CITIES FROM ELSEWHERE
Chronic Homelessness and Globalising Urban Policy

Thomas Baker
BDevStud(Hons)

For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Human Geography)
University of Newcastle, Australia
Submitted October 2013
The thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to the final version of my thesis being made available worldwide when deposited in the University’s Digital Repository, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

T. Baker
21st October 2013
Acknowledgements

This thesis benefitted inordinately from the supervision of Prof. Pauline McGuirk, whose guidance, intellectual heft, and assiduous eye for an unwieldy sentence, has been crucial. Beyond the thesis, my development as a researcher, writer and critical thinker owes a great deal to you and your effort Pauline, thank you.

I am particularly grateful for those who gave their time to be interviewed. The insights that were offered do much to enliven and enlighten this thesis.

Thanks to my office-mates Adam, Miriam and Rhyall for educations on topics including, but certainly not limited to, music and film criticism, the workings of Australian parliamentary democracy, and the cultivation of heirloom vegetables; to Dr. Kathy Mee for supervision and encouragement; to staff and post-graduate students within the Discipline of Geography and Environmental Studies; to Olivier Rey-Lescure for map expertise and lunchtime conversation; and to the Australian government, the University of Newcastle and the Institute of Australian Geographers for financial support during the course of the research.

Thanks to Ash for just about everything else.

T.B.

October 2013
Table of contents

1. Introduction

1.1 New York state of mind ................................................................. 2
1.2 Approaching cities through elsewhere ....................................... 4
  1.2.1 Objective 1 ......................................................................... 5
  1.2.2 Objective 2 ......................................................................... 6
  1.2.3 Objective 3 ......................................................................... 8
1.3 Investigating Common Ground .................................................... 9

2. Urban politics, global geographies

2.1 Introduction .................................................................................. 14
2.2 Politicising the urban ................................................................. 15
  2.2.1 State rescaling .................................................................... 15
  2.2.2 The New Urban Politics ...................................................... 17
  2.2.3 Urban neoliberalisation ....................................................... 19
2.3 Spatialising the urban ................................................................. 29
  2.3.1 Re-thinking scale .............................................................. 31
  2.3.2 Understanding networks ................................................... 35
2.4 Conclusion .................................................................................. 40

3. Conceptualising mobile policy

3.1 Introduction .................................................................................. 44
3.2 Diffusionist beginnings ............................................................... 45
3.3 Lesson-drawing ........................................................................... 47
3.4 Policy transfer ............................................................................ 49
3.5 Policy mobilities ........................................................................ 59
  3.5.1 Policy as socially constructed ......................................... 62
  3.5.2 Policy mobility as socially practiced................................. 64
  3.5.3 Policy mobility as a spatial process .................................. 68
3.6 Conclusion .................................................................................. 70

4. Apprehending mobile urban policy

4.1 Introduction .................................................................................. 74
4.2 Arriving at Common Ground ....................................................... 74
4.3 Assemblage methodology ........................................................... 83
4.4 Methodological practices ............................................................ 93
  4.4.1 Ethnographic ambition .................................................... 93
  4.4.2 Sites and situations ........................................................ 99
  4.4.3 Following labours .......................................................... 103
4.5 Method ........................................................................................ 107
  4.5.1 Data sources and collection ......................................... 107
  4.5.2 Analysis ............................................................................ 119
4.6 Conclusion .................................................................................. 122
Tables

Table 4.1: Key documentary source categories ................................................. 111
Table 4.2: Summary of interviews ................................................................. 117
Table 4.3: Indicative interview topics .............................................................. 118
Table 5.1: Trajectories of federal homelessness policy in Australia, 1972-2007 ......................................................................................................... 139
Table 7.1: The Australian Common Ground Alliance’s key criteria for Common Ground projects ................................................................. 225

Figures

Figure 3.1: The threshold model of policy adoption ............................................. 47
Figure 3.2: The policy transfer choice-coercion continuum ................................. 51
Figure 3.3: The policy cycle model .................................................................... 54
Figure 4.1: Common Ground Times Square project, NYC ................................. 81
Figure 4.2: Australian Common Ground projects: location and key details ....... 82
Figure 4.3: Selected Australian Common Ground projects ............................... 83
Figure 5.1: Satirical response to Kevin Rudd’s evidence-based policy-making ................................................................................................................. 142
Figure 5.2: Permanent supportive housing and its relationship to ‘Street to Home’ programs ................................................................. 145
Figure 6.1: Portraying New York City’s decline ................................................. 164
Figure 6.2: Portraying New York City’s renewal through supportive housing ................................................................................................................. 164
Figure 6.3: Times Square street count results, showing reduction over time .... 168
Figure 6.4: Street count results when expanded to midtown Manhattan .......... 169
Figure 6.5: Haggerty giving a public address in 2006 as Adelaide Thinker in Residence ................................................................. 175
Figure 6.6: Common Ground and research evidence ........................................ 180
Figure 6.7: International profile: Haggerty in O, The Oprah Magazine ........... 182
Figure 6.8: Initiating emotional responses through qualitative evidence and story ............................................................................................................. 184
Figure 6.9: Site visits and the Common Ground model ...................................... 189
Figure 7.1: Government and private support at Common Ground Melbourne official opening ................................................................. 214
Figure 7.2: Images and text from Ending Homelessness in South Australia showing a potential Common Ground project using a refurbished building ............................................................................................................. 220
Figure 7.3: Highfield House, Hobart, investigated as a potential Common Ground project ................................................................. 221
Figure 7.4: Common Ground projects in Sydney and Brisbane ........................ 223
Abstract
Urban policy has become increasingly global in constitution. Tales from distant ‘elsewheres’ regularly reverberate within urban policy-making and attendant political debate. Mobile policy ideas circulate restlessly, shuttled along by expert testimonials and technologically-mediated success stories, while international conferences and study tours are almost standard elements of the policy-making process. Yet amid all this activity, urban policy remains persistently local and territorial, while, simultaneously, it is intensely global and relational.

In such a context, this thesis seeks to understand the phenomenon of mobile policy and its relationship to contemporary urban politics and policy-making. Focusing on a New York City policy model designed to address chronic homelessness, I follow the people, sites and places involved in selecting, communicating and implementing the model in Australian cities. I argue for a theoretical approach that bridges political economy and post-structuralist treatments of urban politics, and that incorporates scaled and networked understandings of urban spatiality. Critical of the political science ‘policy transfer’ literature, I advocate for a ‘policy mobilities’ approach, conceptualising policy movements as socially constructed, practiced and spatially dynamic. To activate these positions, I explore what an assemblage methodology offers the study of policy mobilities, demonstrating how its grasp of multiplicity, process and the purposive labour involved in mobilising policy opens productive analytical pathways. Seeking to refine scholarship on policy mobility and extend its reach to the empirical domain of urban homelessness, this thesis offers insights into the opportunities and tensions facing contemporary research on cities and policy-making.
Chapter one

Introduction
1.1 New York state of mind

The problems are actually very, very much alike and, happily, so are the solutions … what works in one environment can work in others.

CEO, Common Ground
(Int. 10: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., USA)

On the 3rd of August 2009, with a headline reading ‘Big Apple plan for Sydney homeless’, the Sydney Morning Herald reported the allocation of funding to establish a new way of addressing homelessness in the state of New South Wales (NSW) (Bibby and Murray, 2009, n.p.). Specifically aimed at people experiencing long-term or ‘chronic’ homelessness, the plan would see the establishment of a purpose-built ‘permanent supportive housing’ facility in inner Sydney. Contrasted with shelters and other short-term responses to homelessness, permanent supportive housing involves providing homeless persons with long-term affordable housing combined with comprehensive, on-going support services. The ‘Big Apple’ part of the plan referred to a particular model of permanent supportive housing based on the work of New York City organisation Common Ground. Offering “more than just a short-term bed”, NSW Premier Nathan Rees justified the implementation of the Common Ground model on the basis of its being “successfully established in New York and other cities”. On top of apparent successes in cities elsewhere, the model had the imprimatur of a growing international body of research attesting to the effectiveness of permanent supportive housing in reducing chronic homelessness. As NSW Housing Minister David Borger stated, “All the research tells us that providing chronically homeless people with long-term housing and strong support services can help get them back on their feet and break the cycle of homelessness” (Bibby and Murray, 2009, n.p.).

Only the day before, the Sydney Common Ground project’s fortunes were significantly improved with the announcement of a joint agreement between federal and state governments, known as the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness. Produced in response to a federal government homelessness strategy released the year prior (Australian Government, 2008a), the Agreement provided for the single biggest increase in funding for homeless services in Australian history. Equally significant, the Agreement meant that for the first time
both federal and state governments had an explicit policy focus on reducing chronic homelessness. Local politics, too, played a role in catalysing the Sydney Common Ground project. As the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported (Bibby and Murray, 2009, n.p.), members of a working group responsible for developing the project proposal had resigned in protest after the state government indicated its intention to displace existing public housing tenants to accommodate people experiencing homelessness. The ensuing local debate ultimately influenced the state government’s decision not to go ahead. Instead, it opted to develop a purpose-built facility applying the principles of the Common Ground model.

This newspaper story was my introduction to the Common Ground model. As it happened, the story appeared at a time when Australian homelessness policy and service delivery were undergoing a level of transformation not seen since the 1980s, when Australian governments began formalising their first co-ordinated responses to homelessness. The most decisive factor leading to the transformation was inarguably the election of a federal Labor government in late 2007 and the process of strategic reform it initiated. This process also saw particular attention directed toward chronic homelessness, a category seldom recognised by governments in Australia prior to this. With the renewed interest of government, and funding set to increase, homeless service providers and advocates were encouraged to look for approaches capable of making measurable and sustainable reductions in the number of people experiencing chronic homelessness. Many thought it an opportune moment to trial home-grown approaches based on their local experience with homeless clients. Others looked elsewhere, searching globally for policies and programs that could be mobilised and adapted locally. In Sydney, the arrival of the Common Ground model in August 2009 was one outcome of those global policy engagements.

However, Sydney was not the only Australian city with a Big Apple plan for its homeless. In the wake of visits by Common Ground’s founder and CEO Rosanne Haggerty, two Common Ground projects in the city of Adelaide were already under construction by the time of the Sydney project’s announcement. In the space of two months in 2008, plans for Common Ground projects in Melbourne and Port Augusta were made public; and by mid-2009, two projects had been ear-marked for Hobart and another for Brisbane. Among politicians, public servants, service providers and advocates, something of a Common Ground
awakening was sweeping across Australia. As one Australian city after the next embarked on implementing this unambiguously ‘New York’ approach to addressing chronic homelessness, it was difficult to imagine how the Common Ground model and the places it encountered would be left unchanged in the process. To make sense of this series of events and their significance, this thesis seeks to investigate a number of questions. How and why did the model become part of Australian urban policy discussion? How was it understood and debated over? How was it translated and adapted? In other words, the aim of this thesis is to understand the implementation of the Common Ground model in Australian cities. Informed by existing research on urban globalisation and the mobility of policy, I attempt to fulfil this central aim by addressing three core objectives, which I now introduce.

1.2 Approaching cities through elsewhere
In a world of incessant movement and profound connectivity, where globalising processes routinely collapse physical distances, stories like that of a New York policy model finding its way to Australian cities seem increasingly commonplace. That policy ideas and success stories from other cities and nations have become an accepted and, at times, unremarkable part of public debate gives cause to reflect on the contemporary urban condition. Indeed, with the global traffic of urban policy models and expertise appearing to have intensified in the last few decades, scholars have become increasingly attuned to the ways urban politics and, by extension, cities themselves are constituted through what Allen and Cochrane (2007) call ‘parts of elsewhere’. Although cities have always been defined by the contradictory but generative relationship between local place-particularity and extra-local flows, researchers concerned with governance and policy are only beginning to grasp the significance of that interplay. The implications of Amin and Thrift’s (2002, p. 1) assessment that “the city is everywhere and in everything” appears to have well and truly dawned on urban researchers, with a range of recent interventions directing attention to the articulation of the local and the global, the territorial and the relational, as the basis for understanding ‘the city’ (cf. McCann and Ward, 2011; Roy and Ong, 2011). To a certain degree, this shift in urban theorisation has been motivated, if not necessitated, by the empirical phenomenon of policy mobility—denoting the
circulation of policy discourses, models and knowledge. In the context of urban research traditions that have "long presupposed the existence of a relatively stable, putative "non-urban" realm as a "constitutive outside" " (Brenner and Schmid, 2011, p. 11), the recognition and intensification of policy mobility has helped to make territorially-bounded conceptions of the urban increasingly untenable (McCann and Ward, 2010; McGuirk, 2012).

1.2.1 Objective 1: to devise a framework for theorising cities and policy mobility

Taking these accounts on board, what does it mean for ‘urban’ governance and politics when policy debate is framed through an engagement with the experiences of somewhere else? What is the nature and implications of this engagement between places and territories with distinct histories, institutions and governing practices? In response to these questions, my first objective is to develop a theoretical framework to interpret the relationships between cities and the phenomenon of policy mobility. To address this objective, Chapter 2 explores contemporary urban scholarship, focusing in particular on urban governance, policy-making and globalisation, and assesses the connections to and implications for research on mobile urban policy. Through a discussion of the literature’s treatment of urban politics and urban spatiality, I establish a theoretical framework, which is later employed to interpret the implementation of the Common Ground model in Australian cities. In this framework, focusing on the re-scaling of state capacities, the transition to entrepreneurial urban governance and the process of neoliberalisation, I position policy mobility as part of the changing politics of the city. Drawing on insights from political economy approaches to urban politics which emphasise the power of the global and the hegemonic, as well as post-structural approaches which emphasise the local and the contingent, I argue for, and develop across the thesis, an approach that walks a middle path, drawing on elements of both. The approach I develop takes seriously the role of structures, institutions and hegemonic governance projects in enabling and disabling the mobility of certain policy ideas. Crucially however, it resists the temptation to assume the power, character or even the necessary existence of those structures, institutions and projects. Instead, my approach seeks to specify how structural effects are achieved and how institutions and governance projects
are articulated in hybrid, contingent governing contexts with diverse histories and geographies.

Supplementing this approach to the urban political, I explore how research on policy mobility can help inform, and be informed by, urban spatial theory. Locating recent interest in policy mobility as part of the continued shift toward relational understandings of urban spatiality, I review recent debates over the adequacy of ‘scale’ versus ‘flat ontologies’ and suggest that studies of policy mobility should remain alive to the relational ‘politics of scale’ that pervades the process of policy-making. Yet, recognising that scale alone fails to adequately capture the non-hierarchical, more-than-territorial relations linking policy-making sites, I argue that research on urban policy mobility would benefit from utilising networked understandings of spatiality, which tend to emphasise topological connections and relative distance over topographical relationships and absolute distance. This second middle path, involving the incorporation of scalar and networked thinking, is later employed across a series of empirical chapters to interpret the Australian implementation of the Common Ground model.

1.2.2 Objective 2: to conceptualise the mobility of policy

Despite the usefulness of the urban-theoretical backdrop, perhaps the most obvious theoretical task involved in understanding the Australian implementation of the Common Ground model relates to the conceptualisation of policy mobility itself. Within the discipline of political science, for instance, there are a number of approaches, grounded primarily in realist and positivist traditions. Framed around the concept of policy diffusion (Walker, 1969), early political science accounts used statistical analyses to map sequential patterning associated with the adoption of policy ‘innovations’ by distinct jurisdictions. By the 1990s, political scientists were becoming less interested in pattern and more in process. Thus with the notion of lesson-drawing (Rose, 1991), scholars sought to understand the ways that policy actors voluntarily identified and applied lessons from the experiences of other places and jurisdictions. Before long, lesson-drawing was subsumed by the concept of policy transfer (Dolowitz and Marsh, 1996), which looked beyond voluntarism by acknowledging that instances of policy mobility could also be coerced, whether in the form of direct imposition or through more subtle means, including norms and expectations. While noting the contributions of these
political science approaches, recent geographical and social constructivist interventions have highlighted their significant limitations. Framed around the concept of ‘policy mobilities’ (cf. McCann, 2011b; McCann and Ward, 2011; Peck, 2011b), these accounts suggest that political science approaches to mobile policy remain problematically wedded to notions of policy-making rationality, that they tend to downplay the propensity of policy to mutate as it moves, and that they are inattentive to the way instances of policy mobility are dynamically co-constituted with socio-spatial landscapes and relations.

In response to this emergent work and its critiques of political science approaches, the second objective of this thesis is to explore the insights offered by a geographical and social constructivist conceptualisation of policy mobility. In Chapter 3, I address this objective by critically examining the political science literature on mobile policy before discussing the ontological and epistemological foundations of a ‘policy mobilities’ conceptualisation. Concerned with the processes, practices and resources involved in mobilising and territorialising policy, I argue that research using a policy mobilities conceptualisation has a better grasp of the social and material characteristics of policy mobility. Importantly, such accounts also pay close attention to the existence of “conditioning fields and institutions, existing pathways and trajectories” (McCann and Ward, 2012b, p. 327), which serve to prioritise certain policy ideas over others. In this way, the concept of policy mobilities chimes with my argument for combining political economy and post-structuralist dispositions toward urban politics.

In order to interpret the implementation of the Common Ground model in Australian cities, I advance a policy mobilities approach built on three core propositions. First, I propose that policy-making must be understood as socially constructed. Rather than involving the use of impartial techniques to develop objective, rational policy responses, I side with Prince (2012b, p. 194) in arguing that policy-making depends on “particular notions of legitimate knowledge, expertise, authority and ‘common sense’”, which are “valorized in a particular social formation at a particular time”. Policy-making activities and actors are thus subject to socially produced truths, techniques and forms of knowledge that play an active role in the making of social reality, and in turn they shape the nature of that reality into the future. The second proposition I advance is that policy
mobility must be apprehended as socially practiced. I argue that in order to understand how and why certain policies are mobilised and re-territorialised, one must appreciate the way policy ideas are circulated among embodied actors socialised through their placement in particular networks and institutional settings. Third and finally, I propose that policy mobility must be understood as a plural and dynamic spatial process. Policy mobility does not take place across a “transaction space, marked only with jurisdictional boundaries” (Peck, 2010, p. 170), rather they are produced by networked sites and multi-scaled relations, which actively re-constitute the territories and landscapes encountered.

1.2.3 Objective 3: to develop a methodology for researching urban policy mobilities

These theoretical and conceptual arguments about urban policy mobility lead inevitably to methodological considerations. How do researchers attend to the multitude of actors, places, sites and scales associated with mobilising and re-territorialising urban policy? What type of accounts can researchers hope to produce? Building on the previous two objectives, my third and final objective is to develop a methodological approach appropriate for the study of mobile urban policy and capable of attending to the theoretical and conceptual approaches developed in this thesis. Building on recent methodological debates (see Cochrane and Ward, 2012), I use Chapter 4 to develop an in-depth, qualitative methodological approach using the notion of assemblage (McFarlane and Anderson, 2011). This methodology emphasises the over-determined, processually realised, and labour-intensive nature of policy mobility, and highlights the inherent partiality of research endeavours, which are themselves an assemblage of particular resources interpreted in particular ways. In doing so, it provides a means to apprehend the contingent structures, multiple spatialities and social practices that I claim are integral for understanding urban policy mobility. Reflecting on the specific challenges facing policy mobilities research, particularly the tension between qualitative depth and the spatial dispersal of the research ‘field’, I activate my assemblage methodology through three key methodological practices: an ethnographic ambition; a shift from enclosed research sites to relational situations; and by attempting to follow people, policies and places through those relational situations. Through these practices, I seek to
build an approach capable of fulfilling my aim of understanding the Australian implementation of the Common Ground model.

1.3 Investigating Common Ground

Informed by these theoretical, conceptual and methodological objectives, and the accompanying frameworks and arguments, I address the core aim of this thesis—understanding the Common Ground model’s implementation in Australian cities—through three analytical chapters. These chapters focus in turn on: the constitution of chronic homelessness as a ‘policy problem’ in Australia; the mobilisation of the Common Ground model as a policy exemplar; and, the re-territorialisation of the model in Australian cities. In Chapter 5, I consider the policy context in which the Common Ground model became seen as a worthy solution to an acknowledged policy problem in chronic homelessness. I analyse the historical development of ‘chronic homelessness’ as a socially constructed policy category, one that reflects particular ways of thinking about the problem of homelessness and, in turn, defines the nature of appropriate solutions. Focusing internationally at first, I illustrate key historical shifts in governmental approaches to homelessness among Anglophone nations and chart the emergence, in the 1990s, of chronic homelessness as a distinct policy category. I then attend in detail to the Australian policy context, assessing the impact of territorialised ideological projects and international influences on the historical development of homelessness and chronic homelessness as problems of government. In doing so, this chapter provides insight into the historical-institutional and structural environment that enabled the Common Ground model to travel at a given time and in a given place.

Building on this historical and contextual analysis, Chapters 6 and 7 focus on the processes and labours associated with mobilising and re-territorialising the Common Ground model. In Chapter 6, I explore how the Common Ground model was mobilised as a ‘policy exemplar’ in the eyes of Australian policy actors. Instead of seeing the Common Ground model as an objective, instrumental best-practice responding to a defined policy problem, the chapter traces the social practices and spatial dynamics associated with mobilising the Common Ground model. I analyse the social construction of the Common Ground model’s ‘origin story’ and explore how the model’s mobility rested on establishing relational
connections with place- and site-specific stories of success. Analysing the role of Common Ground’s founder and CEO Rosanne Haggerty, I trace the social labours involved in accomplishing her expertise and illustrate how the practice and mediation of expert authority were important in the mobilisation of the Common Ground model. The chapter also attends to the role of policy tourism in mobilising the Common Ground model, focusing on the practice of Australian policy actors visiting Common Ground NYC projects. Here I follow the spatialities associated with the practice of policy tourism and discuss why actors seeing the model ‘in action’ was important to the implementation of the Common Ground model in the Australian context.

To avoid suggesting the importation of a “fully formed, off-the-shelf” policy model (Peck and Theodore, 2001, p. 449), I focus in Chapter 7 on the local adaptations, territorially embedded actors and social labours involved in re-territorialising the Common Ground model in Australian cities. Recognising that the re-territorialisation of mobile policy “is tied up with a whole set of locally dependent interests” (McCann and Ward, 2010, p. 176), I analyse the way in which the Common Ground model aligned with the political projects and interests of territorially embedded Australian policy actors. My analysis suggests how the model acted as a political resource used to advance and respond to territorial agendas at local, state and national scales. By highlighting how the model co-existed and contended with many political agendas across many scales, I emphasise the over-determinations at work in re-territorialising mobile policy. Following calls to address “how models are re-embedded into, and reshaped in, the[ir] new context” (Cook, 2008, p. 777), I reveal the adaptations made to the Common Ground model for implementation in Australian cities, revealing the practices, processes and shifting spatialities of teaching and learning associated with re-territorialising the Common Ground model.

After piecing together this assemblage of actors and practices, sites and scales, contexts and contingencies, I conclude by surveying the key contributions of the thesis. Based on the preceding chapters, I contend that bounded spatial imaginaries and grand explanatory narratives have lost considerable purchase for understanding ‘the urban’ and its politics. I suggest that future urban research will profit from the production of contextually specified claims, modest conclusions, and malleable theoretical approaches. Retaining a methodological sense of the
‘assembled’ nature of policy worlds, I argue, offers one productive pathway for this to be achieved. As a result, researchers, policy actors and the public will be better equipped to appreciate urban politics and policy for what they are—in-the-making.
Chapter two

Urban politics, global geographies

• •
2.1 Introduction

In *The Urban Question*, Manuel Castells (1977) famously problematised the designation ‘urban’. Questioning the status of the urban and ‘the city’ as uncomplicated and self-evident, Castells signalled a shift toward treating the urban as a theoretical question in its own right, as something that must be specified rather than assumed (Brenner, 2000). Decades on, the urban question continues to perplex. Always exceeding, always slipping beyond view, the urban unsettles and goads critical researchers in equal measure. What counts as ‘the city’, following Amin and Thrift (2002, p. 8), is “an amalgam of often disjointed processes and social heterogeneity, a place of near and far connections, a concatenation of rhythms”. Such concerns for the theoretical and empirical ‘whereabouts’ of the urban have indeed been fundamental to research on mobile urban policy. In this chapter, I locate the literature on mobile urban policy in relation to contemporary understandings of the urban as global-relational. Connecting research on policy mobility with two important urban-theoretical domains—urban politics and urban spatiality—I use this chapter to scope the theoretical orientations of this thesis and to argue for an approach to mobile urban policy capable of walking two ‘middle paths’.

These paths are discussed in two main sections. Section 2.2 frames mobile policy in relation to contemporary urban political scholarship, including that on state rescaling, the New Urban Politics and urban neoliberalisation. Recognising the salience of structures and hegemonic projects but acknowledging their contingent realisation and hybrid composition, the first middle path I advocate involves incorporating the insights of political economy and post-structuralist treatments of urban politics. Turning to recent debates over the abandonment of scale in favour of ‘flatter’ understandings of urban spatiality, Section 2.3 discusses how these debates inform, and can be informed by, the study of mobile policy. I argue that accounts of mobile urban policy stand to benefit from researchers walking a second middle path, between the ontological extremes of scalar and flat spatialities. This stance appreciates the interrelatedness of scaled and networked relations, and the co-implication of those relations in the production of urban space.
2.2 Politicising the urban

Since the turn to critical Marxist-inspired analyses inaugurated by David Harvey’s (1973) *Social Justice and the City*, urban geography has been strongly associated with the political economy of the contemporary city and its connections to capitalism and globalisation (for an overview, see McGuirk, 2012). Jessop (1993) argues that from the 1970s, the organisation of the post-war political economy, associated economically with Fordist production and politically with the Keynesian welfare state, had begun to fray. The epoch of ‘national Fordism’ was being transformed and superseded by ‘globalised post-Fordism’, associated with what Jessop (1993) called the ‘Schumpeterian work-fare state’ (see also Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Peck and Tickell, 2002). Where national Fordism centred on demand-side management and forms of collective consumption, globalised post-Fordism favoured supply-side intervention and the “subordination of social policy to the demands of labour market flexibility and structural competitiveness” (Jessop, 1993, p. 9). The transition to globalised post-Fordism involved fundamentally restructuring the capacities and objectives of the state, made possible through a process of rescaling (Peck, 2002; Ward and England, 2007).

2.2.1 State rescaling

As Brenner et al (2003, p. 4) detail, economic and social management under the post-war Keynesian welfare state had been territorialised at the national scale, involving:

a socially constructed correspondence between the national economy as the primary object of economic management, the national state as the primary political scale on which economic management was conducted and social welfare was delivered, and the treatment of political subjects as national citizens.

With series of economic shocks contributing to high levels of inflation and low economic growth, the primacy of the national scale began to loosen. These shocks, alongside mounting fiscal crises, global economic integration, and ideological changes favouring state withdrawal from economic and social management, undermined the stability of the existing political-economic settlement. With blame laid at the feet of the Keynesian welfare state, the settlement and its necessary scalar organisation began to be reorganised (cf. Harvey, 2006; Jessop, 2006; Leitner et al, 2007).
What resulted was a qualitative reorganisation of the state (O'Neill, 1997), which saw the national scale denaturalised as the preeminent domain for governance and the role of other scales of governance transformed in the process (Jessop, 1993; Ward and England, 2007). While many terms have been deployed to capture this process—for instance, ‘hollowing-out’ of the nation-state (Jessop, 1993) and the ‘glocalisation’ of governance (Swyngedouw, 1997)—each refers to a process of the national scale giving way ‘upwards’ to supra-national scales and ‘downwards’ to sub-national scales. As a scale, Peck and Tickell (1994, p. 317) note, “the national has apparently been outflanked”. This is not to imply that the nation-state has simply been usurped wholesale by other sources of authority, rather (1) the national scale has diminished in importance as the apparently natural scale for economic and social governance, and (2) with the shifting of some state functions to supra- and sub-national scales, the nation-state increasingly works through ‘networked’ or ‘multilevel’ forms of governance incorporating other scales and sources of authority. According to Allen (2011, p. 286), both processes have served to undermine “the sense in which it is possible to talk of a national state apparatus as the territorial locus of power”.

At the sub-national end of state rescaling, many have argued that the urban scale has assumed a central strategic role in the transition to globalised post-Fordism (cf. Brenner et al, 2005; Mayer, 2007; McGuirk, 2004, 2005; Peck, 2001; Peck, 2002). While cities have long been acknowledged, at least since Louis Wirth (1938, p. 2), for their role as “initiating and controlling centers of economic, political, and cultural life”, contemporary changes in the nature of capitalism and globalisation are thought to have rendered cities more and more fundamental. Urban regions, Brenner (2000, p. 361) claims, are “among the key geographical sites in and through which this multiscalar reconfiguration of capitalist spatiality is currently unfolding”. From world systems theory (Wallerstein, 1974) to the expansive literature on global cities (Brenner and Keil, 2006; Knox and Taylor, 1995), many researchers now insist upon the increasingly embedded role of cities, as functional and strategic centres in the global capitalist system—a change propelled by processes of political-economic rescaling.

From the late 1980s, intersecting literatures charted the constitutive role of the urban in processes of political-economic rescaling by attending to transformations in the governance of cities. Particularly influential were a suite of
regulation-theoretic accounts (Cox and Jonas, 1993; Cox and Mair, 1989; Logan and Molotch, 1987), which drew “attention to seemingly systematic reworkings across western cities in the institutional configuration and policy thrusts of urban government as cities responded to deregulated global capitalism as ‘hostile brothers’ competing for globally mobile investment flows” (McGuirk, 2012, p. 257, drawing on Peck & Tickell, 1994). Under the rubric of urban ‘growth machines’ and ‘regimes’, this work detailed the transformation of urban governance through processes of state restructuring and globalisation. In studying what became known as the ‘New Urban Politics’ (Cox, 1993; Hubbard and Hall, 1998; Macleod, 2011; Macleod and Jones, 2011), the multi-scaled relations underpinning the changing politics of the city were drawn to the centre of analysis.

2.2.2 The New Urban Politics

If the New Urban Politics was increasingly characteristic of western cities in the twilight of the twentieth century, it was distinct from the ‘old’ urban politics in a number of ways. Macleod (2011) identifies three differences. The first relates to a shift from government to governance (Hubbard and Hall, 1998) as a greater diversity of actors became involved in urban policy and politics “beyond the formal machinery of government, not least the enrolment of property developers and business leaders into growth coalitions and public-private partnerships” (Macleod, 2011, p. 2631). Second, as private interests were incorporated more thoroughly into urban policy and politics, the local state was itself reconfigured to act in ways traditionally associated with the private sector—being ‘entrepreneurial’, engaging in speculative investment and risk-taking behaviour. Third, the priorities of the local state were reconfigured, away from a primary commitment “to translate tax proceeds into collective consumption and public service provision” with secondary concern for economic growth, toward generating economic growth per se “by courting the private sector and cultivating economic enterprise” (Macleod and Jones, 2011, p. 2444). As Harvey (1989) argued in his seminal paper, these changes amounted to an epochal shift from managerialism to entrepreneurialism. In the process, the fabric of urban governance—its actors, mentalities and priorities—were fundamentally transformed and rescaled.
Accepting that the New Urban Politics is an observable albeit complex and variegated empirical transformation only goes part of the way, however. Just as cities ‘out there’ have undergone transformation, so too have the research questions and concerns directed toward understanding cities. Distancing itself from empiricist, positivist and mainly quantitative traditions which once dominated, urban geography has increasingly been associated with theoretically-driven, social constructivist and qualitative approaches (McGuirk, 2012). Research on the New Urban Politics has also played a role in putting urban politics at the centre of urban geography, and questions of governance and policy in particular. It has focused the research gaze, as Macleod and Jones (2011, p. 2445) state, toward “the rapidly transforming landscapes of urban economic development, the shifting institutional infrastructures of urban politics and governance, and the changing directions of urban policy”.

This research explored how, as a result of globalisation and state rescaling, cities became locked into beggar-thy-neighbour competition and were increasingly oriented toward external constituencies, whether in the form of attracting mobile workers and sources of capital or searching for supposedly successful policy ideas shown to bolster competitive advantage. Over a decade ago, Hubbard and Hall (1998, p. 6) noted that the “current ubiquity of … entrepreneurial policies throughout the advanced capitalist world is now indisputable”. This has been a common refrain. Ever since early observations about the ‘serial reproduction’ (Harvey, 1989) of certain policy forms—such as gentrified neighbourhoods, spectacular consumption spaces and, more recently, creative cities discourse (Peck, 2005)—the New Urban Politics literature has claimed that the circulation of policy was associated with the shift to entrepreneurial urban governance. This concern has done much to kindle the interest of geographers in travelling urban policy. Activating a largely unfulfilled research agenda articulated in earliest of the New Urban Politics literature, researchers cohering around the concept of ‘urban policy mobilities’ have recently begun to investigate the processes that produce ‘serial reproduction’ and policy ‘ubiquity’ (see McCann and Ward, 2011).

This emerging work on urban policy mobilities, in addition to focusing on the fundamental concerns of the literature—those being, the nature of urban politics, governance and policy in the context of global political-economic
transformation—has also emphasised the way travelling urban policy acts as a co-constitutive force, rather than simply a resultant outcome of the New Urban Politics. As Cook and Ward (2011) point out, to date there has been little serious attention given to extra-urban comparison, referencing and the global mobility of policy ideas, as things that instead of simply reflecting the New Urban Politics, actually make it possible. This, they claim, is partly a product of territorially bounded understandings of ‘the urban’ endemic to the New Urban Politics literature, which the next section will specifically address. For the moment, I stress that the New Urban Politics literature has not sufficiently addressed the long acknowledged but little understood role and nature of mobile policy as part of the changing politics of the urban. I contend that the urban policy mobilities literature offers a means of comprehending whether ‘serial reproduction’ and ‘ubiquity’ provide the conceptual vocabulary needed to account for these changes.

Although nuanced analyses dealing with the processes behind the circulation of urban policy have lagged far behind analyses of urban politics that tend to take those processes as granted, the increasing prominence of ‘neoliberalisation’ in geographical debates has brought with it a number of insights which are helpful in unpacking the phenomenon of mobile urban policy. To further theorise the relationship between mobile policy and the urban political, the remainder of this section turns to the literature on urban neoliberalisation. Focusing on two approaches to the concept of neoliberalism—namely, political economy and post-structural approaches—I build a theoretical approach that is later applied to understand urban policy, politics and governance more broadly.

### 2.2.3 Urban neoliberalisation

Scarcely used as part of the critical geographer’s tool-kit prior to the mid-1990s (for an early example, see Peck and Tickell, 1994), neoliberalism is today the master-signifier of the post-Keynesian, post-Fordist epoch. For many human geographers, as Larner (2011, p. 322) explains, “neoliberalism was the concept that in the end captured the debates about qualitative changes in contemporary economic, political and social life that have taken place over the last two decades”. With the ascendance of cities as scales of governance and sites for global capital accumulation, neoliberalism has come to explain the current period of capitalist economic globalisation. What were once thought to be ‘post-Fordist
cities’ are today more likely to be ‘neoliberal cities’ and key terms like ‘capitalism’, ‘globalisation’ and ‘entrepreneurialism’ are now inseparable from neoliberalism in the urban literature.

While neoliberalism is an “essential descriptor of the urban condition” (Brenner and Theodore, 2005, p. 101), geographers also tend to see it as ‘rascal concept’ (Brenner et al, 2010b, p. 184). Brenner et al (2010b, pp. 183-184), for example, note that a “perplexing mix of overreach and underspecification has accompanied the troubled ascendancy of the concept of neoliberalism”. They continue, arguing that neoliberalism has become “promiscuously pervasive, yet inconsistently defined, empirically imprecise, and frequently contested”. This ‘troubled ascendency’ crucially rests on the distinction between neoliberalism-in-theory and neoliberalism-in-practice. As a theory of political-economic practice espoused by key figures such as Friedrich von Hayek and Milton Friedman, neoliberalism is straight-forward enough, in proposing that “human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade” (Harvey, 2007, p. 2). Yet abstract theories of neoliberalism are of little use for those wanting to describe, explain and intervene in the ‘real’ world, where neoliberalism-as-theory must be translated. While neoliberalism-in-theory is important, particularly given its influence over projects of political-economic restructuring exemplified by politicians such as Margaret Thatcher in the UK and Ronald Reagan in the US—and in Australia by successive centre-Left Labor governments led by Bob Hawke and Paul Keating (Badcock, 2000; McKnight and Manne, 2010)—it falls far short of explaining the vastly uneven, disjunctural and incomplete nature of neoliberalism-in-practice. Many have set about producing a new theoretical vocabulary, contending that neoliberalism exists only in the realm of the hypothetical.

Geographers have settled instead on neoliberalisation, a term thought to better capture the way neoliberalism—an unrealisable utopian end-state—is attempted processually and unevenly (cf. Brenner and Theodore, 2002; England and Ward, 2007b; Larner, 2011; MäGuirk, 2012; Peck and Tickell, 2002). There has been a resultant turn away from viewing neoliberalism as a rapidly expanding ‘economic tsunami’ that installs pre-formed and pre-determined logics across the globe (for this critique, see Ong, 2007). Because neoliberalism does not exist
outside of specific instantiations, we have instead been drawn to investigate the ‘concrete political constellations’ (Wacquant, 2012) that produce ‘actually existing neoliberalism’ (for an early use of the term, see Brenner and Theodore, 2002). Actually existing neoliberalism seeks to accommodate the way in which “the nonlinear, multidirectional course of real-world neoliberalisation cannot be reduced to a process of enacting a singular, pristine plan or grand design” (Peck and Theodore, 2012b, p. 178). With increasing acceptance of the need to investigate concrete, ‘actually existing’ cases, scholars have found value in attending to instances of policy mobility—as moments of political, economic, and social transformation—to provide insight into neoliberalisation’s leading edge.

Although a focus on neoliberalisation in actually existing form is de rigueur for urban political geography, there exist markedly different ways of interrogating it. Importantly, this has had implications for policy mobilities research, with different approaches to neoliberalisation engaging the phenomenon of policy mobility in particular ways for particular analytical purposes. In the remainder of this section, I draw stylised distinctions between two broad schools of thought on neoliberalisation, which I refer to as political economy and post-structuralist approaches. In ideal typical form, these approaches are binary opposites: the political economy approach having an overriding concern with structure, commonality and necessity; the post-structuralist approach with agency, difference and contingency. In practice however, the extent to which each approach is operationalised in ideal typical form is limited. I discuss the characteristics of political economy and post-structuralist approaches for two key reasons. First, while defined to a large extent by their disposition toward the concept of neoliberalism specifically, these approaches have valuable applications for research on urban governance in a general, more-than-neoliberal sense. Second, I argue that there is much to be gained in urban policy mobilities research from an approach that walks a middle path, melding insights from political economy and post-structuralist approaches to neoliberalisation and to urban governance more broadly. Drawing inspiration from emerging work described as ‘post-structural political economy’ (Larner and Le Heron, 2002a; Le Heron, 2007, 2009; McCann, 2008; MøGuirk and Dowling, 2009a), I argue against an either/or choice for urban policy mobilities researchers.
Political economy approaches

Political economy approaches to neoliberalisation favour structure, commonality and necessity. Such approaches prioritise the global salience of neoliberalisation, focusing on “emergent regularities and patterns, even convergent tendencies” (Peck and Theodore, 2012b, p. 181), with the aim of understanding ‘actually existing’ examples of neoliberalism to contribute to an understanding of neoliberalism-in-general. Yet it is important to note that most proponents of political economy approaches have been at pains not to legislate simple convergence as a characteristic of neoliberalism-in-general (see Peck, 2004). Instead of involving the imposition of a regulatory blueprint on tabula rasa, neoliberalisation is viewed as an insistently path-dependent and contextually specific process of ‘creative destruction’ (Brenner et al, 2010b; Brenner and Theodore, 2002, 2005; Harvey, 2006). Proponents maintain that neoliberalisation involves the selective dismantling of local institutional frameworks and traditions (‘roll-back’ neoliberalism) and the construction of new ones on an already uneven landscape (‘roll-out’ neoliberalism) (Peck and Tickell, 2002), meaning neoliberalism (as a utopian-theoretical end state) is forever being circled by ideologically ‘impure’ neoliberalisations that are hybrid in their composition. What marks out a political economy approach, then, is the way concrete cases are approached for the analytical purpose of understanding neoliberalisation as a general, globalising project. Although the constitution of neoliberalisation is avowedly local, the analytical task is to understand how it is also a fundamentally extra-local phenomenon (Brenner et al, 2010a, 2010b; Peck, 2004; Theodore et al, 2011). Therefore, commonality across instances of neoliberalisation occupies the centre of analysis.

Despite this focus, the political economy approaches have tended to rely on analytical assumptions regarding the globally hegemonic status of neoliberalism, with little known about the (re)production of hegemony through extra-local processes. To better understand the nature of neoliberalism’s extra-local dynamics or ‘family resemblances’, the work of Peck, Theodore and Brenner has focused attention on mobile policy (Brenner et al, 2010a, 2010b; Peck, 2001, 2011c; Peck and Theodore, 2001; Theodore and Peck, 2000). Their political economy approach to mobile policy stems from a particular understanding of neoliberalisation itself. Brenner et al (2010a), for instance, see
the process of neoliberalisation as having three analytical dimensions: (1) regulatory experiments (projects designed to cultivate market-disciplinary modes of governance); (2) systems of inter-jurisdictional policy transfer (networks through which neoliberal policies are circulated across territories and scales); and (3) transnational rule regimes (systems that impose the ‘rules of the game’, enframing actors and institutions within specific politico-institutional parameters).

Acknowledging the vast literature that exists on the first dimension of neoliberalisation—that is, instances and types of regulatory experimentation—Brenner et al (2010a) assert that far less has been done to interrogate the second and third analytical dimensions. They suggest that, in addition to identifying family resemblances across instances of neoliberalisation, we need to investigate how family resemblances are produced, contested and consolidated by attending to the global circulation of policy and the systems that constitute the ‘rules of the game’. Evident in work on ‘fast policy regimes’ (Peck, 2001, 2002; Peck and Theodore, 2001), which will be discussed further in Chapter 3, political economy perspectives on neoliberalisation have been a major influence on policy mobilities research, drawing attention to the macro political-economic environment—the ‘context of contexts’ (Brenner et al, 2011)—that surrounds and influences policy-making.

Political economy approaches valuably foreground the role that structural dynamics, path dependencies and institutional embeddedness play in channelling the endowment of mobile potential to certain policy ideas. They also help to emphasise and understand how the consciousness of policy actors is inevitably shaped amid ideologically infused common senses generated through extra-local fields of influence. On the basis of these insights, there is much in political economy approaches worth retaining in the study of mobile policy. Though, as post-structuralist analyses have made clear, political economy approaches are not without silences and exclusions. To ameliorate some of these, I argue for the selective incorporation of post-structuralist insights.

Post-structuralist approaches
Where political economy approaches tend to favour structure, commonality, necessity and the global salience of neoliberalism, post-structuralist approaches favour agency, difference, contingency and the consequential role of local context.
In terms of emphasis, those adopting a post-structuralist approach specify neoliberalisation as a constituent part of the regulatory landscape to demonstrate its co-existence with diverse rationalities and modalities of governance in a manner that, crucially, does not necessarily assume dominance. Influenced by post-structuralist thinkers such as Michel Foucault (see Philo, 2000; Schirato et al, 2012), those using post-structuralist approaches do not have an analytical allegiance to neoliberalism’s “status as a hegemonic (albeit hybrid) political project with a core of common, salient features and a tendency towards structural coherence” (McGuirk and Dowling, 2009b, p. 176).

For research on urban policy mobilities, the implications of de-centring neoliberalism are profound. Where political economy accounts lean toward generalisation and theoretical abstraction, post-structuralist accounts opt for an understanding of neoliberalism through specification and low-flying analyses. These accounts approach examples of urban policy mobility not as a means to enable generalisation, but as a means toward specification, seeing neoliberalism as associated

with a specified set of elements (thinkers, institutions, policy programmes) that have to be teased out from a tangle of other things (local and trans-local political conditions; countervailing visions of reform; structural transformations of the global economy that are not reducible to neoliberalism, and so on) (McGuirk and Dowling, 2009b, p. 176).

While careful not to downplay the role and impact of neoliberalisation, by decentring neoliberalism’s analytical primacy and assumed structural salience post-structural approaches urge policy mobilities researchers, and urban researchers more broadly, to locate neoliberalisation among potentially powerful logics of governance exceeding neoliberal explanation. Here, neoliberalisation is something in need of explanation; something which can only be done by attending to the specific places, discordant political projects and contingencies that animate any political economic change.

Outside of the urban policy mobilities literature, there is a substantial body of work in this vein, particularly using governmentality theory (Larner, 2002; Larner and Laurie, 2010; Le Heron, 2007; Lewis, 2009; McGuirk, 2005; McGuirk and Dowling, 2009b). Focusing on what Larner (2000) terms the ‘messy actualities’ of governance, these accounts explicitly address “the different variants of neoliberalism, … the hybrid nature of contemporary policies and programmes,
[and] the multiple and contradictory aspects of neoliberal spaces, techniques, and subjects” (Larner, 2003, p. 509, original emphasis). Similar shifts have occurred in disciplines outside geography, with notable interventions from anthropologists (Collier, 2009, 2012; Hilgers, 2012; Ong, 2007; Ong and Collier, 2005). To better understand the messy actualities of governance, these governmentality approaches to neoliberalisation encourage close attention to “how government gets done—through what rationalities, technologies, discourses, and practices” (McCann, 2008, p. 887, original emphasis). This requires detailed investigation into the achievement of political projects through local sites and, importantly, how those local sites and projects shape and are shaped by circumstances further afield.

As Larner (2003, p. 510) identified a decade ago now, “we need a more careful tracing of the intellectual, policy, and practitioner networks that underpin the global expansion of neoliberal ideas, and their subsequent manifestation in government policies and programmes”. Ong (2007, p. 5), echoing this point, sees neoliberalism as a ‘mobile technology’ that should be investigated as a “technology of governing that interacts with situated sets of elements and circumstances”. These perspectives suggest that attention be given to the role of specific techniques/technologies—such as calculation, audit, and best practice designations, for example—and “the apparently mundane practices through which neoliberal spaces, states, and subjects are being constituted in particular forms” (Larner, 2003, p. 511). Using a governmentality approach, the phenomenon of mobile policy becomes a way to understand the ‘how’ of government in more-than-neoliberal contexts by focusing attention on mundane practice and calculative techniques, and how those practices and techniques travel and can be re-embedded in advancing neoliberalisation. Importantly, as Ferguson (2009, p. 182) points out, such “technologies need not have any essential or eternal loyalty to the political formations within which they were first deployed”. Formerly ‘neoliberal’ techniques can find themselves redeployed and remoulded in the service of a range of political projects at various scales. For geographical engagements with mobile policy-making, governmentality accounts call on researchers to specify the achievement of policy mobilisation in an environment with diverse histories and geographies of governance.
Toward post-structural political economy

In the foregoing discussion, I elaborated the contribution of political economy and post-structuralist approaches to neoliberalisation in order to gauge the insights offered for research on urban governance and policy mobilities. Instead of opting for one approach over another, which would position political economy and post-structuralist approaches in unnecessary binary opposition, this research seeks to walk a middle path between the two approaches. Of course, there are limitations inherent in melding political economy and post-structuralist insights, stemming from “different models of the nature of explanatory concepts; different models of causality and determination; different models of social relations and agency; and different normative understandings of political power” (Barnett, 2005, p. 8). Barnett (2005), somewhat derisively, sees such efforts as engaging in a ‘marriage of convenience’. Others, like England and Ward (2007a, pp. 259-260), highlight possibility over convenience, noting that “a process of dialogue, engagement, and reflection is in and of itself useful, even if there are some irreconcilable differences”. And in a more guarded appraisal, Peck (2004, p. 403) points out that “both endeavours are weakened if they fail to acknowledge the important contributions of the other”.

Drawing inspiration from work on ‘post-structural political economy’ (PSPE) (Larner and Le Heron, 2002a; Larner et al, 2007; Le Heron, 2007, 2009; McCann, 2008; McGuirk and Dowling, 2009a; Wetzstein and Le Heron, 2010), I recognise the complementarities existing between the two approaches as well as the potentially generative contribution that can be made by bringing them into alignment in the context of research on mobile urban policy. Both approaches direct our attention toward theoretically-informed engagements with actually existing forms of neoliberalisation. Further consensus is discernable around the need to address the way urban governance unfolds locally and extra-locally through detailed analyses of the processes, people and places that constitute urban governance across multiple scales. Rather than a once-and-for-all analytical solution, I employ PSPE as a means of analytical experimentation. As Wetzstein and LeHeron (2010, p. 1904) note, PSPE is a “knowledge-production intervention that seeks to extend political economy frameworks by accessing poststructural insights”. The value of such experimentation lies, according to McGuirk and Dowling (2009a, p. 124), in PSPE’s “attention to both the discursive and material,
to the politicised and discursive construction of knowledge and to the material and institutional contexts of economic processes”. In drawing together the insights of neo-Gramscian and governmentality approaches in particular, McGuirk et al (forthcoming, n.p.) note that such a manoeuvre provides “productive theoretical ground that poses probing questions about the sedimented and shifting practices, processes, entities, relations and structures through which urban … governance is made (and remade)”. In response, this thesis views the concept of neoliberalism as something in need of explanation. While there is a common ideological genus associated with various examples of neoliberalisation, each example must be actualised in the context of more-than-neoliberal conditions, projects and contingencies. It is this sense of the hybrid and impure that the PSPE approach used in this thesis seeks to highlight.

Deployed in the context of urban policy mobilities research, my PSPE approach seeks to retain political economy’s acknowledgement of the role of institutional embeddedness, path dependency and powerful ideological projects, such as those associated with neoliberalism, as mechanisms that (re)produce policy orthodoxies. These mechanisms can be productive (for sanctioned policy ideas) and repressive (for those ideas running against the institutional-ideological grain), but, in each case, they provide insight into the “processes and dynamic configurations involved in constituting and reproducing hegemonic governance forms, relations and purposes” (McGuirk et al, forthcoming, n.p.). In so far as political economy approaches help researchers understand the ‘context of contexts’ (Brenner et al, 2011) or the ‘policy ecology’ (Peck, 2011a), they are essential to understanding how and why some policy ideas are endowed with mobile potential, while others become bogged-down, cast as unworthy of replication.

Where I depart most sharply from a political economy approach is in the analytic necessity and explanatory power of neoliberalisation. I look to post-structural governmentality inspired approaches to recognise that neoliberalisation is articulated among myriad other political projects that, depending on context, can be equally determinative of policy outcomes. Such work draws researchers to focus on “how neoliberalism is specified in a variegated landscape of institutional, economic and political forms” (Collier, 2012, p. 191). The salience of neoliberalisation here becomes an empirical question; something researchers must
investigate to explain how and whether its structural power operates. In pursuit of this task, governmentality approaches direct attention to the consequential nature of fine-grained practices and techniques, which can at times be lost under the weight of neoliberal explanation in political economy approaches. As McGuirk et al (forthcoming, n.p.) argue, governmentality analyses “aim to identify the modalities of governance—the logics and assemblage of practices (subjectivisations, problematisations, mechanisms) and entities—through which governance towards particular ends is mobilised”. Thus, governmentality approaches take seriously the role of such practices, entities and techniques in actively re-shaping institutions, path dependencies and powerful political projects. For research on policy mobility, part of their value lies in attending to the active reconstruction of the global circulatory systems through which urban policy is mobilised. In elucidating the reconstruction of circulatory systems, governmentality accounts also suggest that policy mobilities researchers look beyond the movement of identifiable policy models to appreciate, in a broader sense, the context and methods through which policy issues become ‘problematised’ (Collier, 2009; Larner, 2011).

Explored at length in Chapter 5, problematisation is a social and political process where actors and institutions frame problems and present resultant solutions such that existing forms lose coherence and “new forms of understanding and acting [are] invented” (Collier, 2009, p. 95). From this perspective, forms of knowing and acting produced through problematisation are prefigured by the context in which they have emerged, but in emerging they necessarily change that context. This framing offers one way to investigate the influence of the context of contexts, as emphasised in political economy approaches, while attending to fine-grained practices and hybrid contexts emphasised in post-structuralist governmentality accounts. Melding political economy’s attention to structural forces with post-structuralism’s attention to the hybrid contexts involved in the production of structural effects, PSPE is a cogent way to approach and understand the mobility of urban policy.

In the next section I shift from arguing for the usefulness of a political middle path in the study of mobile urban policy, to focus on a spatial middle path. Just as research on policy mobility can benefit from an understanding of urban politics that bridges political economy and post-structural approaches, I claim that
it can also benefit from approaching the relational production of urban space through an attention to scales and networks.

2.3 Spatialising the urban
Critical urban researchers have long conceived of the political and the spatial as co-constituted. Concerned with the spatial whereabouts of ‘urban’ politics, researchers interested in policy mobility have likewise been motivated by the relationship between politics and spatiality. That urban politics extends beyond particular territorial boundaries is, of course, not unique to the contemporary context (Clarke, 2012; Cook et al, 2013; Nasr and Volait, 2003) but—as the previous discussion of state rescaling, the New Urban Politics and urban neoliberalisation made clear—the urban is increasingly implicated in extra-local engagements and flows. As Amin and Thrift (2002, p. 1) note, “the city is everywhere and in everything”, to the point where “we can no longer even agree on what counts as a city”.

Despite such acknowledgements, urban studies research has traditionally proceeded on the basis of a problematic binary demarcating an urban ‘inside’ from an extra-urban ‘outside’, emblematic of deep-seated modernist tendencies (Amin and Thrift, 2002). Recent critiques have noted that much of the urban politics literature operates within a strongly territorial spatial frame centred on an ontologically stable view of the urban scale (Allen and Cochrane, 2007; Cook and Ward, 2011; Fariñas and Bender, 2010; McCann and Ward, 2010). In Allen and Cochrane’s (2007) words this orthodoxy is reflective of a ‘territorial fix’, a view which takes the territorial coherence of the urban scale and its delimitation by identifiable boundaries as self-evident.

