

**A CIRCUIT OF GOVERNANCE
HOUSING FRAMEWORK:
MODES AND SOCIAL RELATIONS IN
NEO-LIBERAL POLITICAL PRACTICES**

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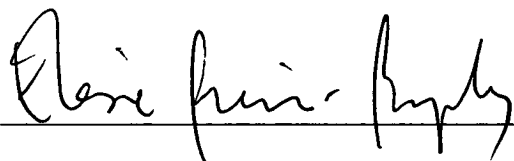
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STATEMENT OF ETHICAL CONDUCT

All research procedures reported in the thesis were approved by the University of Tasmania’s Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee.

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ABSTRACT

Australian State Housing Authorities, influenced by neo-liberal political practices, have implemented housing policies favouring multi-actor 'governance' models. These aim at altering both the size of the public and social housing sectors and the role of the state in delivery. This impetus to involve non-state actors in the management and provision of social housing has been reinforced by discourses that espouse significant benefits in alternative financing and provider models. The thesis analyses this societal shift by considering socio-cultural understandings, individual housing actors' attitudes to self-governance and non-commercial 'stakeholder' organisational views on market coordination. Empirically grounded, this thesis critically interprets the qualitative data gathered from focus groups and semi-structured interviewees with 70 research participants and newspaper and policy document analysis on the Government of Tasmania's *Affordable Housing Strategy* over the period 2003 – 2007. Utilising a critical realist ontology to understand the generative mechanisms of neo-liberal modes of governance, this research argues that heterogeneous actor discourses exist because of differing levels and combinations of support for the social democratic goals or market efficiency elements of the *Affordable Housing Strategy*. While this diversity prevents a coherent and singular application of neo-liberal political practices, it does not constrain the dominance and embeddedness of its rationale.

This thesis makes six contributions to sociological understandings of the operations of nuanced neo-liberal political practices and their uneven impacts in public and social housing. First, the thesis argues that the basic mechanisms in the *Affordable Housing Strategy* for reconfiguring the relationships and responsibilities between state and non-state actors emphasised new modes of governance and new social relations, or degrees of connectivity, between different levels within the state apparatus. Second, it contends that critical realism provides a useful lens to analyse emerging or in flux policy mechanisms. In contrast to rational positivist approaches and post-structuralist interpretations, a critical realist ontology is used to explain the fragmentation and complexity in housing policy and the experiences and responses of key stakeholders amid an environment of change.

Third, to understand how the *Affordable Housing Strategy* functions, a dynamic 'circuit of governance' model, which includes public housing tenants, the media and independent communication specialists, non-government organisations (NGOs) and the state, is developed and applied throughout the thesis. The research also found that three modes of governance dominated the housing circuitry, namely interactions, transactions and compliances. The thesis critiques the emergence of a cultural governance frame for public housing news stories; contradictions in levels of self-governance to state intervention in tenant discourses; NGO compliance based on funding and service delivery uncertainties; attempts, some NGOs articulated, to find a middle-ground or social entrepreneurial identity; and the influence of market-oriented transactional discourses within well-resourced NGOs and quangos. Fifth, the thesis proposes that the local terrain of circuit of governance actors' responded to the *Affordable Housing Strategy* through dialectical processes of negotiation, rejection and opportunity-making. Finally, the thesis centres on empirical examples of neo-liberal political practices in housing and urban sociology to open up conversations on paradigmatic change and replacement possibilities to neo-

liberal political practices. The relevance of this thesis rests on the claim that empirical findings in housing actors' relations strengthen the rich theoretical understandings of neo-liberalism and serve to ground theory in ways that expand it.

PUBLICATIONS

Some of the material in this thesis was included in conference papers and publications during my doctoral candidacy.

Conference Papers based on Thesis

Francis-Brophy, E (2003) "Media Framing of Social Housing and its effects on community perceptions" Australasian Political Studies Association (APSA) Conference, July, Hobart Australia.

Francis-Brophy, E (2005) "Communicating Housing Policy", Asian Pacific Network of Housing Researchers (APNHR) Conference, September, Kobe, Japan.

Francis-Brophy, E (2006) "The Architecture of Community Participation", International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISoCaRP) Congress, September, Istanbul, Turkey.

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Francis-Brophy, E (2006) "Planning to incorporate community participation? City visioning strategies and institutional challenges", Chapter in *ISOCARP Review 02 between integration and disintegration: opportunities and challenges*, ISoCaRP: Netherlands.

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LIST OF ACROYMNS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACF	Advocacy Coalition Framework
ACOSS	Australian Council of Social Services
AHO	Affordable Housing Organisation
AHS	Affordable Housing Strategy
AHURI	Australian Housing Urban Research Institute
CRA	Commonwealth Rent Assistance
CSHA	Commonwealth State Housing Agreement
DHHS	Department of Health and Human Services (Tasmania)
FaHCSIA	Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
HOAP	Home Ownership Assistance Program
HT	Housing Tasmania
NPM	New Public Management
NfP	Not for Profit Organisation
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NRAS	National Rental Affordability Scheme
SAAP	Supported Accommodation Assistance Program
SAIP	Streets Ahead Incentive Program
SHA	State Housing Authority
STEPS	Southern Training and Employment Solutions Ltd (Tasmania)
TAHL	Tasmanian Affordable Housing Limited
TasCOSS	Tasmanian Council of Social Services
WWII	World War Two

PART ONE

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

From the 1950s to the 1980s, the demand-management policies of Keynesian economics guided much of the international political economy. These policies centred on twin compromises between: capital and labour and; the state and the market. A key feature of the affluent postwar period was the establishment of a welfare state system to safeguard citizens from extreme poverty and social isolation. But, over the past three decades, a number of economies fundamentally changed path by adopting neo-liberal economic and ideological constitutions. Australia, New Zealand, Chile, the UK and the USA were amongst them. As individuals earned more income, accumulated greater wealth and achieved higher standards of living, mounting concerns regarding loss of income via taxation propelled resurgence in right-wing ideals and policies. As a reaction against social-democratic and welfare liberalism, neo-liberalism followed a Hayekian *laissez-faire* approach. Previously central goals of full employment and economic growth were abandoned by neo-liberal proponents who, instead, prioritised controlling inflation and the global expansion of free markets (Harvey, 1989b). High public expenditure was also singled out for retraction. From such a background the current era of neo-liberal political practices generated new configurations of the state.

Notions of 'governance' began to replace 'government' as the involvement of a wide range of institutions and actors in the production of policy outcomes was pursued (Stoker 1998; Kooiman, 2000; Newman, 2001). It is argued, coordinating complex social policies now requires the interaction and participation of a range of state and non-state actors. Meanwhile, neo-liberal agendas made institutional boundaries more permeable (Cornwall, 2004), for example neo-liberal political practices established more public-private partnerships, the introduction of incentives for non-government housing providers and community associations to enter the marketplace, and the downsizing of the welfare state through means-testing. In this thesis, the housing problem in contention stems from a residualised public housing sector, a tight rental market and a lack of affordable housing. The thesis analyses governance trends and concomitant shifts in the social relations within policy communities by critically examining the empirical evidence drawn from a micro- and meso-level study of actors' discursive interpretation of the Tasmanian *Affordable Housing Strategy* (hereafter *AHS*).¹

Neo-liberal reforms were evident across Australian housing policy. A key example has been the gradual shift from 'bricks-and-mortar' subsidies, as embodied by early Commonwealth State Housing Agreement's (CSHA) construction of public housing, towards consumption subsidies, such as Commonwealth Rental Assistance (CRA), where low-income private rental tenants receive financial assistance instead of physical housing. Importantly, neo-liberal political practices assuaged all levels of Australian government, in

¹ The micro-level notes both the individual representations of the *Affordable Housing Strategy* and intentional associations of separate actors such as tenants and external communications consultants. The meso-level incorporates the institutional order that encapsulates the level of regulation and strategic coordination that institutional actors such as NGOs and peak bodies adhere to. Society in this way exists as a set of institutions based on repeated actions with a range of symbolic meanings. Organisations that are created to realise a specific end, in the most efficacious way, are considered to be institutions.

various incremental ways, with bi-partisan support from the major political parties (Dean and Hindess, 1998; Maude, 2004). The assiduousness of these practices has meant, that within a relatively short time, the 'logics' of neo-liberalism were accepted and internalised by a broad section of leaders, citizens and housing communities, irrespective of their political or moral persuasion. There was strong belief in the value of 'efficiency' of the free market to distribute resources and knowledge, lower income taxes, introduce choice through user fees and liberate individuals to enact moral and political agency (Hayek, 1944). At the same time, while the ethos of neo-liberalism has permeated into new thinking of long-term housing problems and new ways of 'solving' these problems, social democratic values and egalitarian forms of state legitimation have not been entirely eradicated.

The focus on efficiency through institutional-strategic forms of governance has excused and camouflaged the impossibility of neo-liberal practices being able to successfully mix market *and* social justice priorities for the betterment of society. Considering this paradox, the thesis examines heterogeneous, contradictory discourses and responses (both 'what is the case' and 'what ought to be the case') of state and non-state housing actors on a specific policy directive to broaden social housing provision. Despite the general reification and pervasiveness of neo-liberal ideologies, its expression and enactment by state and non-state actors has not been uniform. In principle, the inclusion of more actors' means more shared power; shared interests between public and private sectors; and increased socio-cultural governance. In practice, this has not eventuated. By using the term 'heterogeneous discourses' the thesis does not propose that two or three discourses work in opposition; rather the thesis separates out a number of discourses along a continuum of neo-liberalism. Each discourse then both fits within an understanding of the changes in governance and social relations and within the duality of neo-liberal political practices in operation. This thesis contends that, in the empirical housing example studied, the basic mechanisms for reconfiguring the relationships and responsibilities between state and non-state actors' centre on:

- I. New modes of governance (or service delivery)
- II. New social relations via degrees of proximity within the circuit to the state.

In other words, this forms the analytical framework of abduction and retroduction. Adopting a critical realist ontology that is both transformative (i.e. considering how things change) and stratified (i.e. allowing for the existence of emergent causal powers that operate at different levels of reality) is necessary to critique actors' discourses on the conditions under which experience is possible to agency (e.g. owing rent depends upon the antecedent relationships between landlord and tenants; being discriminated against is posterior to definitions of exclusion). This means the thesis centres on analysing the discourses of socio-cultural understandings at the *societal level*, individual agency at the *tenant level* and organisational support for market coordination at the *Non-Government organisation (NGO) level*. Within these discourses the thesis distinguishes separate positions of conformity and opposition to dominant neo-liberal political practices. At the regional policy level, the debate on new governance modes was opened up in Tasmania in December 2003. The AHS signalled the state governments' intentions to reallocate resources from direct public service delivery to an arms-length third sector social housing model. Social housing constitutes approximately 6% of Tasmanian households, with

public housing being by far the largest component at 5.53% of all housing tenures or 92.2% of social housing (ABS, 2006). Tasmania is an island state south of the eastern side of the Australian continent with a population of half a million.² Housing Tasmania, the Tasmanian State Housing Authority (SHA), is organisationally situated within the state Government's Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) portfolio.

In considering the variance between actor experiences and discourses, I develop and utilise a 'circuit of governance' framework.³ It intertwines understandings of modes of governance with proximities of social relations and connectedness to the state through a distinctive analytical lens. The dual concepts of governing modes of connections and social relations of proximity represent the analytical fruit of such labour. Reconfiguring state provision of housing to an expanded social housing sector highlights the importance of examining changing patterns in actor relations; ever mindful of Murie's insight that "there are no 'easy answers' in housing policy" (Murie *et al.*, 1976: 248). To use a housing metaphor, the analysis of discourse provides a central doorway to investigate what lies behind the facade of the building, to see how the functionality of the building compares to the architectural plan. To put it another way, I investigate how the state and non-state actors' accommodate these proposed changes by organising and restructuring themselves; adjusting to new interpretations of their capacity during the first stage of policy implementation. The central argument in the thesis is that the local terrain of actors' – those within the circuit of governance – respond to new housing policy, and its concurrent neo-liberal modes of governance and social relations, through processes of negotiation, rejection and opportunity-making. Different enactments of policy change result from actor interpretations, institutional structures and the embeddedness of neo-liberal ideas. As Jacobs *et al* (2004: 256) writes on multi-level governance of housing policy

"Contradictions and confusions are apparent, not just between the understanding and perception of different policy players, but within the responses provided by even the most experienced and centrally placed respondents".

Deciding on the research questions was an iterative or recursive process involving raising a series of them, discarding some, reformulating others and then thinking about the empirical implications (as this was the entry point of the question) followed by the theoretical implications (Alford, 1998: 27). There is always a slippage between the theoretical and the empirical tracks of analysis; as the empirical evidence never quite fits the analytical claims and the theoretical concepts never fully grasp the complexity of the empirical phenomenon. Hence, as Alford (1998) suggests, research questions become 'successive approximations'. These research questions are a commitment to a way of framing the problem so the research process could begin or continue. The research problem was guided by two questions. These were:

1. In what ways do the discourses of state and non-state actors articulate key elements of neo-liberal governance, as portrayed in the *Affordable Housing Strategy*?

² ABS. 1304.6 – Tasmanian Key Indicators, April 2009 (statistic for Sept Quarter 2008) totalled 498,887 residents.

³ This framework is discussed in-depth in Chapter Five and extended in the interpretation of empirical findings.

2. Do these discourses form a coherent application of neo-liberal political practices, or do they reflect competing, contradictory values?

Governance practices affect numerous aspects of social relations within Australian society. The AHS aimed to change the provision of public-social housing in Tasmania, increase the supply of affordable housing to low income earners and communicate the policy to a wider audience. The main governance-social relations to consider are therefore state-tenants, state-NGOs and state-media. These individually capture distinct and common aspects of the factors that constitute social housing governance, in a narrow sense, but also have wider applicability in other policy areas.

Empirical studies that explicitly connect theoretical understandings of neo-liberalism with 'actually existing neo-liberalism' (Brenner and Theodore, 2002) remain largely under-researched.⁴ In particular, the ways in which neo-liberalism functions as a mode of governance are not very well developed in academic scholarship (Miller, 2007: 226). We understand the structural and spatial transformations associated with neo-liberal political economy (Dean, 1999; Leitner and Sheppard, 2002; Ruming, 2005). But we have less knowledge about collectives and "how subjects and subjectivities are formed and how different modes of calculation emerge and become institutionalized" (Jessop and Sum, 2001: 97). It is not that the theoretical engagements on neo-liberalism are lacking *per se*. There is a plethora of contributions offering rich and timely critiques of recent philosophical and political shifts impacting on and changing society. The value of this research rests on the view that empirical findings of negotiations between state and non-state actors in housing could strengthen these theoretical understandings and serve to 'ground' theory in ways that expand it.

As a result, the social and political orientation of this thesis contributes to our understanding of which elements of neo-liberal theorisation reinforce and complement empirical findings. The thesis argues discursive contestations and contradictions of neo-liberal political practices, within housing policy, need to be understood in light of new modes of governance "that are part and parcel of the neoliberal project" (Miller, 2007: 224). In urban research scholars, such as Raco (2003: 77) cite the need to adopt a "change in methodological focus towards the empirical practices of government and less concern with abstract theorisations". Hence this thesis fits within a strand of enquiry into 'governance' that starts from a base of empirical research that assesses the claims that coordination through new governance relations is emerging as a core feature of political, social and economic life.

One way to effectively study the influence of neo-liberalism is to analyse the contingencies that affect the interplay between social relations, specific policy instruments and governance connections. In doing this, the thesis examines empirical evidence of changes identified as neo-liberal, noting key constraints and enablers arising from such shifts in public to social housing. In this light, the state takes on an unfixed form – in part due to the role it plays in conditioning the 'market' through the establishment of quasi-state

⁴ For Brenner and Theodore (2002: 349) 'actually existing neo-liberalism' articulates the contextual embeddedness of neo-liberal restructuring policies and projects at the national, regional and local level that are produced through contestation and inherited institutional legacies.

institutions and continuing to fund most social housing programs – where its' various guises mean different social relations for different housing actors. In referring to 'actually existing neo-liberalism', the thesis recognises the importance of local contingency and divergence between relations within governing institutions. Through applying empirically grounded findings to theories, the ways in which neo-liberalism operated in recent attempts to reconfigure public housing are noted before conceptual understandings of its characteristics are considered. Embedded within new modes of governance are multiple institutional actors whose responses were based on expectations, past interactions, imperatives to participate (e.g. for funding or continued state recognition) and imagined opportunities.

Heterogeneity of actor motivations provides the parameters of competing discourses. This is particularly evident in the multifarious discourses actors in the circuit of governance employ to validate their social relations, new roles and the functions of (social) housing. The many aspects of housing (from physical dwelling, access to services, locality, employment opportunities to surroundings etc) and the actual affect of the *AHS* on several of these further highlights the complexity of understanding the implications of neo-liberal modes of governance. Housing is not an ordinary commodity; it reflects different actor motivations. This is not altogether surprising as the *AHS* essentially attempts to conflate two sets of principles one, neo-liberal and the other, social democratic. These values also coexist in actor accounts, at times almost working in tandem or dovetailing each other and, at others, in clear conflict.

The attractiveness of neo-liberalism is that it seemingly allows actors to articulate heterogeneous preferences as though they were one; in that they exhibit a high degree of convergence with dominant neo-liberal discourse. In the thesis, this takes the form of actors using similar terms such as 'efficiency', 'entrepreneurial', 'choice', 'freedom', 'responsibility' and 'rationality' and yet ending up with preference statements that are conflicting. These conflicting preferences stem from the neo-liberal aspects and the social democratic aspects of social housing provision. This essentially is the duality of neo-liberalism. Despite many common features, neo-liberal political practices are not necessarily replicable across regions. In this thesis, neo-liberalism is discussed as both a political ideology and as a contemporary governance tool. Accordingly, neo-liberal political practices have a number of fissures and internal inconsistencies that are expressed in the *AHS* policy and the experiences of key stakeholders in the circuit of governance. As Andrew Gamble (2007: 3175) elucidates, these complications exist

"not least between a *laissez-faire* strand which believes that the best policy is to allow markets to operate with as few impediments as possible, and a social market strand which believes that for the free market to reach its full potential the state has to be active in creating and sustaining the institutions which make that possible."

The discursive and ideological tools of neo-liberalism constrain the way actors think about and respond to new modes of governance. Closer examination points to the difficulty actors have in imagining a counter-point to prevailing neo-liberal logics when they use the same discursive rhetoric as proponents of neo-liberalism. A main shortfall, then, in the debate and critique of neo-liberalism, is the problematic of 'answering back'. As Slavoj Žižek (2007:17) points out in assessing the neo-liberalism of Blair's years in office, using

the language of neo-liberalism to present an alternative way of societal governance limits its transformative potential:

“The true victory occurs when the enemy talks your language. In this sense, a true victory is a victory in defeat: it occurs when one’s specific message is accepted as a universal ground, even by the enemy.”

Therefore in this thesis the multiple discourses actors utilise are given different labels, such as discourses of acquiescence for NGO actors reluctantly complying with the state’s changes in housing support services (in Chapter Eight) or discourses of cultural governance used by the media and communications specialists to praise the AHS and confine any potential public criticism (in Chapter Six). These distinctions highlight different elements of actors’ lived experiences of neo-liberal political practices; all discourses share elements of commonality and elements of opposition. Importantly, these separate points of opposition do not, necessarily, conform to a coherent critique of neo-liberalism. Neo-liberal political practices remain contingent upon the connection between discrete spheres of human action and social forces and, given the rate of change, there is no central mechanism by which we might understand social change and governance shifts under capitalism. From a critical realist perspective, the program of the AHS involved multiple mechanisms and multiple contexts which lead to different effects, relations and modes of governance emerging for different actors producing multiple outcomes.

The Tasmanian Affordable Housing Strategy

The severity of the entrenched problems in the Tasmanian public housing sector mobilised a diffuse third sector to rally for state intervention and policy action.⁵ Late in 2003, after six months of state-wide community consultations with many of the actors in this research, the Tasmanian Labor Government announced, as part of its re-election platform, the *AHS*. The regional policy was publically praised as a much-needed counter to a multi-tenure affordability crisis. The policy advanced a ‘whole-of-system’ approach to increase the supply of, and access to, affordable housing. The *AHS* set out the provision of housing for a number of groups: low income Tasmanians; for those pushed out of homeownership; those unable to afford to pay private rent; and those unable to be housed in a tight public housing sector. This thesis concentrates attention on the last category – *public housing reform towards more social housing*.

The *AHS* aimed to achieve four key objectives:

1. A sustainable housing system
2. The capacity to expand supply of social and affordable housing in response to the community’s immediate and longer-term housing needs

⁵ For example, insufficient stock to match need, tight allocation system, complex tenant characteristics and requirements, maintenance backlog and lack of opportunities for tenants.

3. A range of effective and responsive housing models that meet a diverse range of housing needs, including special needs and the particular requirements of local areas
4. A housing market that underpins economic growth, area vitality and strong, safe, resilient communities (Housing Tasmania, 2003a: 7).

From 2004 to 2006, the *AHS* was the determining force in the new governance 'imagination' of how to reduce state direct responsibility and financial resources in the delivery of public housing (Dodson, 2006). For Tasmania, the *AHS* represented a shift in both the kind of housing policy deemed appropriate and the language used to endorse policy change. This ideological and linguistic shift encapsulated the shift in mindset and consciousness that the system needed to be reconfigured and that governance should involve a growing number of resources, coordination and participants. Making sense of the affordable housing crisis and the needs of public housing tenants' relied on a *discourse of reconfiguration* – of actors, structures and purpose.

The virtues of increasing multi-level governance to create a "new and revitalised housing system" (Housing Tasmania, 2003a) are named up on every page of the *AHS* policy document. Similarly, the discourse used to describe the crisis in affordable housing, including the public housing system, was connected to state, bureaucratic rationalities and to the dominance of economic values. While 'efficiency' means something very exact in economics (for example Pareto's Law), it has lost its potency in the language of governance, becoming the main way the viability of a range of housing programs and services are assessed. I argue in the thesis that it is when the term 'efficiency' is used in preference over all other ways of conceptualising a problem or solution that multiple discourses and fissures in accounts emerge and, in a broader sense, the negative effects of neo-liberal political practices are most evident. For some non-state actors, such as tenants and NGO actors, who integrate and advance the language of efficiency in their discourses, the relative robustness of this singular solution becomes apparent.

The Tasmanian state's 'transformative' new governance agenda also emerged out of a number of neo-liberal influences coalescing such as, inadequate funding for public housing at state and Commonwealth government levels, a need for offsetting financial investment and risk to other actors, the 'success' of privatisation in other state services and the 'leadership' of other Australian state's in pursuing public-private partnerships. While the policy described public housing in familiar terms, as a "safety net" and "core component" of the housing system, Housing Tasmania placed substantial emphasis on its first attempt to attract new financial resources through partnership arrangements and private sector involvement. For example a Background Paper issued to stakeholders states:

"The future of social housing provision is less about fixed tenure type responses and more about innovative models, partnerships and shared funding and management arrangements" (Housing Tasmania 2003d: Paper 1: 4).

The *AHS* is not used in this thesis as a unique case study. Rather, it assists the examination of multiple articulations of changing modes of governance and relationships between

housing providers and the state.⁶ Increasingly a 'both/and' combination of state and non-state, public and private is spreading across most areas of life. This has created new hybrid forms, fragmentations and ambivalences as well as powerful instrumental mechanisms for government, corporations and NGOs. Despite the case study centring on housing, many generalisations from the research findings are transferable to other social service sectors such as education (de Vita, 2003), health, social security and employment. Again, this illustrates the overwhelming prevalence of its 'logic' and the need to critically reflect on the myriad ways that actors discourses reinforce or challenge these tendencies.

The *AHS* embodies a growing preference in Australia to follow models developed in the UK and to a lesser extent the USA based on encouraging private sector and non-government organisations to manage and maintain public sector housing (see Nygaard *et al.*, 2008). Hence, the *AHS* functions as an exemplar of neo-liberal political practices which tend to trigger a number of fissures in actors' discourses about a reconfigured 'public-social' housing system. In this way, non-state actors' discursive conflicts are interpreted as being symptomatic of the competing pressures and uncertainty that stem from the gradual, often *ad hoc*, introduction of neo-liberal governance into housing policy. Examining a local context encourages an analysis of the subtle, intricate ways that neo-liberal political practices get 'under the skin' of actors in ways that blanket enforcement or coercion of its political and ideological dogma could not. In a similar way, the *AHS* is considered 'in flux' as a tool for neo-liberal policy experimentation, adjusting and accommodating a range of unforeseen policy implementation processes and failures.

Setting the Context: Examples from the 'circuit of governance'

The following three scenarios, selected from the empirical interview data in Part Three of the thesis, are used here to 'set the scene' of the research project, reinforce the issues raised thus far and introduce the central model of the 'circuit of governance'. In this thesis, non-state actors discuss new ways of relating to the state in a housing policy environment experiencing a governance overhaul. Through such accounts, we can observe and unpack how the once 'solid' hierarchical relations between organisations and the state have been replaced with more precarious 'liquid' relations (Bauman, 2005). This fragmentation reveals the ongoing uncertainty of flexible, neo-liberal conditions.

Two men are standing outside a small converted office of a Supported Assistance Accommodation Provider. A main road in a northern suburb of Hobart, an average weekday. The man on the left is pleased he's chalked up eight weeks in a flat. His longest 'home' for many years. The man on the right runs the tenancy support program and is explaining Housing Tasmania's role as 'landlord'. It's a conversation they've had before, but the Program Manager knows it's important that his clients understand the new system they're entering. He also feels the tension of change – the state has started discussions on new rehousing processes in the pipeline. Speculating on their form, he thinks it will mean a contraction of the services his organisation provides.

⁶ It is outside the focus of this thesis to consider the effectiveness of the *Affordable Housing Strategy* in its macro-sense, though actors in this research discussed how some policy components were changed or aborted with new solutions being trialled, again with uneven effects (see Chapters Five, Nine and Ten for elaboration).

There's a crowd of several hundred people surrounded by printed banners with slogans. The local media are assembling on State Parliament's lawn in Salamanca Place, Hobart. A diverse group of seven meet to rehearse what they are going to say. One of the organisers, an articulate woman in her thirties, ensures the 'key message' is clear in everyone's presentation. Minutes later they're sitting in an MP's office sharing personal accounts of housing stress.

Meanwhile, a researcher enters a serviced office block for an interview. Over the next hour she transcribes their examples – page after page – of Housing Tasmania's deficiencies compared to non-state housing providers. She proposes counterarguments, theories and 'evidence' she has read and collated. They are unshakeable – new modes of governance with a minimal state role is the only way forward. Frequently, public housing applicants and tenants are talked of in stigmatised ways. The 'days of getting something for nothing', she was told, are 'thankfully over'.

The actors who belong to the 'circuit of governance' framework include public housing tenants, the media and independent communication specialists, NGOs and the state. The state represents a main power source where the impetus for governance change flows out of, at varying 'voltages' within the circuit. The state, regardless of claims that it has been 'hollowed-out' or weakened, remains a main source of power within the circuit of governance. New relations with the state occur at various proximities, for example some NGO actors were focused on demonstrating a mix of support for state leadership and independent initiative to prove their capacity. The structural parameters may have become more porous as the state publically embraced new housing providers as the 'solution' to a 'sustainable housing system' but the state has not removed its authority. The 'circuit of governance' model is an attempt to move away from rigid formalities by proposing a more encompassing dialectical process of governance that forms and is informed by symbolic practices and an evolving set of negotiations and regulated practices that reproduce society.

The metaphor of an electrical circuit is useful as it encompasses a number of ideas that can be 'tested' in the empirical analysis. These include the notion that the circuit of actors operate in a 'loop' creating a 'return path' back to the key destination node i.e. the state; that the state attempts to predict and modify the voltage and currents at all places within the circuit through regulation; new governance modes and new social relations possess active 'sources of energy' and passive 'loads' that are transmitted to the state to accomplish a specific task; and the state can intentionally create an 'open circuit' preventing successful 'loops' and task accomplishment when the next stage of policy experimentation is required; and, less common, non-state actors' can trigger a 'short circuit' by reinterpreting state goals in unorthodox ways.

Importantly, these members of the 'housing policy community' are aware of the shifting ground surrounding their programs, funding or social relations.⁷ The circuit includes elite actors, key recipients and participants in housing policy and those with internal and

⁷ This 'stakeholder society' (Giddens, 1998) seeks to engage all those affected by decisions in the decision-making process and is seen as one approach to promoting a more participative and inclusive style in governance. A commitment to 'stakeholding' (Hutton, 1995), partnerships and other governance mechanisms occurred to offset market shortcomings and any explicit returning to a Keynesian style stronger state. Jessop (2000: 11) describes the expansion of governance as an attempt to "address the real limitations of the market, state and mixed economy as areas of dealing with various complex, political and social issues".

external relations with the state.⁸ My research enquiry included both people who have policy 'enacted' upon them and those who 'shape' or powerfully influence policy.⁹ Hence the model of a 'circuit' reiterates the flow and movement between connections with the state, with no one stakeholder or actor group being privileged over another. A strong feature of these 'circuit of governance' relations is the ebb and flow of actors' discourses that accentuate "suspicions and denunciations" (Rosanvallon, 2006: 147) and acceptances and consents of state initiated neo-liberal political practices (Ward, 2003). Policy analysis frequently concentrates on government decision-making with "the consequences that external actors and their role in policy tend to be neglected in some accounts of how policy is made" (Moran, 2005: 28).

A Foucauldian view of power provides valuable insights into how power mediates the social relations surrounding the diffusion of national norms of what public housing is, who provides it and how. Foucault's understanding of two intertwined aspects of power i.e. *power-over* and *power-to*, mediate social relations within the circuit, are exercised at various points and subject to an interplay between policy and actor agendas. The analysis of power that Lukes' (1974) offers assists when considering structural 'levels' to powers operation. From the overall framing at the national level debate on governance shifts in housing and the need for greater affordability; through the constructed design of the deliberative processes by different groups of actors such as communication consultants working on the AHS, key Housing Tasmania policy-makers; and housing activist and service providers; to the implementation of the processes themselves at the local level. While institutionally these levels tend to be fairly empirically distinct, the discourses of neo-liberalism potentially operate across socio-spatial scales. However, as will be shown in Chapters Six to Ten, in practice these discursive accounts may originate at particular levels, and consequently derive some of their power from these origins.

As a sociological study of policy change, this thesis aims to contribute to rectifying such a deficit. While the ideas I explore in the thesis are viewed through critical realist lenses, the empirical material belongs collectively to a policy community that lives out the more variegated or unpredictable neo-liberal changes. Critical examination of modes of governance and social relations within the circuit, and the assumptions and theories that underlie these interactions, reveal multiple contradictions and fissures within and between stakeholders on the likely outcomes of policy, their interpretation of neo-liberalism and the rationale for their involvement in the policy process.

⁸ Internal relations are symmetrical, presupposing each other, such as between landlord and tenant. External relations, in contrast, are those that are asymmetrical, more contingent and need not rely on each other to exist, such as the relations between social housing provider and the state.

⁹ I have endeavoured to use interview material to enrich theoretical debates and hope the diversity of these enthusiastic, frustrated and contradictory discourses comes across in this thesis. Interestingly, hour long interviews tended to contain internal contradictions and the struggles actors face when summarising their experiences. Just as we are aware of the multiple identities we enact, play out and live each day at work and home and the tussles for primacy between our views and socialisation practices, these non-state housing actors found ways to deal with the dilemmas they were experiencing in new governance relations.

New modes of governance and social relations

Why consider the connections between social relations and governance? First, because it mixes the old and the new; a combination that is as dynamic and familiar as it is polarised and strange. Social relations are central to the discipline of sociology and the analysis of the divergent ways that individuals, groups and communities interact and connect with each other.¹⁰ In this thesis, the term 'social relations' refers to the more or less durable and direct personal relations between two individuals or representatives of an organisation or the state. Centrally, this thesis advances the notion that essential causal business occurs within social relations among persons and groups and studying relations is critical for greater understanding of mechanisms. Relational sociology, like critical realism, offers alternative ways of thinking about the structure-agency debate. Studying tenants, state and NGO attitudes and perceptions of the current housing crisis, the need for the *AHS* or changing roles for themselves and each other, will not alone explain the social phenomena of neo-liberal governance change. Instead it is important to ascertain how discourses within the social relations and governance modes matter and which particular ones – how together, though not necessarily equally, these actors are part of the 'event' of social housing. For Bruno Latour (2005: 13) sociologists could make a significant contribution by examining "how society is held together" rather than presupposing that the societal structure exerts power upon actors.

Through its cultural turn, sociology has produced greater understandings of ethnicity, gender, and class cultural processes, agency, values, and the shaping of human experience and social processes. Sayer (2002, 2004) and others explain that this new direction in sociological thinking partly arose out of dissatisfaction with materialist analyses of actors' interests, or motivations from structural positions with little analysis on everyday social reactions. In response, there is now a sizeable literature on discourses of racial and ethnic difference but some argue that it often neglects the ways these processes link to social relations (Brubaker, 2002; Walby, 2001). New debates developed, arguing for the importance of context and diversity within a differentiated structure for conceptualising actors' diverse subjective orientations. From here, these approaches revealed an additional value – that of a more relational account of social structure. Conceptualising an actors' social position requires engagement with the social relations and interdependencies (or generative mechanisms) in which social actors are embedded.

Contributing to sociology and urban studies by using a more 'modern' application of 'social relations', the thesis presents a complementary theoretical and empirical focus on the complex interplay between structure and agency and what happens when real structures in the social world impact on actors lives and working practices. Further, this progresses exploration of questions such as, what causal mechanisms in the 'real' domain develop into new social relations and move across and between 'proximities'? In urban studies Raco (2002: 437), drawing on organisation theories, argues "that one often neglected or underemphasised aspect of our understanding of local governance is that of

¹⁰ I recognise that Bourdieu's relationism (1986) and the idea that 'capitals' can be converted with social capital providing access to other capital has been very influential on understandings of networks and dynamics between individuals and resources. But given the constraints of length and form this thesis and its argument, do not rely on more classical definitions and theorisations of 'social relations' often found in structural critiques of class and gender.

the social relations of organisational activity.” Social relations, in this sense, are seen as a dynamic contribution to the “mechanisms in and through which organisations interact” (Raco, 2002: 438) and impact on emerging local policy processes.

