", which establish

the sense of entitlement or obligation that governs emotional exchanges… [and] is a way of describing how—as parents and children, wives and husbands, friends and lovers—we intervene in feelings in order to shape them (Hochschild, 2012, p. 34).

Frequently, it is only when there is a "pinch" between what we feel and what we should feel that we come to be aware of feeling rules (Hochschild, 2012, p. 34). In practice terms, we may say that this "pinch" comes about when the sayings, doings and relatings of a practice are "maladjusted" and "seem to bring about a different future than was anticipated" (Weenink & Spaargaren, 2016, p. 71). For example, we may win a much longed for prize and experience a sense of depression or apathy rather than the "normative emotions" of joy (Weenink & Spaargaren, 2016, p. 71). Equally, the positive feelings that may accompany the successful enactment of a practice reveal these feeling rules (Weenink & Spaargaren, 2016), e.g., the feelings of accomplishment a teacher may feel in teaching a child to read their first book.

Hochschild (2012) distinguishes between emotional management, the feeling rules that govern such displays, and emotional labour. Emotional management is a crucial aspect of human sociality and the relatings of a social practice. The nod and smile at a neighbour, the expression of pleasure when a child brings home a bunch of wilted daisies, the congratulations to a friend who has achieved an honour (no matter whether one genuinely feels joy or is busy suppressing envy) are crucial aspects of practices such as home making, friendship or any other social encounters, including in the workplace.

It is also highly gendered, i.e., part of the emotional 'work' that women typically may carry out. As Hochschild observes, due to women still earning far less than men on average, women as a group learn to

make a resource out of feeling and offer it to men as a gift in return for the more material resources they lack…Thus their capacity to manage feeling and to do "relational" work is for them a more important resource ...

Second …each gender tends to be called on to do different kinds of [emotion] … [and] … tasks. Women are more likely to be presented with the task of mastering anger and aggression in the service of 'being nice.' To men, the socially assigned task of aggressing against those that break rules of various sorts creates the private task of mastering fear and vulnerability (2012, p. 45).

However, what makes this type of labour so problematic is the exploitation of emotions as part of the commodification of labour in contemporary capitalism. For Hochschild, the "transmutation" of emotions to their public expression is driven by "large organisations, social engineering and the profit motive" (2012, p. 42). Such exploitation, as she points out, comes at an emotional cost to one's wellbeing. One must learn to "mentally detach [oneself] —the factory worker from his own body and physical labor, and the flight attendant from her own feelings and emotional labor" (Hochschild, 2012, p. 10).

There are important implications of the concept of emotional labour for educational leading as a collective practice, given such practices always unfold in unequal relations of power, "informed by multiple intersectionalities of gender, race, class, ethnicity, religion and sexuality" (Blackmore, 2018, p. 208). The "transmutation" of

emotions for profit (Hochschild, 2012, p. 42) can be seen in the neoliberal project of educating that has colonised Anglophone nations as part of the Global Education Reform Movement [GERM] (Sahlberg, 2011). As a result, there has been a major shift in the "affective economies" of educational sites (Ahmed, 2004). In Anglophone schools, this includes a shift from a sense of optimism" in the 1970s and 80 s, to one of "generalised anxiety in the 1990s and 2000s due to the sense of insecurity arising from terrorism, market competitiveness and rapid global change" (Blackmore, 2011, p. 221).

In universities, there has been a corresponding shift from optimism to anxiety and insecurity, accompanied by a move away from more collegial and participatory ways of managing and leading to corporate, managerial practices. The combination of decreasing public funding and externally imposed accountability measures have led to considerable demoralisation and contributed to a climate of "incivility" that negatively impacts staff wellbeing (Bosetti & Heffernan, 2021a, p. 103).

As part of this shift in the affective atmospheres of educating, schools and other educational institutions such as universities are now subjected to new accountabilities. These, in turn require new and more intense forms of labour, including skills in performing emotional management work (Blackmore, 2004; Bosetti & Heffernan, 2021a, b). This shift has had contradictory outcomes for some women—positioning them in middle management as change agents and skilled emotional managers in restructuring workplaces (Blackmore & Sachs, 2007). Simultaneously it disadvantages them, placing them under considerable stress as they perform the emotional housework associated with mopping up colleagues' grief, anger and disaffection from constant restructuring (Blackmore & Sachs, 2007).

Those who occupy system roles such as principals, deans, and other middle managers are located at the epicenter of this major change in the affective economies of educating. They are required to be effective managers and performers of their emotions. However, studies of the emotional labour of those who hold formal management roles in education document the high emotional and personal costs this detachment extracts for school leaders such as principals (Riley, et al., 2021; Wilkinson et al., 2020) and senior university personnel (Bosetti & Heffernan, 2021a, b). For example, a principal or deputy may experience ongoing distress at the impact of testing regimes on vulnerable children, while simultaneously suppressing these emotions in front of colleagues (Blackmore, 2004). At the same time, they must orchestrate the emotions of others, to achieve often externally imposed performance goals. Simultaneously, they must manage the felt dissonance experienced by many teachers (or in universities, academics) between the 'real work' of teaching (or teaching and researching) and the demands of performative systems and markets (Blackmore & Sachs, 2007; Bosetti & Heffernan, 2021a, b).

Women and, those from Indigenous, Black and other minority groups, are differentially positioned in relation to the emotional labour of leading. For example, cultural norms inform who should take on the caregiving aspects of leading and shape interpersonal relationships between colleagues (Wharton, 2009). Women are frequently subjected to gendered discourses that position them as better at delivering the 'caring' and 'sharing' duties of leadership (Sachs & Blackmore, 1998).

However, recent studies of women principals from Anglo, African-American and Hispanic backgrounds suggest key differences between how their leadership roles are conceptualised (Ispa-Landa & Thomas, 2019). White women felt under pressure to be emotionally available and struggled with a conflict between being authoritative and directive on the other hand, while also demonstrating emotional support on the other hand (Ispa-Landa & Thomas, 2019). Women of colour in the study reported not experiencing a dissonance between enacting more authoritative ways of leading whilst simultaneously demonstrating emotional availability (Ispa-Landa & Thomas, 2019).

This more nuanced understanding of the different feeling rules within practices of leading depending on one's gender, racial and ethnic positioning is markedly absent from mainstream scholarship of emotions and leadership. In borrowing concepts such as emotional intelligence from populist management literature or newer understandings of the neurology of emotions, mainstream educational leadership research decontextualises and depoliticises emotions from their social, political and cultural contexts. As such, it ignores the different forms of emotional labour participants may be forced to perform, depending on their gender, racial and cultural positioning (Blackmore, 2011). For instance, Black women leaders may be subjected to constant racism and/or misogyny while all the while being expected to conceal the emotional burden of these aggressions (Wharton, 2009).[11]

7.9 Drawing the Threads Together

To paraphrase Jane Austen's ironic opening to *Pride and Prejudice,* it is a truth universally acknowledged in educational leadership scholarship and practice theory that emotions matter in human social life. This is a belated recognition for both mainstream educational leadership scholarship and practice theorists.

In this chapter, I have drawn together some of the key theoretical insights from critical feminism and practice approaches as a stepping stone to understanding how and why emotions matter in educational leading as practice. I do not pretend that it is a comprehensive mapping; rather it is of necessity selective and there are clear gaps and omissions, e.g., the relationship between bodies and emotion work. However, my aim is to begin a dialogue between these bodies of scholarship as they have productive and complementary insights to offer when it comes to theorising the role of emotions in educational leading.

There are clear commonalities between feminist and practice approaches to emotions. For instance, like practice theory, emotions are postulated by feminist scholars as not a fixed state or entity, or something we possess that is pregiven or natural, but are instead.

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[11] I would like to acknowledge and thank our research assistant, Stephanie Westcott whose literature review on emotional labour and educational leadership conducted for the study in Chap. 8 helped to inform some of the writing in this section of the chapter.

something we *do* by attending to inner sensation in a given way, by defining situations in a given way, by managing in given ways … The very act of managing emotion can be seen as part of what the emotion becomes (Hochschild, 2012, p. 17).

Both feminist scholars and practice approaches share insights into the importance of tacit or 'sensible' forms of knowing. In latter iterations such as material feminism, the understanding that emotions/affect is anchored materially in "human bodies and non-human artefacts" (Reckwitz, 2012, p. 249) is being fruitfully explored.

However, there are major differences. Put simply, the strength of a practice approach lies in its inherent relationality (Nicolini, 2011). It radically shifts the basic unit of analysis of human activity/sociality from individuals and their actions to the "relationships and connections" between practices (Nicolini, 2011, pp. 602–603). Hence it shifts our gaze from emotions as situated in dyadic relationships between individuals in a practice (e.g., between leaders as care/less-managers of their emotions, managing the emotions of other individuals/groups such as teachers, students, parents) to emotions as sites of knowing (Gherardi & Rodeschini, 2016, p. 280). A practice lens reveals relationships between these sites of knowing in organising; how different kinds of knowing in practice are enabled and/or constrained; and how clear hierarchies and differing regimes of empowerment are established discursively and through our interactions with the material, non-human world (Nicolini, 2011).[12]

Hence, a practice approach critique of Hochschild's notions of emotional labour is that its understanding of human activity/sociality is too narrow—its focus is purely on interpersonal relations between human subjects. As Reckwitz observes, Hochschild views the "social as identical with intersubjectivity", and thus, emotions/affect are "of interest only when they affect the relationships between subjects" (2012, p. 253). Instead, from a praxeological perspective:

Processes of affecting and being affected need to be observed between all sorts of entities instead, including objects as well as human subjects ... To understand the reproductive and disruptive impact of affects, it seems indispensable to look at subject-object relations (Reckwitz, 2012, p. 253).

Practice architectures theory offers a highly productive lens from which to inter the subject-object relations of "affecting and being affected", discursively, materially and in terms of relatings when it comes to the system and lifeworld of educational leading.

However, feminist critical scholarship, combined with practice theory, offers key understandings about the *politics* of emotions and the assymetrical relations of *power* in which emotions, as intrinsic aspects of practices, are invariably entangled.[13]

Firstly, in terms of the *politics* of emotions, if practices are sites of the social and emotions/affects are a "constitutive part" of this social life (Reckwitz, 2017, p. 118),

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[12] See Chap. 6 where I examine the differences between the knowing in practice of instructional leading and the sensible knowing of English teachers.

[13] See Chap. 4 for a further examination of feminist scholarship's contribution to practice approaches more generally.

then their incessant production is invariably *political*. Hence, emotions—including desire, anger, sadness, grief and joy—cannot be dismissed as "private and individualized experiences" (Boler & Zembylas, 2016, p. 17), i.e., the sole properties of individuals. Instead, the sayings, doings and relatings and specific affective attunements of taken-for-granted practices such as the emotional labour of teaching or leading are prefigured by the practice architectures of gender/class/race brought into or existing in a site and vice versa.