While this view of the urban scale can be a useful way of responding to ‘the challenge of narrative’ facing all researchers (Jonas, 2006, p. 400), it all too often precipitates simplistic treatment of agencies and structures emanating from a bracketed-off outside world. In tending toward ontological stability, it mandates an understanding of city-space embedded in a pre-existing, somehow natural and static spatial structure. It frequently implicates cities in a determinate scalar hierarchy, nesting the urban scale within a larger and more powerful regional scale which in turn is nested within the national scale, and onward to the scale of the global. Commenting on the relations between cities and the nation-state, Isin
Cities from elsewhere

(2007) argues that urban ‘scalar thought’ has been articulated through three principles: *exclusivity* (city and nation are two exclusive bodies); *hierarchy* (the nation is the creator of all scales and, therefore, the urban scale is nested and tiered within the national scale); and, *ahistoricity* (that such a situation has been and always will be the case). Brenner (2001) explains how this type of spatial ontology is itself a product of particular historical, cultural and geographical circumstances, emerging out of Euclidean, Cartesian and Westphalian understandings of geographical scale (see Agnew, 1994; Elden, 2010).

Urban studies researchers—across the spectrum of political economy and post-structuralist allegiances—have increasingly come to see modernist urbanism and its spatial ontology as untenable. The boundaries of the city, Amin and Thrift (2002, p. 8) claim, “have become far too permeable and stretched, both geographically and socially, for it to be theorized as a whole”, and accordingly it is this “aspect of cities that needs to be captured and explained, without any corresponding desire to reduce the varied phenomena to any essence or systemic integrity”. In a similar fashion, Cook and Ward (2011, p. 2523) have called for the “ontological black box of ‘the urban’” to be opened up for consideration, by attending to the production of city-space amid proximate and distant relations and sources of influence. “If it were ever enough”, Ward (2011b, p. 73) claims, “to account for change in the nature of urban development on the basis of analysis generated solely from within cities and the countries of which they are part, then that time has surely passed”.

In response, scholars are exploring urban politics and, by extension, cities themselves as emerging from the interaction of territoriality and relationality (Cook and Ward, 2012b; Massey, 2011; McCann and Ward, 2010, 2011; McNeill, 2010). Drawing on earlier theorisations such as Harvey’s (1989) capitalist dialectic of fixity and flow, and Massey’s (1991, 2005) ‘global sense of place’, this work recognises “the increasingly open, porous, and interconnected configuration of territorial entities” (Ward, 2011b, p. 73). Robinson (2013, p. 1) has gone so far as to argue that a “defining quality to cityness” is the composition of “particularity—a place—in the midst of elsewhere”. Yet this should not be read as installing a fundamental distinction between relations (connections) on one hand, and territory (place) on the other. All places “are what they are precisely as a result of their history of and present participation in relations with elsewhere”,
therefore, “territories are constituted and are to be conceptualized, relationally” (Massey, 2011, p. 4). Territoriality and relationality are, in this way, dialectically produced. According to Massey (2011, p. 4), “they exist in constant tension with each other, each contributing to the formation, and the explanation, of the other”. Scholars have thus been pushed to decentre the city as a bounded object and instead approach the city as “rather an improbable ontological achievement that necessitates elucidation” (Farias, 2010, p. 2).

With growing interest in relational-territorial understandings of urban spatiality, urban politics researchers have turned to the networks, relations and webs involved in urban policy circulation as a means of understanding contemporary cities and their politics (Clarke, 2012; Cook, 2008; Cook and Ward, 2011; McCann, 2008; Peck, 2011a; Robinson, 2011; Ward, 2011a). In what follows I explore an approach to urban spatiality in the context of research on policy mobility. To unpack the production of urban space, I argue that research on policy mobility can benefit from utilising two bodies of spatial theory and their corresponding vocabularies, namely that related to scale and to networks. I argue that by walking a middle path between scaled and networked spatiality, mobile policy research can move beyond outmoded tenets of modernist urbanism to better appreciate the whereabouts of ‘urban’ politics.

2.3.1 Re-thinking scale

While scale is a key concept within human geography, there is now a well-established move away from scale “as a fixed, bounded, self-enclosed and pregiven container”, toward a focus on scale in terms of “process, evolution, dynamism and sociopolitical contestation” (Brenner, 2001, p. 592). Connecting with broader disciplinary acceptance of the social production of space (Brenner, 2000; Lefebvre, 1991), it is now a truism for human geographers that scale is the outcome of social processes rather than a pre-existing platform for social processes (Brenner, 2001; Bulkeley, 2005; McMaster and Sheppard, 2004). Admitting the socially constructed nature of scale means accepting that scale is produced through “a process that is always deeply heterogeneous, conflictual and contested” (Swyngedouw, 1997, p. 140). For Swyngedouw (1997, p. 140), to speak of scale is to speak of a ‘politics of scale’ where “scale becomes the arena and moment, both discursively and materially, where sociospatial power relations
are contested and compromises are negotiated and regulated” (for other contributions on the politics of scale, see Brenner, 2001; Marston, 2000; McCann, 2003; McGuirk, 2003).

Scale politics, in the first instance, is associated with practices of political persuasion (Delaney and Leitner, 1997). In the domain of urban politics, McCann (2003, p. 160) notes that notions of scale are drawn upon by competing interests in an attempt to institute particular discursive frames that (re)define “the appropriate location of political power and the territorial extent of specific policies and regulations”. These framings have material as well as rhetorical consequences which are “inscribed in, and are the outcome of, both everyday life and macro-level social structures” (Marston, 2000, p. 221). Accordingly, scale does not precede political contestation and material reality but is, rather, the provisionally settled outcome that emerges from both.

Consensus on the socially constructed nature of scale has not led to unanimity, however. Debate over the usefulness of scale in contemporary human geography has witnessed trenchant arguments for the abandonment of scale in favour of other spatial vocabularies (Marston et al, 2005; Marston and Smith, 2001; Marston et al, 2007; Woodward et al, 2010) as well as equally trenchant defences of scale’s enduring purchase (Brenner, 2001; Hoefle, 2006; Jonas, 2006; Leitner and Miller, 2007). While these two sides do not neatly correlate to political economy and post-structuralist schools of thought, those associated with purer forms of post-structuralism have had fundamental, irreconcilable objections to the notion of scale. Key to their argument has been the identification of a ‘scaffold imaginary’, thought to be endemic to scalar thinking (in particular, see Marston et al, 2005). Marston et al (2005) claim that an enduring assumption of hierarchical relationships between scales on the basis of spatial extensiveness has resulted in geographers simply moving from an ontologically mandated hierarchy to an assumed hierarchy. They contend that, because of the scaffold imaginary, “social practice takes a lower rung on the hierarchy, while ‘broader forces’, such as the juggernaut of globalization, are assigned a greater degree of social and territorial significance” (Marston et al, 2005, p. 427). The urban scale, if one accepts the critique, slips into being “presented as the context in which the operation of global processes is fine-tuned, rather than as being a formative part of those processes” (McGuirk, 1997, p. 481). Local urban actors and processes are
thus forever on the receiving end of external, structurally forceful processes operating at scales ‘higher up’ in the hierarchy. Gibson-Graham (2002, p. 27) speak about a similar tendency in economic geography and the pervasive hierarchical assumptions at play concerning local and global scales: “we are all familiar with the denigration of the local as small and relatively powerless, defined and confined by the global: the global is a force, the local is its field of play”. For some, this apparent slippage toward hierarchical determinism is a key reason why we should opt for ‘human geography without scale’ (Marston et al, 2005).

Many others, though, disagree with the charge that scalar thinking should be done away with (Hoefle, 2006; Jonas, 2006; Leitner and Miller, 2007). One key reason to retain a sense of scale, even in its hierarchical permutations, is that hierarchical spatial relations continue to matter, discursively and materially. Hoefle (2006, p. 238) defends the concept of scale on the grounds that, while hierarchical power relations may not be ontologically stable, they nonetheless must be understood if and where they exist: “one has to understand [political hierarchies] to be able to understand what they are reacting to” (see also Gonzalez, 2009). Likewise, Jonas (2006, p. 400) asks: “is it productive to accuse ‘scalists’ of a preoccupation with the territorial hierarchies through and around which [the] spaces of capitalism and the state are reworked if such a reworking is indeed what is happening?” These statements suggest that hierarchical power relations are real in the sense that they become reinscribed through socio-spatial relations and embedded in institutions identified with particular scales (Gonzalez, 2009; Hoefle, 2006; Jonas, 2006; Leitner and Miller, 2007). Those who defend the continued use of scale would no doubt agree with Jonas (2006, p. 399) when he states that to “reject ‘scale’ altogether would be to miss out on an important dimension of thinking about and acting upon contemporary economic, political, social and environmental change”.

In contradistinction to Marston et al’s (2005) arguments, Leitner and Miller (2007, p. 117) point out that “the vast majority of the contemporary literature on scale and globalization in geography and beyond does not equate the ‘global’ with structure and the ‘local’ with agency” and “clearly recognise[s] the mutual constitution of structure and agency”. To be certain, they claim that an understanding of scale includes hierarchical relationships that are “suggestive of
top-down power relations”, but to stop there means excluding the full range of *verticality*, where relationships “may be bottom-up, top-down or both simultaneously” (Leitner and Miller, 2007, p. 117). Therefore, to cast all research focusing on hierarchically scaled relations as haplessly reproducing those relations overlooks the value in understanding the actors, processes and consequences of an actually existing politics of scale. For research on urban policy mobility in particular, scale is inseparable from the achievement of territorial political projects, not to mention political debate about policy problems and solutions. There is an enduring need, I argue, to retain a sense of scale, but to recognise that scales are processually and politically territorialised and re-territorialised, not transcendental.

In pursuit of similar goals, geographers increasingly adopt a ‘relational’ view of scale (for example Howitt, 1998, 2007; Paasi, 2004; Swyngedouw, 1997). Making a distinction between approaches that treat scale as *size* (geographical span) and/or *level* (complexity/hierarchy), Howitt (1998) provides one of the earliest treatments of scale as *relation*, that is, the dialectical webs that make scalar labels sensible in a given time and place. Scale is hence reframed as “a relationship of movement and interaction rather than a discrete thing” (Paasi, 2004, p. 538). Applying a relational view of scale to urban development policy, McGuirk (1997, p. 481), for example, shows how the ‘local’ outcomes of policy were “formulated at a variety of scales and [were] mutually constitutive of outcomes at other, ‘higher’, scales”. Such a finding supports McCann and Ward’s (2010, p. 177) more recent claim that the urban region “cannot be understood without reference to its relations with various other scales”. Attending to scale relationally is therefore essential to understanding the production of city-space, as it helps elucidate the vertical dialectical webs that constitute the urban scale. Paying attention to the way territories are constituted through scalar relations does not necessarily entail a territorial urban ontology, nor an exclusively territorial understanding of politics. It does, however, involve “conceding that there may be certain circumstances in which, as an object of analysis, practical and bounded spaces … have been institutionalized through particular struggles and become identified as discrete territories” (M. Jones, 2009, p. 501, original emphasis).

Stemming from such observations, there is, then, value in retaining a sense of scale in research on urban policy mobility. Yet, to avoid recourse to settled
scalar ontologies, this research must attend to scaled processes by focusing on the various practices and techniques that give rise to vertical spatial relations and how different actors contest scalar apportionment in line with their interests. While resolute in retaining this sense of scale, I argue next that research on urban policy mobility should also expand its spatial imaginary and spatial vocabulary beyond scale, to incorporate an awareness of networked spatial relations.

2.3.2 Understanding networks

With the rise of ‘relational thinking’—seen by Jones (2009, p. 488) as “becoming the mantra of the early twenty-first century in human geography”—scholars have moved away from conceptions of space as absolute, toward understandings of space as fundamentally, indeed ontologically, relational (Amin, 2004; Amin and Thrift, 2002; Farias and Bender, 2010; Gonzalez, 2009; M. Jones, 2009; O’Callaghan, 2012; Olds, 2001). In addition to scale being increasingly thought about in relational terms, another important outcome of relational thinking in critical human geography has been the rise of ‘flatter’ understandings of space and spatiality. Pinnegar (2009, p. 2912), for his part, notes a disciplinary shift from spatial imaginaries based on notions of categorisation and containment to notions of “fluidity, connectivity, and interaction”. Gonzalez (2009, p. 32) likewise draws attention to the “heated discussions in geography as to whether or not we should still use so-called ‘rigid’ geographical concepts such as scale and territory in a world [that is] increasingly complex and fluid”.

While the foregoing discussion positioned scale in relational terms, relational thinking in the post-structural tradition goes one step further by analytically decentring scalar spatiality in much the same way as the previous section noted how neoliberalism has been decentred in urban political debates. Acknowledging that some spatial relations are not easily reducible to, or identified with, territorial and scalar spaces, such approaches emphasise the importance of horizontal spatial relations and employ a different set of spatial metaphors, notably, but not exclusively, that of the network. In response to these developments, the remainder of this chapter discusses the value of bringing horizontal notions of spatiality to research on urban policy mobility. I argue that such research should walk a second middle path, between the scalar and the
networked, in order to grasp more fully the relational-territorial production of city-space.

As Amin (2004, p. 34) explains, post-structuralist relational approaches to the city adopt an “ontology of flow, connectivity and multiple geographical expression, to imagine the geography of cities and regions through their plural spatial connections”. Cities are thus recast as:

- nodes that gather flow and juxtapose diversity, as places of overlapping—but not necessarily connected—relational networks, as perforated entities with connections that stretch far back in time and space, and, resulting from all of this, as spatial formations of continuously changing composition, character, and reach (Amin, 2004, p. 34)

Cities are elusive, mobile, fluid, ‘multiplex entities’ (Amin and Graham, 1997, p. 418), such that as a singular, bounded entity, ‘the city’ is not ontologically possible. As spatial formations, cities “must be summoned up as temporary placements of ever moving material and immanent geographies … as situated moments in distanciated networks that cross a given place” (Amin, 2004, p. 34).

Accordingly, relational thinking in its purer form requires a ‘flattened’ conception of space, recognising “a virtually infinite population of mobile and mutable ‘sites’” (Marston et al, 2007, p. 51). Such thinking is ontologically flat because of its “affirmation of immanence—or self-organization—as the fundamental process of material actualization” (Marston et al, 2007, p. 51; Woodward et al, 2010). Flat ontologies have emerged in part as a reaction to certain scalar approaches and their hierarchical assumptions which, it is argued, “operate by carving up the world into a delimited set of manageable object-types” (Marston et al, 2007, p. 51). By rejecting all forms of spatial totality, flat ontologies mandate a view of the world as forever immanent: “objects are space, space is objects, and moreover objects can be understood only in relation to other objects—with all this being a perpetual becoming of heterogeneous networks and events that connect internal spatiotemporal relations” (M. Jones, 2009, p. 491, original emphasis). Scale and territory, with their adherence to notions of topographical space—where absolute distance is the indicator of proximity and separation (Allen, 2011)—are oppositional to a world that is non-hierarchical, spatially elusive and always in-flux.

Many researchers have looked to horizontal, topologic forms of spatiality as a means of enacting relational thinking (Allen, 2010, 2011; Amin, 2004; Amin
and Graham, 1997; Amin and Thrift, 2002; Robinson, 2011). "The appeal of
topology", Allen (2011, p. 283) claims, "seems to rest with the looser, less rigid
approach to space and time that allows for events elsewhere to be folded into the
here and now of daily life". Where topographic spatiality is associated with
absolute space, topologic spatiality is associated with relative space, such that "the
gap between ‘here’ and ‘there’ is measured less by miles or kilometres and more
by the social relationships, exchanges and interactions involved" (Allen, 2011, p.
284). Serres and Latour (1995) explain the distinction between topographic and
topologic space using the metaphor of a crumpled handkerchief. While the spatial
integrity of its surface remains in tact, crumpling the handkerchief reshuffles
proximity and distance, putting points on the handkerchief that were once distant
in absolute terms into relative proximity and vice versa. The metaphor usefully
points out that, rather than being fixed, space is dynamic and thus can be folded
and stretched, drawing further attention to the rendering, the ‘how’, of spatial
relations.

Topological spatiality has particularly important implications for the way
we conceive of power, for example. Power and authority can no longer be thought
to emanate from certain territories or to extend evenly within those territories, as
is sometimes assumed. Amin (2004) argues that power is increasingly exercised
across territories rather than solely within them; he contends that nodal power, as
distinct from territorial power, is increasingly important. Allen (2011, p. 285)
points out that "we are accustomed to thinking about power as, on the whole, an
observable feature of any given territory or that its extension across a flat surface
is, for the most part, relatively unproblematic", which he associates with a
conceptual reliance on scale to describe the spatiality of power. What is missed by
an over-reliance on scalar power and its topographic inclination is:

the ability of different political actors, some public, some private, to
exercise powers of reach that enable them to be more or less present
within and across urban and regional political structures, regardless of
their actual physical location or distance from one another (Allen,
2011, p. 286).

It is, therefore, the quality of spatial relations and their execution that topologic
understandings impress upon urban research.

In response to flatter understandings of spatiality, networks have emerged
as part of the spatial vocabulary of urban studies, seeking to overcome and, in
some cases, replace altogether the traditional focus on scale and territory (Allen, 2011; Farias and Bender, 2010; R. Smith and Doel, 2011). Leitner (2004, p. 237) explains that whereas “the spatiality of a politics of scale is associated with vertical relations among nested territorially defined political entities, by contrast, networks span space rather than [cover] it, transgressing the boundaries that separate and define … political entities”. Networks are horizontally relational insofar as “the conditions of possibility and actions of network participants are defined by their relationship with other participants, rather than by their own inherent characteristics” (Leitner and Sheppard, 2002, p. 496). Bulkeley (2005), for example, points out that transnational epistemic communities and advocacy networks are increasingly important horizontal modes of governance that are networked across multiple scales, exceeding a politics of scale. For many researchers, networks offer a way of navigating spatialities beyond scale because network relations are not defined by inherent territorial associations and territorial sources of authority, but by relations across, among and above different scales.

Similar to the critique levelled at extreme scalar-territorial approaches to space, some have cautioned against its polar opposite: a world understood as radically free-flowing, in-flux and without structures or boundaries (Bulkeley, 2005; Jonas, 2006; M. Jones, 2009; Leitner, 2004; Leitner and Miller, 2007). Jones (2009) is particularly helpful in identifying the pitfalls of what he calls the ‘non-territorial trap’ (appropriating Agnew’s (1994) phrase the ‘territorial trap’, which has been used to argue for non-territorial spatiality). Apart from the previously discussed issue of scale and territory continuing to matter a great deal in the practice of politics, Jones (2009, p. 488) claims that relational, flat ontologies tend to lack “the capacity to deal with multifarious acts of fixing space and to highlight factors that constrain, structure, and connect space”. By putting all things on the same plane, with equal status and potential, it appears all too easy to envisage a world in which relations are equally mobile and forceful, to the exclusion of obdurate conditions, institutions and forms of territorial authority. Convinced of these tendencies, I argue in the remainder of this section that research on urban policy mobility research stands to benefit from incorporating an attention to networks with an attention to relational scale.

*Toward a spatiality of scales and networks*
Wary of the pitfalls accompanying strongly scalar-territorial and strongly networked-relational approaches to spatiality, I side with a growing number of accounts endorsing a middle path between the two (Bulkeley, 2005; M. Jones, 2009; Leitner, 2004; McCann and Ward, 2010, 2011). Key to such an approach is recognising that scalar spatiality and network spatiality are not necessarily in competition. Jones (2009, p. 494, original emphasis), for one, argues that “mobility and fluidity should not be seen as standing in opposition to territories and we should, therefore, not be forced to adopt a ‘networks versus territories’ scenario”. He goes on to claim that “on the one hand, networks should not be seen as non-spatial and without ‘geographical anchors’ … and on the other hand, territories and scales should not be viewed as closed and static” (M. Jones, 2009, p. 494). Bulkeley (2005, p. 898) has similarly argued that “scalar and network readings of spatiality are not necessarily opposed, but may be mutually constitutive”. In much the same way, Leitner (2004, p. 250) claims that “networks are dialectically related to scalar structures”, going on to note that “networks help construct and contest scales and (re)configure scalar relations … [and] in turn scalar structures construct and contest networks”.

As a means of navigating a middle path, I concur with Allen and Cochrane (2007) in their assessment that the problem is not scale and territory per se, but a scalar ontology. For this research—which is comfortable acknowledging the role of structural effects, power asymmetries and the spatialities they help produce—there is value in attenuating networked understandings of space with an attention to the production of durable scaled spatial relations. Such a view permits a relational ontology without evacuating the political and material status of territorial spatiality. In the context of research on urban policy mobility, this means attending to the way mobile policy and policy-making is shaped by territorialised conditions (eg. political projects, institutional arrangements, territorially contingent circumstances) and relational connections (eg. international experts, distant sites of best-practice) which may reflect scaled and networked spatialities, not simply one or the other. Keeping both of these forms of spatiality in view allows for a more nuanced account of how policy mobility is implicated in the relational-territorial production of cities.
2.4 Conclusion
This chapter has demonstrated how urban theoretical debates have influenced and can be informed by geographical research into mobile policy. First, the chapter canvassed contemporary urban politics scholarship. It explained how urban politics in general, and urban policy in particular, has long been acknowledged for its constitutive relationship with globalising processes, made clear in research on state rescaling, the New Urban Politics and neoliberalisation. Attention to mobile policy here offers insight into the changing politics of the urban—its actors, mentalities and priorities—and the connections between urban governance sites and globalising political transformations. The chapter contrasted two key approaches to urban politics, drawn from research on neoliberalisation, to assess their implications for research on urban policy mobilities. For a political economic approach, research on mobile policy is an entry point for understanding the translocal character of neoliberalisation by investigating how neoliberal ‘family resemblances’ are produced, consolidated and contested through circuits of policy. For a post-structuralist approach, neoliberalisation is decentred and instances of policy mobility are used to understand the messy actualities of policy-making, comprised of diverse political projects and hybridised governance contexts. I argued for an approach to policy mobility that builds on the strengths of each approach, recognising the salience of structures and of powerful governance projects, but focusing attention on how those structures are contingently realised and contested through the lens of policy mobilisation.

Second, the chapter addressed developments in scholarship on urban spatiality, narrating the shift away from bounded, static and primarily territorial understandings of urban spatiality to those recognising urban territory as porous, interconnected and relationally produced. In response, I explored approaches that take seriously the relational nature of urban spatiality and the implications of these approaches for research on urban policy mobility. Discussing contemporary debates on the notion of scale, I argued for the need to retain a sense of scale for its ability to capture enduring territorial relations and the ‘scale politics’ associated with urban politics and policy-making. However, responding to critics who have usefully highlighted the risks attending scalar thinking, I stressed that scaled relations should not be assumed or their effects seen as pre-given. As a corrective against any such tendencies, the chapter argued for an appreciation of
flatter forms of spatiality and, in particular, the inclusion of networks into the spatial vocabulary of research on urban policy mobility. Rather than being oppositional to scale, network spatiality offers a way to understand the webs and connections that cut across and through scaled territories, as well as playing a role in constituting those very territories.

By staking these theoretical orientations, this chapter framed the terms of engagement between the urban literature and the phenomenon of mobile policy in this thesis. Informed by these orientations to the urban, I focus in Chapter 3 on how to conceptualise mobile policy. Drawing on literature from political science and geography, I explore the nature of a geographical and social constructivist ‘policy mobilities’ approach and analyse its theoretical implications.
Chapter three

Conceptualising mobile policy

...
3.1 Introduction

In Chapter 2, I situated my concern with mobile urban policy at the intersection of theoretical debates regarding urban politics and spatiality, arguing that researchers can best approach urban politics by taking seriously the power of structures and institutions but approaching them through an analysis of their contingent and hybrid production, and urban spatiality by attending to scaled and networked relations. This chapter seeks to establish my conceptual approach to mobile policy to complement the urban-theoretical framework developed in Chapter 2.

Noting that most research on mobile policy emanates from political science accounts of ‘policy transfer’, I argue instead for an approach drawing from an interdisciplinary project, one that is “both linked to and critical of the policy transfer literature” (McCann and Ward, 2012b, p. 326). Following Peck (2011b, p. 774, original emphasis) and others, I draw a “distinction between the rational-formalist tradition of work on policy transfer, rooted in orthodox political science, and social-constructivist approaches to policy mobility and mutation, an emergent project with diverse roots in the interdisciplinary zone of ‘critical policy studies’”. Both traditions deal with what we might call the ‘geography of policy movement’, insofar as they seek to understand and explain how, why, where and when policy forms move from place to place, and jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Despite recent claims that “policy transfer studies [in political science] have significantly contributed to our understanding of how the ‘space’ dimension matters” (Dussauge-Laguna, 2012, p. 1), I argue that the political science conception of policy transfer is ill-suited, even incompatible, with the theoretical positions established in Chapter 2. In its rendering of both politics and spatiality, the policy transfer literature sits at odds with foundational dispositions of critical urban geography. In light of this, I align the approach taken in this thesis with work on ‘policy mobilities’, work which aims to push beyond the limitations of policy transfer to form “the basis for a distinctively geographical approach to the problematic of policy mobility-mutation” (Peck, 2011b, p. 774).

To build my case for the policy mobilities approach taken in this thesis, I traverse a number of extant literatures within the social sciences, highlighting their contributions and limitations. Providing a critical assessment of successive political science literatures, Sections 3.2 to 3.4 discuss the concepts of policy diffusion, lesson-drawing and policy transfer respectively. I suggest that, although
refined over time, such work remains problematically wedded to notions of policy-making rationality and inattentive to the way travelling policy knowledge co-constitutes dynamic socio-spatial landscapes and relations. To address these deficiencies, Section 3.5 examines the emergence and character of a ‘policy mobilities’ conceptualisation, assessing its relationship to the theoretical orientations established in Chapter 2. This assessment leads to a conceptualisation of policy mobility as socially constructed, socially practiced and spatially dynamic.

3.2 Diffusionist beginnings
The concept of policy transfer became an interest of political scientists from the late 1990s, emerging from a number of literatures that had variously sought to analyse the relations between governmental jurisdictions and the effect of those relations on policy change. It is commonly conceded that while the process of policy transfer is not new (see Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000, p. 6), transfers have proliferated over time due to the integration of countries into a global economic system, the growth of information and communications technology, and the ascendency of international organisations such as the European Union and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000; Evans, 2004; Levi-Faur and Vigoda-Gadot, 2006). By “subjecting countries to similar pressures and expanding the amount of information available to policy-makers”, it is thought that “policy-makers increasingly look to other political systems for knowledge and ideas about institutions, programs and policies and about how they work in other jurisdictions” (Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000, p. 7). Policy transfers, according to political scientists, are thus increasingly involved in the organisation and transformation of government and public administration.

Before delving into the insights of the policy transfer concept and its impact on recent geographical interventions, it is important to understand policy transfer as an attempt to refine two antecedent concepts: policy diffusion and lesson-drawing. Policy diffusion emerged as a distinct area of inquiry in the 1960s, put to the task of studying patterns of intra-national policy adoption in the context of US federalism. Walker’s (1969) The Diffusion of Innovations Among American States marked out the conceptual ground for policy diffusion analysis as concerning “the relative speed and the spatial pattern of adoption of new
programs, not their invention or creation” (p. 881, original emphasis). Policy diffusion studies seek to map and explain sequential patterning related to the uptake of ‘policy innovations’—defined by Walker (1969, p. 881) as “a program or policy which is new to the state adopting it”—and typically employ statistical methodologies to model when and why certain jurisdictions adopt policies from other jurisdictions. While Walker’s pioneering work concerned diffusion among jurisdictions located within a single national territory, contemporary diffusion studies have increasingly been concerned with patterns among nation-states and have begun to move beyond the statistical focus of traditional diffusion studies (see, for example, Levi-Faur (2005) on the international diffusion of regulatory capitalism, and, likewise, Simmons and Elkins (2004) and Simmons et al (2006) on the diffusion of economic liberalisation policies).

Although the term policy diffusion is often invoked to describe “a process through which policy choices in one country affect those made in a second country”, Marsh and Sharman (2009, pp. 270-271) argue that those researching policy diffusion more often have in mind “a process of interdependent policy convergence”. Here the choices of governments are not just interdependent, whereby “the choice of a government influences the choices made by others and, conversely, the choice of a government is influenced by the choices made by others” (Braun and Gilardi, 2006, p. 299). Rather, those choices are interdependent to the extent that they induce isomorphic convergence, as successive jurisdictions adopt the policies of innovator jurisdictions. Many diffusion studies draw on a model from innovation theory, the S-shaped adoption curve, where a small number of early adopters are followed by a much larger wave of late adopters. For example, Simmons and Elkins’ (2004, p. 174) ‘threshold model of policy adoption’ (see Figure 3.1) recalls the innovation curve and exemplifies a common notion in policy diffusion studies, that “the decision of one or a few countries to join a group of policy pioneers precipitates a generalised rush to emulate” (Marsh and Sharman, 2009, p. 273).

*Figure 3.1: The threshold model of policy adoption.*
Source: Simmons and Elkins (2004, p. 174). Graph relates to the diffusion of economic liberalisation policies.
Two key implications arise from the policy diffusion literature and its focus on modelling convergent patterns of policy adoption. First, policy diffusion studies rely on a treatment of policy adoption as dichotomous, such that a country either has or has not adopted the policy innovation in question (Marsh and Sharman, 2009). While this allows an analyst to simplify the process of policy change for the purposes of statistical interrogation, it necessarily forecloses the possibility of investigating “the scope of change in program adoptions” (Clark, 1985, p. 61) and the processes through which a policy was diffused. Moreover, because policies themselves remain bracketed from investigation, and so too the actors and places involved in diffusion processes, policies are “little more than inert data units, traveling across a landscape marked only by formal jurisdictional boundaries” (Peck, 2011b, p. 776). Traditional diffusion approaches thus offer limited insight into multi-scalar, networked spatialities and peopled practices described as important in Chapter 2.

Second, as a result of its intellectual debts to modernism and neoclassical economic theory, diffusion is thought to result from unrelenting processes of technocratic modernisation and competition, carried along by rational, optimising policy-makers “scanning the ‘market’ for potential policy products” (Peck, 2011b, p. 776). Policy-makers, therefore, operate within a determinate set of decision-rules thought to underwrite optimal outcomes, simultaneously contributing to a process of teleological refinement as one rationally selected policy innovation after another is diffused and adopted. The politically inflected historical-geographical production of ‘common sense’ remains outside the frame of reference for diffusion studies. Neoliberalisation, for example, would be approached as a naturally occurring step toward optimal policy settings, rather than, as I suggested in Chapter 2, a deeply contested, unevenly realised political project.

3.3 Lesson-drawing

By the 1990s, political scientists were looking for a corrective to the dichotomous rendering of policy adoption and rational-teleological overtones associated with diffusion studies. The policy diffusion literature had been primarily interested in the sequence of diffusion, seeking to “identify states or countries that are leaders
and laggards in adopting programmes, and to account for the difference” (Rose, 1991, p. 9), leading Wolman (1992, p. 29, original emphasis) to remark that “we know almost nothing about the process by which such policy transfer occurs”. Rose’s (1991, 1993) work was an early and influential attempt to move beyond the conceptual and theoretical baggage associated with policy diffusion. He sought to explain policy movements by replacing the prior emphasis on pattern with an emphasis on process, in particular what he called lesson-drawing: the process by which policy-makers learn apparently applicable lessons from exogenous sources. Rose (1991, p. 7) refers to lesson-drawing as an “action-oriented conclusion about a programme or programmes in operation elsewhere”, and explains that “the process of lesson-drawing starts with scanning programmes in effect elsewhere, and ends with the prospective evaluation of what would happen if a programme already in effect elsewhere were transferred here in future” (p. 3).

Under this approach, policy movements began to be explained less by emulative, mechanistic adoption of policy innovation and more by the differentiated way that policy-makers source, assimilate and apply knowledge. Rose (1991, p. 9) explicitly fashioned his lesson-drawing approach as a reaction against policy diffusion studies, which he thought “often presuppose a kind of technocratic determinism”, where “the existence of common problems in many places will dictate a common response”. By contrast, the practice of lesson-drawing was more voluntary and volitional. Doing away with the notion that “there must be, or even can be, a common response” (Rose, 1991, p. 9), lesson-drawing centred the policy-maker as “a social engineer seeking knowledge instrumentally” (p. 5). Policy-makers, so the logic dictates, are inherently problem-solvers, abstracting conceptual lessons from the fug of contextual detail, playing-off the advantages and disadvantages of one policy against a range of others. Motivated not by what ought to be done but by what can be done, policy-makers are satisficers “doing what is necessary to dissipate dissatisfaction rather than searching endlessly for ‘ideal’ policy solutions” (Peck, 2011b, p. 777).

Far from the rational, dehumanised policy-maker implied in diffusionist accounts, Rose’s policy-maker is a learning agent operating under conditions of bounded rationality, doing their best at ‘muddling through’ (Dwyer and Ellison, 2009) in politicised territorial contexts. “Purely rational policymakers”, argued
Robertson (1991, p. 57), “would integrate and rank all goals, consider all alternatives and consequences, and select an optimum alternative based on a self-executing calculus of goals, means, and consequences”. Bounded rationality, on the other hand, acknowledges that “decision-making is restricted by human and organisational characteristics resulting in efforts to find solutions that are good enough rather than fully optimal from a perfectly rational viewpoint” (James and Lodge, 2003, pp. 184-185). Although Peck (2011b, p. 778) argues that here “the ghost of the rational actor was never fully exorcised”—a point I return to—lesson-drawing studies did acknowledge that policy-makers operate under cognitive, institutional and political constraints, thwarting the possibility for truly rational decision-making carried out above the territorial fray. For one, policy lessons are themselves “weapons in political conflict” which, despite claims to impartiality, “simplify the premises of complex policy decisions and in doing so … bias the outcome of the policymaking process” (Robertson, 1991, p. 57). By viewing policy learning as a process that is “normatively pre-filtered”, it became “increasingly clear that periodic crises and strategically selected targets presented the means to enact preferred strategies” (Peck, 2011b, p. 778, original emphasis). By relinquishing the grip of the rational policy-maker, lesson-drawing studies provided an important enrichment to issues overlooked by modernist policy diffusion studies. With the turn to process-tracing, they began to open up the phenomenon of mobile policy to less abstract conceptions of political contestation and strategic selectivity in policy-making, of the kind discussed in Chapter 2 regarding urban spatial politics.

3.4 Policy transfer

By the mid-1990s, however, the association of lesson-drawing literature with voluntaristic policy learning began to attract criticism. For Dolowitz and Marsh (1996, p. 344), who framed lesson-drawing as resulting from “the free choices of political actors”, the answer was to typologise lesson-drawing as one element of a larger class of phenomena—policy transfer. Building on lesson-drawing’s turn to process-tracing and continuing the march away from pattern-finding policy diffusion studies, policy transfer was increasingly accepted as a master signifier or ‘umbrella’ concept incorporating a range of terms and concepts that were in common usage (Evans, 2009; Evans and Davies, 1999).
While terms such as emulation, convergence, diffusion and lesson-drawing continue to be littered throughout the political science literature, Dolowitz and Marsh’s (1996) review sought to collect and reconcile many of these terms under the conceptual umbrella of policy transfer, igniting considerable and continued scholarly interest in the concept (as evidenced by recent special issues in *Policy & Politics* (2009), *Policy Studies* (2009), *Political Studies Review* (2012) and *International Journal of Public Administration* (2012)). Their work produced the standard definition of policy transfer: “the process by which knowledge about policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in one political system (past or present) is used in the development of policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in another political system” (Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000, p. 5). Insofar as policy transfer serves as a broad conceptual matrix, it has proven significant for geographical policy mobilities research, opening up possibilities beyond an either/or choice between structuralist policy diffusion and voluntarist lesson-drawing.

Noting how jurisdictions are at times induced and coerced to adopt certain policies, Dolowitz and Marsh (1996, p. 344) claimed that lesson-drawing—wedded, as it is, to voluntarist policy learning—was incapable of dealing with the full range of policy movements. They argued that examples of policy transfer are locatable on a choice-coercion continuum (see Figure 3.2) which, according to Peck (2011b, p. 779) positions “coercive or ‘push’ transfer (involving direct imposition) in an axial relationship with a still-idealized conception of the rational policy actor, freely choosing between well-documented alternatives, with the boundedly rational actor located in between”. Just as they were doubtful of purely voluntary transfers, Dolowitz and Marsh (1996, p. 348) cautioned that the “direct imposition of policy transfer on one country by another is rare”. As Evans (2004, p. 11) points out, direct imposition requires that one government force another “to introduce constitutional, social and political changes against its will and the will of its people”. Under this view, transfers that are in many respects highly coercive, such as the structural adjustment policies of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, are not truly ‘direct impositions’ given that the sovereignty of the adopter country is not overridden. Redolent of the institutional-structural pressures surrounding policy-making described in Chapter 2, policy transfer analysts have emphasised the role of functional and economic interdependence as
well as the emergence of international consensus as factors that induce rather than impose certain policy prescriptions through different modes of coercion. Therefore, in critiquing the improbability of purely voluntary and directly imposed transfers, Dolowitz and Marsh (1996) have helped locate the intervening zone of ‘indirect coercive transfers’ as the centre of gravity for policy transfer studies.

*Figure deleted in accordance with copyright*

**Figure 3.2: The policy transfer choice-coercion continuum.**
Source: Dolowitz and Marsh (2000, p. 13)

The choice-coercion continuum, eponymously known as ‘Dolowitz and Marsh model’, has allowed analysts “to think more systematically about the processes involved” in policy transfer (Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000, p. 13), though it holds subtly steadfast to the rational actor. Despite expanding the fluid zone of bounded rationality and indirect coercion, Peck (2011b, p. 779) argues that the rational actor remains “an ideal-typical presence, as an abstract measure against which ‘less rational’ behaviour is modeled”. Such a view stands in contrast to my concern with how the politicised ‘context of contexts’, rather than standing outside social reality, is actively implicated in the constitution of reality and in turn how policy-making rationality is understood and attempted. This rigidly held notion of the ideal typical rational actor is in part a reflection of dominant intellectual traditions within political science and their approaches to social reality (Benson and Jordan, 2012; McCann and Ward, 2012b). Dolowitz and Marsh (2012, p. 344) note that “most researchers of policy transfer, certainly within political science … operate within a realist ontological and a positivist epistemological position”. Extrapolating from Marsh’s earlier work (Marsh and Furlong, 2002), the dominant political science approach can be summarised as entailing: (1) an ontological commitment to the idea that “the world exists independently of our knowledge of it” (p. 30), and (2) an epistemology broadly analogous to the natural sciences, where the researcher can objectively and directly observe the ‘real’ world, as opposed to a socially constructed world, mediated by theory.
The realist-positivist foundations of political science approaches to policy transfer permit, indeed require, the retention of rationality and in turn the ideal typical rational policy actor. At their most careful, such analyses disentangle the actor from their (bounding) context, recognising imperfect access to knowledge and the role of particular opportunity structures. The implication of this, however, is that, at some level, rational, context-independent policy-making is possible. Realist approaches tend to brush aside the “conditioning fields and institutions, existing pathways and trajectories, which structure the conditions under, and the economies within, which transfer agents operate” (McCann and Ward, 2012b, p. 327). As I will explain shortly, social constructivists have taken issue with this, critiquing any recourse to rationality on the basis that it authorises a problematic separation between policy-actors and their “institutional-ideological milieux” (Peck, 2011b, p. 791). Where a realist perspective holds to the notion that policy-actors can be removed, at least in theory, from the tangle of their institutional-ideological milieu, a social constructivist perspective maintains such a separation is impossible. Realist approaches to policy transfer, therefore, sit at odds with the theoretical positions established in the previous chapter, which had their roots in social constructivism. In addition to being at odds with the political economy-inspired notion that institutions and political projects are inseparable from social reality, establishing and continually re-establishing the ‘context of contexts’ in which policy-making occurs (Brenner et al, 2011), orthodox policy transfer approaches also clash with my utilisation of post-structuralist-inspired insights about the role of multiple rationalities in framing what is perceived as reality. In the context of the theoretical debates central to this research, ontological and epistemological dissonances of this nature make wholesale application of orthodox policy transfer approaches problematic.

Despite its limitations, the policy transfer literature has been helpful to social constructivist policy mobilities research. As suggested by the choice-coercion continuum above, policy transfer research is distinct from previous diffusion and lesson-drawing approaches in its attention toward systematically cataloguing the process of policy transfer. Peck (2011b, p. 779), for example, notes that the policy transfer literature’s core business has been to “exhaustively classify the full range of empirically observed policy transfers”. Although this predilection risks the reification and fetishisation of the categories themselves
(McCann and Ward, 2012b), which I discuss later, such efforts have nonetheless provided important cues for subsequent policy mobilities research, particularly in identifying a suite of actors involved in transferring policy ideas. By attending to the roles and characteristics of various ‘agents of transfer’ (Stone, 1999), a significant proportion of the policy transfer literature focuses on theorising and empirically observing those involved in the transfer of policy. Transfer agents take a variety of forms (including individuals, organisations and networks) and a variety of types (including, but not limited to, politicians, political parties, bureaucrats, government agencies, inter/supranational organisations, expert networks, policy entrepreneurs, think tanks, advocacy groups, journalists, academic researchers and consultants) (Dolowitz and Marsh, 1996, 2000; Stone, 1999). Chiming with the urban literature’s acknowledgement of the dispersal of policy-making functions beyond the realm of government, policy transfer is conceived as a process fundamentally linked to, but not solely colonised by, state actors. Many recent accounts focus, for example, on non- or extra-state transfer agents, such as the European Union (Radaelli, 2000), transnational policy networks (De Jong and Edelenbos, 2007; Legrand, 2012), advocacy groups (Studlar, 2007), and, in particular, think tanks (Marsh and Stone, 2004; Stone, 1996; Stone and Denham, 2004).

While providing insight into the wide array of actors involved in transferring policy, policy transfer studies are often limited by their reliance on rigidly categorised policy actors with fixed subject positions. Particularly pervasive is a sharply drawn distinction between state and non-state actors, both in the type of knowledge such actors are thought to transfer and their role in the policy cycle. Evans and Davies (1999, p. 382) distinguish ‘hard’ forms of codified policy knowledge (ie. policy models/programs) from more diffuse, ‘soft’ forms of policy knowledge (ideas, discourses, concepts). Official state actors, with their capacity to “set the parameters of policy, legitimate the character of public discourse, and endorse the adoption of new programmes” (Stone, 1999, p. 55), are commonly associated with transfers of hard policy knowledge, with their roles concentrated in the decision-making and implementation stages of the policy cycle (see Figure 3.3). Non-state actors, lacking official authority and decision-making capacities, are associated with ‘soft’ transfers, thought to occur during the ‘agenda-setting’ or ‘issue-identification’ stages of the policy cycle (Evans and
Davies, 1999; Stone, 2004). According to Stone (2004, p. 556), non-state actors provide ‘normative resonance’ by “pulling together the symbols, language and ‘cognitive frames’ that portray ‘morally compelling’ issues in a concrete manner to which the public can respond”. Think tanks, for example, “distribute policy advice and intellectual arguments within the political system” (Marsh and Stone, 2004, p. 263), educating policy actors and the public at large as well as providing their expert imprimatur to certain policy ideas. As “a policy develops and moves through the policy cycle”, note Dolowitz and Marsh (2012, p. 341), “new actors and institutions are structurally obliged (and positioned) to become involved in the policy’s development”. Conceptualised in this way, policy transfer studies see transfer agents as having differentiated roles and capacities, associating actor types with distinct stages in the policy cycle.

*Figure 3.3: The policy cycle model.*

Two key implications result from this tendency to categorise and differentiate transfer agents in the policy transfer literature. First, despite an insistence that policy transfer research remain open to a diverse range of transfer agents and forms of policy knowledge, there remains a durable ‘state-centric core’ in the literature (Benson and Jordan, 2011, p. 367). While policy research inevitably requires some level of attention to the state, and those actors identified with it, contemporary shifts involving the incorporation private actors and extra-state institutions into policy-making, as suggested in Chapter 2, make too strong a focus on the state problematic. Moreover, as the methodological discussion in Chapter 4 will make clear, the state itself is not monolithic. Rather, the state is dynamic, peopled with actors whose actions and logics are not reducible to that of a state functionary (Askew, 2009; Mountz, 2003; Painter, 2006). Within the policy transfer literature, this preoccupation with the state has arguably encouraged an emphasis on “directly observable transfers of people, policy instruments or legislation” (Stone, 2004, p. 552), at the expense of more amorphous, less direct forms of transfer—the apparent domain of non-state actors. Stone (1999, 2004) posits that an overemphasis on policy transfer has served to
mask policy-related ‘knowledge transfers’. This inclination, she argues, focuses the “analytical gaze towards the state when it may be that ideas, behaviours, perceptions and discourses are transported and adapted irrespective of state structures” (Stone, 2004, p. 556). This argument is consistent with the urban literature’s acknowledgement that, in the shift from government to governance, the state can no longer be analytically relied upon as the sole, or even preeminent, institutional site at which governing capacity is located.

Second, as the scope of who and what counts in instances of policy transfer has gradually broadened, enduring efforts within the policy transfer literature to categorise and differentiate transfer agents have been undermined. Categories and typologies, which inevitably fix transfer agents into determinate roles and subject positions, struggle to deal with the slippery, dispersed nature of the policy-making process. McCann and Ward (2012b, p. 327, original emphasis) have argued that formalist categorisation runs the risk of reifying and fetishising the categories themselves, such that they become “the objects of debate rather than facilitating analyses of the social processes that constitute policy transfer”. Although adherence to the formalist tradition predominates, some scholars are beginning to acknowledge the problems attending strict delineations between different types of actors and their supposedly fixed roles in transferring policy knowledge (Stone, 2012). Social constructivist approaches, as I will explain shortly, have been particularly sensitive to this tendency in the policy transfer literature.

The formalist focus on state-centred, directly observable ‘policy’ transfers feeds into two other characteristics of policy transfer literature: (1) its dominant national spatial imaginary, and (2) its literal understanding of ‘transfer’. Casual references to ‘countries’ and ‘nations’ as well as ‘domestic’ and ‘foreign’ jurisdictions point to a pervasive national spatial imaginary within policy transfer research. Despite the existence of some important contributions focusing on local government and instances of urban policy transfer (see Mossberger and Wolman, 2003; Wolman and Page, 2002), the literature displays a nation-state-centred conceptualisation of the “institutional geography of policy transfer” (McCann and Ward, 2012b, p. 327). This stands in stark contrast to the theoretical positions I argued for in Chapter 2, which stressed the need for attention toward the relational construction of scales as well as the multi-scalar, networked nature of urban
spatiality and politics. As evidence of the policy transfer spatial imaginary, Evans (2009, p. 243) explicitly defines policy transfer as an approach concerned with “cross-national policy development”, while Stone (2004) identifies a tendency toward ‘methodological nationalism’ borne out of its focus on bilateral policy transfer between nation-states. Dwyer and Ellison (2009, p. 389, original emphasis) note that many studies rely “too heavily on a one-dimensional understanding of international policy transfer” and ignore the possibility that other sources of learning and transfer “are likely to affect policy formulation in any particular national context”.

Conceding that there has been a lack of attention to “transfer between sub-national governments”, Dolowitz and Marsh (2012, p. 343), for their part, do not agree that researchers have overemphasised the nation-state and the national scale, citing extensive research on the EU and international organisations. Perversely, their argument is illustrative of an implicit national imaginary. It would, of course, be an exaggeration to claim the literature has focused exclusively on nation-state actors and policies, but, more subtly, the literature has maintained “a problematic separation between the domestic and the international” (McCann and Ward, 2012b, p. 327), such that actors and policies are locatable within and determined by their national context. This is geography seen through the lens of the nation, albeit one comprised of sub-national and international domains, which, by installing national territory at the centre of its spatial imagination, sidelines the commitment to relationality and multi-scalarity that, in Chapter 2, I argued was crucial for research on mobile urban policy. Accordingly, there have been calls by those outside political science to interrogate what this non-relational spatial framing limits and what might be gained from a “fundamental rethinking of the basic categories and tenets that underpin our understanding of policy transfer” (McCann and Ward, 2012b, p. 327).

Closer examination of the tendency toward bilateral, international policy transfers has also led many to question the assumptions underlying the use of the term ‘transfer’. Redolent of an exchange or transaction, and perpetuated through the use of importer-exporter metaphors in the literature, Page and Mark-Lawson (2007, p. 49) express their concern that policy transfer has come to imply a “process that is straightforward if not involuntary”, entailing the “simple movement of a set of policies from one place to another with no (or limited)
change of state, as the policy can be clearly recognised as an import from another jurisdiction”. Identifying its ‘implicit literalism’, Peck and Theodore (2001, p. 449) have critiqued the policy transfer literature on the basis that it “tends to suggest the importation of fully formed, off-the-shelf policies, when in fact the nature of this process is much more complex, selective, and multilateral”. In line with the theoretical dispositions outlined in Chapter 2, this suggests that greater attention be given to the contingent, contextual and relational processes through which policy travels and, following governmentality researchers, to the problematisations and politicisations that give rise to such activities.

To the extent that the policy transfer literature acknowledges such complexity, it identifies different ‘degrees of transfer’: copying, emulation, hybridisation and inspiration (Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000; Evans, 2009). Copying, the “rarest form of policy-oriented learning”, is “where a governmental organization adopts a policy, programme or institution without modification” (Evans, 2009, p. 245). Emulation is where one policy “provides the best standard for designing a policy, programme or institution at home” (p. 246). Hybridisation, the “most typical form of policy-oriented learning”, “is where a governmental organization combines elements of programmes found in several settings to develop a policy that is culturally sensitive to the needs of the recipient” (p. 246). And finally, inspiration is where “an idea inspires fresh thinking about a policy problem and helps to facilitate policy change” (p. 246).

Categorising so-called degrees of transfer is useful to a point, as it allows for the identification of different ways that transfer agents use forms of policy knowledge in policy development. However, this categorisation is unable to come to grips with the way policies are transformed through their translation. Conceiving transfer as a question of degree mandates the fundamental immutability of policy ideas as they travel, while presuming policy development will correspond neatly to one or another of the sharply defined categories. Such a conception has also coincided with a tendency to identify mainly explicit changes to the characteristics of a formal policy program or model, overlooking informal and less explicit changes occurring in tandem with and in support of formal instances of policy transfer. Largely ignored, too, is the role of policy transfer in reshaping, not merely reacting to, wider institutional contexts and local territorial politics. Although it has long been noted that “the process of modification in
transfer requires closer attention” (Stone, 1999, p. 57), only recently have political scientists begun to heed this call. Recognising that “transfer does not create a cryogenically preserved policy forever more”, Stone (2012, p. 7) remarks on emergent interdisciplinary research that has “criticised the rationalist underpinnings of early transfer approaches and instead stress[es] the complexity of context [and the need for] interpretation or experimentalism … in the assemblage of policy” (p. 5). She refers to this work as a ‘nascent third generation’ of policy transfer research, after earlier policy diffusion (first generation) and traditional political science policy transfer approaches (second generation).

Geographers, whose work exemplifies the nascent third generation to which Stone refers, have been particularly critical of the terminology of transfer, questioning the utility of the transfer metaphor in light of its literalist connotations (McCann, 2011b; McCann and Ward, 2011, 2012b; Peck, 2011b; Peck and Theodore, 2010a). Many of them would agree with Peck (2011b, p. 774) on his point that conceptualisations must be “much more attentive to the constitutive sociospatial context of policy-making activities, and to the hybrid mutations of policy techniques and practices across dynamized institutional landscapes”. Accordingly, there has been a shift away from policy ‘transfer’, with its spatiality of simple, transactional policy movement, toward a conception that, on one hand, grasps how the “form and effects” of certain policies are “transformed by their journeys” (Peck, 2011b, p. 793, original emphasis), and on the other, how the journeys of policy “serve continuously to remake relational connections across an intensely variegated and socio-institutional landscape”.

Such an approach owes certain debts to the orthodox political science work on diffusion, lesson-drawing and policy transfer, particularly in the way that this work has put the process of transfer ‘on the map’ and gestured toward a diversity of policy actors and forms of transfer. For those operating within social constructivist traditions however, policy transfer’s rationalist-formalist approach obscures as much as it illuminates, necessitating the development of a different approach. This point of distinction has been most clearly signalled by the adoption of a new term, ‘policy mobilities’. Given the theoretical focus of this thesis—the grounded, constitutive and relational socio-spatial processes surrounding urban politics and urban spatiality—alignment with the policy transfer approach is, at
the very least, unduly limiting. To provide greater analytical purchase on the urban-theoretical debates presented in Chapter 2, the following elaborates my conceptual approach to policy mobility. I argue that a policy mobilities approach offers the best way of activating my concerns for the way institutions, structures and their effects are practiced and contingently realised through the process of urban policy-making, as well as the multiple, dynamic spatialities involved in the production of the urban.

3.5 Policy mobilities

To speak of a geographical approach to the phenomenon of mobile policy is to speak of a number of affiliated projects, together representing a “rolling conversation rather than a coherent paradigm” (Peck, 2011b, p. 774). Just as political scientists have oscillated between metaphors of diffusion, lesson-drawing and transfer, the organising metaphors of this approach have centred on notions of assemblage, mutation and mobilities (McCann and Ward, 2012b; Peck, 2011b; Peck and Theodore, 2010a). These metaphors bridge approaches with different theoretical allegiances, notably political economy approaches and more thoroughly post-structural ones, and at times they do so uneasily, particularly in relation to debates about the usefulness of assemblage (Brenner et al, 2011; McCann, 2011c; McFarlane, 2011b; Prince, 2010c; Tonkiss, 2011). Among this suite of post-transfer research, McCann’s (2008, 2011b) notion of ‘policy mobilities’ has emerged as a concept with particular resonance, around which much research has gravitated.

