A talk about policy influenced by reading...

.... and trying to work out what to do in response to the picture

Wendy Brown presents

Undoing the Demos
Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution
Our North, Our Future: White Paper on Developing Northern Australia
Overview
Brown’s contention:

Policies of the sort developed under the political rationality this document expresses...

are slowly and surely killing democracy in liberal democracies like Australia.
Within thirty years [of neoliberalising policies beginning to be instituted], Western democracy would grow gaunt, ghostly, its future increasingly hedged and improbable. More than merely saturating the meaning or content of democracy with market values, neoliberalism assaults the principles, practices, cultures, subjects, and institutions of democracy, understood as rule by the people.

Wendy Brown *Undoing the Demos*, 2015, p. 9
Difference between a policy bad... and bad policy....

Brown’s thesis

As a political rationality, Neoliberalism produces a policy bad.... The death of democracy

Implication...

good policy is incompatible with neoliberalism
Policy goods...

Examples of policy goods

... re-distribution of wealth generated in collective life... a contested policy good

.... fostering conditions to widen the horizon of citizens and give them command of their own powers... a policy good that expresses the hopes of democracy... as distinct from plutocracy and technocracy
Democracy as relation...
...from Rancière from Aristotle

A democratic moment in policy nurtures a collective impulse towards enacting a relation...

Democracy is
the relation between a citizen as a member of the demos (as subject) and...
the paradoxical simultaneously partaking by this citizen in the collective action... of ruling and of being ruled
What this refuses is the claim that democracy can be defined by the workings of liberal democratic institutions.
If institutions are no longer the sites where caring for democracy is primarily vested...
Where can we care for democracy?

If we take democracy as a relation seriously

....we will find ourselves caring for the configuration of citizens

.... and we will find ourselves caring for the configuration of objects of governance
Democracy is
the relation between a citizen configured as
member of the demos (as subject) and...
the collective action which is the
paradoxical simultaneously partaking
by this citizen... in the
collective action of ruling and of being ruled

Implication...

The figure of the citizen as simultaneously
knowing and being known... governing and
being governed.... emerges all of a piece in the
moment of governance
The figure of the citizen... knowing and being known... and governing and being governed...

.... emerges all of a piece

This is exactly how I would characterise some of what I have learned from my Yolngu colleagues over a period of nearly thirty years
... fostering conditions to widen the horizon of citizens and give them command of their own powers

Deweyan sensibility
Caring for democracy in policy? ...

Does policy care for democracy? Surely that’s the job of politics and politicians?

To have democracy ‘done’ in the work of caring for relations between government officers and citizens radically alters the perception of where politics is done...

... and what politics is... and what policy is... and what research for policy is...

... and our working story of relations between knowledge and politics in policy...
Democracy is cared for in nurturing particular sorts of politico-epistemic practices and their arrangements...

... Doing research for policy is becoming sensitized to the multiplicities and myriad variety of politico-epistemic practices and their arrangements and workings in institutions