Secondly and relatedly, feminist scholarship foregrounds the role that emotions play in terms of reproducing or challenging existing *power* relations as part of the "construction of social relations and hierarchies" in practices (Boler & Zembylas, 2016, p. 17). Every social order, conceived of an "arrangement of practice" is affectively tuned "in a particular way" (Reckwitz, 2017, p. 118). The particularities of these affective attunements are "collectively and socially produced and constructed" (Boler & Zembylas, 2016, p. 17). Thus, they are "highly relevant to politics and the public sphere" (Boler & Zembylas, 2016, pp. 18, 19).

It is only when we understand how emotions function as sites of power, i.e., of "socio-political control", that the sayings, doings and relatings of "previously hidden and silenced emotions"—and that which enables and constrains them—can be rendered visible (Boler & Zembylas, 2016, pp. 17, 19). In so doing, they can be reflected upon collectively and emerge as sites of know-how.

For example, historical discourses of women as 'overly emotional' (and therefore not suited to administrative positions in education)—and males as 'natural disciplinarians'—have had material and constitutive effects on the teaching workforce. These arrangements prefigure which forms of labour are rendered visible, accorded higher status and subsequently rewarded. Typically, administration 'science' has emerged as a higher paid, high status, predominantly masculinised practice and site of 'know-how'. This is in comparison to classroom teaching which remains a lower paid, less prestigious, highly feminised practice in many nation states. Simultaneously, the cultivation of emotionality is encouraged and exploited in women as a group (Boler & Zembylas, 2016, pp. 18, 19) so that an increasingly feminised teaching workforce continues to be the carriers of the invisible labour of caring and nurturing.

7.10   Conclusion

Feminist critical scholarship addresses a key shortcoming in flat ontological approaches to emotions such as site ontologies, i.e., their silence regarding issues of power and politics, be it in relation to emotions and educational leading or more broadly, social life itself[14] (Watson, 2017). Relatedly, although practice architectures

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[14] I note in Chap. 4, Nicolini's observation that from a flat ontology perspective (encompassing practice architectures and site ontologies theories), "it is practices all the way" (2017, p. 99). According to Nicolini, in flat ontological lenses, social reality has "no levels", with large-scale

theory directly addresses issues of power and politics through the twin notions of *relatings* and *social-political arrangements*, the implications for theory and practice have been sparsely teased out thus far. This chapter and the subsequent one begins to address this lacuna.

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Chapter 8
The Emotional Labour of Educational Leading: A Practice Lens

Jane Wilkinson , **Lucas Walsh, Amanda Keddie, and Fiona Longmuir**

Abstract In this chapter, we examine the heightened volatilities and politics of the emotional labour of leading in contemporary times. We begin the chapter by 'zooming out' to examine the practice architectures which prefigure schooling, teaching and leading practices in the state of Victoria and how they shape the intersubjective spaces of educating. Drawing on case studies of schools defined as exemplary in building socially cohesive communities, we then 'zoom in' to examine the practice landscapes of the case study sites and how varied types of emotional labour were enabled and constrained within them. We analyse emotional labour primarily through the contested emotion of caring, examining how 'caring' practices are variously bundled together with other emotions as part of the labour of leading. We analyse how these practices emerge and circulate in the sites, their political impacts, and their relationship with practices such as teaching and learning. We conclude by teasing out the implications of this analysis for practice architectures theory, educational leading and emotions as fields of scholarship and practice.

Keywords Emotional labour of educational leadership · Social cohesion · Practice architectures · Principals · Secondary schools

8.1 Introduction

Q: *What are the major social issues facing schools today?*

A: *Feelings of disengagement, hopelessness and at times anger against the disenfranchising inertia of society's power structures. Every social issue I can think of for our school stems from the widening gap in incomes and its associated beliefs of superiority and inferiority [Australian principal, 2020].*

The increasing diversification of societies over recent decades stems from a variety of factors. These include the global mass migration of peoples from a range of ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds and a greater recognition of difference when it comes to gender, sexuality and ability (Kostogriz et al., 2021). The speed, complexity and intensity of these societal changes has led to the coining of the term,

"super-diversity", to describe a "level and kind of complexity surpassing anything previously experienced in a particular society" (Vertovec, 2007, p. 1049).

In addition to increasing diversification, nation states are grappling with heightened political and social volatilities. These include threats to national security from religious movements and alt-right terrorism; the weaponisation of the public sphere through social media; the climate emergency; and the challenges and opportunities afforded by the enhanced mobility and diversity of populations. These issues have implications for educating as a site of human sociality.

One of the key shifts in recent times has been a major movement in the affective economies of education as a field of research and practice. The optimism of the 1970 and 80s has been supplanted in the 1990s onwards by disquiet, "generalised anxiety" and "a sense of insecurity … arising from terrorism, market competitiveness and rapid global change" (Blackmore, 2011, p. 221). These anxieties and insecurities have been fed by and feed into neoliberal quasi market economies which sprang up in Anglophone education systems in the 1980 and 90s and whose ideologies have been variously adopted by a wide range of nations. Such systems are characterised by a narrowed purpose of education as a producer of human capital; the corporatisation of schooling; the adoption of new public management principles that have restructured education bureaucracies, and new modes of governance and accountability such as datafication via testing (Lingard et al., 2016). These technologies of governing have in turn led to a reconfiguration of relations between the state, educational systems, schools and individuals from an emphasis on collegiality, collaboration and trust, to relatings characterised by mistrust and a deprofessionalisation of teaching as a career (Blackmore, 2011).

The "competitive individualism" (Blackmore, 2011, p. 221) of educating as a contemporary project in Anglo-American nations prefigures significant changes in its intersubjective spaces. These include changed language and discourses (e.g., 'evidence-informed policy and practice'); space–time in the material world (e.g., high stakes testing in schools; the metrification of academic work); and reconfigured social relationships (e.g., students and parents positioned as consumers of relentlessly marketed education products). Consequently, an increasing degree of "relational tensions" characterise the affective economies of education and unfold in the intersubjective spaces that comprise teaching, learning and leading (Kostogriz et al., in press).

As a market driven and performative affective economy, schooling systems in Anglo-American countries exploit emotions. They play on the significant emotional investment of educators in their vocation; the shame when schools and systems are judged to have 'failed'; and schools' passion and drive to compete and succeed which is often driven by a fear for survival. They prey on tensions for school leaders between "self-care … 'being good'", and "care for others, 'doing good'" (Blackmore, 2011, p. 223) and the desires and anxieties of middle-class parents to maximise opportunities for their children. These emotions comprise the affective dimensions of practice architectures of educating in Australia, Canada, USA and UK. However, they do not predetermine those practices.

In this chapter, we 'zoom in' to examine how broader shifts in the affective economies of educating come to form sites of competing collective know-how that hang together in the contested projects of practice associated with the emotional labour of educational leading. We do so through the lens of a qualitative case study conducted in 2017 with three government schools in Victoria, Australia. The one primary and two secondary schools comprised highly diverse socio-economic, linguistic, ethnic, racial and religious student populations.[1] They had been nominated as 'exemplary' in responding to social volatilities and disharmonies in positive and enabling ways that fostered greater levels of social cohesion amongst students (Wilkinson et al., 2018). Our threefold aim for the study included: examining how principals, teachers and students responded to, and opened up conversations about social cohesion within their school communities; identifying what strategies and resources were employed by school leaders to respond to issues that threatened social cohesion; and analysing how school leaders drew on non-school actors in order to build cohesion and address challenges such as disharmony and exclusion so that "initiatives became locally owned" and community-led[2] (Wilkinson et al., 2018, p. 3).

The study was conducted in 2017 at the height of global political and societal anxieties and polarisation. Internationally, US president Donald Trump actively encouraged alt-right movements via Twitter and Facebook, leading to a rise in hate speech centered on Islamophobic, anti-Semitic and xenophobic sentiments. 2017 witnessed the continuing ascension of the Islamic state militant group and its active recruitment from the global north as well as south. A mass exodus of peoples due to ongoing wars such as that in Syria led to the highest numbers of displaced persons since the conclusion of the second world war.

In Australia, a federal government-initiated same sex marriage postal vote was being conducted amongst considerable controversy. The debates emanating from this high stakes vote in turn led to a heightening of the affective atmospheres in the case study sites. Emotions associated with these debates played out in the lifeworld of the three schools, e.g., via relational tensions generated in practices such as badge wearing or flag waving associated with supporting or not supporting the vote. They also played out in the micropolitics of practice architectures associated with system roles of teaching and leadership, e.g., through teaching and leadership practices such as expressing, condoning, regulating, minimising, deflecting or ignoring 'hot' emotions that bubbled to the surface.

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[1] The study was funded by the Social Cohesion Unit, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Victoria, Australia. It was carried out in partnership with the Victorian Department of Education and Training, the Bastow Institute of Education Leadership and The Centre for Strategic Education.

[2] The emphasis on social cohesion was due to the nature of the research funding we received. The aim of the broad research program driven by the Victorian Government's Research Institute on Social Cohesion [RIOSC] was to improve "understanding of social cohesion, diversity, community resilience, community polarisation and violent extremism" in order to build an evidence base. A second aim was "to develop… innovative ways to reduce racial, ethnic and religious exclusivism and enhance Victoria's pluralism into the future" (Research Institute on Social Cohesion, 2015, p. 1).

Our case study of leading for social cohesion was complemented in 2020 by a survey of approximately 100 Victorian government principals and assistant principals. The aim of the research was to elicit school executive's understandings of the key social issues impacting their students, the resources and supports that were helping schools to build more socially cohesive communities, and any gaps in these resources (Wilkinson et al., 2020).[3] Coincidentally, the survey was conducted at a time of unprecedented heightening of national and global anxieties due to the rapid international spread of Covid 19. In February, when the survey commenced, international borders began closing. Australia was one of the first nations to do so. A nation-wide lockdown was declared in late March as the first wave of Covid 19 began to spread. Students in schools and post compulsory settings across the nation moved into remote learning a fortnight before the survey closed. As the opening quotation to the chapter attests, the qualitative responses received in the last two weeks of the survey reveal executive staff's heightened anxieties and tensions.

In response to the pandemic, schools, universities and further education institutions scrambled to move to wholesale remote learning. New practice architectures and practices associated with these forms of learning rapidly evolved. Employers struggled to adapt as workers juggled the competing demands of remote schooling and work. Equally, educators, students and families were placed under enormous pressure as they attempted to cope with novel practices and arrangements of educating under new conditions that were not of their making. However, as the opening quotation to this chapter reveals, government funded schools and school leaders in poorer areas faced particular pressures due to the highly vulnerable families in their care. For instance, some families were unable to afford mobile devices and internet connections, students went without food that schools would ordinarily provide, and a 'shadow pandemic' of family violence ensued.