But if the turn to policy mobilities signifies a departure from policy transfer, what, beyond the change in terminology, does a policy mobilities approach entail? This is answerable in part by looking at the theoretical projects motivating geographical interest in mobile policy. Drawing on reviews by Clarke (2012) and Prince (2012b), three overlapping strands of theoretical engagement can be identified. The first strand, epitomised by authors such as Peck and Theodore (Peck, 2002, 2011b; Peck and Theodore, 2001, 2010b), uses policy mobility as an entry-point into understanding hegemonic political-economic settlements. Seen through the lens of neoliberalisation, this work asks what the process of policy mobilisation can reveal about the political-economic context in which policy-making happens and how that context is processually reconstituted.
Key to their argument is the notion of ‘fast policy’, which concerns two mutually reinforcing processes: (1) the rapid circulation of neoliberal policy prescriptions through global policy networks, and (2) the establishment of rule regimes circumscribing the scope of regulatory intervention to neoliberal imperatives. The process of policy mobilisation is a window, on the one hand, into what is made allowable in certain political-economic contexts and, on the other, into how those contexts are consolidated, resisted and contested. This strand has strong links with the political economy approach to neoliberalisation discussed in Chapter 2.

The second strand of theoretical engagement, epitomised by authors such as McCann and Ward (McCann, 2008, 2011b; McCann and Ward, 2011; Ward, 2006, 2011b) approaches policy mobility as a means of understanding the production of places and territories through global-relational connections. Chiming with my previous argument for a relational approach to urban politics and spatiality, their work builds on earlier arguments for an understanding of geography as emerging dialectically from the productive tension between fixity and flow (Harvey, 1982) as well as that between grounded territories and globally-extensive relations (Massey, 2005). This approach sees the process of policy mobilisation as part of the production of places and territories amid cross-cutting relations connecting people, sites and places. Much of this work has focused on the circulation of urban policies, such as Business Improvement Districts (Cook, 2008; Cook and Ward, 2012a; Ward, 2006, 2007, 2011a), harm reduction drug policy (McCann, 2008, 2011b) and creativity-based economic development (Peck, 2011a, 2012).

While attending to the relational character of policy, this strand of work also emphasises the way policies are ‘placed’, pointing to the importance of territorial narratives that script policy success, encapsulated in labels like ‘Vancouverism’ for sustainable urban design (McCann and Ward, 2010), and the ‘Bilbao effect’ (McNeill, 2009) for statement-architecture-led regeneration. As Prince (2012b, p. 192) notes, through such place-based experiences and narratives:

policies can be packaged into forms amenable to travel and translation on policy circuits, out of which they can be refixed elsewhere, often with different results, and occasionally resulting in a new, mutated policy approach for release back onto the circuit.
Here policy mobility illuminates the way places and their politics are produced through the nexus of the immobile and the mobile, the territorial and the relational.

The final strand of theoretical engagement is found in work focusing on policy-making and policy mobilities as socio-material assemblages. This research is reflective of efforts to ‘rematerialise geography’ (Robbins and Marks, 2010) as well as more widespread initiatives to destabilise the social as a self-evident and exclusively human domain in favour of seeing the social as something produced through the assemblage of overlapping and dynamic more-than-human networks (cf. Deleuze and Guattari, 2004 [1987]; Haraway, 1997; Latour, 2005). Most pronounced in the approaches of Prince (2010a, 2010b, 2010c, 2012a, 2012b) and McFarlane (2010, 2011a), though also evident in McCann’s (2008, 2011b) governmentality inspired accounts, this strand of policy mobilities research “considers how particular kinds of connections are forged before, during and after policy transfer to form sociomaterial assemblages in which particular policies are (successfully or unsuccessfully) realized” (Prince, 2012b, pp. 192-193). This strand of research is interested in the interplay of the contingent and the structural in mobilising policy, reflecting the poststructuralist orientation advocated in the previous chapter.

Under this approach, policy mobility is decentred as a solely human endeavour, acknowledging that policy actors’ intentionality is dependent on their engagements with certain materials (policy documents, press releases, websites, manuals) and sites (study tours, meetings, conferences) which shape the characteristics and outcomes of the policy process. This approach is also concerned with how policy mobility is related to technical systems. For Prince (2012b, p. 193), policy mobility is dependent on the construction and maintenance of enduring relations which often necessitates “the abstraction of disparate and distant objects from their social context in technical systems in which they can be lined up, compared, contrasted and made commensurable” (see also Ward, 2011b). While such techniques importantly provide the basis for policy to be translated and mobilised, they are also involved in the production of problematisations—the framing and articulation of policy problems—which ‘educate the attention’ of policy-makers (McFarlane, 2011a; Temenos and
McCann, 2012), priming them to look toward certain policy approaches and certain places as examples of apparent best-practice.

Extrapolating from the literature just outlined, we can isolate a set of core propositions in geographical research on policy mobilities. In the remainder of this section, I identify and discuss three such propositions, explaining their usefulness in the context of this research: first, an ontological and epistemological commitment to policy, policy-making, and policy mobility as socially constructed; second, the acknowledgement that policy mobility is an innately socialised practice incorporating host of political actors embedded in social, institutional and material contexts; and third, the recognition of policy mobility as a dynamic, plural spatial process. In contrast to political science approaches to policy transfer, these propositions, forming the basis of my policy mobilities approach, allow for better dialogue between the conceptual domain of mobile policy and the urban-theoretical middle paths established in Chapter 2.

3.5.1 Policy as socially constructed

Perhaps the most consequential proposition advanced by the policy mobilities literature relates not to policy mobility per se but to ontological and epistemological commitments and their implication for how one conceives of policy and policy-making. Unlike the realist-positivist stance of political scientists, policy mobilities research is social constructivist in its outlook. This amounts, ontologically, to an insistence that social reality does not exist independent of interpretation and, epistemologically, tasks researchers with understanding the world through the cognitive, textual and representational interpretations of research subjects. Social constructivist analyses of policy, or what Peck (2011b) refers to as interdisciplinary ‘critical policy studies’, have become increasingly apparent in the fields of sociology, anthropology, planning and geography, though in political science and public policy studies it remains a minority position. The realist-positivist foundations of orthodox policy studies have come under sustained critique from social constructivists, particularly for conceiving of policy in instrumental-rational terms. Shore and Wright (2011, p. 6), for example, note the prevalence of “positivistic models of perfect or bounded rationality in which economic actors pursue purposeful goals, decision makers make fully informed strategic choices and analysts measure policy effects in terms
of calculable costs and benefits”. Seen as neutral and rational, policy is thus “a mere tool that serves to unite means and ends or bridge the gap between goals and their execution” (Wedel et al, 2005, p. 37). The implication here is one of reification and ‘creeping normativity’, as studies attempt to manage a “complicated interplay of factors by making them appear to follow a logical sequence of linear steps” (Shore and Wright, 1997, p. 15). Likewise, in the context of the policy transfer literature’s preoccupation with models and typologies, McCann and Ward (2012b) have expressed concern that such activities run the risk of becoming stand-ins for reality rather than heuristic devices that knowingly simplify the complex social phenomenon of policy transfer/mobility.

Social constructivists have concerned themselves with understanding policy as domain in which particular claims on what is real are fought out. Speaking of an anthropological approach to policy, Wedel et al (2005, p. 35) see the task of social constructivist policy studies as “understanding how policy functions in the shaping of society” and to “expose the political effects of allegedly neutral statements about reality” (p. 37). They claim that such an approach allows for an investigation of how “taken-for-granted assumptions channel policy debates in certain directions, inform the dominant ways policy problems are identified, enable particular classifications of target groups, and legitimise certain policy solutions while marginalizing others” (p. 34). As Chapter 5 will show in relation to the constitution of chronic homelessness as a ‘problem of government’, policies arise from and reflect historically and geographically-specific ‘policy worlds’ (Shore and Wright, 2011), while simultaneously reconstituting those worlds and edging them in different directions. Where orthodox policy transfer studies isolate policy processes by “holding the rest of the world still” (Prince, 2012b, p. 191), social constructivist accounts are intent on locating policy as situated, contested and constitutive of the social world, chiming with the theoretical positions established in the previous chapter.

The ‘politics’ of policy does not, therefore, start and finish with the machinations of political systems and formal processes. Because social constructivism holds to the notion that reality is apprehended through interpretations, which are innately partial, selective and oftentimes strategically deployed, policy comprises a zone of political contestation where “new
rationalities of governance and regimes of knowledge and power” (Shore and Wright, 2011, p. 2) are created and consolidated. It is the job of social constructivist analyses to understand: how such rationalities and regimes problematise certain issues and target groups; what types of knowledge and actors are privileged; what types of policy solutions are called forth; and, how policy-making shapes and is shaped by sedimented institutions and rule regimes.

Framed as such, policy mobilities researchers have resisted reducing the policy-making process to ideal models and typologies. Instead they have focused attention on how “particular notions of legitimate knowledge, expertise, authority and ‘common sense’ … are valorized in a particular social formation at a particular time” (Prince, 2012b, p. 194). On this fundamental level, the constructivism of policy mobilities research recasts policy as something inescapably political, exhorting us “to think about both what exactly is being constructed and the foundations they are being constructed on” (Prince, 2012b, p. 194). Connecting with the theoretical positions established in Chapter 2, I aim to approach the shifting, politicised foundations on which policy is mobilised through post-structural political economy analysis, focusing on the creation and maintenance of contingent, hybrid problematisations, while attending to the role of ideological-institutional path dependency. Like McFarlane (2011a, p. 118), I focus on mobile policy to investigate “how policies are framed and translated through ideological alignments and power relations, and … how knowledge is transformed through messy realities of local histories and concerns, embodied practices and materialities”. This framing of mobile policy resonates with my theoretical approach and its emphasis on the peopled, contingent, institutionalised, and, above all, co-constitutive relations between policy-making, urban politics and urban spatiality.

3.5.2 Policy mobility as socially practiced

As its name suggests, the concept of policy mobilities draws down from the broader ‘mobilities’ turn in sociology and geography (Cresswell, 2006, 2012; Sheller and Urry, 2007; Urry, 2010 (2000)). This body of work, while theoretically and empirically heterogeneous, is centrally “concerned with the diverse mobilities of peoples, objects, images, information, and wastes; and of the complex interdependencies between, and social consequences of, these diverse
mobilities” (Urry, 2010 (2000), pp. 347-348). For some, an attention to mobilities must lead to a fundamental rethink of social ontology, replacing extant ‘sedentarist’ tendencies, which install stasis as the ontological bedrock of the social world, with a social ontology of incessant human and non-human mobilities (Adey, 2009; Sheller and Urry, 2007; Urry, 2010 (2000)). This scholarship also advances a more moderate claim, that mobility has received short-shrift within the social sciences, treated “as a black box, a neutral set of technologies and processes predominantly permitting forms of economic, social, and political life that are seen as explicable in terms of other, more causally powerful processes” (Hannam et al, 2006, p. 4). In response, mobilities researchers have been adept at investigating the practice and social significance of mobilities, the role of different types of mobilities (Adey, 2009; Cresswell, 2006; Sheller and Urry, 2007; Urry, 2004)—from the mundane and seemingly insignificant (eg. commuting) to the grand and highly visible (eg. aeronautics) (Binnie et al, 2007)—as well as the co-constitutive role of immobilities or ‘moorings’ (Hannam et al, 2006).

McCann’s (2008, 2011b) work has done the most to connect the phenomenon of mobile policy with the mobilities turn. Arguing that policy transfer research has been culpable of focusing on ‘desocialised movement’ (using Cresswell’s (2001) phrase), he sees the movement of policy as a “social process operating through and constitutive of social space”, which is inseparable from a host of ‘socialised mobility practices’ (McCann, 2011b, p. 117). McCann suggests that an under-appreciation of the social nature of policy mobilities has meant that many accounts overlook what happens to policies and the places and actors involved in their mobilisation ‘along the way’, in the process of travel. His conceptualisation, by contrast, emphasises the “activities, co-presences, and learning opportunities that emerge in the spaces of travel, as well as the microspaces of persuasion that situate and inform policy oriented travel and learning” (p. 117). McCann’s (p. 122) analyses also take into account how policy mobilities are “produced by the social, spatial, institutional, ideological, and political contexts in which they are developed, applied, transferred, and adopted”. The mobility of any particular policy, then, is predicated on a host of socialised practices, sites and contexts that must be analysed if one is to understand why and how policy moves. This perspective, empirically illustrated in Chapters 6 and 7 in particular, calls for close analyses of socialised practices of teaching and learning.
practices in mobilising policy, and attention to the way *embodiment* and contextual-institutional *embeddedness* shape the nature and potential of teaching and learning.

In *Learning the City*, McFarlane (2011a) warns against the taken-for-granted view of learning as the means by which an individual acquires knowledge. Instead he claims that learning should be understood as related to socialised, embodied experience, associated with “specific processes, practices and interactions through which knowledge is created, contested and transformed, and for how perception emerges and changes” (p. 3). “Rather than being confined to the individual”, McFarlane (p. 3) frames learning as a process “distributed through relations between people-materials-environment”. In repositioning learning away from the notion of an instrumentalised individual, sealed-off from social influence, this argument resonates with common understandings among policy mobilities authors who have preferred to see the learning activities of policy actors as part of an embodied, socio-spatially distributed process. For McCann and Ward (2012b, p. 329), for example, “the spaces and times of travel are not ‘dead’ or unimportant”, and thus “should be taken seriously as playing a role in shaping policy knowledge”.

Sympathetic to these sentiments, a number of authors have set about analysing the spaces within which policy-makers do their learning. This work emphasises that while policy-makers are increasingly able to learn at a distance—through email, websites, YouTube videos, etc—such activities “also depend on the intermittent co-presence of those actors in specific places like conferences [and] site-visits” (McCann and Ward, 2012b, p. 329) (see also Hannam et al, 2006; Urry, 2002). Attention to the role of physical and virtual forms of learning has led to investigations into, on the one hand, how and why various types of policy tourism (Cook and Ward, 2011; Gonzalez, 2011; Ward, 2011a) appear to remain important, and, on the other, how policy actors learn at-a-distance via their engagements with a range of materials and technical systems (Prince, 2010b, 2010c) such as reports, best practice guides, and performance indicators. Learning is viewed as a translatable, selective and necessarily partial process whereby policy actors learn *through* these experiences and materials—or as McFarlane (2011a) has put it, learning is the development of ‘situated seeing’, where one’s policy consciousness emerges via engagements with particular materials, people and
environments. In Chapters 5 to 7, I apply this perspective on embodied, social learning by tracing the materials, people and environments involved in the implementation of the Common Ground model in Australian cities.

Yet, while learning is done by embodied actors, those actors are also embedded in specific contexts and in networks of association that channel learning potential. Gonzalez’s (2011) study of Bilbao and Barcelona as urban policy tourism destinations, for example, underscores one important aspect of policy learning and its context-dependencies. She explains how carefully planned study tour itineraries and stylised narratives of success, “with none or very little engagement with more critical and alternative voices” (p. 1413), formed the basis for policy tourists’ understandings of such places and their policies, translating an always more complex situation into a tailored, selective vision. Peck and Theodore (2010a, p. 170) make a similar point, noting that policy actors operate in shifting ‘fields of practice’, heavily intermediated by a range of interests, around which policy teaching and learning is moulded. Such observations resonate with my focus on hegemonic ‘common senses’ associated with political economy approaches to urban politics, as well as the production of ‘regimes of truth’ associated with post-structuralist governmentality accounts. For both approaches, the potential lessons available to policy actors are, to a large degree, the product of the position of those actors in certain networks and knowledge communities whose composition is prone to organisational and political change. On this point, McCann (2011b, p. 121) highlights the ‘stratification’ and conditioning of mobility brought about by uneven “access to resources and by one’s identity (classed, racialized, gendered, etc.) as well as by one’s embeddedness in particular institutional and political contexts that define a constrained set of potential pathways for action”. Peck (2011b, pp. 791-792, original emphasis) neatly summarises the embedded nature of learning, stating that the policy landscape is sharply contoured and striated, in the form of shifting landscapes of conjunctural openings and preferred channels … These intensely contested and deeply constitutive contexts, which have their own histories and geographies, shape what is seen, and what counts, in terms of policy innovations, preferred models, and best practices.

There is not, then, a smooth plane across which policy actors teach and learn, rather, as political economy perspectives have emphasised, institutions, structures,
and the path dependencies they induce, create uneven relational geographies which must be recognised in any policy mobilities account.

The acknowledgement that learning is both embodied and embedded is crucial to a policy mobilities approach, serving to focus attention on the socio-material atmospheres inhabited by policy actors and the way learning potential is structured by the “local conditions and institutional contexts in which the various transfer agents are embedded” (McCann, 2011b, p. 118). In contrast to policy transfer research, which envisages policy learning in terms of singular rationality, or bounded rationality owing to a lack of complete information, policy mobilities studies insist on rationality as plural and emergent, dependent on particular social-material-institutional practices and situations.

3.5.3 Policy mobility as a spatial process

The third and final proposition characterising the policy mobilities approach shifts us from the realm of the social to that of the spatial. Taking issue with the spatial foundations of orthodox policy transfer research—which suggest that policy moves through static, transactional transfers across defined (often national) jurisdictional boundaries—policy mobilities accounts conceive of policy movement in terms of spatial multiplicity and dynamism. On spatial multiplicity, Peck and Theodore (2010a) warn against what they perceive to be a narrow, formalist understanding of spatiality in political science accounts preoccupied with the spatial primacy of state territories. “The spatiality of policymaking”, they argue, should not be conceived as an

almost-featureless and inert plane or transaction space, marked only with jurisdictional boundaries, across which transfers occur, but in terms of a three-dimensional mosaic of increasingly reflexive forms of governance, shaped by multi-directional forms of cross-scalar and interlocal policy mobility (p. 170).

Policy-making tends to be viewed as a complex assemblage of components that are not easily located within state territory despite the influences running across and through such territories (McCann, 2011c; McCann and Ward, 2012b; McFarlane, 2011a; Prince, 2010c). “Contemporary policy-making processes”, Peck (2011b, p. 773) claims, “have promiscuously spilled over jurisdictional boundaries, both ‘horizontally’ (between national and local political entities) and ‘vertically’ (between hierarchically scaled institutions and domains)”, pointing to
a diverse set of spatialities influencing the mobilisation of policy. This observation reinforces the need, as I argued in Chapter 2, to attend to spatiality in its scaled and networked permutations.

In addition to spatiality being seen as multiple and overlapping, policy mobilities researchers hold to the belief that space, like society, is produced dialectically (see Lefebvre, 1991). Thus, rather than acting as a passive backdrop, space plays an active part in the constitution of the social world. As the discussion of the relational production of urban territory in Chapter 2 suggested, space is dynamic, not static. Adherence to such a view of spatiality has led geographers to question the common metaphors associated with policy transfer (McCann, 2008, 2011b, 2011c; McCann and Ward, 2011; Peck, 2011b; Peck and Theodore, 2010a). The metaphors of transfer and diffusion, connoting transactional A-to-B movement of an immutable policy form, have tended to accompany accounts that have little interest in acknowledging the possibility for change to happen before, during and after the process of transfer. Under this view, instances of policy transfer are considered to be analytically separable from their constitutive socio-spatial contexts. In contrast, geographical policy mobilities accounts see the movement of policy knowledge in active terms, shaped by and shaping the relational-territorial production of space.

Accordingly, policy mobilities research “call[s] attention to the dialectical reconstruction of policy landscapes” (Peck, 2011b, p. 793). Insofar as they reconstitute the policy landscape, policy movements have profound spatial impacts, reshaping scalar and networked geographies. As Peck (2011b, p. 793) notes, mobile policies “dynamically reconstitute the terrains across which they travel, at the same time as being embedded within, if not products of, extralocal regimes and circuits”. Such an acknowledgement has led policy mobilities authors to abandon notions of transfer in favour of mutation. In part, this is because policy-making is an inherently ‘local’ endeavour. “It is something of a truism”, Peck and Theodore (2010a, p. 170) claim, “that policy development and delivery are characteristically grounded processes, and the impact of policies is likewise contextually specific”. Mobilising policy is, therefore, about extrapolating an innately context-dependent policy experience into a form with apparently context-independent features, then “translating [the] general model into something that makes sense to those with territorial remits” (Ward, 2011b, p. 81). This, as
Chapter 7 explores, is a process that inevitably entails mutation, both in the
process of extrapolating a ‘model’ and in applying that model to different local
contexts. Though, as McCann and Ward (2012b, p. 329) note, it is not only the
mobilised policy that changes; “the places, institutions and communities through
which policies pass are also changed as policies move”. While policy mobilities
are influenced by scaled and networked relations coursing through particular
places, institutions and people, they are simultaneously involved in re-wiring
those relations, establishing and severing connections to produce new spatial
formations. In positioning the movements of policy as part of the ongoing socio-
spatial reconstruction of the policy landscape, such a perspective has clear
resonances with my approach to urban spatiality outlined in Chapter 2, while
notably standing in contradistinction to policy transfer research, which has
traditionally seen space as static and inert. Considering my previous arguments for
analysing the mobility of urban policy to theorise the relational-territorial
spatiality of the city, the policy mobilities literature, therefore, offers a more
nuanced and theoretically consonant conceptualisation to apply in this research.

3.6 Conclusion
To activate the urban-theoretical framework established in Chapter 2, I have
argued for a conceptualisation of mobile policy stemming from the geographical
and social constructivist literature on ‘policy mobilities’. To build my case, this
chapter offered a critical assessment of the political science literatures on policy
diffusion, lesson-drawing and policy transfer, showing that, in the context of this
thesis, the political science literature displays significant shortcomings. These
include: latent expectations of rational behaviour on the part of policy actors; a
tendency to treat transfer in literal terms; a spatial imaginary dominated by the
national scale; over-emphasis on official state actors; and, a lack of appreciation
of the co-constitutive role policy mobility plays in the production of political
space. In relation to the urban-theoretical orientations established in Chapter 2, I
argued that traditional political science approaches to mobile policy are ill-suited,
and in some respects incompatible, with the understandings of urban politics and
spatiality utilised and explored in this thesis.

In reaction, this chapter sought direction from the geographical literature
on policy mobilities to better understand the achievement and contestation of
political projects, the relational production of places and territories, and the socio-materiality of governance and policy. Drawing from policy mobilities scholarship, my conceptualisation emphasises: the socially constructed nature of policy; the importance of socialised practices incorporating a host of political actors embedded in social, institutional and material contexts; and, the dynamic, plural and processual spatiality of policy mobility. Given the political and spatial ‘middle paths’ advocated in Chapter 2, with their emphasis on relationality, practice and the contingency of structure, the policy mobilities approach outlined in this chapter offers the most fruitful way of addressing the urban-theoretical concerns driving this thesis.

With the theoretical and conceptual foundations established, there are pressing methodological questions about urban policy mobilities research which have not yet been broached. In Chapter 4, I turn to discuss the implications of doing research at the urban-global interface in general and on policy mobilities in particular. In doing so, I elaborate on the empirical case at the centre of this thesis and explain the methodological philosophy, practices and techniques used.
Chapter four

Apprehending mobile urban policy
4.1 Introduction
Issues of methodology have been central to the direction and contribution of this thesis. Indeed, the initial motivation for exploring the global travels of urban policy stemmed from a methodological problematic: the challenge of how to trace policy across space. Yet recent contributions have highlighted a range of different ways one might respond to the methodological challenge of mobile policy-making (Cochrane and Ward, 2012; Freeman, 2012; McCann, 2011c; McCann and Ward, 2012a; Peck and Theodore, 2012a; Roy, 2012). In light of my theorisation of urban politics, spatiality, and policy mobility provided in Chapters 2 and 3, in this chapter I develop a qualitative methodological approach framed around the concept of ‘assemblage’. I claim that an assemblage methodology equips researchers with tools to uncover and interpret the multitude of practices, processes, actors, sites and scales, which are enrolled in, and constitutive of, policy mobility, while also maintaining an awareness of the researcher’s situated role in the production of knowledge.

The chapter is divided into four main sections. Section 4.2 outlines the nature of the empirical case at the core of this thesis: the implementation of the Common Ground model in Australian cities. I argue that focusing on how a mobile policy program was ‘arrived at’ (Robinson, 2013) in Australian cities profoundly influences the constitution of the research and the type of urban policy mobility account provided. Section 4.3 discusses my use of assemblage as a methodological framework. I focus in particular on the way it focuses attention on the multiple, processual and practiced nature of policy and policy-making, and the emphasis placed on the researcher’s role as an agent of assemblage. In Section 4.4, discussion turns to the research practices employed to activate an assemblage methodology in the context of research on urban policy mobilities, namely: ethnographic ambition; a shift from enclosed research sites to relational situations; and the following of mobile people, policies and places. Section 4.5 focuses on the practical concerns of method, outlining the collection and nature of the data used, and the means of analysis.

4.2 Arriving at Common Ground
By focusing on an observable ‘case’ of urban policy mobility, this thesis follows a path established by existing policy mobilities research, where case study
approaches have been the norm (Clarke, 2012; Cochrane and Ward, 2012; Cook, 2008; Gonzalez, 2011; McCann, 2008; McCann and Ward, 2011; Peck and Theodore, 2010a; Temenos and McCann, 2012; Ward, 2006). For social scientific research more generally, case studies have become an extensively used methodological approach (Chadderton and Torrance, 2011; Flyvbjerg, 2007; Ruddin, 2006; Yin, 2003), particularly with interrelated post-structuralist, post-modern, cultural and qualitative turns and their emphasis on the granular, socially-constructed and, for some, performative nature of the social world (Ruming, 2009). In geography, Crang’s (2002) tentative proposition, over a decade ago, that qualitative research may represent a ‘new orthodoxy’, is now beyond doubt.

If there is a common thread connecting otherwise disparate case study approaches it is a commitment to the notion that understanding is gained through the particular (Baxter, 2010). For Castree (2005), this view reflects an ‘epistemology of particulars’, the belief that knowledge is best acquired and produced by attending to differences and similarities among concrete cases. Clifford Geertz, a pioneer of in-depth qualitative research, did much to point out the awkwardness of abstract, predictive theory, with its inherent universals and generalisations, in accounting for the messiness and particularity of the ‘real life’ he encountered in field research. To him, the field was a “powerful disciplinary force: assertive, demanding, even coercive” (quoted in Flyvbjerg, 2007, p. 428), that threw into doubt the certainties of grand theoretical gestures. Many of those involved in case study research have similar concerns to Geertz. Wary of moving from the concrete to the abstract too quickly, they seek “to identify and describe before trying to analyse and theorize” (Chadderton and Torrance, 2011, p. 53). For Flyvbjerg (2007), the field’s ‘disciplinary force’—its ability to fray theoretical certainties—points to the impossibility of a truly predictive, universal theory in the study of human affairs. Without viable context-independent theory, social science has “nothing else to offer than concrete, context-dependent knowledge”, to which case study research is “especially well suited” (Flyvbjerg, 2007, p. 422).

Although case study researchers would reject the notion of universal theory, this does not mean inferences are impossible. Despite routine protestations over the dubious ability of case study accounts to enable generalisation—owing to their specificity, partiality and the trappings of their apparent subjectivity—many maintain that case studies offer the opportunity for a certain type of generalisation
Cities from elsewhere

(Baxter, 2010; Chadderton and Torrance, 2011; Flyvbjerg, 2007; Ruddin, 2006). While case studies certainly fall short of formal generalisation steeped in scientific and statistical traditions, this does not exclude them from “enter[ing] into the collective process of knowledge accumulation in a given field or in a society” (Flyvbjerg, 2007, p. 424). What case studies offer are opportunities for ‘case inference’ (Ruddin, 2006) based on analytical generalisations (Baxter, 2010). Flyvbjerg (2007) argues that strategic case study selection and design has a significant role in enabling analytical generalisations to be made, demonstrating how different case study types are suited to certain analytical purposes. For instance, when the objective is to maximise the analytical utility of information from a given case, Flyvbjerg (2007, p. 425) argues that an atypical or extreme case is likely to be appropriate, because such cases “activate more actors and more basic mechanisms in the situation studied”.

For Peck and Theodore (2012a, p. 28), “research sites should be identified with a view to troubling theory, placing stress on its basic premises and foundational claims”. In this vein, the case study used in this research was not selected with the intention of its being a representative example of urban policy-making. Instead, the Australian implementation of the Common Ground model represents what Flyvbjerg (2007) terms a ‘critical case’, a case that promises to activate ‘more actors and more basic mechanisms’ associated with urban policy mobility than a ‘representative case’ might have allowed. By focusing on an explicitly mobile policy idea—a model with a conspicuous New York City ancestry being implemented in Australian cities—this research has been able to access the phenomenon of policy mobility at a time of particular intensity. By selecting such a case, my hope was that the phenomenon of policy mobility would be more vividly available, which would, in turn, provide purchase on debates about contemporary urban politics and spatiality in general, and policy mobility in particular.

Given the nature of the case study, it is important to point out that this thesis does not focus on the mobilisation of a homelessness policy as such. Rather, it focuses on the appearance in Australian cities of a particular programmatic response to homelessness, or policy program. If policy denotes a statement of strategic intent with directives for action, then programs are the frameworks employed to help realise those policy intentions. The separation between policy
and program, however, is not self-evident. As I will demonstrate in Chapter 5, strategic directions in homelessness policy have been shaped in the context of programmatic responses and vice versa. So, while this thesis takes the mobilisation of a programmatic response—the Common Ground model—as its entry point, it also aims to elucidate the relationship between the implementation of Australian programs based on the Common Ground model and the shifting strategic landscape of homelessness policy that such programs shape and reshape.

It is important to point out, too, that my interest is not in the global mobility of the Common Ground model per se: that is, how it ‘arrived in’ places. Instead, following Robinson (2013), my focus is on how the Common Ground model was ‘arrived at’ from the particular perspective of Australian cities. By approaching policy mobilities through the lens of grounded places, “the effective work of the urban in relation to elsewhere—its mediating function”—can be better understood (Robinson, 2013, p. 9). The case study presented here is designed to provide an account of how policy ‘elsewheres’ were made present and actionable in Australian cities by attending to the explicit mobility of the Common Ground model. As will be shown across Chapters 5 to 7, focusing on how Australian cities ‘arrived at’ Common Ground has meant going beyond the model itself, tracing connections that would otherwise have been missed had my optic been only the model’s mobility, while also allowing for an appreciation of the structuring context in which policy mobility occurs.

To specify what makes the Australian implementation of the Common Ground model a ‘critical case’, it is worth foreshadowing the model and its Australian presence in more detail. The Common Ground model is an approach targeted at people experiencing chronic homelessness. At its most generic, chronic homelessness denotes the long-term homeless. In the US, for instance, the condition of chronic homelessness is understood in more specific terms as applying to those who have had an episode of homelessness lasting six months or longer, or who have had multiple episodes of homelessness over a 12 month period (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2012). People experiencing chronic homelessness are likely to have complex needs, either because of the conditions wrought by long periods of homelessness or because their complex needs predispose them to prolonged periods of homelessness. ‘Complex needs’
generally denotes a combination of personal afflictions (e.g., mental and/or physical health issues, substance abuse, developmental impairment) which compound one another, making a transition out of homelessness difficult. People experiencing chronic homelessness comprise a small minority of the overall homeless population. In the US, recent figures indicate that approximately 100,000 persons experience chronic homelessness, comprising 16% of the total homeless population (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2012). In Australia, it has been estimated that approximately 8,500 persons experience chronic homelessness, comprising 8% of the total homeless population (Australian Common Ground Alliance, 2012).

Chronicity is a relatively recent concept in the sphere of homelessness policy and services. For the most part, policy-makers, service providers and researchers have understood the homeless population according to demographic characteristics (i.e., adults, youth, families) and living conditions (i.e., rough sleeping, temporary accommodation, boarding houses/single room occupancies). At a public lecture delivered in the Australian city of Adelaide, Rosanne Haggerty (2006, p. 5), Common Ground’s founder, noted that chronic homelessness is “a critical dimension of homelessness that has only recently been understood”. The emergence of chronic homelessness as a distinct category of homelessness has coincided with the increasingly accepted notion that a portion of the overall homeless population have “much more complex needs than others and remain homeless for years, not days and months” (Haggerty, 2006, p. 5).

The identification of a distinct long-term homeless population with complex assistance needs cannot be traced to a single source or epiphanic moment—it is the result of many observations and conversations across innumerable places and arenas. Homelessness service practitioners have long been aware of the persistent homelessness of certain clients and the inadequacy of existing forms of assistance. However, with the appearance of a number of academic studies on homelessness in the late 1990s, particularly those associated with Dennis Culhane and his co-authors’ studies in New York City and Philadelphia (Culhane and Kuhn, 1998; Kuhn and Culhane, 1998; Wong et al, 1997), anecdotal accounts were buttressed by the authority of research evidence attesting to the existence of chronic homelessness. In the US, the chronically
homeless, once scarcely recognised, are now a central focus of federal, state and city governments’ homelessness policy and services (Sparks, 2012).

Chronic homelessness is also an emergent global common sense. Recent policy-making exercises by governments and municipalities in the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia, for example, have incorporated chronic homelessness as an object of policy attention. With many governments around the world now pursuing the strategic policy goal of permanently reducing homelessness, some aiming to ‘end homelessness’ altogether (Parsell et al, 2013), policy-makers have begun to approach the question of how to effectively respond to chronic homelessness with particular vigour. In Chapter 5, I explore the emergence of chronic homelessness as a ‘policy problem’ in Australia. By tracing the interaction of global policy currents with Australian urban-national political projects, I seek to understand the context in which the Common Ground model was mobilised.

Of course, the constitution of chronic homelessness as a problem of government is intertwined with the proposal of programmatic ‘solutions’, with permanent supportive housing approaches like Common Ground emerging as one such solution in recent years. Permanent supportive housing, at its simplest, is “a form of service delivery that provides stable and affordable housing with access to flexible and individualised support services” (R. Gordon, 2008, p. 5). Many supportive housing providers, including Common Ground in New York City, are involved in both the construction or renovation of supportive housing units and the provision of support and tenancy services to residents. Projects vary in regard to: who they target (some projects are specific to people with mental illness or HIV/AIDS, for example); what services are available and where (on-site/off-site); the behavioural requirements placed on clients (some are abstinence-based, while others employ harm reduction principles; and, some require participation in specified service programs, others do not). The fundamental premise for all supportive housing projects is that clients with complex needs require intensive, tailored and ongoing support, offered alongside safe and stable accommodation. This combination of support and housing, proponents argue, provides the preconditions for a client’s underlying issues to be addressed. In western countries, homelessness has traditionally been approached through a transitional model: a person initially receives emergency services and crisis accommodation,
before progressing through a series of steps that ideally result in that person not having a need for services and being placed in permanent accommodation. This is also referred to as the ‘staircase model’, the ‘treatment first approach’ or, in the US, the ‘continuum of care model’ (Johnsen and Teixeira, 2010). Many practitioners, researchers and policy-makers now recognise that the transitional approach is innately ill-suited to those experiencing chronic homelessness. Such people are thought to be ‘doomed to fail’ in the transitional system because the initial steps of the transition (crisis or short-term accommodation with tapering service provision) do not allow a person with significant issues to gain a foothold in their recovery, resulting in clients churning repeatedly through the services system or disengaging with the services system altogether.

In an effort to overcome these supposed deficiencies, permanent supportive housing providers such as Common Ground have emerged, offering permanent accommodation combined with sustained, individualised support services. With the renovation of a derelict former hotel in the Manhattan entertainment district Times Square, Rosanne Haggerty opened the first Common Ground project in 1990. The 652-unit ‘Times Square’ remains one of the largest supportive housing projects anywhere and enjoys arguably the highest international profile of any single supportive housing project (see Figure 4.1). The design and mixture of program features found in Common Ground supportive housing projects has been fashioned over time into a supportive housing ‘model’. Where once it designated the localised practice of a New York City organisation delivering supportive housing, today the name Common Ground signifies a globally-recognised approach, an apparent ‘best practice’. Chapter 6 in particular attends to the construction of Common Ground as a mobile best practice. To do this, I focus on the narration of New York City as a place of homelessness policy innovation and its intertwinemement with the accomplishment of expert authority by certain policy actors.

*Figure 4.1: Common Ground Times Square project, NYC.*
Sources: [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/16/Times_Square_Hotel.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/16/Times_Square_Hotel.jpg); [http://www.commonground.org/our-buildings/the-times-square](http://www.commonground.org/our-buildings/the-times-square)
While the model has been part of the policy discussion in places such as Tokyo (Tokyo Foundation, 2010) and London (Casciani, 2003), its international expansion has been most pronounced in Australia. The Common Ground model’s first formal contact with Australia came in 2005, with a government-sponsored visit by Rosanne Haggerty as part of the South Australian government’s ‘Thinkers in Residence’ program. As part of the program, designed to bring “new ideas into the state [of South Australia] and [translate] them into practical solutions” (Adelaide Thinkers in Residence, 2011, n.p.), Haggerty produced a report advising the government on ‘solutions to solve homelessness’. The first Australian project, in Adelaide, was announced just months after Haggerty’s residency. Between late 2005 and mid-2009, eight Common Ground projects were announced, located in five of Australia’s eight state and territory jurisdictions (incorporating Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania) (see Figure 4.2). All of the projects except one were located in their respective state capital cities (none are located in a territory); the other was located in a major regional city (Port Augusta). Since the conclusion of fieldwork for this research, another project, in the national capital Canberra, has been funded (Downie, 2012). Other projects have been considered, and yet more have been influenced by the model and its international and Australian advocates without bearing the ‘Common Ground’ label. While this thesis focuses on Common Ground-branded projects only, it should be acknowledged that the implementation of the Common Ground model has done much to promote the expansion of permanent supportive housing and Housing First approaches to homelessness in Australia. In this sense, the influence of the model exceeds the specific projects analysed in this thesis.
Far from being a simple transfer of the exemplar Times Square project, Australian Common Ground projects are the outcome of translation and adaptation. Even a basic aesthetic assessment of the Australian projects (see Figure 4.3) indicates that the Common Ground model has ventured into very different territory. But aesthetic differentiation is merely the tip of the iceberg.

**Figure 4.2: Australian Common Ground projects: location and key details.**
(Created by O. Rey-Lescure, University of Newcastle)
While, on one level, the Australian Common Ground projects have an unambiguous ancestral connection to New York, they are also the product of a host of local-national factors, translatable moments and wider circuits of policy engagement that have remoulded and repurposed the model in profound ways. Presented as a ‘critical case’ of urban policy mobility, this thesis sets out to trace those factors, moments and engagements to understand how, why and with what consequences Australian cities ‘arrived at’ the Common Ground model. Thus, in Chapter 7, I focus on the politics of translation and adaptation involved in implementing the Common Ground model in Australian cities, aiming to demonstrate how the policy exemplar was ‘grounded’. With the case study outlined, I now focus on discussing the methodological framework by first outlining my use of the concept of assemblage.

4.3 Assemblage methodology
Since its recent inauguration (McCann, 2008), the concept of policy mobilities has garnered keen interest from geographers and cognate researchers. Unsurprisingly given its putative status, most policy mobilities research has been interested in theoretical concerns—reflection, experimentation, prospecting. While necessary and worthwhile, one apparent outcome of the push toward theoretical advancement has been a tendency to gloss over questions of methodology. Only recently has sustained attention been directed at the methodological issues, challenges and opportunities that attend the doing of policy mobilities research (for example, see the special issue in Environment & Planning A (Cochrane and Ward, 2012)). A focus on methodology is entirely warranted when one considers the hurdles presented by the theoretical commitments outlined in Chapters 2 and 3.
The spatiality of policy mobility, for one, poses challenges. By overturning strongly territorial understandings—which locate urban politics within defined scalar arenas—previous methodological certainties have been undermined, leaving us “grappling to understand what a politics that moves beyond such limitations might look like, how it is constructed, how it is assembled” (Cochrane and Ward, 2012, p. 5). For Peck and Theodore (2010a), the socially constructed and relational nature of policy confounds received methodological approaches. In response, they have called for the ‘methodological registers’ of policy analysis to be extended by pushing beyond “internalist and/or positivist evaluations of state(d) aims and objectives” (p. 169) and to embrace a wider methodological repertoire, including policy genealogies, tracing of networks, and ethnographic analyses. A view of the policy-making process as dynamic and fluid also poses practical complications for policy mobilities research. If the processes in question are “defined through eddies and flows that move uncertainly and are defined in place as well as in and through networks it is not easy to find straightforward ways of researching them” (Cochrane and Ward, 2012, p. 7).

Summing up the methodological gauntlet thrown down by the notion of policy mobilities, Cochrane and Ward (2012, p. 8) conclude that the “challenge faced is that of capturing the complex dance associated with the grounding of mobile policies in place”. This is similar to what Le Heron and Lewis (2011) identify as the generative challenge of connecting methodology with ontology and epistemology. In the following sections, I detail how this research has gone about capturing this complex dance. The chapter progresses from the abstract to the practical, focusing, in turn, on the methodological framework, methodological practices, and, finally, the methods of data collection and analysis used in this research. In the most abstract of senses, this research has employed the concept of assemblage as its methodological framework or, if you like, its methodological philosophy. Therefore, this section introduces the concept of assemblage before discussing how it has been used methodologically.

Like policy mobilities, ‘assemblage’ has become ingrained in geographical scholarship of late (for an overview, cf. Anderson et al, 2012; Robbins and Marks, 2010). With a lengthy history in fields such as art history and archaeology, the ascendency of assemblage within the social sciences has accompanied a
“redefinition of ‘the social’ as materially heterogeneous, practice-based, emergent and processual” (McFarlane, 2009, p. 561). Geographers, for their part, have drawn on assemblage as part of more-than-human geographies, rethinking what counts as ‘human’ geography if agencies are distributed across animals, microbes, and technologies (to list a few) in addition to humans. This work has recently been delineated as ‘assemblage geographies’ (Robbins and Marks, 2010). In urban studies, Farias and Bender’s (2010) book Urban Assemblages coincided with a number of contributions from urban geographers (McFarlane, 2009; McGuirk and Dowling, 2009b), which have since been built upon (Brenner et al, 2011; McCann, 2011c; McCann and Ward, 2012b, 2013; McFarlane, 2011a, 2011b; McFarlane and Anderson, 2011; Tonkiss, 2011). Operating from relational understandings, these researchers see a fit between the spatially and materially heterogeneous nature of the urban and the way “assemblage thought asks how urban ‘things’—including, quite appropriately, the urban itself—are assembled, and how they might be disassembled or reassembled” (Brenner et al, 2011, p. 228). “In many ways, cities and urban systems are perfect for assemblage thinking”, Tonkiss (2011, p. 585) explains, in part, because the “concept of the city cannot refer to an integrated whole, just as any city fails to resolve itself into a sum of distinct parts, however strenuous the official attempts to draw boundaries around it or to do a head-count”. Assemblage, it must be said, has always had strong spatial overtones, conceived early on as an ongoing process of ‘determinational’ and ‘reterritorialisation’ (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004 [1987]). This spatial awareness has since been used to unpack how urban regions are constituted as “politically meaningful spatial entities” (Allen and Cochrane, 2007, p. 1163) in a space of flows, and to understand urban policy mobilisation as a type of (de/re)territorialising policy assemblage (for example McCann, 2011c).

If geographers have found the notion of assemblage useful, they have not necessarily found it useful in the same ways or for the same purposes. It is critical, then, to outline what assemblage has come to mean. While overlap is more or less routine, Anderson and McFarlane (2011) argue that a distinction can be made between researchers invoking assemblage as a descriptor, a concept, and an ethos (see also Anderson et al, 2012). Brenner et al (2011) arrive at the same conclusion, albeit with different terminology, seeing assemblage used in empirical, ontological and methodological senses. In its descriptive guise,
assemblage denotes composition across difference, generally the “coming together of heterogeneous elements within an institution, place, built structure or art form” (Brenner et al, 2011, p. 227). As a descriptor, assemblage has no attachment to a particular theoretical tradition, instead it serves simply as a helpful term.

In certain cases, the use of assemblage as a descriptor sits uncomfortably with its use as a concept; one freighted with philosophical heritage. This more fundamental application of assemblage has its origins in the work of Deleuze and Guattari (2004 [1987]). For Anderson and McFarlane (2011, p. 125), the descriptive use of assemblage runs counter to conceptual applications of assemblage when “an emphasis on form replaces formation, assemblage as noun replaces assemblage as verb”. They, like many others, explicitly reject the connotation of stability implied in some descriptive accounts, asserting instead the restlessness of assemblage. Emphasising the point, Robbins and Marks (2010, p. 181, my emphasis) explain that an assemblage is a ‘dynamic structure applied to semi-stable socio-natural configurations and geographies that emerge over space and time”. In a world comprised of people, things, relations and spaces swirling chaotically, assemblage denotes a form of provisional unity which “attends to the agency of whole and parts, not one or the other” (McFarlane and Anderson, 2011, p. 162, original emphasis). Assemblage is less a stable thing than a process of composition resulting in fleeting alliance. Wise (2005, p. 77) emphasises this ghostly quality, explaining that an “assemblage is not a set of predetermined parts … [nor] is an assemblage a random collection of things, since there is a sense that an assemblage is a whole of some sort that expresses some identity and claims a territory”. Deleuze and Guattari’s (2004 [1987], p. 406, original emphasis) definition of assemblage also foregrounds the expression of an identity in the face of instability and emergence:

An assemblage [is] every constellation of singularities and traits deducted from the flow—selected, organized, stratified—in such a way as to converge … artificially and naturally; an assemblage, in this sense, is a veritable invention.

For them, what is important about an assemblage is the process through which it is ‘deducted from the flow’ and held together as “a discrete set that later takes on consistency” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004 [1987], p. 357). This form of assemblage thinking appeals to some because it offers an ontological world-view
where structures and systems are seen as prone to repeated acts of assemblage. Structures have no *a priori* status, rather they are “intimately linked to, and emergent from, particular assemblages that have come together in complex ways” (Prince, 2010c, p. 172). Others, however, are wary of such efforts to promote assemblage to the level of ontology. Brenner et al (2011, p. 229) object to the ‘mercurial nature’ of assemblage ontologies, claiming that researchers have attributed assemblage with “some rather impressive explanatory capabilities, up to a point at which its definitional parameters [have] become extremely vague”. In attempting to explain more and more, for Brenner et al (2011) at least, assemblage is able to say less and less (see also Tonkiss, 2011).

Putting debates about the ontological capabilities and implications of assemblage to one side, there is broader consensus around putting assemblage to work as a methodology, and it is this methodological variant of assemblage thinking that I wish to apply in this research. In methodological terms, assemblage builds upon other traditions and theoretical frameworks, such as political economy, for instance, “while extending and reformulating some of its core elements and concerns” (Brenner et al, 2011, p. 231). Roy (2012, p. 35) notes that “the analytics of assemblage has come to pose important methodological questions for the social sciences”, but stresses that it is important to “make a distinction between assemblage as an object in the world and assemblage as a methodology”. As a methodology, assemblage moves away from a set of commitments based on how the world works toward a way of investigating the world. In policy mobilities research to date, assemblage has been employed less as an ontology than as a methodological tool, framing policy mobility in ways that open it up to investigation (McCann, 2011c; McCann and Ward, 2012b, 2013; Prince, 2010c). For McCann’s (2011c, p. 145) work on urban policy, “engaging with a concept like assemblage provokes numerous more general thoughts on cities, policies and politics that may not have emerged otherwise, or at least would not have emerged in the same manner”. But for all the consensus around the methodological utility of assemblage “there is little specific discussion … about what difference assemblage might make to methodology” (McFarlane and Anderson, 2011, p. 164). In light of this, the remainder of this section discusses the features and concerns of an assemblage methodology and the impact it has had on the doing of this research. In particular, I argue that an assemblage
methodology is defined by the way it draws attention to multiplicity, process and labour, requiring an uncertain and reflexive stance on the part of the researcher.

First, an assemblage methodology demands that research phenomena be approached as the “product of multiple determinations that are not reducible to a single logic” (Collier and Ong, 2005, p. 12). By acknowledging that “neither assemblages nor their various components necessarily display internal coherence” (McGuirk and Dowling, 2009b, p. 180), the researcher must avoid recourse to claims of a singular determining factor in any given situation and begin instead with an assumption of multiplicity. In the context of governmental interventions, Li (2007) has similarly emphasised the phalanx of interacting, sometimes contradictory, projects, actors and materials that cohere in ‘policy’. McCann (2011c, p. 146), referring to his research on the mobilities of urban drug policy, claims that assemblage “offers the opportunity to see … hegemonic monoliths, like the War on Drugs, as contingent assemblages, constituted by a range of forces and interests that may not be as internally coherent and unassailable as they often seem”. The assumption of multiplicity—and, relatedly, of over-determination—helps to “capture a sense of the uncertainty, nonlinearity and contingency of change” (McFarlane and Anderson, 2011, p. 162), which can be downplayed or rubbed-out altogether in the rush to demonstrate the presence and power of the structural and the systemic. This is not to deny the effect of power asymmetries that differentially position certain actors, knowledges and places, but rather to resituate structures themselves as contextually-realised assemblages that require explanation and specification (McFarlane, 2011b). Such an approach necessitates empirically-rich accounts able to reveal how structural effects are realised through an imbroglio of diverse projects, actors and ambitions.

McGuirk and Dowling’s (2009b, p. 177) account of an ostensibly ‘neoliberal’ governance arena—the private residential estate—shows how an assumption of multiplicity revealed “the practical co-existence of multiple political projects, modes of governance, practices and outcomes” that, for the most part, had gone unnoticed in accounts quick to assert neoliberal determinants. Their account sheds light on the more-than-neoliberal context in which governance plays out, but importantly it also provides clues for researching neoliberalisation in the way I advocated in Chapter 2, “not as a singular, circulating encompassing hegemonic force, but as a contingent set of translating
logics that have to be enacted in practice” (McFarlane, 2011b, p. 379). In assemblage methodologies, multiplicity is thus an interpretative strategy used “to frame an open-ended rather than predetermined interpretation” (McGuirk and Dowling, 2009b, p. 177). In my case, rather than being wholly determined by structurally salient monoliths like neoliberalisation, urban policy mobility is seen to be “enacted through situated assemblages of actors, practices and projects in which neoliberalism cannot be assumed to dominate” (McGuirk and Dowling, 2009b, p. 177).

Second, an assemblage methodology draws the researcher’s attention to process. Indeed, part of the way assemblage thinkers act on the assumption of multiplicity is, paraphrasing Tonkiss (2011, p. 584), by collapsing structure and agency into a concern with process. As Wise (2005, p. 77, original emphasis) claims, assemblage “is a concept dealing with the play of contingency and structure, organization and change … the process of arranging, organizing, fitting together”. What happens in process, during the arranging, organising and fitting together, is therefore central to the character of an assemblage and what it can do. For Ong (2007, p. 5), who sees assemblage as concerning how “promiscuous entanglements crystallize different conditions of possibility”, it is through process that the effect of an assemblage is established.

Underscoring the promiscuity of assemblages, Anderson and McFarlane (2011, p. 126) stress that the processes constituting them are only ever provisional: “relations may change, new elements may enter, alliances may be broken, new conjunctions may be fostered. Assemblages are constantly opening up to new lines of flight, new becomings”. While an attention to process is partly about “resisting the siren call of final or stable states” (Legg, 2009, p. 238) to insist on the world as emergent and in-flux, it also emphasises provisional stabilisation, disassembly and reassembly. A concern with process incorporates a sensitivity to stability and change, and “it is partly this constant tension of formulation and form that assemblage perhaps uniquely brings to different areas of human geography” (McFarlane and Anderson, 2011, p. 162). In methodological terms, a focus on the processes through which assemblages come into and out of being lends itself to careful genealogical tracing of how past alignments and associations have informed the present and how contemporary conditions and actors are crystallising new conditions of possibility. In the
following chapters, I attempt such a genealogical tracing by analysing how the historical homelessness policy context has informed recent attention on chronic homelessness (Chapter 5), before focusing on how, first, the mobilisation and, second, the grounding of the Common Ground model in an Australian setting has been made possible by a number of overlapping contexts, circumstances and contingencies (Chapters 6 and 7).

Third, an assemblage methodology must be concerned with the labours that produce and maintain assemblages, or what we might call ‘labours of assembly’. For McCann (2011c, p. 145, original emphasis), “assemblages are always coming apart as much as coming together, so their existence in particular configurations is something that must be continually worked at” (see also McCann and Ward, 2012b; Prince, 2010c). Assemblages are not accidental, they are knowingly and, at times, unknowingly held together. Policy mobility, for example, is itself linked to purposive assemblages, requiring the continued effort of engaged actors and the enrolment of various materials and techniques (McCann and Ward, 2013, p. 7). Although such activity is “often mundane, everyday, and seemingly trivial, [it] constitute[s] an important locus for analysis” (Prince, 2010c, p. 172); without those efforts and enrolments—without labours of assembly—policy mobility is not possible.

From the perspective of an assemblage methodology, however, it is important to stress that labour does not operate in isolation. Agency, in this sense, is not a capacity that resides within or is held by an individual. It is instead distributed across an assemblage, raising “questions about where agency, causality and responsibility lie” (Anderson and McFarlane, 2011, p. 125). For example, if we are to understand the way policy actors operate, we must understand how they are advantaged or disadvantaged by certain contexts and how they marshal resources, expertise, relationships and the like—how their position in shifting assemblages enables them to act. This behoves researchers to take the role of materials and non-humans seriously, as critical elements in the distribution of agency. Robbins and Marks (2010, p. 184) claim that an acknowledgement of agency’s more-than-human character is integral to painting a “wider portrait of [the] world humans inhabit and that inhabits them”. Of course, just how much agency one attributes to materials and non-humans remains an unresolved question in assemblage accounts. My own position is to draw a
distinction on the basis of intentionality. Tonkiss (2011, pp. 585-586, original emphasis) notes that “material things are doubtless effective, even generative, but this is not the same as agency”. She goes on to point out that “people are not always agents … but in so far as they are constituted as agents, human agency is of a different order from the effectivity of matter”. While I stop short of assigning materials and non-humans intentionality, an assemblage methodology has required this research not only to unpack how agencies are distributed across humans—as policy actors—but how they are intertwined and enabled by a host of materials, technologies and environments which are also essential to labours of assembly.