Assessing the politics of Urban Development Corporations (UDCs) in Cardiff and Sheffield, Raco (2002: 438) writes of the need to consider social relations as important “intersubjective relations in the construction of working relationships between institutions and the development of community involvement in local decision-making.” Just as Raco found internal contradictions and tensions marked the social relations between organisations (in this case within the ‘circuit of governance’) effecting levels of cooperation and views on policy/strategy success. Internal differences of opinions within organisations were also seen as indicative of fluctuating, diverse social relations with broader local communities.

Studying social relations gives us an insight into how social phenomena such as public housing stigmatisation or inequalities in accessing affordable housing, emerge. Social relations refers to the abstract as well as the personal; formal and informal; and connections between individuals and groups of people or institutions. ‘Relations’ are the property of systems of actors and express the linkages that run between them – hence the supportive purpose of the ‘circuit of governance’ that relies on social relations and discursive modes of engagement.¹¹

Many theorists across disciplines in social science and from varying perspectives contend that social relations are *constituted* by the multiple social processes surrounding them.¹² Theorising social relations as being overdetermined emphasises the complex, contradictory conditions of existence of any social relation, and how that social relation is historical, contingent and always changing, even if only incrementally (Resnick and Wolff, 1989). Hence the remedies for inequalities in housing and complex public and social housing issues, for example, are not singular (Sayer, 1999). This means replacing residualised housing with more equally distributed housing and multiple providers requires “recognising and valuing different types of social roles, contributions, relationships, and encouraging the transformation of individual and collective identities” (Swanston, 2005: 99). To this extent, the internalisation of social practices and their mutual articulation in discourse are also a feature of overdetermination (Althusser and Balibar, 1970) given “every practice can simultaneously articulate together with many others from multiple social positions and with diverse social effects” (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999: 24).

Social relations also involve unordered, repetitive discursive shifts, specific (cultural and organisational) knowledges, values and ideas about, for example, tenant behaviour or NGO practices, rational considerations and (economic) calculations, individual self-interest and altruism. Stenson and Watt (1999: 192), drawing on Foucault (1972) and Fairclough (1995), list the power and membership of discourses as creating

¹¹ Relational sociology has also implicitly informed the application of ‘social relations’ in the thesis. ‘Relational’ data in social network analysis refers to the ties and connections, group attachments and meetings which relate one actor to another hence it is irreducible to the properties of individuals themselves.

¹² See for example Laclau and Mouffe (1985), Zelizer (1994).

“a cast list of political and economic agents which government must consider, objects of concern, agendas for action, preferred narratives for making sense of the origins of current situations, conceptual and geographical spaces within which problems of government are made recognisable. They also create a series of absent agendas, agents, objects of concerns and counter-narratives, which are mobilized out of the discursive picture”.

‘Governance’ is a new enlarged term for government ‘plus more’. It casts a contemporary gaze on the interplay and ideological significance of connecting or joining up various actors. But it is also a mechanism that enables an examination of neo-liberal political practices as they emerge and unfold. Moreover, ‘governance’ has been dubbed an ambiguous concept with applications in economic development, international institutions and regimes, corporate governance, new public management strategies and public sector administration. In this thesis it refers to the burgeoning negotiated social governance modes that are emerging in housing policy in Australia.

Second, connections between social relations and governance reveal contradictions, limitations and failures within the promise of mutual relations; that ‘joining up’ will achieve satisfactory results for all parties. Uncertainty in policy implementation and the process of adaption in policy experimentation suggests change and fluidity is central to new housing relations in neo-liberal times. This impetus to work across sectors starts from a premise that what was in operation was failing. Of course, the interpretations of failures and deficiencies vary across state and housing actor groups, again influencing their contradictory discourses. What is of interest, then, are the ways in which the navigation between governance modes and social relations reveal the contours of nuanced, variegated neo-liberal political practices in an everyday policy setting. This sociological practice reveals the

“messy, complicated, contradictory webs of social relations and practices that shape different parts of the social world in specific and diverse ways, and thus interpellate and affect individuals differently” (Swanson, 2002: 106).

Messy relationships are to be expected in a messy world where research subjects “refuse to remain neatly within the boundaries that discipline them” (Grewal, 2005: 34). Spilling over the edges occurs when, for instance, after years of inertia and financial constraints key actors notice a fissure that gives a little when pushed, transforming itself into a different way of ‘solving’ old housing problems. Social policy, nonetheless, is obligated to delve into “the messy realm of practices and relations and the compromised, corrupted, partial ways in which these entities [‘neoliberal rationality’, ‘the spirit of capitalism’] inhabit the real world” (Garland, 1997: 199 quoted in Culpitt, 1999: 2).

Third, new modes of governance in housing systems are viewed in their material expression through social relations and actors’ discourses. In turn, social relations were interpreted as being based on discussions and contact with the state on current (actual) housing issues and future (imagined) issues. These combine to form part of the ‘policy picture’ that articulates how multiple actors will be ‘integrated’ to achieve a stated policy objective. As social exchange theory (Emerson, 1976) outlines, social relations between

actors (forming their 'relationships') are continuous exchanges structured by the experienced past and expectation future exchanges and interactions; but not necessarily based on a 'rational-action' or economic transaction perspective. Additionally, overdetermination of social practices recognises the dynamic embeddedness of actor connections and how "social relations form complex and powerful networks, which comprise the institutional reality of modern society" (King, 2004: 59). Interpreting people's needs (Fraser, 1989) in public housing, for example involves contact and potential conflicts with a divergent group of non-state housing actors who deploy several discourses. These discourses intermingle, coexist and compete, often polemically, wanting different or opposed outcomes (Young, 1997).

There is a growing concern for the social consequences of neo-liberal practices on modern commercial and voluntary organisations accompanied with calls for more theoretical explanations of different varieties of capitalism, particularly those acknowledging the interaction of economic systems and socio-cultural relations (du Gay, 2000; Kafkoulas, 2000). In the thesis, the pairing of social relations and modes of governance highlights the inseparable connection between political, economic and social systems. Though these links can be highly variable and situation or context dependent.

The circuitry of social relations and the constant changes that occur within an analysis of a housing policy 'in process' are well-suited to the social ontology of critical realism and its emphasis on how the "emergent social powers, constraining and facilitating human activities are possessed by social structures by virtue of their constitutive internal relationships" (Brown 2007: 504). The contemporary state's institutional role is one of both mediator *and* enforcer, of negotiator *and* regulator, though state actors were more reluctant to describe the state as anything other than facilitator and enabler. Conflicting necessary and contingent relations emerge because of a number of key factors including: neo-liberal political practices, governance expansion, ruptures and policy anomalies within public housing tenures. Hence this thesis is concerned with analysing what Brenner and Theodore (2002) call the variable enactments, constraints and enablers of "actually existing neo-liberalism" (Brenner and Theodore, 2002) as emergent in part of the AHS implementation process.

Scholars proposing corporate and managerial theories (Pahl, 1975) acknowledge the uneven power relations between multiple housing agents, from urban planners, real estate agents, housing professionals and tenant managers, in mediating information, access and the privileges that come with power thereby influencing the overall circuit of governance and housing network. Others accentuate the mediated role of the state (Lundqvist, 1989) writing of its place within broader social and economic structures rather than an all-controlling or meddling actor. Both these perspectives offer useful insights and starting points for this empirical enquiry. In many ways combining these views has led to an awareness of the internally contradictory nature of urban development swinging from periods of crisis to periods of structural coherence (Chouinard, 1990; Berry, 1998). Interactions between regimes of accumulation and the 'regulation of society' are seen as causal factors that lead to uneven distribution of housing resources and changes in the number of actors involved in housing provision.

Previous examples of theoretical and practical meta-tools (Lawson, 2001) established to analyse multi-stakeholder and multi-housing factors involved in housing systems included a comprehensive descriptive 'chain of provision' framework (Ambrose, 1994). This tool stresses the array of state, private, community and voluntary configurations of actors engaged in interconnected stages of housing from promotion, investment, construction, allocation, delivery and maintenance. Also of significance in exploring the diversity of networks and relations in the production, allocation, consumption and reproduction of housing are Ball's (1986) and Ball and Harloe's (1992) theories of the structure of housing provision. Just as Ball (1986: 158) insists on historical situatedness of housing systems in "providing and reproducing the physical entity, housing", this thesis contextualises governance changes during neo-liberalism. Lawson (2001) argues that these models, because of their sensitivity to the distinctive relations of housing networks, equip us to better understand housing differences across countries.

The circuit of governance framework I propose accentuates the relational, multi-dimensional quality of housing policy change and the interconnectedness of actors to the state, and implicitly to each other. Hence institutional relationships are still valued. Noting Ball's (1986) invitation to researchers to focus on the relations between social agents essential to the process of housing provision, this thesis concentrates, through the lens of a circuit of governance framework, on the complexity of 'being involved' in new policy mechanisms.

Overview of Thesis

The eleven chapters in the thesis are divided into three sections: Part One (Chapters Two and Three) explains the theoretical and methodological approach of the research; Part Two (Chapter Four and Five) examines theories of neo-liberalism and the role of the state in Tasmanian housing policy; and Part Three (Chapters Six to Eleven) centres on the empirical evidence and analysis of the circuit of governance relations during the implementation of Stage One of the AHS before providing a conclusion drawing the main findings of the thesis together.

In Part One, key themes and terms are named and the sociological value of the research is presented. A major challenge I faced in writing the thesis was separating out sufficiently the differences between descriptions of neo-liberalism from neo-liberalism as a political ideology. This thesis seeks to demonstrate how the application of ideas that can be collectively termed 'neo-liberal' have influenced the discourses and actual practices or expectations of actors. In such an endeavour, I have needed to restrain tendencies to give agency to neo-liberalism – as though it is a real entity in itself. In this regard, drawing on the social ontology of critical realism has been instrumental to counteract any false interpretations or naive conclusions of neo-liberalism's 'magical' hold on actors or the state.

To this end, I propose a critical realist theoretical framework (Bhaskar, 1978, 1989; Archer, 1995) lends itself to an assessment of the structure of governance and social relations exposing the transitive and contingent dimension of housing 'reality' where, for example, not-for-profit housing actors and public housing tenants express multiple viewpoints on their connections with Housing Tasmania. Such contestation highlights differences in

social relations with the state and a range of contingent conditions which function to either enable or constrain inherent or necessary causal powers of social structures and actors. Finally, the complementary qualitative methods used in the study and their applicability to the research problem are reviewed. The thesis concurs with Julie Lawson's perspective that "the state plays an integral, mediating and contested role in the definition of these (social) relations and their structural coherence in generating actual housing solutions. For this reason, understanding the institutionalised role, relations and resources of the state is also an integral part of any explanation." (Lawson, 2006: 25). To this end, Chapter Four considers the policy context of the research and Chapter Five outlines Housing Tasmania's views on the language and practices of new governance in housing and NGO's capabilities in achieving the state's goals.

Part Two (Chapter Four and Five) covers defining the forms of neo-liberalism relevant to this study; relating Housing Tasmania's neo-liberal enactments and variabilities in 'policy' to 'governance' literature; providing a brief overview of national and Tasmanian public housing structural shifts before outlining the public housing components of the AHS. Housing Tasmania's diverse role at the centre of these structural relations is analysed via senior management interview data covering discussions on their perspective of the policy rationale for expanding out to new modes of governance.

Part Three constitutes the majority of empirical data that informs the development and utilisation of a 'circuit of governance' frame. In adopting a 'circuit of governance' actor network to investigate and critique relations with the state, the themes for each chapter are determined by the actors themselves, for example narratives of social change in housing provision, allocation and management by non-state housing actors (in Chapters Seven to Ten) are considered alongside public sphere discourses in local press coverage (in Chapter Six). The AHS does not adhere to a purely neo-liberal agenda. It includes key components of a social democratic perspective where universal access to affordable, safe and sustainable housing is central alongside an economic rationalist position that economic growth and a successful market economy are necessary to achieve such ends. Focusing on economic rather than social outcomes shifts the political and social relations between actors and the state to a particular form of understanding about 'governance'.

To analyse the discourses of socio-cultural understandings at the *societal level*, Chapter Six addresses the prevalence of cultural governance techniques in newspaper headlines across three regional papers during the initial AHS decision-making and implementation stages. These are, in turn, utilised, in the promotional discourse of contracted communications experts developing public policy documents.¹³ Considering the internal discourse of actors enables a reflection on the contested mode of their actual and working relationship with the state. Relating these findings back to the thesis questions, this chapter finds that actors working in communications utilise a discourse endorsing transactional modes of governance that, they argue, necessitate 'close' social relations with the state.

¹³ These media practitioners are included in an attempt to address, an often over-looked dynamic social relations between larger structural organisation or government bureaucracies with smaller, corporate cultural producers.

Chapter Seven analyses interview and focus group data with public housing tenants in the three largest cities in Tasmania – Hobart, Devonport and Launceston. This chapter reveals the coexistence of differing ideological perspectives in tenants' accounts of their communicative processes and relationships with Housing Tasmania. Rival discourses were connected to the proximity of social relations to the state. Focusing on 'distant' tenants, the most dominant discourse used by interviewees, indicates the tensions and difficulties in new policy coordination and dynamic shifts in perceptions of self and state governance. Unfolding the 'circuit of governance' model progressively within actor groups reveals the fissures within their discourses. For instance, this chapter considers how tenants sought close relationships with the state but felt they were locked into distant relationships that were largely ineffectual.

Chapters Eight to Ten review some of the key complexities and contested modes of engagement and interaction between non-state institutions, such as NGOs, quangos and community sector organisations, with Housing Tasmania. Three discourses prevailed and assisted in registering the diversity of NGO opinion on their governing modes and social relations with the state. Chapter Eight covers the rationale, context and influences for the discursive model before outlining the three discourses of acquiescence, social entrepreneurial and pseudo-market. It covers actors who were least supportive of neo-liberal political practices and talked of the value of a social democratic approach in maintaining the strengths of the state and assisting as many clients in need as possible. Chapter Nine analyses NGO actors who drew on discourses that explained their capacity to supplement benefits to support government; complement programs funded by the government; and take an adversarial stance to ensure the stories, experiences and needs of low income and disadvantaged Tasmanians were heard and acted on. Not everyone agrees with the 'commonsense' dominance of neo-liberalism and competing discourses emerge in actors' accounts when risk and unknown possibilities dominate the new ways of 'doing business' with the state and other actors. For example, some NGOs describe the benefits of a social governance approach alongside their 'business-like' philosophy and their support for public housing contraction. These actors tend to indicate having 'close' relations with Housing Tasmania and perceived their organisations growth as a consequence of their social entrepreneurialism. Chapter Ten critiques a pseudo-market discourse used by a few, well-resourced NGOs and quangos. Restructuring public housing to a multi-provider system dominates the social relations of these actors, triggering consideration of new competitive governance positions and problematics.

Finally, in Chapter Eleven, the thesis concludes with the main theoretical threads and empirical findings being reiterated and integrated, not in a demonstration of wholeness or 'oneness' but rather to restate the emergence of competing interpretations, applications and rejections of public housing policy reform. I also summarise the extent to which the research findings confirm or contradict leading theoretical scholarship in sociology on the workings of neo-liberal political practices. Further research possibilities and an outline of some significant Commonwealth Government lead changes affecting NGO governance in housing within the context of disruptions to neo-liberal dominance since the global financial crisis in September 2007 are reviewed.

Conclusion

Housing policy reforms emerged from neo-liberal political practices which preference new governance techniques for the coordination of complex social issues and policies. This chapter introduced the core idea of the thesis: that new modes of governance and new social relations with the state embody the central mechanisms for reconfiguring public housing. To understand how these function and interconnect a dynamic circuit of governance model is developed and used throughout the thesis. The purpose of this governance and relations study is the development of not only a new explanatory theory of an emerging housing policy but also a novel application of empirical data to theoretical approaches to neo-liberalism and its social and political ramifications. By employing a critical realist ontology, I use the 'circuit of governance' as the analytical framework to systematically examine the connections between new ways of working with the state and new proximities of distance to the state.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL APPROACH

Introduction

At the time of Stage One of the *AHS*, in the early 2000s, the dominant discourse in Tasmanian housing policy centred on developing a wider resource, coordination and governance base to undertake housing provision and related services. Creating a simultaneous competitive and enabling state has been a deliberate policy fostered by national and regional governments in Australia, keen to offset and resolve balance of payments debts and fiscal problems in underfunded public housing. However, the state has not completely replaced public ownership with entrepreneurial social housing providers. Instead it took a different stance of encouraging market approaches to efficiency through various components of outsourcing support services, developing possible partnerships and incorporating governance and structural changes into policy parameters. But, as Cameron and Palan (2003: 176) argue, it is important not to obscure the ways in which the state has also maintained significant 'reregulating' of various economic and social policy spheres. Greater de-centralisation of housing is not necessarily a consequence or inevitable by-product of modes of governance across sectors. The state has not retreated altogether. Over the past two decades a governance narrative has also featured an appeal to traditional form of control by governing through state hierarchies (Newman, 2001). From this perspective, changes to Tasmania's housing system are seen as linked to national change through the mediating agency of neo-liberal social forces, and the integration of non-state financial and human resources to deliver affordable housing.

The state has also attempted to reconfigure its relationship to housing at a macro level; to NGO and other institutions at a meso level; and public and social housing tenants and applicants at the micro level. The strengths of interpretive arguments are found in their sensitivity to the complicated negotiations of meanings among human actors at the micro level and the ways in which deeply embedded cultural, political and linguistic symbols define personal identities, shape the legitimate boundaries of action, and channel potential resistance at the macro level. This indicates that a substantial discrepancy exists in the state's position and interpretation of the public housing problems and reality. The state is simultaneously performing two, almost opposed, roles. It has an obligation to conform to and pursue national interests within the prevalent ideology of neo-liberalism (such as globalisation and a premium on individual choice in the marketplace) and, on the other hand, the state has a role in providing housing as a merit good to address socio-economic cohesion through a housing system that does not want to further exclude already locationally disadvantaged citizens.

In order to understand the ways in which these neo-liberal reforms unfold and emerge within such a dynamic actor environment the thesis focuses on social relations. Social relations are complex and cannot be reduced to a set of rules or generalisations about how something is or will remain, instead "the many interwoven dimensions of social life are roughly patterned rather than law-determined" (Carter and New, 2004). 'Relationality', then, becomes of secondary interest, as it makes transparent processes within social relations that shape and reshape modes of governance between actors and the state, and

differences in values and perceptions about public housing. This 'roughly patterned' process means internal contradictions are far more likely and tolerated, as are changed tactics, across state and non-state actors. Continuing with the (electric) circuit metaphor from Chapter One, the AHS operates as a bundle of social relations. A jumble of crisscrossing wires clustering to form more flexible multi-stranded cables that are able to withstand 'corrosive' elements. This bundle experienced, throughout the period of 2003 to 2007, a number of 'disentanglements' from the state and from actors' own interpretations of housing practices. From a critical realist standpoint, the combined experiences, events and mechanisms form this bundle of social relations. In social realism, society is intrinsically an open system which ontologically precludes closure and "to the realist, the one factor which generates that social systems remain open is that they are necessarily peopled" (Archer, 1998: 190). To this end the circuit is not a closed number of routes, discourses or ways of relating, rather it accommodates changes in preferences, practices and events. Critical realism also makes it possible to analyse how and when these multi-stranded wires of discursive social relations, within the circuit of governance, overlap with the neo-liberal discourse. New insights into the Australian context of neo-liberal policy in housing can be generated from connecting theory and empirical methods.

This thesis utilises the theoretical framework of critical realism because it is a particularly effective ontology to consider the diversity of emerging social relations. First, it provides an ontology for interpreting divergence within public housing policy reform, by drawing attention to underlying institutional structures and social mechanisms (Lawson, 2006; 2010) or the *modus operandi* of neo-liberal political practice in a regional context. This means the thesis avoids a collapsing of agency and structure, making it possible to investigate: housing actors' processes of negotiation and variances in transforming their own organisational structures and/or that of the state; and differences within governing modes and relational 'distances' to the state. Second, in practical terms, critical realism's focus on *generative mechanisms* complements the 'circuit of governance' framework. These mechanisms, whose power may also exist unexercised or be exercised unrealised, illustrate the value and contribution of local, empirical research in expanding theoretical explorations of neo-liberal political practices. While examples of "actually existing neo-liberalism" share common features and processes across countries and housing systems, the particular mechanisms that account for new social relations and modes of governance emergence can only be discussed in view of the specific context of the case at hand i.e. the Tasmanian AHS. Discovering and explaining the *mechanisms* that account for the particular events under scrutiny in the *real* ontological domain (Bhaskar, 1978) and their resulting events in the *actual* domain whether felt or not, and the effects in the *empirical* domain constitute the framework of systematic data analysis.

Theory has often been written about in a rarefied way or in a demarcated fashion as a separate subject in its own right. Many prominent sociologists, such as C. Wright Mills, note the dangers awaiting researchers who undertake either theory without evidence or method without theory. Earlier too, the 'canonical set' of Durkheim, Weber and Marx all assumed that a continuous interplay existed between theoretical assumptions and the objects of inquiry, with this connection functioning as a vital 'moment' or component within the process of inquiry.¹⁴ Limitations of abstract theorisations or 'grand theory' on

¹⁴ Although only Durkheim and Marx adopted realist positions.

neo-liberalism occur when analysis becomes divorced from messy, real examples of how practices are enacted over time in policy settings or from the accounts of multiple actors who possess divergent positions. In order to overcome these constraints, I argue that the empirical findings that constitute the subject of this thesis reveal a theoretically informed way of working, involving *abduction* and *retroduction*, and conducting research. The theory chosen provides a better-informed and more effective assessment of the concepts used in analysis. Guided by an empirical focus, critical realism is useful in its capacity to develop adequate explanations across micro and meso terrains. Using a variety of explanations ensures that the limitations and weaknesses of critical realism are offset or counterbalanced by strengths in applying other theories. The thesis argues that it is vital to develop research claims that allow for fallibility. Rather than locating a timeless 'truth', critical realism employs the notion of 'practical adequacy' – the idea that analyses must generate expectations of the world that are actually realised, inter-subjectively intelligible, or recognisable to actors involved in the social phenomena and acceptable in terms of linguistic expression (Sayer, 1992: 69).

In this chapter the conceptual lens or tools of critical realism are explicitly employed to stress its application in this study and to engage with the theory in more than an abstract way. This chapter is divided into three sections. In the first section, critical realism as a social ontology or theory of the nature of reality and its constituting elements are considered. Here a working vocabulary of critical realist terms (in italics) are explained and discussed in connection to the course of this research, such as *transitive* and *intransitive* dimensions to reality, *deep structures*, *generative mechanisms*, *causal powers* and *emergence*. The second section makes clear why critical realism is of relevance to the thesis, in particular its readiness to seek explanations of social processes and events in terms of multiple causal powers, between agency and structures and the contingency of their effects on the housing policy arena. Critical realism is sensitive to complicated in-flux processes of *negotiation* among actors at the micro level, analytically reflexive of institutional practices at the meso level and aware of emerging potentialities to channel resistance at the macro level. Figure 1 summarises the research framework developed for this thesis. Finally the chapter ends with an outline of the *abstraction* and the *retroductive* epistemology applied to the data. Given the changes proposed by the AHS, the thesis covers three years of actor interviews and analysis of the cumulative role of neo-liberal political practices on their social relations within the circuit of governance. Every day accounts of interactions, transactions and compliances were analysed through a process of *abduction* and *retroduction* to refine and propose causal explanations of the effect of neo-liberal housing change.

Figure 1 Outline of research framework

Subject of Research Focus	New modes of governance and social relations between non-state housing actors and Housing Tasmania during a time of policy implementation (i.e. Stage One of the <i>AHS</i>)
Ontology	Critical realism is utilised to seek explanations of social processes and events in terms of multiple causal powers, between agency and structures and the contingency of their effects on the housing policy arena. Critical realism enables explanations of the processes of negotiation among actors at the micro level, analytically reflexive of institutional practices at the meso level and aware of emerging potentialities to channel resistance at the macro level.
Epistemology	Abduction and Retroduction This is a process of abstracting, postulating, testing and revising causal models and structures in order to explain empirical phenomena. The causal mechanisms of different social relations and modes of governance are compared between actors to explain difference and the heterogeneous engagement with neo-liberal practices affecting public/social housing provision.
Methodological approach	<i>Methodological considerations</i> of ‘circuits of governance’ involving modes of governance and proximity of actors’ social relations with the state Analysing dominant discourses used by actors’ and their interconnections with neo-liberal political practices <i>Multiple methods</i> including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Qualitative semi-structured interviews• Focus groups• Headline analysis of newspaper articles• Key elements of the public-social housing components of the <i>AHS</i> policy documents.

Key characteristics of Critical Realism

Originating out of the theoretical turmoil of the 1960s and Roy Bhaskar’s promotion of ‘transcendental realism’ in the 1970s, realism has matured over the decades to provide an engagement with substantive social and political questions across disciplines. Its influence is obvious in sociology in the social ontologies of the action and structure debate (Archer, 1982; Giddens, 1984) and expanded concerns with history, agency and culture. While the practicalities of what it means to do realist research require further and ongoing debate, the potential of critical realism continues to be explored in a number of theoretical and empirical arenas. For example critical realist approaches in housing studies recognise the existence of multi-causal explanations as evidenced in understandings of housing networks (Lawson, 2001), housing management (Somerville and Bengtsson, 2002), accounts of ill health and housing (Allen, 2000), homelessness (Fitzpatrick, 2005) and in urban geography (Dickens, Duncan, Goodwin & Gray, 1985). Human geographers also turned to critical realism when investigating space-governance relations (Lovering, 1990, 1991; Sayer, 1992). Julie Lawson’s recent publication, *Critical Realism and Housing Research* (2006) successfully deploys critical realism to explain the divergences between two long established housing ‘solutions’ represented by different housing tenures and urban forms in Australia and the Netherlands during the twentieth century. Lawson (2006: 24) contends that Australian and Dutch housing solutions “have emerged from the

fundamentally different packaging of property investment and savings, and labour and welfare relations, which have promoted distinctive housing choices and living environments." Australians opted for home ownership in large, low-density cities while the Dutch's dominate tenure, until recently, was social housing in relatively numerous compact towns and cities.

Lawson's comparative case study demonstrates that cycles of coherence, crisis and adaptation formed different phases in the Australian and Dutch housing systems as they adapted to cope with contingent circumstances. In this context, causation is seen not only as multiple, but also as cumulative and path-dependent. Further, Lawson's contributes a useful framework for housing studies by presenting a continuum of alternative theories of the dynamic composition of housing provision from purely agency-oriented at one-end to structuralist at the other. The circuit of governance framework sits midway between these two ends; alongside econometric models, theories of power resources; chain of provision; and the positions of key public and private actors in housing provision. There are connections between Lawson's work with the project of this thesis in that to explain the new modes of governance in the *AHS* and to understand the complex structured reality in public/social housing, actors' accounts must be considered alongside the "underlying social relations and causal mechanisms generating social practices, ideological constructs and perceived phenomena" (Lawson, 2006: 19).

No ontology or theory exists in isolation or without recourse to an assemblage or fusion of other schools of thought. Critical realism is no exception. According to several critical realist thinkers, it is a metatheory that can adequately straddle or encompass a variety of competing substantive theories. It works as a framework and an underlabourer for these theories, not prescribing the superiority of any specific substantive theories. It does not hold a monopoly on innovative philosophical and methodological ways to interpret underlying structures and mechanisms, such as the language of institutional and agency reconfiguration used by state and non-state actors. Hence the arguments in this research are not mutually exclusive or developed in a theoretical vacuum. Rather, arguments are formed by interconnecting critiques of various epistemologies. In tracing the sociological heritage of this study it is evident that, although I write predominantly from a critical realist position, insights from social constructionist approaches are also incorporated into the thesis. For instance perspectives on the significance of language and discourse in generating meaning (Somerville, 1994; Marston, 2004) and the prioritisation of individuals and professional interest groups interpretations of policy changes (Jacobs, 1999) informed the literature review and perspectives in the study. Going further, I concur with weak social constructionists and argue that ways of seeing the world and the discursive practices used by the state, the third sector, the media and tenants are real, causally powerful, and hence become objects of knowledge.

Similarly, realists and constructionists agree on the important role of meaning-making places in our understanding of 'reality', for example, definitions of social problems have real impacts on policy-making, underlying causes of the said problem and the life experiences of people enduring the 'problem' (Fitzpatrick, 2005). Fopp (2008: 10) concludes that overall, given the breadth of similarity, 'weak' constructivism and critical realism "are different by degrees", with subtleties existing between their intellectual origins, emphasis and, ultimately, proposed theories. The several fundamental similarities

between weak social constructivism and critical realism include a shared agreement of the social and human basis of knowledge in the social sciences; social relations, practices and discourses are socially generated; both perspectives share the potential to challenge 'normalised' or dominant discourses such as the market efficiency of outsourcing housing provision to a range of new and existing NGOs and housing associations or the benefits of neo-liberal practices over all others; a pre-existing real world of social phenomena exists as does the possibility of objective knowledge (Fopp, 2008: 10). In housing research social constructionists highlight the exercise of relations of power, interest groups and inequality through discourse and wider structures. Further social constructionists argue that social structure, including housing policy, operates as the product of conscious human agency and is highly 'contingent' or malleable. While critical realists agree in principle with this view, there remains a need to acknowledge mechanisms that cannot be observed and therefore not 'consciously' derived. Critical realism is driven by a keenness for explanatory perspicuity of the complex interplay between structure and agency as it works its way through collective and individual responses and negotiations of housing change. It enables deeper understanding of the longer-term impact of emergent struggles with social relations and modes of governance and institutional, policy 'outcomes'.

To be influential, structural factors require agential mediation but understanding social relationships means appreciating that they are constituted by *social structures* (Bhaskar, 1989; Archer, 1995). For example, the relationship between Housing Tasmania and a tenant relies on a social structure adhering to internal *powers* and dynamics between parties, fundamentally aligned to social position – that is, with individuals 'slot(ing)' (Bhaskar, 1989) into pre-existing roles. Bhaskar (1989) contends that a system of mediating concepts is required because of the ontological hiatus between society and people (neither can be reduced to the other, both are real in their own right). This system considers the "'point of contact' between human agency and social structures" (Bhaskar 1989 [1979]: 40-41) proposing that social structures are *both* independent from human agency *and* dependent on human agency. Social relations are reproduced or transformed by individuals continuing to 'slot' into established social roles. Social structures are dependent on human actors to reproduce these roles hence human actors' effect structural transformations by deviating or challenging norms.¹⁵ However, pre-existing structures can also constrain or enable human actions, with "some people having more options allowed them by structures than others" (Fitzpatrick, 2005: 3). Social structures and agency are, from a critical realist perspective

"two completely separate phenomena with qualitatively different characteristics. Here structures are viewed as laying down conditions for people's lives, while agency provides the effective cause for what happens in society" (Danermark *et al.*, 2002: 12).

¹⁵ This 'analytical dualism' highlights the compatibility between Giddens' structuration theory and realism. Other sociologists whose writing is consistent, in part, with critical realism include Jurgen Habermas and Pierre Bourdieu.

Critical realism emphasises that society consists of *totalities* of internally linked structures (Bhaskar, 1989: 44).¹⁶ This again highlights the compatibility between critical realism and the circuit of governance model as separate actor groups are linked or connected within the circuit through their asymmetrical relationship to the state on housing issues.

Importantly, critical realism recognises the legitimacy of reality as a field of enquiry but also affirms that its representations are characterised, negotiated and mediated by other factors such as culture, group dynamics, language, political interests based on class, race, gender or social status (Bhaskar, 1989). Corresponding to the multiple actors within the 'circuit of governance' model, the reality of governance and social relations changes involve various *empirical*, *actual* and *real* domains. Rejecting the idealism of poststructuralism, critical realism argues that multiple methodologies are well suited to investigating various negotiated discourses of housing change.

However, critical realists diverge from a strict or pure hermeneutic position, asserting that social scientific methods must be appropriate to their objects but need not be singular. Linking this point back to the thesis, the systems of meaning about neo-liberal political practices are negotiated by actors in the course of their social relations, but they are not always confined by, or solely determined by, their chosen or prescribed discourses. This is partially the reason why many actors hold contradictory viewpoints, for example tenants desire both greater state involvement in regulating other tenants' behaviour and enforcing rules and greater tenant self-governance (see findings in Chapter Seven). The discourses actors utilise are not 'empty vessels' without meaning, or neutral carriers that can be interpreted uniformly and nor are they only or totally real experiences of human experience. As Lawson (2006: 19) notes "For critical realists, the social world and its spatial organisation are perceived as something that is experienced differently by different actors." The real structures and mechanisms that impose themselves on the 'circuit of governance' actors are distinct from the competing or contradictory discourses actors use (in the *empirical* domain, see below). Thus, in formulating the central argument of this thesis, critical realism is considered more valuable than other theories in its assessment that social science cannot be reduced purely to the interpretation of meaning and discursive constructions of meaning *alone*. As Williams' (2003) elucidates

"there is much more to the social world than agent's understanding of it. [In particular] real structures in the social world can impose themselves upon agents both in a way they do not understand and without agents' knowledge of their existence".

The significance of discourse should not be overlooked when considering how empirical evidence reinforces theoretical analyses of neo-liberalism. The *AHS 2004-2008 Framework* document contains seven references (in headings and text) for 'alternative financing and delivery models'. These 'alternatives' constitute governance modes with NGOs and community housing associations. The state's rhetorical choice of 'alternatives' conjures up a softer image; one of weighing up possibilities; of a harder neo-liberal practice involving

¹⁶ Obviously structures do not actually exist as real physical things, rather it is the people working collectively who claim to be part of a structure who attempt to impose a totality on others outside their structure (but often fail because of the flaws in their structure created by irrational behaviour of their very members).

meaningful retraction out of public housing provision. The language used by social actors expresses how socio-economic changes affect their social actions and practices. This research realises the importance of discourse by considering the contribution it can make to understanding how 'actually existing neo-liberalism' occurs within housing communities undergoing change.