The unfolding crisis of Covid 19 exposed hitherto unremarkable practices and practice architectures of educating as key parts of human sociality. As practice philosopher, Ted Schatzki somewhat wryly observed in a study of US academics switching to online learning, "crises have a knack of revealing structures that are unattended to until the crises occur" (2021, p. 8).

Remote educating revealed the centrality of place to the successful carrying out of educational practices. It did so in two key ways. Firstly, it laid bare ecological interdependencies between educational practices, for teaching and learning are dependent on the stability of other practices for their survival (Schatzki, 2021). For example, teaching in a bricks and mortar classroom in most parts of Australia depends on varied arrangements. These include cultural-discursive arrangements, e.g., a comprehensive curriculum and a shared language of educating. They include material-economic arrangements, e.g., trained educators, students, heating and power, toilets, drinking water and books. Finally, they encompass social-political arrangements, e.g., agreed-upon relationships between students, educators, administrators, schools/universities/further education and larger education systems. In other words, the apparent stability of educating depends on the practice architectures of

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[3] The survey was funded by the RE Ross Trust and the Reichstein Foundation.

education which "form an evolving ecology" due to their "extensive interdependence" (Schatzki, 2021, p. 8). It is only at times of crises that these otherwise unremarked-upon arrangements of education and their ecological interdependencies are revealed.

However, when it comes to education, place is not simply about the bricks and mortar of institutions. At least in the first few weeks of lockdown, teaching and learning practices suffered due to a "loss of encompassing place" (Schatzki, 2021, p. 12). Many educators and students across compulsory and post compulsory sectors struggled to achieve "resonance", i.e., a "healthy, harmonious connection to a world that is felt to be meaningfully connected to oneself" (Rosa, 2019, as cited in Schatzki, 2021, p. 12). For educators and students, "a relation of resonance between an instructor … [or a student] … and an encompassing place of educating is an 'axis' around which a generally rewarding relationship to the world can grow" (Schatzki, 2021, p. 12). Despite best efforts, this resonance was missing for many students and educators during lockdown.

Hence, the crisis of Covid revealed a second lesson about the centrality of place in the successful carrying out of educational practices. It provided a stark reminder of the importance of emotional connections to place and the forging of meaningful connections which underpin healthy relatings between educators, learners and their world. As such, it exposed practices such as teaching, learning and educational leading as "not only concerned with knowledge, cognition and skill" but inherently relational and "irretrievably emotional" (Hargreaves, 2001, p. 1056). Understanding this interdependence and emotionality is of crucial importance to what Habermas has termed the lifeworld of educating which underpins education as praxis and the relations of teaching, learning and leading. It is a lesson that most educators intuitively know to be true but which the current 'relentless focus' on school improvement minimises or sidelines.

For those holding formal positions of leadership, such as middle managers in universities, further education and the principalship, Covid exacted even heavier emotional demands. They were sandwiched between the competing tensions of supporting staff, students, parents and communities at a time of exacerbated tensions, whilst also coping with the emotional toll upon their own wellbeing (c.f., Beauchamp et al., 2021; Longmuir, 2021). This was on top of the relentless levels of emotional labour required in positions of middle educational management, which have been extensively documented in scholarship in schools and universities (e.g., Blackmore, 1996, 2004, 2011; Bosetti & Heffernan, 2021; Zembylas, 2009). However, until recently this invisible labour has been largely ignored in mainstream school improvement scholarship and practice.

In this chapter, we examine the heightened volatilities and politics of the emotional labour of leading in contemporary times. We begin the chapter by zooming out to examine the practice architectures which prefigure schooling, teaching and leading practices in the state of Victoria and how they shape the intersubjective spaces of educating. Drawing on our case studies of schools defined as exemplary in building socially cohesive communities, we then zoom in to examine the practice landscapes of the different sites and how varied types of emotional labour were enabled

and constrained within them. We analyse emotional labour primarily through the contested emotion of caring, defined in this chapter as the "everyday accomplishment of a community of practitioners" (Gherardi & Rodeschini, 2016, p. 281). This definition shifts the gaze from caring as a "dyadic interpersonal relation" between educators and students, to a practice lens, i.e., an "organizational context where caring practices are sites of knowing" (Nicolini, 2011). These sites of knowing "perform a collective know-how and a common orientation to a matter of concern" (Gherardi & Rodeschini, 2016, p. 280).

We examine how caring practices are variously bundled together with other emotions as part of the labour of leading. We analyse how they emerge and circulate in the sites, their political impacts, and their relationship with practices such as teaching and learning. We conclude by teasing out the implications of this analysis for practice architectures theory, educational leading and emotions as fields of scholarship and practice.

8.2   Mapping the Practice Architectures of Victorian Education

Chapter 5 examined the orchestration of the practice architectures of instructional leading in Big River Catholic Education District, New South Wales. It mapped how transformed sayings, doings and relatings amongst educators emerged from performative pressures associated with international and national school improvement reforms. The Victorian public education system in which the three case study schools was located faced similar demands. However, there was one key difference. Unlike non-government schools in Australia, which are funded by a mix of federal government grants and parent fees, government schools are funded by the state. Each state has its own education system with its specific practice traditions, histories and ways of working. Ultimate responsibility for student outcomes resides with this level of government. Hence, schools, principals and the large education bureaucracies which manage them have been subject to heightened practices of accountability over the past three decades.

The Victorian public education system is an outlier in Australian education. It was a pioneering adopter of neoliberal ideologies in the early 1990s. This was due to the election of a conservative government which applied Thatcherite ideologies of competition and privatisation to the public schooling system (c.f., Townsend et al. 2017, Wilkinson, 2019).[4] The practice architectures which ensued continue to this day to compose the key cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements of the Victorian system. They have had a profound impact

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[4] Other Australian state education systems moved far more slowly towards the adoption of neoliberal ideologies. New South Wales, the largest education bureaucracy in Australia, only adopted policies of greater autonomy for principals in the second decade of the 2000s. Centralised controls are now being reasserted.

on the affective economies of schooling and practices of leading as detailed in the introduction to this chapter and Chap. 7. This is despite successive tinkering around the edges by left-wing state labour governments.

Features of the Victorian system are now commonplace in many nations across the world. These include discourses of competition and parental choice and the creation of a quasi-education market in which government schools compete with one another for student enrolments. Principals have been granted greater autonomy over some aspects of schooling, e.g., the employment of staff and budgets, but not over aspects, such as curriculum. The greater 'responsibilisation' of principals has led to increases in stress levels (Riley et al., 2021) and a decline in the popularity of the role (Heffernan & Pierpoint, 2020). This is a trend that is experienced at state, national and international levels (Heffernan & Pierpoint, 2020).

Moreover, there is an ever-growing stratification of the state system as mainly middle-class parents exercise their neoliberal choice to 'flee' low SES, highly multicultural, disadvantaged public schools. The ensuing pockets of entrenched disadvantage and privilege in Victorian public schooling were clearly etched in our case study schools to which we now turn.

8.3 School Sites and Methodology

Eucalyptus and Wattle High Schools[5] were comparatively large secondary schools located in well-heeled urban settings. Both had diverse school populations in terms of ethnicity, although Eucalyptus High School had more students who were first generation immigrants, typically drawn from highly skilled professional or business backgrounds. Wattle High School recruited small pockets of students from poorer backgrounds but most of its students, like Eucalyptus, were from middle class backgrounds. Starflower Primary, a smaller school, was located in an urban fringe, characterised by high levels of poverty, as well as religious, linguistic and ethnic diversity. The school regularly dealt with children who were experiencing family dysfunction, violence, drugs and greater levels of unemployment compared to the national average (Wilkinson et al., 2018).

All three principals were female, each with at least a decade of experience in the principalship. Two were from Anglo-Australian backgrounds (Wattle and Starflower) and one from a Southern European background[6] (Eucalyptus). Staff were largely white and Anglo-Celtic, reflecting the overwhelming whiteness of educators in Anglophone systems despite the increasing diversity of Australia's population (Wilkinson, 2018).

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[5] These are pseudonyms. All identifying details have been changed to protect the identity of the participants and their schools.

[6] Due to issues of confidentiality and anonymity, the descriptions of the schools, student populations and staff have been kept relatively general.

Data collection consisted of a minimum of two site visits per school; school walkthroughs to allow for informal researcher observations; semi-structured interviews/focus groups with principals and school executive; and focus groups with teachers, students and community members. The latter variously included non-teaching staff, school council members, peripatetic staff, parents and external service providers. Relevant schools' policies, practices and community documentation around social cohesion were analysed. At the conclusion of the data collection, a one-day symposium was conducted for key stakeholders (e.g., principals, teachers, community/non-school actors, policymakers, advisory committee members) to disseminate findings regarding exemplary practices of social cohesion work in schools and gain feedback on draft findings. Responses from participants in the symposium were collected by the research team and this data further informed the research findings.[7]

A key finding from the study was that leading for social cohesion was a crucial form of emotional labour which was largely overlooked in official policies such as the Australian Principal Standard (Wilkinson et al., 2018). Moreover, this form of leading was not a practice undertaken by one individual alone, although the principals were crucial in orchestrating the conditions by which more socially cohesive relatings between students, staff, executive and community could be fostered and enabled (c.f., Walsh et al., 2020). Rather, leading for social cohesion was a collective practice and an ongoing process, rather than an end point. In addition, it was 'risky' business for it required pedagogies of discomfort (Boler, 1999) and a level of threshold knowledges and practices to challenge and interrogate existing practice architectures that enabled more socially unjust practices to emerge. In relation to this last point, i.e., challenging these unjust practices, the schools were only partially successful (c.f., Keddie et al., 2018; Wilkinson et al., 2018).

We now turn to examining the caring practices associated with the emotional labour of leading for social cohesion in one of the school sites, Wattle High School. We do so through the lens of a critical incident, defined as "an emotional event in the life of a person or an organization in that it is a period of intense feelings" (Gherardi & Rodeschini, 2016, p. 272). Critical incident analysis thus provides

> an opportunity for practice researchers to look at a breakdown in the course of what is taken as 'normality,' in order to gain deeper understanding of the values, rules, and behaviours that are taken for granted and are therefore almost invisible for most of the time (Gherardi & Rodeschini, 2016, p. 272).

We draw on accounts from the school principal and teachers, supplemented by reflections from members of the school executive and a community member responsible for running professional development for students and staff which challenged sexist behaviours. Before doing so, however, we sketch the project of community making in which the school was engaged and the contested nature of this work.

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[7] For further details of data collection and methodology, see Wilkinson et al. (2018).

8.4   **Community Making as a Contested Project of Caring**

Wattle High School was in a rapidly gentrifying suburb, which had transformed from a largely working-class and ethnically diverse locale to an area which attracted high numbers of young professionals and families. Parents had higher than average levels of tertiary education and tended to be more left-leaning and socially progressive in their views than the general Australian populace. The school remained ethnically diverse with 42 nationalities. However, this ethnicity was primarily second and third generation Italian, Greek, Turkish and Lebanese and included a large cohort of international students. Along with ethnic diversity, there was a high level of affluence. As such the school was described by several participants as a privileged enclave. The principal summed up these sentiments, remarking that the school consisted of

> mainly people just like us. So, it's sort of a bubble and that is an issue in this community ... there's a little bit of disadvantage, there's a little bit of diversity, there's a little bit of a whole lot of stuff, but actually it's the 'good life 101' on a platter.