Finally, while an assemblage methodology foregrounds multiplicity, process and labour, it also suggests a more general disposition to how research is done. This is in part about maintaining a sense of uncertainty in conducting research, eschewing the temptation to ‘know too much’ (Gibson-Graham, 2008; Sedgwick, 2003). Many have commented on how assemblage approaches emphasise detailed description and inductive theorising as a means of coming good on methodological commitments to multiplicity, process and labour. For Tonkiss (2011, p. 588), “the real value of assemblage to critical urbanism is in its capacity to generate critical descriptions that trace out the workings of a given empirical context”. Similarly, McFarlane (2011b, p. 380) argues that the assemblage thinking seeks:

- to identify new possibilities and agencies, to try to avoid pre-given causal explanations or assumptions about what necessarily matters most through a focus on thick description of socio-material relations of history and potential, with all the limitations that the situated sightlines and positionalities that a given researcher brings.

What is apparent, then, is the need for qualitative depth gained through detailed description as well as avoiding the imposition of rigid explanatory frameworks in favour of a more uncertain and flexible approach. McCann and Ward (2012a, p. 43) claim that assemblage “encourages and rewards a methodological openness and flexibility”, acknowledging the “reality of unexpected connections, mutations, and research sites emerging during [research] projects”. Likewise, Anderson and McFarlane (2011, p. 126) argue that research using assemblage thinking should avoid “the testing of a pre-existing hypothesis”, and instead favour an approach that “opens the researcher up to risk, embraces uncertainty, expresses something
Cities from elsewhere

of the fragility of composition”. Such an approach reflects calls by urban geographers for less determinative and more experimental stances, such as O’Callaghan’s (2012, p. 1930) “provisional approach to conceptualising and writing about cities”, Robinson’s (2013) argument for a ‘properly revisable’ urban theory, as well as Cochrane and Ward’s (2012) call for more modest claims in urban policy mobilities research and Peck and Theodore’s (2012a) argument that policy mobilities research should focus on ‘explanatory prototyping’ rather than ‘hypothesis testing’.

An assemblage methodology also demands researcher reflexivity. Such a position reflects broader acceptance of positionality, situated knowledge production and the need for researchers to engage in critical self-reflection stemming from feminist and post-structuralist thinking (Haraway, 1988, 1997; Kobayashi, 2009; Weedon, 1997). An assemblage methodology, in line with post-positivist work generally, “does not provide a satisfying ‘Truth’ at the end of the research, but rather a situated reading of life’s phenomena” (Dittmer, 2010, p. 285). By accepting that social research can only produce situated readings rather than Archimedean accounts of the world ‘as it is’—in other words, presenting an unmediated reality—it becomes possible, indeed necessary, to make the type of modest claims just discussed.

What recent accounts have emphasised is the need to enlarge the application of assemblage from the realm of research phenomena ‘out there’ to see the research process itself as an act of assembling; one that is subject to the same contingencies, fragilities and distributed agencies as that being researched (McCann and Ward, 2012a; McFarlane and Anderson, 2011). McCann and Ward (2012a, p. 49) have pointed out that policy mobilities research does not simply report through analysis and writing, rather “our writing of the policy world—the world of mobilities and selective gatherings of exemplars, models, and best practices—is, in itself, an assemblage”. From project inception to final publication, the research account is fundamentally shaped by decisions arising from the practicalities of identifying and accessing key human and non-human actors and sites, the influence of theoretical and disciplinary traditions, and the style of interpretation and representation used. Assemblage methodologies, like actor-network theory accounts, acknowledge that researchers are not distanced
observers of reality but embedded translators with a “powerful position in the translation of the research environment in question” (Ruming, 2009, p. 455).

Following through on the demand for modest claims and reflexivity, the rest of this chapter provides substance and specification to the methodological orientation outlined in this section. The next section begins to account for my situated reading of the Common Ground model in Australian cities by discussing the practices used to operationalise an assemblage methodology in the context of urban policy mobility research.

4.4 Methodological practices
Where the previous section sought to outline the methodological orientation of this research and establish a suite of abstract propositions, this section ventures toward a more concrete domain: methodological practice. For urban policy mobilities research, acting on an assemblage methodology presents significant challenges. In the following, I outline what these challenges are and propose three methodological practices that map onto the key concerns of multiplicity, process and labour associated with an assemblage methodology. I argue that by cultivating an ethnographic ambition, shifting from discrete research sites to relational situations, and, following people, policies and places, this research has actualised an assemblage methodology to meet the challenges of urban policy mobilities research.

4.4.1 Ethnographic ambition
Before all else, an assemblage methodology prioritises the particular. Attending to multiplicity, for instance, requires qualitative, descriptive detail to piece together the over-determinations and fragile alignments that give assemblages substance. This concern for particularity is mirrored in policy mobilities accounts, with their focus on the myriad practices and micro-spaces that enable policy knowledges to travel. An approach is needed that is capable of generating the level of detail demanded by policy mobilities research in general and an assemblage methodology in particular. In what follows, I outline the approach taken in this research, which draws on ethnographic methodologies. But acknowledging the substantial limits to conducting ethnographic research on and with policy elites, I
caution against a ‘properly ethnographic’ approach in favour of one with an ‘ethnographic ambition’.

With feminist, post-colonial, post-structuralist and qualitative turns, ethnography was emerged as a key methodology for geographers (Crang and Cook, 2007; Herbert, 2000). Pollitt et al (1990, p. 174) define ethnography as a “tradition in the social sciences where the method is to watch and interact with people on their own ‘territory’ and using their own language”. The mission of the ethnographer, they explain, is to penetrate the “assumptive worlds” (p. 175) of their subjects. Thus, ethnographers seek to make sense of how others make sense of the world. While not limited to it, most associate ethnography with methods of immersive participant observation. Herbert (2000, p. 551, original emphasis), for example, claims that ethnography “rest[s] upon participant observation, a methodology whereby the researcher spends considerable time observing and interacting with a social group”. He argues that the observations and interactions enabled through participant observation allow “the ethnographer to understand how the group develops a skein of relations and cultural constructions that tie it together” (p. 551). Watson and Till (2010, p. 121), for their part, do not see ethnographic research as synonymous with participant observation, instead positioning it as an inter-subjective form of qualitative research “through which the relationships of the research and researched, insider and outsider, self and other, body and environment, and field and home are negotiated”. We can infer, then, that while participant observation is not the only method employed by ethnographers, it is an essential part of an ethnographic approach. Its importance is clear to Herbert (2000, p. 552, original emphasis), who draws a distinction between ethnographic participant observation and other qualitative methods such as interviews on the basis that participant observation “examines what people do as well as what they say. It thus enables an insightful examination of any discrepancies between thoughts and deeds”.

If ethnography’s data collection methods are immersive, its method of analysis is inductive. Ethnography, in this sense, has much in common with the modest, uncertain orientation called for in assemblage methodologies. Similar to the central injunction of grounded theory—that theory should be ‘discovered’ from the data of social research (Glaser and Strauss, 1967)—ethnographers argue that “order should emerge from the field rather than be imposed on the field”
Apprehending mobile urban policy

(Herbert, 2000, p. 552 original emphasis). Cloke et al (2004, p. 169), for their part, claim that ethnography is a methodology that seeks to “ground social orders, worldviews and ways of life to gradually become apparent”. Ethnographers, of course, are not unencumbered by theory before entering the field, however they are careful not to use “overwrought theorizations that might occlude the processes through which social life transpires and acquires meaning” (Herbert, 2000, p. 552). Ethnographers, therefore, opt for modest claims and weak generalities.

Although ethnographers, particularly in the anthropological tradition, have tended to focus on non-industrial societies and marginalised groups, there have been sustained calls for ethnographers to focus on the powerful and the cosmopolitan. Over forty years ago now, Laura Nader (1972) urged researchers to ‘study up’ with ethnographic approaches. Such calls have led to increasing acceptance of ‘policy ethnographies’: studies that seek to penetrate the ‘assumptive worlds’ of policy actors and the policy process more broadly (Askew, 2009; Kuus, 2013). Pollitt et al (1990, p. 171) claim that ethnography “has become widely recognised in studies of the contemporary policy process”, in part because of the limitations of quantitative methodologies in accessing “the world of meanings, choices and resultant behaviours” that are now recognised as central to policy-making (p. 174). Mountz (2003, p. 633) promotes ethnography as a way of coming to grips with the way “governmental policies and procedures unfold: never in a vacuum, but rather recursively, amid social and cultural contexts”. In the context of policy mobilities research, Peck and Theodore (2010a, p. 172) see ethnographic methodologies as “well suited to the challenges of studying embodied policy knowledges and mutating technologies of government” (see also McCann and Ward, 2012a, p. 45). Acceptance of ethnography has unfolded with a ‘practice turn’ in policy studies, which has focused attention on the social milieu of policy-making to “think about and ask after what it is that policy makers do when they go to work” (Freeman, 2012, p. 19). As Freeman et al (2011) point out, policy work is not simply work, rather it is a zone of practice defined by configurations of action, norms and knowledge. They go on to define policy work as “thoughtful, learned and remembered action” (Freeman et al, 2011, p. 128). Thus, ethnographic approaches to policy stay ‘close to practice’ in order to understand the granular social lives of policy.
The most developed body of research within geography that brings an ethnographic approach to the policy domain is work on ‘ethnographies of the state’ (Askew, 2009; R. Jones, 2007, 2012; Mountz, 2003, 2007; Painter, 2006). Objecting to ‘the state’ as a taken-for-granted feature of much social research, these accounts see the state as less a delineable, unitary or monolithic entity than as a prosaic, peopled domain through which ‘the state’ as we know it is realised. Here the state is an effect rather than a thing. Using this approach, Askew (2009), for instance, explores the ‘peopled practices’ of human services institutions and Mountz (2003) investigates the ‘everyday geographies of the nation-state’ through the work of immigration bureaucrats. The job of such work is not to point out the falsehood of what Ferguson and Gupta (2007, p. 108) call the ‘up there’ state, rather it is to “draw attention to the social and imaginative processes through which state verticality is made effective and authoritative”. The methodological entry point common to ethnographies of the state is thus a focus on “the mundane practices through which something which we label ‘the state’ becomes present in everyday life” (Painter, 2006, p. 753, original emphasis).

For all the interest in ethnographic approaches to policy and governance, there are reasons to be wary. Mountz (2003, p. 626), for one, acknowledges that monolithic understandings of the state are in part a result of the difficulty of “actually conducting ethnographic research within government institutions”. Kuus (2013, p. 6) more pointedly argues that there has been conspicuous silence about the “uphill tight-ropes involved in ‘studying up’”, perpetuated by an “academic fascination with ethnography in the study of policy” (p. 12). While hers is a focus on ethnography in foreign policy institutions, Kuus highlights the logistical and intellectual limitations that face all policy ethnographies. First, the ability to gain access to elite policy actors, not to mention prolonged immersion, presents a logistical challenge for policy ethnographers. Researchers typically face “various forms of resistance to scholarly investigation” (Pollitt et al, 1990, p. 169), and if access is granted, policy institutions “are not places where researchers can chummily hang around” (Kuus, 2013, p. 4). Despite the fact that many accounts engage the idiom and nomenclature of ethnography, more often:

the actual empirical analysis is built on a mix of interviews, documentary analysis, and some ethnographic observation. That ‘some’ sometimes appears to be as modest as being escorted through the corridors by an administrative assistant. … There is still a veritable
Without the ease of access to their research subjects or to opportunities for immersive participant observation, aspiring policy ethnographers must recognise that *properly* ethnographic is very often beyond reach. Less intensive qualitative methods, such as interviewing, are “often the only means of gathering first hand information and gaining entrée to difficult-to-access “fields,” such as individuals in powerful institutions” (Wedel et al, 2005, p. 41). Documents, too, can be used ethnographically. Treated as constructed artefacts reflecting particular views and interests, documents offer powerful insights into how individuals and groups see the world and/or how they choose to script it. For the study of policy, documents are an indispensible part of any ethnographically inspired methodology and in Section 4.5, I expand on how interviews and documents have enabled this thesis to make ethnographically ambitious insights.

Owing to the power dynamics that frame engagements with elite policy actors, the conduct of ethnographic policy research also has intellectual limits. Kuus (2013) notes that in ‘studying down’—the traditional approach for ethnographers—the researcher often benefits from their own economic, institutional and intellectual position, and enjoys an enhanced level of freedom and control regarding which research subjects they talk to, for how long, etc. In ‘studying up’ this power balanced is reversed, not only in terms of the research subjects (eg. policy actors) having greater control over access and engagement, but through the interpersonal and linguistic skills of those subjects. Kuus (2013, p. 4) shows how her interviews with European foreign policy actors were profoundly shaped by the interviewees’ astuteness at “arguing within the technical and ideological parameters of their field”. She adds that to

```
participate in the field, the researcher has to command its language, but the language powerfully directs the questions that can be asked in it. The danger for the researcher of being trapped in the echo-chamber of policy talk is real (p. 4).
```

Speaking of policy mobilities research, Peck and Theodore (2012a, p. 25) similarly point out that the “challenge here is one of traveling within cosmopolitan policy networks without becoming another creature of those networks”. If ethnography is about penetrating the ‘assumptive worlds’ of research subjects,
this is made quite difficult, perhaps impossible in some cases, in the context of policy-making. The difficulty for a properly ethnographic approach to policy and, by extension, policy mobilities, rests on balancing the need to speak in a policy language that inevitably channels discussion down certain pathways, while remaining sufficiently distanced so as to interpret the work of that language.

In light of these difficulties, this research is not positioned as an ethnographic account of policy-making and mobility in the fullest sense. Though, acknowledging the intention of ethnography (to understand the world as it seems from the perspective of the researched) and its approach (detailed empirical description with inductive theorising), I maintain that ethnography has much to offer the study of urban policy mobility. An ethnographic ambition is, therefore, an appropriate and more realistic stance for this research to adopt. Many authors have recognised the usefulness of ethnographic approaches without signing up to ethnography-as-immersive-participant-observation. Shore and Wright (2011, p. 15) speak of an ‘ethnographic sensibility’, for example, which they argue is a “critical and questioning disposition that treats the familiar as strange”. Roy (2012, p. 34) draws on ethnography as “less a practice of specific methods and more an orientation, a way of undertaking problematizations of the world”. Like Shore and Wright’s method of making ‘the familiar strange’, Roy contends that ethnographies should be concerned with the practice of ‘defamiliarisation’.

Defamiliarisation, to be sure, need not be a strategy limited to methods of participant observation. Interviewing and documentary analysis, like that adopted in this research, can also provide the opportunity for the detailed accounts of practice associated with ethnography. Freeman (2012, p. 19) argues that attending to policy-making practice is about a set of questions: “what matters is what we ask and/or look for ... We need to know what was said, agreed, contested, puzzled over, or simply passed over at any given moment”. Interviewing, therefore, does not necessarily limit the researcher to surface accounts by guarded policy actors. Interviews are social interactions in which “what is conveyed exceeds what is said” (Kuus, 2013, p. 13). They are also occasions to invite interviewees to act as ‘double agents’ (Roy, 2012, p. 37): to elicit the somewhat expected, straightforward, approved institutional and professional narratives, but also to draw interviewees into reflexive discussion. For the study of policy mobility, an ethnographic ambition emphasises the need to understand the assumptive worlds
of policy actors and to understand how more or less distinct assumptive worlds interact with one another through the mobilisation of policy knowledge. This research has found that an ethnographic ambition, when using methods of interviewing and documentary analysis, has been able to provide insight into those assumptive worlds.

4.4.2 Sites and situations

Garnering the type of ethnographically inspired depth required of an assemblage methodology presents a related methodological challenge for policy mobilities researchers: maintaining that depth over distance. For the most part, intensive, qualitative research has relied on a tightly bounded conception of the research ‘field’, often corresponding to a particular place or location conceptually separated from the world beyond. The fact that policy mobilities research, by its nature, cannot be cordoned to a single site troubles a foundational practice of much in-depth research. Burawoy (2001, p. 147) notes that in anthropology, “we stereotypically picture the lone ethnographer settled in his or her village, itself isolated from the world around”, while in sociology “we think of the ethnographer as the specialist of face-to-face relations or of situational analysis, but with the context firmly bracketed”. In urban studies, McCann and Ward (2012a, p. 44) observe widespread ‘methodological territorialism’, noting that many researchers have “limited themselves to particular cities and associated stakeholders … [and have] focused on various agencies and institutions either in the city or whose geographical remit encompasses the city”. Demonstrating just how ingrained various forms of methodological territorialism are to geography more broadly, Castree (2005, p. 541), summarising the use of case study approaches, says such approaches usually involve “investigating one or more phenomena in some depth in one place, region or country”.

Of course, single sited studies are entirely appropriate in certain instances, offering the opportunity to screen-out what is apparently ‘white noise’ emanating from other sites and scales. Although, it should be made clear that single sited research is able to focus on the local by conceptually and methodologically carving it out from an always present global or, at least, extra-local—an unfortunate but necessary side-effect being that the mode of engagement with the global tends toward ‘contextualising portraiture’ (Marcus, 1995) or what McCann
(2011a) refers to as ‘gestural analysis’. That which lies ‘outside’ is often seen as having an obvious and unambiguous influence on the ‘inside’ under investigation. What has emerged, then, is a practice of in-depth local analyses gesturing ‘up’ to “the wider global context as “obviously” playing some constitutive role in the local process” (McCann, 2011a, p. 114), and of globally oriented analyses gesturing ‘down’ to “quickly sketched examples from specific cities or territories to bolster or validate the global analysis”.

But for urban policy mobilities research, it is precisely that white noise—the extra-local—that the researcher must take seriously. In the context of my research, with its focus on the scales and networks that relationally constitute urban politics, this is all the more apparent. Attention must be given to how various sites of local practice are packaged, translated and mutated through engagements with the wider world (see, for example, Massey’s (1991) early and influential work on the relational production of place). Such research must eschew any easy separation between the ‘field’ as an unambiguously local research site and ‘the global’ or ‘the extra-local’ as a vague, if powerful, realm beyond. The field, instead, “consists of loosely connected actors with varying degrees of institutional leverage located in multiple “sites” that are not always even geographically fixed” (Wedel et al, 2005, p. 39). For Shore and Wright (1997, p. 14), this calls for “a radical reconceptualization of ‘the field’: not as a discrete local community or bounded geographical area, but as a social and political space articulated through relations”.

The first step toward a reconceptualisation of the field for urban policy mobilities research must be to overturn the methodological separation of local and extra-local. This means troubling the local as the domain of ethnographic attention and the global as the domain of sweeping political-economic context to explore the co-constitution of local and global. As Cochrane and Ward (2012, p. 7) outline:

The challenge is to find means of exploring the ways in which global policy networks, defined through reach ... contribute to the construction of apparently local responses. And at the same time it is necessary to find ways of researching how it is that apparently global phenomena—globalized policies—find their expression and are given their meaning in particular, grounded, localized ways.

One strategy, suggested by Burawoy (2001), is to treat the global as an ethnographic object. Like much geographical research has done (see, for example
Gibson-Graham, 2002), this means acknowledging and investigating how what we conceive as global is produced in and across local sites, as emanating “from very specific agencies, institutions and organizations whose processes can be observed first-hand” (Burawoy, 2001, p. 150). Calling for researchers to problematise the ‘production of globalisation projects’, Peck and Theodore (2012a, p. 21) similarly promote “explorations of the sources and circuits of global(izing) power [that] seek to ‘denaturalize’ globalization processes, to account for their diverse and often contradictory socioinstitutional forms”.

Resonating with my earlier argument in Chapter 2 about approaching structures and institutions through their (re)production, Burawoy (2001, p. 158) argues that researchers should replace notions of ‘abstract globalisation’ with ‘grounded globalisation’ to demonstrate how globalisation is “produced in specific localities and how that productive process is contested and thus a political accomplishment”.

Policy mobilities researchers must therefore orient the spatial frame underwriting their methodological approach, away from bounded local sites toward interconnected, relational sites. While there is an established geographical tradition, particularly stemming from Massey’s (1991, 2005, 2011) work, approaches in anthropology and sociology also offer an indication of how this can be done. Hannerz (2003, p. 206) advocates multi-sited ethnography, which focuses on how “sites are connected with one another in such ways that the relationships between them are as important ... as the relationships within them” (see also Marcus, 1995). Differing slightly, Burawoy et al (1991, p. 6) use an extended-case method, “which examines how the social situation is shaped by external forces” (see also Burawoy, 2001; Burawoy et al, 2000). Drawing on these approaches, McCann and Ward (2012a) see their geographical policy mobilities research in terms of ‘studying through’ situations (following Wedel et al, 2005). They explain that “traditionally in geography, ‘site’ referred to the internal properties of a location, while its ‘situation’ referred to the various constitutive relationships that existed beyond its physical extent” (McCann and Ward, 2012a, p. 47). Attending to the situations through which policies are mobilised means not only attending to relationally connected places such as cities, but also the host of events involved in communicating policy ideas, such as conferences, study tours, lectures and informal interactions among policy actors. Chapters 6 and 7 focus on
tracing these events in regard to the Common Ground model to help understand the sites and situations of Australian urban homelessness policy.

It is important to recognise, though, that policy mobilities research cannot have it all. Relational extension comes, to some degree, at the expense of ethnographic intensity. Peck and Theodore (2012a, p. 25) argue that there is an ‘inescapable trade-off’ between “the situational depth ... achievable in long-duration, single-site ethnographies … and those ‘low-flying’ (but flying nevertheless), network-centric perspectives that privilege cross-conjunctural reach over sustained, in situ engagement, and traveling over dwelling”. There is, then, a decision to be made about just how many of the seemingly endless connections that fan-out from any given policy-making site will be followed. As my case study discussion revealed earlier, this thesis is concerned with how the Common Ground model was ‘arrived at’ in Australian cities; its focus is how Australian cities have interacted with globalised circuits of policy knowledge and the consequences these interactions have had for people and places in Australia and elsewhere. Although this research is an account from the vantage point of Australian cities, following McCann and Ward’s (2012a) notion of ‘studying through situations’, I have approached those cities not as enclosed sites but as relationally situated. In this way, the case study resembles Peck and Theodore’s (2012a) ‘distended case approach’, which focuses on certain primary sites while tracing the connections that course through those sites, constituting the distended research field. For them, the distended case approach seeks to exploit the potential associated with analysing circuits and networks of policy knowledge without sacrificing the ‘explanatory traction’ gained from ethnographically inspired, situated depth (Peck and Theodore, 2012a, p. 25).

In order to achieve such a balance, this research does not focus on all sites and situations equally. As Marcus (1995, p. 100) suggests of multi-site ethnography, in studies that extend beyond a bounded research field “not all sites are treated by a uniform set of fieldwork practices of the same intensity”, meaning such research is inevitably “the product of knowledge bases of varying intensities and qualities”. By configuring the methodological spatial frame of this research in such a way, my aim has been to strike a balance between the demand for depth and the demand for coverage in urban policy mobilities research in general, and an assemblage methodology in particular. My choices here, in terms of the spatial
entry point and its emphases, reinforce one important way that researchers act as assemblers, rather than passive and objective observers. The decision to move from enclosed sites to relational situations is, therefore, deeply constitutive of the account I provide in this thesis.

4.4.3 Following labours

So far I have discussed two methodological practices used to apply an assemblage methodology in the context of urban policy mobilities research. Principally, these practices—ethnographic ambition and ‘studying through’ relational situations—have sought to come to grips with generating and maintaining ‘depth over distance’. These practices appeal to an assemblage methodology’s concern with multiplicity and process. In this subsection, I want to discuss the final methodological practice used in this research; one that builds on the previous two, but which seeks to address more directly the concern of an assemblage methodology with ‘labours of assembly’. Given the spatially dispersed nature of urban policy mobilities research, I argue that attending to labours of assembly means being able to ‘follow’ those labours. In the following, I offer an explanation for how this research has approached following labours of assembly.

Social researchers have long acknowledged the methodological necessity of ‘following’ for certain types of research. Marcus (1995) outlines a number of different variations used in multi-site ethnographies, including ‘follow the people’, ‘follow the thing’ and ‘follow the metaphor’ approaches. He argues that the practice of following is an essential part of multi-site ethnographic method, stating: “strategies of quite literally following connections, associations, and putative relationships are ... at the very heart of designing multi-sited ethnographic research” (Marcus, 1995, p. 97). Actor-network theory research, too, has long had ‘follow the actor’ methodologies as fundamental to its approach (Ruming, 2009). And policy mobilities researchers, for their part, have also stressed the need to track policy ideas and policy actors across space as an essential part of generating sufficient levels of qualitative insight into processes of policy mobilisation (Cochrane and Ward, 2012; McCann and Ward, 2012a, 2012b, 2013; Peck and Theodore, 2012a). Peck and Theodore (2010a, p. 172), for instance, state that “flow methodologies, of the kind that stay close to policy subjects and expert
actors ... can provide much-needed depth and multi-dimensionality to critical policy studies”.

Despite consensus that some form of methodological following is needed, there is no unanimity surrounding the questions of what to follow and how to follow. McCann and Ward (2012b) argue that policy mobilities researchers have typically followed a combination of people, policies and places. In terms of people, this has involved following any number of “transfer agents and other policy actors that produce, circulate, mediate, modify and consume policies through their daily work practices” (McCann and Ward, 2012b, p. 329). It also involves following them through the ‘globalising micro-spaces’ (Larner and Le Heron, 2002b) they inhabit, such as conferences and study tours, which shape the way policies are disseminated and framed (Cook and Ward, 2012a). Following a particular policy, means using the conspicuous appearances of certain policy labels as markers in order to trace processes of policy mobility (Peck and Theodore, 2012a). Finally, researchers have followed places, in particular “the figurative uprooting and making mobile of certain places as referential components of particular models, for example the ‘Barcelona model’ of urban regeneration, or the ‘Vancouverism’ model of urban design” (McCann and Ward, 2012b, p. 329). This thesis uses a configuration combining all three varieties. First and foremost, I follow a policy: how the Common Ground model was ‘arrived at’ in Australian cities. That policy is then used as a locus for investigating both the people and the places that were assembled as part of the Australian implementation of the Common Ground model. For example, as Chapter 6 will show, this involved following how a particular conception of New York was packaged and mobilised, and how international policy actors such as Rosanne Haggerty were able to project their expertise.

Consideration of the methodological implications of following mobile phenomena is arguably most developed by researchers associated with the ‘mobilities turn’ in the social sciences (Adey, 2009; Binnie et al, 2007; Cresswell, 2012; Sheller and Urry, 2007; Urry, 2010 (2000)). A number of recent works have explicitly addressed the topic of ‘mobile methodology’ and method (Büscher et al, 2011; Fincham et al, 2010; Hein et al, 2008), acknowledging the need to compliment ontological commitments to the mobility saturated constitution of the social world with specific methodological approaches (Büscher and Urry, 2009).
The methodological problematic of such research lies in “trying to move with, and to be moved by, the fleeting, distributed, multiple, non-causal, sensory, emotional and kinaesthetic” (Büscher et al, 2011, p. 1), while its methods deal with how to “capture, track, simulate, mimic, parallel and ‘go along with’ the kinds of moving systems and experiences that seem to characterise the contemporary world” (p. 7). For the most part, this body of work has prioritised the researcher ‘being there’, physically and virtually, with mobile research subjects, to follow mobilities in-action (Fincham et al, 2010).

As helpful as the mobile methodology literature is, particularly its attention to matching one’s theoretical position to a consistent methodological approach, its emphasis on ‘being there’ does not reflect the reality facing many policy mobilities researchers. Most research to date has focused on instances of policy mobilisation that have already occurred; in all but a few instances, such as Cook and Ward’s (2012a) first-hand account of a Swedish Business Improvement District conference, policy mobilities researchers are ‘tracing back’. To confront this reality, policy mobilities researchers must broaden their methodological outlook to focus on ‘being there’ when it is possible and feasible, but to also think about how researchers can access and interpret mobility practices that are more-or-less historical and remembered. McCann and Ward (2012b, p. 329, original emphasis) rightly stress the “imperative to reflect on how researchers might best move with or after”.

The fact that policy mobilities research is more often ‘moving after’ emphasises the importance of critically investigating post-facto rationalisations by policy actors (“It happened because ...”) and the way narratives strategically exclude and smooth-over. It also places in question the threads that allow a researcher to ‘move after’ a particular policy or actor, especially given that connections and their traces have a habit of decaying over time (Prince, 2012a). This impresses the need, again, for modest, considered claims about what a research account can actually say about what occurred in a given instance of policy mobility. In this research, I began investigating the Australian implementation of Common Ground in early 2010, five years after Rosanne Haggerty’s initial visit to Australia. Some Common Ground projects had been announced four years before my investigation began, while others were announced six months before (see Figure 4.2, from Section 4.2 above). This
meant that, for some projects, personnel had since moved to other positions and were beyond my reach. In some cases, though, having distance from the establishment of a Common Ground project had the advantage of making discussions with interviewees less politically sensitive, allowing interviewees to critically reflect without the same level of political risk surrounding their testimony. Like the limitations attending claims of ‘properly ethnographic’ policy research, policy mobilities researchers must be transparent and realistic about what and whom they have been able to follow and what that enables the researcher to say about examples policy mobility. The knowledge produced in this research is thus inevitably situated (Haraway, 1988; Kobayashi, 2009), a product of the different accounts available to be assembled.

Just what a policy mobility researcher *can* follow is also shaped by what they *choose* to follow, owing to the visibilities and invisibilities created by their theoretical framework and disciplinary tradition. For instance, the emphasis that different theoretical frameworks place on the agency of materials will impact the lengths one goes to in following, say, a policy document as it travels through the hands of different actors and jurisdictions. Prince’s (2010a, 2010b, 2010c) account of the UK government’s ‘creative industries mapping document’ places significantly more emphasis on non-human agencies than McCann’s (2008, 2011a, 2011b) account of Vancouver’s ‘four pillar’ drug policy document, for example. Likewise, while following is obviously about tracing connections, the emphasis on disconnection and failure can be quite different within the policy mobilities literature. Given my commitment to an assemblage methodology and its concern with multiplicity and over-determination, this research has adopted the methodological practice of ‘following’, in part, as a means of accommodating “surprising encounters, unexpected turns, and unforeseen conclusions” (Peck and Theodore, 2012a, p. 29).

One unexpected turn, for example, involved speaking with the administrator of an Australian not-for-profit homeless service organisation that had long used an approach similar to Common Ground. In the clamour around Common Ground’s ‘new’ approach to chronic homelessness, the work of this interviewee had, he thought, been selectively forgotten. It galled him that politicians would perpetuate the narrative of Common Ground’s ‘innovative approach’ when his organisation had long been established as an already-existing
domestic approach to chronic homelessness. His testimony was useful in its own right, however it also spoke volumes about Common Ground’s implementation in Australia. By following this disconnection, or failure of sorts, it impressed upon this research account that following cannot only be about “the relatively straightforward task of tracking norms, practices, and agents ‘downstream’”, but must also focus on “contingent connection, marginalization, and exclusion” (Peck and Theodore, 2012a, p. 28). With this approach to following, the intention was to better understand the disjunctures as well as the conjunctures at work in the multiplicities, processes and labours surrounding Australia’s Common Ground policy assemblage. Any policy mobility methodology should be attentive to the ways that mobility and immobility are mutually-constitutive elements of the policy-making process (McCann, 2011b; McCann and Ward, 2011) because each is an important domain through which labours of assembly can be followed.

4.5 Method

So far this chapter has explained the rationale and character of an assemblage methodology, emphasising its concerns with multiplicity, process, labour and researcher reflexivity. I have argued that through an ethnographic ambition, a shift from enclosed sites to relational situations as well as a disposition toward following labours, an assemblage methodology can be usefully applied to the study of urban policy mobilities. In this section, I outline how those foundational sensitivities have come to inform the methods, or methodological techniques, used in this thesis. This is done in two parts. First, I introduce the two data sources used—documentary material and elite interviews—and explain the type of insights they yielded. Second, I discuss how the use of iterative discursive analyses allowed for an appreciation of multiplicity and an ability to follow labours of assembly through people, policies and places.

4.5.1 Data sources and collection

Responding to the concern of my assemblage methodology to uncover the ‘promiscuous entanglements’ (Ong, 2007, p. 5) through which Common Ground was ‘arrived at’ in Australian cities, this research adopts a multi-method approach (Elwood, 2010). As Peck and Theodore (2012a, p. 26) explain, multi-method approaches have become widely used in policy mobilities research because they
offer “a means of probing, interrogating, and triangulating issues around the functioning of global policy networks, the reconstruction of policy models, and the adaptation of policy practice”. Despite having divergent empirical and theoretical interests, policy mobilities researchers have typically looked to documentary sources and in-depth interviews as the core of their multi-method approaches (Cook, 2008; Gonzalez, 2011; McCann, 2008, 2011b; McCann and Ward, 2011; Peck, 2011b; Prince, 2010c; Temenos and McCann, 2012; Ward, 2006). These methods are sometimes accompanied by peripheral participant observations derived from attendance at meetings and conferences, as with Prince (2012b) and Cook and Ward (2012a), but for the moment these accounts are exceptional in the prominence given to methods of participant observation.

Keeping in mind the methodological framework outlined so far, there are two main reasons why a multi-method approach combining documentary and interview data sources was useful and appropriate for this thesis. First, considering the logistical and intellectual limitations that accompany ‘properly ethnographic’ research in policy-making contexts (Kuus, 2013), documentary sources and elite interviews were the most viable methods available. Notwithstanding the difficulties of using immersive ethnographic methods as previously discussed, such methods were inappropriate for this thesis because the Australian implementation of Common Ground model had largely concluded before the commencement of fieldwork in 2010. There was no possibility for first-hand insight into the ‘rooms and moments’ of decision-making (Le Heron, 2009), nor the day-to-day ‘policy worlds’ (Shore et al, 2011) in which the Common Ground model was selected and translated. Instead, this research required methods suited to the task of re-tracing or ‘following after’ the events, people and ideas associated with Australian engagements with the Common Ground model. As data sources, documentary material and interview testimony were well suited to this task.

Second, an inability to bear witness in real-time did not close-off ‘access’ to the rooms and moments important to policy mobilities research and to an assemblage methodology. If the ethnographic ambition argued for earlier involves gaining insight into the assumptive worlds of policy-makers through a strategy of defamiliarisation (Roy, 2012), directed at both the researcher and the researched, documentary sources and interviews are ripe with potential. For instance,
documentary sources, such as newspaper reports and formal policy documents, provide insight into the way policy-makers rationalise their behaviour and script narratives of failure and success. In this way, documentary sources allow the researcher to make sense of how policy-makers make sense of the world around them. With the policy process more dispersed and documented than perhaps ever before (resulting in wider availability of sources such as video and audio recordings) there are greater opportunities to analyse fine-grained events and interactions with a level of ethnographic intent and insight.

What is more, the use of documentary sources and elite interviews in concert is analytically generative—it allows for deeper, more nuanced accounts by playing-off the strengths of each method. Beyond factual triangulation, the combination of documentary sources and interviews allowed for threads of information to be followed and investigated, sites and situations connected, and various forms of labour uncovered in ways that were helpful in meeting the analytical challenges posed throughout the chapters so far. This occurred in a way that would not have been possible if each of the data sources were used in isolation. With that general explanation of my multi-method approach, I now discuss the two data sources in more detail.

Documents

Documentary materials were utilised in two main ways, the first being to establish contextual and factual information about the case study. Given the central empirical focus of this research—how Australian cities ‘arrived at’ the Common Ground model—searches were initially directed at gathering information with an explicit connection to the appearance of the Common Ground model in Australia. Using search terms such as ‘Common Ground’ and ‘Rosanne Haggerty’ in conjunction with ‘Australia’ or specific cities such as ‘Sydney’, ‘Adelaide’, etc, a wide range of documentary material was gathered, which I elaborate on shortly, providing contextual information regarding key actors, events, places and issues. Searches were conducted mainly online and, when necessary, through physical archives, although the contemporary nature of the case study meant almost all information was available online.

Reflecting the theoretical framework of this research and its attention to multiplicity, particularity, and the significance of apparently mundane practices,
no single type of documentary material was seen as necessarily more important than any other type. In the first instance, I sought to collect all available information on the Common Ground model as it related to places, people and organisations within Australia before making decisions about the relative weight given to each source. As a result, searches yielded a wide range of documentary source types (shown in Table 4.1), including: formal policy documents at federal, state and local government levels; reports by government and non-government organisations; research literature; public presentations and speeches; media reports, social media material (e.g. YouTube footage, Twitter feeds of key actors); and, website material.

This initial sweep allowed for the establishment of basic information about the nature of the case study. From these sources, time-lines were produced, making intelligible the events and milestones that were significant to the evolution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key documentary sources</th>
<th>Indicative examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government policy documents and reports</td>
<td>Federal green (discussion) and white (policy) papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary transcripts (Hansard)</td>
<td>References to Common Ground in parliament; parliamentary debate relating to federal homelessness strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government-commissioned reports</td>
<td>Reports authored by R. Haggerty for Tasmanian and South Australian governments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formally published works</td>
<td>Culhane &amp; Kuhn (1998); Padgett et al (2006); Parsell et al (2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational literature</td>
<td>Annual reports and organisational policy documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentations and speeches</td>
<td>Haggerty Thinker in Residence public addresses; ministerial speeches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media releases</td>
<td>Government policy and funding announcements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventional media reportage</td>
<td><em>The Australian; Sydney Morning Herald; The Age; New York Times; The New Yorker</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media sources</td>
<td>Twitter streams and blogs from key actors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Websites</td>
<td>Common Ground organisational webpages; associated not-for-profits and government agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotional material</td>
<td>Flyers and other ephemera</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1: Key documentary source categories.
were always carried out with the express purpose of relating back to the key empirical question: how Common Ground was ‘arrived at’ in Australia cities. For example, after basic case study details were established, it was apparent that the introduction of the Common Ground model was dependent on the notion of ‘chronic homelessness’, a category of homelessness not generally familiar to Australian policy approaches and policy actors. In an effort to appreciate the significance of this somewhat ‘new’ category of homelessness, historical responses to homelessness in Australia were investigated. Documentary materials offered the opportunity to temporally ‘follow’ the appearance, continuity and change of the category of chronic homelessness, as well as the ebb and flow of involvement by different actors and institutions in the policy-making process. Thus, the initial round of documentary collection, which was tightly focused on Australian experiences with the Common Ground model, was usefully augmented with targeted documentary searches framed by the overriding analytical objective of understanding the Common Ground model in Australia. This strategy for documentary data collection spawned numerous specialised searches, each assisting to better understand how Common Ground was ‘arrived at’ in Australian cities.

Documentary sources also informed how subsequent interviews with policy actors were carried out, helping to identifying the “‘causal group’ of policy actors, advocates and critics” (Peck and Theodore, 2012a, p. 26) that were central to Australian experiences with the Common Ground model. Media reports and internet searches, for example, were used to identify key actors, providing information about their involvement in implementing Common Ground projects in Australia, which, with further investigation, assisted in establishing lists of potential interviewees. Documentary material was also invaluable in acquiring a level of fluency with the ‘policy language’ surrounding homelessness policy and the Common Ground model, which Kuus (2013) highlights as critical to effectively engaging with policy actors. Without having a background in homelessness policy prior to embarking on this research, documentary materials were essential in maximising the utility of subsequent interviews.

While these materials formed the contextual-factual bedrock of the case study, they also served an important and distinct second purpose. Beyond their instrumental value for researchers looking to understand policy-making,
documents themselves are central to the business of policy-making. Documents
do not simply reflect and recount, they are policy-making interventions that direct,
catalyse and constrain. For Freeman and Maybin (2011), policy-making is ‘talk
and text’, ‘meetings and documents’. Documents are the essence of policy work.
The importance of such an observation, following Cloke et al (2004, p. 54), lies in
the recognition that the construction and presentation of information “help[s] to
shape the ‘policy landscape’ in particular ways”. To fully appreciate policy-
related documentation, this research sought to engage documents as ‘cultural
texts’, which classify and narrate in ways that “serve to justify or condemn the
present … [and] that function to empower some and silence others” (Shore and
Wright, 1997, p. 15). By paying attention to documents in such a way—as
political interventions reflective of discursive and material labour—the basic
questions of documentary research regarding positioning, intention, audience and
authority (Roche, 2005) were integral to this research, serving to continually
foreground the way strategic selectivity is implicated in the production of
documentary material. As Chapters 5 to 7 demonstrate regarding homelessness
policy and the Common Ground model, the materiality of documents—their
substance and constitution—needs consideration in studies on policy mobility (see
Prince, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c). Documents and their content are critical to the
construction of policy ‘problems’ and ‘solutions’, which, through modes of
argument, narrative and calculation, attempt to achieve discursive and material
outcomes and, ultimately, the fulfilment of political projects.

However, with an assemblage methodology’s emphasis on multiplicity,
process and labour, and the need for policy mobilities research to explore the
‘prosaic netherworlds’ of policy (Peck and Theodore, 2012a, p. 25), there are
significant limitations to documentary materials. This research has sought to
mitigate such limitations through the use of interviews with policy actors.

Interviews

Despite their aforementioned usefulness, documentary sources have a tendency to
smooth over the rough edges of the policy-making process. Equivocations, dead-
ends, redirections, disagreements, and mundane goings-on often lie below the
surface of documented accounts, receding beyond view with the need to produce
confident conclusions, arguments and directives. There is a rich social life to
policy-making that documentary materials often do not capture. And notwithstanding candid (auto)biographies of policy actors (usually high-profile politicians), documentary sources do not generally yield accounts of policy actors critically reflecting on their own practices and the contingencies surrounding them. In the context of research responding to an ethnographic imperative, that is, research wanting to understand how policy-makers make sense of the world, this is an important limitation. Noting Roy’s (2012) argument that ethnographically inspired policy research needs to invite policy actors to act as ‘double agents’—a strategy that aims to have policy actors critically examine their day-to-day practice and its political implications—documentary sources tend to fall short. In response, this research has engaged elite interviews as a way to complement and supplement documentary materials. By allowing for the co-production of knowledge around questions relating to the implementation of Common Ground in Australian cities, this research attempted to access that which lies below polished accounts of policy-making and policy mobilisation. In the context of an assemblage methodology, elite interviews also allowed for a more nuanced understanding of the multiple, processual and laboured nature of policy mobility than documentary sources alone could provide.

Within geography and the social sciences it is widely accepted that interviewing involves more than instrumentally extracting information from interview subjects (Barbour and Schostak, 2011; Dunn, 2005; McDowell, 2010; Schoenberger, 1991). At the other extreme, interviewing involves “much more than ‘having a chat’” (Dunn, 2005, p. 79). McDowell (2010, p. 161) explains that an interview is a “complex and contested social encounter riven with power relations”. Those power relations see the researcher as “dependent upon the cooperation of interviewees, who must both agree to participate and feel willing and able to share with the interviewer the sorts of information on which the success of the work will depend” (McDowell, 2010, p. 161). In this research, the supplicant position of researcher, alluded to by McDowell, was all the more apparent given the ‘elite’ status of the interview subjects involved (Rice, 2010). Acknowledging the diversity of actors that influence the policy process, as Chapters 2 and 3 highlighted, I sought the involvement of a range of state and non-state elite actors, based within Australia and internationally. Woods (1998, p. 2108) characterises an ‘elite’ as someone that: (1) has privileged access or control
over a set of resources; (2) is embedded in social and professional network relations; and, (3) is discursively constructed as an elite by themselves or others. Unless there is a specific engagement with those directly targeted or affected by policy (e.g., service users, members of the public), most interview subjects in policy mobilities research will be classed as elite either by virtue of their privileged position in relation to the policy-making process and its implication in the allocation of resources or by virtue of their expertise. Importantly, this research did not seek to involve users of homeless services. Stemming from my focus on the practice of policy-making and policy mobilisation, it focused exclusively on policy elites, those with a professional role in the formulation of policies and programs addressing homelessness, including: politicians, public servants/bureaucrats, homelessness service sector workers, academic researchers, and consultants.

Informed by the need to combine analytical uncertainty with an overriding attention to the multiple determinations at work in any given situation, this research opted for semi-structured elite interviews. As distinct from structured interviewing, where each interviewee is asked the same questions in the same order, and open interviewing, where an interview is conducted similar to an undirected conversation, a semi-structured interview is “organized around ordered but flexible questioning” (Dunn, 2005, p. 88). Flexibility was a key attraction of semi-structured interviewing, allowing me to revise questions and topics in relation to changes in my own understandings and to the specific characteristics of interviewees. Semi-structured interviewing also allowed room for interviewees to steer discussion and to incorporate issues that I would not have otherwise considered, but which they saw as important. Accordingly, this mode of interviewing allowed for the co-production of social data “at the nexus of interviewee worldviews and the evolving bundle of questions actively pursued by the researcher” (Peck and Theodore, 2012a, p. 26).

As suggested earlier when explaining the ‘ethnographic ambition’ of this research, encounters with astute and empowered policy actors can result in “somewhat staged and often rather scripted encounters”, yielding “exaggerated accounts of foresight, rationality, or creative entrepreneurism” (Peck and Theodore, 2012a, p. 26). Keeping this in mind, I have been wary of treating interview data as somehow more ‘truthful’ than documentary data. My intention
was not to use interview data simply to peel-back the polished narratives proffered in documentary materials to find the ‘real story’ of Common Ground in Australia. It was, instead, to use interviewing as a way to ask questions not sufficiently answered by available documentary material and to provide policy actors with an opportunity to provide their perspective on the connections, translations, processes, labours surrounding the emergence of Common Ground in Australia. Reflecting my previous acknowledgement of the research account itself being an assemblage, the interview dataset was created through a process of co-production inflected by my own interests, capabilities and agendas as researcher and those of the policy actors involved. In recognising the provenance and particularity of the research assemblage girding this thesis, it is worth discussing in more detail the nature of the interviewees, their accounts and what they have offered this research.

Based on surveys of available documentary material, individuals and organisations were identified and classified according to their perspective on the implementation of the Common Ground model in Australian cities. Interviewees were selected for their ability to provide insight based on either their direct involvement in establishing and implementing Australian Common Ground projects (‘insiders’) or the fact that their work substantially intersected with the projects in a manner that would help to understand Australian experiences with the Common Ground model (‘outsiders’). These criteria yielded a list of potential interviewees affiliated to a range of institutional positions (in federal, state and local governments, the homelessness services sector, universities, private consultancies and private businesses (as philanthropic donors)) and spatial domains (including city (eg. Sydney, New York City), state (eg. Queensland, Victoria) and national (Australia, USA) scales). In total, 25 interviews were conducted, with representation from policy actors with institutional positions in the Australian homeless service sector (n=10), US homeless service sector (n=4), Australian local, state and federal governments (n=8), as well as university and consultancy sectors (n=3). Interviews were conducted in numerous parts of Australia, in New York City, and by telephone, between February and July 2011. Displayed chronologically in Table 4.2, interviews were first conducted with a number of Australian policy actors located in different cities in order to become familiar from an early stage with the range of Common Ground projects in
Cities from elsewhere

Australia. Interviews were then carried out with policy actors from the US and with additional Australian policy actors as interviewees became available and as prospective interviewees were suggested by those already interviewed.

Interview questions were adjusted to suit the role and level of engagement each interviewee had regarding the implementation of Common Ground projects (see Table 4.3 for an overview). For each interview, discussion centred on three analytical themes, framed by literatures on assemblage and urban policy mobilities, as outlined in the chapters so far. First, interviews focused on the ideational emergence of the Common Ground model in Australia. On one hand, questions sought to elicit information about the territorial zeitgeist—the contexts and drivers in operation at different scales (city, state, federal) when Common Ground began to be discussed in Australia. On the other, questions were aimed at getting interviewees to describe the relational connections to places, ideas and actors from elsewhere that presenced the Common Ground model in Australia. These emphases provided insight into the spatial dynamics of policy mobility.

Second, interviews focused on the character of debate surrounding the consideration and implementation of the Common Ground model, helping me to understand the social construction of policy problems and solutions as well as the discursive and material labour associated with policy mobilisation. Questions sought information about the key actors, moments and arguments that propelled the Common Ground model’s mobilisation and territorialisation in five Australian cities. Questions were also aimed at understanding whether or not the implementation of Common Ground projects benefited from an alignment or ‘fit’ with prevailing understandings of homelessness and with powerful political projects in Australia, relating to my post-structural political economy approach outlined in Chapter 2.
### Table 4.2: Summary of interviews.
(where a site affiliation is exclusively urban, the city appears in brackets)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N°</th>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Institutional role</th>
<th>Interview medium</th>
<th>Primary site affiliation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>CEO, Mercy Foundation</td>
<td>Administrator, not-for-profit organisation (non-service provider)</td>
<td>In person</td>
<td>NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Manager Homelessness and Indigenous Policy, Projects and Reform, Department Health and Human Services, Tasmania</td>
<td>Public servant, state government agency</td>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>Tasmania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Postdoctoral Research Fellow, University of Queensland</td>
<td>Researcher, university</td>
<td>In person</td>
<td>Australia-wide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Senior Research Officer, University of Queensland</td>
<td>Researcher, university</td>
<td>In person</td>
<td>Australia-wide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Principal Consultant, Resolve Community Consulting</td>
<td>Private consultant</td>
<td>In person</td>
<td>Victoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Senior Social Planner, City of Melbourne</td>
<td>Public servant, local government</td>
<td>In person</td>
<td>Victoria (Melbourne)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>CEO, HomeGround Services</td>
<td>Administrator, not-for-profit organisation (service provider)</td>
<td>In person</td>
<td>Victoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>General Manager Client Services, HomeGround Services</td>
<td>Administrator, not-for-profit organisation (service provider)</td>
<td>In person</td>
<td>Victoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Executive Officer, Australian Common Ground Alliance</td>
<td>Administrator, not-for-profit organisation (non-service provider)</td>
<td>In person</td>
<td>Australia-wide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>CEO, Common Ground</td>
<td>Administrator, not-for-profit organisation (service provider)</td>
<td>In person</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>COO, Corporation for Supportive Housing</td>
<td>Administrator, not-for-profit organisation (service provider)</td>
<td>In person</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>CEO, Pathways to Housing</td>
<td>Administrator, not-for-profit organisation (service provider)</td>
<td>In person</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Manager Homeless Unit, City of Sydney</td>
<td>Public servant, local government</td>
<td>In person</td>
<td>NSW (Sydney)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Director Social Inclusion Unit, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Tasmania</td>
<td>Public servant, state government agency</td>
<td>In person</td>
<td>Tasmania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Director Housing Innovations Unit, Department of Health and Human Services, Tasmania</td>
<td>Public servant, state government agency</td>
<td>In person</td>
<td>Tasmania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Principal Policy Officer, Department of Families and Communities, South Australia</td>
<td>Public servant, state government agency</td>
<td>In person</td>
<td>South Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Manager Business Operations, Common Ground Adelaide</td>
<td>Administrator, not-for-profit organisation (service provider)</td>
<td>In person</td>
<td>South Australia (Adelaide)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Coordinator, Micah Projects</td>
<td>Administrator, not-for-profit organisation (service provider)</td>
<td>In person</td>
<td>Queensland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>CEO, Y Foundations</td>
<td>Administrator, not-for-profit organisation (non-service provider)</td>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>New South Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Former Director Innovations Department, Common Ground</td>
<td>Administrator, not-for-profit organisation (service provider)</td>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Former Housing Minister, Victorian Government</td>
<td>Elected official</td>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>Victoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Manager Policy and Communications, Council to Homeless Persons</td>
<td>Administrator, not-for-profit organisation (non-service provider)</td>
<td>In person</td>
<td>Victoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>CEO, Wintringham</td>
<td>Administrator, not-for-profit organisation (service provider)</td>
<td>In person</td>
<td>Victoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Former Minister for Housing, Federal Government</td>
<td>Elected official</td>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>Australia-wide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Executive Officer, Common Ground Tasmania</td>
<td>Administrator, not-for-profit organisation (service provider)</td>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>Tasmania (Hobart)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interviewee perspective | Key interview topics
---|---
Common Ground ‘insider’ | • Role/background in development of Aust. CG projects
Australia- or US-based | • Initial awareness of CG model (and for US actors, awareness of Aust. homelessness policy/services)

Common Ground ‘outsider’ | • Role/background in homelessness policy/services
Australia- or US-based | • Initial awareness of CG model (and for US actors, awareness of Aust. homelessness policy/services)

| • Context and drivers for emergence CG in Aust. and US
| • Key actors/moments/activities/arguments for implementation of CG in Aust.
| • Differences/similarities within and between Aust. and US in: (1) homelessness policy; (2) CG projects
| • ‘Fit’ of CG with dominant approaches/understandings of homelessness in US and/or Aust.
| • Failures/successes of implementing CG model in Aust.
| • Future pathways for CG model and Aust. local expertise

Table 4.3: Indicative interview topics.

Finally, interviews focused on the process of adaptation associated with implementing the Common Ground model in Australian cities, providing insight into the socially practiced, mutative process of policy mobility. Interviewees were asked to reflect on the differences and similarities across Common Ground projects internationally and within Australia to shed light on how the Common Ground model had mutated over time as well as how those changes were reflective of relational and territorial spatialities. Questions also focused on what interviewees saw as being failures and successes surrounding the implementation of the Common Ground model and what the model’s overall impact had been on Australian approaches to homelessness.