Discourses are important in three central ways in these social actors' lives. First, as part of the social activity within a practice – for example, as public housing tenants and neighbours or within their role in an NGO – actors use specific language to describe their own positioned reality. Second, as representations of their own practice in the course of a larger activity and 'recontextualised' (Bernstein, 1990) other practices. In short, different social actors will represent their social actions differently depending on contingent changes and their positionality within the practice. Third, discourses affect our ways of being and add to the development or entropy of one's identity. To repeat and amplify, a central aim of critical realists' research is to obtain reliable knowledge in a reflexive open-system. The transformational feature of a critical realist ontology mean individual actors and their active human agency create effects on existing structures, social processes or social practices. This means contingent events such as policy experimentation occur throughout the implementation of the AHS.

A critical realist ontology clearly purports that reality fits a 'both/and' way of thinking rather than an 'either/or' one. Therefore reality is 'structured *and* stratified', 'dynamic *and* holistic,' existing whether we possess knowledge about it or not (Bhaskar, 1978, 1989; Sayer, 1992; Archer, 1995; Fleetwood, 1999) and fundamentally complex. This stratification means the highest stratum of reality, that of society, is composed of five emergent orders – the social, cultural, institutional, interactional and individual. Working across these stratified emergent orders makes it possible to conduct research at micro-levels such as individual representations of the AHS and intentional associations of tenants and regulated and strategically coordinated repeated actions of actors, such as community and NGO employees. Neo-liberal political practices are embedded in variegated ways within each stratified emergent order. As the thesis contends, empirical evidence from the circuit of governance reveals the interconnections between these stratifications and some of the reasons for the robustness of neo-liberal ideals in tenant, NGO and state actors discourses.

Critical realism is not an even or homogeneous paradigm and serious intellectual differences exist between its proponents. That said, there are some basic tenets that define critical realism. The search for social mechanisms in critical realism is the *sine qua non* of science. The transfactually active or *generative mechanisms* (i.e. where things are really going on) constitute the primary structure of the world and, from such a conceptual framework, explanations of the underlying mechanisms that generate the possible occurrence of events become possible. In appealing to an ontology that recognises there may be more than one *generative mechanism* involved in causation, it becomes possible to explore the meaning of public housing policy change for tenants, NGO or third sector organisations and Housing Tasmania without writing homogenising experiences. It becomes possible to critique actors multiple, often contradictory discourses on governance that are affected by contingent events and their degree of compliant, transactional or relationship-centred negotiation processes with the state. Through the application of critical realism, the meaning of policy changes, influenced by neo-liberal political

practices, were understood as part of a multidimensional phenomenon involving the interplay of structure and agency. Hence, the social ontology of realism empowers “us to analyse the processes by which structure and agency shape and re-shape one another over time and to explain variable outcomes at different times” (Archer, 1998: 203). Bhaskar (1989: 9) stresses that both ontologically and methodologically this distinction is pivotal.

Identifying mechanisms involves the analytical movement across three ontological domains: the *empirical*, the *actual* and the *real* (Bhaskar, 1978: 56). The distinctive characteristics of each realm mean that the *actual* does not reflect the *real* and vice versa. The differences between the *real*, the *actual* and the *empirical* support the assertion that contingent factors play a major role in our understanding of complexity and uncertainty (see Figure 2). Reality is not merely observable: empirical evidence reveals what is in the observable domain; the actual domain of reality can comprise of events that are unobservable (e.g. pre-existing status expectations and norms on how to relate to tenants); and events are triggered by real underlying structures which usually influence reality in favourable circumstances (Bhaskar, 1978).

Figure 2 Critical realism’s distinctions of reality

EMPIRICAL	ACTUAL	REAL
Consists of what we directly or indirectly ‘experience’.	The actual domain describes where ‘events’ happen, whether we experience them or not.	The ontological level of ‘mechanisms’ that produce or cause events in the world.
That which is observed and becomes ‘fact’.	These events generate experiences. Potentially open to observation.	These causal mechanisms are often unseen or unobservable.
Example: a public housing applicant moving into a property and becoming a tenant of Housing Tasmania.	Example: the AHS is announced. Within months Housing Tasmania starts an Expressions of Interest process to find ‘interested partners’ to work with.	Example: ‘New ways of working’ discourse in the AHS trigger discussions between NGOs and community housing associations with the state on how they might be involved.
<div> <div>◆</div> <div>.....</div> <div>➔</div> </div>		
Movement from ‘open’ system in empirical	along a continuum towards	more ‘closed’ system in real

For critical realists, an *open system* is one that has *differentiated* systems in flux, negating the possibility of any one *cause* or essence. *Open-systems* ontology presents the complexity actors face when making decisions, for instance about social relations and governance positionalities. But faced with bewildering uncertainty some actors attempt to develop or adapt decision-making stages that appear to ‘close’ off other options. An example of this in the thesis is when, some NGO actors using a pseudo-market discourse embody the ideologies of mainstream neo-classical economics in assuming closure is possible and desirable (see Chapter Ten). Instead, critical realism and its *open-systems* approach recognises that a dynamic plurality of partial regularities and processes underlie emerging

events. Downward *et al* (2002: 483) describes *events* as being unpredictable and non-universal regularities “because of [their] continual interplay between (intrinsic) reflexive human agency and structure”. Historically and geographically specific *mechanisms* in the *real* domain are complex interconnections of bundled social relations involved in the implementation of policies reshaping public housing. Mechanisms are the internal processes operating within things that give them their powers, for example the process of interaction between Housing Tasmania and a public housing tenant are underpinned by the conditions stipulated in a housing contract. Multiple mechanisms are at work in the causation of any given *event* in the *actual* domain, while the effect of a *generative mechanism* is known through its power and tendencies. Fairclough (2004) describes how *actual events* are dependent on a number of powers that may or may not be activated or come into effect in the domain of the *real*. He states:

“the extent to which, and ways in which, the particular causal powers are activated to affect actual events is contingent upon the complex interaction of different structures and causal powers in the causing of events” (Fairclough, 2004: 8).

Fairclough, Jessop and Sayer (2004), using a critical realist approach, write that the analytical isolation of distinct *chains of events* or *singular events* in the social process relies on discourses – even if the *events* concerned are not predominantly discursive in character. What is of particular interest here is the push-and-pull dynamic or state of *emergence* between these two aspects of the ‘social’. The social whole is stressed in critical realism and is constituted by social relations of “positioned-practices” (Bhaskar, 1989: 41) which Lawson (2003: 117) asserts are the “key to social being”. Bhaskar (1989: 41, original emphasis) defines the mediating position-practice system as

“the *positions* (places, functions, rules, tasks, duties, rights, etc.) occupied (filled, assumed, enacted, etc.) by individuals, and of the *practices* (activities, etc.) in which, in virtue of their occupancy of these positions (and vice versa), they engage. Now such positions and practices, if they are to be individuated at all, can only be done so *relationally*”.

The process of *emergence* occurs when a new power or entity results from the coming together of existing powers or entities (Dean, Joseph and Norrie, 2005: 9). Emerging new discourses find their new articulation in existing discourses. *Emergence* can be gradual as new powers, un-identified or unobserved, quietly form. Take for instance the progressive unfolding of the neo-liberal ‘project’ over the past thirty years affecting an array of social, economic and political ways of life in modern society. Problems of *emergence* can be studied by analysing social processes of change, social interaction and written discourses and referencing structural, strategic and other factors. Housing Tasmania’s ways of working with the third and private sector fall into the category of an emergent stratum – i.e. these modes are governed by increasingly, market laws not by purely social democratic ones and hence may control, to a degree, some of the mechanisms that come into play and the forces generated by their social existence. Housing tenures are stratified and differentiated according to income and asset barriers. In a stratified world there is a distinction drawn between the *transitive* realm where reality is affected by agency and purposeful intervention and the *intransitive* domain of objects and events. For critical realists our knowledge and explanations about the world are *transitive*. This means our

understanding is situated, value-laden, socially determined and, importantly, fallible. We grasp reality *transitively* through our limited perceptions, ideas, concepts, value systems and expression. To this end, as New (2005: 56, original emphasis) writes, building on Mannheim's (1956) ideas, "the necessity of knowing *from a particular place* [enables] knowledge rather than hinder(s) it".

Rival needs and explanations of social relations are reshaped in the social *transitive* domain into claims for state-intervention in the form of policy changes (see Chapter Eight); greater enforcement or prominence on policy agendas (see Chapter Seven) or increased independent funding provision. The argument developed in this thesis occurs in the *transitive* dimension. Theories and ways of interpreting interview material have undergone a process of analysis, modification and final editing to their current form and content. I am also mindful that over time these, too, shall change to accommodate future policy, relationship and *transitive* shifts. For example responses from public housing tenants about their relationship with Housing Tasmania and the third sector explanations of new modes of governance will interact to create situations and ideas requiring further responses and engagement. This iterative process of abduction to retroduction gradually conceptualises the multiple discourses of social relations in play during a period of policy implementation and strives for a non-reductive explanation of a complex phenomena (Collier, 1994). Actors connect with the state and engage in particular modes of governance and social relations that move them away from their original position within the 'circuit of governance' model. The context of their interaction is often related to their need for greater resources, be they financial, human or property.

On the other side of the 'reality' coin, *intransitive* refers to how the world "simply is, however it is" (Lopez and Potter, 2001: 12). Things and processes exist "independently of their identification by human beings" (Bhaskar, 1989: 11). Reality is not entirely constituted by our theories on it or irreducible to social knowledge. It is also important to register that the *transitive* dimension (or epistemic dimension of science) has an *intransitive* (or ontological dimension of knowledge) aspect to it (New, 2005). Following Bourdieu's insights (1990), I argue that even when language is heterogeneous embodying multiple competing discourses, the social action of key non-state actors often occurs within dominant frameworks, such as neo-liberal political practices, that constrain, orient and direct 'how and why' things eventuate or emerge as they do.¹⁷

Critical realism emphasises that society consists of *totalities* of internally linked structures (Bhaskar, 1989: 44).¹⁸ This again highlights the compatibility between critical realism and the circuit of governance model in that separate actor groups are linked or connected within the circuit through their asymmetrical relationship to the state on housing issues. *Necessary relations* highlight the status and interactive relationship between structures and actors; landlord and tenant; borrowers to lenders; and quasi-state institutions and investors (Lawson, 2001: 35). While *necessary relations* may generate causal powers (made

¹⁷ Criticisms are levelled at the slippage in critical realisms meaning of ontology within the dualism of a transitive and intransitive realm. The common-back or retort from critical realists is that ultimately the fallibility of interpretations of social reality takes centre-stage.

¹⁸ Obviously structures do not actually exist as real physical things, rather it is the people working collectively who claim to be part of a structure who attempt to impose a totality on others outside their structure (but often fail because of the flaws in their structure created by irrational behaviour of their very members).

up of *tendencies* and *potentialities*), they are not entirely fixed, predictable or able to determine future events or the course of the relationship. Instead necessary social relations are actualised in the context of interacting *contingent relations* (Lawson, 2001: 35). In contrast, *contingent relations* pose both simultaneous risks and threats, or opportunities for improved individual or organisational trust and mutual learning. These directly affect the (*actual*) *necessary relations* and the direction or course of an individual actor's actions. Entities have *powers* that may or may not be exercised, depending on contextual *contingencies* (Sayer, 1992). Additionally, pathway dependent behaviour and individual agency change social relations within housing networks. *Mediating entities* or *countervailing factors* account for the relationship between *social structures* and *actual events*. A good definition of these mediating entities is *social practices*, which may include discourse and social action. Given the many internal social relations between actors with social powers, the regular actualisation of any one power is uncertain because a multitude of potentially countervailing powers must necessarily be in play together. Moreover in critical realism, the certainty, predictability and empirical regularity of causes are dismissed. As such, social action generates possibilities to challenge or modify existing practices through 'rational agency' (Bhaskar, 1998).¹⁹

The Value of Critical Realism in Social Relations and Housing Policy Research

As Chapter One introduced, a 'circuit of governance' framework became a concept that arose out of a continuous dialogue with the empirical data and the step-by-step processes involved in these shifts in housing.²⁰ The 'circuit of governance' model, first, showed dynamic compatibility with my understanding of critical realism and how the nature of divergent social relations and practices in policy implementation could not be overlooked. Second, 'circuits' mirror an *open system* approach with more than one factor influencing social governing and relations; they also flow in-and-between each other revealing which actors' may be preferred by the state over others at any one time. While all groups do not have equal access to resources or power, they are relationally connected – hence the social relations of governance are emergent and greater than any one part; the unity of the circuit mechanism is capable of explaining far more than a study of one component or social grouping.²¹ Third, the circuitry of governance and the constant changes that occur within an analysis of a housing policy 'in process' are well-suited to the social ontology of critical realism and its emphasis on how the "emergent social powers, constraining and facilitating human activities are possessed by social structures by virtue of their constitutive internal relationships" (Brown 2007: 504). Circuit members belonging to the housing 'policy community'; share an interest in a policy area or common 'policy focus'

¹⁹ Social action requires an individual to act independently of social structures. She or he must possess the cognitive skills to act in one's best interest (Bhaskar, 1998: 660-661); be empowered and resourceful in order to do so and have the disposition or motivation to follow through with one's actions (Lawson, 2002: 142).

²⁰ I initially drew on Paul du Gay *et al.* (1997) 'circuit of culture' model. This cultural model concentrates on five major processes or distinct stages, namely representation, identity, production, consumption and regulation that often overlap in complex and contingent ways and, when combined, complete a circuit.

²¹ This model endeavours to bridge divisions between political, economic and cultural approaches by focusing on the dynamic communication environment, which I have adapted and appropriated to consider 'social relations'. Such an approach allows for a consideration of the myriad of social, political, cultural and economic factors that influence social relations in housing policy implementation processes.

and, over time, can succeed in shaping policy. Opinion-making processes and non-state policy actors explanations are influenced by the representation, framing and discursive context of social housing issues in the public arena, for example in policy documents or the press. These, in turn, affect current and future policy-making and policy readjustments, funding arrangements, the likelihood and style of new governance models and levels of support or opposition from public housing tenants and NGOs (Kemeny, 1995).²² Finally, the framework of the circuit avoids a common research problem of what Giddens (1984) calls 'methodological bracketing' where the structural level is artificially 'bracketed' to focus on the individual level or vice versa.

With links to the natural sciences, the *open-system* approach assumes that the state could be conceptualised as a system of 'input and output' functioning in an environment that provided the 'energy' required by the system. In political science this 'energy' in systems theories is seen as the 'demands and supports' from individuals and groups and via resources such as tax. Outputs refer to policies, such as the *AHS*, bound together by a feedback loop that continues the process by responding to the policy and initiating another round of political demands from non-state actors. While this is a crude outline of the dependence of the state on its environment at the macro-level, the utility of an *open-systems* approach for this research is in its 'withinputs', or the role and relations of multiple actors in governance positions. Social systems as *open systems* are vulnerable to external influences and internal qualitative change. Different causes of, for instance broader modes of governance in social housing, occur at different times, and may be truncated and then brought back into public debate. These tendential causes also trigger different kinds of events according to the totality of open processes involved. Over time, adjustments to a discourse or the reconceptualisation of an issue, such as affordability or tenants with high and complex needs, occurs to accommodate or suppress these shifts in events.

Housing Tasmania and the Tasmanian state Government have inner structures that both *generate* and *constrain* their powers (in Chapter Five). These structures influence the questions that became apparent out of the interviewee data namely, what sort of relations occurred, given existing structures, and what relations did not? What different sorts of relations could arise from different structures and, in a kind of amalgamation of the two questions, how can one sort of structure be transformed into another? (Collier, 1994: 10). As outlined in Chapter One, neo-liberal political practices have placed limitations on the possibilities and opportunities that actors imagine they can activate within an open system to transform the current operational and ideological paradigm. However, the findings in this thesis demonstrate that social interactions and dialogue between non-state housing actors are dynamic, often producing outcomes as a result of specific communicative action and exchange. For instance, when housing actors converged to form advocacy coalitions they actively urged MPs and the media to listen to tenants speak about their needs for themselves (see findings in Chapter Nine).

The intellectual purchase of critical realism emphasises emergence, differentiation and systemic openness. Such a focus makes critical realism amenable to dialectical accounts of

²² Policy adjustment and readjustment is seen as a neo-liberal form of modulating policies to improve performance of an accumulation regime and modes of regulation (Jessop, 2002a, 2002b).

reality where “becoming, negation, process, mediation and reciprocity” (Coole, 2005: 122) emerge over time. The rearticulation, repetition and convergence of the discourses expressed by non-state housing actors in the research interviews connect issues of temporality to the critical realist thinking of structure. With contingent repetition as its basis, these discourses emerge and re-emerge through their reinstatement as ways to make sense of the evolving processes of actor involvement in housing policy change (see Chapter Three for further elaboration on discourse analysis). Formed in part as a response to official state expectations or societal conceptions of public-social housing tenancy, tenant identities and social actions reference broader structural mechanics. Unfortunately, these identities also tend to be regulated or confined to a number of pre-existing or pre-constructed scripts of problem narratives (Fairclough *et al.*, 2003: 3). Other non-state housing actors, such as NGOs, transformed their social relations with the state, to varying degrees by reference to new shared understandings, attempts to shift the axes of power or reinforce existing power structures. The notion of power designates relations between parties (Foucault, 1982: 217), existing in and through social relations in the very ‘machinery’ of social life, groups and institutions (Foucault, 1990a: 94). King (2004: 64) elaborates on links between social relations and power, writing

“Power is capillary, it arises out of the most insignificant social relations [...] a regime is powerful when all these social relations mesh together to support each other to ensure universal conformity”.

Regime shifts, such as the widespread neo-liberal political practices being introduced into housing policy, can adversely affect some tenants, third sector organisations and Housing Tasmania itself. As the findings in the following chapters demonstrate, public housing tenants were constrained by the narrowing of their social practices and agency towards concerns for the regulation of their neighbours’ or their own behaviour (detailed in Chapter Seven). I also show in Chapter Eight and Nine some staff employed at a range of third sector organisations expressed their cynicism about new managerialistic processes being any better able to meet the intensive needs of a targeted client base. State actors from Housing Tasmania talked of the pressure to be pragmatic in their operations and goals in order to maintain their bureaucratic existence when Government funding commitments or increases tend to take years to finalise and decisions were outside their control (Chapter Five), while the framing of public housing issues in the local Tasmanian press is a case of the familiar ‘good’ and ‘bad’ tenant stories with an additional cultural governance frame that musters support for neo-liberal political practices (outlined in Chapter Six). But, it is equally important to consider who stands to gain from regime shifts in housing and the introduction of governance modes? Within their heterogeneous discourses, circuit of governance actors reiterated that they expected to or were currently benefitting from new transactions and relationships with the state via, for example, growth of their organisation, more opportunities to secure housing contracts and integration of housing into market mechanisms. Jessop (2002b: 467) writes that the force of neo-liberalism is apparent when it seeks ‘to promote new discourses, subjectivities and ways of representing the world which establish the legitimacy of the market economy, the disciplinary state and the enterprise culture’. The unassailable nature of neo-liberalism is that it demands acceptance of all its ‘rational’ approaches. If an NGO agrees to be a housing provider it inevitably constrains the state’s capacity to provide public housing and aligns its own organisation to adhere to a number of neo-liberal tenets. Partial support for neo-liberal changes are constrained

within the nature of its systematic 'common-sense' and replacement of state interventions with market mechanisms.

Abduction and Retroduction: a systematic approach to the data

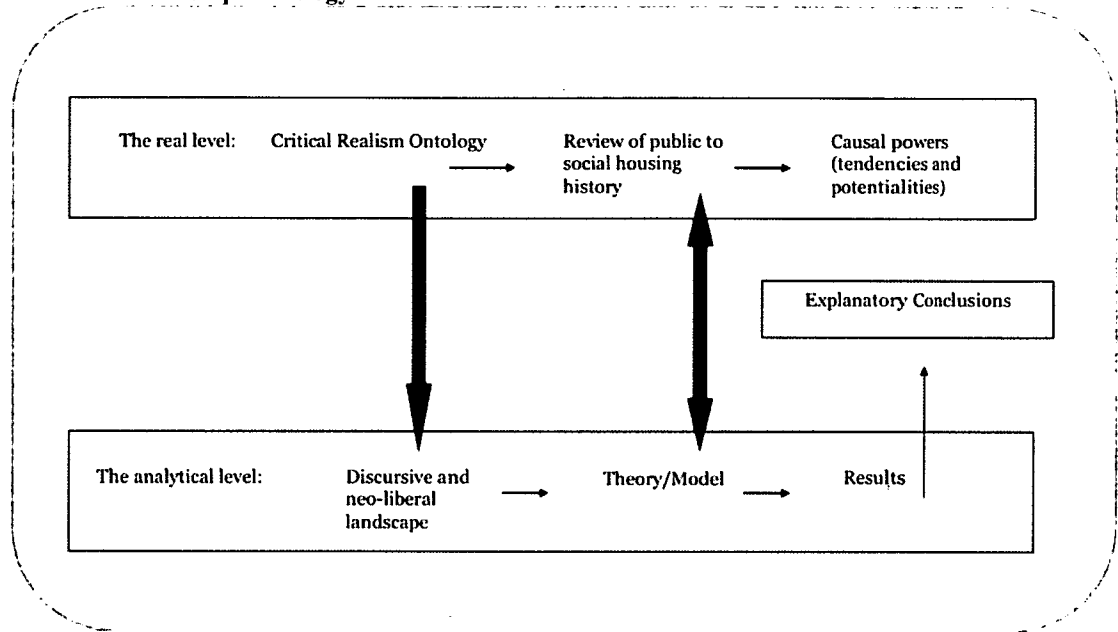
The systematic research strategy and epistemological framework of abduction and retroduction were used to formulate the modes of governance structure; namely actors utilised three main governing modes with Housing Tasmania:

1. Interactions
2. Transactions
3. Compliances.²³

A critical realist approach to the explanation of the concrete phenomena of new modes of governance in social housing provision analyses the change as a series of amalgamations of structures and causal powers that combine to produce specific effects. The aim of the two-phase abduction-retroduction process is to provide a contestable but competitive explanation (Danermark *et al.*, 2002, Sayer, 2000) of a social phenomena. Abduction requires interpretation and recontextualisation of the public to social housing change using a plausible, justifiable set of explanatory ideas and concepts. This forms a postulate or hypothetical conceptual model which maps and details what is occurring. Hence a process of abduction is used to consider the characteristics of: the AHS policy, news framing devices in the press, 'distant' tenants' and a range of NGOs and their respective causal powers and limitations or possible liabilities. At this juncture, the analysis can turn, once again, towards the concrete by thinking through the combination of characteristics of actors' with the results of their dialectically related interaction. Fairclough, Jessop and Sayer (2001: 17) describe this process of abstraction as an acknowledgement of discursive interdependence as positioned ways of representing social practices and the material world are enacted and then reflexively registered back or inculcated into social practices. Having acquired a model for 'testing' the retroduction phase begins using methods such as contrastive and counterfactual questioning, to provide a more competitive explanation (Lawson, 2006: 262-263). Retroductive analysis determines the generative mechanisms and their interplay in specific situations (see Figure 3).

²³ These modes are initially outlined in Chapter Five before being applied throughout Chapter Six to Ten.

Figure 3 Retroductive Epistemology



Each chapter in Part Three postulates, through empirical evidence different actor group negotiations of these governing modes and their understanding of their own proximity to the state. To achieve the later goal, I utilised a socio-spatial figurative model, retroductively drawn from actors interview data. ‘Proximity’ is used as an interpretative measure that assists in the examination of concealed, reinforced or rejected elements of neo-liberal political practices in actors’ formal social relations with the state. These proximities were described as ‘close’, ‘distant’ and ‘neutral’ and refer to levels of accessibility and comfort actors’ perceived they had with the state. From such a perspective, then, these changes to housing are perceived as a dynamic circuit of governance between actors, unobservable structures and contingent conditions. It will be argued throughout Part Three that specific attention can fruitfully be given to the interpretation and distribution of social relations, the dynamic of working with the state and other NGOs, as well as relations among tenants, and between communications specialists and their clients and eventual wider community audience. These all play a generative influencing factor on the level of negotiation, opposition or support for the AHS over space and time.

Conclusion

Critical realism extols the potentiality of a convergence of ideas from a variety of research methods to enrich our theoretical and empirical tussles. Conclusions are not in themselves considered valid just because they are, or can be, replicated. Replication has questionable utility in dynamic social and temporal contexts. What is preferred is the emphasis on identifying the mechanisms and particular causal powers in time-and place-specific

contexts. From this perspective, critical realism offers a useful metatheory to explain the challenges facing actors involved in new modes of governance via expansion to social housing in Tasmania and which elements of neo-liberal theorisation reinforce and complement empirical findings.

Like other researchers who advocate that critical realism effectively recognises the deep structures and mechanisms involved in social situations, the thesis is focused on making explicit knowledge that is already often implicit in social practice; it is “already given” but “confused” (Bhaskar, 1978: 24). Critical realism allows for the merging of theoretical (abstract) and empirical (concrete) research findings. Critical realism’s key epistemological process of abduction and retroduction is used in the systematic analysis of the data to explain, by identifying and then postulating, which mechanisms are capable of producing change and interference to the existing public/social housing order. Retroduction focuses on the different components of neo-liberal political practices, social relations and modes of governance being studied. Questions such as how do the structures and relations involving these components come about? What properties underpin them and what causal mechanisms are involved?

The next chapter sets out the multimethodological qualitative approach and its application in this research by emphasising the thesis’ premise that empirical understandings of neo-liberal political practices are as critical for knowledge formation as theoretical abstractions.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND METHOD

Introduction

The previous two chapters presented the parameters of the research project and the rationale for using a critical realist social ontology. This chapter continues by stressing the importance of integrated methods in the research to avoid insular understandings or the dominance of theory. The chapter is broadly divided into two sections: in the first, I clarify the methodological preoccupations of the empirical research; the second details the methods used to collect the empirical evidence and connected issues of reflexivity, ethics and validity. Arriving at critical realism as my 'theory of choice' was, aptly, a process of emergence. Much of my first year of research was devoted to reading social constructionism, which shaped my early thinking and questioning. But closer interaction with the object of study, especially once I started interviewing the cross-section of 'circuit of governance' actors, presented ways of interpreting actor accounts through a critical realist lens. For example, the discursive practices and actions of non-state housing actors are interdependently connected in non-linear ways to each other and a range of political, economic, cultural and social processes in housing. Following from the epistemological basis of critical realism, the *AHS* policy enactment is viewed as an *open system* where dynamic relations (i.e. *experiences, events* and *mechanisms*) and rival needs were in a state of flux, responding to contingent conditions that function to either enable or constrain housing structures and actors. The methodological assumption is that social relations *both* determine policy outcomes *and* are shaped by policy deliberations. In light of this, the governing connections mode and the proximity of social relations combine to expose nuanced and specific actor discourses tabling the effects of neo-liberalism.

Critical realism values iterative research processes that make it conceptually amenable to case study analyses. The *AHS* became the backdrop for the research. It acts as a specific example to 'drill' down into and explore a range of social relations that may or may not have been lucidly considered by housing actors. The 'context' of the case study represents its boundaries (Yin, 1994: 17). The *AHS* was an unfolding event, complete with unexpected twists and turns and unintended consequences as much as distinct linear policy stages. Within the macro-context of national neo-liberal style reforms, the Tasmanian Labor Government's *AHS* became a regional-based political solution to affordability housing issues. The spatial and temporal boundaries of the policy determined how the state presented its expectations of the 'rolling out' of social policy change and shifts in governance. My task was to direct interviewees to consider and reflect on their social relations with the state and other non-state housing or policy actors during these changes and heightened public attention on housing. The case study approach encourages analysis of a specific place, event or policy at a particular time thereby assisting a researcher to view an issue from many angles.²⁴ The local practice site and its multiple actors, emergent powers and constraining/enabling mechanisms are connected to discursive and material

²⁴ Background reading in Australian community and suburban case study examples included Dempsey's (1990) study of a bush community in north-west Victoria; Peel's (2005) study of the outer Adelaide suburb of Elizabeth; Bryson and Winter's (1999) account of 'Newtown' a pseudonym for an outer suburb of Victoria; and Gabriel's (2004) exploration of youth mobility in the North West Coast of Tasmania.

neo-liberal political practices that have imbued Tasmanian housing policy. Pitfalls within case studies arise when they are overly descriptive or dissociated from broader debates; failing to weave together sufficient analysis of events with explanations of individual action and political change. In order to overcome these weaknesses the case study serves as a filter for layers of qualitative methods in the hope of not inadvertently relying on any one group of actors or discourse to speak for all.

Methodological issues: Change and causal powers in the domain of analysis

Critiques of change – whether in housing and urban studies or economic and political history – generally acknowledge that change does not occur randomly. Housing researchers propose a number of different indicators or causal factors that trigger housing change, for example class struggle (Dickens *et al.*, 1985), ideological hegemony (Kemeny, 1992) and the structure and nature of politics and institutions (Lundquist, 1989). In the social sciences the political direction of change has been scrutinised, with prioritisation often given to phenomenon such as the ‘great haste’ towards capitalism (Castells, 1977) or the movement from Fordism to post-Fordism (Lipietz, 1986; Darcy, 2001). Throughout the thesis I suggest that while state and non-state housing actors possess differing ideological perspectives about the change from government to modes of governance, they tended to agree that this shift was ‘necessary’ or ‘rational’. But their understanding of what ‘necessary’ and ‘rational’ meant differed. The associated discourses of these non-state actors generate complex dynamic relations between themselves and the state; their substantive organisational agendas; and their adaptability in a new policy environment. Ways of handling and adapting to change vary within the housing policy community. As Chapter One discussed, among membership of the ‘circuit of governance’, not all actors have equal access, power or capacity to verbalise and rationalise their actions, whether these are strategically crucial to policy or everyday routine acts. Not all actors want to disclose their motivations, intentions or prejudices. Additionally, having the skills or resources to critically reflect on their social or working practices with the state was not equally distributed among actors – as different day-to-day pressures and/or different allegiances to organisations masked engagement with certain conditions and operations; as certain actors held privileged positions in determining policy outcomes and as contestation and dominance takes effect in material reality. Actors’ accounts are passionate *and* indifferent, verbose *and* reticent, certain *and* unsure, supportive *and* antagonistic.

The circuit metaphor is used to explore the expansion of processes of new social relations and modes of governance underpinned by principles of neo-liberal political practices that tend to depend on the presence and conscious exercise of discursive and institutional power. These structural and discursive elements of power include formal AHS based governance structures and underlying assumptions about state-actor relations and norms of interaction. It is difficult to understand the social practices and relations of any one actor without considering the interconnected processes all actors experience within the circuit. For du Gay *et al* (1997: 10) the meaning of power between actors and it functioning was “less in terms of a ‘transmission’ flow model and more like the model of a dialogue.” By extension, a critical realist conceptualisation of power considers how power works to facilitate or constrain actors’ relations with the state, which may have emancipatory or

transformative effects through its own causal role in governance. Some internal patterns within the social relations of the circuit exist and rely on levels of power within the circuit's boundaries. This should be expected as the governance within housing is different to other social policy areas and hence those outside its boundaries. Power is constituted of multiple overlapping and intersecting socio-spatial relationships and networks of power. These 'moments' can be described in critical realist terms as *events* or observable structural breaks and episodes of change which create cumulative impact. These events are often caused by mechanisms in the real world that may not be understood, observed or felt by actors involved in the implementation of the AHS or its governance changes.

This sociological enquiry registers a need to move away from narrow objectivity and an 'outsiders' or 'spectators' commentary of these social relations and aspects of change (Manent, 1998). I take the stance that it is important, in the process of eliciting meaning from actors' engagement with policy change, to ensure that a narrative that "adjudicate(s) between participants' competing versions" is not developed (Silverman, 1985: 105). Rather, the methodology of this thesis acknowledges the breadth and complexity of accounts "to understand the situated work that they do" (ibid; see also Latour, 2005 for a similar argument from a different perspective, e.g. triangulation of location) while still questioning the interpretations and politicisation of these housing changes. Thus the methodological approach becomes a matter of switching between, and relating information across, different levels of abstraction (Danermark *et al.*, 1997: 117).

As outlined in Chapter Two, *mechanisms* are complex interconnections of bundled social relations involved in the implementation of new policies reshaping public housing. It follows, then, that we can understand the AHS by examining concepts that provide us with a way of speaking about qualitative properties, structures and mechanisms. Realist methodologies adhere to dual ideas: the theoretical premise that *necessary causal powers* exist and to the empirical claim that *contingent* conditions can either constrain or enable these causal powers (Bhaskar, 1978, 1989; Sayer, 1992). Thus, in general, critical realists support a 'critical methodological pluralism' that demonstrates how metatheory and method can, together, determine 'best fit' for a specific research project. Echoing a thread through sociology, this perspective reaffirms that hierarchical distinctions between methods and theory are problematic. These critical realist methodologies set the boundaries for my approach. The imagery of a helix (continuous series of loops) or the circuit moving forward and back can apply here too as an illustration of my positioning in the research process.

Data collation and analysis involved a constant cycling back and forth between theory and data to identify patterns and exceptions. I alternated the focus from considering individual quotes and accounts to understanding their impact on the most common themes across the entire sample of actors'. It involved looking at peoples' words and phrases, themes and then the broader discourse. From this 'to-ing and fro-ing' it became clear that governing modes and proximities of connectedness to the state intersected in interviewees discourses. I subsequently developed a number of actor or stakeholder groups from the retrieved data – which relied on proximity of social relations e.g. distant tenants, or governing modes that influences NGO discourses. It was important to keep asking 'why' and 'how' types of questions such as, why is this significant and how does it relate to what they said earlier or how do these discourses relate to theories of neo-liberalism.