"Community making" was a distinctive project of practice on which the activities of the school were centred (principal). It was based on "cementing" the school's key values of humanity and fairness, "which we as a community have agreed upon" (executive team). A community member agreed, describing the culture of the school when it came to building a strong sense of community as "really fantastic … open and progressive". Activities such as student-initiated clubs were encouraged as they helped students who might not otherwise belong to feel a sense of "community within a community" (principal). However, the formation of clubs needed to "reflect community standards" and "match the behaviours of the people in the organisation" (principal).

Sayings associated with community making, such as "fairness" and "humanity" 'hung together' with a range of doings and concomitant relatings. Along with clubs, a variety of extra educational programs were developed by or in coordination with the staff welfare team for students. These included a 'Say No to Racism' program in which junior students were trained to be upstanders when dealing with discriminatory acts. They also included a gender awareness training program for students, staff and parents run by an outside provider. The latter program was initiated by the school because of recommendations from the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence (2016) around the role that schools could play in promoting "gender and equality" as a "societal issue" (executive team). The community member who facilitated the program observed that the program also related to "some issues around gender that were popping up at that high school". Incidents which had precipitated the program included the public defacing of advertisements for a prominent visiting feminist author and intimidating displays of aggressive masculinities by certain groups of male students. The program was particularly noteworthy, for until recently, most schools in Australia have tended to deflect or minimise issues of sexism and misogyny. As the community member remarked:

running that particular program focused on gender would be very difficult … it's probably an issue that most schools would probably just ignore, but for Wattle High School, it's been a real priority.

In terms of relations of solidarity and power, unlike many large Australian secondary schools which possess a hierarchical structure centred at the apex of principal, Wattle High School deliberately encouraged a diversity of views. The community member observed that there was a

healthy culture where people are able to put their hand up and be an odd one out and say, 'actually I don't think that is a problem', or 'I think completely different to where this has been going for the last 20 minutes'. So it seemed to be welcome there, which I think is a really good thing.

The principal concurred, observing that when it came to staff and students, "we don't want beige, we want someone with an opinion. So in order to build the brand, we want diversity of opinion and we want people who will take action."

Fostering a sense of community, democracy, humanity and fairness as part of the stated ethos of the school was dynamic, ongoing labour. It was "shaped, invented, negotiated, and adapted, time and time again" in the "everyday practices" of staff and students at Wattle High School (Gherardi & Rodeschini, 2016, p. 273). It lay at the heart of the collective identity of the school, a "'we' which encompassed all" educators, but which had "different meanings for each according to the sociomaterial relationships of their professional practice" (Gherardi & Rodeschini, 2016, p. 273), e.g., for classroom teachers, subject coordinators, school executive, students and parents.

Like all sites of practice, there was "contestation, contradiction, tension, and struggle" at Wattle High School in terms of "what avenues for acting" were "opened up or closed down, by particular power dynamics at play" (Mahon et al., 2017, p. 20). Thus, attempts to build community invariably raise questions about whose community, who is included/excluded, and on whose terms? For instance, caring practices centred around democratic community making, fairness and humanity were enmeshed with the practice architectures of the school site and its student/family demographics. These included a local community whose discourses of progressivism and 'green credentials' prefigured the uptake of more collaborative forms of decision making with staff, students and parents. However, not all subscribed to a democratic and inclusive ethos. Dissenting voices included some families and a small number of boys who fought back against the school's progressive views. These students were described by the principal as

incredibly racist and sexist … they will discriminate against someone with Asperger's, Autism, a female, like anything … They're just incredibly right wing and they're fuelled by the sort of Trump blah.

Despite seeking assistance at departmental level, the school felt largely unsupported and isolated in their attempts to address these challenging volatilities. For instance, the principal observed that the Department of Education had

no strategies on 'what are we going to do about these kids?' So when you can't get any grab with the families, because possibly they're religious right, or they're neo-Nazis, or they're whatever else, so they don't think – you know, they may think 'I can see that's possibly not okay, but I'm going to defend Johnny', you've got nowhere to go, because often their behaviour's clandestine (principal).

What kept the project of community making going at Wattle High School, despite irruptions of misogyny, homophobia and alt right perspectives was the "invisible work" of "articulation" (Corbin & Strauss, 1993, as cited in Gherardi & Rodeschini, 2016, p. 274). This articulation work was orchestrated as part of an ecology of caring within the case study sites, comprising teaching, learning, leading and professional learning practices (c.f., Walsh et al., 2020). Articulation work is that which is

necessary to establish, maintain, and change the arrangements necessary to work within one's own organizational unit, among different units, and among different interacting organizations (Gherardi & Rodeschini, 2016, p. 274).

When critical incidents occur, such as "young, kind of alpha male students really pushing back hard" (community member), this articulation work may break down. This breakdown produces "conflicts, anxieties, frustrations" and the necessity of "further repair work" on the lifeworld relationships and relatings between practitioners that have been "unintentionally severed" (Gherardi & Rodeschini, 2016, p. 274). Such repair work is a crucial aspect of the daily emotional labour undertaken by Australian educators in these securitised times as suggested by the principal's comments and the critical incident detailed below.

However, this necessary repair work in Victorian schools was prefigured by practice architectures of accountability and competitive individualism, as sketched in the opening to this chapter. It was also prefigured by rising societal volatilities noted by the principal, such as a backlash against increased rights for equity groups such as women and minorities; the emboldening of the alt right and students' ability to access these views via social media; Islamophobia; increasing fear of the 'other'; and heightened anxiety associated with increasing gaps between the haves and have-nots (Wilkinson et al., 2018). Moreover, the affective dimensions of these practice architectures played out in the diverse relations of solidarity and tension that comprised the lifeworld relationships and system roles, rules and functions of contemporary Victorian schooling.

Hence, when critical incidents occur, they reveal how the project of community making and its associated practices of caring are not only individual and collective accomplishments but are ecologically interdependent within broader "texture[s] of caring practices" (Gherardi & Rodeschini, 2016, p. 275). These caring practices include the family (e.g., the principal summons the parents of the alt-right boys to school); law, police and the departments of education in which government schools are located (even if the state system is deemed to be "lacking strategies" as in the preceding instance). As we see below, they also include the media whose panoptic gaze is now a crucial dimension in the "interorganizational field" (Gherardi & Rodeschini, 2016, p. 275) in which Australian schooling systems are located.

Critical incidents with students or staff may activate this "interorganizational field", which includes these other players "as participants in caring, but also as controllers of other participants" (Gherardi & Rodeschini, 2016, pp. 275–276). As the responsibilised carriers of this care work, educators and in particular, principals are at the centre of negotiations and decision-making around the ethics of care work in these more volatile times. This is hinted at in the principal's account above and explored further below.

The incident is narrated from two different perspectives. Firstly, we hear from Helen and Darby, both highly experienced educators who are participating in a teachers' focus group. The topic the teachers were discussing was the issue of student well-being and the related impact of bullying. Secondly, we hear Principal Anne's account, as part of a one-to-one interview exploring the practices and practice architectures of facilitating a more socially cohesive community at Wattle High School.

We have selected these contrasting accounts as "analytical shifting between sites" highlights that "knowing in practice is associated with a particular distribution of power" that is never fixed or sedimented (Nicolini, 2011, p. 614). Instead, it "requires working around other knowledges, continuously negotiating the boundaries with other knowings" (Nicolini, 2011, p. 614), such as principals making choices about avoiding stepping on parents' or communities' toes. Thus, the contrasting accounts reveal how practices "perform different hierarchies of knowing and associated patterns of relationships" (Nicolini, 2011, p. 613) that are part of the varied politics of emotional labour associated with projects of practice such as community making. We begin with the teachers' accounts.

8.5   A Critical Incident: Breakdowns in Community Making/Caring

Extracts from Wattle High School teachers' focus group

Interviewer: How do you respond to [online bullying]? Go on, you were going to say something?

Helen: Yes, from a wellbeing perspective I may see some of those students, who then come and seek help, or are directed by teachers or … talk to [the] Wellbeing [Unit], to talk through what's happening. So I see effects of bullying impacting self-confidence, identity, anxiety, maybe even low moods, that kind of thing.

Interviewer: Good, great.

Helen: I do worry. A few years ago we had one of our students became a terrorist[8] and I knew that boy, and I look at some of our boys and I worry that—because he was a lovely boy, but had very low skills. So I look at some of our students, and I'm not

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[8] Due to confidentiality concerns, we have used more generalised terms and omitted identifying details in some parts of these accounts. We employ pseudonyms for teachers and students.

saying I sort of target them, but I think even if their disconnection is in the future, if we are not including them and in whatever manner it is, I worry about that continual feeling excluded from mainstream culture, and where it leads …

[short exchanges between teachers] …

Darby: Yeah. I was just saying, stepping back, there's another piece where they're—like, they're not with us 18 hours a day … There has been arguably a devolution of the community … where there used to be the local shop or—there's lot more—families are pocketed, in some ways. And while this school is pretty strong in its community connectedness it's not necessarily—we don't necessarily have the reach or the resources to bring the whole community into the fold …

School is a big socialiser and is a big community builder, but it's also there's a community outside of the school. And that particular kid or kids like him who are disengaged and schools are trying to find learning plans, and there's a whole bunch of competing needs, that when they do walk out the gate then—and who's keeping an eye on them? Or who's aware of them? And are there any nets out there?

Extracts from interview with principal

Anne: [In this community] there's a little bit of disadvantage, there's a little bit of diversity, there's a little bit of a whole lot of stuff, but actually it's the good life 101 on a platter and so with that you can end up with behaviours and discourse that's actually unhelpful around building community, around community making, particularly for kids, because they're—it's a bubble—they don't even know what goes on.

Interestingly, [an Islamist terrorist] was a student from this school—an ex-student from this school …

Interviewer: Okay.

Anne: David … He was an ex-student from this school. So there's a Middle Eastern community living up in [X area] … lovely people, all fine—but, you know some difficult young men behaviours. But essentially that kid was marginalised at school …

Interviewer: At this school?

Anne: At this school. And really couldn't find his people because we didn't have those people. So he then went and found those people out in the community … So, I don't know if that's relevant, but it's sort of interesting in itself…

Interviewer: So how did the school respond when? …

Anne: And so there's some relationship with this school and that community, or you know, that anti-social sort of behaviour, but it's not a sort of current nuance.