Interviews were audio recorded to help maintain the flow of conversation (Dunn, 2005), with interviewees having the option of receiving a transcript of the
interview, enabling them to edit and delete their comments. This allowed interviewees to speak more freely and gave them a sense of control over their testimony. Many requested a copy of their transcript and a significant number of interviewees made amendments. Interviews were no doubt impacted by my positionality as an obviously young researcher (except in phone interviews). While this may have had negative consequences, in that the interviewees may have dismissed me as inexperienced and unknowledgeable, for the most part this positionality seemed to work in favour of this research given its interest in seemingly mundane details and practices, prompting interviewees to provide more of the ‘back story’, which may have been glossed over for researchers with apparent experience or seniority. My positionality as someone with knowledge of homelessness policy and services did change over the duration of the fieldwork, however. As the research progressed, I acquired greater fluency with the language of homelessness policy and services, gaining a sense of how to frame my questions for greater effect. Thus, through “the interaction with previous informants and the mobilisation of data collected in these interactions”, I was positioned, to use Ruming’s (2009, p. 459) words, as an increasingly “knowledgeable and worthy actor”. The precise chemistry of the interview encounter, conditioned in part by the changing positionalities of the researcher and the researched, underscores again the extent to which this research has been formed from an assemblage of situated, contingently co-produced data sources. To further develop this point, the remainder of this chapter discusses the method of analysis used to interpret the data sources just outlined.

4.5.2 Analysis

Sensitised to the processes, labours and over-determinations at work in policy assemblages, this research looked to documents and interviews to understand how Australian cities ‘arrived at’ the Common Ground model. In the foregoing discussion, I have explained how documents and interviews were utilised to enact the ethnographic ambition discussed previously and alluded to the way my search strategy and interview questions were less interested in what occurred within bounded sites than with following the relational webs that connected and constituted sites of teaching and learning. In the remainder of this chapter, I transition away from data collection to explain how the data were analysed,
arguing that the use of iterative discursive analyses allowed this research to follow the people, policies and places required of an assemblage methodology in general and urban policy mobilities research in particular.

With the ascendency of post-structuralism and post-positivism in the social sciences, it is now commonplace to approach social reality through the construction and/or performativity of ‘texts’ (Fairclough, 2003; Gregson and Rose, 2000). Viewed as texts, documents and interviews offer up insights into dominant and emergent ways of thinking and acting, which can be analysed through attention to discourse (Dittmer, 2010; Fairclough, 2003; Lee and Petersen, 2011; Waitt, 2005). In the context of urban geography, discourse analysis has become an increasingly popular methodological tool. Reflecting key schools of urban political research, as Chapter 2 discussed, Lees (2004) notes that discourse analysis in urban geography is generally bifurcated between Marxist political economy approaches and Foucauldian post-structuralist approaches. With a Marxist approach, “discourse analysis is a tool for uncovering certain hegemonic ways of thinking and talking about how things should be done that serve certain vested interests” (Prince, 2012a, p. 102). Discourse is thus an instrument to conceal the power of certain interests and induce the consent of the dominated. With a Foucauldian approach however, discourses create ‘regimes of truth’ that help install “the acceptable formulation of problems and solutions to those problems” (Lees, 2004, pp. 102-103). Reality, by this way of thinking, is constituted through discourse, rather than veiled by it. Chiming with the post-structuralist disposition of an assemblage methodology, this research aligns itself with the Foucauldian conception of discourse, acknowledging that it is impossible to talk of or know the world “without resorting to language as a mediating agent that classifies, subjectifies, and objectifies” (Dittmer, 2010, p. 277).

Influenced by assemblage methodology’s concern for over-determination and ethnography’s sensitivity to the way strong theory can “occlude the processes through which social life transpires and acquires meaning” (Herbert, 2000, p. 552), this research incorporated insights from grounded theory in its discursive analyses (Corbin and Holt, 2011; Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Grounded theorists approach datasets with ‘weak’ theoretical understandings, aiming to build-up theoretical frameworks from engagements with the data, rather than imposing rigid, and perhaps ill-fitting, theoretical frameworks onto the data (for a similar
approach to weak theory, see Gibson-Graham, 2006). For Burawoy et al (1991, p. 9), this means that when “our expectations are violated—when we discover what we didn’t anticipate—we then turn to existing bodies of academic theory that might cast light on our anomaly”. Such a view chimes with Peck and Theodore’s (2012a, p. 27) argument that policy mobilities researchers should focus on “‘road-testing’ hunches, hypotheses, and theories-in-reconstruction”, rather than overlaying grand, immutable theoretical schemas. In urban geography, O’Callaghan’s (2012) assemblage-theory-inspired call for a ‘provisional’ approach to theorising similarly acknowledges the benefits of ongoing, responsive conversation between empirical cases and theory. The grounded approach to post-structuralist discourse analysis adopted in this research is also useful in the context of the methodological practice of ‘following’. With its continual reassessment of theoretical adequacy, a grounded approach rewards the discovery of new, even confounding, connections and associations as a route toward greater theoretical clarity, embedding at its core an openness to following the people, policies and places involved in mobilising policy.

Putting such dispositions into practice, data were interrogated through iterative rounds of discursive analysis. The first stage of analysis focused exclusively on documentary material, enabling the identification of key actors, sites, arguments, techniques and categories relating to the appearance and implementation of the Common Ground model in Australian cities. Insights gained from an engagement with documentary materials went on to inform the analysis of interview materials, which was followed by rounds of data analysis shuffling back and forth between interview and documentary materials to isolate key moments and movements. An iterative approach to data analysis better enabled this research to come good on the methodological practice of following. In temporal and spatial senses, this research followed discursive traces within and between the data sources, assessing their character, continuity, and change, allowing empirical and analytical themes to be provisionally established and tested for their prevalence and significance across the data sets.

Coding was central to following these traces. Across all stages of analysis, manifest and latent coding was used (Cope, 2005). Manifest coding, relating to the analysis of discursive ‘content’, allowed for the identification of key actors and terms (such as Rosanne Haggerty and ‘chronic homelessness’ respectively) as
well as how those actors and terms were discursively framed (for instance, how Haggerty was positioned as an ‘expert’ with ‘innovative’ ideas that had been ‘proven to work’ in the US). Once manifest codes were assigned, data sources were then latently coded with reference to the discursive ‘context’ in which they operated (for instance, how an attention to ‘ideas that work’ might be reflective of wider efforts toward de-politicisation or technocratic policy-making). Latent codes also helped provide a sense of whether or not certain areas of theory could help understand the case study, leading to a process of workshopping theoretical insights to ascertain their purchase.

Of course, the practice of following discursive traces is not somehow scientific and rational. On the contrary, the inherent partialities of available data and theory, and the way they have been assembled in the context of my research project, result in this thesis being a particular reading of urban policy mobility and the Common Ground model in Australia. The shape of the following three empirical chapters should thus be seen as resulting from a combination of methodological iteration and assemblage. The chapters focus, in turn, on the way chronic homelessness was made knowable and actionable as a policy problem (Chapter 5), the mobilisation of the Common Ground model as an international best practice (Chapter 6), and the process of re-territorialising the Common Ground model in Australian cities (Chapter 7). Rather than being destined for exploration at the outset of this research, the empirical ground covered in this thesis is the outcome of an interactive process, profoundly impacted by the theoretical, conceptual and methodological dispositions outlined so far, as well as by the nature of documentary and interview data assembled. What I offer, then, is a necessarily situated appraisal of how Common Ground was ‘arrived at’ in Australian cities.

4.6 Conclusion
Informed by the theoretical framework established in Chapters 2 and 3, this chapter introduced the methodological approach taken in this thesis. Responding to the need for detailed qualitative insight into the multitude of practices, actors, sites and scales enrolled in instances of urban policy mobility, I argued for a case study approach framed around the concept of assemblage. My discussion began by showing that, rather than being a ‘representative case’ of policy mobility, the
implementation of the Common Ground model in Australian cities constitutes a ‘critical case’, one that provides analytical leverage on the theoretical and methodological issues raised in the chapters so far. Using a case study of Australian cities ‘arriving at’ the Common Ground model, I made clear that the focus of this research has been on investigating urban policy mobility from the vantage of Australian cities, not on the global mobility of certain ideas and experts per se.

By explaining the methodological uses of assemblage thinking and its emphasis on multiplicity, process and labour, I argued that assemblage methodologies open up avenues for urban policy mobilities researchers to explore the messy actualities of governance at the same time as attending to the realisation of power asymmetries that differentially position certain actors, knowledges and places. Emphasising reflexivity, assemblage methodologies also encourage urban policy mobilities researchers to think critically about the situated, partial nature of social research in general and qualitative case study research in particular. In response to the concerns and challenges of assemblage methodologies and of policy mobilities research, I advocated for the use of three methodological practices: (1) an ‘ethnographic ambition’; (2) a focus on relational situations over enclosed research sites; and, (3) ‘following’ people, policies and places. Finally, the chapter accounted for the way in which the methodological philosophy and practices informing this research have influenced the collection of data, the type of data sources used, and the manner in which they were analysed.

Across Chapters 5, 6 and 7, I utilise the theoretical and methodological frameworks established so far to explore the implementation of the Common Ground model in Australian cities. Paying attention to the contingent, hybrid production of structural effects and relational production of urban space, to the socially constructed, practiced and spatially dynamic nature of policy mobility, and to the multiplicities, processes and labours involved, the chapters focus in turn on three co-occurring and interrelated aspects of implementing the Common Ground model in Australia. In Chapter 5, I survey the Australian and international policy environment to understand the ‘context of contexts’ in which chronic homelessness became a policy ‘problem’ deserving of specialised responses such as the Common Ground model. This chapter sets the historical and contextual scene for a more grounded analysis of the actors, practices and labours involved in
both mobilising the model as an international best practice, in Chapter 6, and re-
territorialising the model in Australian cities, in Chapter 7. These insights are then
brought together in the thesis conclusion, where I reflect on what Australia’s
implementation of the Common Ground model suggests for research on urban
policy mobility and contemporary urban politics.
Chapter five

Constituting chronic homelessness
5.1 Introduction
In 2005, Rosanne Haggerty had her first encounter with Australia, visiting the South Australian city of Adelaide as part of its Thinkers in Residence program. Invited by the state government to advise on ‘solutions to solve homelessness’ (Adelaide Thinkers in Residence, 2011), Haggerty drew on her knowledge and experience as the founder of Common Ground, a New York City organisation specialising in the provision of ‘permanent supportive housing’ for people experiencing chronic homelessness. At the time, Common Ground’s work was not well known in Adelaide, or Australia, and the specific population it assisted, people experiencing chronic homelessness, scantly appeared in mainstream homelessness policy discussion. It is no exaggeration to claim that upon Haggerty’s first visit to Australia, the ‘problem’ of chronic homelessness was arguably as foreign as the model ‘solution’ Common Ground represented. Yet by the middle of 2009, no fewer than eight Australian Common Ground initiatives had been funded, each tasked with addressing chronic homelessness in their respective cities. Many of these initiatives, as I write, are operational and having material impacts on policy subjects now recognised as chronically homeless.

Collectively, the following chapters attempt to make sense of this example of urban policy mobility. Chapters 6 and 7 focus in grounded detail on the social practices, dynamic spatialities and the assemblage of labours and processes associated with mobilising and re-territorialising the Common Ground model in Australian cities. Though, despite being integral to urban policy mobility, this fine-grained activity cannot be divorced from a broader ‘context of contexts’ (Brenner et al, 2011). As I have previously suggested, mobile policy assemblages come into and out of being amid path dependencies and institutional settings that help establish conditions of possibility. In order to understand how the Common Ground model came to be implemented in Australian cities, it is critical, therefore, to understand first the historical-institutional context in which chronic homelessness became a policy problem deserving of certain programmatic solutions. In response, this chapter steps back from the intricacies of the model’s mobilisation and re-territorialisation to consider the broader homelessness policy landscape and its influence over the constitution of chronic homelessness as a policy problem.
The chapter is structured around four main sections. Section 5.2 introduces the topic of homelessness and orients my account around the concept of problematisation to help understand the social construction of homelessness as a policy problem. Section 5.3 discusses the international policy environment, illustrating the manner in which homelessness and notions of chronicity have become recognised as policy problems among countries with liberal welfare regimes. In light of my earlier argument regarding the hybridity and specificity of governance projects, Section 5.4 focuses in historical detail on the Australian homelessness policy context, showing its connection to a number of territorialised ideological shifts, and its influence over the problematisation of chronic homelessness. Acknowledging that the emergence of chronic homelessness in Australia was informed by international ‘common sense’ as much as domestic politics, Section 5.5 discusses the nature and impact of international influences on Australian understandings of chronic homelessness. In doing so, I explore how those influences laid the foundation for certain policy models, notably the Common Ground model, to be implemented in Australian cities. In Chapters 6 and 7, I complement the historical and contextual account provided here by exploring the model’s mobilisation and re-territorialisation in granular detail.

5.2 Problematising homelessness

‘Homelessness’ is not constant across time and space. Like all categories and concepts, it is socially produced, “formulated at certain times to convey certain meanings and to provide the basis or authority for certain actions” (Jamrozik, 2009, p. 1). As Mitchell (2011, p. 933) has argued, homelessness “names a social condition, a set of social relations that are as much about the structures of housed society as they are about how society understands those who lack shelter”. Homelessness is understood and approached—in effect, constituted—through historically and geographically specific renderings that make it intelligible as a social phenomenon. The way homelessness is constituted is not straight-forward, nor is it natural or inevitable. It is “an evolving, contested “project,” not a once-and-for all thing” (Mitchell, 2011, p. 933). Commenting on the UK context, Pleace and Quilgars (2003, p. 187) note how the category of homelessness has undergone profound changes over the span of a century owing to “paradigmatic shifts both in conceptualizations as well as political responses to those
conceptualizations”. Within the geographical literature, however, researchers have tended to overlook the considerable variability between nations and between cities, often extrapolating from the experience of certain paradigmatic places in a manner that papers over contextual nuance. “One of the more frustrating aspects of recent work by geographers on homelessness”, DeVerteuil et al (2009, p. 655) claim, “is the tendency to proceed as though the problems of homelessness—and policy responses to those problems—are implicitly everywhere the same”.

Precisely because ‘homelessness’ is spatially dynamic—persistently variegated and realised differently in various national and local contexts—the conditions and techniques associated with its constitution do not correspond neatly to any given context. Recent work has highlighted the need to explore how the ‘problem’ of homelessness and attendant policy responses are constituted through global connections and the experiences of often distant sources of influence (Mitchell, 2011; von Mahs, 2011). These accounts have so far been interested in the ‘Americanisation of homelessness’; the way approaches and understandings of homelessness associated with the US and its cities have become globally influential, even hegemonic. In a special issue of Urban Studies dedicated to this topic, von Mahs (2011, p. 925) notes that “we are, in fact, witnessing Americanization, especially in the area of implementing punitive urban policy to rid the homeless from redeveloped urban prime spaces”. Although he duly acknowledges “that the matter is far more complex”, the incipient risk with Americanisation, as debates concerning neoliberalisation have shown, is a presumption of dominance that results from the analytical privilege afforded to supposedly hegemonic processes. Consistent with my approach to urban politics established in Chapter 2, many authors have pointed out that responses to homelessness remain deeply ambivalent, hybrid and multiple (DeVerteuil, 2006, forthcoming; DeVerteuil et al, 2009; Laurenson and Collins, 2006, 2007; Murphy, 2009; Sparks, 2012). In reaction to work focusing on the expansion of US-inspired punitive approaches to homelessness, DeVerteuil et al (2009, p. 646), for their part, highlight “the growing multiplic[it]y of homeless geographies in recent years under policies that are better understood as multifaceted and ambivalent rather than only punitive”. The problem of homelessness is constructed in relation to any number of global influences, interacting in ways that cannot be known in advance.
There is, then, a politics and a geography to the way homelessness is understood as a societal condition and, more specifically, as a problem requiring policy intervention. This suggests that close attention be paid to the precise character of ‘homelessness’ as it is deployed in particular situations. It also highlights the need to appreciate the multi-scaled conditions and circulation of techniques enabling that deployment within the policy apparatus. Following Freeman (2012, p. 13), homelessness policy is less a logical response to a transcendent problem than a ‘collective script’ incorporating “the shared understanding of a problem, of what is to be done in response to it, how, by whom, and to what effect”. In this chapter, I examine the collective homelessness policy script, and its social construction, to understand the context in which the Common Ground model was mobilised and re-territorialised. To do so, I frame my analysis around processes and practices of problematisation (Barnett et al, 2011; Collier, 2009; Larner, 2011). At its simplest, problematisation entails asking “how and why certain things (behaviour, phenomena, processes) became a problem” (Foucault, 2000, p. 171, original emphasis). In a manner sympathetic to my PSPE approach to urban politics, Barnett et al (2011, p. 20) additionally claim that the concept of problematisation helps “avoid the style of grand theorizing associated with narratives of modernity, postmodernity, neoliberalism and advanced liberalism”, revealing how the formations of a ‘problem’ is “indicative of distinctive forms of political mobilization and representation” (p. 1). Building on these insights, I discuss how homelessness, and specifically chronic homelessness, has been problematised as an object of government policy. Connecting this to the broader outlook of this thesis, I explore the process of problematisation not as a necessary response to structural imperatives or a particular hegemonic project, but as a hybrid assemblage of different historical and territorialised path dependencies, institutional settings, and multi-scaled policy engagements.

5.3 International policy trajectories
To understand the way homelessness and homelessness policy has been problematised in Australia, it is useful to trace the trajectories and dynamics of the international policy scene, particularly in Anglophone world. For the majority of the 20th century, policy communities in Anglophone nations—nations collectively
defined by their having liberal welfare regimes (Esping-Anderson, 1990)\textsuperscript{1}, understood homelessness to be a niche phenomenon associated with a small population of single males concentrated in impoverished inner city districts, often known as 'skid rows'. As “specialized districts for housing, maintaining, and managing the massive reserve army of labor”, Mitchell (2011, p. 937) characterises skid rows by the preponderance of “single-room occupancy hotels (SROs), flophouses, municipal lodging houses, labor agencies, cheap bars and cafes, missions, whorehouses, and other businesses and services geared toward poor and migratory workers”. Although homelessness was generally seen in terms of individual moral failure in the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century (Pleace, 2000), the numbers of homeless persons fluctuated dramatically with changes in the economic climate, suggesting its causes were fundamentally structural. In the US, for example, the Great Depression of the late 1920s resulted in large increases in homelessness that later contracted with the demand for soldiers and industrial labour brought about by World War II. Easy access to shelter, albeit poor quality, meant that very few homeless people were living on the streets (Rossi, 1990). Homelessness was thus relatively hidden, contained spatially (in skid rows) and demographically (associated with, often older, single males). In the post war years coinciding with the expansion of the welfare state in Anglophone nations, homelessness was increasingly diagnosed as a structural issue (Pleace, 2000). With concerted efforts to alleviate poverty and provide affordable state-sponsored housing, social scientists of the time claimed that the problem of homelessness was receding, noting marked contractions in the size of skid row districts (Rossi, 1990). Some prophesised the end of homelessness.

However, this prophecy would become more and more fanciful from the late 1970s. Anglophone nations began to envisage a qualitatively different set of structural relations between the state, the market and society. With neoliberal reform projects in the UK and US particularly, the state was subject to sustained moral critique, charged with the perversion of market efficiency, infringement of individual liberty and the creation of welfare dependant populations. As a result,

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{1} Esping-Anderson (1990) distinguishes between liberal, social-democratic and corporatist welfare state regimes (in later work, additional categories are included). Liberal welfare regimes, in countries including Australia, Canada, New Zealand, UK and US, are characterised by residual, targeted assistance, typically with extensive means-testing, modest income payments and modest social-insurance.}
the state began to withdraw from its interventionist and redistributive roles, increasingly acting as a facilitator for market allocation of public and private goods (Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Harvey, 2007; Jessop, 2002; Larner, 2000; Peck and Tickell, 2002). In concert with reductions to welfare spending overall, individuals were increasingly expected to manage risk and engage in self-provisioning, supported by a residual welfare safety-net. Corresponding with these broader changes, the problem of homelessness underwent a thorough revision during this time. Echoing the supposed moral deviance associated with earlier skid row homelessness, individual pathology again became the favoured lens through which homelessness was understood and acted upon. In the US context, Mitchell (2011) refers to it as ‘The Great U-turn’ in the understanding of homelessness—from individual determinants, to structural, and back (see also Pleace, 2000).

Continued restructuring into the 1980s coincided with—and, many argue, created—a distinct change in the nature and extent of homelessness (DeVerteuil, 2006; DeVerteuil et al, 2009; Hopper and Hamberg, 1984; May et al, 2005; Mitchell, 2011; Sparks, 2012; Tsemberis, 2010; von Mahs, 2011). ‘New homelessness’ began to spill over demographic and spatial containment lines characteristic of the ‘old homelessness’ embodied in skid row’s lone males. The gravity of change is evident in Hopper and Hamberg’s (1984, p. 1) observation that homelessness “has crept back into prominence, snatched from oblivion”. Worsening economic conditions and the impact of neoliberal reform broadened the demographic profile of homelessness to include women, youths and families, and, in the US at least, was racialised, with disproportionate numbers of African Americans (for the Australian experience during this time, see Chamberlain and MacKenzie, 2003; Thompson, 2007). Gentrification and disinvestment in low cost housing meant homelessness was no longer confined and managed in marginalised urban districts. In the UK, there was growing public and political concern about the visibility of street homelessness throughout the 1980s. Congregated in encampments like ‘Cardboard City’ near London’s Waterloo Station, homelessness began to infringe on prime urban space (Pleace and Quilgars, 2003). “What marked out this new homelessness was its sudden visibility”, Mitchell (2011, p. 940) notes in the US context, “streets, especially the streets of the Central Business District, were full of homeless people”.

Constituting chronic homelessness 133
Emphasising the point, he goes on: “No longer confined to the old skid row, the homeless littered the sidewalks and parks on the everyday paths of urban residents and suburban commuters alike”. From the 1980s onwards, the acknowledged ‘crisis’ or ‘epidemic’ of street homelessness (May et al, 2005; Tsemberis, 2010) began to demand concerted policy responses. In Australia and New Zealand though, increases were not as severe as in the US and UK (Bullen, 2010; Laurenson and Collins, 2007), suggesting the variability of both neoliberal reform and the capacity of welfare systems to ameliorate its impact.

The geographical literature on homelessness has focused extensively on the post-1980s increase in punitive measures at the urban scale. Particularly from a UK and US vantage, this work has documented the rise of initiatives aiming to disrupt, deter and/or criminalise behaviours associated with homeless persons (Mitchell, 2011; N. Smith, 1998, 2001; von Mahs, 2011). As DeVerteuil (2006, p. 109) points out, increased visibility of homelessness brought on by national welfare retrenchment, combined with mounting pressure on city administrations to project positive images to secure global competitiveness, put mounting “pressure on the local state to hide the visual manifestation of homelessness”. At the same time, many inner city areas were the site of large scale redevelopment initiatives, the profitability of which depended on the maintenance of sanitised, consumer-friendly environments. As a result, punitive measures—such as outlawing of panhandling, begging and unlicensed commercial activities, and the removal of the homeless from prime urban areas—targeted the very presence of homeless people themselves in the name of re-asserting order (Mitchell, 2011). In more extreme and somewhat vengeful cases, such as New York City mayor Giuliani’s ‘quality of life’ measures in the 1990s, punitive policy approaches were framed as assisting middle and upper classes ‘reclaim’ city space, what Smith (1998) calls ‘revanchism’. Highlighting the popularity of this highly individualised framing of the homelessness problem, recent articles have explored the global influence of punitive approaches in general (Mitchell, 2011; von Mahs, 2011) and revanchism in particular (Mountz and Curran, 2009; N. Smith, 2001; Swanson, 2007). Helpful as they are, such accounts cannot be said to have adequately captured the collective experience of Anglophone nations. In the Australian and New Zealand contexts for example, punitive responses have not been nearly as pervasive as the geographical literature implies (Laurenson and
Constituting chronic homelessness

Collins, 2006, 2007; Walsh, 2011), pointing again to the geographic variability of homelessness policy and the decisive role played by territorial institutions and the path dependencies they create.

Emerging alongside punitive measures to address homelessness have been altogether more supportive, or at least benign, approaches. In Australia and the US for example, the 1980s saw the first systematic efforts by national governments to provide state-funded shelters and services (Bullen, 2010; Sparks, 2012). For DeVereuil (2006, p. 119), shelters are “contradictory and nuanced institutions that contain/conceal/manage the homeless while also providing basic subsistence needs”. Shelters provide life-sustaining services, acting as important sites of repair and care-giving (Cloke et al, 2010), but are also widely criticised by practitioners and scholars alike as simply ‘managing’ or ‘warehousing’ the problem of homelessness rather than ‘solving’ it (for example DeVereuil, 2006; Tsemberis, 2010). In the absence of efforts to address structural issues such as poverty and the provision of affordable housing, the expansion of the shelter system in the 1980s showcased the persistence of government efforts to act on individual improvement and to provide ‘transitional’ services as the primary means of addressing homelessness. Commenting on policies addressing street homelessness in the UK, for example, Pleace (2000, p. 584) notes that “it is not a question of changing the world, but ensuring that citizens are equipped to deal with … [an] ever changing world”.

From the mid 1990s, the cultivation of self-reliant subjects using a combination of punitive measures and short-term managerial approaches, such as shelter accommodation, became seen as ineffective for a certain segment of the homeless population. This segment of ‘hard core’, ‘long-term’ or ‘chronically’ homeless persons were seemingly unresponsive to existing policy interventions that either sought to deter homelessness or provide transitional responses to help homeless persons achieve self-reliance. Chronically homeless persons, understood to have compounded mental/physical illnesses and substance abuse issues, which either predispose them to living on the streets or were acquired/aggravated through those experiences, were increasingly seen as incapable of ‘rational self-governance’ (Sparks, 2012). With this realisation, chronic homelessness began to be thought of as warranting a different type of policy intervention. Originating in the US, the most widely known intervention is Housing First, a service philosophy
centred around the provision of stable housing and long-term support services to
address individual issues (Johnsen and Teixeira, 2010; Padgett et al, 2006;
a “radical shift away from existing approaches because of its explicit focus on
housing as a first and necessary step in the process of recovery”. Spurred on by
strategic policy efforts seeking to achieve sustained reductions in homelessness in
the UK, US, Australia, Canada and Europe (Parsell et al, 2013), from the mid
2000s chronic homelessness became a policy priority and Housing First a new
‘common sense’ for many governments (Atherton and McNaughton Nicholls,
2008; European Consensus Conference on Homelessness, 2010; Houard, 2011;
Johnsen and Teixeira, 2010; G. Johnson et al, 2012; Pleace, 2011). In Section 5.5,
I elaborate on the nature of this internationalised common sense by focusing on its
impact and articulation in Australia. But in order to contextualise the circulation
of international common sense regarding chronic homelessness, the next section
attends to the hybridity and ambiguity of the Australian homelessness policy
environment and its influence on understandings of chronic homelessness.

5.4 Producing homelessness policy in Australia

Responding to the ambiguities and multiplicities associated with homelessness
policy, as well as the emphasis that my PSPE approach places on the active
production of structures, institutions and political projects in hybrid governance
contexts, this section seeks to detail Australian policy approaches to
homelessness. I claim that in order to understand the social construction of
chronic homelessness as a policy problem in Australia, attention must be given to
the articulation of territorial political projects and the durability of historical
legacies in shaping policy. Before discussing the recent emergence of chronic
homelessness as a formal policy category, it is necessary first to explain the
establishment of Australian homelessness policy, its reform trajectory, and the
influence this trajectory has had on the social construction of chronic
homelessness in Australian policy.

5.4.1 Establishment and expectations

As a discreet policy domain, homelessness began to receive significant
government attention in Australia from the 1970s. Elected on a platform railing
against disadvantage and poverty, the centre-Left Whitlam Labor government (1972-75) introduced the federal Homeless Persons Assistance Act (HPA Act) in 1974. Facilitating direct government assistance to non-government service providers, the HPA Act formalised previously disjointed federal government initiatives. As Bullen (2010) outlines in her history of Australian homelessness policy, this response also sought to overcome a reliance on charitable providers, whose service provision was often premised on religious selectivity and improvement. Alongside the Whitlam government’s ambitious reform project addressing structural inequalities in education, social housing and indigenous rights, for example, the HPA Act was designed to serve as a crisis response to homelessness. Based on need, entitlement and the passive provision of services, its welfare logic was classically social democratic (Taylor, 2007).

The demise of the Whitlam government saw the centre-Right Fraser government brought to power (1975-83). Although the Fraser government was influenced by circulating international critique of the welfare state, public support for welfare ensured there was little appetite for the scale of welfare retrenchment seen in the UK and US at the time. By the end of Fraser’s government in 1983, and coinciding with deteriorating economic circumstances, the HPA Act had been broadened to accommodate a greater range of homeless individuals and families (Bullen, 2010), known elsewhere as the ‘new homeless’. Homelessness was spared from any initial flirtations with neoliberal welfare reform and, accordingly, did not have ‘The Great U-turn’ toward individualised understandings of the homelessness problem felt elsewhere (Mitchell, 2011).

Unusual in international terms, Australia’s neoliberalisation project was initiated by successive centre-Left Labor governments, under the prime ministership of Bob Hawke (1983-91) and Paul Keating (1991-96). While the process of neoliberalisation has been no less transformational in Australia than elsewhere—Pusey (2010, p. 125) calls it “a top-down ‘revolution from above’ that has transformed our political and economic institutions and touched every nerve of our society”—it was guided neither by a repudiation of social democracy, nor by a moral critique of the state, as seen in the UK and US, for instance. Many authors have grappled with how best to reconcile Australian reform trajectories with neoliberal ideology and theory (McGuirk, 2005; McGuirk and Dowling, 2009a, 2009b; McKnight and Manne, 2010; O’Neill and Argent, 2005; O’Neill
and Moore, 2005; Ruming, 2005). O’Neill and Weller (2013, n.p.), for their part, are wary of simplistic invocations of Australian neoliberalism, noting that while “many moments of reform can be stitched together into a story about [neoliberalism] … we emphasise that this is not the only or necessarily best reading of events”. What is clear is that the Australian experience of the 1980s less resembled conservative projects of neoliberalisation than it did what would later be known as ‘the Third Way’ under the governments/administrations of Tony Blair, Bill Clinton and Gerhard Schröder in the 1990s (indeed, it is increasingly acknowledged that Australian Labor governments of the 1980s had a large influence on Blair’s Third Way politics (C. Johnson and Tonkiss, 2002; Scanlon, 2001)).

Similar to later Third Way projects, Australian neoliberalisation during the 1980s was motivated by a managerial rather than moral critique of the state. Whereas Thatcher and Reagan were “driven by an ideological commitment to reducing the size of the state”, Zifkac (1994, p. 19) explains that the Hawke administration “was informed by a technocratic concern for effective administration”. Attention was focused not on the legitimacy of the state to govern, but on the calibration of apparently non-political governing practices in response to “an era of globalisation, ‘footloose’ capital and the shrinking revenue base of the state” (Scanlon, 2001, pp. 489-490). Accordingly, Australian Labor governments have tended to meld neoliberal influences with a durable social democratic project, often entailing an uneasy integration of market economics with commitments to progressive social policy (C. Johnson and Tonkiss, 2002).

This hybrid political project filtered its way into the next major development in national homelessness policy, the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (the SAAP). Beginning in 1985 under the Hawke government, the SAAP sought to coordinate what had become a range of fragmented programs at federal and state levels into a jointly funded federal-state program, updated on a five year cycle and supported by legislation (the Supported Accommodation Assistance Act). The first decade of the SAAP (incorporating SAAP I (1985-89), II (1989-94) and part of III (1994-99)) saw it expand markedly: the number of funded services increased from 500 in 1985 to 718 in 1987, and 1183 by 1997; and between 1989-90 and 1992-3 recurrent expenditure grew from AU$113.5m to AU$156.6m (Bullen, 2010, p. 70). Bullen (2010) notes
that the SAAP was distinctive in extending welfare entitlements to the homeless at the same time as re-framing the responsibilities of the state and of the service recipient—away from the passive provision of the HPA Act to an approach requiring the client’s ‘active participation’. While reminiscent of neoliberal social policy orientations, this re-framing built on Australian approaches to welfare apparent since Federation in 1901. Known as a ‘wage-earner’s welfare state’, Gray and Agllias (2009, p. 277) point out that with Australia’s deeply embedded egalitarian values, often expressed in the notion of having and receiving a ‘fair go’, “moral judgements as to who was deserving or not thus rested heavily on an individual’s capacity for self-reliance”. While contextually important, it would be a misreading then to attribute neoliberal influences as the only factor shifting the problematisation of homelessness toward active participation and individual improvement.

A shift from the passive provision of the HPA Act under Whitlam and Fraser to the SAAP’s focus on active participation under Hawke and Keating coincided with a change in the principle aim of federal homelessness policy. Rather than providing services per se, the SAAP was re-oriented toward services that supported transitions to independent living (Fopp, 2002; Thompson, 2007; Walsh, 2011; Zaretzky et al, 2008). Greenhalgh et al (2004, p. 105) note that the SAAP’s aim was “to provide transitional supported accommodation and related support services to help homeless people achieve the maximum possible degree of self-reliance and independence”. From 1989, the SAAP was increasingly required not only to provide a ‘crisis response’ for the homeless, as it had done previously, but to also provide a ‘transitional response’ through short- and medium-term services and accommodation. Case management was introduced in 1994 to further assist clients make the transition to independent living (Fopp, 2002). This shift from standardised welfare to individualised welfare, and from entitlement to participation, coincided with international approaches to homelessness at the time, which framed service provision in terms of ‘transitions’, ‘staircases’ and ‘ladders’ (Johnsen and Teixeira, 2010). For example, the SAAP’s US equivalent, the McKinney-Vento Act 1987, used the language of a ‘continuum’ approach that similarly aimed to support client transitions. By the end of the Hawke and Keating governments in 1996, the expansion of homeless services through the SAAP had slowed and a shift away from structural solutions to homelessness was underway.
Homelessness was less about housing and employment than it was about individual barriers to self-reliance.

Individualisation of the homelessness problem in Australia accelerated under the conservative Howard government (1996-2007). As the deterioration of the welfare safety-net, disinvestment in social housing, and mental health de-institutionalisation appeared to be exacerbating the structural determinants of homelessness, the Howard government introduced a moral dimension to welfare (O’Neill and Weller, 2013). Under the doctrine of ‘mutual obligation’, prior emphasis on active participation was supplemented by efforts to prevent welfare ‘dependency’ (Gray and Aglias, 2009; C. Johnson and Tonkiss, 2002). As much conservative as neoliberal in orientation, O’Neill and Weller (2013, n.p.) explain that “Howard focused on reforming social institutions with a view to elevating personal responsibility and eradicating dependence, creating self-motivated and self-reliant citizens accepting of responsibility for their fate”. Growth in the homeless service system slowed, then halted, and some state governments claimed that the federal contribution did not allow them to meet real cost increases over the period of SAAP IV (2000-5) (Bullen, 2010, p. 83). Bullen (2010) argues that the conception of homelessness as ‘individualised’ was consolidated during this period, and service providers, in addition to being responsive to the individual, were expected to engender changes within the individual.

By the end of the Howard government in late 2007, homelessness policy had undergone significant changes (key information is summarised in Table 5.1). As a problem of government, homelessness, once understood as primarily structural, was being approached as primarily individual. Once addressed through the passive provision of crisis responses, homelessness policy had changed to focus on transitional responses, requiring active participation and mutual obligation. And crucially, with declining real spending on homeless services and minimal interest in addressing structural determinants, SAAP-funded non-government service providers were increasingly expected to ‘solve’ homelessness themselves. This expectation would later prove decisive for the discovery of chronic homelessness and its legitimation as an object of government policy.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gov’t</th>
<th>Party and ideological position</th>
<th>Primary program</th>
<th>Direction of real spending</th>
<th>Emphasised determinants of homelessness</th>
<th>Mode of service provision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whitlam</td>
<td>Labor Party – social democratic</td>
<td>HAP</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td>Structural</td>
<td>Crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972-75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraser</td>
<td>Liberal Party – traditional liberal</td>
<td>HAP</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td>Structural</td>
<td>Crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975-83</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawke</td>
<td>Labor Party – social democratic and neoliberal</td>
<td>SAAP</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td>Structural and individual</td>
<td>Crisis and transitional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983-91</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keating</td>
<td>Labor Party – social democratic and neoliberal</td>
<td>SAAP</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td>Structural and individual</td>
<td>Crisis and transitional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-96</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howard</td>
<td>Liberal Party – conservative and neoliberal</td>
<td>SAAP</td>
<td>↓</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Crisis and transitional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-07</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.1: Trajectories of federal homelessness policy in Australia, 1972-2007.

5.4.2 Formalising chronic homelessness

After a stretch of neglect under the Howard government, the election of the Rudd Labor government in 2007 saw homelessness placed firmly on the national agenda. In the run up to the election, Rudd’s widely reported personal interest in homelessness lent the issue unprecedented prominence among the intransigent electoral concerns of jobs, tax, health, climate change and education. Given the nation’s sustained economic prosperity, it was time, Rudd said, to do “the right thing for all those Australians out there who have run into one of life’s brick walls” by establishing a new ‘social contract’ on homelessness (Schubert and Stafford, 2007, p. 6). To the newly elected government, rising levels of homelessness in the face of almost two decades of uninterrupted economic growth highlighted the inadequacy of existing policy approaches. According to the federal Housing Minister of the time:

> there had been a shocking underinvestment in homelessness and low income housing for many years, at least a decade I think you could fairly say. We had strong economic growth figures and yet from the 2001 Census to the 2006 Census we actually saw the number of homeless people increase, and we saw that as a government … that needed to be addressed as a priority. (Int. 24: former Housing Minister, Australian Government)

Attention on homelessness chimed with Rudd’s broader electoral rhetoric, which traded on public discontent with the market fundamentalism of the Howard government—particularly in the area of labour reform—as well as its conservativism in social and environmental policy. “Given that John Howard’s neo-liberal experiment has now reached the extreme, the time has come to restore the
balance in Australian politics”, Rudd (2006, n.p.) argued as a then prime ministerial hopeful. In the wake of the 2008 Global Financial Crisis, Rudd (2009, n.p.) was unique among Western political leaders in directly attacking neoliberalism, claiming that the crisis had “called into question the prevailing neoliberal economic orthodoxy of the past 30 years—the orthodoxy that has underpinned the national and global regulatory frameworks that have so spectacularly failed to prevent the economic mayhem which has now been visited upon us”. Yet despite the boldness of such a statement, Rudd’s path forward was decidedly measured, even conciliatory. The “challenge for social democrats”, he stated, “is not to throw the baby out with the bathwater” (Rudd, 2009, n.p.).

By fusing market-based reform with progressive tendencies, the Rudd government continued a policy trajectory established by the Hawke and Keating Labor governments of the 1980s and 90s. Framed as “a modern incarnation of Labor’s social democratic vision”, Treasurer Wayne Swan (2011, p. 2) explained that the Rudd government’s “aim was to build on the achievements of the Hawke and Keating Governments”. While earlier Labor governments had, in Wark’s (1999, p. 327) terms, “an incomplete go” at the Third Way, Rudd drew on Labor’s historically-rooted project and combined it with an embrace of the ideological commitments and policy approaches of more recent Third Way proponents. His plea to eschew “the extremism of both the Left and the Right” (Rudd, 2009, n.p.) is remarkably similar to the catch-cry of Blair’s (2003) Third Way project in the UK. Long before becoming prime minister, Rudd declared his affinity with international Third Way projects. With a nod to Clinton, Blair and Schröder, Rudd argued in his first speech as a Member of Parliament, that “parties of the Centre Left around the world are wrestling with a similar challenge—the creation of a competitive economy while advancing the overriding imperative of a just society” (Rudd, 1998, n.p.).

Contrasted against the bureaucracy and ‘tax and spend’ approach levelled at old social democracy, Third Way reform projects have set about dramatically changing the provision of welfare, captured in Clinton’s famous pledge to ‘end
welfare as we know it’. For Taylor (2007, p. 89), Third Way proponents seek to use welfare measures not to redistribute resources but to ‘redistribute possibilities’, and where traditional social democratic ideology frames welfare as a right, Third Way ideology frames it as an unfortunate but necessary concession that comes with responsibilities for the recipient. Instead of eradicating structural determinants of poverty or mitigating them through redistributive mechanisms, Third Way projects are more likely to focus on assisting individuals and families overcome ‘social exclusion’, which Levitas (2005, p. 7) explains as an effort to assist ‘outsiders’ with “a transition across the boundary to become an insider”. In Australia, Rudd drew explicitly on the discourse of social exclusion, establishing the Social Inclusion Unit, a centralised social policy unit tasked with the goal of “maximising participation in economic and social life” (Rudd, 2008, p. 7).

With welfare articulated in this manner, Third Way governments are motivated by pragmatic considerations to find ‘what works’. This has driven such governments to place greater importance on performance management (using techniques of audit, benchmarking and performance indicators (Power, 1997)), and has also led to a focus on ‘evidence-based policy-making’ (Bulmer et al, 2007; Kay, 2011; Pawson, 2006). In an address to senior public servants in 2008, prime minister Rudd signalled his interest, stating that “evidence-based policy making is at the heart of being a reformist government” (quoted in Productivity Commission, 2009, p. 3). Indeed, the emphasis Rudd placed on utilising evidence became a central part of his technocratic public persona (see Figure 5.1).

With these dispositions bearing down, Rudd announced his plan for homelessness policy reform upon assuming office in late 2007. Signalling the intent, he directed newly sworn-in ministers to visit homeless service providers. He noted that

> while significant funds are dedicated to housing and support of the homeless, for too many intervention does not bring stable housing, a job or increased participation in their community ... It is for this reason that the Government will embark on an unprecedented examination of homelessness in Australia (Rudd, 2008, p. 2).

Setting in motion the production of a White Paper\(^2\), the Rudd government elevated the issue of homelessness to the level of national policy priority. It was a

---

\(^2\) Borrowed from the British parliamentary tradition, White Papers are strategic policy documents formulated by a presiding government. They are major undertakings, typically produced after the
watershed moment, particularly for those in the homeless service sector whose calls for systemic reform had fallen on deaf ears during the Howard years. As one prominent service sector professional later noted, “no other government has invested so much funding and expended so much political capital towards this cause” (Morgan-Thomas, 2012, n.p.).

Figure 5.1: Satirical response to Kevin Rudd’s evidence-based policy-making.

The White Paper, titled *The Road Home: A National Approach to Reducing Homelessness* (Australian Government, 2008a), recommended significant funding increases for the homeless service sector. Consistently demonstrated through SAAP evaluations (eg. Erebus Consultants, 2004), it had long been apparent that the homeless service system was not resourced to keep pace with service demand. Following the White Paper’s recommendation, federal and state/territory governments committed to substantial funding increases, formalised with the creation of the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness in 2009. Funding was increased by 55 per cent, totalling AU$800m over the five year span of the Agreement—the largest single increase since the inception of the SAAP in 1985.

Perhaps more remarkable than wholesale funding increases was the way Rudd and the White Paper re-oriented homelessness policy itself. The most radical change was an emphasis on achieving measurable reductions in homelessness, made clear in the White Paper’s subtitle. Framed around three strategic directions—‘turning off the tap’ (preventing homelessness), ‘expanding and improving services’ and ‘breaking the cycle’ (addressing long-term homelessness)—the White Paper articulated objectives of halving homelessness and offering supported accommodation “to all rough sleepers who need it” by 2020 (Australian Government, 2008a, p. viii). Interim targets were specified to dissemination of a discussion document known as a Green Paper (in this case, see Australian Government, 2008b) and extensive public consultation.

3 The National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness is an agreement between federal, state and territory governments detailing agreed policy objectives and funding contributions. It is a component of the National Affordable Housing Agreement, which also includes social and indigenous remote housing.
gauge progress against the objectives. Parsell et al (2013, p. 188) note that “these objectives represented a fundamental change in Australian homelessness policy”, pointing out that despite an emphasis on assisting the homeless achieve self-reliance, the now superseded SAAP “was not in any way intended, designed or resourced to achieve a permanent reduction in homelessness but merely managed the problem”. Positioning the issue of homelessness as a ‘preventable social problem’ to be met with a strategic response and significant funding was thus a profound change for Australian homelessness policy (Parsell and Marston, 2012). Building on the supposed deficiencies of previous policy approaches, and the understandings of homelessness associated with them, this round of problematisation served to re-make homelessness as a socially constructed policy category.

With the goal of reducing homelessness by half, and strategic attention on ‘breaking the cycle’ of homelessness, rough sleepers became a defining policy focus. Australian policy responses at federal and state levels had not previously targeted rough sleeping with dedicated service programs (Parsell and Jones, 2012), with the White Paper concluding that “services targeting people sleeping rough in Australia are underdeveloped” (Australian Government, 2008a, p. xi). Seen in the context of Australia’s total homeless population of 105,000, the government’s attention to a small minority of rough sleepers, estimated at 6,500, was all the more significant (Parsell, 2011). Phillips et al (2011, p. 4) similarly point out that “despite their statistically small numbers relative to the broader homeless population, rough sleepers are receiving considerable public policy attention”. Discussion documents leading up to the White Paper drew on examples in the UK, US and the city of Adelaide as places that had reduced rough sleeping numbers through targeted interventions (Australian Government, 2008b; Rudd, 2008).

Related to this interest in making sustained reductions in rough sleeping was a new focus on chronically homeless individuals as requiring unique program responses. The White Paper drew an explicit distinction between short- and long-term homelessness, claiming:

for some people, homelessness is an isolated event—it happens once and for a short time. For others, a small minority, homelessness is part of a chaotic and uncertain life of poverty and disadvantage. These people tend to cycle in and out of homelessness and when they do find
housing, it tends to be short term (Australian Government, 2008a, p. xi).

Given that Australian homelessness policy had, historically, based interventions around specific demographic characteristics (e.g. youth, single adults, women and families) and shelter types (e.g. no accommodation, temporary accommodation and accommodation without secure tenure), the White Paper demonstrated a newfound awareness of the length of one’s homelessness as being a “good indicator of the type, intensity and duration of services they need” (G. Johnson et al, 2011, p. 2). This awareness disrupted the existing categorical order as it related to homelessness, thereby re-problematising homelessness itself. While chronic homelessness, long-term homelessness, and people with ‘complex needs’ are conflated throughout the White Paper (it also conflates these types of homelessness with rough sleeping generally) (see Parsell and Jones, 2012, pp. 26-27), it is clear in recognising that those who have been homeless for long periods of time are different from the majority of the homeless population, have more complex needs, and require specialised responses. With this understanding, chronic homelessness took its place as a fully-fledged policy category awaiting government intervention.

Such an intervention came in the form of ‘Street to Home’, an approach attributed to Common Ground and its work in New York City and in the US more broadly. At its most basic, the Street to Home model combines assertive outreach services (involving teams of professionals who persistently and assertively engage people sleeping on the streets) and permanent supportive housing (e.g. permanent housing with individualised, on-going support services, such as the Common Ground model) (see Figure 5.2). While first implemented in New York City,
Constituting chronic homelessness

Common Ground established the Street to Home model after drawing inspiration from a number of international initiatives, namely the UK Rough Sleepers Unit’s assertive outreach approach and a philosophy known as Housing First, which I will explain shortly. On the recommendation of Rosanne Haggerty during her tenure as a Thinker in Residence, the South Australian government began its Street to Home program in Adelaide in 2005. Supporting its nation-wide expansion, the White Paper describes the model’s success:

This model has been successful overseas and has been trialled in South Australia. At any point in time the South Australian Street to Home program is working with more than 80 people. Data from the past two years show that more than 200 people sleeping rough in the Adelaide inner city have been housed long-term. One-fifth of these people had been sleeping rough for between five and 15 years. The level of support required to sustain housing decreases after six to 12 months of continuous housing. More than 95 per cent of these tenancies have been successful. (Australian Government, 2008a, p. 51)

With the commitment to introduce Street to Home programs, chronic homelessness became the target of a specialised, federally mandated response. In this way, the creation of chronic homelessness as a distinct policy category had been stabilised. With the category absorbed into the policy apparatus, it was now possible for policy actors to advocate for an appropriate policy ‘fix’ to address the problem of chronic homelessness.
Importantly, the nature of that policy fix would be shaped by other elements of the federal government’s re-problematisation of homelessness. While the White Paper focused on making sustained reductions in homelessness, in part through interventions targeting rough sleeping and chronic homelessness, this focus was accompanied by an emphasis on appropriate solutions being evidence-based and outcomes-focused. Echoing the search for ‘what works’ characteristic of Third Way politics, evidence-based policy was nominated as a ‘guiding principle’ of the White Paper, which stated that “strong evidence on outcomes should drive policy and program design” and that achievements should be “measured to assess the economic and social returns on investment” (Australian Government, 2008a, p. 20). In addition to prioritising interventions that could demonstrate evidence-based credentials, the White Paper announced the need to develop a “long-term research agenda … to improve the evidence on which our response to homelessness is based” (Australian Government, 2008a, p. 58). To this end, additional research funding was made available under a new National Homelessness Research Agenda (Australian Government, 2009, p. 4), established with the aim of “improving the evidence base for preventing and responding to homelessness”. Longitudinal data, cost studies and research into effective service responses were identified as particular priorities (Australian Government, 2008a, pp. 60-61).

Arising from the White Paper, Zaretzky et al (2013, p. 1) note an “increased emphasis on examining the outcomes of homelessness support programs and whether these programs are cost-effective”. To justify his focus on achieving outcomes, Rudd cited international examples where homelessness had been apparently reduced. In an early document setting out the pathway for reform, he drew on the example of the UK Rough Sleepers Unit having halved homelessness in the early 2000s and the supposed success of 10 Year Plans to End Homelessness being rolled out by the US Interagency Council on Homelessness (Rudd, 2008, p. 6). Through examples like these, which the next section will explore, the federal government came to understand that, through evidence-based, outcomes-driven programs, it could and should expect homeless services to make sustained reductions in chronic homelessness. By couching the problem of chronic homelessness in these terms, certain programmatic solutions would be buffeted by the change in governmental climate; others would find themselves
running into headwinds. As Chapters 6 and 7 will detail, advocates for the Common Ground model’s implementation in Australia would benefit greatly from this shift in governmental awareness and understanding of chronic homelessness. In the history of Australian homelessness policy, there had never been a political-institutional context more amenable to the Common Ground model.

5.5 Understanding chronicity

By charting the trajectory of Australian homelessness policy, I have narrated in broad terms how chronic homelessness was socially constructed as a problem within a particular political-institutional context. I have positioned the emergence of chronic homelessness in relation to path-dependent shifts toward individualised understandings of homelessness and increasing expectations placed on service providers to equip homeless persons with the capacity to achieve self-reliance. In doing so, I touched on references made in the White Paper to international experiences that legitimated the provision of specialised policy responses to chronic homelessness. With this in mind, the following seeks to account for the nature and impact of international influences on the constitution of chronic homelessness as a policy problem in Australia. I explore the intellectual climate among Australian homelessness policy actors in the lead-up and aftermath of the White Paper’s production, showing how this problematisation was shaped in reference to internationalised literatures, stories and philosophies. Such engagements assisted in making the category of chronic homelessness intelligible and, in turn, created the space for certain programmatic interventions, such as the Common Ground model, to be mobilised and re-territorialised.

Like many other countries, Australian homelessness policy traditionally focused on assisting homeless clients achieve self-reliance through the provision of housing and support offered by homeless service providers. Since the introduction of the SAAP in 1985, the homeless service system sought to assist clients achieve self-reliance through time-limited packages of housing and support that were either short-term (crisis-based) or medium-term. “Whilst the exact form of the service varies”, Johnsen and Teixeira (2010, p. 4) note that this ‘transitional’ or ‘linear’ model “essentially involves ‘progressing’ homeless people through a series of separate residential services—typically emergency shelter programmes, transitional housing and supportive housing—toward
independent living”. The rationale underlying the linear model is that a client should demonstrate ‘housing readiness’ before being placed in unsupported, long-term housing where self-reliance is expected (Tsemberis, 2004). This is sometimes referred to as a ‘treatment first’ philosophy, where as a “client’s level of functioning improves, or his or her need for services lessens, the client ‘graduates’ and moves to a more normalized and less restrictive setting” (Ridgway and Zipple, 1990, p. 12). The focus on clinical stabilisation under a treatment first philosophy also means that “progress is conditional on evidence of sustained abstinence from substance misuse” (Johnsen and Teixeira, 2010, p. 4).

At the conclusion of the transition, clients are expected to be appropriate for placement in social housing or able to sustain private rental housing. Many professionals in the Australian homeless service sector acknowledge that the transitional model is by and large an effective response, insofar as it enables many clients to achieve self-reliance. Provided there is adequate service funding, social security payments, and social housing stock, the transitional model allows most clients to ‘get back on their feet’, with demand for services tapering quickly. SAAP evaluations have also shown that the bulk of clients are not repeat users of homeless services (Erebus Consultants, 2004), which could be taken as a proxy indicator of the transitional model’s success in Australia.

