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THE PRACTICES OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE:
A TASMANIAN CASE STUDY

Ms Denbeigh J Armstrong BA (Hons)

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

School of Geography and Environmental Studies
University of Tasmania
April 2010

Declarations

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for a degree or diploma by the University or any other institution, except by way of background information and duly acknowledged in this thesis, and to the best of my knowledge and belief no material previously published or written by another person except where due acknowledgement is made in the text of the thesis, nor does the thesis contain any material that infringes copyright.

Denbeigh Armstrong
April 2010

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April 2010

This thesis incorporates the outcome of data analyses undertaken in collaboration with Dr Elaine Stratford as part of a research project under her supervision. The collaboration relates to research on local governance and citizen participation in Tasmania and pertains to sections of chapters 6 and 7. The findings of that research have been published in the journal, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geography* and the journal *Local Environment*.

Armstrong, D and Stratford, E 2004, 'Partnerships for local sustainability and local governance in a Tasmanian settlement', *Local Environment*, 9(6), pp. 541-560

Stratford, E, Armstrong, D, Jaskolski, M, 2003, 'Relational spaces and the geopolitics of community participation in two Tasmanian local governments – a case for agonistic pluralism?' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 28(4), pp.461-472.

Elaine Stratford
April 2010

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List of abbreviations

ACIR	Advisory Council for Inter-governmental Relations
ALGA	Australian Local Government Association
APM	Australian Paper Manufacturers
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
Cr	Councillor
GSRG	Geeveston Streetscape Reference Group
HVC	Hon Valley Council
LGAT	Local Government Association of Tasmania
LGMAT	Local Government Managers Association, Tasmania
LUPAA	Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993
MHA	Member of the House of Assembly
NCP	National Competition Policy
NOLG	National Office of Local Government
NPM	New Public Management
RFA	Regional Forest Agreement
RMPS	Resource Management and Planning System
RPDC	Resource Management and Planning Commission
SCAG	Southwood Community Advisory Group
SRG	Streetscape Reference Group
TDC	Town Development Committee
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Chronological list of Federal and Tasmanian governments

Numerous references are made throughout the work to government policies and programs implemented over time and a chronological reference of the different Tasmanian and Federal Governments from the early 1970s to the present time is provided here for reference purposes.

Period in Government	Federal party in government	Under the leadership of Prime Minister
1972-1975	Labor Party	Gough Whitlam
1975-1983	Liberal-National Coalition	Malcolm Fraser
1983-1991	Labor Party	Bob Hawke
1991-1996	Labor Party	Paul Keating
1996-2007	Liberal-National Coalition	John Howard
2007- to date	Labor Party	Kevin Rudd

Period in Government	Tasmanian State party in government	Under the leadership of Premier
1982-1989	Liberal Party	Robin Gray
1989-1992	Labor Party (includes period of the Labor-Green Accord)	Michael Field
1992-1996	Liberal Party	Ray Groom
1996-1998	Liberal Party	Tony Rundle
1998-2004	Labor Party	Jim Bacon
2004-2008	Labor Party	Paul Lennon
2008-to date	Labor Party	David Bartlett

Abstract

In this thesis I examine how local government and community actors are managing change in local governing processes. I describe how governing is practised and document the effects of such practices for the rural township of Geeveston in the Huon Valley Council, Tasmania, Australia. The aim of the research is to apprehend the materiality of governing at the local level under neoliberal governmental regimes in order to comprehend *what happens and what is at stake* when people govern and are governed in particular ways. This project is underpinned by an interest in everyday practices and the particular experiences of individuals in communities of place and interest and grounded in a case study of township revitalisation.

The implementation of neoliberal governmental technologies has changed profoundly governing practices at all levels of government. The term *governance* is being used as a general reference for these changing conditions of governing. Of concern here are the effects of those changes on local government that occurred in Tasmania, Australia during the 1990s. This period of local government modernisation emphasised managerial and structural changes designed to increase local government efficiency and effectiveness and were accompanied by legislative requirements to enhance citizen participation in local government processes. Determining how to integrate these twin goals has generated significant challenges for local government and community actors as they negotiate what it means to govern and be governed in the new *governance* environment.

The design for the research is based on a case study approach and draws on qualitative research methods. It assumes great value in working from the particularities of people's experiences; a position central to the practice of cultural geography. The theoretical framework draws on concepts of government developed in literature on governmentality; a perspective that highlights the regimes of practices of government used in attempts to shape rationally human conduct for particular ends. In its detailed examination of the practices of government, this project addresses a gap identified in the literature calling for more empirical research to explicate theorizations of governmental practices.

This research builds knowledge about local governance with attention to its constitution through the discursive and material practices of identity, community, representation, citizenship and politics in place. The work links the empirical findings of this research with concepts of the representative claim, agonistic pluralism and governing through community to problematise, respectively, meanings and practices of representation, the role of conflict in democracy and practices of community empowerment.

Key words: cultural geography, governmentality, representative claim, agonistic pluralism, local government, representation, participation, citizenship, place-making, Tasmania