So how did the community react? Oh, I don't know—I had the bloody—ten different media people at my house, you know they were out the front of the school, there was all that sort of stuff. But I don't know; it's tomorrow's sort of fish and chip wrapper really. It's something around—because it's not a current [issue] … people don't relate to it.

End of extracts

It is important to preface our subsequent analysis of these accounts with a preamble. The educators are recounting a critical incident that was deeply distressing for the

school and its community. It was widely covered by the media at the time, thus placing the community and the school under even greater stress. Anne's use of a swear word in an otherwise more emotionally neutral account reveals this tension, "I had the bloody – ten different media people at my house".

As researchers, we are acutely aware of the responsibility we must bear in selecting, presenting and discussing this incident in ways that humanise all participants, in particular, student David. We did not wish to reinscribe the "very cultural, gendered and racial stereotyping" of young Muslim men as "potentially dangerous, risky and uncertain" that we are seeking to prevent (Howie et al., 2020, p. 9). We are mindful that this is a particularly grave responsibility in Australia, a nation in which rising levels of Islamophobia and the purported links of Islam to terrorism have been the daily fodder of the media and a prevailing focus of governments of all political stripes, security forces and the law. This has in turn led to the effective criminalising of young Muslim men as a group (Howie et al., 2020).

However, the reasons we have selected this incident, whilst also being mindful of these responsibilities are as follows. Firstly, it is "an emotional event in the life" of Wattle High School as an organisation and its educators, i.e., "a period of intense feelings" (Gherardi & Rodeschini, 2016, p. 272). Despite the incident no longer threatening the school's reputation as a "current nuance" (principal), the affective intensities underlying the educators' accounts reveal its ongoing impact in the lifeworld of the school.

Secondly, the incident renders visible the "values, rules, and behaviours that are taken for granted" at Wattle High School "and are therefore almost invisible for most of the time" (Gherardi & Rodeschini, 2016, p. 272). As such, it provided us as researchers with valuable insights. For instance, a critical incident such as this indicates "underlying trends, motives, and structures that have a more general meaning and indicate something of importance" in the "wider context" of Australian society (Gherardi & Rodeschini, 2016, p. 272). They reveal the struggles that schools must engage in as they attempt to foster more socially inclusive communities in an era of heightened social and political volatilities. This is particularly the case for Australian public schools which are over-represented when it comes to groups of students from equity backgrounds (Rorris, 2021). Hence, the incident raises broader questions and reflections about what constitutes the project of educating in these securitised times, in terms of education's double purpose of the "formation of persons … communities and societies" (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 27).

Thirdly, the incident poignantly illustrates the emotional labour that public school practitioners and leaders must grapple with in their daily negotiations between the lifeworld and system requirements of educating. In this sense, paying particular attention to "people's life narratives" must be an important consideration in practice approaches, as educational sites are invariably sites of practice and in their "broadest sense", of human lives (Mahon et al., 2017, p. 17).

Finally, the incident in all its troubling consequences powerfully illustrates the importance of the humanising concept of praxis in the theory of practice architectures (Mahon et al., 2017). The incorporation of praxis humanises practice approaches in education by reinserting the "'actor/s' in "the act'" and the people in "the unfolding

of the events'" (Mahon et al., 2017, p. 17). Praxis is the "action of people who act in the knowledge that their actions will have good and ill consequences for which they have sole or shared responsibility" (Mahon et al., 2017, p. 17). Hence, critical incidents such as the one above illuminate the messy, day to day unfolding of educational praxis as an integral part of the encounters between individuals and groups in the intersubjective spaces of schooling (Mahon et al., 2017, p. 17). In addition, the employment of practice architectures theory as a lens through which to examine this unfolding allows us to apprehend how socially unjust practices and the arrangements that prefigure them may be overcome. This is both the *practical* aim of practice architectures theory, i.e., "transforming existing arrangements in the intersubjective spaces that support" socially unjust educational practices, and its *critical* aim, identifying these arrangements and thus allowing us to "think about how they might be overcome" (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 6).

We now turn to analysing these accounts, beginning with Teacher Helen.

8.6   Community Making and Caring as Emotional Labour

8.6.1   Different Forms of Teacherly 'Know-How'

There is a marked contrast between the sayings and implied doings and relatings of community making as a project of practice amongst the three educators' accounts. Helen's utilisation of the first-person plural, he was "one of *our* students … I knew that boy" foregrounds community making as a relational project of caring. Her sayings suggest its unfolding in the intersubjective spaces of power and solidarity between teachers as the providers and distributors of caring, and students as its recipients, the 'cared-for'. For Helen, these relatings are embedded in lifeworld relationships that are human to human and emerge as warm, loving and responsive. In her mind and heart, David remains a member of the school community.

Helen's language is inclusive and humanising, "a *lovely* boy". She opens and concludes with a reference to her more generalised worries and perhaps feelings of guilt about disengaged students and how the school may not be engaging them sufficiently as part of community making, "I worry about that continual feeling excluded from mainstream culture." Her repetition of the verb "worry' in the present tense, "I do worry" and "I worry about", suggest an empathy and understanding for David and other potentially marginalised students in their care. Her commentary implies an understanding of the broader human need to belong and experience solidarity with others that is a crucial aspect of community making: needs which the school and society more generally may not be meeting, at least in the case of David.

Helen's display of tender emotions is noteworthy. Typically, teachers will call on discourses of professionalism, "modelled on the traditionally male preserves of medicine and law" to avoid "emotional entanglement" and "maintain professional distance" with students and parents (Gromit, 1988, as cited in Hargreaves, 2001,

p. 1069). Ordinarily such discourses would provide a bulwark for teachers against unacceptable or "outlaw" emotions (Jaggar, 1989, as cited in Boler, 1999, p. 21). The latter feelings may include "pain, despair, uncertainty and so on, feelings which would otherwise interfere with the professional relationship" of teacher and student (Sachs & Blackmore, 1998, p. 271). We see this play out in Darby's account below.

Yet, the "core activities of teaching and learning" that form the heart of community making in a classroom necessitate the development of a "close emotional understanding between teachers, parents and students" (Hargreaves, 2001, p. 1069). Hence, Helen in some ways breaks the "feeling rules" of teacherly professionalism by not masking the emotional labour associated with educating as an ethics of care bound up in the relatings between teachers and students in the lifeworld of schooling. Instead, her emotions of care, concern, worry, guilt, and pain provide a glimpse of the "back stage" of teaching, those private places and times where the performance of expected emotions associated with the discourses of professionalism may be suspended (Gherardi & Rodeschini, 2016, p. 276).

In one sense, Helen disrupts the "feeling rules" of teacher professionalism. However, from a site ontological lens, when we enter a practice such as teaching or leading, we take on the teleoaffective structure of that practice, or the "oughtness" regarding the project of the practice, i.e., how it should unfold (Nicolini, 2012, p. 166) (See Chap. 7 for more details). Accompanying the practice is "a set of emotions and moods that connote ends and project affectively" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 166). As the predominant carriers of the know-how of caring, women educators typically will absorb normativised understandings of what it is acceptable to feel or express when it comes to the practices of teaching and educating (Schatzki, 2012). Hence, Helen's account can also be understood as revealing her absorption into these normativised understandings through, for example, her adoption of a maternal discourse of caring when it comes to the responsibilities associated with building an inclusive community for students, "I do worry … a lovely boy".

Moreover, Helen's account hints at the civilising function of teaching as a (white, middle class, feminised) practice of care into which she has entered (see Chap. 7). A major aspect of this caring labour is "transforming the unruliness of youth into manageable adulthood" (Walther, 2003, as cited in Howie et al., 2020, p. 3). This is suggested in the euphemisms she uses to characterise David as "a *lovely* boy *but with low skills*". There are allusions to his religion of Islam and thus his 'otherness' from the mainly middle class, non-Muslim community of students and staff, "excluded from mainstream culture."

In making these observations, we are not wishing to criticise Helen as an individual or to call into question the genuine love and care for David that her account suggests. Rather it is to suggest how emotions are not the exclusive property of individual educators but are "embedded in culture and ideology and embodied and situated in lived relations of power" (Zorn & Boler, 2007, p. 146). Put another way, Helen's account reveals that "emotional displays and the emotional division of labour are gendered and racialised" with "cultural, racial and gender expectations and stereotypes" shaping how teaching, leading and "emotions are understood and enacted as social practices" (Blackmore, 2011, p. 217). This can be seen in the contrasts

between Helen and Darby's accounts of community building as a project of practice at Wattle High School.

Like Helen, Darby's account references community making as an important project of the school. However, in his retelling, emotions appear to be under tight control. For instance, he employs the passive voice, "there has been a devolution of the community." He does not use David's name and instead uses the third person, "that particular kid", subsuming David's individuality into the collective noun, "kids like him". This may be a protective device to conceal David's identity but nonetheless the contrast between his account and that of Helen's is striking.

In discussing what enables and constrains community making as a key project of practice for the school, Darby's account emphasises metaphorical borders as demarcation zones. These include divisions and binaries between home, community outside the school gate and school community (Howie et al., 2020). We hear school described as an important "socialiser" and "big community builder **but** … there's a community outside" and "pocketed" families when the students "walk out the gate". This contrasts with Helen's account, which in its loving tones appears to suggest a "malleable border", unified by recognition that there is a shared lifeworld of caring between home, school and family (Howie et al., 2020, p. 13).

Darby's account emphasises the metaphorical and physical boundaries between the practice landscape of the school and the broader community in which it nestles. He stresses the breakdown of community and the increasingly important role schools can play in making up for these gaps, albeit prefigured by a lack of resources and "competing needs". However, his objectivity ends with a hint of passion and despair in the use of rhetorical questions, "when they do walk out the gate … who's keeping an eye on them? Or who's aware of them? And are there any [safety] nets out there?"

What is unsayable is that which is most potent in the preceding accounts. Islam is never explicitly named (the closest it occurs is when Anne describes David's Middle Eastern community). But in this era of securitisation and Islamophobia, Helen drops an ominous hint of how those who feel 'othered' from white, Christian culture may capitulate to violence against the "mainstream", "I worry about that continual feeling … and where it leads …" It is this (unspoken/unsayable) conflation of Islam with terrorism and violence that gives Helen and Darby's sayings affective intensity.

Yet, there is a clear contrast between the 'hot' emotions of Helen, e.g., her repeated "worry" about where the Davids of the world will end up and the same teacher group's more neutral emotions when it comes to discussing the alt right students. As one participant mildly observes in response to a discussion about the behaviours of the alt-right boys (which included threats to a prominent social campaigner, online engagement with white extremism and verbal aggression towards female peers and pupils with disabilities), students are

> allowed to have a political view, but they're not allowed to vilify … offend anyone. You know, all those bullying, harassment policies that we have, that's when we bring those in and make it really clear what school expectations are of behaviour and how we treat people. But I don't think - if you just berate them, it's just walls are up.