The iterative analysis values the organic nature of “continuously developing and reformulating itself as a result of the interchange and dialogue between emergent (data-embedded) theory and prior theory (models, concepts, frameworks)” (Layder, 1998: 156). Following on the conceptual abstraction, retroduction is the theoretical model building explanation of the housing change and thereby systematic knowledge about underlying mechanisms that generate outcome or events. Retroduction involves a ‘working back’ from the identification and naming of the studied phenomena to theoretically postulated mechanisms or structures, such as the modes of governance as responses to neo-liberal practices and the tendencies they manifest. Thus, to produce an in-depth context-specific understanding of housing policy change and its impact on non-state actors, the data collection and analysis started with understanding how the social actors perceive the constraints and opportunities that it embodies.

Complementary methodological strategies

Complementary empirical methods are used to consider how *generative mechanisms* manifest themselves in various housing policy contexts. A critical realist perspective supports the identification of the most appropriate methods for the research questions; while pursuing a cautious methodology that seeks to explore and contrast multiple perspectives in order to arrive at ‘practically adequate’ conclusions. Therefore, the deployment of multiple methods to collect, analyse and present information is in keeping with a critical realist approach (Sayer, 1984). Qualitative methods also provide interpretive insight into social and political agency and enable analysis of structural processes, in this case via semi-structured interviews with senior management of Housing Tasmania and key non-state housing actors. Integrating relevant literatures with the research findings builds a dialogue between academic scholarships and contributed to the validity of the thesis’ interpretations. In turn, the reliability of conclusions is enhanced by attention to the data collection and methodological clarity in interviews. Critical realism relies on the convergence and corroboration of different types of evidence to draw valid conclusions, stressing the particular causal powers that emerge and are actualised in specific contexts. The pragmatic concerns of the practical and empirical need to be balanced against ontological or epistemological concerns. I emphasise the vitality of an ontological-methodological link that energises the study’s formation of conclusions that are transparent, valid and ethical. Figure 4 summarises the key methodological considerations within particular process stages.

Figure 4 Methodological considerations/research process. Adapted from Sayer (1992: 243)

Methodological Process	Methodological considerations
Research Questions	In what ways do the discourses of state and non-state actors articulate key elements of neo-liberal governance, as portrayed in the <i>Affordable Housing Strategy</i> ? Do these discourses form a coherent application of neo-liberal political practices, or do they reflect competing, contradictory values?
Relations	Substantial relations of connections
Type of group studied	Causal groups (and their actual connections rather than, for instance aggregate formal relations among 'taxonomic' groups)
Methods	Interviews/focus groups: individual actors in their causal contexts Discursive analysis (with basic content analysis) Literature review
Limitations	Contingent relations (questionable reliability) Not everything can be observed Rate of change in policy implementation (e.g. delivered in Stages and altering with experimentation) might affect fallibility of explanations in short-term
Type of account produced	Causal explanations of the social relations and processes of some non-state housing actors. Unable to determine representativeness.

Although this research favours the use of a complementary multi-methodological strategy, this linkage of methods and analytical frameworks does not translate into an assumption that the object of the methods "are the same, that they can be integrated into a larger and more comprehensive perspective, or that there should be a single standard for evaluating the methodological emphases of these approaches to qualitative research" (Miller, 1997: 25). Miller (1997: 24) proposes 'building bridges' to show how analytical formations are mutually informative "while also respecting the distinctive contributions and integrity of each perspective". Aware of triangulation's approach – using several methods to reveal multiple aspects of a single empirical reality (Denzin, 1978) – this thesis prefers Miller's appreciation of diversity *within* and *between* accounts of empirical reality. It is a more nuanced reading of triangulation that focuses on comparing and cross-checking findings *and* validating conclusions, while accepting that there are multiple and overlapping 'realities' and understandings of the *AHS*'s goals such that a coherent and consistent account may not be possible. Viewing the *AHS* as a case study, the four main methods I employ in this research will be outlined below including: semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, discourse analysis of news headlines and policy documents, and the incorporation of key literature reviews.

Figure 5 Method type and chapter utilised

Method	Chapter
Semi-structured interviews	Chapters Five to Ten
Focus group discussions	Chapter Seven
Discourse analysis of headline / lead paragraph analysis	Chapter Five Chapter Six to Ten
Discourse analysis of interview / focus group data	
Literature reviews	Chapter Four to Chapter Ten

Figure 6 Critical realist domain and Method

Critical realist domain of reality	Method
Empirical experiences of AHS – answering descriptive questions: what does it include? Who set it up and will deliver it? How? When and why?	Descriptive, micro-level CDA of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>AHS</i> document- Newspaper articles on <i>AHS</i>
Actual experiences of ‘actually existing neo-liberalism’ and changed social relations and modes of governance Clarifies actors’ experiences and explain in relation to agreement or dissonance with conceptual/theoretical dimensions Description of key actors contribution to the AHS and its effect on their lives/work practices.	Interviews Focus groups
Real experiences of social housing change Greater critique of the experiences of neo-liberal housing change on actors as evidenced in their discursive accounts and interpretations of their social relations (degrees of proximity) Explain key actors contribution to the <i>AHS</i> and its effect on their lives/work practices; their social relations with the state.	Critical analysis of interview material

This critical realist account of the neo-liberal changes in social housing is aligned with complementary methods carried out through an abduction/retroduction process built around the separation of *empirical*, *actual* and *real* social reality. The above Figure 6 shows that the processes of data collection and analysis are linked to each other and connected to the critical realist ontology. Hence data analysis was not conducted at the end of the data collection process.

Focus group discussions

Focus group discussions were held with twenty (20) public housing tenants across Hobart, Launceston and Devonport. Individual information discussed within focus groups was de-identified by using pseudonyms. For Kitzinger (1994, 1995) interaction between participants is an important feature of focus groups because it highlights the type of language they use about an issue and their values and beliefs about a situation. As a method, in questioning each other, participants can potentially reconsider their own understandings of their specific experiences, closing the gap in understanding and contextualising what people say and what they do (Lankshear, 1993). When participants reveal multiple understandings and contradictory meanings, there also emerges (in the analysis) capacity to better articulate multiple explanations of their behaviour and attitudes. In this thesis, focus groups were used to test out the type of questions that would illicit discussion on actual practices and social relations with Housing Tasmania. Focus group discussions were conducted before interviews as a preliminary or exploratory stage of the research (Kreuger, 1988). Advantages of focus groups include: greater social interaction; participatory opportunities and forums for change; to be involved in decision-making processes (Race *et al.*, 1994); to be valued as 'experts', and to be given the chance to work collaboratively with researchers. Applied to the thesis, tenants were in small familiar and like-experienced groups, treated as 'experts' and lively participants in working with me to determine appropriate and necessary 'depths' in questioning for the interviews. The focus groups also availed an opportunity for tenants to attend together hear each others' stories', learn that the research community is interested in their first-hand housing experiences and contribute to possible or alternative governmental practices. This research methodology offered insights into the negotiations between actors and the state and aiding the development of Research Question 1's argument (i.e. in what ways do the discourses of state and non-state actors articulate key elements of neo-liberal governance, as portrayed in the AHS?)

As focus group moderator I was aware of the relative open-ended process and reduced 'control' I had over the group and information revealed (Morgan, 1988). However, to work effectively focus groups require a balance between a clear purpose and guideline of topics to be covered and sufficient conversational space for participants to talk to each other, ask questions and express doubts and opinions. Focus groups rely on interaction within the group based on themes or questions that are supplied by the researcher (Morgan, 1997: 12). Interactions were very easy to establish and 'keep moving' with these tenants as they were highly participatory in their neighbourhood and community and tended to be lively and outgoing. In accordance with usual ethical considerations, full information about the purpose and uses of participants' contributions was given. At the outset I clarified that each participant's contributions would be shared with the others in the group as well as with the moderators and as such, needed to remain confidential, unless otherwise

disclosed by the participant, after the focus group. The focus groups were encouraged to work together in prioritising their collective views into an 'order of most importance.' Using a consistent and stated method, the validity of the research examples and findings rests on participants being invited into the research frame to engage in the interpretive process.

Semi-structured interviews

I conducted in-depth, semi-structured face-to-face interviews over the period 2004-2007 with fifty (50) actors, constituting the primary method for data collation.²⁵ Semi-structured interviews were considered an appropriate way to analyse how a housing policy (and its key goal of extending governance) was enacted and contested at the regional level in actors' discourses and to explore how actors changed or reproduced conditioning structures, such as the rhetoric of neo-liberalism, over time. As a method semi-structured interviews provide a flexible way of interacting and listening to actors' accounts (Minichiello *et al.*, 1995), based on questions related to the theoretical categories of social change, policy and new governance ideas, emergent powers and social relations. Existing research on interactions between policy communities and disadvantaged individuals influenced the design of the interview schedule.

Interviews were audio taped, lasting between 30 minutes and two hours, depending on the level of interest and expertise of the participant. Key information and quotes were transcribed and thematically analysed. Thematic analysis included reviewing:

- The representativeness of a shared account
- Level of issue convergence and divergence
- Understanding of new governance modes
- Major difficulties in social relations
- Major achievement in social relations and any unique positions held by an interviewee.

I was keen to record interviewees' responses to open-ended questions taking into account a range of mechanisms that affected public housing tenants, NGOs and Housing Tasmania. Interviewees were encouraged to talk about their role in their organisation and their various points of contact with Housing Tasmania, before I guided them to a set of more specific questions on the implications of the AHS. This process was effective in gathering adequate background details and in recording how interviewees negotiated official lines of government and/or business practice. Interviewees privileged which aspects of the AHS were most relevant to their organisation or themselves and which components of their housing social relations – with other organisations, tenants and the

²⁵ A copy of the interview schedule is provided in Appendices A to D.

state – were positive or problematic.²⁶ I conducted three short interviews with the press – one with a newspaper editor and two with journalists. A notoriously difficult group to interview, I abandoned the idea of having journalists discuss their work, in the context of headline analysis, when I could not secure any further interviews.²⁷ Thinking about new technologies of governance and neo-liberalism, I realised that interviewing actors' who were contracted by the state to promote 'official' policy messages in marketing would relate to the thesis questions more directly.

Interview questions varied in order and inclusion depending on the flow of information and what interviewees had already offered through the course of our exchange. This is standard qualitative research protocol and fits with a type of immersed response to the interview (i.e. in the 'here and now'). Sometimes it was necessary to ask additional probe questions to encourage an interviewee to expand on a specific theme. While, at other times, I followed the interviewee's diversion to topics that interested them (Minichello *et al.*, 1995: 65), to demonstrate my respect for individuals providing the data and my curiosity for what 'off the beaten track' can expose. Aware of actual or perceived power-differentials between my research status and the status of interviewees, I sought to make interviewees comfortable in our 'conversation' (Kvale, 1996) rather than imbue the event with formality that could distort or lessen the intellectual space for personal recollection and comment. Feedback from interviewees about the process indicated they felt: at ease, their opinions had been validated and a rapport was established between us. This environment created the necessary space for interviewees to shift their discourse from purely bureaucratic, official or static accounts to more personal, unresolved details of how they experience social relations. Tendencies to answer questions with a rational explanation of political activity decreased within the course of the interview.

Some of the strengths of semi-structured interviewing include: its focus on interviewing people with specialist knowledge, obtaining information that cannot be collated in other ways, and its flexible structure that enables researchers to get below the surface of organisational structures to find out the degree to which actors are exercising their agency and conscious of the "ideological investment of a particular discursive convention in some situations than others" (Fairclough, 1992: 228). These strengths were assessed as being particularly important because of the level of contradiction and negotiation evident in interviewees' accounts. Generally, broad, easy to answer questions were followed with more involved personal accounts or structural questions based on their attitudes, social relationships and impressions of experiences or events. Some interviewees preferred to be given or 'read' one question after another; other interviewees talked more freely and addressed issues *inter alia*. 'Logics-in-use' occurred as I accumulated interview data and was able to float, test and debate tentative theorisations and concepts with these expert sources. The process of theory development also emerged, blurring any artificial separation between data collection and data analysis. By reading and rereading interview

²⁶ All interviews were conducted face-to-face at either the place of work (in the case of NGOs, Housing Tasmania and communications specialists), home (public housing tenants) or a community centre (public housing tenants). The focus groups were held in meeting rooms at prominent venues. Usually brief email or telephone correspondence and confirmation preceded the interview (with the exception of public housing tenants).

²⁷ As the interviews with journalists were not continued (and their data does not figure in the analysis) I have not included these actors in the total interviews with state and non-state actors.

notes, identifying key themes, forms of expressions and meanings and then grouping similar accounts together I set up a process that effectively limited significant error in coding. As a rigorous analytical stage, this meant I was able to effectively eliminate distortion by cross-checking evidence and focusing on points of divergence and convergence rather than discourses that I anticipated or seemed to fit the conceptual frame of a 'circuit of governance'. The interview schedules used in this research are in Appendices A (Housing Tasmania staff), B (communications experts), C (tenants) and D (NGOs, peak bodies, quasi-state bodies) with the discourse derived from these questions being extensively analysed in Chapters Five to Ten.

Each participant was informed that they would be identified in the thesis by either:

- Fabricated name plus true biography, e.g. Lucy, a tenant for ten years in her current property or
- Position title, organisation type and allocated number from total interviewee sample, e.g. Senior Manager, NGO 7.

I followed a 'snowballing' methodology to obtain interviews with NGOs, tenants and creative directors/designers – a common technique in qualitative approaches where initial contacts suggest further potential interviewees and so on, until the suggestions begin to overlap and become circular (Silverman, 1998). This approach also helps gain entry into particular groups through peer introduction and recommendation. To avoid bias I also: searched 'yellow page' entries for marketing consultants and followed up on possible contacts; visited a public housing estate in Hobart and set up interviews with people I met, and reviewed NGO, advocacy and peak body submissions and web pages to ascertain the breadth of the personnel I interviewed. Focusing on "specific, identifiable individuals of interest in terms of their properties and the mode of connection to others" (Sayer, 1992: 244), many of the participants provided meaningful insights into the policy process and the changes they were experiencing in their role. These interviews added rich descriptions to the research demonstrating how qualitative data (when interrogated and analysed) brings complex social processes 'alive' (Dalton and Rowe, 2002: 3). Writing up the data reinforced the need to acknowledge contradictions and tensions within and between the field of study from a retroductive position – in terms of a) contrasting subjective experiences, tensions between actors' discourses and actions and b) actually existing neo-liberal practices that actors endorse, neutralise or contest and c) my own expectations as researcher. Willis (1980: 93) describes these fissures 'as moments of crisis' and sees them as being creative uncertainties in the structural social relationships between actors which can "further theoretical and methodological options". Interview transcripts were read and re-read along with the notes made just after interviews (that served as immediate impressions of key ideas).

Figure 7 outlines the number of research participants from each actor group and the chapter in which their data is explored.

Figure 7 Semi-structured interviews and focus group chapters, number of participants

Chapter	Semi-structured interviews & focus groups Number of research participants
Chapter Five	5 senior staff from Housing Tasmania ²⁸
Chapter Six	8 communication specialists
Chapter Seven	35 public housing tenants
Chapter Eight, Nine and Ten	22 senior staff from NGO and community sector organisations
Total	Total 70 research participants

Newspaper discourse analysis and discourse analysis of interviews/focus groups

To chart how the *AHS* policy was framed in the Tasmanian press a discursive analysis of headlines and lead paragraphs over the period 1 June 2002 (as discussions on government intervention were emerging in the public sphere) to 31 December 2004 are considered in Chapter Six. This data provides insights into the role of the media in housing policy deliberations and the reliance on existing narratives of social order and state mechanisms. With an undergraduate and employment background in communications, I was accustomed to accessing large samples of articles in national newspaper and regional databases such as 'Tasmanian online.' As expected, using a statewide approach surfaced the greatest volume of articles in the Hobart based publication *The Mercury* (South) compared with the two other tabloid newspapers – *The Advocate* (North West) and *The Examiner* (North). Discourse analysis is used to assist in the examination of the framing of governance and public/social housing issues in Tasmania's mainstream press coverage.²⁹

Manual keyword counting and qualitative analysis was chosen over computer assisted content analysis programs with keyword searches including: 'public housing', 'anti-social behaviour', 'eviction', 'tenants', 'affordable housing', '*AHS*' 'social housing' and 'Housing Tasmania'. I extracted a sample of 390 articles published between mid-2002 and 2003 using these keywords (and deleting duplicates) of which 9 identified the *AHS* in the headline or lead paragraph. From this sample I then selected articles that specifically referred to broader social relations problems (e.g. Tasmanian Affordable Housing Limited slow establishment) and benefits (e.g. new opportunities for NGO sector, new building developments, increased funding) for closer discursive and frame analysis, narrowing the sample further to 147 articles. The final analysis centres on 46 articles that utilised a similar frame. Framing refers to the way in which news is presented, contained and controlled by journalists, editors and sources. As such, identifying the main frame used in the headline

²⁸ As only five Housing Tasmania staff members were interviewed in the study care was needed when attributing quoted observations to ensure anonymity.

²⁹ To a lesser extent textual analysis is included to critique the presentation, textual structures, layout, use of keywords and rhetorical devices.

and lead paragraphs – the two principle ways to draw a reader into a newspaper article – constituted the focus of the discursive analysis. Newspaper articles record public discourse and offer insights into how the changing dynamic of housing policy is portrayed in the present and historically connected to longstanding structures, expectations and debates.

A reappraisal of structuralism's distinct patterns and meanings in language by poststructuralists show how variability need not be glossed over or dismissed. Rather, these theorists make the point that 'discourse' consolidates particular meanings in particular institutional settings over time. The power of a discourse, then, is its ability to ascribe meaning to specific 'normalised' interpretations which deliberately obscure the contingent nature of knowledge (Finlayson and Valentine, 2002). For example, Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punishment: the Birth of the Prison* (1975/1977) was a seminal text for discursive analysis in its examination of a genealogy of disciplinary institutions and practices that, in their enactment of rules, reveal which 'truth' statements become validated in institutional settings. These discourses are constitutive in that they give shape to how actors see themselves. In his discussion of power, Foucault argues that institutions operate to produce subjects, normalise specific behaviours and promote some actors to 'expert' status. Power, in this form, circulates within institutional settings and becomes infused with people's actions and/or enacted on and through their bodies (McHoul and Grace, 1993: 26-56).

For Foucault the distributional conceptualisations of power as a resource or a capacity should be replaced with an understood of power as a relationship dependent on knowledges and freedoms of individuals in order for it to be exercised. This interdependent relationship between power and knowledge altered the way knowledge was viewed – no longer outside the relations and exercise of power. Knowledge has become plural, historical, political, non-linear and contingent. The productive relations of power are embodied in a set of micro-political techniques such as systems of power/knowledge made up of expert knowledges and those that possess them, associated institutional forms, the configuration of the circuit and other networks of support and a range of practical processes and ideas. Micro-mobilisations of power happen at the everyday level, are inherently unstable and uncertain in their outcomes. The effective exercise of governmental power centres on acting on individuals in such a way that they choose (rather than are suppressed or forced) to respond in certain ways to, for example, neo-liberal processes of change affecting their work and tenancy. The fields of possible reactions can be limited by the state (Foucault, 1982) which implies some level of stability and hierarchy to how power relationships are exercised.

Post-Marxist analysis, such as the work of Laclau and Mouffe (1985), emphasise a discursive shift from structural constraint to the *openness*, dynamism and contingency of social life. The interrelationship between discourse change and social change, between the written word and the material world of social policy practice and implementation (Lukes, 1986) has been strongly articulated in critical theory and post-structuralism (Agger, 1998). This 'openness' of social life is a comfortable companion with critical realist notions that events are governed by simultaneously operative mechanisms or generative powers. Distinctive structures within dimensions of social life – in this thesis it includes the social, economic, governmental and personal realm – contribute to various unpredictable,

stratified mechanisms that are often mediated by others. This scholarship informs my argument that discourses are co-existent, intersecting and prone to disruption and reframing over time. This occurs as contingency affects historical specificities and the particular governance (and other technologies) available, or in use, at a particular policy juncture. A discourse then becomes a particular way of representing distinct parts of the social, physical and psychological world.

This thesis endorses the view that a version of CDA, based upon a critical realist social ontology, is potentially of worth for explorations on the dynamics between key actors affected by social policy change. Like Fairclough's recent work on critical realism and organisational discourse (2005), I use the term 'discourse' primarily for linguistic and other semiotic elements of the social, such as newspaper articles and connected photos and activist rallies. But, importantly, it is used in a relational way, with a focus on the relations *between* actors' use of particular linguistic and other structural and material elements. CDA has a socio-political emphasis (van Dijk, 1990: 8) on language use and draws attention to the conditions under which policies such as the AHS are produced, disseminated and appropriated by actors (Taylor, 1999).

There is a significant relationship between critical realism and CDA. Fairclough (2005: 918) for example extols the benefits of holding an analytically dualist position which "distinguishes 'social process' and 'social structure' as ontologically distinct though interconnected facets of the social, and focuses research on the relationship between them. Analysis of social process includes analysis of agency, so another way of formulating the fundamental ontological distinction is 'agency v structure'." Critical realism rejects the tendency for the study of state and actor social and governance relations to be reduced to the study of discourse; instead the analysis of discourse is situated within the abduction-retroduction dualist epistemology. This means the researching of relations between agency and structure on the basis of a realist social ontology is given primacy within the discourse analysis. From the perspective of critical realism and the realist view of discourse, it is seriously problematic to explain agency and structure as alternatives that an actor or organisation can choose between. The causal effects of both agency and structure impact on how neo-liberal political practices emerge within housing policy change and are then subsumed or rejected by processes and actions. Change in social relations and new modes of governance are subject to conditions of possibility and a range of generative mechanisms which include actors and structures.

Some versions of Foucaultian inspired discourse analysis limit their attention to identifying the presence and combinations of recurrent and relatively stable and durable 'discourses' in texts. Other academics proceed with various forms of detailed linguistic analysis of a key aspect such as grammar, semantics, forms of argumentation or narrative; others still are more interested in the visual aspects, read as semiotic features, within texts. Fairclough's work, keeping with his view that 'discourse' consist of linguistic/semiotic elements of social events, and linguistic/semiotic facets of social structures describes 'social practices' mediating the relationship between events and structures.

In this thesis, the differences that neo-liberal political discourses bring to housing actors social world are revealed. Hence I acknowledge the value of incorporating aspects of critical discursive analysis (hereafter CDA) to explore in more detail relations between

mechanisms that identify ways in which social and policy dimensions of life are grounded and emergent from the economy (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999: 21). CDA's ontological and epistemological claims are based upon social life being constituted by 'social practices' with one component within it being 'discourse'. In terms of the discourse analysis used on interviewee and focus group data, I sought to examine the variety of knowledges' and beliefs about public housing and the *AHS* and how what is being said by actors within the circuit of governance has a relationship with neo-liberal political practices promoted in policy change. I was motivated to explore Scott's (1988: 35) claim that "discursive fields overlap, influence and compete with one another; they appeal to one another's 'truths' for authority and legitimation". I address how some meanings of policy change emerged as normative while others were eclipsed or relegated to background context by examining interviewees 'utterances', relevant policy texts and newspaper coverage. CDA explicitly concentrates on how narratives, words and mythmaking are not innocent in form or value-neutral. Rather the act of interpreting and writing news articles and headlines, policy documents, actors' conversations in interviews or public addresses must involve a disassembling of the politics of production and 'knowledge' dissemination.

In focusing on CDA the ambiguities between the intentions and epistemological undercurrents of these social, governmental or theoretical pre-constructions can then be analysed. The other main source of tension lies in the contested definitions of the value, roles and place in policy of public and social housing estates and tenants across the social, governing and theoretical fields. Some housing academics highlight the largely ignored possibilities offered by discourse analyses as super-structural accounts of the social order are overwhelmingly favoured (Jacobs and Manzi, 1996; Hastings, 1998; Marston, 2002). Discourse analysis has also recently been used by Sorvoll (2009) to explain shifts in political ideology (between social democratic parties and governments) affecting housing policy in Denmark, Sweden and Norway over the last thirty years.

Discourses provide us with subject positions, relationships and identities. Discourses are not fixed or totalising, instead they become blurred or mutate in form, depending on the conventions of the discourse and the level of negotiation within discursive boundaries. Chiapello and Fairclough (2002) linked CDA with the 'new sociology of capitalism' (Boltanski and Chiapello, 1999). What is of concern here is the particular connection between systems and lifeworld (for example the need to reach consensus on every issue in society could become an untenable burden to normative functioning and the creation of innovative solutions) and the way in which systems tend to dominate.³⁰ Discourse can navigate us through this tight jam and help us realise ways to live together in our increasingly pluralistic *and* individualised culture. Fairclough's (1997: 4) writing on 'public spaces' illuminated how they represent a "discursive geography of spaces defined by relationships between discursive practices" and enable an analytical focus on:

"how particular bodies of texts and interactions redraw boundaries, open or close flows, both between practices within a particular order of discourse and between different orders of discourse".

³⁰ To prevent such burdens systems transform interactions between people into "routine and mechanical exchanges" (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999: 85).

Literature Review

The project of the literature review was an organic and slow process, more akin to detective work than a linear, chronological reading of key texts. In some ways formulating a more conventional reading list or primer may have saved time but I expect the enjoyment of stumbling across a reference would have disappeared. As a result, building and melding a literature review is incorporated on different levels in the thesis. Sayer (1992: 86) describes the process of reflecting on and incorporating research literature as having wider bearing on

“(c)hanges in the structure of conceptual systems and hence in meanings [...] by discovering inconsistencies and omissions in the system of theoretical reflection”.

On a direct level, in each chapter there is a relevant literature review of the ‘policy community’ key issues. For example the literature review for Chapter Four on the Tasmanian SHA follows the governance literature, broader housing research on SHA’s and structural processes in housing affecting the development of neo-liberal political practices. A review of the extensive literature on media framing leads Chapter Six on local press coverage of public housing, while the emerging literature in public sector marketing and communications sits at the end of the chapter when considering marketised social policy documents. In Chapter Seven, references to literature are woven within the empirical analysis and explanations of changes in neighbourhoods and tenant populations. The literature review in Chapter’s Eight to Ten on housing organisations and NGOs considers their changing importance amid neo-liberal political practices.

Research Position

I have chosen qualitative methods as they offer an active rather than passive engagement, and reflexive power for both the housing actors within the research and my role as researcher. My positionality infused all aspects of the ways in which I conducted the research, analysed and wrote the findings chapters. To minimise problems that arise from using an authorial, detached voice I needed to foreground my own position within the research process and acknowledge such a relationship. I questioned the assumptions I held about actors and structures that could impact on, distort or inform the research in order to reveal and work with the complexities of the research process. My drive to undertake this research was underpinned by an ethic of social justice – within the paradigm of universal provision, concerned with interrogating the relationships, institutional and social practices that manifest in exclusion and disadvantage. Post-structuralism draws attention to the positioning and capacity of our expression in using the ‘I’ in research. Aware of the linguistic structural limitations of using personal pronouns and ‘activism’, I agree with writers such as Judith Butler (2006: xxvi) that I am also not determined by the language that makes the ‘I’ possible. Rather the opacity of the ‘I’ in language needs to be acknowledged. In (occasionally and where appropriate) using the first person, writing myself into the text as researcher and apprentice scholar, I aim to move away from more hegemonic conservative sociological thinking that too often disregards the unorthodoxy of sociological endeavours. Equally, no sociological rule

books require us to be anything other than at best “rigorous, poetic and ethical in the quest to contemplate the already existing reality in all its quotidian untidiness” (Blackshaw, 2005: xii).

Deliberately aiming to be a reflexive researcher requires a tenacious spirit of iterative analysis – and willpower to get out of the numerous pit holes and anxious self-deprecating ‘moments of crisis.’ Initially I was motivated to investigate the prevalence of communications and managerialism in government promotions and housing more specifically. This interest rapidly changed to an eagerness to explore how actors hold, articulate and authenticate multiple, often competing discourses, about the transformation of public housing and related traditional ‘social’ dimension aspects of welfare state provision. The common theme was the social effects (in communications campaigns or actor discourses) of neo-liberal political practices. The research was grounded in current knowledge of the housing system in Tasmania and some degree of ‘insider knowledge’ or ‘existential reflectivity’ (Morrow, 1994) in working on short consulting contracts to review Housing Tasmania’s service delivery across the state; in conducting stakeholder consultation forums to evaluate part of the AHS; and as a recipient of an Australian Housing Urban Research Institute (AHURI) top-up scholarship providing financial support and access to housing academics, policy debates and peer feedback.³¹

I found my concerns and sociological enquiries cut across realms of my ‘social’ life. I noticed the discursive shift in newspapers, local radio bulletins, favourite ABC Radio National programs and the conversations of friends being promoted to senior executive positions. It was the new official language of acceptance of an altered role for the state, ‘naturally’ usurped by market ‘solutions.’ It signalled a need to consider how these discourses and ideas were being mobilised. It was what John Ralston Saul wrote of in the 1980s when he pre-empted these change. Or closer to home, what Don Watson, the speech writer for former Labor PM Paul Keating, antagonised us to do in *Death Sentence* (2003) – to be indignant and resistant of corporate-speak polluting our phrases, minds and social practices.

My first memory is of waving morning goodbyes to my mum and two older brothers off to work and school. Just turned four, I was standing in the lounge room of our ‘Housing Commission’ home. This brief biographical or lifeworld account is not unusually for the 1970s. It also mirrors the radical changes that were taking place with more mothers returning to the labour force after having children and a steady retraction from public housing to home ownership. By the time I was seven my parents proudly lay claim to a manageable mortgage in a new middle-class suburb. My interest in public housing perhaps also stems from a lament for a Dutch sized public housing system; where tenants were not saving to escape into other tenures. I interpreted neo-liberal political practices as lessening not only the state’s role and equity within the community but also the social contract and ‘will’ of the people. I saw strong connections between the embeddedness of

³¹ I deferred my PhD studies to pursue social policy consulting in the private sector on contracts with state and local government agencies and councils, peak bodies, NGOs and community sector organisations. I was aware of the potential benefits for both projects – the final Housing Tasmania report being informed by two years research on housing policy and my PhD research, upon returning to it, being enriched by greater awareness of the operational mechanisms of how the language of policy works, is interpreted and ‘comes to life’ through its application.

the great Australian dream of owning a home on a quarter acre block with the uptake and 'fertility' of neo-liberal ideals. I felt alienated from the smug, unconscious acceptance of the market to deliver 'better' and 'efficient' answers to intractable problems. I thought there had to be various contingent reasons as to how such an ideology and economic pursuit often triumphed over other discourses and social imagining for public housing within a broader housing system.

Conclusion

In this chapter I detailed the methods and methodological focus of the dissertation. Using qualitative methods, my intention was to examine through an appropriate framework how multiple discourses emerge in actors' enactment of new housing policy agendas. I recognise that analysis of non-linear events and mechanisms is not easy or simple. By suspending government statements of 'fact' as 'truth' I am attempting to open up a space to scrutinise social relations in a governance and policy landscape. The research problem grew out of a combination of experiences (my motives, interests, life and work history), the available methods and analytical tools, and social problems that are transmitted through my exposure to broader social theory, and political resonance of neo-liberalism into many facets of life and the media. The following chapters provide the empirical body of the thesis and demonstrate how the methods outlined in this chapter productively contribute to greater analysis of the circuit of governance involved in housing policy processes. Variation within and between the intentions of the qualitative methods – some overtly political, others more linguistically or discursively focused – together combine within the critical realist interpretation of social relations and interplay between non-state housing actors with the state.

PART TWO

CHAPTER FOUR: POLICY CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

Introduction

As stated in Chapter One, changes to public housing policy and operations in Tasmania are best viewed in the context of neo-liberal discourses (Harvey, 1989a; Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Jessop, 2002a, 2002b). The thesis goes some way to addressing and refuting criticisms that using neo-liberal political practice as an explanatory concept or 'overarching mechanism' neglects, in some unspecified totalising way, the local, actualised, contingent processes that shape material outcomes (Jacobs, 2007: 265; see also Barnett, 2005). The thesis moves beyond the obvious political understanding that neo-liberal political practices in Tasmania vary, at times considerably, from other Australian states or other public/social housing policies within advanced liberal economies. Using critical realism, the thesis argues this variation exists because structural relations are always dependent on contingency – leading to different elements of neo-liberalism coming to the fore, gaining acceptance by multiple actors' or being subverted over time and space. Hence, the essential context in which to understand the AHS incorporates a neo-liberal analysis of the complex array of ideologies and incoherent governance processes that affect multiple or ongoing policy deliberations (Jessop, 2002b; Healey, 2006). In Chapter Two I argued, while neo-liberal governance has achieved widespread acceptability and legitimacy, it also remains uncertain and ambiguous in its policy outcomes. To add to this dynamic, in the discourses of non-state housing actors in this research, the SHA in Tasmania is not seen as being significantly 'less' powerful in determining housing outcomes and policy agendas.

Part Two of the thesis consists of Chapters Four and Five. It encompasses five aims. First in Chapter Four, I consider definitions and histories of variegated forms of neo-liberalism relevant to this study. Second, I relate Housing Tasmania's neo-liberal enactments and variabilities in 'policy' (Clarke and Glendinning, 2002; Peck and Tickell, 2002) to 'governance' literature. Third, a brief overview of national and Tasmanian public housing structural elements, such as historic purposes and funding arrangements, is undertaken.³² Four, building on the earlier sections I outline the public housing components of the AHS. Finally, Chapter Five contextualises Housing Tasmania's diverse role as the main power source within the circuit of governance before examining the discourse of staff at Housing Tasmania on their policy rationale for promoting new governance modes and relations with non-state housing actors'.

How 'actually existing neo-liberalism' is understood: variegation and divergence

There is a growing awareness of the heterogeneity of neo-liberalism borne out of the limitations of previous scholarship writing of it in a maligned 'grand narrative' manner

³² This is a short overview, given technical details of housing provision are less the substance of the study than the multiplication of discourses integrating neo-liberal principles in a renewed 'public-social' housing system.

(Larner, 2003). Some earlier critics argued that widespread propagation of an economic rationalist doctrine dominated neo-liberal political practices with the populist misconception that

“markets and prices are the only reliable means of setting a value on anything, and, further, that markets and money can always, at least in principle, deliver better outcomes than state and bureaucracies” (Pusey, 1993: 14).