By the time of the 2008 White Paper’s release, however, many within the homeless service sector had long been grappling with a small but intractable proportion of their clients who cycled repeatedly through their facilities. Unable to navigate the pathway toward self-reliance due to their complex needs, this group of clients appeared to be growing. As two not-for-profit organisation managers explained:

[the] problem that we saw getting worse in our service delivery. Our two main entry point services were saying ‘look, we’re seeing this group of people, we’re helping them into some form of temporary shelter, in a boarding house usually and they’re getting damaged, they’re vulnerable’. (Int. 7: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., Victoria)

there is a population of people within the homeless population who are not able to achieve self-reliance, and that was the target of the SAAP legislation. More and more we were seeing people with mental illness, undiagnosed or diagnosed and untreated, people with disabilities, the closure of institutions, the recycling of arrangements between people in poverty and homelessness in the criminal justice system. (Int. 18: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., Queensland)
Observations like these point to a nascent transformation in the social construction of homelessness, as the adequacy of received ways of thinking about homelessness and its sub-groups began to be destabilised. In a context where homeless persons were categorised and assisted primarily on the basis of demographic characteristics such as age, gender and household type (G. Johnson et al, 2011), such observations suggest that homelessness began to be re-categorised, within the sector at least, according to the complexity of clients’ needs and the length of their homelessness. The notion that some people experiencing homelessness were amenable to the transitional system, while others perpetually failed to conform to its strictures, helped disrupt ‘homelessness’ as it was then understood. Service providers started to plan and advocate for two distinct categories of homeless client: those in short-term or crisis situations and those experiencing prolonged or ‘chronic’ homelessness. In the period surrounding the White Paper, governments were being made aware by service providers that the transitional system and its short-term, time-limited responses were failing those with complex needs. As one Tasmanian public servant commented, this distinction of between short-term and chronic homelessness made apparent the need for a dedicated programmatic response to chronic homelessness:

What the specialist homelessness services were saying was that, in highly complex cases, it was not enough to work with people for, say, three to six months. They really need very long term support and they need that because it hasn’t taken them three to six months to get to this stage, it’s taken them a whole lifetime to develop their complex issues and patterns of behaviour, so they really need a very intensive, long term response to make changes to their lives. (Int. 2: Public Servant, State Government, Tasmania)

While it is conceivable that chronic homelessness was recognised by Australian policy actors in relative isolation at first, its recognition quickly became linked with experiences and actors from the US, where, as Section 5.3 showed, chronic homelessness had been a longer-standing subject of policy and research. An early engagement with US expertise was with Common Ground’s Rosanne Haggerty, when, in 2005-6 as Adelaide’s Thinker in Residence, she sparked considerable interest in chronic homelessness. At a public address, she drew on her experience in New York, telling the audience that chronic homeless persons have “much more complex needs than others and remain homeless for years, not days and
months” (Haggerty, 2006, n.p.). Although the exact circumstances surrounding the inception of chronic homelessness as a policy category in Australia cannot be ascertained, the influence of US-based understandings in shaping its constitution can be traced to at least three sources, namely: the chronic homelessness cost-study literature; a *New Yorker* article titled *Million-Dollar Murray*; and Housing First philosophy. I elaborate on each in the remainder of this section.

Of any country, the US has by far the most extensive and influential body of research dedicated to chronic homelessness. Much like in Australia, researchers in the US focused their attention on chronic homelessness in the wake of long-standing anecdotal reports from service providers. From the 1990s, research evidence began to validate the notion of a qualitatively distinct subset of the homeless population who were in a more-or-less permanent state of homelessness and were long-term users of government-funded homeless services (Culhane and Kuhn, 1998; Culhane et al, 2002; Kuhn and Culhane, 1998; Wong et al, 1997). Such studies, many of them based in New York City and Philadelphia initially, lent legitimacy to chronic homelessness as a qualitatively distinct category by buttressing prior anecdotal observations with expert authority. While, on the one hand, research studies helped make the case that existing approaches to homelessness were ineffective for a chronic subset of the homeless population, on the other, they also highlighted how spending increases for housing and services aimed at the chronically homeless would lead to net government savings. By tracking homeless individuals’ use of emergency services, psychiatric services, the justice system, and the like, researchers calculated the cost of ‘managing’ chronic homelessness. Chronically homeless individuals were found to be disproportionate users of government services compared to the rest of the homeless population. As a homeless service provider from New York noted, the research literature and its acknowledgement of a cost imperative to addressing chronic homelessness was central to government responses:

> shelters were considered initially as a very cost effective way of meeting [the City government’s] mandate without having to spend a whole lot of money. It turns out that wasn’t totally accurate. Culhane came along, and other people looking at data saying ‘hey, you can spend these dollars, $40,000 per person, per year, keeping them in a shelter, and you could spend that or less getting them housed and with services’. (Int. 12: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., USA)
With the cost to government quantified, the literature showed that chronic homelessness may be cheaper to ‘solve’ than to manage. The provision of nominally expensive long-term housing and support, the literature suggested, could be more fiscally prudent than providing complex clients with the standard offering of the transitional homeless service system: short-term programs designed to progress clients toward self-reliance.

In Australia, this research evidence and its categorisation of the homeless has had significant influence. Inspired by the work of American cost-study researchers, one Australian homeless advocate presented a paper at the 2006 National Homelessness Conference estimating potential cost savings to government, later pointing out: “This received a lot of interest at the time because, I think, the argument must have appeared counter-intuitive” (Reynolds, 2007, p. 35). By 2008 though, the argument had become mainstream. The White Paper drew on an Australian report surveying the international literature on the ‘cost effectiveness of homelessness programs’, claiming that research had shown that “services which work with clients to end their homelessness are good investments of public money” (Australian Government, 2008a, p. 10). The Green Paper, released prior, drew on a study from the same authors, noting that “if homelessness was effectively addressed, the potential cost offsets to both the health and justice systems could be between $7,500 and as much as $40,000 per person a year” (Australian Government, 2008b, p. 39). Signalling the growing familiarity with and influence of the US cost-study literature in Australia, the 2012 National Homelessness Research Conference hosted Dennis Culhane as a keynote speaker and its program had a strong focus on governmental datasets and cost-benefit analyses. Although putative, there is now an Australian literature focusing on the net cost of homeless services (Zaretzky et al, 2008; Zaretzky et al, 2013).

However, it is unlikely that these chronic homelessness cost-studies would have garnered such international recognition without a 2006 article in the New Yorker. Written by best-selling author Malcolm Gladwell (2006), Million-Dollar Murray: Why Problems Like Homelessness May be Easier to Solve Than to Manage highlighted the distinctiveness of chronic homelessness and its impact on public spending. Through an argument about the influence of statistical outliers, Gladwell used the individual story of Murray, a person who had experienced
long-term homelessness, who had cycled repeatedly through jail and hospitals, and whose complex needs were never met by a system ill-equipped for hard cases. Upon Murray’s death, an estimated US$1m worth of public services were expended without him ever escaping homelessness. Drawing explicitly on the US cost-study research discussed earlier, Gladwell (2006, n.p.) concluded that rather than “observe the principle of universality” by providing the same response to all homeless clients, resources should first be directed at the small minority of high-cost individuals.

For policy actors in Australia, Million-Dollar Murray became a touchstone for their conception of chronic homelessness. Mentioned in presentations and policy conversations among key policy-makers, it served to legitimise the category of chronic homelessness as well as the need to develop specialised policy responses (see G. Johnson et al, 2012). For those seeking to influence government officials and people within the homeless service sector, the article distilled a complex argument, underpinned by research literature, into compelling shorthand. For politicians wanting to substantiate a case for more spending on chronic homelessness, Gladwell’s article was accessible and entertaining:

The [Victorian Housing] Minister was very big on that ‘Million-Dollar Murray’ and he’d always trot out Million-Dollar Murray. If he had an Australian Murray he would have loved it because that’s the argument, it’s simple for people to understand, it’s politically clean and it grabs people’s attention. (Int. 5: Private Consultant, Victoria)

Million-Dollar Murray thus became a widely-understood signifier in Australia. Used to frame chronic homelessness as categorically distinct from crisis-based, short-term homelessness, Gladwell’s article helped Australian policy actors justify the need for specialised policy responses by highlighting the inadequacy of existing approaches and reminding of the costs incurred by the public if left unchecked.

With the existing homeless service system positioned as ineffective and costly for addressing chronic homelessness, policy-makers and service professionals in Australia and elsewhere began to look beyond the transitional model and its ‘treatment first’ philosophy. Policy actors increasingly favoured a philosophy known as ‘Housing First’, attributed to the approach of New York organisation Pathways to Housing (Tsemberis, 2010). Pathways to Housing’s approach is widely known among policy-makers and homeless advocates, in large
part because it is supported by a robust body of research—involving longitudinal random control trials and quasi-experimental studies (Padgett et al, 2006; Tsai et al, 2010; Tsemberis, 2004)—showing the effectiveness of Housing First approaches in addressing chronic homelessness and an ability to realise net reductions in government spending in the US context. As the name implies, a Housing First approach requires the provision of up-front, long-term housing to clients in the belief that stable housing acts as a pre-condition to the process of recovery. As housed ‘tenants’, formerly homeless clients are “proactively offered a range of services they may require to address problems in their lives such as mental illness, drug and alcohol use, education and employment” (Parsell and Jones, 2012, p. 22). Engagement with services is not compulsory and, in line with harm reduction principles, tenants may continue to consume drugs and alcohol. In shifting away from the treatment first underpinning of the transitional service model, Housing First ideas have “forced clinical service providers to think about and recognise housing as more than an ‘outcome’, rather a ‘critical ingredient’ in any treatment model” (G. Johnson et al, 2012, p. 4).

Beyond the US, recent years have seen Housing First widely promoted among developed nations (European Consensus Conference on Homelessness, 2010; Houard, 2011; Johnsen and Teixeira, 2010; P lease, 2011). Intensified in the wake of the White Paper, Housing First has also come to “dominat[ec] contemporary Australian homelessness policy discourse and service practice” (G. Johnson et al, 2012, p. 2). Housing First ideas have had profound impacts on the way policy actors conceive of chronic homelessness, particularly in regard to “the importance of rapid access to permanent housing options, and the necessity to provide a comprehensive package of support” (G. Johnson et al, 2012, p. 13). For example, Housing First’s key message—that chronically homeless persons are best served by having direct access to long-term housing and support—forms the foundation of the White Paper’s key initiative for addressing chronic homelessness, the Street to Home model. Housing First ideas have been central to the theory and rhetoric underpinning federal and state governments’ implementation of the Street to Home model but, as Parsell and Jones (2012, p. 56) point out, a lack of permanent or long-term supportive housing represents a significant barrier to “achieving permanent reductions in homelessness or implementing the Housing First approach as the model intended”.

Constituting chronic homelessness
With the philosophical transition away from transitional responses toward the ‘common sense’ of Housing First responses to chronic homelessness, as formalised in the 2008 White Paper, Australian jurisdictions were ripe for a distinct type of programmatic response. Because of the particular way in which the problem of chronic homelessness had been socially constructed, this was a programmatic response capable of providing up-front permanent accommodation to the chronically homeless, while demonstrating its effectiveness for the client and its value for money. As Chapter 6 and 7 will reveal in detail, on all counts, the Common Ground model was well positioned.

5.6 Conclusion
In an effort to understand the implementation of the Common Ground model in Australian cities, this chapter discussed the historical-institutional ‘context of contexts’ in operation at the time of the model’s mobilisation and re-territorialisation. Attending to the social construction of chronic homelessness as a problem requiring a particular type of policy response, I argued that homelessness should not be seen as a once-and-for-all policy category but as something subject to an ongoing process of problematisation. Politically constructed and geographically variable, the problematisation of homelessness reflects and gives rise to particular views on the causes of homelessness, the features of those designated as homeless, and the character of legitimate policy and program interventions.

Using this frame, I identified international shifts in the problematisation of homelessness, and attendant policy approaches, highlighting an individualisation of policy responses over time and the increasing recognition of chronic homelessness as a distinct policy category. Acknowledging the hybrid, ambivalent assemblage of political projects, path dependencies and institutional settings that enable and constrain particular urban policy mobilities, I focused in detail on the character of Australia’s homelessness policy environment. Continuing the long-standing fusion of social democratic and neoliberal political projects in Australia, from 2008, chronic homelessness became articulated as a formal policy problem to be addressed through outcomes-driven, evidence-based policy solutions. In addition to territorial political projects and settings, Australian understandings of chronic homelessness were also shown to be shaped by a number of specific
engagements with international policy ‘common sense’. By discussing, in a broad sense, the political, institutional and historical environment, and the shifts within it, this chapter has laid the foundation for a more granular analysis of the actors, practices, labours and materials involved in mobilising and re-territorialising the Common Ground model in Australian cities. Chapters 6 and 7 now turn to this task.
Chapter six

Mobilising the model
6.1 Introduction
In August 2003, the Australian international affairs program *Foreign Correspondent* broadcast a story on the state of homelessness in New Orleans (Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2003). In a social context wracked by poverty, homelessness had spiralled out of control. Civic leaders were apparently at their wits end. For an answer, they engaged Rosanne Haggerty to adapt her New York City program, Common Ground, for which she had become well known. “The answer, it seems, lies in New York”, said the reporter, standing in Manhattan’s Time Square. “This exclusive address is beyond the reach of most mere mortals and yet hundreds of formerly homeless men and women now have a home here”. In case Australian viewers wondered whether the New York idea offered any lessons, toward the end of the story Haggerty put it plainly: “I absolutely believe this is a model that … has proven itself able to travel”. Many policy changes begin with unassuming moments like this, no doubt. For policy actors in Australia, this television program was the point of ‘first contact’ with the work of Common Ground NYC⁴ (Int. 10: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., USA). In retrospect, it has proven significant, prompting the South Australian government to appoint Haggerty to a public consultancy role in 2005. In the years following that consultancy, many people were inspired to see if an answer did, indeed, lie in New York.

Over the next two chapters, I explore how the Common Ground model was implemented—or ‘arrived at’ (Robinson, 2013)—in Australian cities. After arguing in Chapter 5 that the social construction of chronic homelessness assisted in making the Australian context amenable to particular programmatic solutions, I now focus on the implementation of the Common Ground model as one such solution. Attending in grounded detail to the processes and labours associated with urban policy mobility, this chapter examines the mobilisation of the Common Ground model, while Chapter 7 examines the re-territorialisation of the model in Australian cities. In the following, I analyse how the Common Ground model was rendered a mobile ‘policy exemplar’, something that Australian policy actors thought worthy of replicating or extrapolating lessons from. Following the

---

⁴ The organisation responsible for the creation of the ‘Common Ground model’ is generally referred to as ‘Common Ground’. However, from now on I refer to the organisation as ‘Common Ground NYC’ to clearly distinguish between the model and the organisation.
argument put forward in Chapter 3, I resist seeing the Common Ground model as an objective, instrumental best-practice responding to a defined policy problem. Instead, this chapter focuses on what happened to the model “along the way, in the telling, and on site” (McCann, 2011b, p. 117), by tracing the social practices and spatial dynamics associated with mobilising the Common Ground model.

The chapter is structured around three main sections. In Section 6.2, I analyse the social construction of the Common Ground model’s ‘origin story’ and discuss how the model’s mobility rested on establishing relational connections with place- and site-specific stories of success. Section 6.3 explores the role of the expert in mobilising the Common Ground model. Focusing on the social labours involved in accomplishing Rosanne Haggerty’s expertise in the Australian context, I show how the practice and mediation of expert authority were important aspects of mobilising the Common Ground model. Finally, Section 6.4 assesses the role of policy tourism in mobilising the Common Ground model. I discuss the practice of Australian policy actors visiting Common Ground NYC projects, the spatialities induced, and why policy tourism was important to the implementation of the Common Ground model in the Australian context.

6.2 Stories of success
Sifting through the great many newspaper articles, pamphlets and web pages that discuss the Common Ground model, it is difficult to over-estimate the power of its ‘origin story’ (Peck and Theodore, 2010b). More than transmitting technical details or basic contextual information, the origin story surrounding the Common Ground model has been central to its achieving the status of a mobile policy exemplar. As McCann (2011b, p. 119) points out, mobile policies are “shaped and given momentum in the telling of stories”, which necessarily involve “strategic namings and framings” (p. 115). From this perspective, policy mobilities accounts have focused on the representational politics implicated in stories of policy success and, in particular, the way certain places become enrolled as “referential components of particular models” (McCann and Ward, 2012b, p. 329). Stylised stories of place-based success, Gonzalez (2011, pp. 1414-1415) notes, “become part of the script of ‘what works’ … they become hegemonic and part of a wider code according to which some ideas are deemed possible and others are discarded”. Through their repetition and circulation, these stories ossify strategic
bundles of relations and attributes which orient the attention of policy actors around a particular version of place (Pierce et al., 2011). Origin stories are central to policy actors’ mental maps of policy success and as such they form part of the relational conduit through which particular territorially-embedded policies are mobilised.

Building on these understandings of policy success stories, I seek to analyse the narratives associated with the Common Ground model. In piecing together the way its success has been storied and the labour involved in making that story persuasive, the discussion also acts as an introduction to the Common Ground model and the organisation that created it, Common Ground NYC, founded by Rosanne Haggerty. Although Chapter 5 alluded to a number of influences associated with the formation of the Common Ground model—namely, the work of the UK Rough Sleepers Unit and the growing popularity of Housing First within the US—this chapter focuses on two particular elements of the Common Ground model’s origin story to understand the representational politics of mobilising policy: first, a narrative situating the Common Ground model as part of midtown Manhattan’s urban renewal; and, second, a narrative situating the model’s success as the outcome of organisational innovation. Reinforced through practices of expertise and policy tourism, which subsequent sections will explore, these narratives were critical in rendering the Common Ground model mobile in the Australian context and they demonstrate, in particular, the socially constructed and practiced nature of policy mobility. While these two elements were not the only influences associated with the model’s creation, they were particularly important for its subsequent mobilisation as a policy exemplar.

6.2.1 Reversing urban decline

Just as participatory budgeting policy is associated with the city of Porto Alegre and post-industrial urban regeneration with Bilbao, the Common Ground model is inextricably associated with New York City. In the time leading up to the model’s implementation in Australia, media reports rarely neglected pointing out that Common Ground was a ‘New York model’ or, as I highlighted at the beginning of this thesis, a ‘Big Apple plan for Sydney homeless’ (Bibby and Murray, 2009). Despite the sometimes throw-away nature of such references, the model’s association with New York City was neither inconsequential nor innocent. Indeed,
the Common Ground model’s mobilisation was assisted greatly by the story surrounding the establishment of Common Ground NYC and its first project, ‘The Times Square’. The story of the Times Square project’s creation and success in midtown Manhattan—perceived by many Australian policy actors as the most testing of urban crucibles—is pivotal to understanding the appeal of the policy model it informed.

To grasp the selective ‘namings and framings’ involved in the Common Ground model’s origin story in New York City, it is first worth rehearsing some key historical details. While homelessness had become a widespread national phenomenon in the US from the 1970s and 80s (see Chapter 5), it was particularly acute in New York City. Linked to the city government’s fiscal crisis of the mid-1970s, the redevelopment of Single Room Occupancy (SRO) housing stock, and de-institutionalisation of the mentally ill, homelessness had reached ‘epidemic’ proportions by the 1980s (Tsengberis, 2010). Amid broader urban decline, Times Square in midtown Manhattan became seen as the city’s symbolic rotten core. Once known as the Great White Way, Times Square’s main thoroughfare, Broadway, was better known as the ‘boulevard of filth’ by the 1970s. Framed as “a sordid and dangerous place where legitimate businesses are hardly able to survive” (Sagalyn, 2001, p. 6), Times Square was overrun by apparently deviant enterprises and individuals, including pan-handlers, sex workers and the homeless. Films such as Midnight Cowboy, Taxi Driver and Crocodile Dundee did much to cement this portrayal of New York City in popular consciousness. Times Square became the focus of moral outrage on the part of elected officials, private interests and segments of the public, with the area of West 42nd Street, for example, seen “as a civic embarrassment, in moral terms, as a cesspool of epic proportions in need of thorough sanitisation” (Sagalyn, 2001, p. xiv).

From the 1970s to the late 1990s in particular, a number of policy initiatives went about re-making and reclaiming Times Square. Constructed as “New York’s most disorderly place” (Chronopoulos, 2011, p. 58), Times Square began to be transformed from “a heterogeneous district of entertainment and vice establishments into … a space for elite work and mainstream tourist consumption” (Chesluk, 2007, p. 14). These initiatives included large-scale property developments, such as the 42nd Street Development Project, as well as the establishment of privatised sub-municipal governance in the form of the
Cities from elsewhere

Times Square Business Improvement District (BID) (Cook, 2008; Ward, 2007). Created in 1992, the BID’s goal was to make “Times Square clean, safe and friendly for its 5,000 businesses, 10,000 residents, the 1.5 million people who pass through daily, and the 20 million tourists who come annually” (Dykstra, 1995, p. 75). At about the same time, Times Square became the target of Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and Police Chief William Bratton’s strategy of zero-tolerance policing which, by imposing harsh penalties on minor offences, elevated the maintenance of social order to “one of the most important functions of city governance” (Chronopoulos, 2011, p. 1). In ridding perceived physical and social blight, such efforts have since received the adulation of policy-makers and commentators, with New York triumphantly narrated as The City That Became Safe Again (Zimring, 2011). In terms of homelessness policy, punitive approaches implemented during this period in New York City have also gone on to be globally influential (N. Smith, 2001).

Yet, when the Common Ground model was being considered in Australia, policy actors were made aware of a notably different narrative, built on a different set of relational connections to New York City. In particular, it centred on urban renewal and the growth of the supportive housing sector in response to New York City’s homelessness crisis. In a 2008 special issue on supportive housing in Parity—the primary journal of the Australian homeless service sector—an article by the Supportive Housing Network of New York (2008) recounted the popularisation of supportive housing policy models in the mid-1980s. Critical to the supportive housing sector’s development in New York City was the introduction of the federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit Scheme in 1986, which allowed private investors to receive tax-offsets for investments in social housing developments. A number of intermediary organisations were created, including the Corporation for Supportive Housing, which “played a pivotal role in helping non-profit developers across the country syndicate these credits, thereby generating much-needed equity for projects” (Supportive Housing Network of New York, 2008, p. 7). In 1988, the government of New York State established a subsidy program to assist not-for-profit operators of SROs provide flexible support services to their tenants. Then, in 1990, State and City governments signed a joint agreement, known as the New York/New York Agreement, which funded thousands of units of supportive housing for the mentally ill (Supportive
Housing Network of New York, 2008). Throughout the 1990s, many new not-for-profit supportive housing providers were established and the supportive housing sector “proliferated and diversified” (Supportive Housing Network of New York, 2008, p. 7).

Established in 1990, Common Ground NYC emerged on the cusp of this expansionary period for the supportive housing sector. Rosanne Haggerty founded the organisation with the intention of acquiring and refurbishing the then derelict 652-unit Times Square Hotel (see Chapter 4, Figure 4.1). It was, and remains, the largest supportive housing project in the US. Initially met with apprehension due to its scale and size, Haggerty secured support through “an extensive outreach effort [with] … neighbourhood groups, business leaders, long-time tenants of The Times Square, and city government” (Supportive Housing Network of New York, 2008, p. 7). Through a combination of private fundraising initiatives, historic building preservation funding, and utilisation of the Low Income Housing Tax Credit Scheme, among other sources, the Times Square project is recognised as “demonstrat[ing] that the complexities involved in negotiating the financing, renovation, and management of even extremely large buildings are not beyond the capabilities of innovative non-profits” (Supportive Housing Network of New York, 2008, p. 7).

An ability to secure funding and support for a project of unprecedented scale and size has positioned Haggerty and Common Ground NYC as enterprising, ambitious and successful. As a profile in Queensland’s \textit{Courier-Mail} newspaper noted:

\begin{quote}
Built in 1922 as a luxury hotel, by the 1990s [the Times Square Hotel] was a crack-ridden wreck, housing people in squalor, with rampant drug use, prostitution and violence. In other words, perfect for Haggerty’s plan. … With quiet persistence she pushed a path through New York’s thorny politics and bureaucracies and convinced big business, the mayor’s office and welfare services to back her revolutionary vision for supported housing. (Noonan, 2006, p. 44)
\end{quote}

While portrayed as a triumph over New York’s big city politics, Common Ground NYC’s signature large-scale preservation projects have been skilfully woven into the story of midtown Manhattan’s post-1990s urban renaissance. \textit{The Wall Street Journal}, for example, recently claimed that Haggerty had “found a way to use good design and business savvy to take the blight out of the city” (A. Gordon, 2010, n.p.). This narrative is supported by Common Ground NYC, with its
promotional material contending that the “transformation of the [Times Square Hotel] into the largest permanent supportive housing residence in the nation contributed to the revitalization of the Times Square neighborhood as a whole”\(^5\). In a 2009 presentation in Sydney, Haggerty herself narrated the work of Common Ground NYC in the context of midtown’s urban decline (Figure 6.1), before positioning the Times Square project and the subsequent historic building refurbishments undertaken by Common Ground NYC as part of wider neighbourhood renewal (Figure 6.2).

\[<Figure removed in accordance with copyright>\]

**Figure 6.1: Portraying New York City’s decline.**  
Slide from R. Haggerty’s presentation *What Would it Take to End Homelessness?*, Sydney, 19th November 2009, at an event hosted by Mercy Foundation.  

\[<Figure removed in accordance with copyright>\]

**Figure 6.2: Portraying New York City’s renewal through supportive housing.**  
Slides from R. Haggerty’s presentation *What Would it Take to End Homelessness?*, Sydney, 19th November 2009, at an event hosted by Mercy Foundation.  

The story of an organisation offering high quality accommodation and support to the homeless in prime urban space had the effect of reinforcing the Common Ground model’s worthiness in the minds of Australian policy actors, thus nurturing its mobile capacity. As one not-for-profit manager implied, the apparent success of Common Ground NYC under the testing conditions of midtown Manhattan helped legitimise Haggerty’s expertise:

> you’re in one of the biggest cities in the world, capitalism gone rampant, a welfare state that doesn’t exist, where poor people die regularly. ... To have looked at this giant Times Square building in 1989 … [and to] redevelop it and offer it to low income people in the middle of Manhattan, clearly she’s got some skills … I can’t even begin to imagine how I would even have done that. (Int. 1: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., New South Wales)

The New York City origin story’s impact was apparent to the CEO of Common Ground NYC, who noted:

> I think that it does provide credibility … if you’re from a small town in the United States it probably would be hard. Even if you had

\(^5\) From Common Ground NYC’s website: [http://www.commonground.org/our-buildings/the-times-square/#.Ud4OpXqRPVo](http://www.commonground.org/our-buildings/the-times-square/#.Ud4OpXqRPVo)
exactly the same idea and exactly the same success, it may be hard for
a larger community or metropolitan region to take the idea seriously,
but the fact that we’ve made this work in a big, complex, fast
environment, I think there’s an ‘alright, if it works there, it’s standing
up to some real pressures’. (Int. 10: Manager, Not-for-profit Org.,
USA)

In addition to highlighting the importance of ‘placed’ authenticity in the
mobilisation of policy exemplars, these comments point to the selective, socially
constructed nature of place-based narratives as well as to the practices associated
with producing them. Such narratives are involved in the establishment of
relational connections between selectively rendered places and place-based
stories. Thus, in contrast to common narratives associating the success of punitive
approaches to homelessness with Times Square’s urban renewal, Common
Ground NYC offered a different explanation, a different socially constructed
narrative, associating the success of its supportive housing initiatives with
midtown’s renaissance. Relational connections with Australian policy actors were
accordingly built on this particular imaginary of New York City. In isolation
however, this narrative of success is not sufficient in accounting for the Common
Ground model’s origin story and its impact on the model’s mobility. In the
following, I discuss how the model was narrated as part of a story of
organisational refinement, which constructed Common Ground NYC as a site of
innovation.

6.2.2 Organisational innovation

In addition to the story of the Times Square project’s creation, Common Ground
NYC’s success has been attributed to a conscious organisational shift from
‘managing’ to ‘solving’ chronic homelessness. With operations commencing in
1994, The Times Square project began to house homeless individuals referred by
other service providers. At the same time, Common Ground NYC began to
formalise its own supportive housing ‘model’. As distinct from ‘scattered-site’
supportive housing—referring to rent-subsidised privately leased apartments or
affordable ‘set aside’ units within privately owned buildings—Common Ground
NYC specialised in a ‘single-site’ model (Corporation for Supportive Housing,
2008). Their approach adopted the key features of supportive housing in general,
in that it targeted those who were homeless or at risk of homelessness; offered
high quality, safe, permanent housing and a comprehensive range of support
services; and did not require participation in services for a client to sustain housing (Roman and Lyons, 2008). To ensure a ‘diverse mix of residents’, Common Ground NYC’s model stipulated that 50 per cent of units, offered without support services, would be allocated to people on low incomes (Haggerty, 2008a). It also came to have a particular emphasis on establishing ‘connections to the wider community’, such as developing relationships with local businesses to participate in work training programs for tenants (Haggerty, 2008a).

However, despite having an approach that seemed to work well for formerly homeless tenants, the Times Square project was having little demonstrable impact on the level of homelessness in its local area. Operating on the belief that chronic rough sleepers were resistant to service providers’ assistance and unprepared to receive permanent housing direct from the street, the Times Square project’s supportive housing units were being filled by less severe cases, with the most needy and most visible rough sleepers left unaddressed. As Haggerty (2010, p. 6) narrated it, this thinking changed when the organisation had an experience that troubled its acceptance of ‘the conventional wisdom’:

> Even after building housing for the homeless for many years, I still walked by the street people in Times Square in New York City and accepted the conventional wisdom that they didn't want our help. … My eyes were opened when a hospital social worker asked us to offer a home to an older woman we had seen for years on our neighbourhood streets. To our surprise the social worker was the first person who had ever offered her help to find a home. After she moved in, we began interviewing others on the street. … This experience caused us to change our approach. We began focusing on those who had been on the street the longest and connected them directly with homes.

Spurred by research questioning conventional approaches to chronic homelessness (Culhane and Kuhn, 1998; Culhane et al, 2002; Kuhn and Culhane, 1998), and by the success of the New York City organisation Pathways to Housing (Padgett et al, 2006; Tsemberis, 2004), Common Ground NYC re-oriented its model in line with a Housing First approach (see Chapter 5). At a public address in Adelaide, Haggerty (2006, n.p.) explained Common Ground NYC’s embrace of Housing First thinking as an evidence-based innovation for ‘solving’ chronic homelessness:

> What is now solving homelessness in city after city, though, is the evidence that we must focus on this group of chronically homeless people first … By doing so, cities are caring effectively for their most vulnerable homeless citizens; they're unjamming their emergency
In order to prioritise those thought to be the most vulnerable chronically homeless individuals, Common Ground NYC began to conduct regular street counts in the Times Square area (see Figure 6.3). Motivated by reports of the UK government’s Rough Sleepers Unit having reduced rough sleeping by two-thirds between 1999 and 2002, Common Ground NYC adopted a similar street count methodology. But distinctively, Common Ground NYC targeted those with the most significant and disabling health conditions, offering them direct access to permanent housing. Subsequent street counts reported fewer and fewer rough sleepers in the Times Square area, with Haggerty (2010) noting an 87 per cent reduction over the first three years. More recently it has become a common-place observation that such efforts have helped ‘end homelessness in Times Square’, pointing to the importance of the material labour involved in street counting for the construction of the Common Ground model as an innovative policy idea.

Figure 6.3: Times Square street count results, showing reduction over time.
Slides from R. Haggerty’s presentation What Would it Take to End Homelessness?, Sydney, 19th November 2009, at an event hosted by Mercy Foundation.

Based on the apparent success of the Times Square street counts, Common Ground NYC was awarded a government grant enabling it to expand the street count method from 25 city blocks to approximately 250 square miles, covering the area of midtown Manhattan (see Figure 6.4). Needing to streamline the methodology used to prioritise rough sleepers on the basis of their health conditions, Common Ground NYC turned to the Boston Medical Centre’s Dr. Jim O’Connell. As a former Common Ground NYC manager told, this process of collaboration resulted in a tool known as the Vulnerability Index:

During the huge expansion we wanted to develop tools that would take the guess-work out of the outreach workers hands … We wanted
to make it automatic. We wanted to find out who were the people who had been out there the longest and get those people into housing. So we worked with a doctor out of Boston, Dr. Jim O’Connell, and he had done research with Dr Stephen Hwang, and they had looked at people who had the highest instance of dying on the streets. … We incorporated that into our operational work, which then became the Vulnerability Index. (Int. 20: former Manager, Not-for-profit Org., USA)

This process of refining the street count methodology, through the addition of the Vulnerability Index, became a key element of Common Ground NYC’s success story, strengthening the organisation’s reputation as a site of organisational innovation and its association with notions of evidence-based, outcomes-driven policy favoured by Australian governments (see Chapter 5). For Australian policy actors, use of the Vulnerability Index and street count methods were understood to have been critical for reducing homelessness. Common Ground NYC’s method of counting and cataloguing chronic rough sleepers was a widely understood aspect of the organisation’s success story. According to one not-for-profit manager:

> Once Rosanne started using that [the Vulnerability Index] they then started to make a difference on the numbers on the street in New York. It’s a very compelling story actually, it’s quite remarkable. (Int. 9: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., Australia)

<Figure removed in accordance with copyright>

**Figure 6.4: Street count results when expanded to midtown Manhattan.**

In an opinion piece for *The Australian*, Haggerty (2010) reinforced Common Ground NYC’s evidence-based credentials, claiming the combination of supportive housing and regular street counts had helped reduce street homelessness in midtown by 43 per cent. And in a public address in Adelaide, she explained that Common Ground NYC had:

> made the firm choice to put the evidence into practice, and to work with those with the most complex needs in the belief that this was the way to begin reducing homelessness itself. This embrace of evidence has been more than vindicated (Haggerty, 2006, n.p.).

Here, Haggerty’s portrayal of Common Ground NYC as an evidence-based organisation is itself a type of social practice, one that serves to free the model from place-bound associations. With success attributed in part to the adoption of
evidence-based approaches, the work of Common Ground NYC became positioned as a transferrable and mobile form of best practice applicable to the Australian context.

These two key narratives illustrate how mobile policy ideas are “shaped and given momentum in the telling of stories” (McCann, 2011b, p. 119). While such narratives helped shape Common Ground NYC’s narration as a mobile policy exemplar, they have also been important in establishing relational connections between Australian policy actors and an apparently successful New York City program designed to address chronic homelessness. By positioning Common Ground NYC’s Times Square project as part of midtown’s post-1990s urban renewal, Australian policy actors were not acquainted with a punitive, zero-tolerance New York City, but with a place of progressive supportive housing innovation. The Times Square loomed as a symbol of triumph over big city politics and urban decay, its authenticity inextricably linked to its New York City origins. Common Ground NYC’s success story also rested on a narrative of organisational innovation and a set of social practices relating to the adoption of evidence-based ‘innovations’. Throwing away conventional wisdom about the chronically homeless, Common Ground NYC was consciously fashioned as a site of evidence-based, outcomes-oriented innovation intent on ‘solving’ not ‘managing’ chronic homelessness. As a socially constructed site, this version of Common Ground NYC entered into the orbit of Australian policy actors, establishing connections between them and an organisation known to have ended homelessness for the most vulnerable of people.

Yet, while this place- and site-based success story was crucial for the mobilisation of the Common Ground model, without its activation in ‘rooms and moments’ (Le Heron, 2009) it would certainly have laid dormant. In other words, the mobility of the model relied on purposive labour and social processes to activate the stories of success just outlined. In the remainder of the chapter, I attend to the labours, processes, and spatial dynamics associated with mobilising the Common Ground model. Where this section focused on the content of the Common Ground success story, the following two sections explore how that story was communicated and experienced by analysing the role of expert practices and policy tourism respectively. In doing so, the sections seek to account for what
happened “along the way, in the telling, and on site” (McCann, 2011b, p. 117) to mobilise the Common Ground model.

6.3 Acting the expert

To grasp the manner in which policy circulates, policy mobilities accounts have paid attention to the role of policy expertise (McCann, 2008; Prince, 2010a). Those actors with a claim to policy expertise channel flows of knowledge, arbitrate policy success and failure, and frame policy problems and solutions, shaping certain relational ‘routes’ as they do so. Insofar as expertise affords certain actors the ability to speak authoritatively, experts can be powerful ‘agents of transfer’ (Stone, 2004), exerting influence over other policy actors and over the terms of policy debate. Some accounts, for instance, have highlighted the role of ‘kinetic elites’ (Cresswell, 2006) and the ‘global consultocracy’ (Saint-Martin, 2000) as two varieties of highly mobile expert thought to have assumed greater importance in recent times. However, just as important are the seemingly more ordinary, less mobile varieties of expert, including the ‘middling technocrats’ identified by Larner and Laurie (2010) as crucial to projects of globalisation and neoliberalisation.

While an expert’s status is often conferred by formal credentials, it is only through the practice of expertise that the power of an expert is revealed. Thus, as Prince (2010a, p. 877) claims, it is useful to distinguish between expertise and ‘expert power’, with the latter referring to “the ability of a particular form of expertise to influence policy and other programmes”. Likewise, Kuus (2011) analyses the ‘accomplishment of expert authority’ to emphasise the way expertise must be cultivated, projected and sustained in order for it to be effective. With a call to focus on the “instruments, procedures and vocabularies that make different arguments coagulate as legitimate expertise”, she argues that although expertise can operate through technical competencies produced in formal policy settings, it also “operate[s] through informal social alchemies by which constellations of power/knowledge are produced and maintained” (Kuus, 2011, pp. 275-276).

These conceptions of expertise highlight two key points that frame this section. First, expert authority is accomplished through practice. Rather than assume that forms of expert authority operate everywhere the same, attention must be directed toward the role of embodied expert encounters (Larner and Laurie,
2010) and circulating ‘products of expertise’ (McCann, 2008)—including calculative techniques and documentation—which are part of the labour of rendering policy mobile in a given context. Second, expert authority is necessarily mediated. The ability of a policy actor to accomplish expert authority is profoundly mediated by the territorially-associated audiences they seek to engage and by an informational infrastructure of “institutions, organizations, and technologies that, in various ways, frame and package knowledge about best policy practices, successful cities, and cutting-edge ideas and then present that information to specific audiences” (McCann, 2008, p. 12).

With this in mind, I focus on the accomplishment of expertise as a crucial kind of social practice involved in making the Common Ground model ‘fit’ for travel. Acknowledging that the model’s mobilisation is attributable to a great many actors and instances of policy expertise, this section attends specifically to the role of Common Ground NYC’s founder, Rosanne Haggerty. Selected because of her central and continuous presence in discussions surrounding the Common Ground model, I argue that Haggerty’s accomplishment of expertise in the Australian context rested on her embodied expert performances, which were mediated by the contexts in which they were delivered. By discussing, in turn, the context in which Haggerty’s expert performances occurred, the resources drawn upon to project expert authority, and the embodied conduct of expert performances, I demonstrate how practices of expertise were necessary for rendering the Common Ground model mobile.

### 6.3.1 Staging expertise

As Section 6.2 showed, Rosanne Haggerty played a prominent role in the origin story of the Common Ground model. As founder and, until recently, CEO of Common Ground NYC, she has been critical to Australian cities implementing the model. So much so, one public servant ventured: “it’s hard to separate out at times whether it’s Rosanne or whether it’s Common Ground. I think the things are inextricable” (Int. 16: Public Servant, State Government, South Australia).

Although Haggerty and Common Ground NYC had been storied through newspapers, websites and, as Section 6.4 will explore, policy tourism, policy actors in Australia were profoundly affected by Haggerty’s co-present expert performances. In November 2009, Melbourne newspaper *The Age* reported: “On
her 10\textsuperscript{th} visit to Australia, Haggerty is something of a celebrity philosopher among social housing organisations and government who are steadily embracing the Common Ground concept” (Skelton, 2009, p. 9). Highlighting the way that events are a key part of the labour of rendering policy mobile, a Melbourne-based not-for-profit manager likewise touched on the importance of Haggerty’s in-person interactions with Australian policy actors, claiming: ‘I think her presence here really started pushing things … she wowed a lot of people when she was here’ (Int. 22: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., Victoria). To account for the mobilisation of the Common Ground model, these comments allude to the role and impact of expert performances. One aspect relates to the manner in which those visits were \textit{staged} under particular conditions and in particular spaces and times. In the following, I argue that the staging of Rosanne Haggerty’s first formal visit to Australia in 2005, under the auspices of the Adelaide Thinkers in Residence (ATiR) program, was critical to her accomplishment of expert authority and, ultimately, the mobilisation of the Common Ground model.

In February 2003, the Labor Party formed government in the state of South Australia and Mike Rann assumed the office of Premier. Soon after forming government, Rann instigated the establishment of the ATiR program, with the stated purpose of bringing “new ideas into the state and translat[ing] them into practical solutions to improve the lives of the people who live here”\textsuperscript{6}. The program involved the Premier’s inviting ‘internationally renowned experts’ to the state of South Australia, typically for two to six months, “to help explore and find original solutions to issues and challenges” (Kuhr, 2008, p. 1). Aligned with the objectives and targets of the South Australian Strategic Plan, the appointment of individual Thinkers and the design of activities during each residency was, according to the ATiR program director, designed to deliver tangible benefits for the state (Kuhr, 2008).

As noted in Section 6.1, Haggerty was invited to participate in the ATiR program after the Australian television program \textit{Foreign Correspondent} profiled her work in August 2003, shortly after Rann became Premier. The invitation coincided with Rann having elevated the issue of homelessness as a key policy concern of his government, with some in the media referring to it as the Premier’s

\textsuperscript{6} From the ATiR website: \url{http://www.thinkers.sa.gov.au/about/default.aspx}
‘pet project’ (A. Blair, 2005). Setting the goal of halving homelessness over the four-year term of his government, Rann tasked the newly established Social Inclusion Board, a social policy advisory body, to prepare a report on ways to reduce homelessness. Issued one month before Haggerty’s profile on *Foreign Correspondent*, the report titled *Everyone’s Responsibility: Reducing Homelessness in South Australia* (Social Inclusion Board, 2003) recommended the government analyse costs and benefits associated with long-term supported accommodation for homeless clients with complex needs. Insofar as the South Australian government and the Social Inclusion Board had placed homelessness and supportive housing on the policy agenda, Haggerty’s invitation to take part in the ATiR program arose in response to an already sanctioned policy problem. Rather than Haggerty seeking to accomplish expert authority in a disinterested or perhaps hostile context, the attention of her South Australian audience had thus been pump-primed, pointing to the political ground-clearing work done to enable policy mobility.

Haggerty’s residency, split over visits during March 2005 and June/July 2006, was guided by the question ‘what would it take to end homelessness in South Australia?’ During her residency, Haggerty spoke to the South Australian government’s ministry and met with a range of stakeholder groups, including homeless service sector organisations, business leaders, public servants, and representatives from Adelaide City Council. These processually forged connections went on to inform a scoping report titled *Ending Homelessness in South Australia* (Haggerty, 2005), a public address (Haggerty, 2006) (see Figure 6.5), and a final report titled *Smart Moves: Spending to Saving, Streets to Home* (Haggerty, 2007). While her speeches and reports went far beyond touting the specific example of Common Ground NYC—in particular, they touched on Housing First philosophy, the Street to Home initiative and research literature on chronic homelessness—South Australian policy actors quickly rallied behind the idea of adapting the Common Ground model. By late 2005, prior to the conclusion of Haggerty’s residency and about two years before her final report was released, a not-for-profit group called Common Ground Adelaide had formed and the state government had announced its support for Adelaide’s first Common

---

Ground project. These initial alignments were critical in establishing momentum behind the model’s mobilisation in the Australian context.

To understand Haggerty’s projection of expert authority in the context of her ATiR visits, two further issues are important. First, in addition to the fact that her expertise responded to a sanctioned policy problem and a government interested in apparent solutions, local policy actors did much to position Haggerty as an incoming expert. Involved in this process of cementing Haggerty’s expert profile were numerous media references to her success in housing New York City’s homeless, with one report highlighting that Haggerty “last year was named by New York’s Daily News as one of 100 most influential women in the city” (Kemp, 2005, p. 25). Haggerty’s track record of achievement and innovation was emphasised in the ATiR program’s outputs, including this introductory statement in Haggerty’s (2005, p. 2) scoping report:

Rosanne Haggerty is a leading creator of solutions to homelessness in the United States … She applies her expertise in real estate, finance, management and strategic planning to address the unique challenges of housing low-income or otherwise disadvantaged residents. Rosanne is the founder of Common Ground Community a not-for-profit housing development and management organization in New York City, which provides innovative housing opportunities for homeless adults. Common Ground is the largest developer of supportive housing in the United States. The organisation’s work has been widely imitated both in the US and abroad.

Similar orienting statements about Haggerty’s expert credentials were reiterated, including at a 2006 public address attended by dignitaries and approximately 800 members of the public. Government minister Jane Lomax-Smith offered an introduction at the address, which leveraged Haggerty’s expert authority as a reason why South Australians should take her testimony seriously:

Now, Rosanne comes, of course, from the United States[,] from New York[,] and has a business commercial background in real estate, so that when she moved into homelessness in 1990 she brought a different way of looking at the problems—a “can do” attitude that looked at how to do things differently. That's why it is so important that she looks at the issues in South Australia. … I think it's really
Important that we listen to what Rosanne says. (quoted from Haggerty, 2006, n.p.)

Second, the design of the ATiR program played an important part in Haggerty’s staging of expertise. The program explicitly framed the recruitment of international experts as a means to catalyse the enrolment of various stakeholder groups to work on an agreed problem and to meet the program’s principle aims of ‘generating new thinking’, ‘inspiring momentum’, ‘provoking change’, and ‘activating results for the people of South Australia’. Thinkers were also teamed with ‘partners’, sourced from public, not-for-profit and private sectors, to assist them in arranging meetings, identifying key actors and accessing information, consciously seeding connections between international experts and certain local policy actors. According to the CEO of Common Ground, the outsider status of the international expert, and the sense of urgency surrounding their visit, acted as a mechanism to initiate policy discussion between a diverse range of actors. Her comments suggest that by forging connections between international and local actors, as well as by aligning sets of local policy actors into new relational configurations, the ATiR process created new conditions of possibility:

one of the most interestingly designed devices that I’ve ever seen a government use, which is essentially to … create an event and some urgency, like, ‘she’s only here for three weeks’. … [It was] an excuse to have a conversation and connect people in discussion who typically weren’t in dialogue with each other, it’s a very useful role to have an outsider play. (Int. 10: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., USA)

Despite the consultative expectations placed on each Thinker and the importance of local ‘ownership’ over the particular policy problem in question, Haggerty’s international expertise played a decisive role in the range of meetings, events and informal discussions that were held at the time of her residency. The programme was structured such that the international expert assessed local conditions and used their expert judgement to provide recommendations to government on how to best proceed. While Haggerty’s involvement in the ATiR program was certainly not the only context in which her expertise was staged, it was particularly important because of the way her performance in South Australia went on to influence other places in Australia. In this way, Haggerty’s involvement in the ATiR program acted as a technique for inducing other places and actors to consider implementing the Common Ground model. For one not-for-

8 From the ATiR website: http://www.thinkers.sa.gov.au/about/default.aspx
profit manager in Sydney, reading Haggerty’s scoping report for the South Australian government prompted their first meeting:

I came across Rosanne Haggerty … [when] she had got the Thinker in Residence gig at the Social Inclusion Board in South Australia. … I read her draft report for the Social Inclusion Board and I thought ‘my goodness gracious me, I have to make contact.’ So I did, and that was fantastic. … I still remember it. (Int. 1: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., New South Wales)

By late 2007, not long after Haggerty’s final report to the South Australian government had been made public, policy actors had become so widely aware of Adelaide’s implementation of Haggerty’s ideas one newspaper report noted that “Adelaide’s work in housing our most vulnerable people has triggered a national revolution” (Russell, 2007, p. 12). Haggerty’s expert profile, forged in Adelaide, became the springboard to proselytise the model across Australia. In 2008, Haggerty was contracted by the Tasmanian state government, delivering them a report in May that year titled *Ending Homelessness in Tasmania*. The report closely reflected the previous South Australian reports, and notably the South Australian experience was referred to alongside that of the US and UK as places that “achieved significant progress in reducing homelessness” (Haggerty, 2008b, p. 5). The federal government’s 2008 White Paper similarly singled out South Australia as a success story, noting that “although the South Australian strategy was only launched in 2004, it has already seen a 6.4 per cent reduction in rough sleeping in a period when rough sleeping grew nationally by 16 per cent” (Australian Government, 2008a, p. 17). In advocating the national roll-out of the Street to Home model, pioneered by Haggerty and implemented in South Australia following her visits, the White Paper claimed: “This model has been successful overseas and has been trialled in South Australia” (p. 51). In this way, the early and seemingly successful implementation of Haggerty’s ideas in the South Australian context set the tone within Australia, giving other cities and policy actors confidence in Haggerty’s expertise.

Where discussion of Haggerty’s expert performance in South Australia so far has stressed how grounded sites mediate the accomplishment of expert authority, this is not sufficient for understanding the power of her testimony. In the following, I turn to the techniques employed to accomplish expertise, first by discussing the resources used to project expert authority, before concluding the section by exploring the role of embodied conduct.
6.3.2 Resourcing expertise

Although the staging of expertise is crucial to accomplishing expert authority, it does not assure it. An unconvincing performance of authoritative knowledge undermines the accomplishment of expertise because the performance has to be “accepted by both sides” (Kuus, 2011, p. 277). Given that expertise is dependent on a person convincing others of their view of the world, establishing a ‘regime of truth’ (McCann, 2008), the following focuses on the resources—the materials and techniques—used by Rosanne Haggerty to establish truths about the problem of chronic homelessness and the appropriate way to approach it. By focusing on the way expertise is resourced, and the role of engaged actors assembling resources to render policy mobile, I associate materials and techniques with the social practices enabling policy mobility. To do so, I discuss three resources that were particularly important in projecting Haggerty’s expertise, namely: practitioner experience, research evidence, and international standing.

Perhaps the most remarked upon aspect of Rosanne Haggerty’s expertise is that of her practitioner experience. As the ATiR program’s organisers emphasised, Haggerty’s claim to authoritative knowledge rested in large part on her success in ‘creating solutions’ and operating an ‘effective’ and ‘innovative’ organisation:

Rosanne Haggerty is a leading creator of solutions to homelessness …
A committed social service champion and determined leader …
Rosanne conceived and founded Common Ground in New York City.
This ingenious and highly effective not-for-profit housing development and management organisation provides innovative housing opportunities for homeless people. The Common Ground model has been successfully adapted worldwide.

For Melbourne not-for-profit organisation HomeGround Services (2008, n.p.), Haggerty was a “renowned pioneer in the field of ending homelessness … developing more than 2,500 units of permanent supportive housing in the USA”. Likewise, in a media release announcing Haggerty’s involvement in an event organised by Sydney not-for-profit Mercy Foundation (2009, n.p.), its CEO stated the organisation was “very fortunate to have someone of Ms Haggerty’s experience and expertise in Sydney to speak about Common Ground and other initiatives that solve homelessness”. Putting the significance of practice-based

knowledge more pointedly, Brisbane’s Courier-Mail opined: “Haggerty’s not just about sprouting theories about how to fix homelessness. She does fix it” (Noonan, 2006, p. 44). For the state Housing Minister responsible for implementing Melbourne’s Common Ground project, it was also the longevity of Haggerty’s practitioner success that attracted:

> it’s not based on a one year whim. She’s been at it a very long time, and I think the power of her message is both her longevity of working in the area, but also her practice experience. (Int. 21: former Housing Minister, Victorian Government)

Connected with Common Ground’s origin story, discussed earlier, Haggerty was seen by key policy actors to be an enterprising problem-solver who turned her business nous, determination and systematic approach into creating effective program interventions. Yet, in isolation, practitioner experience may have been dismissed by Australian policy actors as questionable in its subjectivity and specific to the territorial context of New York City. Perhaps conscious of this, Haggerty readily utilised research evidence to support her case for supportive housing generally and for the effectiveness of the Common Ground model in particular. In presentations, she drew on quantitative data to demonstrate the cost effectiveness of Common Ground supportive housing as well as data showing reductions in homelessness in Times Square (see Figure 6.6). At a public address in Adelaide, Haggerty (2006, n.p.) used research evidence to argue for the comparability of New York City and Adelaide:

> I’m very fond of this graph. It contrasts the costs of integrated supportive housing with emergency and institutional responses in New York City, but though it’s New York City figures, I can assure you that you’ll see the same relationships in Adelaide and in any city—huge sums being spent in health and mental health institutions to serve people who cannot get well without a stable home, a home that could be provided for a fraction of the cost.

*<Figure removed in accordance with copyright>*

**Figure 6.6: Common Ground and research evidence.**
Top: graph used in a report to the South Aust. government (Haggerty, 2005, p. 7).

Noting the power of Haggerty’s testimony when supported by research-derived ‘facts’, one not-for-profit manager claimed: “One of the things that comes out of
Common Ground in the States is some pretty well thought through stuff … it’s based in pretty good research” (Int. 1: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., New South Wales). The Housing Minister quoted above was also convinced by Haggerty’s use of research evidence, which lent her expert performances a sense of being objective, systematic and well-reasoned:

the reason [it] sparked my attention in particular was the vast body of research that underpins the Common Ground model in the United States. That’s why I wanted to go and look at it, because it seems to me that it was very strongly anchored in a research evidence base.
(Int. 21: former Housing Minister, Victorian Government)

Justifying his organisation’s intention to implement the Common Ground model in Melbourne, the CEO of HomeGround Services similarly alluded to the power of evidence in accepting Haggerty’s expertise, noting: “Common Ground is results-oriented, generating and promoting evidence of the outcomes of their work” (Nash, 2008, p. 24). Complimenting Haggerty’s acknowledged practitioner experience, use of research evidence was, then, crucial for the projection of expert knowledge claims as it had the effect of de-contextualising the territorially embedded nature of practitioner experience to produce immutable evidence of the effectiveness of Common Ground supportive housing. Purposely enrolled in the accomplishment of expert authority, such research evidence made the Common Ground model transferable and in turn mobile.

Finally, as the earlier discussion of the ATiR program alluded, Haggerty’s ability to project expert authority was strongly related to her international standing. The perception of Haggerty being an international figure in addressing homelessness was often linked to Australian policy actors’ esteem for her expertise. During Haggerty’s first visit to Adelaide in 2005, The Australian underlined the significance of her international standing, reporting:

An international expert on homelessness has taken government to task for low spending on accommodation and services for the homeless, claiming their approach only leads to worse outcomes and higher costs. (McGarry, 2005, p. 5)

Suggestive of the scale politics involved in projecting claims to expert authority, the ATiR program organisers also framed Haggerty’s authority in terms of her international profile, noting that “Rosanne brought a wealth of knowledge and proven strategies that are driving reductions in homelessness in communities
around the world”\textsuperscript{10}. Likewise, HomeGround Services (2008) pointed out that the “Common Ground model is now recognised internationally and has won numerous international awards in the field of homelessness”. References to international ‘recognition’ highlight the powerful educative role played by media reports and marketing, which helped to reify Haggerty’s apparent success. As one not-for-profit manager told, Haggerty’s expertise was made apparent in part by conducting an internet search that revealed her acclaim:

\begin{quote}
when you talk about supportive housing and when you research this type of thing you find that Common Ground [NYC] is one of the key players. Not the only one, but it has had a big impact. And then if you do research on Rosanne as a social planner and things like that you get … and see the accolades that she’s received (Int. 17: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., South Australia).
\end{quote}

As a simple internet search reveals, policy actors had ready access to a range of stories that scripted Haggerty and Common Ground NYC as exemplary. Haggerty herself has received a number of awards and honours, such as being awarded prestigious MacArthur and Ashoka Fellowships, and has been profiled, for instance, by the US 60 Minutes program, O, The Oprah Magazine and The Wall Street Journal. These mediated stories and images of success (see Figure 6.7) assist in valorising Haggerty’s achievements and legitimating her status as an international expert, thus helping to mobilise ‘her’ policy model.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure6.7.png}
\end{figure}

It is apparent then that the mobilisation of the Common Ground model owed much to the resources that were marshalled to project expert authority. To conclude this section, I shift the discussion from staging and resourcing expert performances to highlight the role of embodied conduct as a crucial part of the social practices involved in projecting expert authority and mobilising policy.