8.6.2   Different Forms of Principalship 'Know-How'

For Principal Anne, community making as a project of practice in the school was enabled and constrained by prevailing socio-economic inequalities which played out in the majority students' privileged insulation from reality:

> it's the good life 101 on a platter and so with that you can end up with behaviours and discourse that's actually unhelpful around building community, around community making – it's a bubble – they don't even know what goes on.

These binaries of privilege and deprivation led to acute material disparities and social exclusions, "that kid was marginalised at school". However, unlike the teachers, she is more pessimistic about the school's responsibility to engage such children as part of community building, observing, "[He] couldn't find his people because we didn't have those people. So he then went and found those people out in the community … it's sort of interesting in itself."

Anne's tone is blunter, factual and more emotionally distant from David as the subject of her caring. Her language, with a few exceptions, is emotionally neutral, appearing to lack the passion and closeness to the student body exhibited by Helen in particular. This is both due to her role as principal but also suggests she may be deploying the kinds of strategies invoked by other female principals to cope with the emotional demands of their labour, i.e., detachment, distancing, regulation of one's emotions (Blackmore, 1996). Yet, unlike the teachers, she calls David by his name and in that sense, humanises him.

Many of Anne's sayings are characterised using the third person as a boundary marker. Discursively, this locates David at arms' length from the school, from the current generation of students, and perhaps, as a form of protection, from her emotions. The critical incident is "not a current [issue] … it's tomorrow's sort of fish and chip wrapper". David is an "ex-student" whose behaviours are minimised as "difficult young men behaviours." He is a member of "those people", a low SES, Muslim community in this white, privileged school, and perhaps a somewhat uncomfortable reminder of the school's 'grittier' location before gentrification. Thus, he was unable to find "those people" in the school and sought them in the 'outside' community. It is only when asked about the community reaction that her account takes on an affective intensity, displaying a flash of exasperation and anger, such as the incident that attracted ten media people at Anne's house described above.

From an emotional labour lens, the contrast in the educators' accounts reveals how differently principals and teachers are located in the intersubjective spaces that comprise the system (roles, rules and functions) and lifeworld (human to human relations) of contemporary schooling. As an experienced principal, Anne appears to have learned to "mentally detach" herself … "from her own feelings and emotional labor" (Hochschild, 2012, p. 10) associated with the practices of principalship. On the one hand, it can be argued that this 'luxury' of detachment is not afforded to school leaders and teachers who work in more disadvantaged communities. In those locales both school leaders and teachers are more likely to report intense emotional displays as revealed in the opening quotation to our chapter (Oplatka, 2012; Zembylas, 2010).

On the other hand, Anne's apparent detachment is also part of the feeling rules demanded by market-driven systems and implicit in the teleoaffective structure of practising the principalship (Blackmore, 2004).

However, as Anne's account reveals, this performative labour is gendered and racialised (Blackmore, 2011). Put another way, as a highly experienced, Anglo-Australian female principal, Anne carries out a different form of emotional labour compared to her male counterparts. For instance, she displays a situated knowledge and tacit know-how that includes a "practice-specific emotionality … a high control of emotions" (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 254). As an accomplished practitioner of this know-how, Anne appears to have learned how "gendered associations of femininity with emotional labor can complicate professional women's attempts to exercise managerial authority" (Ispa-Lande & Thomas, 2019, p. 387). Indeed, managing one's emotions and that of others is a significant aspect of the principal's role. To not manage her emotions would incur far greater costs for Anne as a female than for a white male.

Hence, Anne's largely emotionally neutral account and her apparent careful management of her emotions suggests she may be practising a form of "affective containment" requiring "order, control and organization of the body" (Pullen et al., 2017, p. 13). In this sense, "giving in to the visceral would be unprofessional, chaotic and, maybe, hysterical" (Pullen et al., 2017, p. 13). Giving in to her emotions may also have major consequences for her ongoing success as a principal. Equally, by exercising the emotional labour demanded of her role and subject location, normative leadership practices are reinscribed which maintain a (white) masculinist, rationalist hegemony in the practice of leadership relations (Blackmore, 2010) (c.f. Chap. 7). Hence, Anne cannot 'win' no matter how she behaves.

Interestingly, Anne's language contrasts not only with the teachers but that of a second principal in our case study, Selita, the principal of Eucalyptus High School. Although both women 'head up' schools that are in some ways similar—affluent, ethnically diverse, suburban—Selita's leading practices differ markedly from the emotional steering at a distance suggested by Anne's account. Rather, when Selita speaks of her commitment to building a school community, or as she puts it, becoming a member of the Eucalyptus "family"/"way" of life, she reveals considerable emotion about the roots of this passion in her own working class background:

> I felt like an outsider when I was kid … I've lived bullying and humiliation and discrimination. I've lived it all my life. I'm not putting up with it for any of our kids, I've got to tell you. I'm just not putting up with it. So, you know, I was belittled for being, you know, a [Southern European] in the '70s with a name like Selita, like for fuck's sake, who was going to, you know. So I grew up with that, you know, you're not part of it.
>
> My parents were non-English speaking factory workers. Participating in sport, we had no money. There's no access. I couldn't go on any trips. I wasn't allowed to go on any trips.

A member of the Eucalyptus High School executive observed that

> they're the things I've noticed in critical conversations when things are really difficult and at the pointiest end. Selita will be quite personable about her experience and then comparing it to that child's experience, and then bringing that child forward. There's always been a

strong sense of discipline, but then there's also a strong sense of care. So, there'll be serious consequences, but the interview – a suspension interview, or whatever it might be – always end with a hug. Of parents and of the student.

The key points which emerge here are how "different hierarchies of knowing and associated patterns of relationships" (Nicolini, 2011, p. 613) associated with class, ethnicity and gender play out in terms of the kinds of emotional labour that female school leaders perform. School principals and teachers' forms of know-how, types of labour and relatings differ because of the varied system roles they inhabit and the social relations of gender. However, what has been less explored in the feminist and practice bodies of literature but is hinted at in the differing accounts of Anne and Selita is how differing forms of know-how about leading as caring may be permitted for leading, depending on one's original class, gender and ethnic/racial background.

Anne's more distanced account implies that she has successfully absorbed the teleoaffective structure of caring practices associated with middle class, Anglo-Australian woman entering the secondary principalship. This process includes absorbing the affective colouring associated with this structure that proscribes what should or should not be felt. Anger is typically a proscribed emotion for women leaders as a group but this premise about emotional labour rests on idealised assumptions of the white, middle-class woman as the "norm" (Glenn, 1999, as cited in Ispa-Landa & Thomas, 2019, p. 405). It also positions (white, middle class) women as "'naturally' caring" (Mirchandani, 2003 as cited in Ispa-Landa & Thomas, 2019, p. 390). However, the intersectional aspects of the affective intensities associated with educational leading as emotional labour are only gradually being explored in the feminist literature on educational leadership (Ispa-Landa & Thomas, 2019). They have barely been explored in practice approaches in organisational sites such as schools or other educational institutions (see Chap. 7).

Anger is an emotion that feeling rules proscribe for middle class Anglo-Australian women leaders such as Anne. It is why her flash of anger at the end of her account stands out. In contrast, Selita's emotions are raw, unapologetic and on display from the beginning, e.g., "I was belittled … for fuck's sake". She ends difficult conversations with students and parents with a hug for all, thus breaking the barriers of professionalism in schooling that place other bodies at a literal distance.

The affective intensity in Selita's account reveals the injuries of class and their lingering impacts which have shaped the reflexivity of her principal habitus. As she passionately states, "I've lived bullying and humiliation and discrimination … I've lived it all my life. I'm not putting up with it for any of our kids … I'm just not …" The contrast between her account and that of Anne's suggests that distance from one's emotions may be part of the classed privilege of emotional labour. As Illouz (1997) argues:

> The ability to distance oneself from one's immediate emotional experience is the prerogative of those who have readily available a range of emotional options … who are not overwhelmed by emotional necessity and intensity (Illouz, 1997, p. 56).

However, Selita's narrative makes it clear that this is not only a classed but racial and ethnic issue, "I was belittled for being, you know, a [Southern European] in the '70s with a name like Selita, like for fuck's sake … You're not part of it."

Yet there is an irony here. Selita's minority ethnic and class background may provide her with valuable funds of emotional capital in performing the principalship. For instance, US research into the differences between newly appointed black and white women principals suggest that unlike white, professional women who are "subjected to racialized, gendered stereotypes" of submissiveness and passivity, black women principals may enjoy greater liberty to express anger (Wingfield, 2010, p. 263). Selita's narrative similarly implies that as a working-class origin principal from a minority group, she may well enjoy a freedom to express emotions that are otherwise proscribed in terms of feeling rules for Anglo-Australian, middle-class women in the role.

In addition, a more recent US study of the intersection of race and gender in newly appointed principals found that white, female principals typically experienced a tension between the emotional labour of their role, i.e., their desire to "establish themselves as emotionally supportive", and on the other hand, "showing authority as a leader" (Ispa-Landa & Thomas, 2019, p. 387). In contrast, Black women principals showed no such tension, viewing the exercise of authority and emotional labour, "as part of a blended project … [they] … did not talk about these two aspects of leadership as existing in tension" (Ispa-Landa & Thomas, 2019, p. 387). Similarly, Selita appears able to comfortably combine caring practices associated with "gendered notions of femininity" (i.e., as "care for other's well-being"), with the assertion of authority, the latter of which typically associates "masculinity with authority and expertise" (Ispa-Landa & Thomas, 2019, p. 391). As a member of the school executive remarks about Selita, "There's always been a strong sense of discipline, but then there's also a strong sense of care."

However, the emotional labour associated with the project of community making as a form of care also comes at a high cost. As Selita remarks:

> I've aged significantly. I mean, I'm not joking. It wears thin and it plays on your mind as it's very difficult to continuously be resilient. I mean, I'm really tough but it does wear you down and then you've got, you know, very difficult staff that you're dealing with. It takes an incredible amount of energy to have people working together and harmoniously and, you know, to understand where we're heading and what our core purpose is. We really need clarity around that. I think, you know, I just think people need to understand that it's not an easy thing to do. It's just not easy.

8.7   The Emotional Labour of Educational Leading Through a Practice Lens

The project of community making at Wattle High School is an activity playing out "within a contested terrain, a metaphorical space where a plurality of meanings and of professional and non-professional logics meet and clash" (Gherardi & Rodeschini, 2016, p. 281). We witness how this "clash" is enabled and constrained by the varied

practice architectures existing within and without the school site. These include discourses of teacher professionalism and maternal care; material set-ups including "pocketed" families and the school's limited "reach" and lack of "resources"; relationships of solidarity and care between students and teachers in the lifeworld of the school and gendered, raced and classed exclusions. It is in this "contested terrain" that we see the contingent nature of these arrangements and the constant articulation work that is required to forge these connections.