These writers claim we have witnessed the retreat of the Australian state (Pusey, 1991). Similarly, the British academic Peter Self (2000: 2, 131) writes, in *Rolling back the market: Economic dogma and political choice*, that “armed market ‘operations’ now play a dominant role in the politics and policies of almost all countries” to the extent that the state becomes a “weak imitation and auxiliary of the market system to the grave detriment of a democratic political process and good standards of public administration”. Subsequently, academic debate in the late 1990s centred on the degree to which state powers were ‘hollowed out’ (Jessop, 1995; Whitehead, 2003). All-encompassing accounts of the ‘rolling back’ of the state are not, however, precise recordings of the change (Barnett, 2005). They disguise the divergent ways neo-liberal policies are translated and enacted in practice and the neo-liberal variations within urban policy programs.

Neo-liberal governance in public housing is conceptualised as a series of variable processes that are keenly negotiated, depending on the regional housing authorities political and economic preferences. Urban ‘governance’ centres on new service delivery practices, the ‘hollowing out’ of state functions and greater emphasis on ‘flexibility’, ‘innovation’ and ‘entrepreneurialism.’ The supposed hollowing-out of state intervention is more accurately described as a reorganisation or restructuring of institutional organisations to create a relationship between market and the state. More recent perspectives assert that incorporating the market does not, of itself, result in an unfettered process of ‘rolling back’ or loss of governmental power and authority. There is a greater understanding that government’s capacity to maintain a stronghold on some aspects of policy, while negating or decreasing their role in other service or policy areas is characteristic of their heterogeneity (Keating, 2004; Dodson, 2006; Nygaard *et al.*, 2008). The state has not withdrawn or pulled back from social and economic activity – as is evident in housing policy (Doherty, 2004). A more appropriate term for this process is ‘new statism’ which refers to the ways the government has developed new forms of incorporation of other actors (Cochrane, 2003; Geddes, 2005).

This shift in analysis from the state having ‘rolled back’ to a newer perception of the state ‘rolling out’ (Peck and Tickell 2002) under neo-liberalism resulted in “more nuanced and sensitive assessments of the changing character of the contemporary neo-liberal state” (Dodson, 2006: 2). Strange (1996: 15) argues processes, such as privatisation, are not synonymous with the “retreat of the state, or even the primacy of private over public” rather it involves “constant negotiation between dominant actors [...] constant redrawing of the frontiers between public and private”. The process, she suggests, is from a “diffusion” of power and authority to private agents and institutions. The rise of private actors at the international level leads not only to loss of legitimacy and effectiveness of state action but also to a gap in responsibility. More conservatively, Michael Keating (2004), in proposing an intermediary or negotiated position, reasoned that mutual

dependence between markets and government exists rather than merely a struggle over power. Keating (2004: 5) contends that

“markets can most often be managed to assist in the achievement of many of the State policy directions and goals [...] the shift to marketisation largely represents an attempt by governments to enhance or restore their power to achieve their economic and social objectives, while minimising any loss of efficiency”.

Keating's insights are useful by extension as he poses the important, though cautiously understated, question as to whether “the responsibilities and value of the government [have] remained constant, or has the reliance on markets led to a subtle reorientation in favour of market values and expectations?” Earlier work by Barry Hindess stresses (1997: 20) that governments play an active role in constructing and managing markets to ensure both negative and positive incentives turn the seemingly independent action of free agents into instruments of government. According to Davis (2000: 231) the orthodox role for governments is to “decide and implement preferred courses of action, which makes a difference to society and its economy”. I build on this view by arguing that government ‘restructuring’ entailed an economic imperative with an ideological and political shift towards an entrenchment of a neo-liberal narrative. These two perspectives need not be mutually exclusive – as they cover the objectives of government and how these objectives are then carried out or implemented by the government. Economic shifts act as precursors to a nuanced form of privatisation of welfare provision from the state to the informal, market or voluntary sectors (Leat, 1986: 290-291). Neo-liberalism has shifted the traditions of the state to set and guarantee a social minimum. Some scholars argue that the free market does not become embroiled in social justice issues or notions of ‘right’ or ‘good’. Others, such as Thomas and Wilkin (1997: 2), writing on the unevenness of globalisation, argue that deliberate mechanisms within neo-liberalism privilege the interests of capitalist actors and present is as the “only ‘respectable’ knowledge about just economic, social and political organization and practice.”

As an empirical exploration of a regional instance of actually existing neo-liberalism, the thesis considers the contextually specific social relations and modes of governance that emerge within neo-liberal housing policies in Tasmania. Actually existing neo-liberalism operates through the provisional stages of the *AHS*, open to change and contingent new governance alliances with the state. While the series of contradictory double movements of the rolling back and rolling out of public services dominate neo-liberal policy priorities, the responses to these processes are contingent upon specific social relations and practices, often based on historical connections or inherited expectations and rules. The diversity of ‘actually existing neo-liberalisms’ at the local level reveal its uneven, contested nature and the specific institutional and regulatory landscapes that neo-liberal practices emerge from. Brenner and Theodore (2002), Harvey (2005) and Hackworth (2007) contend that ‘actually existing neo-liberalism’ involves the active intervention of the state to firstly destroy existing institutional arrangements before creating a new system based on capital accumulation. As Dodson (2006) applies to Australia, these phases of roll-back and roll-out neo-liberalism are driven by market ideologies and aims at replacing public services with new forms of public-private partnerships and quasi-market entities as a way to make up for government funding shortfalls.

Hackworth (2007) provides a recent analysis of the genealogy of neo-liberalism and the accelerated, contradictory development of public housing programs in the United States. Studying the major federal public housing legislation accommodating the private sector, Hackworth details half a century of policy shifts culminating in the 1998 'Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act' created to (among other things) enable housing authorities to pass over management of public housing to private managers. Importantly, by examining each programs structure Hackworth (2007: 48) convincingly argues that "the neoliberalisation of public housing [...] has involved much more than the withdrawal of funding and oversight" with the roll-back or destruction of various American public housing programs being "accompanied by the roll-out/creation of various neoliberal measures that promote 'self-sufficiency', entrepreneurialism and private governance."

Commenting on local changes to public housing Hackworth (2007) notes that they are also part of a larger restructuring of public housing policy, which again is part of the larger neo-liberal policy regime. Despite radical changes at the local and policy level with housing stock visibly reducing and becoming less redistributive, a tenant movement with a geographical focused activism was not generated. Rather, tenants in their increasing isolation, tend to be critical of housing problems and injustices at the level of their own neighbourhood or block. This fragmentation of 'voice' is important as successful counter neo-liberal movements required leadership by people most affected, in several localities, in order for it to be sustainable. Hence Hackworth concludes that solutions need to be political and further, tenants need to win "the discursive right to claim that viable and progressive alternatives are possible" (Hackworth, 2007: 204).

Crossing continents, Fuller and Geddes (2008) examine similar questions about the degree UK's New Labour's urban state restructuring was embedded within neo-liberalism. In reviewing two programs created to reshape urban governance arrangements and focus on joining up agencies to better help deprived communities – Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) and New Deal for Communities (NDC), they conclude that New Labour's restructuring is an extended reproduction or roll-out of neo-liberalism. "New institutional fixes" had superficial or weak structures that were tightly controlled by the national government and were again riddled with internal contradictions and tensions. Overall, this has not led to a broader contestation of neo-liberalism. New Labour's policies on social exclusion, community cohesion and neighbourhood renewal were an attempt at balancing market competitiveness with a social need to ameliorate the implications of competitive individualism and its effects on widening socio-economic disparities. Hence there was recognition, just as in the Tasmanian *AHS* policy, of the systemic nature of social problems and the government's commitment to tackle them and present alternatives – whether through new governance modes introducing new actors and financial capacity to housing or building new homes. However, the dominance of the market strand is strong as Fuller and Geddes (2008) found at the urban and neighbourhood regulatory level. Strong neo-liberal assumptions on the need for a reorientation of the welfare state to propel and integrate 'excluded' groups into accessing greater 'opportunities' offered in the labour market were widely advocated within these two programs.

The duality of neo-liberalism also reveals deeper ambiguities. For these reasons, it is the critics of neo-liberalism, not neo-liberals themselves, that discuss the 'rolling back' or 'hollowing out' of the state. For, while on the surface of it, it appears neo-liberals find the

state stifling, in actuality the state plays a critical role in enforcing many neo-liberal practices. It has taken three decades for neo-liberal ideas and practices to become discursively embedded and widely accepted as 'common-sense'. These transformations began relatively slowly when the need for new guiding principles was advocated to redress many economic difficulties such as the consequences of high inflation and the oil crisis. The global economy needed to be managed differently. Neo-liberals argued that some of the institutional frameworks needed to be reshaped to match changed circumstances and broader causes of inflation such as the welfare state, trade union power, taxation, regulation and barriers to competition.

In principle this should mean that, with the retraction of state housing provision, primacy is given to the free market and the unrestrained play of competition. However, this has not been the case. The state has retained a central role as a major power source within the governance circuit – in policy formation and implementation. What has happened, as this thesis demonstrates in the analysis of various actors discourses of policy change, is that the state has opened public housing up to new providers but under stringent regulatory controls. Discursively and materially, the state, focused on neo-liberal tropes of efficiency and competition, determines who can enter the market and how they will operate and behave. Market forces are not left to their own devices. Neo-liberal tools have been deliberately employed by the state in order to facilitate governing modes. It is a mistake to think that the role of the state is passive. The Tasmanian Government was active and forceful in all stages of the implementation of the *AHS*. To enable interest from private and NGO sectors in affordable housing it endorsed strong state mechanisms that would guarantee the basic institutional requirements of a liberal market order, such as the enforcement of property rights and the ability to transfer ownership of public housing to other sectors.

Such nuanced engagements observed how the emergence of neo-liberal political rationalities, strategies and technologies of rules (Rose, 1996) separated out into a tripartite model – the economic, moral and political realm of 'liberalism' – and contributed to the redefining of social bonds, connections and relations with the state (Rosanvallon, 2006). Criticisms of this model argue that these realms are not mutually exclusive, and that morals function differently to economics and politics in that they can inform or undermine these two realms. In considering the argument of this thesis, despite the "emphatic turn towards neo-liberalism" (Harvey, 2005: 2), Housing Tasmania plays an integral varied role in the definition, autonomy and actualisation of social relations with housing actors and implementation of the policy. This paradox meant the role of Housing Tasmania and the Tasmanian Government did not necessarily reduce during the implementation of the *AHS*. Instead neo-liberal reforms altered the mode of intervention across governments (Nygaard *et al.*, 2008: 7; see also Forrest and Murie, 1988; Wolch, 1990) and the development of a 'circuit of governance' in housing in Tasmania. This is an important theme in the thesis as accentuation on partnerships, investment and sharing the social 'burden' is perceived by some actors as an energised, innovative policy shift and by others, as an articulation of government retraction and overemphasis on one end of the neo-liberal spectrum. For these actors the forces of structural and economic power and influences in particular localities, as Harvey (2005) details, suggest the inherent difficulties in acting independently of the state.

The neo-liberal content within policies also shows variation along a continuum, as Jessop (2002: 452b) writes

“ranging from a project for radical system transformation from state socialism to market capitalism, through a basic regime shift within capitalism, to more limited policy adjustments intended to maintain another type of accumulation regime and its mode of regulation”.

This literature in governance and its association with neo-liberalism is complex, covering ‘continuums’, ‘key elements’, paths, trajectories, scales and differential rates of change. There are some noteworthy angles taken in empirical research such as Smyth and Wearing’s (2003) findings on differences among Australian states and between federal and state levels of neo-liberal political practices. The key findings in this thesis employ Jessop’s (2002b) continuum idea by considering the heterogeneous discourses actors use to talk of their engagement with new governing practices and their positionality along this neo-liberal plane. This thesis proposes that conceptually embedded neo-liberal political practices operate and are produced in multiple government and geographical scales – national, regional and local.³³ They are defined “by the legacies of inherited institutional frameworks, policy regimes, regulatory practices and political struggles” (Brenner and Theodore, 2002: 349). In considering the regular social relations between state and non-state actors I turn to Jessop’s (2002b) acknowledgement of ordinary practices. For him the prevalence and recurrence of neo-liberal projects

“pursued on many different and often tangled scales [means that] various contradictions, and tensions of ‘actually existing neo-liberalism’ are expressed most saliently in everyday life” (Jessop, 2002b: 452).

For Brenner and Theodore (2002: 349) ‘actually existing neo-liberalism’ refers to how inbuilt fissures within these relations function as catalysts for points of opposition or more democratic-communicative practices. One reason why different forms of ‘actually existing neo-liberalism’ have combined to ensure prominence and an interdependent relationship with political and economic processes stems from their open mechanisms. This means structural relations are always dependent upon contingency leading to different forms of neo-liberalism over time and space (Lawson, 2006). Moreover, this thesis serves as a contribution to understanding these contested interactions of neo-liberal localisation expressed in the *AHS* and articulated or paraphrased by key actors. To sum, neo-liberal practices have become naturalised and embedded discursively as a ‘necessity’ within an array of social, political and economic areas of life. But whether these practices are conceptualised as being uneven or socially disruptive, their trajectory and robust application is evident in the *AHS* and its propensity to adapt to contingencies and uncertainties without ‘losing ground’.

Considerable literature exists in sociology, geography and politics on the role of ideologies in shaping social and spatial policy initiatives and neo-liberalism’s pervasiveness across

³³ The ‘spatial turn’ figures in discussion on the operation and outcomes of neo-liberal governance (Dufty, 2007).

terrains.³⁴ Examples of Australian scholarship on neo-liberalism include a study of the hybrid nature of its enactment as the product of multiple institutional interactions in specific locations and growth 'corridors' (Ruming, 2005); discursive struggles to define neo-liberal understandings of frontline welfare services (McDonald and Marston, 2006) and housing change in policy documents (Darcy, 2001). Housing academics such as Clapham (2006) and Beer *et al.* (2007) argue government attempts to reduce welfare expenditure, enhance private sector interventions and commend the virtues of individual responsibility combined to significantly lessen housing policy's competence in securing 'social' and redistributive outcomes. Internationally, scholars have shown interest in analysing the cultural dimension of governance by zooming in on case-specific symbols and meanings within discourses that normalise neo-liberal policies (Hall and Hubbard, 1998).

Neo-liberal political practices were active in the reorganisation of 'commonsense'. Left-wing critics such as Rosanvallon (2006: 152) describe the power of neo-liberalism to penetrate and alter our worldview as 'utopian capitalism' in its capacity to operate as "a temptation and an illusion". This means that the discursive arrangements that mediate our understanding of the world, and understanding of individual roles for ourselves and others have changed. In other words, the "neo-liberal restructuring of the state and economy that occurred in Australia from the 1970s onwards entailed a corresponding attempt to secure hegemony" (Cahill, 2004: 1). As such theories of hegemony proliferate in international studies in an attempt to understand shifts from welfare to neo-liberal capitalism.³⁵ Since the 1960s the modern intellectual foundations of neo-liberalism, as a suite of economic and philosophical concepts and theories, were influenced by the post-war writings of Friedrich Hayek (1948) and Milton Friedman (1962). Neo-liberalism gained widespread acceptance in the late 1970s and early 1980s as a response to a sustained global recession.

A upturned post-Fordist international economy, burgeoning globalisation and its associated labour shifts, competitiveness and resource redistribution added up to an environment ready to advance neo-liberal political practices and its concomitant 'transformation of capitalism' (Jacobs, J. 1992). David Harvey (1989b) sees the mutation of capitalism as a response to the failure of the Fordist mode of regulation to guarantee continued economic growth. To combat this, economists and the corporate sector advanced new forms of governance and regulation to match flexible accumulation. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the discourse of neo-liberalism was imposed throughout the world as the next 'One True way' – a term popularised by Brazilian legal theorist Roberto Mangabeira Unger. Keynesian welfare state policies were cast aside as ineffectual and overly restrictive for enterprise. These were replaced with a range of policies extending the power of the market's 'invisible hand', competition and mass commodification. Public and social housing were a major feature of the Fordist welfare state (Burrows and Loader, 1994) and thus came under threat by proposed and actual alternatives to direct state provision and state management within the post-Fordist industrialised world (Darcy, 2001).

³⁴ See Jessop (2002a); Culpitt (1999); Brenner and Theodore (2002); Dodson (2006); Rosanvallon, (2006); Harvey, (2007).

³⁵ See Hall (1988); Hay (1992) for British accounts and Carroll and Shaw (2001) for a Canadian perspective.

This economic liberalism was a response or “sign of a more profound aspiration for a civil society immediate to itself – one that would be entirely self-regulated” (Rosanvallon, 2006: 148). Extending themes from the Scottish Enlightenment, most notably Adam Smith’s work, the only valid regulator of society, it was argued, was the market not the social contract; economics not political deliberation or collective involvement. Taking on a more radical sociological and political meaning, the market moved from being seen as a “limited technical instrument that organises economic activity” (Rosanvallon, 2006: 150) to being an alternative model redefining the market along the line of Montesquieu’s (1748) proclamations in *The Spirit of the Laws* that commerce softens manners and encourages peace, harnessing humanity’s strengths of cooperation. Advanced liberal countries were experiencing a broad and far-reaching political and economic transition in relations as evidenced in their adherence to key elements of the definitive neo-liberal policy proposals of John Williamson’s ‘Washington Consensus’. These included legal security for property right, fiscal policy discipline, trade liberalisation, tax reforms, deregulation of the financial markets and the ‘rolling back’, withdrawal or privatisation of public services (Whitehead, 2003).

As manufacturing and unskilled industries reduced in size so too did the extent of the working-class who constituted the support base for Labor and marginal left-wing parties. From the 1980s neo-liberal reform programs began to seep into Federal and State government in various incremental forms with bi-partisan support from the major political parties (Dean and Hindess, 1998; Maude, 2004). These new discourses of necessity, globalisation and the spread of ‘economic growth for all’ were popularised. This changed the value attributed to the state in providing social services, such as housing, and forced a reconsideration of governments’ roles, responsibilities, preferred tools and processes (Keating and Weller, 2001: 72). Supplanting the relative statist political tradition in Australia with a market economy altered the regulatory environment and propelled the state to incorporate a range of commercial practices such as contracting out, marketisation and competitive tendering. Traditional divisions between political ideologies began to blur at the edges and convergence on the median voter became the norm (McKnight, 2006). Values-based voting gained momentum with the major value pointed to the economy. Johnstone and Glasmeier (2007: 10) write that voters are no longer concerned with which class or population group benefits from a policy but rather “whether it can be successfully argued that the country as a whole has benefited or suffered [...] the stress is on the promotion of capitalism as the *sine qua non*”.

Challenges to neo-liberal hegemony surfaced across continents by the ‘neo-conservatives’ in US politics for its weak ‘moral’ force, the ‘Third Way’ advocates in the UK and ‘social economists’ in Europe (Gilding and Marjoribanks, 2007). Likewise in academia, points of resistance emerged across the social sciences to highlight the multiple shortcomings of neo-liberal ideas (see Pusey, 1991; Carroll and Manne, 1992; Sennett, 1998). In resisting neo-liberal accelerations, critical theorists outline the fundamental importance of the state’s influence and capacity to achieve social ends that ameliorate the corrosive effects of inequality. For Connell (2000: 292) it was as clear as “the realm of ‘the market’ expands, the realm of ‘the social’ shrinks”. In new modes of governance the state functions are transferred, in part or whole, to non-state, quango or quasi-state bodies (Peck and Tickell, 2002). Much disquiet also existed as to the deficiencies of neo-classical economic explanations of the complexities of housing experiences (see Meen, 2001; O’Sullivan and

Gibb, 2003). Brandsen (2001) describes these shortcomings in neo-classical economics as a failure to include accounts of how actors are historically embedded; that other non-economic contextual factors exist; and that actors have a role in constructing their context.

Other academics identified the discrepancies neo-liberalism produces against citizen opinion. Brett (1996) believes, by and large, Australians accepted a form of 'social liberalism' where the state engaged in large-scale projects of social reform and improvement. Hayward (2002) raises the issue of strong support throughout the 1990s for public ownership in direct opposition to the governments' enthusiasm for privatisation. Similarly, Moran (2005) notes, that unlike Americans, Australians are not as suspicious of the state. We have fostered a national solidarity where people think and feel "that they have a stake in the broader society, despite social divisions like class" (Moran, 2005: 26). Australian researchers considered public attitudes about the delivery of a range of social, educational and welfare services – individuals, governments or charities – with the majority favouring government involvement in health, housing and education because of the strong history of government coordination in these areas and non-discriminatory access to these services (Wilson *et. al*, 2005).³⁶ But the electoral popularity of neo-liberal practices cannot be denied which points to a sizeable group in the population believing that they, and broader society, 'benefit' from such priorities.

Overall, the uptake by the Tasmanian Government and Housing Tasmania of policy mechanisms to work closely with key stakeholders in the Not-for-profit (NfP), community and private sectors have indicated some of the contingent 'workings' of neo-liberal political practices. As one policy idea was thwarted another emerged to achieve similar ends through different partnerships. The AHS was operationalised by the government as an immutable solution to a deficit public housing model.

Policy processes in neo-liberal environments

The previous section established neo-liberalism's historic specificity and its implication for economic and social policy. The next section broadly reviews theories of governance with direct links back to the AHS. By focusing attention on the interaction between actors and wider structural forces in specific episodes of governance it is possible to broaden our empirical knowledge of variegated discourses that actors use and their links to neo-liberal rhetoric. This, in turn, helps to verify and strengthen theoretical appreciations of neo-liberal processes of governance. In thinking about these issues I drew on a 'neo-institutionalist' approach (see Jessop, 2000a; Lowndes, 2001) to critique processes of policy experimentation and governance transformations in mainstream relations between Housing Tasmania and housing actors. This perspective views governance institutions as exemplifying the norms and standards of a social group, shaped by formal and informal ways of thinking and acting. Although the movement from 'government' to 'governance' figured strongly in scholarship over the past few decades a neo-institutionalist perspective argues governance is better understood as a more general phenomenon.

³⁶ For example the survey asked respondents 'who is better able to help people in poverty in Australia?' Given a choice between governments (all three levels) and charities, 50 per cent choose the former, and 37 per cent the latter while 13 per cent nominated 'can't choose' (Denemark *et al.*, 2007: 277).

Considering the temporality of policy implementation (over the three year period), it was evident the *AHS* was indeed continuous and the meanings of actor discourses and normative social relations were both 'framing and reframing' the housing agendas and being 'framed' by the agenda. At times their responses repeated the prescriptive dimension of neo-liberal thought, such as norms that preference self-conduct over egalitarianism or, the market over government relations. Capitalism and neo-liberal political practices require "supplementary modes of reproduction, regulation and governance – including those provided in part through the operation of the state" (Jessop, 2002a: 2). Some discourses used by NGO actors referenced ethical dilemmas and contentions by questioning the value and benefits of neo-liberal dominance and the tenacious hold its principles had on the social, political and economic environments. To this end, viewing social life in an interpretive manner means supposedly 'economic' phenomena, such as neo-liberal reforms, cannot be considered independently. It is for this reason that the thesis critiques the interconnection between governance changes and the social relations of actors to the state.

When a government agency sees its role as facilitating supportive conditions for the market and individuals to meet needs rather than meet those needs directly (Bramley *et al.*, 2004) the social relations and policy mechanisms fundamentally alter. These neo-liberal changes are yet to be fully played out in the housing sector in Tasmania but the debate was opened up, in a formal policy sense, in the *AHS*. Hence policy implementation is as much concerned with framing 'action' in a particular way to stress some components over others as with defining actors and processes in relation to the policy under consideration (Colebatch, 1998). There is a longstanding debate in policy-making about the extent of inclusiveness in the policy process and whether non-state housing actors constrict or expand the civic (Osborne and Gaebler, 1992; Burton, 2001). Housing Tasmania operates within horizontal and vertical, empirical and normative dimensions of policy and all their associated ambiguities. Policy outcomes are seen as having a greater likelihood of success and relevance when close interaction between those involved in policy implementation and those involved in policy development occurs. In effect, multiple public, community and private sector actions, mechanisms and events influence and determine the changing shape of public policy. These multiple stakeholders are using multiple discourses that, on the surface, may appear as a totalising neo-liberal discourse but collectively they exhibit elements of competition, ambiguity and contradiction.

Government 'enablers' of housing policy share responsibility for policy implementation with external partners and stakeholders. Ideally, shared understandings of housing strategies can facilitate more effective 'partnerships'. As new governance models espoused the virtues of opening up decision-making to a wider terrain of actors within a shared process of negotiation and exchange and top-down vertical approaches evolved to wider circles of inclusivity. However, as the findings in this thesis reveal crowded policy arenas do not necessarily mean that all voices feel valued or genuinely incorporated into policy learning and strategies (see NGO actor discourses in Chapters Eight and Nine). Nor do they mean that the four common governance arrangements, namely hierarchies, markets, networks and communities serve the same interests and policy outcomes. Public-private mixes transcended, to some degree, hierarchical models and markets and the greater involvement and interdependence of numerous non-state actors in policy areas. McKee (2007: 321) argues there is a shortcoming in governance literature centring on its over-

descriptive and normative approach often portraying “networks, partnerships and self-government as more desirable than both hierarchies and markets”.

The territory of social policy is contested as moral and value judgements surface and come in contact with political forces (Saunders, 2002: 10).³⁷ For example, NGO, welfare or third sector groups can withdraw their support for a government and challenge their legitimacy if the government fails to meet a social agenda. Similarly, reduced confidence in government policies can result in other pressures such as reduced capital investment, employment, savings or consumption. Balancing both governance roles – i.e. ensuring the conditions for capitalist reproduction and social integration and inclusion of all population groups – is a characteristic of the mechanism of the state. Hence the state promotes, regulates, enables and constrains neo-liberal political practices within non-state housing actors’ activity. Competing interests identify themselves as having a legitimate voice in expressing issues in housing based on their experience, client services and policy agendas.

Neo-liberal governments, throughout advanced liberal democracies, invested support for partnerships (Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002) which often sit within other broad changes to governance (Rhodes, 1997; Newman, 2001) and policy networks (see elaboration in Chapter Nine). ‘Congested states’ (Skelcher, 2000) are marked by a desire to deliver policies to tackle entrenched social problems through a plurality of governance models and non-state housing networks and decision-makers. The management and incorporation of a range of NGO and community sector organisations to deliver housing services has been only recently promoted by the SHAs. Housing Tasmania, in implementing the public housing component of the AHS, reshaped the management practices and types of stakeholder involvement while additional funding and structural changes promoted a new business or commercial ethos in social housing organisations.

Policy processes are unquestionably complex. This is partly because of the number of participants and relationships involved and partly because of the organisational forms, socialisation processes, resistances, coordination capacities and resource mobilisation necessary to achieve stated targets. Numerous new social formations and changed social relations were envisaged by Housing Tasmania and experienced over the three year policy period. Even though the vast majority of Stage Two of the AHS was thwarted, social relations were altered through the Stage One process of the strategy. Identifying additional funding was part of the AHS and included public housing transfer strategies, partnerships with private and public sector bodies, considering alternative programs/support services and combining local government resources and networks. The politics of opening up public housing to new players was expressed positively by the state, as an “*exciting and challenging new direction*” (Housing Tasmania, 2003a). But Housing Tasmania did not propose a straight-forward transferral of properties, management or ownership to NfPs or NGOs. Instead the AHS promoted a strong public housing sector *within* a multi-service provider system of social housing again complicating the idea of state withdrawal (Dodson, 2006). The AHS represents a shift in the kind of housing policy instruments deemed appropriate and the language used to endorse policy choices as clearly reflected in the empirical research of the thesis (Part Three: Chapter Six to Ten).

³⁷ Policy applied approaches tend to draw on the paradigm of need for social housing which require “analysis of the whole housing system and people’s actions and partiality within the market” (Wallace, 2004: 5).

The term governance has “varied theoretical roots” (Jessop 1995: 310) and applications. Following Whitehead’s (2003: 7) definition, governance in this research is

“understood as a process whereby formal governing structures are no longer focused primarily on the political realms of public sector government (parliament, town/city hall, civil servants) but are increasingly incorporating a range of interests drawn also from the private sector and civil society”.

Hence governance is used in this thesis more generally, not as any single mode of governance (see Cars *et al.*, 2002) but to describe a shift towards multiple involvement in previously constrained state concerns (Kooiman, 1999). For example modernisation experiments attempt to transform the traditional government mode with a variety of governance possibilities and potentialities. As a reaction to Keynesianism, we now have a new legacy where many social, economic, cultural and political matters are not just the province of the state and may include a wide range of activities. The modern political ‘stage’ is marked as one of “complexity and multiplicity of levels of types of governance” (Hirst and Thompson, 1996: 183). Critical questioning of the (im)possibility of coherent and integrated governance and “the knitting together of the myriad of agencies involved in the governing process and the salience of democratic processes” (Jewson and MacGregor 1997: 6-7) is central when examining the effectiveness of urban policy to respond to endemic issues of affordable housing, social exclusion and neighbourhood inequality. As a theoretical project, governance emerged in reaction to the overriding concern of political economy with hierarchy – in the exercise of top-down state power and the formation of unitary corporate hierarchies (Jessop, 1995). This has impacted on the way governance is discussed in relation to the role of networks (Rhodes, 1997), associations (Streeck and Schmitter, 1985), regimes (Stone, 1989), economic coalitions (Harvey, 1989b), tangled hierarchies of power and associated negotiation processes (Scharpf, 1994) in the organisation of political and economic activity (Whitehead, 2003).

The Australian and Tasmanian context of public housing: A period of change

Although historically a small sector, public housing has served many Australians well since its inception in 1945. Australian public housing functioned as an effective safety net, dispersing housing in cities and regional areas, with fewer entrenched ‘estate problems’ than in the US, the UK and Europe. Initially providing for working and low-income families at the end of WWII (Neutze, 1978), public housing began to be stripped down in size and desirability by a combination of rental housing and sales to public housing tenants before more recent periods of greater targeting to those in most need.³⁸ Over the past three decades government ideologies for the provision of housing shifted from proactive and willing to invest to an unenthusiastic and reluctant housing provider (Hayward, 1996) – a stark contrast from the provision of housing in western European countries, as the percentage of public housing stock between different countries indicates.

³⁸ The CSHA of the 1950s did however target and attempt to enhance home ownership more than public housing rental.

In summarising the key public housing changes over the past sixty years it is evident that a number of interrelated factors combined to reshape public housing estates into concentrated areas of social and economic disadvantage. These factors included:

- The withdrawal of funding from the Federal government effecting the management practices and housing priorities of SHAs
- Reconfiguration of direct public housing assistance to individuals to consumption subsidies, such as CRA
- Fundamental changes to the relationship between the Federal and State governments (Darcy, 1999)
- A growing demand for public housing by vulnerable individuals and households
- Increased targeted allocations
- Inadequate and poorly maintained housing stock and a substantial mismatch between size of house and household requirements that has remained relatively unchanged over time (Auditor-General Tasmania, 2005: 46)
- Geographic isolation and insufficient investment in local infrastructure and services (Arthurson, 1998; Randolph and Judd, 2000; Spiller Gibbins Swan, 2000).

An unintended consequence of allocative rationing throughout the 1980s was the weakening of the political and financial position of public housing. Having shrunk in absolute and relative terms, public housing is now repeatedly described as a residual 'tenure of last resort' (Watt, 2006). Public housing tenants in Anglo-American countries continue to be labelled and framed within political and media discourses as possessing any number of negative traits – as 'illegitimate subjects' (Haylett, 2001), the 'undeserving poor', 'sink estates' (Murray, 1990), 'rough', 'problem tenants' (Damer, 1989), 'bad' (Papps, 1998), 'ghetto' dwellers, members of the unruly 'underclass' (Murray, 1990; Watt and Jacobs, 2000; Savage *et al.*, 2005) and 'responsible' for anti-social behaviour (Flint, 2002). Tenants entrenched in socio-tenurial polarisation "occupy the disadvantaged 'end' of the polar distribution of socio-economic resources" (Watt, 2006: 777).³⁹ Arguably, state housing tenants are entirely drawn from economic and socially marginalised groups demonstrating the state's fulfilment of a social mandate within the context of residual housing provision.

Over the past ten years the changed public housing tenant profile impacted on the cost of managing tenancies, adding to the average real costs per household and compounded Housing Tasmania's operating deficits (Lewis, 2002).⁴⁰ Housing services were capable of

³⁹ Academics differ in their definition of social polarisation. Sassen (1991) saw social polarisation through the lens of occupational opportunities. Alternatively, Hamnett (2003) preferred to use the term 'socio-tenurial polarization' to describe the prevalent socio-economic inequalities in cities.

⁴⁰ This refers to concentrations of people older than 65 years, single parents, those reliant on income support, unemployed, indigenous people, people with a disability, refugees, people with serious mental illnesses and/or complex needs.

few responses to the additional high needs of tenants given resource constraints and the chronic shortage of affordable housing. Burke (2005: 4) argues institutional parameters of the political residualisation of public housing were reinforced by locating housing in human services departments becoming “little more than a support agency for health, disability, aged and homeless services”. Federally, ministerial arrangements were further complicated by government funding disputes (on CRA and the combinations of Commonwealth and State funding) and ongoing tensions. In short, targeting public housing to people in receipt of a Commonwealth pension or benefit concentrated disadvantage and poverty in particular locations and in particular housing programs.

The Commonwealth was able to undermine SHAs strategies such as public housing stock transfer by imposing restrictions on those eligible for CRA. Following the experience of the UK (Malpass and Mullins, 2002), SHAs explored transferring public housing stock to the community sector in order to rationalise their own activities and keep the stock free from private market absorption. However, Jacobs *et al.*, (2004) demonstrated that the experience of Tasmania and evidence from elsewhere around Australia indicates that the Commonwealth Government was unwilling to accede to large amounts of rental assistance funds being appropriated towards social housing providers in this way. The current preference for some form of stock transfer was seen as being reinforced by the UK’s experience and policy context, specifically large-scale initiatives in the late 1980s and 1990s aimed at subsidising housing associations made it advantageous for many public housing associations to transfer their stock to community housing associations.