\section*{6.3.3 Embodying expertise}
To understand the process of policy mobilisation, researchers have come to emphasise the social settings and interactions associated with the communication

and circulation of policy expertise. McCann (2011b, pp. 118-119), for example, highlights the ‘globalising micro-spaces’ (Larner and Le Heron, 2002b) “where expertise about globally significant best practice is deployed and discussed, where lessons are learned, where trust is developed, where reputations are made or unmade”. Such a focus resonates with Kuus (2011), who foregrounds the accomplishment of expertise through informal, inter-personal ‘social alchemies’. Prince (2010a) similarly notes that abstract and narrowly technical conceptions of expertise should be ‘fleshed out’ by attending to the socio-material assemblages through which specific actors produce expert capacity. In geography more broadly, the permeation of post-structuralist thinking has emphasised notions of affect, embodiment and performativity (Dewsbury et al, 2002; Gregson and Rose, 2000; Thrift, 2007), highlighting the importance of bodily encounter “in the creation and maintenance of meaning and signification” (Harrison, 2008, p. 423).

Building on the previous discussion relating to the context and resources involved in Rosanne Haggerty’s accomplishment of expert authority, the remainder of this section looks at the way Australian policy actors were affected by the embodied conduct of expert performances and how this catalysed the mobilisation of the Common Ground model. By drawing attention to the role of Haggerty’s communicative style and bodily comportment, I argue that the embodied conduct of expertise was a key factor in the mobilisation of the Common Ground model in Australia.

In conversation with policy actors involved in implementing the Common Ground model in Australia, it was striking how often they remarked upon Haggerty’s communicative style when explaining the attraction of her ideas. Suggestive of the way expert agency was produced through embodied performance, the comments of policy actors bore some similarity, albeit in less sensationalist terms, to the reaction of a South Australian radio announcer. In an article for Adelaide’s Sunday Mail, she wrote: “I attended a talk by Haggerty. I have to tell you, this woman is so cool she makes Nick Cave\footnote{Australian-born, UK-based musician, composer and author, best known for his punk rock and gothic rock influenced music produced under the auspices of Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds.} look like your cardigan-wearing grandpa” (A. Blair, 2005, p. 15). What many touched upon was the way Haggerty utilised affecting stories and examples that provoked an emotional engagement with her arguments for acting on chronic homelessness. In
a presentation in Sydney in 2009, for instance, Haggerty utilised ‘before and after’
photographs of formerly homeless persons who had been housed in Common
Ground NYC projects (see Figure 6.8). Such techniques had powerful affects on
policy actors, including the ATiR program organisers who claimed\textsuperscript{12} in recounting
one of Haggerty’s presentations:

Rosanne provided … inspirational examples of how long term rough
sleepers have not only been housed, but have been able to re-engage
with a fuller and richer life outside the street environment they have
known.

\textit{<Figure removed in accordance with copyright>}

\textbf{Figure 6.8: Initiating emotional responses through qualitative evidence and story.}
Slides from R. Haggerty’s presentation \textit{What Would it Take to End Homelessness?},
Sydney, 19th November 2009, at an event hosted by Mercy Foundation.

For some, Haggerty’s testimony connected with their experiences and
understandings of particular homeless clients they had known over their careers.
As one not-for-profit organisation manager explained:

\begin{quote}
when the concept of Common Ground was outlined to me I thought of
a client I had had, where I would buy her a house and she would burn
it down, I would buy her a house and she would turn it into a brothel, I
would buy her a house and she would move out and let all of her
mates move in, and it just occurred to me that that particular person,
actually it wasn’t about having nowhere to live, it was that she simply
didn’t have the skills to stay there on her own. That’s a very personal
example, but I remember that whole concept … really appealed to me.
(Int. 25: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., Tasmania)
\end{quote}

Although Haggerty’s communicative style and techniques were notable for
eliciting emotional responses, just as often policy actors alluded to the way she
appealed to the rational impulses of her audiences. Haggerty’s expertise was
repeatedly remarked upon by informants as powerful because of the way she
clearly articulated her argument and used evidence to support it:

\begin{quote}
She’s a wonderful advocate, but she’s also, I think, very, very clear in
her message. Very clear. (Int. 21: former Housing Minister, Victorian
Government)
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
they’re [supportive housing advocates in the US] very good at
isolating a point, a key point, and getting data to back it up. We’re
much more waffly in the way we proceed in Australia as far as I can

\textsuperscript{12} From the ATiR website: http://www.thinkers.sa.gov.au/Thinkers/haggerty/Results.aspx
Common Ground NYC staff were acutely aware of the importance of their communicative style. A former manager noted the deliberate nature of their communication, citing the 2010 book *Switch: How to Change Things When Change is Hard* by brothers Chip and Dan Heath as a touchstone:

A lot of our work is informed by the Heath brothers’ book called *Switch*, and they have this way of looking at things ... first, lure people by their emotions where you get them emotionally excited about it, because this is really appealing to people who want to be part of something bigger than themselves. (Int. 20: former Manager, Not-for-profit Org., USA)

The thesis behind *Switch* is that a person’s decision-making processes reflect two thought systems held in tension—the rational system and the emotional system. Popularising a range of social scientific and psychological insights, *Switch* proposes ways to align the rational and emotional systems in the service common goals. In the Australian context, Haggerty’s expert performances used appeals to both the rational and emotional responses of her audiences. The following excerpt from her public address in Adelaide is illustrative of the way narrative and research data were interwoven to make authoritative knowledge claims about the need to provide supportive housing similar to that provided by Common Ground NYC:

On the Sunday before I left New York City for Adelaide, I was passing by this building in mid-town Manhattan and heard a man crying for help. He was up on this scaffold structure you see just in from the corner, and he'd apparently fallen. From his appearance and the sight of a cart underneath the scaffold filled with cans and personal belongings, it was clear that the man was homeless. … The man, who was known to some of the local police responders and ambulance staff, was someone that they had frequently encountered and was taken to Bellevue Hospital … Now, I don't know if the injured man was admitted to the hospital or simply treated in the emergency room and released, but that one half hour of assistance—the police, fire department, ambulance and emergency room assistance—had cost the public over $4600 in resources. If the man was admitted to the hospital, the public cost of his care would be at least an additional $1000 a day. Now, the human tragedy and the financial folly of allowing this pattern to continue has prompted a new strategy for assisting homeless people that has now been adopted in over 200 American cities. It is a commonsense commitment to securing housing and the support services that will help vulnerable people to remain housed, and avoid repeated encounters with emergency systems. … So what does this alternative strategy look like? Just round the corner from the building that the man was injured at is one of Common
Ground's integrated supportive housing residences, the Prince George. (Haggerty, 2006, n.p.)

In addition to the communicative style employed in expert performances, policy actors also spoke of Haggerty’s bodily comportment as part of her expert authority. Highlighting her charm and charisma, one not-for-profit manager noted how thoroughly convincing she found Haggerty’s physical performance of expertise:

I’ve met her and I’m fairly cynical of things and I was prepared to assess the situation independently, but she really is charming, she’s charismatic and she can speak effortlessly about Common Ground and why it makes sense. (Int. 25: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., Tasmania)

Far from being a trivial detail, this affective response underscores how embodied conduct was central to the accomplishment of authoritative knowledge or, in the not-for-profit manager’s terms, why the Common Ground model ‘made sense’. When explaining why Haggerty had been an effective expert in Australia, another not-for-profit manager expounded: “Rosanne is charming, she’s gorgeous, she’s lovely, she’s intelligent, she’s articulate, she’d sell sand to the Arabs” (Int. 23: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., Victoria). That Rosanne Haggerty had the qualities of charismatic expert was thus an important part of why the Common Ground model was convincing. In particular, it was part of what motivated policy actors to assemble around the policy model and render it a mobile policy exemplar.

But apart from being charismatic, Haggerty was noted for the subdued and reasoned manner in which she carried herself. In accomplishing expert authority, her measured approach meant that many policy actors saw her motives as genuine. “She’s not a full-bore marketing seller”, noted one not-for-profit manager, “she’s very low-key and she speaks with the facts, really” (Int. 9: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., Aust.). In contrast to other people who adopt a more zealous, ‘gung-ho’ performance style, Haggerty’s use of apparently objective quantitative data combined with her subdued embodied performance was seen by a number of policy actors as associated with her being well-reasoned, calculated and therefore authoritative:

When I did finally meet her it wasn’t what I expected. She’s actually very quiet. Very quietly spoken, it wasn’t like a loud New Yorker or American. And not, like, very passionate, more quiet, reasoned, and quite different to what I’d expected given the reaction people were having around her … [Haggerty’s does not display] that fervour or
mad conviction or zeal, it’s just calm common sense. (Int. 5: Private Consultant, Victoria)

she’s a very quiet speaker. She’s not a gung-ho sort of person, she’s very measured, but she has reams of information, data, but also she links that with stories (Int. 6: Social Planner, City of Melbourne).

Insofar as the mobilisation of the Common Ground model was dependent on expert performances, policy actors’ views toward the model were profoundly impacted by Haggerty’s embodied conduct. She successfully ‘played the part’ of an expert, convincing people of her claims to authoritative knowledge. This embodied conduct of expertise, when seen alongside the stages on which expert authority was projected, and the resources utilised to make knowledge claims, underscores the notion that expertise cannot be assumed. The accomplishment of expert authority to mobilise the Common Ground model was hard won, both in its performance and its mediation with Australian sites and audiences.

In addition to the practice of international expertise in Australian policy-making sites, the Common Ground model was rendered mobile through another method of teaching and learning: policy tourism. In the next section, I analyse the relationship between policy tourism and the mobilisation of policy knowledge, focusing on the role of ‘site visits’. To do this, I discuss the practice of Australian policy actors visiting Common Ground NYC projects, the spatialities incorporated and induced by those visits, and how the labours involved in policy tourism impacted the mobilisation of the Common Ground model.

6.4 Seeing the exemplar

In the wake of Rosanne Haggerty’s expert performances, many Australian policy actors sought to investigate the idea of supportive housing and the Common Ground model further. For some, this meant travelling to see already operating examples of supportive housing for themselves, engaging in what policy mobilities researchers refer to as ‘policy tourism’ (Cook, 2008; Cook and Ward, 2011; Gonzalez, 2011; Ward, 2007). These accounts highlight the enduring “importance of travel, first-hand experience, and face-to-face connections” (McCann, 2008, p. 10) for the mobilisation of policy. Importantly, they emphasise that policy tourism is much more than a simple exercise in learning through ‘fact-finding’, as political science approaches to policy transfer have tended to suggest. McFarlane (2011a), for instance, dispels this narrowly instrumental conception of
learning to reveal the tactile, socially immersive, ‘haptic’ side of the learning process. In a similar way, Cook and Ward (2011, p. 2532) note that “gaining a ‘firsthand’ sensory understanding of how things actually look and work … is still valued by those in the business of urban policy-making”. Others have emphasised the selective and strategic characteristics of policy tourism activities, involving exposure to curated sites and itineraries, and serving as “part of a process of policy legitimation or reassurance” (Gonzalez, 2011, p. 1412). Policy tourism is a method of policy learning that draws often distant sites and places together, thereby establishing the relational conduit through which policy is rendered mobile. For this reason, policy tourism is a variety of social and spatial practice deserving of close attention in policy mobilities research.

Describing the extent of policy tourism relating to the Common Ground model, Haggerty told Adelaide’s The City Messenger in November 2007, some two years after her first formal visit, that “we’ve had a parade of people from different Australian cities coming to visit us in New York” (Russell, 2007, p. 12). That parade included managers from not-for-profit organisations such as HomeGround Services and Mercy Foundation who, between 2006 and 2007, toured supportive housing facilities across the US, Canada and the UK. Over time the parade continued: in March 2008, Thérèse Rein, wife of Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, visited Common Ground NYC facilities (see Figure 6.9), as did a delegation led by the Victorian state government in October that year. These instances of policy tourism left powerful impressions on Australian policy actors. Speaking of this period, one Victorian homelessness policy consultant referred to a “fervour taking hold of certain people” who had visited (Int. 5: Private Consultant, Victoria). Her comments suggested a type of affective agency cultivated through site visits:

“everyone was going to the States and Canada and checking things out, coming back almost evangelical [laughs] about supportive housing and Common Ground. … There was this guy … [who had] come back from the States almost like a changed man. He had this sparkle in his eye just talking about it. It was really like this conversion thing. (Int. 5: Private Consultant, Victoria)

---

13 Based on grant information obtained, respectively, from The Ian Potter Foundation (http://www.ianpotter.org.au/) and the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust (http://churchilltrust.com.au).
In this section, I seek to analyse the ‘site visit’, a particular type of policy tourism activity, in order to assess its role in mobilising the Common Ground model in the Australian context. First, I explore the labour involved with site visits, showing how policy tourism activities are heavily mediated encounters, influenced by professional network connections, the reception of the host, and of policy tourists’ prior exposure. Second, by analysing the purpose of site visits for mobilising the Common Ground model, I reveal how Australian policy actors engaged in policy tourism because of the perceived importance of experiential evidence and the opportunities it provided for lobbying decision-makers. By discussing these two aspects of policy tourism, I demonstrate further the social processes and practices associated with policy mobilisation, while highlighting the way such activities give rise to a relational spatiality of connected sites and territories.

6.4.1 Labouring over site visits
As with leisure tourism, Gonzalez (2011, p. 1400) claims that policy tourism “involves the rescripting of places, the reassembling of cities out of the bits and pieces that are visited”, whereby “some ‘sites’ get turned into ‘sights’ worth photographing, while others are ignored or downplayed”. In this way, policy tourism activities are subject to social labour. Such labour includes curatorial decision-making about the sites, stories and actors selected to represent an authentic and authoritative account of policy success or failure, and about the other sites, stories and actors pushed beyond view. What policy actors see when on tour thus depends a great deal on the planning and conduct of activities. In the following, I focus on three important aspects influencing site visit activities and their role in mobilising the Common Ground model, each of which shaped the character of relational connections between Australian and US policy-making.
First, professional networks played a crucial role in utilising site visits as a mode of policy learning. Perhaps most consequential of all, a number of Australian policy actors, particularly those within the homeless service sector, had established professional relationships with Rosanne Haggerty since her visit to Adelaide in 2005. Through those relationships, Haggerty provided Australian policy actors with introductions to certain people and organisations in the US that she thought would be useful to them. In doing so, Haggerty acted as a network node, connecting Australian actors with new professional networks from which to draw in arranging study tours and site visits. This form of relational labour is explained by two not-for-profit managers:

the generosity that she has shown has really been an important part of how things have grown here, and her opening her contact books to me for my trip to people that she’d never visited but knew were leaders in different cities and around the movement [to end homelessness] … To be given access to all of the key players in that space was just an incredible opportunity that Rosanne offered. (Int. 7: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., Victoria)

She [Haggerty] was just perfect in putting me in touch with the right people. Like saying ‘when you come to New York, don’t just visit Common Ground, you gotta go meet up with Sam Tsemberis at Pathways to Housing, he’s the father of Housing First, etcetera etcetera’. And she put me in contact with some of the policy bods [policy professionals] in Washington DC and they’ve since been fantastic resources (Int. 1: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., New South Wales).

With access to contacts in the US, Australian policy actors went about organising study tours involving visits to supportive housing facilities and meetings with US-based policy actors. While in some cases such tours were undertaken by individual actors (see Reynolds, 2007), in other cases, groups of actors went. For instance, on the urging of Melbourne-based not-for-profit HomeGround Services, the Victorian Department of Human Services organised a delegation involving the state Housing Minister, senior public servants and homeless service sector representatives. Leveraging professional connections with Rosanne Haggerty, HomeGround Services and other organisations lobbied the minister to see Common Ground projects in person. As the minister explains:

My involvement in Common Ground, of course, was as the then Minister for Housing in Victoria … it arose out of conversations that
Mobilising the model

I’ve had with a range of service providers who really suggested to me that I need to go and have a look at what the Common Ground proposal in New York was about, and see if there was any applicability to an Australian context. That was really the start of it. (Int. 21: former Housing Minister, Victorian Government)

Without access to the professional networks facilitated by Haggerty, site visits and study tours conducted by Australian policy actors would have unfolded quite differently. As the head of the Victorian-based Council to Homeless Persons claimed, being part of the government delegation described above “provided opportunities to meet with people and services I would have otherwise found more difficult” (Tsorbaris, 2008, p. 15). At the very least, had Haggerty’s professional network not been utilised such activities would not have included the same set of ‘sites’ and ‘sights’. This would no doubt have had implications for the way Australian policy actors came to know the Common Ground model and supportive housing in general.

Second, the conduct of site visits attended by Australian policy actors was shaped by the reception of the hosts they encountered. As Gonzalez (2011) has shown, hosts play an important role in establishing which places and sites are seen by policy tourists as well as the type of stories that get attached to them. In her study of urban policy tourism in Barcelona and Bilbao, for example, it was noted that local authorities presented tourists with a “stylised and partial version … of what is happening, with none or very little engagement with more critical and alternative voices” (p. 1413). In the case of Australian policy tourists visiting supportive housing providers in the US, their experiences were similarly mediated by the reception of the host. As a manager from the US-based Corporation for Supportive Housing told, Common Ground NYC in particular had developed well-honed tours of their facilities. Referring to this social practice, she noted the particular skills of Common Ground staff in presenting their work ‘to the outside’:

Because they’ve got so many visitors there they’ve learnt, I think, more than other places about what the questions are, what people need to know. They’ve had the demands on them. In some ways they are the most famous provider, so they’ve had to accommodate that interest and I think they’re better at presenting that to the outside. (Int. 11: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., USA)

Responding to its emergent status as a policy tourist ‘mecca’ (Cook and Ward, 2011), Common Ground NYC staff had developed procedures allowing them to effectively showcase their work to visitors. Likewise, McCann (2011b, p. 118)
observes how hosts dealing with high levels of policy tourist traffic tend to “develop protocols and packaged narratives for dealing with their visitors in a way that is efficient for the hosts and also edifying and enjoyable for the guests”.

Gleaned from the many policy tourists she had hosted, the CEO of Common Ground NYC explained the range of topics covered in a typical site visit:

> The nature of the questions [asked by visitors] is likely to track where the person’s coming in on the question, but typically people are interested in how it works, how the money comes together, how we target, who we focus on and who we target among the homeless, how we maintain this integrated environment, the types of services people need in order to be successful. Those are the typical questions people come with. Very practically oriented questions. (Int. 10: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., USA)

In reflecting on the impact of site visits, Australian policy actors commented on the significance of their hosts’ hospitality. As a not-for-profit manager who attended the Victorian government delegation recounted, the generous treatment of their delegation was an important contributor to the delegation’s perception of the Common Ground model and other supportive housing models. His comments allude to the significant influence that these labours of hospitality had on the mobilisation of the Common Ground model:

> part of the [success of the] tour was people being very generous over there in New York … not just in Common Ground but in some of the other organisations that we established tours to … Without asking more than ‘do you mind showing someone one of your properties?’, they lay it on, they have the car, they have the lunch prepared, the people running their buildings used to be homeless and they’re engaging. The generosity over there from people is extraordinary. (Int. 7: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., Victoria)

Contrast this experience with an Australian not-for-profit manager who arrived at a New York City supportive housing provider unannounced and received an impromptu tour through a facility:

> the day I turned up there [at a NYC supportive housing facility] it was a little bit more informal, so I didn’t get the official tour, I got the tour by the caretaker, which was a very, very different version. (Int. 19: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., New South Wales)

His comment suggests that without the provider having time to arrange an ‘official tour’, the tour left him less persuaded or affected by the experience of visiting in-person than he had expected. While these responses refer to fairly unremarkable acts of hospitality and to mundane labour, they should not be discounted. In the case of the Common Ground model, such labour played a
consequential role in shaping the practice of policy tourism and, in turn, profoundly impacted the conditions of possibility for mobilising the model in the Australian context.

Finally, the conduct of site visits was mediated by the prior exposure policy actors had to the Common Ground model and to supportive housing in general. Redolent of the ‘tourist gaze’ (Urry, 1990)—the freight of expectation framing and pre-figuring tourism activities—policy tourism activities are subject to prior engagements, with experts and documentation, for example, which inform the gaze of policy tourists. Additionally, Gonzalez (2011, p. 1400) claims that the policy tourist gaze involves “anticipation, previous daydreaming and a sense of being taken out of the ordinary which makes the place become more exotic, a place where anything can happen”. In the case of Australian policy actors visiting Common Ground NYC facilities, many stated that they were, by and large, convinced of the model prior to visiting. As the federal Housing Minister said of her site visit to Common Ground NYC:

I had a first-hand look at what they were doing, but by that time I was already pretty convinced that it was a good model to be part of the range of accommodation solutions that we would offer in Australia.
(Int. 24: former Housing Minister, Australian Government)

Of course, politicians were subject to prior lobbying efforts by homeless service sector professionals, who furnished them with information about the Common Ground model and its apparent success. The quote above suggests that such efforts had a significant impact on the way the Housing Minister approached the Common Ground model in person. While prior exposure to supportive housing models left many Australian policy actors more receptive to having positive in person experiences, it need not have been the case. As one not-for-profit manager explained, her site visit experience was informed by the warnings of colleagues not to get carried away by what she saw. These comments left her ‘determined’ to remain ‘critical’ when participating in the study tour:

Once the tour was confirmed I was cautioned by several wise sector leaders not to return from the trip overly evangelical about international policy responses or believing that the elusive answer to homelessness had been found. ... On the basis of this justifiable caution, I and those I travelled with were determined to view what we saw critically but be open to ideas that could complement what had already been achieved in Australia and particularly in Victoria.
(Tsorbaris, 2008, p. 15)
Comparing this quote with the Housing Minister’s above, it is apparent that policy actors bring pre-conceptions and dispositions to their experiences as policy tourists. Their experiences on site and on tour are influenced by prior rounds of exposure, underlining the extent to which expert performances and circulating stories of success, while not explicit, are nonetheless implicated in the encounters had by policy tourists. Where so far I have focused on the conduct of site visits, showing them to be shaped in practice and by various labours required for them to operate, next I turn to discuss what site visits achieved for local policy actors and, in particular, how they enabled the mobility of the Common Ground model.

6.4.2 The achievements of site visits

Considering that many policy actors were convinced of the Common Ground model without having seen the work of Common Ground NYC in person, it is all the more notable that so many thought it useful to engage in policy tourism. This raises the question: what did Australian policy actors achieve by visiting Common Ground projects when many were already convinced of the model’s merits? In the following, I argue that site visits were important in mobilising the Common Ground model, not strictly because they were opportunities for ‘fact finding’, but because of their role in providing ‘experiential evidence’ as well as opportunities for effective lobbying. In this way, policy tourism was a crucial form of labour involved in mobilising the Common Ground model, bedding down relational connections between Australian cities and policy sites in New York City.

First, the accounts of Australian policy actors who visited Common Ground NYC’s facilities often alluded to the importance of experiential evidence. Melbourne newspaper The Age recounted the impact of Victorian Housing Minister Richard Wynne’s visit to a Common Ground NYC facility, stating: “Wynne had been worded-up about Common Ground … by Melbourne public housing advocates. But it was October’s trip to New York that cemented the idea that it could work in Melbourne” (Rood, 2008, p. 12). Similarly, the CEO of not-for-profit organisation HomeGround Services emphasised the importance of first-hand exposure for understanding whether the Common Ground model could be adapted: “I was fortunate to have the opportunity to travel overseas last year to see various models first hand and explore their adaptability to the Melbourne context” (Nash, 2008, p. 23). These comments echo Cook’s (2008, p. 783) account of
Business Improvement District study tours, in which he notes that “behind the various study tours was an implicit epistemological and methodological belief that by ‘seeing’ and ‘experiencing’ first-hand, the operations and ‘successes’ of the BIDs would be better visualised and understood”. But rather than usurping the role of ‘hard facts’, experiential evidence was often seen by policy actors as a necessary complement, an affective affirmation of the Common Ground model’s success. Alluding to the cultivation of affective agency through first-hand experience, the CEO of Common Ground NYC noted that what ‘ultimately convinces’ people is not facts and figures, but personal encounters with clients who have been assisted by Common Ground facilities and programs:

I think oftentimes, especially policy leaders … what does ultimately convince people who then have to go convince other people that this is a good direction is meeting with tenants here [at Common Ground NYC facilities] and hearing about how their lives have changed. (Int. 10: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., USA)

Common Ground NYC’s CEO then offered an anecdote of the federal Housing Minister Tanya Plibersek, stressing the importance of the experiential evidence she gained through an encounter with one of Common Ground NYC’s clients:

When Tanya Plibersek was here I remember … [she met] a man who we had first met in our street outreach program. He had lived under a bridge in Queens for 27 years. He was telling his story and he’s a very successful tenant, has friends, has started working again, and you could see that this was the thing that really convinced her that this is a solution. These are the very hard cases that many cities had given up on and the fact that people like this gentleman are willing to come in and can make a successful life here with the support we provide, it’s those kinds of stories that are very, very powerful for policy makers. (Int. 10: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., USA)

In addition to meeting with clients, site visits also offered the opportunity to meet with Common Ground staff. This was another type of evidence gathering, as it allowed visitors to speak directly and informally with staff, outside the strictures of set-piece expert performances. For the manager of Sydney-based not-for-profit Mercy Foundation, she felt that being able to engage with staff allowed for a more nuanced understanding of how the Common Ground model operated:

it’s always nice getting it straight from the person and the passion there as well. And some of the nuances there that you don’t get from just reading stuff. (Int. 1: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., New South Wales)

As with Cook’s (2008) account, these responses point to the privileged epistemological status afforded to first-hand exposure, highlighting, as Ward
(2011b, p. 80) has identified, the potency of “real-life, in-your-face evidence”. Seeing the Common Ground model in-person and ‘in action’ was crucial for gaining the interest and support of key policy actors and, in this way, was fundamental to mobilising the model itself.

Second, site visits allowed for more effective advocacy. Because of the acknowledged potency of experiential evidence, Australian policy actors advocating for the implementation of the Common Ground model used site visits as part of wider lobbying efforts, encouraging decision-makers to see the model’s successes for themselves. This indicates that while policy tourism activities offer opportunities for learning, they are also, following Cook (2008), promotional exercises. Like Cook and Ward’s (2011) study of mega-event policy tourism, site visits to Common Ground NYC’s facilities operated as occasions for learning and for selling the model to policy actors. The power of having key policy actors see the model for themselves was alluded to by the former federal housing minister, who suggested to the prime minister’s wife, Thérèse Rein, that she visit one of Common Ground NYC’s facilities. The minister notes that, after visiting, Ms Rein became a strong advocate for the model’s implementation in Australia:

one person who was very, very influential was Therese Rein. She had been to New York with the Prime Minister … [and] had gone to visit Common Ground. I’d heard that it was an interesting thing and I knew that she was interested in homelessness and I suggested as part of her trip to New York with the Prime Minister that she might want to have a look at this, and she came back absolutely so impressed with the difference that it made to the lives of the people that she had met. (Int. 24: former Housing Minister, Australian Government)

The extent to which site visits supported wider lobbying efforts was also made apparent by the manager of a Melbourne-based not-for-profit. He told of a senior state government public servant who had taken part in the aforementioned Victorian government delegation but did not attend the site visits of supportive housing providers in New York City, including Common Ground NYC. The not-for-profit manager claimed that his organisation had subsequent difficulties lobbying the public servant, citing ‘problems with messaging’:

he didn’t come to New York unfortunately, because part of the problem with messaging after that was ‘Melbourne’s not New York’ still. And had he come to New York I believe it would have made a huge difference because he would have seen environments just like these in Melbourne that people have been able to articulate. (Int. 7: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., Victoria)
Contrast these difficulties with the response of the Victorian Housing Minister, who described the impact of his visit to Common Ground NYC and other supportive housing providers in the US:

I came back from the US and said ‘we’re going to do this, we’re going to give this a run and we’ll see how it goes’. I literally found the site myself and we went out and bought it. Then I basically went out and talked to people and said ‘here’s what this thing is about’. (Int. 21: former Housing Minister, Victorian Government)

Visiting Common Ground facilities in New York thus assisted in laying the foundation for an effective advocacy effort, helping to form a constituency of support for implementing the program in Australia. In contrast to rationalist understandings of policy-making, these affective responses to supportive housing models demonstrate the importance of more-than-rational processes and of affective agency to the mobilisation of policy ideas like the Common Ground model. In this case, site visits had the effect of inspiring policy actors as well as concretising the success stories and expert testimony those actors had previously encountered, thereby enabling local advocates to more effectively lobby for the model’s implementation. In concert with Common Ground NYC’s powerful origin story and Rosanne Haggerty’s accomplishment of expert authority, the processes and labours associated with the practice of policy tourism were critical for rendering the Common Ground model a mobile policy exemplar ready for re-territorialisation in the Australian context.

6.5 Conclusion
Rather than seeing the implementation of the Common Ground model in Australian cities as a simple case of isomorphic diffusion, I have explored the socio-spatial labours and processes involved in mobilising the Common Ground model. By tracing the assemblage of techniques, actors and events embroiled in rendering the Common Ground model mobile, I demonstrated that policy mobilisation is far more than an instrumental or utility-maximising exercise on the part of policy actors. It is instead a social and geographical process, involving numerous sites of teaching and learning, staged co-presently and at-a-distance, where the mobile potential of a policy idea is in contention.

Focusing on the social construction of the Common Ground model’s origin story, I analysed place- and site-specific narratives of policy success
associated with Common Ground NYC. Through the selective configuration of this spatialised narrative, Australian policy actors came to see the Common Ground model as an ambitious, innovative and evidence-based approach to addressing chronic homelessness. To understand the techniques, actors and labours involved in mobilising the Common Ground model’s origin story in the Australian context, I focused on two key practices: expert performance and policy tourism. Whether referring to the rooms in Adelaide where Rosanne Haggerty projected her expert authority in dialogue with Australian policy actors or the experiential evidence those actors gained from visiting Common Ground NYC, I highlighted the purposive labour and relational connections forged to render policy mobile. Rather than the model’s origin story ‘selling itself’, this chapter has demonstrated how social practices and spatialised processes were crucial to the mobilisation of the Common Ground model.

Moving away from the processes, practices and techniques associated with mobilising the Common Ground model, the next chapter attends to the model’s re-territorialisation in Australian cities. Attuned to the alignments and mutations associated with re-territorialising policy, I piece together the assemblage of events, actors and labours involved in applying mobile policy in a new territorial context.
Chapter seven

Grounding the model
7.1 Introduction

In 2008, surrounding the release of the federal government’s homelessness White Paper, Common Ground projects were being announced in cities across Australia. Primed by Rosanne Haggerty’s visits to Adelaide, the South Australian government had already begun developing two projects. On the 24th of April, the Victorian state government announced plans for a Common Ground project in Melbourne. On the 21st of May, while visiting the US National Alliance to End Homelessness in Washington D.C., South Australian Premier Mike Rann announced a third Common Ground project for his state, this time in the regional city of Port Augusta (Shepherd, 2008). Then in September, a coalition of local, state and federal government representatives, not-for-profit organisations and the consultancy firm KPMG announced plans for a Common Ground project in Sydney (Horin, 2008). By the middle of 2009, two projects in the city of Hobart had been announced and another in Brisbane, making a total of eight Common Ground projects across six Australian cities. Only five years earlier, Australian policy-makers had seldom encountered the notion of chronic homelessness, let alone the Common Ground model.

In light of the focus on policy mobilisation in Chapter 6, it is tempting to attribute the Common Ground model’s fevered implementation in Australia to the power of its origin story and the persuasiveness of international expertise. Yet such a manoeuvre would privilege global relations and mobile actors at the expense of the local contexts and territorially embedded actors also integral to urban policy mobilities research. By sidelining the social labours involved in embedding and adapting urban policy, it would also likely mean falling prey to the ‘implicit literalism’ of some policy transfer studies, which have tended to suggest “the importation of fully formed, off-the-shelf policies” (Peck and Theodore, 2001, p. 449). For policy mobilities accounts, understanding travelling policy is of course about “fluidity, mobilisation and deterritorialisation”, but is also fundamentally about “‘moorings’, stabilities and territorialisations” (McCann and Ward, 2013, p. 8). Commenting on the mutative process of re-territorialising mobile policy, Peck (2011b, p. 794) similarly highlights that an instance of policy mobility “does not mean that once-distinct policy-making ‘worlds’ are simply dissolving into the global space of flows”. Accordingly, policy mobilities accounts must attend to the processes and practices involved in re-territorialising
Grounding the model

mobile policy. Thus, in this chapter, I explore how the Common Ground model was re-territorialised or ‘grounded’ in Australian cities.

The chapter is divided into two main sections. Recognising that the re-territorialisation of mobile policy “is tied up with a whole set of locally dependent interests” (McCann and Ward, 2010, p. 176), Section 7.2 analyses the way in which the Common Ground model aligned with the political projects and interests of territorially embedded Australian policy actors. Paying particular attention to not-for-profit and government actors, I argue that the Common Ground model was not implemented simply because policy actors thought it would ‘work’. More importantly, the model acted as a political resource used to advance and respond to territorial agendas at local, state and national scales. With the Common Ground model having to co-exist and contend with many political agendas across many scales, I emphasise the multiplicities at work in re-territorialising mobile policy. Following calls to address “how models are re-embedded into, and reshaped in, the[ir] new context” (Cook, 2008, p. 777), Section 7.3 discusses the adaptations made to the Common Ground model for implementation in Australian cities. Outlining the nature of the adaptations made and the rationale behind them, I reveal the practices, processes and spatialities of teaching and learning associated with re-territorialising the Common Ground model. Reflective of the plural and dynamic spatialities associated with urban policy mobility, I discuss the shift from international to intra-national learning through the process of implementation as well as the growing international influence of Australian expertise on chronic homelessness and the Common Ground model.

7.2 Aligning with territorial interests

While contemporary processes of policy mobilisation are global in reach, they cannot be divorced from territorially embedded institutions and politics. As McGuirk (2012, p. 263, original emphasis) notes, global circuits of policy “must happen somewhere, as a territorialised political process enrolled in local spatial politics and worked through local political legacies”. Consistent with warnings of the potential for mobility fetishism (McCann, 2011b), Peck (2003, p. 229) claims that “crucial questions … relate not simply to the “export performance” of the innovatory policy products, but also to the political conditions that shape their reception at the local level”. Acknowledging that there “is no pool of policies out
there waiting to be selected on the basis of clear priorities, expertise and ‘perfect information’”, McCann and Ward (2013, p. 7) similarly urge researchers to analyse “the conditioning fields and institutions, the existing pathways and trajectories”, that frame the demand for certain policy prescriptions. This cannot be tackled without attending to the practices and labours at the ‘arriving’ end as much as at the ‘mobilising’ end of the process.

Although globe-trotting policy entrepreneurs and international experts are oftentimes pivotal to the circulation and re-territorialisation of urban policy, territorially embedded policy actors must not be underestimated. In one way, “locally dependent or embedded agents of transference play an important role in translating a general model into something that makes sense to those within territorial remits” (Ward, 2011b, p. 81). More significant yet is the way territorial actors selectively engage distant sources of policy knowledge “to reinforce their position, to develop political initiatives, to resolve or generate political controversy, and to build political power and authority” (Cochrane, 2011, xi). Rather than being supine to global expertise, local policy actors tactically engage global flows to suit their territorial interests, highlighting important social and political practices shaping the reception and re-embedding of policy. Framing global policy ideas as ‘resources’ used in local political contests, Temenos and McCann (2012, p. 1393), for example, argue that territorially embedded policy actors look “for policies that can be helpful practically, but also politically” in a governance context with multiple motivations, agendas and opportunities.

To understand the role of local actors in re-territorialising the Common Ground model in Australian cities, I focus on the two most active stakeholder groups involved: not-for-profit organisations and governments. For both groups, I argue that the Common Ground model was selected not because it worked better than other policy models aimed at addressing chronic homelessness, but because it aligned with the agendas and interests of Australian actors at multiple scales. For not-for-profit policy actors, the renown of the Common Ground model enabled them to attract the interest of government, while its ‘brand’ meant that governments were less likely to interfere with the model. For federal and state governments, the Common Ground model aligned with ideological dispositions favouring ‘innovative’, outcomes-based approaches to homeless service provision and tentative experiments with private funding of welfare initiatives. By
discussing these varying interests and agendas, I seek to demonstrate how the implementation of the Common Ground model was shaped fundamentally by a diverse political context, comprised of multiple projects territorialised a range of scales.

7.2.1 Not-for-profit agendas
With the exception of South Australian and Tasmanian Common Ground projects, which were top-down initiatives instigated by state governments, Australian projects came about in large part through the assiduous advocacy of not-for-profit organisations. If it is taken as given that not-for-profit organisations were convinced that supportive housing offered a means to reduce chronic homelessness, it is worth exploring why such policy actors chose to advocate in particular for the implementation of the Common Ground model in their respective cities. First and foremost, not-for-profit policy actors saw a political opportunity in the Common Ground model. In a 2008 issue of the homeless service sector journal *Parity*, Stephen Nash, of Melbourne-based not-for-profit HomeGround Services, explained his organisation’s motivations. Under the heading ‘What is so special about Common Ground?’, Nash (2008, p. 24) explained:

The Common Ground founder Rosanne Haggerty is an active leader across the US and in various parts of Australia promoting solutions to homelessness. … HomeGround has been fortunate to form a partnership with Common Ground and we have been assisted by Rosanne Haggerty in presenting the case for Supportive Housing to corporates, philanthropic bodies, key politicians and departmental staff.

The Common Ground model was not particularly distinctive, then, in its ability to address chronic homelessness more effectively than other comparable supportive housing models. Rather the model and Rosanne Haggerty’s reputation within the Australian context meant it had a better chance of being accepted by key policy actors and decision-makers. In interview, HomeGround’s CEO explained the organisation’s reasoning further. As well as pointing out Haggerty’s profile as a respected expert, he emphasised the power of the Common Ground ‘brand’ for effective advocacy:

We’ve latched on and made the most of the brand and the generosity and leadership that they’ve [Common Ground NYC] shown. … there were hundreds of supportive housing providers. But there were certain
things about Common Ground that were really attractive and easy to promote compared to a concept of supportive housing. So you had a brand and you had an amazing communicator and leader [Rosanne Haggerty] out there that we were able to talk about in numerous presentations in all sorts of places, in public and private, promoting this. (Int. 7: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., Victoria)

Compared to the relatively abstract notion of supportive housing, the Common Ground model offered a tangible, readily understood brand that policy actors thought would be more likely to gain political traction. That the Common Ground model presented as a ‘political resource’ (Temenos and McCann, 2012), rather than simply an instrumental solution to chronic homelessness, was important in securing the attention and support of local policy actors.

In addition to its brand recognition, Australian policy actors were drawn to the Common Ground model because, as a proprietary model, governments were less able to dictate the features of individual projects. In Australia, ‘Common Ground’ is a trade mark registered to Rosanne Haggerty\(^\text{14}\), giving her the ability to arbitrate whether certain organisations and projects may use the Common Ground name. In contrast to traditional tender-based approaches to welfare service provision, where governments dictate a service model and not-for-profit organisations bid to implement it, the Common Ground model could not be easily controlled by government. If a government decided to establish a Common Ground project, it had to accept certain program features, defined by Haggerty or an authorised body as constituting the Common Ground model. As a South Australian public servant noted, with the constitution of the model decided by actors outside of government, not-for-profit actors had greater leverage in maintaining ‘the integrity of the service model’:

> I think to some extent Common Ground … is arguably able to define its service model … To some extent we [government] are able to say [to the not-for-profit sector] … ‘this is how the service model is, and you tender for it’. Whereas with Common Ground it’s come from a place of [not-for-profit organisations] saying ‘this is how the model works, do you want to partner with us’. So it’s more of a partner than a traditional purchaser-provider type role. So I think they [not-for-profits] have somewhat more leverage, given the integrity of their service model and how that’s understood. (Int. 16: Public Servant, State Government, South Australia)

Such sentiments were reflected by many policy actors involved in advocating and implementing the Common Ground model in Australia. The fact that

\(^{14}\) Australian Trade Mark N°: 1206185.
governments, in effect, ‘bought into’ the Common Ground model meant that not-for-profit actors were better able to withstand coercive pressures to alter the model. In a field of multiple demands and agendas, the model acted as a ‘vehicular idea’ (McLennan, 2004), a device that stabilised groups of actors into provisional settlements, yet able to move forward in a particular guided direction. This ability was often referred to by not-for-profit actors. Whereas the concept of ‘supportive housing’ was very much prone to the interpretation of government and the demands of stakeholders, one Melbourne-based not-for-profit manager explained that “the Common Ground model has quite fixed, defined characteristics and that’s been useful in the hurly burly” (Int. 8: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., Victoria).

These coercive pressures on the part of government, in part, led a collection of Australian not-for-profit organisations to establish the Australian Common Ground Alliance (ACGA). In the wake of Rosanne Haggerty’s visits to Adelaide in 2005-6, a number of not-for-profit organisations began to independently approach Haggerty for advice and assistance on establishing Common Ground projects in Australia. On Haggerty’s urging, these organisations made contact and, in 2008, established the ACGA. Initially focused on sharing knowledge and experiences with the Common Ground model, over time the ACGA took on the formal role of protecting and promoting the Common Ground franchise in Australia. As the organisation’s executive director told, its role was to:

help and monitor the integrity of Common Ground projects in Australia and Common Ground entities in Australia on Rosanne’s behalf, but knowing that she is still the person who’s the final arbiter.
(Int. 9: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., Aust.)

For her part, the CEO of Common Ground NYC saw the ACGA as important to the ongoing integrity of the Common Ground model, stating that: “membership in the Australian Common Ground Alliance is going to be a key part of outsourcing the policing of the model in Australia” (Int. 10: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., USA). Through its processual realisation, the ACGA came to operate as an important institutional actor, establishing stable relations between Australian projects and actors and the Common Ground model’s heartland in New York City. As Section 7.3 will show, the not-for-profit organisations comprising the ACGA’s membership had considerable power to determine which local
adaptations were consistent with maintaining the integrity of the Common Ground model. With institutional authority as licensed agents of the Common Ground model, and with Haggerty and Thérèse Rein, wife of Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, as high-profile patrons, ACGA members were able to play influential roles in shaping the re-territorialisation of the model in Australia. The ability of certain not-for-profit policy actors to influence the constitution of the Common Ground model through their associations with Rosanne Haggerty and the ACGA, and to guard against the coercive pressures of government, was therefore crucial to the model’s re-territorialisation. As an internationally recognised best practice, the Common Ground model did not bend supplicant local policy actors to its will. Instead, it provided politically engaged, territorially-embedded actors a strategic opportunity to realise their agendas.

7.2.2 Government agendas

While homeless services in Australia are provided by not-for-profit organisations, their work is impacted by government strategy and funding priorities. As Chapter 5 demonstrated, changes in federal government policy directions have profoundly shaped and re-shaped the homeless service sector, from its formalisation under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) in 1985, through to Kevin Rudd’s 2008 White Paper, and the replacement of the SAAP with the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH) in 2009. It is worth pointing out too that Australian urban policy responsibilities are shared among federal, state and local governments (Stilwell and Troy, 2000). Funding and policy responsibility for urban homelessness, like many other urban policy areas in Australia, rests primarily with federal and state governments.15 Where the federal government sets overarching policy directions and exerts considerable fiscal power by contributing approximately 50% of each state’s homelessness funding, state governments are generally responsible for administering homeless service funding and selecting which services to fund.

---

15 Some local governments have homelessness strategies and dedicate funding to homeless services, particularly in inner metropolitan local government areas where the numbers of homeless persons are generally greater. However, because of the constrained responsibilities and fiscal capacity of local government under Australian federalism (Stilwell and Troy, 2000), state and federal governments have pre-eminence.
Acknowledging the important role of federal and state governments in funding programmatic responses to urban homelessness, this section turns to the role of government in re-territorialising the Common Ground model in Australian cities. I argue that the Common Ground model secured the interest of government policy actors because it aligned with the scaled political projects and agendas of federal and state governments. Reflective of the social and political practices highlighted in Chapter 5, I focus in particular on the federal government’s prioritisation of ‘innovative’ outcomes-based programs as well as a shared interest on the part of federal and state governments in experimenting with privately-supported welfare services. Insofar as the Common Ground model aligned with these territorial governance agendas at multiple scales, I demonstrate how mobile urban policy ideas are subject to diverse and spatially plural governance contexts.

In the months before the release of the White Paper, the newly elected Rudd government sought public feedback through a consultation paper titled *Which Way Home?: A New Approach to Homelessness* (Australian Government, 2008b). Federal Housing Minister Tanya Plibersek (2008, p. 3100) described the consultation paper’s agenda as attempting to look “beyond the quick fixes of providing a bed and a hot meal to homeless people”. She went on to identify “a failure to invest in new ways of helping homeless Australians” and, while noting the important role of the SAAP, conceded that “many people leave Supported Accommodation Assistance Program services without satisfactory outcomes” (Plibersek, 2008, p. 3100). While the SAAP was seen by the government as a “highly valuable program, particularly for people in crisis”, Minister Plibersek noted that “it has never had the capacity to attack the drivers of homelessness” (p. 3100).

As Chapter 5 discussed in historical detail, these comments occurred in the context of international policy shifts and the federal government’s re-problematisation of homelessness policy away from ‘managing’ and toward ‘solving’ homelessness. Influenced by neoliberalising as well as durable social democratic ideological impulses, the federal government was clear in its openness to new ideas and, in particular, to ideas that could achieve its desired outcome: sustained reductions in the numbers of people experiencing homelessness. With the SAAP framed as well-intentioned but ultimately ineffective, policy actors were authorised, even actively encouraged, to look beyond Australia for ideas and
policy models that would provide answers to the failure of the SAAP and the services it funded. Commenting on the outlook of the White Paper, for example, one not-for-profit manager noted:

one of the sentiments sitting underneath it [the White Paper] was that everything we’ve done before was rubbish, so we need to look for new things. … there was a bit of a ‘cult of the new’. There was a new government and they had to sort of say ‘we’re going to do things differently’. (Int. 19: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., New South Wales)

This welcoming disposition on the part of government toward new and apparently innovative ideas was echoed by other policy actors. While not going so far as to describe a ‘cult of the new’, City of Sydney’s homelessness policy manager identified how government interest in policy models that ‘worked’ brought a new-found competitiveness among not-for-profits eager to secure funding:

The White Paper played a big role … because it really brought a focus and an attention, but also a competitiveness into the whole homelessness space. … Suddenly there were lots of conversations happening and a process of looking beyond our borders for what works. (Int. 13: Manager, City of Sydney)

The federal government’s interest in outcomes-focused approaches that would reduce homelessness worked to the advantage of those advocating for the implementation of the Common Ground model. As I detailed in Chapter 6, the Common Ground model was widely recognised as an outcomes-focused, evidence-based approach to chronic homelessness. Underlining the degree to which those advocating for the model found themselves in alignment with federal government priorities, one homelessness researcher explained:

the traditional service system never thought about permanently ending homelessness. It wasn’t even something that was thought about, whereas now … what fits in with the Common Ground idea was that it’s meant to be a permanent solution to homelessness … whereas before that idea of permanently ending a middle-aged male drunk’s homelessness was not even on the agenda, it was more about perpetuating their homelessness by providing them ongoing crisis accommodation. (Int. 3: University Researcher, Queensland)

These comments indicate that in the policy context prior to the Rudd government, an idea like the Common Ground model would have experienced significant impediments, rubbing against the grain of territorial politics. Yet in the political context surrounding the White Paper’s production, Common Ground model resonated with federal political objectives and was thus able to forge alignments and relational connections across intra- and international space. As evidence of
the Common Ground model’s alignment, ministers often singled out the model as a prime example of what the government envisaged for the homeless service system. In a statement to the Australian Parliament before the White Paper’s release, Housing Minister Tanya Plibersek (2008, p. 3102) referenced the successes of the first Common Ground project in Adelaide, but lamented that such approaches were “currently too limited to have any impact on the overall numbers of homeless people in Australia”. In an address to the NSW Federation of Housing Associations Conference in 2010, Minister for Homelessness Mark Arbib made a point of the mentioning the newly opened Common Ground Melbourne project:

I am genuinely impressed with the innovation that many community housing organisations have shown … I had the opportunity to visit the Common Ground site in Elizabeth Street in Melbourne this week. The service … is an excellent example of what can be achieved when community housing organisations take the initiative and use their expertise to deliver innovative models that work and actually help change people’s lives. (Arbib, 2010, n.p.)

Mirroring claims associated with the Common Ground model’s exemplar status, discussed in Chapter 6 as an ‘innovative’ approach that ‘works’ to reduce homelessness, the minister’s comments positioned the Common Ground model as symbolic of the federal government’s homelessness policy agenda.

In addition to outcomes-based approaches to homelessness, the federal government was sympathetic to experiments in privately-funded welfare initiatives. Although federal governments, at least since the 1980s, have engaged in welfare privatisation in various forms (Aulich and O’Flynn, 2007), the period of homelessness policy reform ushered in by the Rudd government’s election, offered the opportunity to further experiment with private involvement in welfare service provision, in the form of ‘cross-sectoral’ or ‘partnership’ approaches to delivering homeless services. Here, long-term political-economic path dependencies interacted with emergent problematisations to produce a new articulation of welfare privatisation. In this articulation, the rhetorical importance of private involvement is demonstrated in the White Paper’s vision statement, which claims that “ending homelessness requires sustained long-term effort from all levels of government, business, the not-for-profit sector and the community” (Australian Government, 2008a, p. vii). Common Ground provided precisely this alignment.
Such an interest was not specific to nationally scaled political projects, however. With the great majority of service delivery responsibilities resting at other scales, state governments have been particularly enthusiastic proponents of welfare privatisation and ‘partnership approaches’. The extent to which corporate-philanthropic involvement in welfare delivery was part of the ‘common sense’ at multiple scales of government was emphasised by City of Sydney’s homelessness policy manager. She claimed that ‘everyone became interested’ when the private sector was engaged:

When any private interest wants to spend a lot of money on a project, everyone becomes interested. Over the last couple of years, the government has talked more about a greater role for the private sector in funding social welfare activities. They want corporate and philanthropic partners to ‘get more involved’. (Int. 13: Manager, City of Sydney)

Due to its strong association with corporate and philanthropic funding, as Chapter 6 highlighted, the Common Ground model was frequently referred to as an example of the not-for-profit sector being able to engage funding streams beyond government to deliver high-quality services. As the CEO of Common Ground NYC noted, this was an aspect of the model that she stressed during her interactions with Australian policy actors and was received enthusiastically by them. Her comments indicate the extent to which the Common Ground model resonated with the political agendas of various state governments, smoothing the way for the model’s re-territorialisation in Australia:

when I’ve been to Australia I have really focused on that type of collaboration [inclusion of business actors] as key. So I think that has been one of the take-aways that Australian audiences have really absorbed. That this is not just a government effort, this is different. So I think that’s been a motivator for some of the state government participation, certainly in South Australia and in Victoria and in Tasmania, because in those areas they’ve been able to enlist the early support of key business leaders. I think it has made the Australian image of these projects very much about private sector involvement (Int. 10: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., USA).

She went on to point out that the Common Ground model quickly came to “symbolise something … that’s new and of interest to Australia, which is the public-private partnership to solving social problems”, stating that “Common Ground projects are very clear places to point to that illustrate different types of partnerships”. These comments highlight how government enthusiasm for certain types of neoliberal social service provision—namely partnership approaches—
demonstrably improved the chances of the Common Ground model being implemented in Australia, yet, at the same time, the model was explicit in its rejection of the more punitive variants of welfare neoliberalisation. For instance, with the Tasmanian state government, the Common Ground model was implemented in the spirit of experimenting with new partnership approaches, not as part of a formal program of privatisation or welfare retrenchment. According to a director within the Department of Premier and Cabinet:

   The main driver, I think, was this cross-sectoral approach. What we were offering [with the Common Ground model] that was new was the possibility to engage the business community. … Common Ground was the tangible case study to advocate or promote a whole-of-community approach, rather than whole-of-government. (Int. 14: Public Servant, State Government, Tasmania)

The same was the case in South Australia, with a state government public servant claiming that “the idea that there could be some private sector input [with Common Ground projects] … seemed to be another opportunity to broaden and see what the response would be” (Int. 16: Public Servant, State Government, South Australia). By aligning with these different territorial projects and their experimental interest in leveraging private involvement in service provision, the model was readied for re-territorialisation.