But there is a dark side to the project of community making as the Wattle High School narratives reveal. The formation of communities by their very nature reproduces inclusionary and exclusionary practices which "perform different hierarchies of knowing and associated patterns of relationships" (Nicolini, 2011, p. 613). The preceding accounts are redolent with analogies to borders and binary divisions: the 'in group' of privileged students who live in a "bubble" versus the "out groups" who come from less affluent circumstances; "his people" (David) versus the implied white Christianity of "our" people (educators); the children who have found a sense of belonging in clubs and those who remain disengaged; the "community out there" as a site of threat and an untameable "wild zone" versus the imagined communities within the school, a potentially "tame zone" (Howie et al., 2020).

Moreover, the Wattle High School incident exposes deeper and more fundamental societal fractures as neoliberal policies of public school marketisation and competition bite deeply into government school's community building and caregiving practices. Principal Anne's references to "anti-social" behaviours as not being a "current nuance" at the school and "tomorrow's sort of fish and chip wrapper" suggests the brutal discardability of social issues in the 24 hour news cycle. However, they also point to an uncomfortable truth in Victorian government schools. Like the "fish and chip wrapper", students such as David and those from a variety of equity groups are ultimately discardable from well-heeled government schools, for they "do not have the same promotional value as a marketable commodity" (Blackmore, 1996, p. 341). In Principal Anne's words, the school recruits students (and their market assets, parents) on the basis of

> a particular set of criteria and one of them is that you're going to value-add to what we have here … we recruit parents with expertise … [who] … talk to everyone about what we're doing here around community building and community making … Because like your local restaurant, you can be flavour of the month one week and on the nose the next.

The insertion of the market into the practice architectures of Victorian government schooling has led to "different arrangements of practical knowings" for school principals (Nicolini, 2011, p. 616). This change in arrangements has in turn "produc[ed] and reproduc[ed] a landscape of inequalities" (Nicolini, 2011, p. 616) in the field of government schooling. Amongst the most dramatic manifestations of these inequalities are the expendability of groups of students such as David and the responsibilisation of poorer schools such as Stardust Primary School for the project of integrating diverse populations of students (c.f. Howie et al, 2020; Keddie et al., 2018).

Moreover, in relation to educational leading as practice, what "counts as legitimate knowledge" (Nicolini, 2011, p. 613) when it comes to successfully performing the

principalship has now changed. The careful curating of Wattle High School's image and Anne's use of parents to impression manage through the project of community making reveals how the performative logics of the market colonise relatings of solidarity between teachers, students, principal, parents and community. It simultaneously exploits teachers such as Helen and Darby's (and Anne's) "desires to do good" (Blackmore, 2004, p. 445) whilst playing on the school's fear of losing market share. Leadership practices of image making perform a "different hierarch[y] of knowing and associated pattern… of relationships" (Nicolini, 2011, p. 613). As such, success in public relations assumes a greater form of legitimacy for principal know-how compared to the "moral, political and ethical dimensions of leadership" (Blackmore, 1996, p. 344). But this 'success' as the critical incident reveals, comes at a major price for David and the other disengaged students in the school's care.

In terms of a practice approach to emotions, the critical incident with David renders visible the usually "invisible work" of emotional labour that characterises community making as crucial projects of educating in schools such as Wattle High. The breakdown in normality produced pain, despair, guilt and conflict and the necessity of "further repair work" in the relatings between practitioners that had been "unintentionally severed" (Gherardi & Rodeschini, 2016, p. 274). The incident reveals both the ubiquity and significance of these oft-overlooked forms of "repair work" in the everyday lifeworld and praxis of schooling (Gherardi & Rodeschini, 2016, p. 274). This is where a practice lens is invaluable, for in examining the projects of practice that compose different forms of emotional labour, it lays bare the crucial nature of practices that have for too long been invisible in sites of organising such as schools.

Moreover, one of the main issues with a term such as emotional labour is that it suggests a pregiven entity or fixed state into which participants enter. Instead, a practice lens reveals emotional labour as composed of different forms of situated knowing bundled together in a variety of projects and dynamically unfolding through varied ways of talking and thinking about, acting and relating to other participants and the material world.

Importantly, in terms of emotions, a practice approach reveals the *affective attunement* of the situated sayings, doings and relatings that make up the varied projects of emotional labour. Moreover, it reveals their potential connectivity to other caring practices in the ecologies of practices of educating. It suggests how practices such as community making/breaking and the sayings, doings and relatings which compose them manifest not only as a "matter of fact", i.e., subject to empirical observation, but as a "matter of … feeling" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 167) (e.g., Helen's "worry" about other disengaged adolescents, Darby's troubled questions, Anne's frustration and anger).

In terms of educational leading as praxis, the critical incident with David raises challenging questions. For example, what is the responsibility of schools and school leaders to undertake the labour of community building for all students in ways that move beyond limiting and demarcating the binaries of borders of 'us' and 'them'? How can projects of community building be orchestrated in ways that do not reinscribe the very cultural, gendered and racial stereotyping they may be seeking to prevent? (Howie et al., 2020) This is where pedagogies of discomfort (Boler, 1999; Boler & Zembylas, 2003) can be a crucial aspect of the affective repertoire in which

schools must engage. This is because the primary aim of such pedagogies is to unsettle taken-for-granted ways of knowing and thinking about privilege and oppression.

Furthermore, what is the responsibility of relatively well-heeled schools such as Wattle and Eucalyptus High Schools in a market system which responsibilises poorer schools for the crucial civic building role of integrating diverse populations of students, whilst largely insulating more privileged schools from this task? What are the limits of government schools' caregiving, given their increasing responsibilisation by successive neoliberal government for the ills of society? The latter is a particularly crucial question given the reality that much of this damage has been inflicted due to the shredding/winding back of the social contract between citizens and neoliberal governments over successive decades.

8.8   Conclusion

There are no easy answers to the preceding questions. As Megan Boler observes in relation to the practice of witnessing as part of pedagogies of discomfort:

> witnessing involves recognizing moral relations not simply as a 'perspectival' difference – 'we all see things differently' – but rather, that how we see or choose not to see has ethical implications and may even cause others to suffer (1999, p. 194).

Understanding social life as it happens in a site such as Wattle High School requires grasping not only *what* and *how* we see, but also what we do not see, i.e., "what is not happening" (Nicolini, 2012, p. 167). It requires paying careful attention to not only existing sayings, doings and relatings and the arrangements that render them possible, but what is rendered less sayable, doable and relatable by the practice architectures of the site. Only then can we understand what is happening and the ethical implications of what has been omitted and silenced, i.e., what is not said, not done, and not related to.

As Boler reminds us, "silences and omissions are by no means neutral" (1999, p. 183). Rather they are "central manifestations of racism, sexism, and homophobia" as a form of "erasure … often stem[ming] from ignorance and not necessarily from intentional desires to hurt or oppress" (1999, p. 183). As such, they are part of "feeling power", i.e., how we are socialised to internalise certain "truths" in relation to "particular silences" (Boler, 1999, p. 184). For example, the construction of women as 'naturally' caring, i.e., as a 'biological 'truth' silences the immense labour that goes into reproducing gendered hierarchies and their intersection with other social categories such as 'race', ethnicity, class and sexuality.

Moreover, an examination of the affective dimensions of educating uncovers the crucial role that emotions may play in forging or dismantling connections between practices such as leading, teaching and students' learning and the arrangements that prefigure them. In turn, this deepens our understanding of what can drive social change. For example, the emotional management work that principals engage in as they suppress proscribed emotions such as anger and grief may be an understandable

protective response. However, it also can blunt and desensitise responses to children's and educators' suffering. The "emotion/body work" of principals (Keesman & Weenink, 2020, p. 173), such as the assumption of a mask of professionalism is a form of surface acting that constitutes part of the emotional labour of the role and can help to "safeguard" one's "professional identity" (Keesman & Weenink, 2020, p. 185). However, such acting can have long term physical and mental health consequences as studies of principal stress reveal (Riley et al., 2021). On the other hand, emotions such as anger, shame and humiliation can drive a "collective affect"—an understanding that "life in organisations" for children and other stakeholders can and should be different (Pullen et al., 2017, p. 109). We glimpse this in Selita's response to the bullying of children. However, we also see the immense emotional toll that this work exacts.

Finally, the critical incident reveals the ambiguity of educational leading. The apparent "normalcy" of its practices is a "truce", with other ways of knowing silenced or marginalised, depending on the practice architectures in the site (Nicolini, 2011, p. 613). Yet "contestation and conflict" is always present (Nicolini, 2011, p. 613). As such, understanding emotions in leading as a practice matters for it provides a glimpse of alternative forms of educational praxis, i.e., what else might unfold, given different conditions of possibility.

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Chapter 9
Leading Matters: A Modest Manifesto

Abstract This chapter draws together the main arguments of the book, examining their implications for theorising and practice. It argues that understanding of educational leadership as pedagogical practice and praxis provides a stereoscopic vision that can disrupt the drive towards standardisation and performativity so common to Anglophone educational systems. This is crucial as part of a larger project to reimagine what socially just educating might look like. The chapter posits that the theory of practice architectures, in alliance with other thinking tools, reveals alternative ways to revision educational leading and in so doing, reclaim the praxis and pedagogy of educating as its chief telos. These are crucial theoretical, practical and political moves. By attempting to put educational leadership in its place, the chapter and the book more broadly, posits an unabashedly modest manifesto for leading that is long overdue.

Keywords Educational leadership · Practice · Praxis · Pedagogy · Practice architectures · Social justice

This chapter draws together the main arguments of the book, examining their implications for theorising and practice. It argues that understanding of educational leadership as pedagogical practice and praxis provides a stereoscopic vision that can disrupt the drive towards standardisation and performativity so common to Anglophone educational systems. This is crucial as part of a larger project to reimagine what socially just educating might look like.

The chapter posits that the theory of practice architectures, in alliance with other thinking tools, reveals alternative ways to revision educational leading and in so doing, reclaim the praxis and pedagogy of educating as its chief telos. These are crucial theoretical, practical and political moves. By attempting to put educational leadership in its place, the chapter and the book more broadly, posits an unabashedly modest manifesto for leading that is long overdue.

9.1 Introduction

I commenced writing this book as a second wave of Covid 19 was sweeping my home state of Victoria. I concluded this book 12 months later, as Victorians entered a sixth lockdown, due to a third wave caused by the Delta B variant. Sydney, Australia's most populous city remained under severe lockdown with considerable question marks as to when it would emerge. Southeast Queensland was in a similar state. At the time of writing, over 16 million Australians, or most of the nation's population were in some form of lockdown.

Internationally, our neighbours, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Indonesia, Malaysia and India were fighting millions of infections every day. Hundreds of thousands of people were dying and there was diminishing space for graves. Vaccines had become a crucial feature of the way 'out' but were maldistributed with the global North commandeering most supplies. Anti-vaxxers, misinformation and vaccine hesitancy were exacerbating an already volatile situation. As the sixth lockdown was declared in my home city of Melbourne, a gathering of maskless protestors demanded their individual freedoms.