More vulnerable tenants require greater support and assistance from Housing Tasmania, inter-agencies and service providers to maintain their tenancies. Two forms of residualisation are working in tandem – that of public housing with that of the welfare state (Murphy, 2003). Currently in Australia, Government provision of housing to people with greatest need is being reconceptualised in terms of its delivery, management and ownership leading to more diverse social housing provision.⁴¹ Australia is slowly devolving some aspects of state housing provision in favour of a multi-service provider system. From these changes a host of opportunities and challenges surface, not least those pertaining to whether the public housing ethos should become superseded by ‘social housing.’ Redrawing the conceptual and practical boundaries of public housing resulted from the declining funds from the Federal and state governments, higher cost structures in housing disadvantaged tenants and chronic under-investment in stock (Hall and Berry, 2004). Extensive debate on public housing’s transformation is taking place within and outside the housing sector, with contributions from NGOs, tenants, the press and housing industry representatives. Nygaard *et al* (2008) pinpoint two main factors that are altering the provision and form of public housing: as a greater reliance on market and not-for-profit organisations (NfPs) to provide housing services and second, differences in the role and mode of bureaucratic intervention across governmental levels.

Despite evidence that public housing is still an effective long-term way to provide housing assistance (Industry Commission, 1993; Hall and Berry, 2007), contemporary neo-liberal policy espouses the virtues of the NfP and private sectors capacity for efficient and

⁴¹ For example as proposed by the Affordable Housing Associations in Victoria, the Brisbane Housing Company in Queensland and Tasmanian Affordable Housing Limited (TAHL) in Tasmania.

effective distribution of housing welfare. The effect of this is felt in the public housing sector with an overall decrease in the stock available for rent – by the mid-1990s only 6 percent of Australian households were in public rented accommodation with the vast majority on very low incomes, paying no more than 25 percent of their income in rent (Hall and Berry, 2004). Small population states, such as Tasmania, South Australia and the Northern Territory experienced particularly large declines in public housing stock. The already limited public housing stock in Tasmania reduced from 1996-97 to 2002-03 (the year preceding the *AHS*) by 10.9 percent.⁴²

The Commonwealth and the state funding contributions for public housing, home ownership assistance and private rental assistance are formally agreed in the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA). Years of reluctance, by both tiers of government, to fund the CSHA obviously resulted in reduced housing expenditure. As discussed in Chapter One, from the late 1990s to the mid-2000s the Liberal Howard Government redirected resources from the CSHA to CRA with the rationale that the private rental sector constitutes 20 percent of the national housing stock while the public rental is substantially smaller at 5.4 percent (ABS, 2001).⁴³ Declining CSHA funding – by 28.4 percent, or \$3.1 billion, in real terms between the decade 1992/93 to 2002/03 – also coincided with growing housing affordability issues as a national housing boom took hold, propelling property prices upwards in cities around the country.⁴⁴

Between 1996-97 and 2004-05, CSHA general assistance funding to Tasmania, or ‘base funding’, from the Commonwealth fell 18.4 percent, and ‘matching’ general assistance funding from the Tasmanian Government fell by 19.3 percent. Importantly, Housing Tasmania’s capacity to fully utilise CSHA funding continues to be restricted by returning \$17 million of funding (almost 70 percent of Tasmania’s grant of \$21 million) to the Commonwealth each year in repayment of a housing debt (\$264 million in 2003) incurred when the CSHA was provided as a loan instead of a grant (Housing Tasmania, 2003b). Housing Tasmania was running an operating deficit and residual model of public housing support prior to the announcement of the *AHS*, which limited its ability to independently expand or grow their housing stock. Anticipated neo-liberal reforms signalled in the *AHS* indicated acceptance of a new role for private and NGO or ‘community’ organisations in the provision and management of social housing alongside quasi-state institutions and market mechanisms (Industry Commission, 1993; Keating, 1995). Adding to this Housing Tasmania, in line with other SHAs accentuated the need to ‘de-concentrate’ certain identified areas of social disadvantage in public housing estates while simultaneously restricting access to public housing to the most disadvantaged (Flanagan, 2008). In Housing Tasmania’s terms:

“greater targeting of public housing has resulted in housing being provided to a higher proportion of people with high needs. These people often require higher levels of support, service coordination and tenancy management. This is both more expensive and consuming to manage” (*Housing Tasmania*, 2003b: 2).

⁴² Excluding community housing, Aboriginal rental and crisis accommodation dwellings.

⁴³ In 2004, 22.7 per cent of low income earners receiving CRA in Tasmania were experiencing housing stress.

⁴⁴ Calculation based on the Housing Assistance Annual Reports and the CSHA National Data Reports 2005-06. See also Productivity Commission, 2006.

But there is another way in which to read the funding crisis and the state's 'imagination' in how to respond. In 2007, Hall and Berry's research concluded that Housing Tasmania required further funding to halt this growing operating deficit. Hall and Berry (2007: 74) noted an anticipated turnaround, if investment occurred, stating:

"if the full cost of Housing Tasmania's community service obligation was fully recognised (i.e. if the difference between market rents and income related rents was fully funded), Housing Tasmania's Operating Deficit would become a very small surplus. Combined with some reduction in debt servicing and if funding was maintained on that basis, Housing Tasmania would likely operate at a profit for the foreseeable future".

The Tasmanian AHS: Public housing component

By the mid-1990s, economic and social commentators noted that the Tasmanian economy was financial weaker and more vulnerable than other Australian states (Rae, 2002) with difficulties attracting commercial investment. To offset this, the State government began a number of large-scale infrastructure projects from 1998 onwards, often under the banner of securing jobs and improving the state's economic competitiveness (see Jacobs, 2007). The AHS marked a definitive break away from Housing Tasmania's 'usual business' and longstanding focus on maintaining and managing public housing stock. In terms of housing, a succession of policy discussions at the National and state level on housing affordability occurred at the time of the AHS announcement. Relative to other states, Tasmania undertook the largest financial commitment to addressing housing affordability. In 2003, the state government allocated an additional \$45 million (above its existing financial budget) for the implementation of the first stage of the proposed AHS. This allocation was equivalent to, on a per capita basis, the NSW government raising \$620 million and Victoria raising \$450 million (Milligan, 2004).⁴⁵

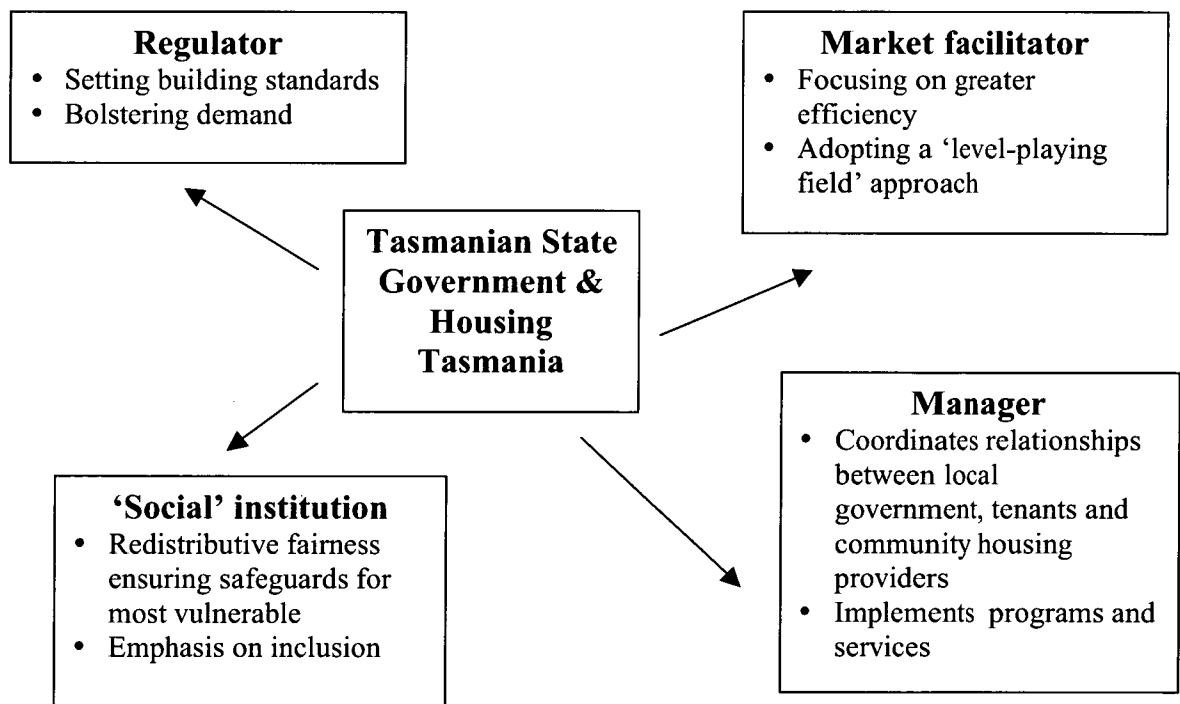
By 30 June 2006 there were 11,676 public housing dwellings in Tasmania, housing an estimated 30,000 individuals. This was a decrease of 11.4 percent over five years (Flanagan, 2007). This decline was due to the sale of properties without rebuilding or spot purchasing and the transferral of a smaller number of properties to the NFP sector for crisis and community housing. In 2006 the community housing sector in Tasmania was fragmented and small, with the largest provider of community housing, Red Shield Housing, having 149 properties and the smallest providers managing only a handful of properties each. There were also seven housing cooperatives in Tasmania. Overall, affordable housing in Tasmania declined from 1999 to 2003 as the state experienced a dramatic turnaround in the economy capitalising on profits from tourism and an unprecedented wave of new residents from interstate securing their 'ideal' retirement or sea-change location, leading to a housing boom and rising property values (Burnley and Murphy, 2003). The median price of houses across the state grew by fifty percent between

⁴⁵ In 2003, with the advent of the AHS and other innovative social policies, Tasmania was seen as the top ranking state in social policy performance, according to the Evatt Foundation. But this prestigious social policy ranking was short lived and within three years Tasmania's position had reversed, becoming the worst of any state in any policy area, being 18 percentage points below the league table average. This was as a result of the Tasmanian government's welfare expenditure tailing off from 2003-2006, including the pulling-back of the commitment to the AHS.

1999 and 2003 while wage levels remained relatively stable (Gabriel and Jacobs, 2006). However, not all locals experienced Tasmania’s economic and housing boom. A few prominent journalists and social commentators such as Richard Flanagan (2003, 2007) scrutinised the governments’ valorisation of commercial investments over community concerns and the Tasmanian Council of Social Services (TasCOSS) and Shelter Tasmania argued that chronic social inequalities in housing, employment and household income were still not ‘first-order’ policy priorities.

The Tasmanian State Government and Housing Tasmania perform several simultaneous, interconnected functions (see Figure 8). The SHAs mediation and regulation of economic relations, for example of property, finance and welfare, play a fundamental role in defining housing networks. As outlined earlier in this chapter and Chapter One, despite new discourses of incorporation between NGOs, quango and the commercial sector in housing services and products, housing policy still remains centralised in the hands of the state. This demonstrates the duality of the neo-liberal regime shift – incorporating a multi-stranded outflow of power to a range of non-state actors within a circuit of governance (this is further discussed in Chapter Five).

Figure 8 Key functions of the Tasmanian State Housing Authority



The social policy aims of the *AHS* were associated with an array of neo-liberal political practices manifested in the discourse, interpretation and implementation of the policy. Significant contradictions and tensions emerged on how to house people in most need; how to balance the local social needs of Tasmanians on low incomes with the neo-liberal discourse of increasing the role of private investment and leadership in expanding the housing sector 'capacity.' In developing the *AHS* the Tasmanian Government talked of its responsibility in assisting and balancing-out inequalities in housing access across the 'housing system.' The nature and extent of this policy intervention was unprecedented for Tasmanians. The key state documents that the state and non-state actors discuss in interviews for this thesis are:

1. The *AHS* Tasmania 2004–2008: Framework, Housing Tasmania, Hobart, December 2003;
2. The *AHS* Tasmania 2004–2008, Stage 1 Summary: Sharing the Rewards, Housing Tasmania, December 2003.

The *AHS Framework* sets out the policy background and details of the *AHS* actions (Housing Tasmania 2003a) – what was needed to create a 'fairer' housing system – with a provisional script that had not entirely worked out its development (see Figure 9 from *AHS* overleaf). Hence new governance models were more broadly discussed rather than pinned down. For the government, the market embodies many answers to funding and housing stock limitations, influencing Housing Tasmania's interpretation and framing of the affordability and public housing problem. Dividing the *AHS* into four objectives and over 80 strategies (grouped as focus areas, see Figure 9), boundaries are marked between rationale and action, 'stripping' the policy from 'too much politics' and "bracketing wider questions about social and public purpose" (Clarke and Newman, 1997: 16). Again, contradictions emerged from the social versus economic goals of the policy. Analytical inputs act like 'commodities' rather than integral features of a governments' pursuit of the public interest, and a 'business-like' approach is applied by conservatives and liberals alike to "do more with less" (Rhodes, 1996).

The second document, *AHS Tasmania 2004–2008 Stage 1 Summary: Sharing the Rewards*, distils key general and quantifiable strategies to meet the four policy objectives set out under each tenure choice (see Housing Tasmania, 2003b). Through the policy implementation stages, this script was 'workshopped' and 'improvisations' changed the shape, level of commitment and participation required by the many actors. These documents are formal versions of the state's marketised approach to housing.

Figure 9 Summary Document of the Aims of the AHS (Source: Housing Tasmania 2003a: 7)

Aim

To ensure safe, adequate and affordable housing for Tasmanians who receive low incomes.

Principles

- Access to safe, secure, affordable and appropriate housing is central to health and wellbeing.
- Housing provides the foundation from which individuals and families are linked with employment, education, health and other services, and it facilitates participation in the wider community.
- Housing stress is a complex problem that requires a whole-of-government and community approach.
- Affordable housing should be part of an integrated and equitable housing system that promotes choice across all housing tenures.

Objectives	Focus Areas
A sustainable social housing system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public housing as a key component of social housing• Public housing targeted to those in greatest need• Long-term, secure and stable tenancies• Infrastructure and funding which supports sustainability• Enhanced capacity of the community sector• A strong Indigenous housing sector
The capacity to expand supply of social and affordable housing in response to the community's immediate and longer-term housing needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alternative financing and delivery models• Reduced barriers to supply• Cost-efficient housing production
A range of effective and responsive housing models that meet a diverse range of housing needs, including special needs and the particular requirements of local areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Choice across tenures• Opportunities to access and maintain home ownership• Opportunities to access an effective and responsive private rental market• Responses which address local needs• Responses which address specific or complex needs
A housing market that underpins economic growth, area vitality and strong, safe, resilient communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regeneration and renewal• Environmental sustainability• Employment and training opportunities• Enhanced capacity of the building industry• Community involvement and empowerment

As the nature of *real* mechanisms are often submerged or unobservable, knowledge about stakeholders' responses to change has to be theoretically grounded. Wolcott (1994: 16) argues that attempts to remove the researcher fully from the picture fail because data is already tainted with an analytical or interpretative cast in the very process of becoming data. The critical realist domains of the *empirical*, *actual* and *real* necessitate the expansion of the data beyond a descriptive account to one where the researcher offers an explanation of the data. From a critical realist perspective, what this means is that epistemologically, the *AHS* policy document does not embody the *real* underlying mechanisms of social reality. Rather, as Freeman (1993: 34) argues

"The interest is not only in what the author may have meant by a particular utterance but what the text itself means: we want to understand what is being said and what this something may be about. This greatly expands the interpretative field. For in moving beyond the subjective meaning, localized in the person of the author, we immediately have before us a much larger range of possible interpretations, emerging in line with the essential openness of discourse itself."

In creating its own 'regimes of truth' (Foucault, 1980) the *AHS* Framework document started by presenting a case "*maintaining*" the traditional 'strong' role of the state in housing but recast its orientation as being a "*safety net*" provider because other sections of the housing system were in a position to provide an adequate supply of affordable housing. Thus the role of the state is contingently affected by actual events and the power shifts in real mechanisms that cause these events. But there is a fissure here between the neo-liberal discourse in the document and a discourse of reconfiguration in order to strengthen public housing. A desire for *both* equitable distributions of housing *and* new ways of working are merged in the policy document, giving both preference. Dodson (2006: 4), appropriating Foucault, calls this governmental process 'statementality'. It implies the ongoing capacity of the state to define its actions and constitute its own condition – a feature of the duality of neo-liberalism:

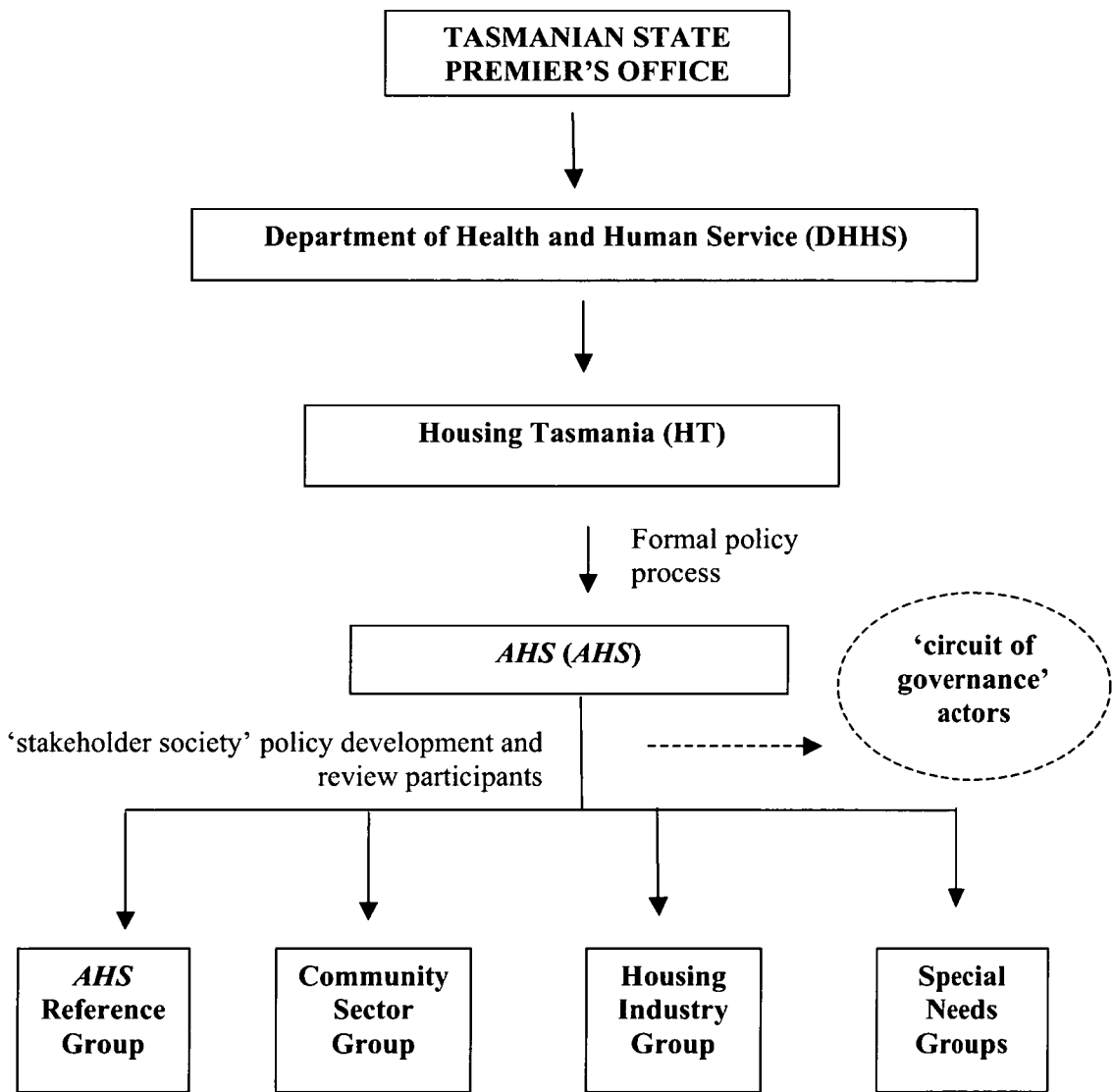
"While state practices may have changed, the power of the state to define the reality of its own existence endures. The state remains the focal point of discursive and ideological production even if it has altered the specific practices through which it governs the reality of the world" (Dodson, 2006: 4).

The *AHS* explicitly expressed a desire to rectify some of the mistakes of previous government approaches to housing policy. Most importantly, it sought to end the segmentation of the housing market between public sector tenants, private sector tenants and private ownership – through an integrated and equitable housing system and links to neo-liberal concerns of flexible labour markets contributing to improving the economy and housing process/market (see Figure 10).⁴⁶ The *AHS*'s 'new ways of working' discourse emanated through the establishment of steering committees and reference groups, the open acknowledgement of the 'need' for 'expert' assistance and the 'answers' being drawn from across networks within the circuit of governance (see Figure 11). By extension, it is

⁴⁶ The structure of the policy document includes a vision statement with key objectives, context for its rationale, a mechanism for soliciting public/community and expert interest group input, an action plan or staged level of outputs and monitoring arrangements or feedback reporting systems.

apparent that neo-liberal political practices do not purport to seek the withering of state, rather for their successful implementation the state needs to be an efficient regulator. The neo-liberal language of ‘working together’ not only shaped the validity of the discourse and its associated ideology and practices of new governance being applied to public housing but it also shared the ownership of its intentions and dictated the parameters of the heterogeneous discourses that state and non-state actors utilised.



Figure 10 Institutional Structure in Tasmanian Housing



Public housing policy changes need to be understood within a broader political, social and economic context that inevitably incorporates the prominence of neo-liberalism on policy and governance shifts. The *AHS* sought to promote a strong public housing sector within a social housing sector. The state’s discourse actively articulated a vision for a united, affordable ‘housing system’ across sectors – private rental, social rental and home

ownership – being supported by effective collaborations and demand subsidies. The main policy implications of considering ‘housing as a system’ include: the need for housing to be seen within a wider framework of relationships; a drive towards allocation ‘efficiency’ and a push for more flexible labour markets; interconnections within the system demand integrated institutional structures rather than independent separate controlling bodies; and the side-effects of policies are often unforeseen, effecting multiple areas of life. Indeed, the document told us a new “*more diverse system is required*” that may, in time, be strong, effective and efficient enough to own and operate public housing stock. The official Housing Tasmania line was that a range of responses was required to deliver the AHS outcomes. Diagrammatically, Housing Tasmania documented this as a number of models along a continuum of government assistance:

Figure 11 Tasmanian housing models with associated levels of government assistance

Models							
Group homes Crisis services	Public housing Community Housing Supported tenancies	Public Housing Community Housing Non-supported services	Low-cost rental delivery (e.g. boarding houses, not for profit providers)	Below market rental	Market rental	Assisted home ownership and shared ownership	Unassisted home ownership
 Increasing Government Assistance				Reducing Government Assistance 			
Very low income Homeless High support needs	Nominated places for people needing support linked to housing	Low income families and the aged		Work ready clients Singles Low paid workers Students		Key workers Low and moderate income families	
Target Groups							

The Tasmanian Government pushed the policy line that the answer was to be found in various stakeholders owning the rationale for ‘working together’ by increasing their role in ‘efficiently’ delivering more social housing stock. Housing Tasmania in many ways was searching for what they could hold on to and pin down as the ‘best’ approach to further neo-liberal practices. Jessop (2002b: 470) describes the states propensity to ‘invest’ in neo-liberal political practices in order to

“manage its social and environmental costs and their adverse political repercussions, and to identify and pursue flanking measures that would help to re-embed the recently liberated market forces into a well-functioning market society”.

A key discourse utilised in the AHS policy documents was of “shifting our [the polity] thinking” (Housing Tasmania, 2003a) with statements such as “*If provision of affordable housing continues to be considered in a traditional, tenure based way (largely as a result of Commonwealth funding guidelines) opportunities may be limited or overlooked*” explaining the state’s approach and need to respond to decreased national funding (Housing Tasmania,

2003a).⁴⁷ Throughout the policy texts, greater flexibility is seen as the most viable way to develop a more responsive 'whole-of-housing' system that can cater for the diverse needs of the broadest group of low income Tasmanians.

Conclusion

Neo-liberal political practices are carried out by state and non-state actors and are not just relegated or restricted to the ideational. They primarily involve economic considerations and coercive or instrumental relocations of substantial state powers to NGOs, civil society, the private property or free market. The discourse of governance is not only accepted and promoted by the state but it repositions the state's common values, institutions and practices (Hindess, 2005). The melding of some aspects of social democratic tendencies with laissez-faire or market-oriented tendencies made it difficult for the state and circuit of governance actors to reject neo-liberal practices wholesale. The relative taken-for-grantedness of liberal mentalities of government imbibe a dual democratic process whereby the need to rectify long-standing entrenched problems in housing provision must be addressed at the same time as the state must coordinate efficient allocation of resources, which inevitably change the dynamics of governance.

Recent contingent and heterogeneous concepts of neo-liberalism contribute valuable perspectives to understanding new modes of governance and actors' social relations in public housing change. In conceptual and theoretical writings on neo-liberalism, overlapping clusterings on key themes within political practices exist. These reveal the embedded complexity of neo-liberalism, occurring along a 'continuum' of regime and policy shifts. Importantly, this directly relates to the empirical findings in the following chapters which reveal the dynamic nature of multiple, often competing discourses, utilised by circuit of governance actors. After reviewing the processes of policy formation in an environment governed by principles of neo-liberalism, this chapter summarised the key contextual aspects of public housing in Tasmania and Australia more broadly. As Chapter Two highlighted the diverse enactments of neo-liberal policies emerge and unfold relationally as the Tasmanian Government responded to community calls for more affordable housing, and greater investment in public housing and problems associated with ongoing Federal government funding retractions. The unfolding of events outlined in this chapter enables a deeper analysis of how the *AHS* emerged and some of the key institutional properties of Housing Tasmania, which generated *and* constrained their ability to devolve the management and ownership of public housing stock. Such an approach, as Crouch and McKenzie (2006: 490) write, offers significant development beyond descriptive accounts of change: "as the 'system elements' of social life are rarely more than hinted at in respondents' accounts, the emergent analysis and interpretation of these accounts require reference to relevant social circumstances to be grounded in extant sociological (including, of course, theoretical) knowledge."

The next chapter considers the rules and behaviours of the state (Brandsen, 2001; Lowndes, 2001) in the role of a major source of power within the circuit of governance.

⁴⁷ Empirical evidence of the various enactments of neo-liberal ideology by NGOs is presented in Chapters Nine and Ten.

The policy backdrop explored in this chapter assists in building a critique in the next chapter of the open system and contingent nature of government practices. It explores the discourses senior Housing Tasmania staff use to explain the rationale and workings of the *AHS* new governance processes. For instance, they discuss the *AHS*' first alternative financing approach, its failure to move beyond initial agreement and the difficulties 'actually existing neo-liberal' governance modes faced when external private sector actors sought short-term return on their investment. This example is instructive as it demonstrates how state experimentation processes occur, favouring different actors within the circuit of governance at different times. These contingent challenges reveal the 'in flux' nature of the *AHS*. It is also indicative of the competing discourses that emerge in housing actors' explanations in the preceding chapters, especially Chapters Seven to Ten.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE STATE AS A MAJOR SOURCE OF POWER IN THE CIRCUIT OF GOVERNANCE

Introduction

A key theoretically informed hypothesis in the thesis is that the state is a major source of power in the circuit of governance and, in many ways, attempts to determine how experiences, events and mechanisms interconnect to meet the state's policy objectives and the 'required' new dimensions of governance. Taking this argument and the Tasmania Government and Housing Tasmania's ambiguously central role as the point of departure for the qualitative data, this chapter presents a summary of five senior Housing Tasmania staff members' views on these new governance processes during the infancy of policy implementation practices.⁴⁸ In particular the chapter outlines the:

- a. Rationale for the *AHS* and its primary aims of increasing partnerships and non-state relations
- b. Difficulties that arose within these 'new ways of working' with multiple actors
- c. Policy and practical imperatives for *in situ* experimentation to new governance modes in operation
- d. State employees' interpretations of the third or community sector's capabilities to deliver social housing.

The language of new governance: State actor accounts of the AHS

Interviews were conducted with five Housing Tasmania senior employees who were selected because of their position and their connection to the *AHS* implementation process. The number of interviewees was relatively small, as the policy and corporate governance 'memory' in Housing Tasmania and the Department of Health and Human Services had atrophied, with significant movement of staff during the case study time period. The upside was, by interviewing these actors in 2007, I was able to elicit comments on the entire Stage One implementation experience and the shifting generative mechanisms that it produced. I would, however, have liked to interview a greater number of senior state actors, particularly those that left the agency in 2006. I emailed and called three ex-staff members but they either declined to participate or were unavailable. As only a fifth of the senior personnel working on the *AHS* remained working for Housing Tasmania in 2007, its capacity to continually rejuvenate its policy through experimentation and rapidly respond to contingent factors was stretched. One interviewee normalised the high staff

⁴⁸ Non-state actors generally perceived Housing Tasmania and the Tasmanian Government as the one entity – the agency doing the government's work. In contrast, staff from Housing Tasmania talked of the difference in authority and power that the Minister's office had over housing issues and their position within a hierarchy of 'government' that made them accountable to the Director of Housing first but ultimately to the Minister of Health and Human Services.

turnover at Housing Tasmania by describing it as inevitable over the timeframe of policy announcement to implementation. Four years in today's policy environment was seen as a very long time. Her reading of the situation was that:

"People move on. Some in Housing have moved out into different agencies and others into the private sector. It regularly fluctuates" (Housing Tasmania Interviewee 3).

The normative thrust of neo-liberal reforms favour public-private partnerships, alternative service delivery methods and contracting out or out-sourcing of highly skilled or professional tasks to supplement government in-house capacity. Housing Tasmania and the Tasmanian State Government promoted 'partnerships' to the top of their housing policy agenda because of the pressures resulting from economic restructuring and deep-seated changes in the machinery of government at state and national levels. One advantage of partnerships, as a style of governance, is that sole responsibility for a policy's success or failure is diffused across actor groups. Optimally, partnerships require relatively low levels of public expenditure to lever large amounts of private investment while still fulfilling social obligations. Much of the literature on partnerships reveals that both state and non-state actors tend to view them opportunistically as synergistic structures (Hastings, 1996). It is argued that 'efficient' partnerships can reduce the transaction costs that often inhibit social investment or as Ball *et al.*, (2003: 2239-2240) notes some academics positively describe externalities and connections between public and private or non-profit spheres as:

"with the sum being greater than the parts because of the benefits of interaction between the various types of agency [...] A major justification for [...] partnerships is the argument that together agencies can create more than they can separately".

The findings in this chapter contribute to empirical critiques that refute that partnerships necessarily produce 'efficient' and fair results for all parties involved. In actuality, partnerships are not always equal or collaborative in their formation or enactment (see Chapter Seven for tenant interviewees' view on power inequalities within social relations). If reduced transaction costs emerge from partnerships it is important to ascertain who then appropriates the surplus – NGOs for their capacity-building or is it distributed evenly to poor people? This inequity affects their outcomes and limits inclusion (Lawrence, Hardy and Phillips, 2002). Status differences, privileges and state favouritism of one NGO over another also influence the 'possibilities' of partnerships. Indeed, partnerships require a firm base in democratic principles and practices otherwise they can mutate into a system for co-opting institutions into an extended system of repressive control (Jewson and MacGregor, 1997). Governance changes, such as partnerships, are predicated on the logic of state allocation being progressively replaced by the logic of the market (Marcuse, 1993). Neo-liberal political practices present a strange combination of 'fear and loathing' of the market – where favouritism and preferential treatment are accepted on the one hand, and where the free market is espoused as almost objectively distributing scarce resources in the most economical ways. Senior Housing Tasmania staff used the language of facilitation and distance to express how they perceived their new retracted role as the private and non-profit sector filled the void. In this example, an interviewee integrated neo-liberal discourse of 'rolling-back' the state into his account of the AHS' purpose:

"One of the things for us is that we step away from the traditional type of governing. These should be independent organisations, one-arms distant from government with the government as a facilitator of this [provider system changes]" (Housing Tasmania Interviewee 4).

Public housing changes in favour of a sustainable social housing system reflect wider changes in the governance of the modern welfare states (Esping-Andersen, 1990). These changes also entail structural shifts in the organisational, legislative and norm based framework of new actors in governance modes (Nygaard *et al.*, 2007). The state articulated and initiated a move towards withdrawing some of its own resources in public housing provision to fund and encourage the development of a larger social housing sector, to soak up both existing public housing tenants and applicants. However, the AHS did not explicitly outline how or when non-state actors entering or expanding their social housing service delivery would also receive the transfer of legal entitlements to these properties. The absence of this property rights dimension of the new governance modes in the AHS was countered by state and non-state actors speculating on its *fait accompli* (see Chapters Eight to Ten). A sense of the incremental transfer of ownership rights to non-state providers indicated how new modes of governance were perceived by Housing Tasmania:

"We are certainly looking at stock transfer. So transferring management or ownership to other organisations could occur. Those organisations might as well pick up land to assist further developments of housing. There could be some capital grants that will assist them as well. That would allow them to stand on their own two feet and for the nature and quality of our [Housing Tasmania] work to change" (Housing Tasmania Interviewee 2).

The AHS was described as a 'whole of housing system' approach spanning across tenure types, with partnerships opening up Housing Tasmania to new financing opportunities. Importantly, the goal of the AHS was a changed public housing sector, not its cessation. Evidence-based research informed Interviewee 3's comments that public housing still remained central to the AHS with conditions on market segmentation advantages:

"Certainly we think public housing needs to remain. We've gone through the national level research through AHURI [Australian Housing Urban Research Institute] and others that indicates public housing is still the most effective means financially to provide this type of assistance. But we know that if you are looking at segmenting your affordable market there is room for growth in certain segments" (Housing Tasmania Interviewee 3).