Common Ground projects in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane became particularly symbolic of the potential for greater private involvement in delivering homeless services, with Grocon, Australia’s largest privately owned development company, offering to build each project ‘at cost’. Extensively covered in the popular press, Grocon’s involvement in each of the projects was presented as a demonstration of government, not-for-profit and corporate sectors working together to assist society’s most vulnerable. At the Melbourne project launch (see Figure 7.1), Victorian Premier John Brumby noted: “this is a great development and [it] couldn’t have happened without this partnership approach” (Higginbottom, 2008, p. 32). For Grocon CEO Daniel Grollo, involvement offered a way to atone for the ‘social footprint’ left by development companies like his (Higginbottom, 2008, p. 32). According to Victorian Housing Minister Richard Wynne, Daniel Grollo’s involvement in the Melbourne Common Ground project was ‘extraordinary’, showing that, with the Common Ground model, things were ‘on the right track’:
let’s pay credit, absolute credit to Daniel [Grollo]. The amount of money that was saved off that building by Daniel and all of the contractors was in the order of $8m, maybe a bit more. Now, that’s the biggest philanthropic contribution that’s been made to homelessness in this state, probably ever. This was quite an extraordinary thing. … it said to me that we were on the right track. (Int. 21: former Housing Minister, Victorian Government)

*Figure 7.1: Government and private support at Common Ground Melbourne official opening.*
L to R: John Brumby (Victorian Premier), Daniel Grollo (CEO Grocon Pty. Ltd.), Richard Wynne (Victorian Housing Minister), Tanya Plibersek (Federal Housing Minister).
Source: [http://www.homeground.org.au](http://www.homeground.org.au)

Seen as an approach capable of delivering ‘outcomes’, and doing so through engagements with corporate-philanthropic funding, the Common Ground model resonated with territorial political agendas at multiple scales. In a federal and state government context sympathetic to private involvement in homeless services, the re-territorialisation of the Common Ground model in Australian cities was propelled because it aligned with a shared political project. As a symbol of the potential for ‘cross-sectoral collaboration’, the Common Ground model represented a case-study in just the type of homeless service provision that different levels of government at the time were interested in experimenting with. Insofar as the model fit with this territorially articulated agenda, resonating at multiple scales, it was well placed for implementation.

Without dismissing the importance of these territorial-ideological resonances however, it is also important to highlight the fiscal context in which the Common Ground model was implemented in Australia. Prior to the release of the White Paper in 2008, the Rudd government contributed AU$150m to a one-off funding program called *A Place to Call Home*, with additional contributions coming from state and territory governments. Demonstrative of the ambivalences present in governance contexts, and sitting awkwardly with a purely neoliberal reading of events, the initiative funded 600 supported dwellings for people experiencing homelessness and had a focus on “breaking the cycle of
homelessness”\textsuperscript{16}. Soon after, the White Paper increased funding to the homeless service sector by 55% to AU$800m, and with the economic shock brought about by the Global Financial Crisis late in 2008, the Rudd government responded with an economic stimulus strategy totalling AU$27bn. Announced in two stages, during December 2008 and February 2009, the stimulus strategy dedicated AU$5.638bn to the construction and repair of social housing under the \textit{Social Housing Initiative} (KPMG, 2012). As a result of the stimulus strategy funding, 19,236 social housing projects were funded. Excluding Common Ground projects in Adelaide, some of which had been built prior, every Common Ground project in Australia benefited from at least one of these funding streams. These events point to the contingent assemblage of circumstances and hybrid governing context surrounding the Australian implementation of the Common Ground model. 

Alongside neoliberalising moves in the area of welfare partnerships, the federal government embarked on unprecedented capital and recurrent funding increases for homeless services, in part attributable to the Global Financial Crisis of 2008—triggered by the collapse of sub-prime mortgage markets in the US—and the resultant need for Keynesian fiscal stimulus. The significance of this historical and contingent alignment was evident to one homelessness researcher, who noted:

\begin{quote}
Stimulus money and new housing money. That’s the first time in … over 30 years that I’ve been involved in this sector, that you have that confluence of a fairly flexible, big injection of capital money, at the same time as a whole heap of new recurrent money for homelessness responses. (Int. 3: University Researcher, Queensland)
\end{quote}

Similarly, a not-for-profit manager involved in the Sydney Common Ground project pointed out the fortuity of the particular moment in time and space:

\begin{quote}
at the time we were running hard on trying to get Common Ground projects up in each city, we had the global financial crisis and all that money went into construction, so that was a bit lucky. (Int. 1: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., New South Wales)
\end{quote}

Further underscoring the contingent nature of funding availability, the executive director of the ACGA doubted whether or not, in the absence of a comparable funding context, any further Common Ground projects would be developed in Australia:

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{16} From the Department of Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs website: http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/our-responsibilities/housing-support/programs-services/homelessness/a-place-to-call-home
\end{flushright}
I think because there was money floating around from the federal Government. Being left up to the state to fund it, I don’t think they would have been able to. So the fact that there was … prime minister Rudd’s fantastic money there, that then enabled the building to happen … that combination of state and federal money has been quite powerful, I think, in every single project, and that’s why it’s going to be difficult now [for further projects]. With the federal funding running out, where are they going to get their funding from? (Int. 9: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., Aust.)

These comments indicate that, despite being aligned with territorial-ideological projects, many Australian Common Ground projects would not have been implemented had it not been for the substantial government funding available. While emphasising the fiscal contingencies surrounding the re-territorialisation of the Common Ground model, it also underscores the importance of attending to processes and practices, rather than reading-off local political outcomes from global forces. In the wake of the neoliberal regulatory failure leading to the Global Financial Crisis, for instance, vast amounts of capital funding was made available to those wishing to implement the Common Ground model in Australian cities, which in turn allowed for experimentation with techniques associated with neoliberal welfare provision and progressive social policy in the form of permanent supportive housing. Few would have expected the uneven trajectory of global neoliberalisation to have supported the expansion of permanent supportive housing and the Common Ground model in Australia. The vagaries of these circumstances serve to highlight that the re-territorialisation of mobile policy is shaped in process and through practice, in ways that are often unpredictable. Rather than being peripheral to the causal power of hegemonic political projects, this unpredictability is consequential and demands to be understood as a constitutive element of urban policy mobility.

### 7.3 Adapting the model

While the degree of alignment between the Common Ground model and the interests and agendas of territorially embedded policy actors was crucial, the re-territorialisation of the model also involved adaptation through purposive labours and practices. As McCann and Ward (2010, p. 176) note, although “cities might be encouraged to learn or adopt [a policy] model, it is generally understood that, in doing so, adjustments will need to be made in order for it to work elsewhere”. Indeed, a recurring topic among policy actors and in public debate was whether or
not the Common Ground model could be adapted to the Australian context. One not-for-profit manager, while positive about the Common Ground model, was direct in acknowledging the specificity of the model’s origins: “Rosanne’s model was designed by an American for American conditions” (Int. 23: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., Victoria). Common Ground NYC’s CEO claimed that in many of her conversations with Australian policy actors she stressed that adjustments can and should be made to suit local circumstances, but admitted that, for some, the model’s connection to New York City raised suspicion, expressed in the form of responses like “‘hey wait a minute, we’re just Adelaide’ … or ‘hey wait a minute, we’re Brisbane, we’re not New York’” (Int. 10: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., USA).

Inevitably, as McCann and Ward suggest, adjustments were made in the process of re-territorialising the Common Ground model. One public servant underscored the extent of the adjustments, stating: “we’ve come a long way from the New York stuff” (Int. 16: Public Servant, State Government, South Australia). When asked to explain the characteristics of Australian Common Ground projects, a not-for-profit manager emphasised not only the international differences in Common Ground projects, but the different adaptations made among Australian projects, claiming: “Well, every state’s done it differently” (Int. 18: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., Queensland). Many policy actors stressed how the practical work of implementing international policy ideas in particular territorial contexts, necessarily induced adaptation. As one not-for-profit manager noted, this was a process of navigating structural conditions and institutional constraints, which she phrased as “making a way forward within the constraints of government and funding” (Int. 9: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., Aust.). Similarly, a homelessness policy researcher told how the practicalities of implementation meant that abstract models ‘don’t hit the ground as intended’:

when you start to try and put those solutions on the ground in particular contexts, by the nature of the local community, the nature of the clients, the nature of the service systems that sit around them, the nature of the services that are being delivered, the agencies that deliver the services, mean that it doesn’t quite hit the ground according to the pre-packaged form that is intended. (Int. 4: University Researcher, Queensland)

These comments suggest that there is more to policy mobility than a simple process of isomorphic diffusion or neat, transactional policy transfer.
Accordingly, attention should be directed “not so much [to] how policies are ‘transferred’ but how they mutate as they are moved” (McCann and Ward, 2013, p. 6), or as Cook puts it: “how models are re-embedded into, and reshaped in, the[ir] new context” (2008, p. 777). In response, this section focuses on the way the Common Ground model was adapted for implementation in Australian cities. Distinguishing between the model’s ‘delivery features’, which relate to the establishment of a Common Ground facility, and ‘operational features’, which relate to ongoing management and service provision, I discuss the rationale behind various Australian adaptations to the Common Ground model, showing the processes and labours associated with re-territorialising mobile policy. The section concludes by highlighting the dynamic spatialities of teaching and learning associated with the Common Ground model, discussing how Australian Common Ground projects have come ‘full circle’ to inform the practice of Common Ground NYC.

7.3.1 Delivery features

As Chapter 6 discussed, a substantial part of the Common Ground model’s origin story, as it was told to and understood by Australian policy actors, drew on the way Common Ground NYC established its facilities. In particular, Common Ground NYC was widely known for its ability to secure funding through the Low Income Housing Tax Credit Scheme, and through philanthropic contributions, to refurbish large historic properties, which over time have become iconic examples of permanent supportive housing. This way of delivering facilities was a crucial part of the Common Ground model’s international profile and had significant resonance with Australian policy actors, particularly those who would go on to advocate for the model’s implementation. As City of Sydney’s homelessness policy manager told, the ‘innovation’ of Common Ground NYC was precisely the way it delivered its facilities:

> What was different about Common Ground was the incredibly innovative way in which Rosanne Haggerty managed to leverage the whole tax credit system to make that viable, which no one had done before on that scale … So I think it’s that that really differentiated it from a lot of things that it was actually very, very similar to in the US. … So to us back in Australia, if you are looking at the satellite view of everything, the thing that stood out like the Great Wall of China was 600 unit buildings that were funded through private, corporate relationships. (Int. 13: Manager, City of Sydney)
During Haggerty’s early engagements in Australia, she did much to emphasise the potential for refurbishment projects similar to Common Ground NYC’s Times Square project. In an opening vignette contained in *Ending Homelessness in South Australia*, Haggerty’s first report as Adelaide’s Thinker in Residence, she set the scene for the reader:

Imagine a date three years from now. The opening of a new building in Adelaide’s city centre is being celebrated. A former office building of heritage interest, it has just been renovated after standing largely vacant for several years … (Haggerty, 2005, p. 3).

As an “illustration of how Common Ground principles could work in Adelaide” (p. 3), the vignette was accompanied by an artistic rendering of a dilapidated inner-city building refurbished into a supportive housing facility (Figure 7.2). Noting that “Adelaide has numerous opportunities to create iconic projects”, later in the report Haggerty (2005, p. 17) suggested that “an assessment of other underutilised buildings, particularly heritage buildings, will reveal other opportunities for distinctive mixed use supportive housing projects that satisfy many urban agendas”. Likewise, during her tenure as a consultant for the Tasmanian state government, investigations were made into utilising Highfield House, a former educational institution, as the site of a Common Ground project in Hobart (Figure 7.3). In *Ending Homelessness in Tasmania*, Haggerty’s report to the state government, she was supportive of the move to refurbish the building:

An iconic project, such as that proposed for Highfield House, will be a powerful symbol of Tasmania’s new direction on homelessness and Social Inclusion. The preservation of this important Heritage building will be a perfect demonstration of the whole-of-community benefits of tackling homelessness with resolve and creativity. (Haggerty, 2008b, p. 17)

In the end, however, the refurbishment of historic buildings did not eventuate in Australia. Despite initial interest among Australian policy actors, this aspect of the Common Ground model was generally considered to be unviable for two main reasons.
First, Australian cities, unlike late-1990s New York City, did not have an adequate stock of large-scale disused properties with heritage value suitable for conversion into apartment-style supportive housing units. Although suitable small-scale buildings did exist, without the economy of scale achieved in Common Ground NYC’s projects, per-unit refurbishment costs were prohibitive. In the case of Highfield House in Hobart, ABC News Hobart (2008) reported the findings of a suitability study estimating that the cost of each unit could reach AU$475,000. This was similarly the case in Sydney, as a not-for-profit manager involved in establishing the Sydney Common Ground project explained:

we completely lacked … any old large derelict buildings. That’s not completely true, we do have some old large derelict buildings—we looked for a year. … The cost of actually doing a retrofit … can sometimes be far more costly than actually just building a new building, [and] those buildings were not desirable enough, compared to, say, some of the landmark buildings like The Times Square. (Int. 1: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., New South Wales)

Figure 7.3: Highfield House, Hobart, investigated as a potential Common Ground project.
Source: http://www.abc.net.au/reslib/200806/r266653_1115774.jpg

Second, policy actors wanting to establish Common Ground projects in Australian cities did not have access to levels of private funding comparable to Common Ground NYC. Where Common Ground NYC was able to take advantage of the Low Income Housing Tax Credit Scheme and significant contributions from philanthropic donors, Australian Common Ground projects had access to neither. With social housing funded by government and, increasingly, not-for-profit housing associations, Australia does not have a tax-offset scheme to encourage private investment in affordable rent-controlled or not-for-profit housing. As one homelessness researcher explained, this structural difference in funding availability meant Australian Common Ground projects were far more dependent on government funding than their New York City counterparts:

They [US supportive housing providers] have tax credit arrangements that mean that not-for-profits can finance these things with private finance and make them stack up because of the income from the way that the funding arrangements work. Where here you haven’t got those arrangements and you’re really dependant on state governments to fund the capital to get these things off the ground, so you’re already having a hybrid [model]. (Int. 4: University Researcher, Queensland)
Compounding the reliance on government funding streams, major philanthropic donations in Australia are relatively rare, despite some effort to cultivate a culture of philanthropy, particularly among corporate donors (Department of Family and Community Services, 2005). For a Tasmanian state government public servant, it was unrealistic to expect comparable levels of philanthropic funding to establish Common Ground projects in Australia:

I think in the USA there was a lot of philanthropic contribution [went] towards establishing these facilities … We don’t have the size and scale, particularly when it comes to philanthropic organisations, to donate a huge amount of money in providing services and support for these type of facilities. (Int. 2: Public Servant, State Government, Tasmania)

Given the relative absence of private funding, and the expense of refurbishing historic buildings, Common Ground projects in Australia have, without exception, been new-build developments funded primarily by state and federal governments (Figure 7.4). As a further example of how institutional conditions influenced the re-territorialisation of the Common Ground model, the ownership status of Australian projects varies greatly. This has depended in large part on the way respective state governments administer capital funding. Where Common Ground NYC owns the facilities it operates, only in the states of South Australia and Tasmania have similar not-for-profit organisations been created—Common Ground Adelaide and Common Ground Hobart—to confer ownership. For Common Ground projects in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne, each respective state government has reserved some level of ownership over the properties. In Brisbane, for example, the Queensland state government leases the Common Ground project for a token amount to a specially created organisation called Common Ground Queensland. In Sydney and Brisbane, property management is put to tender, with existing not-for-profit housing management organisations bidding to secure the contract. As one outcome of the re-territorialisation process, territorial differences have necessitated a range of organisational arrangements to implement the Common Ground model.

Figure 7.4: Common Ground projects in Sydney (left) and Brisbane (right).
The enduring territorial differences just described have meant that Australian projects differ in significant ways from their New York City counterparts. In order to be re-territorialised, the Common Ground model had to undergo a process of mutation, responding to the territorial milieu each project resided within. The significance of these mutations led one not-for-profit manager to remark: “the whole way by which you actually create a Common Ground building has been left behind because our systems are way too different” (Int. 1: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., New South Wales). So despite the admiration many Australian policy actors had for the way Common Ground NYC projects were delivered, and its importance to the success story of the model, in practice, Australian Common Ground projects were delivered in substantially different ways to those in New York City. Owing to different assemblages of social practices and institutional path dependencies, the re-territorialisation of the Common Ground model in Australia has resulted in a series of variations on the projects associated with Rosanne Haggerty and Common Ground NYC.

7.3.2 Operational features

In contrast to the perceived incompatibility of the Common Ground model’s delivery features in the Australian context, policy actors were in general agreement about the applicability and necessity of the model’s operational features. According to guidelines produced by the ACGA, Australian Common Ground projects must have: ‘quality, permanent, affordable housing’; ‘a diverse and sustainable social mix’; ‘proactive on-site services’; ‘a safe and secure environment’; and, ‘separation of tenancy management and support services’ (see Table 7.1 for detailed explanation). For the manager of a Sydney-based not-for-profit, these operational features reflected the practice of Common Ground NYC and were ‘completely non-negotiable’, such that, without them, a project would not be in accordance with Common Ground model:

for me there are … key things in the Common Ground model that have to stay pure for it to be Common Ground, otherwise it will be something different. … they’re obvious, clear and, for me, completely non-negotiable, and they are taken straight from Common Ground in New York. I wouldn’t compromise on any … It’s the tenancy mix, it’s the on-site support, it’s the twenty-four hour concierge, it’s the separation of tenancy and support services (Int. 1: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., New South Wales).
Compared with Haggerty’s (2008a) own explanation of the operational features of Common Ground NYC projects, it is clear that, in a general sense, Australian Common Ground projects have been successful in implementing and abiding by these features. Yet it is important to note that there exists a range of interpretations of what this abiding entails. Take, for example, the stipulation that tenancy management and support services should be provided as two distinct services. Common Ground NYC argue that in order for residents to be treated like legitimate ‘tenants’ rather than ‘clients’, a clear distinction should exist between providers of support services and providers of tenancy management services. In Common Ground NYC properties, Common Ground NYC itself acts as the tenancy manager, while support services are contracted to a separate organisation. In Sydney however, one not-for-profit organisation, Mission Australia, assumes the roles of tenancy manager and support provider. In this case, functional separation is thought to be maintained by a clear demarcation of responsibilities within Mission Australia’s organisational structure, such that the project is operating in accordance with the spirit of the Common Ground model. Because of this situation, the ACGA’s guidelines, shown in Table 7.1, state that in general Common Ground buildings are “managed by two distinct services”, indicating how the enactment of policy in a new territorial context has resulted in subtle changes to the social practices associated with the Common Ground model.

Similarly, Common Ground NYC projects are known for having 24-hour concierge services in order to monitor the entry of people into their facilities and to help resolve issues and disputes. Because of the relatively high concentration of people with complex needs in Common Ground facilities, and because of the vulnerability of formerly homeless persons to the ‘stand-over’ behaviour of other residents and members of the public, Common Ground NYC places significant emphasis on ensuring the safety of its residents. Despite their preference for 24-hour concierge services, many Australian policy actors doubted whether levels of available funding would cover costs. Without the financial economies of scale present in Common Ground NYC’s projects—in some Australian Common Ground projects, the number of housing units is just 5% of the Times Square project in NYC—24-hour concierge services have not been implemented in all projects. Although initial comments from Australian policy actors, like Stephen Nash (2008) of the not-for-profit HomeGround Services, indicated that 24-hour
Staffing was an essential component of the Common Ground model, over time this stipulation has been relaxed. In response, the ACGA’s guidelines note that safety and security services in Common Ground facilities are “usually provided by [an] on-site 24 hour concierge service” (my emphasis, see Table 7.1). As a manager from Common Ground Adelaide explained, the Franklin Street Common Ground project had made an adaptation to the practice of Common Ground NYC by utilising CCTV systems and intermittent security ‘walk-throughs’, instead of 24-hour on-site security, to maintain adequate levels of safety and security:

What we’ve adapted is that we’ve got CCTV throughout the building, we’ve got security that does walk-throughs randomly a few times a night and over the weekends, they also let people into their room if they’re locked out, and then we do an on-call system where staff are allocated the ‘on-call phone’ so if there’s an emergency they can go out and deal with it. So that’s what we’ve had to adapt. (Int. 17: Manager, Not-for-profit Org. South Australia)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Ground criteria</th>
<th>Explanation from the ACGA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality, permanent, affordable housing</td>
<td>All tenants pay between 25 and 30% of their income in rent. They have a lease or residential agreement, with no limits on the length of tenancy, and the same rights and responsibilities as residents of any apartment building.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Ground projects are high quality, environmentally sustainable, architect-designed apartment buildings. All apartments have self-contained kitchen and bathroom facilities, and the buildings contain communal spaces as well as separate clinical facilities and staff offices for support workers, tenancy management and visiting clinicians.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A diverse and sustainable social mix</td>
<td>Common Ground buildings house a mix of formerly homeless people and low income tenants (for example, students or workers on low wages), generally in a 50:50 ratio.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proactive on-site services</td>
<td>Support services are located on-site and focused on helping tenants maintain their tenancies and connecting them to the local community. Engagement with services is voluntary and not a condition of tenancy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A safe, secure environment</td>
<td>Safety and security are key elements in the design of Common Ground housing sites, usually provided by on-site 24 hour concierge service and other appropriate (non-intrusive) security measures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separation of tenancy management and support services</td>
<td>Common Ground buildings, in general, are managed and supported by two distinct services: building/tenancy management and on-site support services. Service and property management coordinate approaches for addressing tenant issues, with a focus on fostering housing stability.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.1: The Australian Common Ground Alliance’s key criteria for Common Ground projects.
As these two examples make apparent, while the operational features of Australian Common Ground projects appear to abide by the intentions of the Common Ground model—represented by the work of Common Ground NYC—adaptations were necessarily made in the process of re-territorialisation. Although these adaptations are subtle, they are nonetheless important for understanding the implementation of Common Ground projects and have material impacts on the chronically homeless persons housed in those projects. In the remainder of this section, I shift away from the rationale behind Australian adaptations to briefly explore the dynamic and plural spatialities of teaching and learning associated with re-territorialising the Common Ground model. I position teaching and learning not as defined activities with clear starting and finishing points, but as part of an ongoing mutative process, one that continued long after the Australian Common Ground projects went ‘live’.

7.3.3 Spatialities of implementation
In Chapter 6, discussion focused on how the Common Ground model was mobilised as a policy success in the eyes of Australian policy actors by attending to various techniques and sites of teaching and learning. Yet these moments of policy mobilisation did not mark the conclusion of teaching and learning. Well into the process of re-territorialisation, the Common Ground model was being grappled with, communicated and interpreted. As Common Ground NYC’s CEO pointed out, as Common Ground projects began to be implemented in Australia, her teaching role shifted from conveying the ‘core ideas’ to providing support:

> We see the Australian groups as just having really grasped the core ideas and applying them without, frankly, our direction, just with our support. (Int. 10: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., USA)

In the case of the first Australian Common Ground project in Adelaide, Haggerty’s support was substantial. As a manager from Common Ground Adelaide told, without existing Australian expertise on permanent supportive housing, Haggerty’s experience and problem-solving knowledge with the Common Ground model was invaluable:

> we didn’t have anyone we could go to and say ‘this has happened, is that normal for people to react in this way?’ … Having that relationship with the people in New York was great because we could email, phone, skype, and then to go and see it and talk to people who were there at the beginning at the setup of their organisations and
they’d say ‘yeah, we’ve had similar experiences, how we avoided it the next time was to put these things in place’. That was really useful.
(Int. 17: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., South Australia)

This situation began to change as subsequent Common Ground projects became operational and Australian policy actors, according to one not-for-profit manager, began to be “informed by what’s gone before them” (Int. 9: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., Aust.). In this process, the spatiality of teaching and learning shifted from being primarily international to increasingly intra-national, with Haggerty herself commenting on the speed of “state to state knowledge transfer that’s observed in Australia” (quoted in Gilmour and Wheadon, 2010, p. 17). For the projects following the initial Adelaide project, learning was influenced by both international expertise and nascent Australian experiences with the Common Ground model. Although contact with Haggerty remained regular, the formation of the ACGA in 2008 served to institutionalise mechanisms for knowledge sharing among Australian policy actors.

As one example of intra-national learning, the early experiences of Common Ground projects in Adelaide proved influential for subsequent projects. In addition to learning about Common Ground Adelaide’s ‘teething problems’ (Int. 1: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., New South Wales), actors involved in implementing Tasmanian Common Ground projects, for example, were explicit in drawing on administrative documentation provided by Common Ground Adelaide, as one state government public servant explained:

we couldn’t have … achieved what we did in such a short space of time without the support from another jurisdiction, and just absolute generosity in terms of their time, their materials. We used a lot of their formal documents, their constitution for example, for Common Ground Adelaide. We went over there and met with Theo Maras, who’s the Chair of Common Ground Adelaide. They were just open and transparent with all the documentation. We were just really fortunate, we learnt from all of their mistakes, we didn’t go through the same pitfalls (Int. 14: Public Servant, State Government, Tasmania).

The same public servant told of how, over time, Tasmanian projects began to be less informed by the experiences of Adelaide and more by the experience of the Melbourne Common Ground project, noting that Common Ground Tasmania “have sort of cut links with South Australia and are much more aligned with Melbourne now” (Int. 14: Public Servant, State Government, Tasmania). The coalition of policy actors surrounding the Sydney Common Ground project were
similarly influenced by the experiences the Melbourne project. According to the 
City of Sydney’s homelessness policy manager, her and other policy actors 
working on establishing the Sydney project were heavily influenced by the way 
Melbourne policy actors were able to attract interest from government and 
business:

Melbourne had an event, a launch, and they invited a diverse range of 
people along from key politicians to big hitters in the corporate world, 
[144x797]  
[492x796]  
[113x725]  
[156x643]  
[156x631]  
[156x618]  
[156x606]  
[156x593]  
[156x580]  
[156x567]  
[156x555]  
[156x542]  
[156x519]  
[156x499]  
[156x478]  
[156x457]  
[156x437]  
[156x416]  
[156x395]  
[156x375]  
[156x354]  
[156x333]  
[156x312]  
[156x292]  
[156x271]  
[156x250]  
[156x230]  
[156x209]  
[156x188]  
[156x168]  
[156x147]  
[156x126]  
[156x105]  
[156x62]  
[122x60]  

got them all together in a room and then launched this idea, and it 
went from there. And that’s exactly how we did it in Sydney, 
following Melbourne’s lead. Before we did it in Sydney there was a 
lot of work being done, we were communicating with Melbourne and 
with Adelaide and with Rosanne and all of her people, building some 
noise around that, trying to meet with politicians, that sort of thing. 
(Int. 13: Manager, City of Sydney)

As more Common Ground projects began operations during 2010 and 2011, the 
roles of Australian policy actors would change further. Having learned from 
international experience and implemented Common Ground projects, the 
expertise of Australian policy actors has increasingly come to inform the practice 
of international policy actors. According to Common Ground NYC’s CEO, her 
“colleagues from Australia are consistently now very central participants in the 
international dialogue on, essentially, what works” (Int. 10: Manager, Not-for-
profit Org., USA). In March 2011, for example, Australian researchers and not-
for-profit managers were among 26 policy actors to assemble in Washington D.C. 
to form the International Alliance to End Homelessness17. The group, comprised 
of members from Canada, the EU, UK, US and Australia, stated their purpose was 
to examine the problem of homelessness through “a global lens, sharing emerging 
research, best practices, and effective public policies that ensure that all people 
can find stable, permanent housing” (Roman, 2011, n.p.).

But perhaps the most poignant example of how Australian policy actors 
have gone from learners to teachers on supportive housing, and homelessness in 
general, is the influence that Australian Common Ground projects have had on the 
practice of Common Ground NYC. In a role reversal, Common Ground NYC has 
begun to incorporate the practice of enticing major development companies to 
construct new Common Ground projects ‘at cost’. As the CEO of Common 
Ground NYC explained:

---

17 Further information available at: www.endhomelessness.org/pages/iaeh
we’ve learnt a lot from our Australian colleagues about the ways in which the Australian implementation can influence our work here. … In Melbourne and Brisbane and Sydney, Grocon, the big property development company is building the sites without charging a fee, essentially contributing their profit and also organising the subcontractors to deliver the properties at lower cost. It had not occurred to us to really form those kinds of partnerships and subsequently we’ve been able to do that for our project in Washington. (Int. 10: Manager, Not-for-profit Org., USA)

Here, the largely government funded Common Ground projects in Australia—a nation widely acknowledged for having an underdeveloped philanthropic culture—acted as the proving ground for an adaptation to the Common Ground model which has seen Common Ground NYC leverage further private funding. In this small example, we see that circuits of policy do not always flow in the directions one might expect, or from the places one might presume.

7.4 Conclusion

By focusing on the process of re-territorialising the Common Ground model in Australian cities, this chapter explored why urban policy mobility should not be seen as a more-or-less seamless process of policy diffusion or transactional transfer. Attending to the alignments and adaptations associated with re-territorialising the Common Ground model, I demonstrated the consequential roles played by territorialised agendas and contexts at multiple scales through the process of implementation. Far from replicating a mobile model wholesale, I showed urban policy mobility to be both dependent on and shaped by the path dependencies and institutional conditions present in the territorial environments encountered.

Discussing the reasons behind Australian not-for-profit and government actors’ support of the Common Ground model, I warned against viewing the model’s implementation in Australia as resulting from the rational selection of ‘what works’ to end chronic homelessness. To make this case, I showed how Australian policy actors strategically selected the Common Ground model for implementation because it served as a political resource, providing leverage for and alignment with multiply-scaled territorial agendas. Spurred along by these territorial agendas and the actors behind them, I analysed the labours, processes and dynamic spatialities involved in applying the model in the Australian context. Charting the various adaptations made to Common Ground NYC’s original
approach, as well as the differences among Australian projects, the chapter demonstrated the seemingly ordinary but nonetheless significant changes that were made through the process of re-territorialisation. In doing so, I sought to explore further the social practices and spatial processes associated with urban policy mobility, and how their interaction with local institutional settings and territorialised political projects shape the re-territorialisation of policy.

In the final chapter, I draw out the key contributions of this thesis by reflecting on what my approach to urban policy mobility has uncovered and how it can inform understandings of urban politics and policy-making, and future research directions.
Chapter eight

Conclusion

• • • • • •
8.1 Introduction

In this thesis, I aimed to understand the implementation of the Common Ground model in Australian cities. With its explicit origin in New York City, I set out to investigate how the Common Ground model, a ‘mobile’ policy idea, found its way into Australian urban policy discussion, how it was understood and debated over, and how it was applied in a new set of urban and national contexts. To achieve my overarching aim, I pursued three objectives across the thesis. These were, first, to develop a framework to interpret the relationship between cities and mobile policy; second, to explore the insights offered by a geographical and social constructivist conceptualisation of mobile policy; and, third, to develop a methodological approach appropriate for the study of mobile urban policy, one that, in particular, could attend to my ‘middling’ theoretical positions and conceptualisation of mobile policy as socially practiced and spatially dynamic. In the following, I conclude by considering how each objective was fulfilled in both an abstract and an empirical sense. In abstract terms, I synthesise the theoretical, conceptual and methodological frameworks and approaches developed in Chapters 2 to 4. In empirical terms, I discuss what those frameworks and approaches revealed about the Australian implementation of the Common Ground model in Chapters 5 to 7. Drawing analytical observations across the empirical chapters, I seek to comment on the contribution of the thesis as an interconnected whole, rather than a series of discreet components.

In considering the contributions of the thesis, I advance three key claims about policy mobility research and urban research in general. First, with power shown to be distributed across dynamic assemblages of actors, institutions, scales and sites—the effects of which, importantly, cannot be known in advance—I argue that bounded spatial imaginaries and grand explanatory narratives are increasingly untenable research practices. Second, and building on the first claim, I contend that future research on urban policy and politics needs to focus on cities as ‘in-the-making’, by developing malleable analytical approaches in conversation with contextually specified claims and modest conclusions. Third, I argue for retaining a methodological sense of policy-making and policy mobility as assembled, for this sense provides a means to understand how policy is summoned from and constitutive of dynamic, distributed and emergently uneven landscapes. These claims are developed over three sections. In Section 8.2, I
revisit the theoretical foundations of the thesis by reflecting on the usefulness of navigating between political economy and post-structuralist approaches to urban politics, and of incorporating scalar and networked understandings of urban spatiality. Section 8.3 focuses on the contribution of a policy mobilities conceptualisation and considers what was gained by attending to policy mobility as socially constructed, practiced and spatially dynamic. In Section 8.4, I examine the insights offered by an assemblage methodology and reflect on the significance for urban policy mobilities researchers of focusing on the way local places ‘arrive at’ policy ideas, instead of the way particular mobile policy ideas ‘arrive in’ certain places.

8.2 The how and where of urban politics: theorising cities and policy mobilities

To assist in understanding the implementation of the Common Ground model in Australian cities, the first objective of this thesis was theoretical: to develop a framework with which to interpret the relationship between cities and mobile policy. In consultation with contemporary urban scholarship, I focused on theorising the phenomenon of mobile policy through the domains of urban politics and urban spatiality. Parsing literatures on state rescaling, the New Urban Politics and neoliberalisation, I demonstrated how urban politics and policy is profoundly shaped by extra-local dynamics and globalising processes. In the context of intensifying inter-urban competition and avowedly extrospective governance posturing, urban elites seem increasingly conscious of, and engaged with, a global policy landscape. As Cook and Ward (2011) have pointed out, the mobility of policy is both reflective and constitutive of this juncture in urban politics and governance. Attention to mobile policy thus offers insight into the changing politics of the urban and the connections between urban governance sites and globalising political transformations.

To comprehend the politics of urban policy mobility, I surveyed the insights of two prominent varieties of approaches to urban neoliberalisation. First, under political economy approaches, policy mobility reveals how neoliberal ‘family resemblances’ are produced, consolidated and contested. Such approaches foreground the power of structures, the durability of institutions and focus on “emergent regularities and patterns, even convergent tendencies” associated with
neoliberalisation (Peck and Theodore, 2012b, p. 181). This stands in contrast with the disposition of post-structuralist approaches. Under post-structuralist approaches, policy mobility offers an opportunity to unpack persistently diverse, hybrid and radically contingent governing contexts, in which neoliberalism cannot be assumed to play a particular role. Accordingly, hegemonic ideologies and powerful political projects are seen to be realised in process and in place, and must be “teased out from a tangle of other things” (McGuirk and Dowling, 2009b, p. 176).

Seeking to build on the strengths of each approach, I opted for a middle path, an approach to urban policy mobility that incorporated political economy and post-structural insights (Larner and Le Heron, 2002a). From political economy perspectives, my approach recognised the salience of the structural and the systemic by acknowledging the role of institutional embeddedness, path dependencies and powerful political projects in (re)producing policy orthodoxies. Though, instead of seeing neoliberalisation as an analytical necessity, I followed the lead of post-structural approaches by viewing it as a concern requiring empirical specification. In doing so, my approach was concerned with the realisation and reformation of structural effects by actors and processes associated with policy mobilisation. In Chapter 5, for instance, I historicised the Common Ground model’s emergence amid a hybrid and dynamic homelessness policy context. In an ideological environment where a durable social democratic project has, for decades, intermingled with rounds of neoliberal and conservative reform, I demonstrated how Australian homelessness policy was less prone to the moral individualism and punitive policy responses seen in other Anglophone nations. Thus, with the formal recognition of chronic homelessness by the federal government in 2008, advocates for the Common Ground model were able to tap into a technocratic concern for ‘outcomes’ and ‘effective’ responses. These concerns are structural insofar as they direct and repel certain types of activities, yet their nature and effect is by no means stable and predictable. The recognition of chronic homelessness in Australian homelessness policy was the product of path dependent regulatory experiments, multiple governing logics and territorially embedded political projects, as well as contingently realised alignments with international sources of evidence and inspiration.
While interpreting mobile policy through the congested domain of urban politics, I also sought to ground my analysis in contemporary debates on urban spatiality. With cities increasingly connected to places and activities beyond their apparent territorial remit—be it in economic, political, cultural, or environmental terms—scholars have come to appreciate the inadequacy of bounded, static and primarily territorial understandings of urban spatiality. Convinced that the boundaries of the city “have become far too permeable and stretched … for it to be theorized as a whole” (Amin and Thrift, 2002, p. 8), urban territory is increasingly thought of as porous, interconnected and relationally produced. Responding to these developments, I sought to consider how a relational understanding of urban spatiality could inform the study of policy mobility. In conversation with recent debates, I argued that to grasp the whereabouts of ‘urban’ politics and policy-making, research on policy mobility benefits from an approach that attends to scalar and networked forms of spatiality.

With cogent critiques having exposed the dangers of an ontologically mandated approach to scale (Marston et al, 2005), I opted against a conception of scale as a pre-existing platform on which social processes take place. Siding with a social constructivist conception, I theorised scale as the outcome of social processes, as indicative of a ‘politics of scale’, and as involved in the production of territorial spaces and political projects. Rather than being a stable entity, scale is more appropriately seen as a dynamic arena in which “sociospatial power relations are contested and compromises are negotiated and regulated” (Swyngedouw, 1997, p. 140). Acknowledging the relationality of scale—the vertical relations between scales that constitute and give them meaning in particular times and places—my approach emphasised the need to focus on the cross-scalar and inter-scalar relations associated with urban policy mobility. However, with scholarship shifting away from categorisation and containment toward “flow, connectivity and multiple geographical expression” (Amin, 2004, p. 34), I followed Jones (2009) and others in arguing for an approach incorporating networked understandings of spatiality as an analytical complement to scale. For research on urban policy mobility, network spatiality presents a way, on one hand, to understand the plethora of interconnected sites as themselves having a distinctive spatiality and, on the other, to appreciate the way sites and scales play their part in the relational constitution of the urban.
Applying this framework to understand the Common Ground model’s implementation in Australian cities, I traced the multi-faceted spatialities at play in ‘urban’ governance and policy-making. With reference to national and international scales, Chapter 5 analysed the ways in which chronic homelessness was problematised in Australia as a distinct sub-population with unique service needs. These processes, occurring at supra-urban scales, were crucial for the implementation of the Common Ground model in Australian cities—in effect, a national and international problem-space enabled the implementation of a particular solution at the urban scale. Yet urban policy was not straightforwardly constituted by forces operating at ‘higher scales’. In Chapter 6, I revealed how stories and experiences associated with New York City were crucial in creating awareness of chronic homelessness at national and urban scales in Australia. Whether through the widely read cost-study literature, based heavily on studies conducted in New York City, or through the pioneering Housing First approaches of New York City-based organisations like Common Ground and Pathways to Housing, the Common Ground model became a logical policy solution for Australian cities because of cross-scalar relations to cities elsewhere. Sensitised to networked spatialities however, my analysis also focused on the array of connected sites associated with the Australian implementation of the Common Ground model. These sites, not easily reduced to or explained by their placement in a scalar context, included Rosanne Haggerty’s expert performances in rooms filled with government officials, not-for-profit actors, researchers and members of the public, and they included the many US supportive housing facilities that Australian policy tourists felt needed to be seen in person. As Chapter 7 made apparent, these sites were not just international. Common Ground projects in Australian cities were also influenced by domestic policy sites—the philanthropic windfall achieved for the Melbourne project, where Australia’s largest private development company donated its construction and project management services at-cost, being one site-based lesson that comes to mind. By attending to these scales and sites in their multitude, my analysis revealed the improbability of purely territorial conceptions of the urban, suggesting that urban spatiality is too dispersed and too restless to be read solely in territorial terms. Instead, this thesis has demonstrated how researchers can profit from approaching urban policy,
governance and cities themselves as the provisional outcome of the relational and territorial, the scalar and networked.

8.3 From transfer to mobilities: conceptualising the mobility of policy

Informed by the urban-theoretical foundations just outlined, the second objective framing this thesis was to explore the insights offered by a geographical and social constructivist conceptualisation of mobile policy. To do this, I initially interrogated conceptualisations within political science, the discipline with the most extensive body of research on the mobility of policy. The concepts of lesson-drawing and policy transfer, for instance, were found to be helpful in emphasising the processual nature of policy mobility and highlighting the wide array of state and non-state actors involved. Yet in the context of my theoretical framework, and social constructivist research in general, I argued that the political science literature has significant shortcomings, including: (1) latent assumptions that policy actors behave rationally; (2) a tendency to treat transfer in literal, transactional terms, thus overlooking the propensity for policy to mutate as it moves; (3) a spatial imaginary dominated by the national scale; (4) rigid categorisation of policy actors and types of policy transfers; and, (5) a lack of appreciation for the co-constitutive role mobile policy plays in the production of political space.

In reaction to these shortcomings, I sought direction from recent literature on ‘policy mobilities’ (McCann and Ward, 2011; Peck, 2011b) to develop a geographical, social constructivist conceptualisation of mobile policy. Aligning with the dispositions of my urban-theoretical framework, I showed how policy mobilities accounts focus their attention, variously, on the achievement and contestation of political projects, the relational production of places and territories, and the socio-materiality of governance and policy. Drawing on policy mobilities accounts, and cognate literatures on policy and policy-making, I advanced a conceptualisation of policy mobility as socially constructed, socially practiced and spatially dynamic.

Where political science accounts have primarily been realist and/or positivist in their orientation, my conceptualisation of policy mobility framed policy and policy-making as socially constructed. Concerned with uncovering and understanding “the political effects of allegedly neutral statements about reality”
(Wedel et al, 2005, p. 37), my social constructivist analysis focused on the way policy-making depends on “particular notions of legitimate knowledge … valorized in a particular social formation at a particular time” (Prince, 2012b, p. 194). In this way, I sought to identify the shifting, selective and politicised foundation on which the Common Ground model was mobilised. Attending to the social construction of policy, in Chapter 5, I questioned the tendency of policy transfer approaches to view the mobility of policy ‘solutions’ as the rational response to already existing policy ‘problems’. As my analysis revealed, the proposal of the Common Ground model as a policy solution for Australian cities was intimately linked to, and was indeed coterminal with, the emergence of chronic homelessness as a policy problem in Australia. The philosophies, actors and techniques associated with the Common Ground model—Housing First and street counts, to name two—were not rational responses to a delimited, pre-existing policy problem. They were, instead, fundamentally implicated in the social construction of a new policy problem, chronic homelessness, to which the Common Ground model appeared logical and worthy.

Contrasted with the instrumentalist underpinnings of political science approaches, my policy mobilities conceptualisation emphasised the importance of social practices. Recognising the way “activities, co-presences, and learning opportunities … situate and inform policy oriented travel and learning” (McCann, 2011b, p. 117), my analysis appreciated the role that embodied, socialised policy actors play in the mobilisation and re-territorialisation of policy. In doing so, attention was directed toward the ‘rooms and moments’ (Le Heron, 2009) in which embodied learning takes place and policy ideas take on their lustre. Arguing against a view of learning premised on individual agents sealed-off from social influence, I approached policy learning as a socialised, politicised process of ‘educating the attention’ (McFarlane, 2011a). Policy actors learn through their placement in particular networks, amid shifting fields of practice which are shaped by a range of institutions and interests. Importantly for the process of policy-making, these fields “shape what is seen, and what counts, in terms of policy innovations, preferred models, and best practices” (Peck, 2011b, p. 792). As socialised learning events, none were more influential for Australian policy actors than expert performances and site visits. As Chapter 6 detailed, these events were intensely intermediated and selective, framed as explicit opportunities to
learn from internationally recognised experts and about best practice approaches to chronic homelessness. They had the effect of inculcating policy actors into epistemic fields, exposing them to stories like *Million-Dollar Murray* (Gladwell, 2006) and to exemplar places like New York City. This created what McCann (2008, p. 11) refers to as a ‘moral geography’: mappings of good and bad places which come to guide the attention of policy actors. With particular expert performances and site visits, the Common Ground model began to be seen and began to count as a preferred model. Whether it was the dramatic ‘before and after’ client depictions shown in Rosanne Haggerty’s presentations or the visits to supportive housing facilities succeeding in the urban-capitalist crucible of New York City, social practices were pivotal in enabling the establishment of actor-coalitions and, ultimately, the model’s re-territorialisation in Australian cities.

As the most explicitly geographical aspect of my conceptualisation, I approached policy mobility as a plural and dynamic spatial process. In contrast to the static, nation-centred spatialities employed in political science accounts, I conceived of policy mobility as spatialised through overlapping networked sites and evolving multi-scaled relations. Through this perspective, the mobilisation and re-territorialisation of policy is implicated in the “dialectical reconstruction of policy landscapes” (Peck, 2011b, p. 793), such that a policy idea itself, and the people, places and sites it encounters, are changed in the process. Earlier I touched on the plural spatialities of networked sites and multi-scaled relations, and how the Common Ground model was involved in the reconstruction of the homelessness policy landscape in Australia. Further illustrating the spatial dynamism at work in the mobility of policy, Chapter 7 revealed how the Common Ground model itself underwent changes in order for it to be implemented in Australian cities. Most dramatically, much of what made the model internationally renowned—large-scale refurbishment of heritage buildings, an ability to attract high levels of philanthropic funding, and utilisation of affordable housing tax credits—was not seen as translatable in the Australian context. With Australian Common Ground projects being new-build, small- to medium-scale, and primarily government funded, the elements of the model that ‘stuck’ were operational features: tenant ratios; the configuration of support packages, security and design standards, and management structures. While the model clearly changed through its mobilisation and re-territorialisation, Australian cities, too, have changed in
material ways by virtue of the model—clients are being thought about and acted upon in ways qualitatively different from that previously; permanent supportive housing has been normalised as a legitimate programmatic response to homelessness in Australian cities. As the model mutated, so too did the policy context in which it was mobilised, highlighting the importance of recognising policy mobility as a dynamic spatial process, not a transactional, inert transfer between stable jurisdictions.

8.4 Assembling policy, arriving at the urban: a methodology for policy mobilities research

Provoked by the challenge of apprehending the dynamic spatialities and social practices just described, the third and final objective of this thesis focused on the doing of urban policy mobilities research. This objective was to develop a methodological approach appropriate for the study of mobile urban policy, one capable of addressing, in particular, the theoretical and conceptual sensitivities established in Chapters 2 and 3. With the need to provide detailed qualitative insight into a multitude of practices, actors, sites and scales, located proximately and at-a-distance, I argued that urban policy mobilities research requires a carefully considered methodological approach. For Cochrane and Ward (2012, p. 8), the reason for this ultimately reflects the challenge of “capturing the complex dance associated with the grounding of mobile policies in place”. In this thesis, I went about overcoming this challenge in two ways: first, by framing the empirical investigation in terms of how a mobile policy idea was ‘arrived at’ in a set of specified local places, and, second, by developing a methodological approach based on the concept of assemblage.

Following the large majority of policy mobilities studies, my account focused in considerable depth on a single case—the mobility of the Common Ground model. Of course, this case was not considered to be somehow representative of policy mobility in general. It was a ‘critical case’, a case offering strategic leverage on areas of theoretical inquiry (Flyvbjerg, 2007), including that of urban politics, globalisation and policy-making. More importantly, this was an account of policy mobility from the vantage point of a particular set of places— Australian cities. Rather than tracking the global mobility of a policy idea per se, accounting for how it ‘arrived in’ different places, this thesis focused on how a
Policy idea was ‘arrived at’. This methodological choice, according to Robinson (2013, p. 9), reveals “the effective work of the urban in relation to elsewhere”. Considering my overarching aim to understand the implementation of the Common Ground model in Australian cities, this approach was particularly appropriate, focusing attention on the way policy ‘elsewheres’ were made present and actionable in particular places. Perhaps more notably, the approach enabled an appreciation for the way combinations of elsewheres—bits and pieces from here and there—were selectively appropriated, wrestled with and over. In this sense, it allowed me to grasp the full extent of what was being mobilised with the Common Ground model. On one level, ‘the model’ was clearly being mobilised as a programmatic solution, yet, on another, a different problematisation of chronic homelessness was also being mobilised. And although the Common Ground model’s implementation involved the mobilisation of a ‘New York City model’, Australian projects quickly became influenced by the distinct models developing in Adelaide and Melbourne for example, copying the adapted security features and fundraising approaches respectively. They also incorporated insights from countless other sources of influence within and beyond the US, including those of the UK Rough Sleepers Unit and the US Interagency Council on Homelessness’ Ten Year Plans. Together, these different elements played important roles in the Australian implementation of the Common Ground model, yet they may not have registered if my optic had been the global mobility of the Common Ground model itself.

With this framing of the empirical case in mind, I sought to develop a methodological approach to urban policy mobility based around the concept of assemblage. Informed by my theoretical and conceptual approaches—with their emphasis on plural spatialities, social practice, and the durability and contingency of structures—I argued that assemblage methodologies open up avenues for urban policy mobilities researchers to explore the messy actualities and spatial dispersal of governance and to assess the practiced power asymmetries that unevenly favour certain actors, knowledges and places. To help me understand the way in which the Common Ground model was arrived at in Australian cities, I developed an assemblage methodology with four foundational dispositions. Acknowledging that assemblages are the “product of multiple determinations” (Collier and Ong, 2005, p. 12), the first disposition of an assemblage methodology was to eschew
any recourse to singular causal factors or grand explanatory narratives by appreciating the multiplicities and over-determinations at work in a given situation. This approach allowed room to appreciate the phalanx of evolving territorial agendas and projects, the purposive actions of many and varied policy actors, the internationalisation of common sense to do with chronic homelessness, and the unlikely impacts of events like the Global Financial Crisis. Each of these played a role in the implementation of the Common Ground model, rendering highly problematic any tendency to assign simple causal determinants for the mobility of urban policy.

This appreciation of multiplicity leads, secondly, to a concern for process. Focusing on the nexus between provisional structures and emergent agencies, assemblage methodologies must attend to what happens in process, not least because “relations may change, new elements may enter, alliances may be broken, [and] new conjunctions may be fostered” (Anderson and McFarlane, 2011, p. 126). In this thesis, a focus on the processes through which assemblages come into and out of being has meant carefully tracing how past alignments and associations inform the present and how contemporary conditions and actors crystallise new conditions of possibility. This attention to process should not be dismissed as an obligatory bow to the post-structural turn, for it is precisely what happens in process that governs policy outcomes. The interactions between evolving territorial projects and internationalising common senses, for instance, have profound impacts on the policy environment and must be understood as temporally and spatially specific articulations, momentary convergences of ongoing processes.

Third, acknowledging that assemblages do not form and come apart of their own accord, my methodology has been attuned to labours of assembling. Policy mobility, as a purposive assemblage itself, requires the effort of engaged actors and the enrolment of various materials and techniques. These engagements and enrolments, denoting labours of assembly, are not the product of a singular agent. They result instead from distributed agencies. Policy actors are able to affect the course of events not because of their innate capacities, but because of their position within dynamic assemblages of materials, relationships, knowledges, and institutional settings. Australian advocates for the Common Ground model, for example, were able to exert influence by leveraging their
professional connections to Rosanne Haggerty and in turn leveraging the contacts she provided them with. Advantageously positioned in this dynamic professional network, they were then able to organise transformational site visits to Common Ground facilities, which enabled them to lobby key decision-makers more effectively. The agency of Common Ground advocates must therefore be seen as a distributed capacity, a capacity that was realised in the context of a particular policy assemblage.

Finally, because of its sensitivity toward the provisional, distributed, immanent nature of the social world, an assemblage methodology entails adopting a commensurately uncertain, reflexive and ‘revisable’ (Robinson, 2013) approach to academic knowledge production. Research accounts are ultimately the product of the discursive and material texts traced and assembled into narrative, the disciplinary traditions within which a researcher is situated, and the theoretical, methodological and even administrative choices made. Acting on this element of my assemblage methodology has meant recognising the contingencies surrounding access to informants, events and documentation, impressing the need for specified analyses and modest conclusions across the previous chapters.

The assembled nature of policy mobility and the research process was brought back into view recently. With the outcome of the 2013 federal election, held a matter of weeks prior to writing this conclusion, the national policy focus on homelessness initiated by the Rudd Labor government appears to have come to an end. The election of a conservative federal government saw the removal of the homelessness portfolio from the ministry and no commitment has yet been made to the targets established in the White Paper (Australian Government, 2008a). In Anderson and McFarlane’s (2011, p. 126) terms, alliances are being broken and new conjunctions fostered in ways that will likely be significant for Australian homeless services and for Common Ground advocates. In June, during the electoral ebb tide of the Labor government, this uncertain future loomed over another notable event, with the city of Canberra announced as the location for the ninth Australian Common Ground project. Remarkably, in the media coverage surrounding the multi-million dollar funding announcement, traces of the model’s New York City origin were conspicuously absent (Downie, 2012). For a model once inextricably associated with New York City to have become so quickly ‘Australian’ highlights the different realities presented to, and open to, the
researcher at different times. Developed amid certain assemblages, in which New York City connections were very much ‘live’, the arguments and observations made in the previous chapters reflect and refract those connections. It is now apparent, with connections decaying and others being formed, that such assemblages are being re-organised. The Common Ground model’s implementation in Australian cities appears to be living up to Richard Rose’s (2005, p. 139) parting lesson in his Practical Guide for policy-makers. When it comes to mobilising policy, he notes: “the ultimate achievement is that the foreign origins of a programme are forgotten. It then becomes described as no more and no less than the way we do things here”. While further Common Ground projects seem unlikely in the prevailing political context, by this measure, at least, existing Australian Common Ground projects are close to making the ultimate achievement.

8.5 Conclusion

This thesis set out to understand how a ‘mobile’ policy was arrived at in Australian cities. In the process, it also sought to assess the value of a type of urban research that inhabits uncomfortable yet generative tensions. With urban policy and politics comprised simultaneously of here and there, of the durable and the fleeting, I have argued that bounded spatial imaginaries and grand explanatory narratives cannot be reconciled with the spatial and temporal promiscuity of the urban. If, in the past, such approaches were fit for purpose, circumstances seem to have changed. Research must attend to the restless interactions between actors, institutions, sites and scales. To account for the way those interactions cohere in particular times and places as ‘urban’ politics, recourse to general claims and master-determinants fall well short. I have argued, and hoped to demonstrate, that there is much to be gained from the deployment of malleable analytical approaches, of contextually specified claims, and of modest conclusions. With these dispositions toward the urban, and toward the research endeavour, we stand to better appreciate the ways in which cities and their policies are summoned from somewhere between the local and the global, the structural and the contingent. We stand, in other words, to comprehend cities and their policies where it counts—in their making.
References


Blair, A. (2005, 19th June). Dear Mr Rann, Is she key to your promise?, *Sunday Mail*, p. 15.


References


References


Noonan, K. (2006, 29th July). Home is where the heart is, *The Courier-Mail*, p. 44.