Yet, the new practice architectures of the pandemic that seemed so alien in 2020 had become normalised. A state announced a lockdown, schools and other education providers switched to remote learning and those who had the occupational luxury to do so, worked from home. Most of us resumed mask wearing, maintained an appropriate physical distance and connected remotely, guaranteeing social media's immense profits for another financial year. A general weariness settled over the populace. And once again, we waited.

9.2 Drawing the Threads Together

Melbourne, Australia emerged in late October 2020 after 16 weeks of a severe shutdown. Students had largely studied from home. On my daily lockdown walks, I would go past an empty school with colourful drawings of rainbows in the classroom windows, accompanied by signs such as, "I miss you Grade Six. Mr Ramsay loves you".

A remarkable thing had emerged from this pandemic. Though fraying at the edges, the glue that bound together our diverse Australian society had largely remained intact, bound by a collective understanding of the importance of communities needing to work together for the public good.[1] This is not to minimise the contestation and volatility within and between our communities. This played out most obviously in

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[1] This renewed appreciation and evolving trust in Australia is not something to be taken lightly. In contrast to other OECD nations, levels of trust in state and federal governments dramatically increased in 2020 reversing previous steep declines (Markus, 2021). This trend continued in 2021, despite some declines (Markus, 2021b). A renewed sense of the ties that bind had been discovered. The irony does not escape me that this had occurred at the same time as Australia shut down its borders to international travelers and many of its citizens struggled to return home due to entry

the tabloid press, on social media, in divisions between governments and in increased anti-Asian racism. Equity gaps between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' were glaringly exposed in many parts of the world. In Australia this led to a massive government increase (albeit temporary) in social welfare and services.

What I also witnessed was an elevated consciousness in our communities and governments of the profound interrelatedness of all things. This awareness extended to previously taken-for-granted practices and the arrangements in which they were enmeshed. There were tragic consequences to this interrelatedness. In countries and suburbs where families and communities lived together, often in overcrowded homes and in situations of poverty, the virus more easily took hold.

The interrelatedness between the economy and social practices played out in stark relief. For example, in Australia's increasingly gig economy, service workers were most at risk of illness for they relied on precarious, highly causalised work and might be the sole breadwinner. No amount of imploring people to stay at home would work. And yet some governments such as those in Australia, clung to their ideological beliefs, insisting that increased forms of income support and improved connections between the workplace and one's work were only temporary measures.

This heightened consciousness of our profound interrelatedness extended to the lifeworld relations between humans and our world. Many of us developed a new awareness of how much the ordinary, everyday practices of human sociality mattered and how dependent such practices were on the arrangements in which they were enmeshed. Simple practices such as seeing a friend, hugging a family member, or going for a walk in the fresh air assumed new significance. Their lack thereof revealed gaping holes in our society's aspirations, ideals and value systems.

Moreover, the conditions which foster and nurture these practices—a reasonably well-resourced health care system, a well-trained and educated populace, a welfare safety net, a healthy environment—assumed heightened importance. As such, the pandemic achieved in Australia what a generation of critical scholars, social and climate activists had struggled to achieve. It exposed the shibboleths of neoliberalism and foregrounded the value of alternative ways of thinking about and living in the world. This shift in consciousness extended to educating as a field of practice.

In Chap. 1 I contended that Covid 19 provided a unique opportunity to ask fresh questions of the contemporary project of educating and the related practices of leading in Anglophone nations. I posed questions such as, how can new ways of thinking about, enacting and relating to the world and one another in terms of more socially just and equitable educating practices be enabled in *this* site at *this* time? What are the conditions, resources and arrangements that can enable these practices to emerge and be sustained? I posited that drawing on a range of practice theories, and in particular, practice architectures, afforded an opportunity to "provide not only analyses *of* but also analyses *for*" (Francis & Mills, 2012, p. 3) educational leading as pedagogical practice/praxis. This, I argued, was crucial in terms of a larger project to reimagine what socially just educating might look like.

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quotas. At the time of writing, we lived in 'fortress Australia'. But this does not detract from the growth in trust in institutions that accompanied the pandemic.

In relation to educating as a site of practice, I contended that the pandemic had exposed and problematised previously taken-for-granted practice architectures in the education 'marketplace' of Anglophone nations. These arrangements included the reduction of educational practices to an instrumentalist form of techné, measured by narrow academic outcomes, and the fetishisation of individual choice at the expense of the collective good. Covid had provided an opportunity for these ideologies to be subjected to long overdue public scrutiny, contestation and reimagining. I sketched how robust critiques of the existing state of affairs and alternatives to this diminished notion of educating and leading already existed on which we could draw. These included, for example, the contributions of the Pedagogy, Education and Praxis international research network (Mahon et al., 2020), and a strong tradition of critical educational leadership scholarship to which this book contributes (e.g., Dolan, 2020; Eacott, 2018; Heffernan, 2018; Niesche & Gowlett, 2019; Samier & ElKaleh, 2019).

Covid 19 revealed what educators and families always had intuitively known, i.e., that educating is a collective, interconnected set of practices built on dynamic and ever evolving relatings between the human and material world. These practices unfold as part of a broader ecosystem of educating practices across formal and informal sites, the latter of which have been largely ignored or excluded from discussions in mainstream scholarship. For instance, the pandemic illuminated the importance of informal sites of educating such as the home (where Victorian children spent half of 2020 whilst parents juggled the twin challenges of remote learning and work); and other locales, including playgrounds (shut down for 16 weeks during Victoria's second wave), parks (forbidden if they were more than five kilometres from one's home), and digital devices (where equity gaps between rich and poorer schools and families were starkly exposed).

In sum, the force field of the pandemic revealed that educating was far more than the total of an individual, state or nation's test results.[2] Nor was it simply the captive handmaiden of instrumentalist teaching and learning practices, extolled in narrow forms of evidence-based practice. The power of educational leadership as a discourse and identity has been a key means by which these practice architectures have been rendered 'common sense' in the Anglophone educational marketplace. As such, I have argued for the need to reimagine this project of educating through the thinking tools of a practice approach, in dialogue with Bourdieuian and feminist critical scholarship.

The first four chapters laid down the key markers for this project of reimagining. The chapters examined how and why practice matters *ontologically*, regarding the "specific content and conduct of practice"; *epistemologically*, i.e., "what and how people come to know in a practice" (Mahon et al., 2017, pp. 5–6), and *theoretically,* in terms of the praxis, pedagogy and politics that constitute educating as a key site of sociality.

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[2] In Victoria, all national tests were suspended in 2020 in recognition that testing would exacerbate already increased levels of mental distress amongst the populace, particularly children and youth.

In these chapters, I argued for a reconceptualising of educational leadership from dominant accounts which portray it as a decontextualised entity and/or set of individuals, to educational *leading,* a dynamic and ever-evolving form of pedagogical practice and praxis. Moreover, I asserted that leading's unfolding as practice/praxis could only be understood via an interrogation of the histories of specific educational sites, the site-specific conditions or arrangements in which it may be bundled, and its potential interconnections with other educating practices in a site.

These chapters had a dual purpose. Firstly, they built on and extended Kemmis et al.'s (2014) and Wilkinson and Kemmis' (2015) scholarship on the ontologies of educational leading. In so doing, they ground educational leading as a practice in the senses, the material, the discursive and the social relations of the everyday happeningness of formal and informal sites of educating. They thus provided a theoretical and methodological toolkit through which to put educational leading as a construct in its place: in time, space and context. Their aim was to provide a much needed theoretical and practical lens that is sorely missing in dominant accounts of educational leadership scholarship.

The second purpose of these chapters was to foreground questions of power, politics and social justice when analysing educational leading as a form of pedagogical practice and praxis. I did so in response to critiques that flat ontological approaches such as site ontologies and practice architectures downplay contestation and struggles for what counts as legitimate stakes in a field such as education (Nicolini, 2017; Watson, 2017). These critiques echoed my own concern about the overly rosy perspective that such lenses may bring to accounts of educating practices. My response has been to bring practice architectures and site ontological approaches into dialogue with feminist critical scholarship and Bourdieuian lenses. The aim was to foreground how some practices, such as educational leading, and the conditions that enable them, possess more power to put groups of people in their (unequal) place. The reproduction of inequities remains one of the major moral issues of our times and plays out in the daily practices that comprise the project of educating in its diverse sites. We need theoretical tools and alliances that robustly confront these practices and the conditions that legitimise and sustain them and which allow us to construct new horizons for reimagining.

In building these theoretical alliances between the thinking tools of practice architectures, Bourdieuian and feminist critical scholarship, I am responding to the recognition that no one theory can account for all human life. Hence, there is a need to "form theoretical alliances with compatible theories to cover more of human life" (Schatzki, 2017, p. 151). Readers may dispute the cross fertilisation of theories that I posit in the book. I welcome these responses. The important point is to begin a robust conversation about what will invariably be multiple ways forward.

In the second half of the book, I teased apart the practices of leading from the mythology of leadership, drawing on the theoretical toolkit sketched in the first half of the book. The empirical chapters revealed the active ebb and flow of educating practices in situ*,* in their granularity and specificity. They analysed the ecological connections/disconnections between the varied practices that compose the educational complex of Australian schooling sites. These include but are not limited to those

activities and practices denoted as 'leadership'. Moreover, I theorised the importance of emotions in practice theory approaches to the study of leading, addressing a key lacuna in these approaches. The chapters drew attention to the specific practice histories, politics and relations of power that prefigure organising in sites. They asked ontological and epistemological questions of how these forms of know-how and organisational knowing come to be. They interrogated their constitutive effects on what constitutes knowing in practice and who is valued/marginalised through such practices and their prefiguring arrangements.

My endeavour is invariably incomplete. There are areas that demand greater attention if we are to take seriously the project of reimagining educational leading as pedagogical practice and praxis. For instance, there are questions about the body/embodiment and corporeality when it comes to how sayings, doings and relatings commonly associated with practices of leading come to be situated in sites. Temporality is another area that has been thinly explored and demands attention. The role of histories/herstories and traditions of practices in sites is another. I cannot answer these questions, but my hope is that this book has invited a dialogue about what else may be possible.

9.3 Conclusion: Putting Educational Leadership in Its Place

In brief, there may a place for leading in the *telos* of educating but it is not the predominant role that contemporary mainstream scholars of administration and leadership have constructed. Like practice, leadership appears to be everywhere we look in contemporary, mainstream accounts of *schooling* (rather than educating in the 'high' sense of the word). Unlike practice, however, its seeming ubiquity is fallacious.

The theory of practice architectures, in alliance with other thinking tools, reveals alternative ways to revision educational leading and in so doing, reclaim the praxis and pedagogy of educating as its chief telos. These are crucial theoretical, practical and political moves. By attempting to put educational leadership in its (humbler) place, the book posits an unabashedly modest manifesto for leading. This is long overdue.

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