Justifications for neo-liberal political practices emerged as financial solutions to cash-strapped government agencies. This corresponded with a strong national interest in encouraging private and third sector investment and partnerships in the provision of affordable and social housing in the renegotiated CSHA for the period July 2003 to June 2008. This new emphasis centred on leveraging alternative financing for social housing. One of the principles guiding the Commonwealth and the States in the development of this Agreement included: "to promote innovative approaches to leverage additional resources into the social housing system, through community, private sector and other partnerships" (CSHA Bilateral Agreement, Tasmania, 2003). Interviewees described a commitment to neo-liberalism in the AHS policy rationale. This support was couched in

the language of maximising returns and 'efficient' economic resource management via alternative financing, for example:

"NGO housing providers aren't bound by government policies around rent setting and eligibility and tenure. So you've got a lot more flexibility about who they house, where and for how long and by creating some of these organisations through funding or competition, the state is drawing a lot more resources in and you've got a lot more flexibility in your policy parameters" (Housing Tasmania Interviewee 2).

Difficulties with new governance processes

Shortfalls in Federal and state funding caused by the introduction of market mechanisms and neo-liberal policies, such as an emphasis on CRA rather than public housing expenditure, needed to be 'plugged' by a pool of resources from circuit of governance actors and private sector organisations. Macquarie Community Partnerships became the state's first option in achieving this investment. In December 2004 the Tasmanian Government and Macquarie Bank Limited signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to coordinate the leveraging of private investment in a staged process to develop public housing, community housing, and alternative supplies of affordable housing to low income households. The state claimed Macquarie Community Partnerships, a business of Macquarie Bank set up in April 2003, was selected because of their strategic (market) and social (non-market) 'fit' with the AHS's intentions.⁴⁹ The Tasmanian Government 'Information Kit' (2004) on the partnership model explained:

"The Government has chosen to work with Macquarie Community Partnerships, as there is a close alignment of social objectives in community development. The aim of giving people a fair go, being inclusive, and ensuring that all communities have an opportunity to prosper are central themes to this partnership".

Macquarie Community Partnerships was seen as an 'expert' in the field with experience in planning, developing and regenerating urban places in partnership with communities and governments. In state government publications Macquarie's previous work was described as evidence that they can "deliver world class infrastructure". But this 'experience' was in its infancy with no comparable track-record. In February 2001, a MOU was signed by Liverpool City Council in NSW, Macquarie Bank and the Canterbury Bulldogs (a football team) to develop a 'world-class sporting, entertainment, cultural, educational and recreation precinct'. But after \$15 million of council funds were spent, Macquarie Bank pulled out. Undeterred, Macquarie Community Partnerships signed a contract for a revised vision of this plan, '*Liverpool, 2020*'. Macquarie Community Partnerships were criticised for a one-sided MOU where they acquired an exclusive adviser and arranger role which transpired into "sweeping powers over council land for residential development, yet did not even oblige it to share its financial modelling of the project with councillors" (Haigh, 2007: 37). A subsequent inquiry led by Emeritus Professor Maurice Daly

⁴⁹ Macquarie Group Limited (formerly Macquarie Bank Limited) is a global investment banking and diversified financial services group, providing banking, financial, advisory and investment services to investors, corporations and governments. It is the preeminent Australian investment bank and has its global headquarters located in Sydney.

concluded that Macquarie Bank was “motivated solely by self-interest” holding “councillors captive to the reputations and experience of the parties with whom they were attempting to establish commercial relationships.” Daly further added:

“the most generous summary of Macquarie’s actions is to call them opportunistic. A more appropriate view might be that they were predatory” (Haigh, 2007: 38).⁵⁰

But, unaware of what was to come, the Tasmanian state government saw Macquarie Community Partnerships as having an advantageous organisational size in which “Macquarie will be able to use economies of scale, and cross subsidisation to maximise the provision of affordable housing” to develop large scale models. Macquarie Community Partnerships were engaged as ‘Master Partners’ to explore initiatives such as stock transfer opportunities and the feasibility of two greenfield and two brownfield (re)development sites in Wynyard, Rocherlea, Glenorchy and Clarendon Vale – all traditionally public housing suburbs (Housing Tasmania, 2005). Housing Tasmania hoped to draw on the bank’s expertise in developing private finance sector initiatives. The document entitled ‘AHS, Stage 1, 12 Month Report’ (Housing Tasmania, 2005) charted the shifts in the AHS policy and operational emphasis after its first year. This document ‘retold’ the policy story, rewriting it so as to emphasise or preface the most marketable achievements in new policy directions. The 12 Month Report is celebratory in tone, particularly in the text on the progress of the partnership with Macquarie Community Partnerships. The Director’s Message included the statement:

“This partnership, a master partnership, is an Australian first in working strategically with a private sector partner to attract investment into the affordable housing system, and explore a range of new developments and urban renewal projects” (Housing Tasmania, 2005e: 3).

Selecting some strategies and ‘successes’ to promote over others meant that only some agendas and policy concerns or ‘solutions’ were effectively mobilised out of the AHS story.⁵¹ This process indicates that the AHS policy was iterative, contingent and dynamic. In the ‘12 Month Report’, the partnership was allocated a one-page ‘Case Study’ which included quotes of support from the Premier, a coloured text-box and a photo of the main actors. The model embodied the neo-liberal perspective that the market held “the capacity to radically improve the supply of affordable housing into the future, by increasing investment and establishing innovative ways of doing business” (Housing Tasmania, 2005: 13).

To many in the public realm and financial press, Macquarie was held as an exemplar of neo-liberalism in its entrepreneurial culture, exceptional growth and profitability across multiple sectors from investment, infrastructure, utility and public sector, mining and agriculture. More controversially however, many prominent politicians and senior staffers have moved into posts at Macquarie Bank. This has meant that without a ‘two-year cooling off’ period (as there is in the US) senior state government staffers who

⁵⁰ In May 2007 the local government Liverpool City Council ended its costly, problematic governance relationship with Macquarie over five development agreements involving council land. Macquarie accepted \$600,000 as part of the termination of the agreement.

⁵¹ This idea was developed from writings of Fairclough, 1995 and Stenson and Watt, 1999.

masterminded massive privatisation programs such as the sale of \$40-billion worth of state assets in Victoria have very quickly become Macquarie Bank consultants in receipt of large dividends for their brokering and involvement in the purchasing of many monopoly assets.⁵²

Macquarie confirmed that they could “bring in new sources of capital into the affordable housing sector. There is huge potential, particularly amongst superannuation funds, to match the capital market to the delivery of social infrastructure in Australia” (DHHS, Information Kit, 2004: 4).⁵³ Macquarie also talked of the Tasmanian Master Partner project informing how they could work on similar affordable housing models for other jurisdictions in Australia. However, by the time I conducted the research interviews there was much less grandeur and importance placed on the ‘historic’ partnership across governance modes. For interviewees, recalling the process was both sobering and politically charged. Describing the subsequent difficulties in public-private partnership and motivations to proceed, interviewees said the initial enthusiasm for an Expression of Interest (EOI) process with the private and NGO sector had quickly turned into a preference for a Master Partner process involving one organisation only. This first policy experimentation exposed the critical fissures between the motivations of profit-driven private sector investors in previous state led services and state owned assets. As investigative journalist Gideon Haigh (2007: 36) writes

“An investment bank undertaking roles previously performed by government is anything but a like-for-like swap. A government is elected in the basis of what it may give; an investment bank is chiefly interested in what it can take away.”

Twenty-four EOIs were received by Housing Tasmania before they selected Macquarie Community Partnerships. Interviewees described difficulties in creating a shared understanding between Macquarie and themselves. For example, according to the interviewees, Macquarie had, in showing a reluctance to take an equal share of the risks, adversely affected the possibilities of a long-term partnership:

“What happened was that, in fact, the size and scale that an organisation such as Macquarie Community Partnerships wanted – you know the ‘millionaires factory’ they call it – was too big for Tasmania” (Housing Tasmania Interviewee 2).⁵⁴

“We told Macquarie Community Partnerships if they could use some economies of scale by putting the four sites together and cross-subsidy somehow – ‘if you can get a better bang

⁵² Alan Stockdale, a senior staffer in the former Kennett Victorian Liberal Government is just one example. Former Labor Premier Bob Carr also moved to Macquarie just prior to the \$3-billion float of Snowy Hydro, where Macquarie was to be one of the three brokers receiving a gross \$33-million fee. Bob Carr’s starting salary was reportedly \$500,000 a year. David Clark, the Chairman of Macquarie, is also a former Federal Treasurer of the Australian Liberal Party (Conservative).

⁵³ It should be noted that Macquarie were also committed to opening an office in Hobart (Tasmania’s capital) and agreed to source, either within their organisation or externally, a range of skilled personnel that would offer ‘best practice solutions’ for Tasmania.

⁵⁴ The bank’s high margins and profits, and the consequent rewards for its executives and shareholders, have seen news website Crikey dub the bank “The Millionaire Factory”. For example, in 2006 the top seven Macquarie Bank executives earned \$110-million between them which totalled an estimate 12 per cent of the net annual profit.

for your buck doing that' – even better. But Macquarie Community Partnerships said they couldn't come up with a return that suited them. I suppose our final analysis was that they were not assuming enough of the risk to warrant us going that way" (Housing Tasmania Interviewee 1).

Despite demonstrating many neo-liberal governance principles, the partnership was aborted by the State Government.⁵⁵ The official line was that terminating the MOU was due to the perceived risks that the state would be taking on with the new housing developments (Gabriel and Jacobs, 2006). While the state espoused utilising economies of scale would be a key benefit in joining together with Macquarie, this economic principle also mutated into the main reason why the partnership failed within a year of signing the MOU. Tasmania was too small for Macquarie to 'maximise' the provision of new social housing and lever 'enough' returns. Gabriel and Jacobs (2006: 549) argue the state pursued "secrecy on the basis of confidentiality" to shroud partnership negotiations.⁵⁶ Remnants of this caution were evident in the tone of interviewees' comments on why they decided not to continue the partnership. I interpret their views as being politically redirected towards a more 'acceptable' public language or conclusion reconfigured into a discourse of 'mutual understanding':

EFB: When you decided not to go with that model, was that because some of the evidence that was falling out of it...when they didn't agree that putting the four sites together was enough...did you start to realise that there were other options or...?

(Housing Tasmania) INTERVIEWEE 2: "No, no. We got to a mutual [pause] how you word this is important ... [pause] our dealings with Macquarie Community Partnerships in the end were very sensitive. I would say that we got to a point of mutual agreement that the cost-benefit risk analysis was such that it was best not to proceed with the original model. For us it was like 'look this is probably not going to work' and they realised 'hang on the size and scale and the returns we're looking for [pause] we're a big fish in a little pond here and we need a bigger pond'. The mutualness was not because we knew there were other options it was more 'no, we know this is not going to work.'"

On this occasion, the neo-liberal practices of the state worked poorly because of the financial clout and market positioning of Macquarie Bank. This actor would in many respects have proven to be more powerful within the circuit of governance than the state – a partnership that could not be sustained. In explaining the processes of governance and social relations with the circuit of governance actors these state actors' prioritised a discourse of "learning lessons". Learning lessons enveloped a counter discourse of policy experimentation failure on discussions about the thwarted Master Partner program. This discourse was utilised by interviewees to build an argument of state control and rationality in decision-making; one that could most effectively "weigh up" what was best for the state and hence the polity, and "move towards our goals". To use public sector-speak, the "learnings" from the experiences with Macquarie Community Partnerships meant that

⁵⁵ Widespread concern about the partnership with Macquarie was expressed by a range of non-state housing actors in review consultations and in the interviews in Chapter Nine.

⁵⁶ In 2008 DHHS revealed that in 2003-04 Macquarie Bank estimated the cost of backlog of deferred maintenance in Tasmanian public housing was \$50 million (DHHS, 2008: 13). Again such costs needed to be factored into the Master Partner relationship prior to generating any profit.

local knowledge and expertise needed to be reconsidered and integrated into the AHS processes. For instance, one interviewee interpreted the failure of the Macquarie Community Partnership as ultimately positive in that Housing Tasmania could redirect their approach to something that suited the scale of Tasmania:

"What we learned was that it is very important to get local solutions to local problems and that you've got to get something that fits the size and scale and fits the particular circumstances of your own state. We learnt a lot from that exercise and it was good to do" (Housing Tasmania Interviewee 3).

Change of intention? The long delay in establishing 'Tasmanian Affordable Housing Limited'

Foucault (1977, 1979) and other critics of liberalism view political democracy in free market societies as a kind of discursive veil or mask which obscures the real workings of power and domination inherent in capitalism. Importantly, Foucault reminds us that neither politics nor individual motivations and social actions are necessarily congruent with predictable or guaranteed outcomes. Scholars who borrow from Foucault's insights tend to frame governing as contingent, improvised, and reversible (Rose, 1999; Dean, 1999). Rather than explaining macro-state actions, attention is given to the reorganising and restructuring of particular governance techniques and strategies and their subsequent assemblages and enactments (Rose, 1999: 3-5). Hence it has been argued that a shortcoming in governmentality theorists work is the failure to consider the state's power as the primary site for the articulation of governmental discourse, irrespective of its other activities.⁵⁷ Writing on government dominance in Australian housing Dodson (2006: 4) pursued this line of thinking arguing for the need to remember that:

"[The] production, articulation and implementation of housing policy [...] continues to be the domain of the state, irrespective of whether the policy specifies a social or a market mode of action".

In examining the state actors it was revealed that, Housing Tasmania demonstrated two concurrent, contradictory discourses to explain changes to governance processes. First, after the unsuccessful partnership initiative, Housing Tasmania reconsidered the value and benefits of the local community sector in responding to a local housing crisis (these actors when seen as 'fitting better' in the circuit of governance). Describing the rationale for an expanded role for the community sector, Interviewee 2 attempted to recall the imagined roles for NGO actors' by saying:

"One role was that they could assist us in providing some choice around the tenancy management option. Supported tenancies in particular. And the second role would be that they might be able to grow into being managers and providers of housing. We sort of envisaged back then, I think, an expansion of the community housing sector" (Housing Tasmania Interviewee 2).

⁵⁷ Compared to the appreciation neo-Marxist writers such as Poulantzas (1973) and Jessop (1982) exhibit.

Secondly, almost counteracting the first discourse, the very localness of these NGO actors was seen as relatively weak and insufficient in size and “*capability*”. The community and NGO sector was described as exhibiting shortfalls in “*stepping up to the needs of the state*” to deliver housing contracts. It was this second discourse that influenced the state and Housing Tasmania’s initial decision to heartily endorse Macquarie Community Partnerships. After it failed, the state explored the set up of a quasi-state organisation and, by 2007, they had once again refocused their ‘local view’ towards considering a ‘growth housing provider’ model, already dominant in other Australian states. Establishing contracts between the state and non-state housing providers requires a number of choices about the degree of interactions between the state and the contractor and the specificity or completeness of the contract (Brown *et al.*, 2007). As outlined in interviewee quotes, Housing Tasmania initially perceived that exploring options with local NGOs was too risky – they were seen as being too local and small-scale to contend with the imagined change:

“We were looking for a robust business model that could manage, you know, a multi-million dollar asset portfolio and manage risks. That vision just wasn’t there in the community sector. I’m not saying that they couldn’t have got there. It just wasn’t there when we were ready” (Housing Tasmania Interviewee 5).

Several strong relationships with NGOs were noted but overall these state actors claimed that agreement between parties indicated that growth in the way the state required to facilitate significant stock transfer was not an intended direction of the NGOs. Hence in order for a non-state actor to secure a contract with the state, the state needed to believe that the service provider had the expertise, networks and strategic ability to implement the services in a manner consistent with the state’s goals. Staff at Housing Tasmania were aware of the dilemma as to how much to trust and work with local ‘experts’ – particularly existing NGOs and community housing associations – to achieve their governing goals and how much to invest and experiment with larger mainland organisations. For them a balance had not been reached. The type of contracts the state was accustomed to undertaking with service providers were, on the whole, relatively tight and complete with well-contained funding arrangements, project tasks, timeframes and outcomes. Arguably, this could be due, in part, to a number of factors such as the newness of the NGOs in providing such services, the level of experience of the contractors or the two parties with each other, risk tolerance factors, imperatives to “*get it right*” and the potential for unforeseen market or service contingencies.

The move away from state provision towards ‘new players’, in the early stages of the AHS, was not clearly stipulated. Unsure of the exact shape and arrangement of these governance and working together relations, Housing Tasmania’s policy documents described ‘undeniable’ benefits of partnerships but were less clear on technical details about how these benefits were delivered or meet. When the partnership with Macquarie Community Partnerships was terminated Housing Tasmania began investigations into other models, envisaging a more complex network of local governance including supporting a range of stakeholders. The state government then established a Community Housing Trust, later named the Affordable Housing Organisation (AHO), with an initial budget of \$12 million over a four-year period. It was aimed at encouraging landlords and developers to provide low-cost housing for rent. The Trust comprised of six community housing organisations –

Anglicare, Steps, Southern Cross Care, Onecare, Centacare and the Salvation Army. These organisations later became the community shareholders of Tasmanian Affordable Housing Limited (herein TAHL), a public unlisted company registered in December 2006. As an outcome of the AHS it proposed to provide 700 affordable homes over four years, built by private investors on crown land and head-leased by TAHL on behalf of low income earners. The state government committed annual funding of \$6 million to TAHL for four years to cover the gap between the rents paid by tenants and the market return required by the investors (DHHS, 2006). In this way state intervention created new quasi-state actors in the housing system to contribute to existing policy directions. However, extensive delays in establishing TAHL and the organisation's shifting targets meant Housing Tasmania was susceptible to criticism on the genuinity of the intent to deliver policy outcomes from NGOs (Anglicare Tasmania 2006, 2007) and the media (Duncan, 2007).

Housing Tasmania staff maintained they learnt, through the EOI process and halted possibilities with Macquarie Community Partnerships, that they needed to "rethink" how the strategy was to play out and find a "middle ground". One interviewee expressed concern that a mismatch existed between the capacity of NGOs and what the state required from market relations. What was being articulated was the view that a pure market outcome, or an acceptable market outcome that performed to neo-liberal government standards, did not yet exist. This theme was repeated by several interviewees:

"We had to look at what's available in Tasmania. We've got small players with a small number of properties in a niche market with specialised skills. What we wanted was larger scale growth organisations with business acumen and a range of skills that really weren't in the marketplace. We had a mismatch" (Housing Tasmania Interviewee 2).

This was the rationale Housing Tasmania staff offered for the Tasmanian Government developing a market-oriented quango in TAHL. As a major source of power within the circuit the state could create the conditions or parameters for other actors to operate within thereby maintaining aspects of its traditional role and legitimatising its central status:

"The whole thing had gone from one extreme to another. From the very small to the very big end. We needed to be probably somewhere in the middle and that meant we needed to grow something ourselves. The intention behind TAHL was to establish a not-for-profit company on business lines that could deal in this space. We were promoting the new growth providers but the model of TAHL, the head leasing, the funding and the financing of that came from Treasury rather than from us. It was a political decision." (Housing Tasmania Interviewee 4).

While ideologically and operationally not emerging from Housing Tasmania, TAHL's formal or written intentions were strongly supported by Housing Tasmania staff. But differences in these governance aims and the actual implementation created ruptures in their working relationship and policy outcome expectations. These fissures in governance modes were articulated by interviewees in a number of ways, from inadequate structures and rules to cost-effectiveness issues:

"I think it's a good concept to get a large scale provider in the state providing other options and being able to be more flexible than government can with their housing. In practice it hasn't worked so well because we haven't had the skills and resources to buy-in to develop it and to get the governance and structural issues right to get the organisation established" (Housing Tasmania Interviewee 3).

Conflicts and misunderstandings within the state institutions – that is between the Premier's Department, DHHS and the housing agency, Housing Tasmania – were also discussed by interviewees:

"At the highest level TAHL wasn't distinguished between [stops]. [starts new sentence] The expectation of government, the Premier, was that establishing a group like TAHL [pause] it would behave like public housing except it was just on a different funding basis. I think it demonstrates that there is public housing and there are other things and you can't just set up someone and expect them to behave the same way a public housing authority would" (Housing Tasmania Interviewee 1).

Some staff questioned TAHL's commitment to how much time they were able to dedicate to developing things from "ground up" (Interviewee 3). Instead of developing to the size Housing Tasmania imagined, TAHL employed two full-time staff and outsourced rental and client tasks to the private sector – "it seems a bit incredulous to everyone" (Interviewee 3). Demonstrating her disbelief, Interviewee 1 went further stating how she saw TAHL as embodying neo-liberal practices by breaking away and delivering housing, and its associated services, in an unprecedented market-influenced way:

"The idea was that TAHL would be an organisation that would have all its in-house skills developed or they would contract within the community sector [...] But when you look at it now it's not so bad that they haven't contracted someone from the community sector helping them to manage it because they don't have people with high needs so a real estate management is probably fine with the type of people they are housing!" (Housing Tasmania Interviewee 1).

TAHL's Board was also seen by interviewees as having the necessary expertise overall but with the wrong leadership, causing a top-down, non-negotiable manner. Interviewees stated the 'ideal' TAHL should have had a commercially skilled Board with a CEO exhibiting:

"an affinity with the job and the business; is good with relationships and with a range of people, with community sector players, with the tenant union and the TasCOSS' of the world but could also talk to property owners and developers" (Housing Tasmania Interviewee 1).

Instead TAHL became, a strong community sector Board with a commercially-driven CEO. It constituted the superimposition of a neo-liberal market-oriented structure into the 'alternative provider' environment. Tensions in 'working together' were linked to governance problems and differences of opinions in TAHL's objectives. In urban studies literature it is widely appreciated that governance modes and their constitutive relations are characterised by limited recourse to local socioeconomic conditions or relations with

recipient communities. This trend was mentioned by the interviewees; with one staff member speculating that inadequate regulation of quasi-autonomous bodies, such as TAHL, lead to difficulties in reconciling the differences between public and private ways of operating. He made the qualification that community organisations were having problems with TAHL:

"You've got the CEO of the organisation who comes from a banking background who is probably too strong commercially so he 'manages' the Board [...] And that is creating real issues in relationship between us and TAHL and, by the sound of it, real issues with TAHL and other organisations we've had discussions with. Others (NfPs) have found their relationship isn't what they thought it was going to be" (Housing Tasmania Interviewee 5).

Political problems of governing semi-devolved, quasi-state organisations such as TAHL presented a major challenge for Housing Tasmania. Concepts such as choice, risk and enterprise play a central role in the neo-liberal discourse of the state, and the active pursuit of these has equally become a central concern for 'modern' government. At the same time, the sharp division between state and civil society blurs as government becomes subject to the disciplines of the market. Interviewees talked of structural constraints that were not adequately dealt with in the inception of TAHL such as the lack of a regulatory framework; setting the rules on ensuring as wide a group of applicants as possible is housed including those classified as Category One; rent-setting; service and funding agreements; and registered and accreditation processes:

"The government has said 'we'll fund this group, let them run it' but what the government hasn't done probably is set up the rules. It hasn't set up the outcomes. If you want Category Ones' housed you have to say how many. If you don't do that you'll get people going for the easiest solution. So as a government you shouldn't be surprised of the results if you haven't put in place the rules" (Housing Tasmania Interviewee 4).

"The reality around TAHL is that they want to get as much revenue as they can out of those tenants. They want to have people with lower needs and lower requirements around support because they want to have stable tenancies. They don't want to be out there trying to link up with [NGOs]. I'll give you one example: they won't allow pets or smoking. You can argue that these policies serve as filters that are deliberately designed for them to select 'better' tenants. The tenants they think will be less hassle" (Housing Tasmania Interviewee 1).

Another interviewee described Housing Tasmania's relationship with TAHL as intensifying and becoming more adversarial over the course of the AHS. As policy processes and outcomes varied the governance chasm was being filled by the state government. This, too, was seen as contentious when advice given to the state by Housing Tasmania was not always taken up. A separation between the Department of Treasury and Finance and Housing Tasmania was described in the following way:

"We provide the Premier's Office advice along the way but they don't necessarily want to hear it. It is more state government leading it than Housing Tasmania leading it and directing where it should go. TAHL is so resistant to things and so risk-adverse. They don't understand the social issues and the real directions of the AHS. We try and put things in

the agreement like 'you need to have your rent at these levels' and TAHL has been really resistant to some of that input. I know there were discussions early on about rent setting and modelling and they just never eventuated to anything" (Housing Tasmania Interviewee 5).

Clearly setting the underlying policy rationale means reframing not just in language but in policy targets and outcomes how 'working together' could be achieved. For these interviewees the state government failed to ask and answer pertinent questions like 'who will be housed' and 'what will the conditions of tenure be?' A lack of agreement and participation by Housing Tasmania with the state government existed in several key areas: in the shape and direction of social housing shifts centred on TAHL, the specific financing and delivery approaches to provide certainty in the policy framework and an articulation of the growth and development objectives that sit under a strong regulatory framework.

By the end of my data and interview collection phase in 2007, interviewees described how changes from the AHS and the establishment of TAHL were seen as having a fairly minimal impact on the public to social housing reconfiguration as a whole:

"Our waiting list has gone down. It reached a peak in 2005 at 3,400 and now we are at 2,600. There are a range of reasons for that – we've got private rental, we've got TAHL, we've got boarding houses – so the AHS has put more products in the market which has undoubtedly helped. But what is also happening is people don't come onto the waiting list because they know the chance of being housed is unlikely [...] their name on the waiting list is not going to get them very far." (Housing Tasmania, Interviewee 3).

Connected to the establishment of TAHL was a tender process called 'Home Folio' designed to attract investment to build up to 200 new homes, initially managed by the government and then transferred to TAHL (DHHS, 2006). By mid-2007, Home Folio had delivered six tenanted properties at Brighton, while 40 properties in New Norfolk, Bridgewater, Chigwell and Launceston were nearing completion and a further nine at Warrane were under development. A total of 255 properties had been committed through 'Home Folio', and these were expected to be completed by 2008 (Duncan, 2007). Under the Home Folio umbrella, the state government also entered into bilateral agreements with two NGOs – STEPS and OneCare – to deliver 58 new affordable housing units under head-leasing arrangements. Again, the process of delivering affordable housing through partnership arrangements was not unproblematic. For example, the media aired concerns that 11 new public housing units in Warrane, financed by STEPS, the Tasmanian Government and private capital, remained empty after they were built because of administrative delays. Worley (2007) found that one of the units was to be sold to recoup some of the costs of the development.

Staff were aware of community and NGO sector criticisms not only of the extensive delays in setting up the funding arrangement for TAHL but also how it significantly changed direction to house a different "set of clients". Describing themselves as privately supportive of the NGO sectors advocacy events (see Chapter Nine for elaboration) they noted greater similarities with the community sector on many public housing issues than with the state government:

"Whilst the government was saying 'this is the panacea' we [Housing Tasmania] were saying 'look TAHL is just one little bit of it. It's not everything' and the sector is like that too. They say 'it's just one small part and they're not going to do everything' and they are really lobbying the government to do other things like more public housing and trying to get rid of the debt. They're saying 'we know TAHL won't do everything and we need government to do more'" (Housing Tasmania Interviewee 1).

Housing Tasmania views on the community and NGO sector capabilities

Interviewees recognised that the prominence of affordability issues and the greater awareness of public housing crisis issues were largely due to effective advocacy and promotion in the public domain by NGO organisations. A confluence of governance streams – problem, policy and politics – meant the “policy window opens and change is made possible” (Exworthy and Powell, 2004: 265). These ‘streams of policy’ interact, compete and conflict before integrating social policy outcomes (Exworthy and Powell, 2004). Policy failure is just as significant as policy formation when considering policy implementation processes. As the implementation of the AHS went awry, new options were considered and implemented, again with unexpected consequences. Evidence of the nature of the problem is drawn together in the problem stream. Policy options and proposals to tackle the problem are reviewed and debated and lobby groups, peak bodies and commercial interests vie for credibility and support in the politics stream.

For these interviewees they framed such policy redirection and contingency within a discourse of a paradigm shift or, in their words, a “*rethink*”. Many examples were offered for such a reformulation – needing to “*rethink*” current models for social housing expansion; needing to “*rethink*” the Master Partner approach after “*mutual agreement*” not to continue. Some scholars sceptically critique such language as more of the ‘same’; where reformulating existing conflicts only slightly changes the policy landscape. What emerges are new sites of discordance and tension that result from the ‘folding’ of a problem up into new shapes but, nevertheless, end up as the same overall substance (idea from Jacobs, 2007 quoting Deleuze, 1986/1988). He and others illustrate how policies, actors and discourses reverberate and collide with other social discourses in circuits of governance actors providing fertile ground for the latest “*rethink*” (see for instance McGuirk, 2004, 2005; Jacobs, 2007). Arguably such “*rethinks*” can be costly. Staff resources and the calibre of the remaining human resource capacity at Housing Tasmania reduced significantly since the establishment of the AHS in December 2003. Establishing the AHS as a coherent approach rather than divided into Stages that could be discretionally funded or not, was, in hindsight, a policy position that Housing Tasmania staff wished they had maintained. Continued or recurrent funding to achieve the AHS objectives was essential as their operational budget was already over-stretched. However, despite the multiple “*rethinks*”, the remodelling of public housing into a stronger public-social housing system remains ‘unfinished business’ rather than ‘mission accomplished.’

Not-for-profit organisations possess a number of economic advantages over state housing arrangements. For example, they receive benefits in their charitable statute; are exempt from Fringe Benefit Tax (FBT); can access CRA; borrow against capital assets and cross subsidy through a broader tenant mix. This discourse of change towards governance

modes was seen as being “strategic and pragmatic”, given the constraints Housing Tasmania faced when working with other state agencies. These constraints could be interpreted as elements of competition between Housing Tasmania and the Department of Treasury and Finance as the preferred neo-liberal agency for delivering these changes:

“Now we are seeing that this model of growth providers has been created but if the policy framework changes and CRA changes then we will have to rethink it again and go through it again. At the end of the day you have to be pragmatic and you have to deliver the best you can with what you’ve got. To a large extent it’s a bit of a luxury to engage philosophically on which way you’d like to go” (Housing Tasmania Interviewee 2).

With unknown national agendas and the direction of future CSHA’s, Housing Tasmania staff talked of “being in a state of flux at the moment”. Acknowledging a push, at national committee level, towards more “outcome focused performance indicators” these state actors argued that they will be facing greater pressures to “get further investment from other areas” and “to demonstrate how we can leverage off our assets or direct them to sectors and providers who can”. By 2007 the AHS was reduced from 84 goals and actions to three; having a drastic effect on ongoing policy ‘visibility’. These interviewees thought the community sector and the wider public thought the AHS was axed despite Stage One, though much smaller, being funded until June 2008. With a change of Premier (though not party) support had shifted to other policy areas:

“If there hadn’t been a change (in leaders) then there might have been a different approach to things. We’ve had to redirect and re-badge things [...] Now we are focusing on what we are calling ‘Future Directions of Affordable Housing’ and running projects that come under that banner so we’re not in dire straits in the next ten years” (Housing Tasmania Interviewee 3).

Housing Tasmania’s views on their social relations with tenants

Housing Tasmania staff largely viewed the social relations between tenants and themselves as positive. Few examples were given of problems, with all noting strong support and satisfaction levels in tenant feedback mechanisms. Two interviewees presented opposing views on the effects TAHL may have on tenants’ experiences of social housing. One view was that as the role of Housing Tasmania shifts from ‘provider’ to ‘facilitator’ or ‘enabler’ tenants will have to understand their options more and be educated on the alternatives. If tenants realised, so the argument went, that having a more diverse range of housing options from community housing, co-operative housing or disability housing would assist a greater number of tenants to build and live in the more sustainable communities. According to this staff member, tenants needed to recognise that a housing system with “a multitude of responses” is stronger than one reliant on public housing:

“We need to do a big education campaign not only of the sector about different ways of doing business but of the community and our tenants because they’re not aware of all these other options and what it might mean. Public housing has been there since the 1940s, it gives them security of tenure, it’s backed by government; it feels safe, and it’s what they know and what they want. TAHL on the other hand: ‘Who are they? What do they do? No

thank, don't give them my details'. It's a lack of awareness that is making tenants respond like this. If they knew the advantages we would have greater support for new models of housing" (Housing Tasmania Interviewee 2).

The alternate view, proposed by another Housing Tasmania staff member, was that early tenant feedback about TAHL, as a key governance model, was negative. A letter was sent to all public housing waiting list applicants informing them of TAHL and to all current tenants asking for consent to pass on their information to TAHL. To their surprise Housing Tasmania received over a hundred letters back:

"...saying 'no we don't want our information passed onto TAHL because we don't want to live there'. And the majority of those are people with pets or who smoke. We never expected that kind of response. We expected about a dozen. We've had another 100 or 150 phone calls from people about it. Some have been interested but the majority aren't" (Housing Tasmania Interviewee 3).

The reasons why applicants and tenants were not interested in 'TAHL housing' was explained in terms of receiving a reduced service to public housing:

"I think people are starting to realise it's not a better option for them than going into public housing. Costs with TAHL are higher and there are more criteria about how they are supposed to behave. I think TAHL properties will be okay for people who are on the wait list but not in such high need" (Housing Tasmania Interviewee 3).

Simply educating applicants or tenants about options would not alter the fact that some benefits of living in public housing did not 'carry-over' to other housing options. The role of the state in people's lives has moved from a more central provider to an 'enabling' facilitator. Herein lies another application of the rationale for 'rolling-out' the state in the form of monitoring and developing compliance structures. This reiterates the second component within neo-liberalism. TAHL was initially celebrated as a market-based policy response that would effectively achieve the continuing fundamental objectives of government for social justice and opportunity for adequate housing. This had not eventuated and applicants had noticed meaningful differences.

Governing relations framework: relationships, transactions and compliance

Untangling the dynamics and interplay between the state and non-state actors involved in the AHS requires, as critical realism reminds us, more than one framework to adequately explain why fissures arise or points of conflict emerge in social relations. The value of a critical realist analysis is an appreciation that the heterogeneous discourses of actors and their systems of meaning about neo-liberal political practices are negotiated in the course of their social relations and need not remain fixed. As such, after thematic categorisation of all interview and focus group data was conducted a set of secondary tools were developed to handle the multiplicity within actors' discourses and their actual or desired movement between governing or social relations spaces. Hence a framework of the interconnectivity between governance modes and the proximity of social relations with the state emerged from the various actor data sources. Tracing the association between key non-state actors

with the state reveals how phenomenon such as redistribution of housing provision emerge, become embedded, adapt and change. The workings of these social relations require an anchoring category of 'proximity' or connection to our distance from the state. Proximity functions as a mechanism through which processes of negotiation, rejection and opportunity-making are created or reproduced within actors social relations. Proximity is not fixed; it is possible to "switch models" (Fuhse, 2009: 60 in van Eijk) for example between 'distant' and 'neutral' as the structure of the social relations alters and boundaries extend or close down.

Non-state housing actors involved in public housing issues and in social relations with the state revealed three main governing connections with the state. These were:

1. Interactions
2. Transactions or
3. Compliances.

Actors who voiced their governance connection as an **interaction** relied on a description of having or aiming for meaningful links with the state based on shared understanding of needs, social actions and social practices. For 'distant' public housing tenants 'interactions' with the state were too fractured, making it difficult to raise concerns or requests for additional support. In interview and focus group accounts from these tenants, distant interactions were adversely affected by governing-at-a-distance modes (see findings in Chapter Seven). In contrast, a group of NGOs utilised a discourse that prefaced the necessity of their active involvement in developing interactions with the state to achieve 'best' collaborative results, for their organisation and the *AHS* (see findings on discourses of social entrepreneurialism in Chapter Nine).

The second main grouping of **transactions** refers to governing connections between the state and non-state actors that functioned more 'economically' than 'socially'; involving the dominance of capital over social relationships. These transactions involved much less personal interactivity. Concentrating on the 'task at hand' these actors desired limited social relations with each other. For example, external communications consultants working on Housing Tasmania policy brochures agreed that clear task expectations, set out by the state, were essential before they could design and encode texts with the relevant visual, metaphoric and policy language that advances the *AHS* agenda. This was seen to fulfil their transaction or contractual arrangement. Instrumentally rational, transactions were interpreted as either individual (one-off, means end calculations) or potentially cumulative with a sequence of transactions developing out of results being achieved and incentives offered. Interestingly, a key advocate of transactional relations with the state was the quasi-state body, TAHL, who at the time of the study had no experience in meeting housing targets or in pre-existing structures with the state (see Chapter Ten). To sum, transactions adhered to mechanistic assumptions of neo-classical economics rather than organic models of economic activity. NGO actors, within the transactional mode, tended to be supportive of a minimal state with very limited public housing provision.

Finally, **compliance** signalled an, often uncomfortable or reluctant, acquiescence by actors to the state's rules and regulations. Submitting to state rules and regulations to achieve a larger governance aim often ran contrary to their organisational or personal intentions. This compliance to Housing Tasmania's restructuring of housing processes or services limited actors' communicative and social action possibilities and created a sense of ambivalent social relations to the state. For these actors, acquiescence was compounded by their fragmentation from other resources and other housing actors – they see themselves as less powerful than the largest NGOs and less connected to the state. Uncertainty, and the 'need' for a concomitant political and social acquiescence, is related to broader governance changes and variations in stakeholder interactions. But implicit to modernity are our multiple ambivalences, contends, that stifle our involvement in or motivation to 'change the world for the better' as our lives today are so strongly governed by the contingency of events. Complicit with these levels of ambivalence is cynicism about state institutions – a feature of these actors' discourses. The problem with being cynical or reluctantly compliant is that it produces inaction. This aspect of their social relations is further examined in Chapter Eight. By interweaving the varying logics of neo-liberal political practice in public housing, I aim to expose the tensions and contingency between and within interactions, transactions and compliances that determine actors' governing connections with the state. I demonstrate in the later chapters (Six to Ten) the inflections and fractures of contemporary neo-liberal political practices in order to present a reading that makes visible the operation of divergent discourses.

Conclusion

In explanatory research, critical realism emphasises the process of conceptualisation in determining and influencing subsequent lines of enquiry. For this reason, this chapter carefully reviewed the processes and the causes of housing policy change through the implementation of the *AHS* and the significance of new social relations with key actors along interactive, transactional and compliant mechanisms. This process of abstraction highlights contingently defined emergent relations of governance and, subsequently, housing provision. Importantly, this enables later Chapters to critique the ways actors' exhibit interdependent relations within the circuit of governance, giving it a degree of structural coherence.

After examining the institutional framework of the *AHS* in Chapter Four, this chapter commenced the qualitative findings of the thesis by considering the discourses the state utilised when discussing the *AHS*. Relating actors' activities, perceptions and discourses to the wider power relations, triggered by neo-liberal governance modes, contributes to our understanding of governance and social relations mechanisms. In accounting for political and policy difficulties and changes, Housing Tasmania maintained support for 'new' ways of delivering public housing and new governance models but this chapter has also shown that Housing Tasmania staff described the state as consisting of decision-making hierarchies (Premier's Office, DHHS, Department of Treasury and Finance and Housing Tasmania). Examining the difficulties Housing Tasmania experienced with the *AHS* (such as with Macquarie Community Partnerships or the quasi-state organisation that operated in ways disingenuous to Housing Tasmania's intentions) reveals fissures between how neo-liberalism works in practice and how its uneven impact is academically discussed in theoretical scholarships. Contradictions stem from neo-liberalism's duality: to instigate

policies that allow markets enough 'freedom' to get on with building new housing in a competitive environment while also maintaining an active state to enforce many neo-liberal practices and progressively altering the publics' understanding of the state's role.

The "neo-liberal imaginations of housing assistance" (Dodson, 2006: 13), as articulated by the interviewed staff from Housing Tasmania, outlines their need to adapt and 'rethink' policy in implementation; reconstituting and accounting for their rationale and reworking their notion of what 'new ways of working together' actually entails. Noting their limited political power in persuading the state government to follow through with their public housing strategies, interviewees talked of the need to respond pragmatically. This pragmatism, however, also embodied neo-liberal politics practices in its call to opt for a 'flexible' housing system approach. The Master Partner relationship involved processes of partnerships – i.e. joining up the market with the state – and master planning components – i.e. a process of recognising and pursuing the goals of both the market and the state (Ruming, 2005). On both scales, these new modes of governance did not succeed. The aspirations of a major source of power within the circuit of governance did not come to fruition as the private sector body and the state had maligned interpretations of market capabilities. The contingent nature of neo-liberal political practices could not be navigated. The social relations between Housing Tasmania and NGOs were seen as largely positive with challenges to Housing Tasmania centred on funding constraints. The policy disparity between the intentions for TAHL and its eventual operationalisation, and the subsequent tension and adversarial social relations that resulted, enhanced the commitment of these interviewees to push the Minister for multiple providers and models in the future. Having to 'rethink' the policy during its implementation processes was normalised and attributed to greater learning taking place during the policy process.

This chapter also outlined the main governing modes framework that non-state actors experience with Housing Tasmania, which will be utilised in the following chapters. These three modes – relationships, transactions and compliances – are further developed in Chapters Six to Ten by critiquing their perceptions of proximity to the state. To begin to apply this additional 'circuit of governance' tool, the next chapter considers the reasoning behind external communications consultants (working with the state government on social policy promotions) view that they experience a transactional mode of governing and close social relations to the state. Chapter Six builds on the analysis by considering a dominant discourse used in the media and by communications specialists – the cultural governance frame – as a generative mechanism that attempts to build support for the AHS and encourage market-oriented interests and investments.

In Part Two, the uptake of neo-liberal ideals and the ideological limitations of pairing market efficiency priorities with a social justice agenda were shown to engender the need for a critical realist framework to systematically consider the empirical material in Part Three. This framework views neo-liberal political practices as having a real existence, hence the thesis focuses on the real, underlying structures which reproduce social reality, and the new governance and social relations environment.

PART THREE

CHAPTER SIX – DISCOURSES OF CULTURAL GOVERNANCE: THE LOGICS WITHIN PRESS AND MARKETING FRAMING

Introduction

Newspaper coverage and social marketing brochures were two influential ways the *AHS* was communicated and shaped in the public sphere. This chapter considers the adoption of a particular discourse – that of cultural governance – through framing devices by the local press and external communications consultants in the early 2000s. Why examine how the local press and marketers frame the *AHS* and related changes to public housing? First, within the circuit of governance model the media is a key non-state housing actor. Second, newspaper coverage plays an important role in illustrating policy deliberations materially enacted and the ‘normalisation’ of neo-liberal modes of governance. Third, the extent of affordability issues coupled with the increasing marketisation of government lead to a shift from policy problematisation in the press to policy acceptance and neutralisation, signally a clear relationship between structural changes in government communication skills and issue framing. Four, newspaper headlines and articles portray contemporary policy debates as urgent and already ‘known’ by using “existing narratives of social reality” (Jacobs, 2001: 133) provided by the state, journalists and non-state housing actors. In this sense, framing becomes a process of selection and presentation of information that matches dominant values held by political and economic elites (Gitlin, 1980; Entman, 1991; Dobkin, 1993; Akhavan-Majid and Ramaprasad, 1998). Five, a shortfall exists in the previous housing literature exploring “the way that news stories are socially constructed to produce a range of narratives about housing change” (Mee, 2004: 118).

Beginning with a brief outline of the concept of ‘news framing,’ this chapter then steps the reader through the thematic structure of Tasmanian newspaper headlines. I developed a typology of the three most prominent discourses in the media, namely social pathologising, structural diagnosis and cultural governance. The findings consider the implications of a news frame that legitimises the government as a ‘primary definer’ (Hall *et al.*, 1978) – a term referring to individuals or institutions who occupy a privileged site within the news media. These primary definers “command greater access to the media by virtue of their claims to expert knowledge, their powerful position, or their representative status” (Anderson, 1993: 53). Finally, the chapter concludes by investigating the mirroring or duplication of news framing devices by communication and marketing specialists contracted by the DHHS for *AHS* projects. By reviewing key findings from qualitative interviews with eight (8) communication specialists, I highlight that the ‘working form’ or secondary level of the cultural governance narrative supports whole-of-government approaches and the formation of positive news stories that position the state as responsive and public housing tenants as ‘normal.’

The salience of news framing

News framing continues to be a significant concept within the social sciences, especially in media and communications studies (Cappella and Jamieson, 1997: 38-58; see also

Tuchman, 1978; Gitlin, 1980; Gamson & Mogdiliani, 1989). It is a central feature of the way journalists organise news and help to shape 'reality' for readers. Frames provide journalists with systems of meanings that function as hierarchical structures of 'issue importance.' In other words, frames limit or define the meaning of a message by shaping the inferences readers draw about the message. Framing is one device within agenda-setting that the media use to influence the public, 'public opinion' and consequently, the public agenda (d'Haenens & de Lange, 2001: 849).⁵⁸

Framing becomes an essential component within public interpretation of new governance modes in housing policy as contextualised in media coverage. Oatley (2000: 89) writes that framing "determines the way in which the problem is viewed, the causes that are thought to be operative, and the policies that are thought to be appropriate". A group of scholars writing on policy-as-discourse (Ball, 1990, 1993; Shapiro, 1992; Bacchi, 1999) repeat this premise, arguing the importance of recognising in media analysis the

"non-innocence of how 'problems' get framed within policy proposals, how the frames will affect what can be thought about and how this affects possibilities for action" (Bacchi, 2000: 50).

Entman (1993) details the four key functions of framing, penning a much quoted definition:

"To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, casual interpretation, moral evaluation, and or treatment recommendation" (Entman, 1993: 52).

The salience of an issue is determined by its position, relative to other topics, in policy agendas or in the media, and by an issues' implicit, internal qualities or characteristics. Salience is used either interchangeably with, or connected to, the construction of concepts such as awareness, importance, involvement, relevance, attention, concern and popularity. Conceptually, within news production, frames are seen as both indispensable and elusive. Literature on media frames describe their usage as theoretically ambiguous and fragmented (Gamson, 1992; Entman, 1993; Scheufele, 1999). This fragmentation is based on inconsistent meanings of core terms such as 'frame', 'framing' and 'framework' and researchers seemingly eclectic use of theory inhibiting the possibility of a "general statement of framing theory that shows exactly how frames become embedded within [...] new texts, [and] how framing influences thinking" (Entman, 1993: 51). More recently, D'Angelo (2002: 871) recasts this debate convincingly arguing that "theoretical and paradigmatic diversity has led to a comprehensive view of the framing process, not

⁵⁸ The public agenda is often defined as "a list of issues and events that are viewed at a point in time and ranked in hierarchy of importance" (Rogers and Dearing, 1988: 565). Some academics argue framing is operationalised in combination with other media concepts such as agenda setting or priming (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987). McCombs, Shaw and Weaver (1997) suggest that framing is an extension of agenda setting (calling it second-level agenda-setting).

fragmented findings in isolated research agendas”.⁵⁹ Framing is only one example of how the media structures communication processes.⁶⁰

Reading Headlines for framing devices

There is broad consensus in media sociology that press coverage is organised according to particular frames or framing device. For example, Altheide (1997: 654) writes that articles are shaped “around a narrative that begins with a general conclusion that ‘something is wrong’ and we know what it is”. Mee (2004: 121) links political action with the ways ‘problem frames’ are mobilised by the media “in a way [it] is consistent with how political actors attempt to portray policy problems”. Similarly, Baumgarten (1993) argues the mass media deliberately forces attention to a particular construction of a policy issue which reinforces ‘naturalised’ ideas of the need for policy change. The channels through which popular consent for neo-liberalism are generated are diverse. Harvey (2007: 40) points to the powerful, narrowly defined capitalist class and immense concentrations of corporate power across industries and sectors (transportation, retailing, media etc) and well as the ideological influences circulating in the media, universities and professional associations. Frames work in language as a kind of ‘chain association’ that cluster around a single image or phrase. Some academics perceive these theme clusters as directing readers towards certain meanings, others think they are less ‘in’ the text and more projected onto the text by readers (Fowler, 1991).

To obtain the sample articles for the headline analysis in this chapter I used the Tasmanian Index (Newspapers and Journals) feature on TALIS on the State Library of Tasmania’s database. The three daily tabloid newspapers covering Tasmania – *The Mercury*, *The Examiner* and *The Advocate* – were considered because of their availability and circulation across the state. A preoccupation with local politics is a strong feature of these tabloids as reflected in its salience in political news, commentaries, opinion pages and daily reporting (Gabriel, 2004: 95). Keyword searches (see Chapter Three for greater detail) totalled 390 records from January 2002 to December 2004 which were then narrowed to 147 articles based on content relevance to social relations, AHS governance or financing issues.

The tone of all headlines was initially analysed before considering how favourable headlines were structured within the frame employed. Invariably, economic consequences and responsibility frames dominated. Each cluster of articles was: coded and reviewed to compare framing devices and interpret repetitions, reread for conceptual consistency and any potential overlaps that could distort findings. In particular, contrast cases, irregular examples and patterns were scrutinised. The qualitative dimension of the headline analysis was guided by the questions:

- What topics tend to be expressed in the headlines?

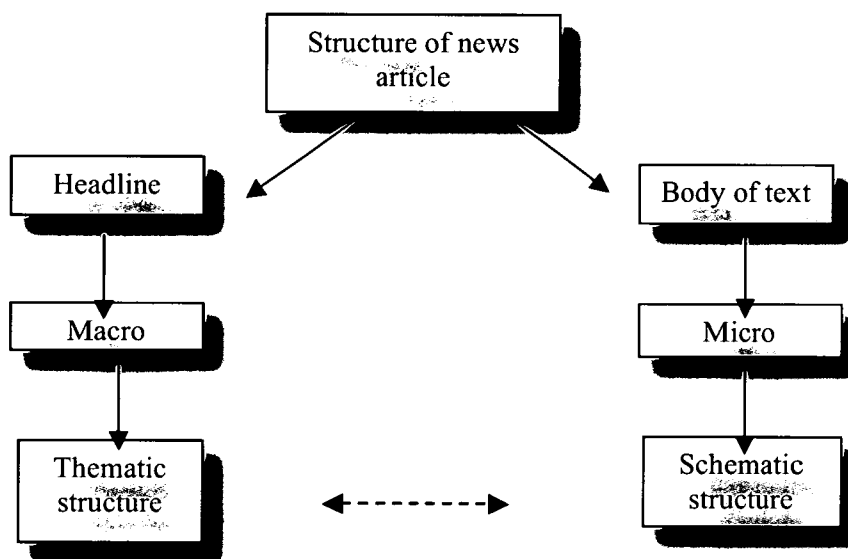
⁵⁹ Key frames include: problem (Altheide, 1997; Mee, 2004), responsibility (Iyengar, 1987), conflict (Neuman *et al.*, 1992; Price *et al.*, 1997; d’Haenens and de Lange, 2001), human interest (Valkenburg and Semetko, 1999), economic consequences frame (Gamson, 1997) and advocate frame (Tewksbury *et al.*, 2000).

⁶⁰ A proliferation of models, yielding various alternative views on the effects and powers of the media, have been in development over the past forty years. Other models, such as convergence and co-orientation models, emphasise exchanges between interacting individuals so as to generate shared meanings of reality.

- What inferences can be drawn from their (structural) form or style?
- How is a cultural governance headline formulated in these three newspapers?⁶¹

The interrelationship between the macro and micro structures – the practices and processes of news production, news reception or comprehension and news structures – mark a powerful way to critically examine and interpret news reports (see Figure 12 below).

Figure 12 The “structures of news” Process of social cognition in news comprehension: (van Dijk, 1988)



A news report typically has a headline, a lead paragraph followed by several ‘event’ paragraphs covering the main element of the story, verbal reactions or quotes on the event and/or a comment. The content of news can be divided into macro and micro components which work to reinforce the thematic or schematic structure of the news story. ‘Macrostructure’ is synonymous with the overall thematic organisation of a text. The headline of a news report, analysed as a concrete discourse, serves to encapsulate this theme. The organisational hierarchy relies on identifying one general theme summing up the whole text (Fairclough, 1995: 29). For example, public housing is a Budget priority which can then be broken into a number of more specific themes, such as the Budget statement, existing public housing infrastructure shortfalls, proposed new funding and its allocations. However, it is argued that ‘thematic framing’ is less commonly used within the media and, contestably, of greater longitudinal importance in changing readers perceptions of issues or social problems. These frames ‘tell’ stories more broadly, incorporating the larger, social, historical context instead of detailing specific case studies or exemplars. Problem framing in the news media is the result of linking specific

⁶¹ This review of a large text corpora to semantically evaluate the cultural governance frame is strengthened by using basic quantitative techniques such as counting the frequency of headlines that use the cultural governance discourse and specific wording/phrases for example ‘public housing’, ‘tenant’, ‘funds’ and ‘need’ (van Dijk, 1988).

discursive strategies to particular ideological agendas. Hence while discourse is not purely ideology, it is involved in producing ideological texts and social practices and in drawing attention to the substance of political positions and policies (Levitas 1998: 3).

The 'microstructure' of news discourse refers to the textual form or 'schematic structure' of a text can be generalised to the level of keywords and sentences and their associated meaning. Each component of the schematic structure matches a more general theme in the thematic structure. The 'story' unfolds, after its thematic headline, within the governing principles of the schematic structure. The dominant temporal framing style in news journalism is episodic framing or the 'schematic structure.' It involves microlevel accounts from the perspective of specific individuals or sources. The proliferation of episodic framing creates the

"unintended consequence of [...] audiences feel[ing] absolved of responsibility for social problems because responsibility is so readily attributed to the people portrayed in the news, whether or not the newsmakers depicted are culpable" (Hallahan, 1999: 221).

Drawing on van Dijk (1988) and Fairclough (1995), I analyse how frames are often instantiated in headlines or lead paragraphs, functioning as macrostructures to establish, reinforce or refute framing mechanisms in support of the *AHS*, changes in public housing funding and modes of governance. Teun van Dijk (1998: 173) notes the primary power of news headlines:

"Undoubtedly the most prominent feature of news discourse is the headline, which expresses the top semantic macrostructure, programmes the interpretation process and generally provides a (subjective) definition of the situation".

The initial summary of the news text consists of the physical headline, super-or-subheadline and lead paragraphs. These are visibly separated from the article or the first paragraph. It is the forerunner or summary of the central action of the narrative allowing the reader to scan the "relevance optimizers" (Dor, 2003) to "get the main point from reading a single opening sentence, and on that basis decide whether to continue" (Bell, 1991: 148-149). Headlines reach an audience wider than those who read the news story beneath it and are often more sensational than the connected story (O'Conner and Casey, 2001). Associations and messages about public housing tenants are 'carried over' as we read a newspaper. It is a process we are accustomed to – just as we easily read a novel with multiple characters, or voice contradictory opinions about everyday activities, likes and dislikes, so too more than one frame on the same topic emerges in newspapers.

Three main discursive frames in local press headlines

After reading the Tasmanian press coverage between January 2002 and December 2004 three main media discursive devices, that retain currency across the regional newspapers, were identified. These discourses demonstrate that simultaneous competing narratives are regularly circulating in daily newspapers (Jacobs, Kemeny and Manzi, 2003). Moreover, these reinforce the double strategy within neo-liberalism: to encourage the norms of social

welfare and policy provision, and limit responsibilities to acute market failures (Esping-Andersen *et al.*, 2002: 15). The three discourses are thematically classified as:

1. ***Social pathology*** – The processes of defining communities, according to Imrie and Raco (2003) rely on boundaries of inclusion and exclusion. The ‘degenerate’ policy culture, supported by the social pathology discourse, constructs issues and target communities as ‘deserving’ or ‘undeserving.’ The social pathology frame accounts for the majority of negatively framed articles (62 articles in the narrowed sample of 147). This framing process shows the reluctance or failure of the journalist to consider and/or critique the complexities of public housing tenancy within broader institutional frameworks and structural inequalities. Tenants’ deviant behaviour is often highlighted.⁶² Social pathologising extends across generations with many articles referencing intergenerational reliance on welfare provision and public housing. The social pathology of tenants indicates their failure to behave as market actors, as economically rational and responsive citizens. Headline examples include:
 - ‘Gangs of youths striking terror in suburbs’ *The Examiner*, 28/08/02 p.4
 - ‘House of horror’ *The Examiner*, 29/11/02 p.1
 - ‘\$400,000 unit held for jailed woman’ *Sunday Tasmanian*, 01/12/02 p.7 and
 - ‘Anti-social NW tenants: ‘Kick them out’’ *Sunday Examiner* 14/03/04 p.1 and 7.
2. ***Structural diagnosis*** – This is a more critical, balanced frame that highlights the attempt to maintain journalistic ethics of neutrality, impartiality and objectivity. These headlines (totalling 38 articles in the narrowed sample of 147) and lead paragraphs inform readers of structural challenges and complexities facing housing policy, the effects of Commonwealth Government funding reductions on state housing provision, and the macroeconomic debates that make it difficult to pinpoint exact ‘blame’ or to resolutely propose remedial actions. A theme in this discourse is sympathy for tenants as the poor unfortunate victim of factors outside their control, such as long waiting lists or a property boom. A greater range of sources are evident in these articles – from advocate groups and community groups, to families and named individuals. Headline examples include:
 - ‘Housing crisis set to worsen: lobby group cites critically ill victim as waiting lists lengthen’ *The Examiner*, 24/09/02 p.15
 - ‘Frustration for family over house shortage’ *The Examiner*, 11/02/03 p.17
 - ‘Catch-22 leaves family homeless’ *The Advocate*, 12/02/03 p.4
 - ‘Motel buy-out angers locals: Government’s short-term housing venture under fire’ *The Mercury*, 28/05/03 p.5
 - ‘Hobart on up and up: boom widens social divide’ *Sunday Tasmanian*, 15/06/03 p.9
 - ‘Family battling due to housing shortage’ *The Advocate*, 04/06/03 p.5
 - ‘Housing wait list grows’ *The Mercury*, 04/06/04 p.3.

⁶² Welfare recipients often come under attack in this media frame (Jacobs, 2001; Marston, 2002; Mee, 2004).

3. **Cultural governance** – This frame positively represents the governments’ role in public housing, occasionally relying on press releases for news content. It emphasises the value of government interventions designed to change ‘cultures’ hence this dimension of discourse practice can be conceptualised as ‘cultural governance.’ Fairclough (2000: 61) succinctly describes culture governance as:

“governing by shaping and changing the cultures of the public services, claimants and the socially excluded, and the general population”.

The shift towards cultural governance is characterised by governments actively manoeuvring representations of an issue to seek supportive media ‘spin’ (Franklin, 1998). In this frame SHAs policy reforms are praised for taking much-needed action, making difficult but necessary decisions and leading the way on crisis issues. Marston (2004: 190-191) writes that if the government is seen to ‘get tough’ on problematic and irresponsible public housing tenants then it contributes to an image of a government that is *both* productive *and* effective. The cultural governance discourse primarily utilises a combination of positively toned responsibility and economic consequences frames.⁶³ The cultural governance discourse has trace elements in the discourses articulated by tenants and NGO actors, discussed in the findings in Chapters Seven and Nine, in contingent ways.

Critical researchers argue that an individual’s prior knowledge provides a basis to “alternatively accept, ignore, and reinterpret the dominant frames offered by the media” (Neuman, Just and Crigler, 1992: 62). From this perspective, frames are the outcome of newsgathering routines by which journalists select and present information about issues and events in line with the dominant values held by political and economic elites (Entman, 1991; Akhavan-Majid and Ramaprasad, 1998). Frames operating within the routines and discourses of groups are generally believed to mediate the power of textual frames (Gitlin, 1980; Molotch *et al.* 1987). For example, Martin and Oshagen (1997) found, in examining news coverage of General Motors announcement in 1991 to close one of their assembly plants in America, employees and citizens were portrayed as adapting to difficult but necessary business decisions. They concluded

“News is a significant part of the structuration process as it works to frame the hegemonic social relations in which downsizing is inevitable and complicity is necessary for success” (Martin and Oshagen, 1997: 690).

These frames, which work to increase hegemonic decoding processes, can limit the scope of public debate, constrict political consciousness “and occlude the potential for a democratic public sphere” (Martin and Oshagen, 1997: 691). This argument supports the notion that a majority of readers can be manoeuvred to come to the same conclusion or biased interpretation of an issue (Rachlin, 1988; Entman, 1991), such as in support of a range of nuanced neo-liberal practices.

⁶³ Cultural governance headline examples are included in the next section and Appendix E

Findings: Cultural governance discourse in news headlines

In this section the third discourse is considered in greater depth because it serves to legitimate neo-liberal modes of governance in housing. Importantly, it appeared as the dominant discourse reproduced in the interview data with communication and marketing experts contracted by Housing Tasmania or the state government to produce social marketing resources. As Figure 12 has shown, the thematic structure of the cultural governance frame is mobilised by a specific macro interpretation in support of government approaches and objectives. Positive headlines draw readers into news articles, for example emphasising the increase in funding allocated to the housing crisis, the governments innovative proactive solution-based stance, good outcomes for tenants and local communities (particularly in regard to housing upgrades) and the combination of public and private resources to solve the problem. The media reinforced the sense of urgency for the policy reforms and seemed to operate as a collective actor responsible for testing out institutional discourses and thereby potentially diffusing later criticism of Housing Tasmania or the state. The cultural governance frame positively represents the government's role in public housing by emphasising the 'value' of government interventions that change 'cultures', individual agency and public perceptions. The main findings reveal that cultural governance works to reinforce governmental power as a 'producer of knowledge' (Eyerman & Jamison, 1991) by disseminating and legitimating their interpretation strengthening its likelihood of becoming socially recognised and embedded. As a convincing, positive discourse it often neutralises other frames and narratives such as the 'structural diagnosis' discourse.

The cultural governance frame also underscores the value in examining headline coverage to ascertain the discursive enactment(s) of neo-liberal modes of governance as articulated in the *AHS*. This news frame directly engaged and appropriated the neo-liberal language and perspective articulated in the *AHS*. A total of 46 headlines were recorded as being framed in the cultural governance discourse; these covered news articles, front page features, Editorials and 'Letters to the Editor'.⁶⁴ Overall, the thematic structure of these cultural governance headlines is of acceptance and support for the governments role and agreement that the *AHS* policy will provide 'effective solutions.' Many headlines centre on government announcement of a financial commitment to housing policy, and the number of housing properties to be built, for example:

- (Headline 3 herein H3) '\$2m redevelopment'
- (H18) '\$45m rescue: Bold housing crisis plan to build 420 new homes'
- (H22) '\$45 million housing strategy'
- (H27) '\$45m stamp duty windfall to pay for unit renovations' and
- (H44) 'Secure housing: \$5m estate offering peace of mind.'

The *AHS* was described in the media as being a 'bold' (H18) 'rescue' package as evidenced in its innovative responses to affordability and its capacity to offer 'peace of mind' (H44) to public housing tenants and applicants. H18 and H44 were also the only two headlined articles on the front page of the newspapers, stressing the importance of financial support in the cultural governance frame. In 2002, nine articles can be described as possessing

⁶⁴ Appendix E includes the 46 headlines in the analysis. There were headlines in the other two frames: social pathology (totalling 63) and structural diagnosis (totalling 38) respectively.

characteristics of the cultural governance discourse. After unsuccessfully (H4) 'push(ing) to secure full funds for housing' from the Commonwealth in October, the (then) ruling Bacon Labor Government began to publicise its (H7-8) 'Budget priorities' of 'low-cost public housing' and dentistry as part of their election campaign.

By 2003 – the year the *AHS* was announced – 14 articles were published across the three papers, broadly supporting the government and the cultural shift towards new governance modes and community / tenant initiatives, examples include:

- (H9) 'Good news for Northern jobless'
- (H11) 'Private firms to help ease housing crisis'
- (H13) 'Innovative high-tech tenants develop support network'
- (H15) 'Some relief for NW public tenants'.

The *Advocate* ran an editorial on 15 October (H16) 'Housing crisis a high priority' outlining the newspaper's support for the policy redirection. In December 2003, six articles were run on the governments' announcement, (H17-22) – one editorial in *The Mercury* (H19) 'Big plans for big problems'; two 'Letters to the Editor' outlining the policy from the then Minister for Economic Development (H21) and the then Minister for Health and Human Services (H21) and one in *The Advocate* describing affordable housing as being 'crucial' (H17). State Ministers or political spokespeople held platforms in the 'Letters to the Editor' section, adding greater legitimacy and reinforcement to the frame which supported government movements towards addressing affordable housing.

The majority of articles that feature headlines or statements conforming to the cultural governance discourse were printed in 2004 (n=25), coinciding with the early stages of the *AHS* implementation. Success stories covered the numerous different actors that would benefit from the policy, for instance

- 'Project to help Tassie builders' (H24)
- 'Units to get homey' (H26)
- Elderly in Kingston (H41)
- Suburbs and neighbourhoods (H42 and H36)
- Residents of George Town (H46) and Glenorchy (H40) and
- Families (H37).

In the cultural governance frame 'deserving' or 'good' tenants are *almost* like 'us' although they live in suburbs we would not want to live in, in 'their own way' they are 'empowering' themselves' and being innovative, 'hi-tech' and connected. 'They' are participating positively in the moral community and embody the active citizenship that reshapes the role of governance away from the state as welfare 'provider' towards the state as 'enabler.' In this way the frame presents the duality of neo-liberalism as 'common-sense'. Such headlines and articles rely on embedding a discourse that prefaces positive actor relationships and behaviour – good tenants, community, partnerships and private stakeholders – within housing policy reform or restructuring. Unlike the social pathology frame that adheres to a moral frame of responsibility to describe how tenants should behave, the cultural governance frame places the moral oriented frame into a subsidiary

position to a more 'matter-of-fact' economic-social-political framing where Housing Tasmania policy makes good 'commonsense' and is pragmatically responsive.

The AHS gained the public support of advocates such as TasCOSS in July 2004 (H32), further entrenching its position as an accepted, leading policy solution to multiple housing issues. This followed a 'Letter to the Editor' from the Director of Housing Tasmania, Mercia Bresnehan, in *The Advocate*. The headline – (H31) 'Housing woes' – does not fit the macrostructure conventions of the cultural governance frame, however, the article significantly justified and legitimated Housing Tasmania's senior management views and created a momentum for other advocate support appearing in the press. It also demonstrated Housing Tasmania's need to harness support from the media and build conducive, ongoing relationships so as to secure space in the 'Letters to Editor' section, circuitously echoing the cultural governance frame principles. It can be surmised that politicians and senior bureaucrats are acutely aware of the alienation between themselves and constituents hence the positive cultural governance discourse is particularly advantageous in legitimising government planned action. 'Letters to the Editor' – as in (H31) – are often followed up by readers responses, the Editor's comment or a news article where the issue is furthered praised for its policy 'coherence' and elaborated on in subsequent articles and editorials (H33 – H34).

In November 2004, *The Mercury* printed seven stories with headlines pronouncing housing upgrades, the commencement of work on affordable housing, support from diverse leaders for the policy. For example the press wrote positively of government's (whether state or local) 'housing system' approach in headlines such as 'Brighton mayor backs new housing plan' (H38) and the visionary aspects of the state governments schemes to 'wed private, public housing' (H42). Readers of (H42) could assume that the new governance 'marriage' would benefit a suburb's 'renewal'. Similarly, *The Examiner* couched proposed changes in a positive way, using the word 'aims' and 'change' to describe the new 'face of housing' (H43). It is assumed readers know the old face of housing and how it could be improved from such 'deals'. *The Examiner* also wrote about specific strategies within the AHS such as community grant funding, using positive metaphors of 'flowing' to describe the movement of money into communities (H39). While only two headlines hit the front pages, there was considerable coverage within the front and middle sections of the local newspapers – 34 headlines were between pages 3 to 12 (see Figure 13 on the prominence of headlines).

Figure 13 Prominence of headlines on public housing and/or AHS, in The Mercury, The Examiner and The Advocate headlines, 2002-2004

Headline prominence page number	Total number	Additional information
Page 1-2	2 headlines	Front page with photo and half page 2
Page 3-6	16 headlines	Page 3: 2 headlines Page 4: 5 headlines Page 5: 5 headlines Page 6: 4 headlines
Page 7-12	18 headlines	3 Editorials 5 Letters to the Editor
Page 13-20	7 headlines	2 Letter to the Editor
Page 21 onwards	3 headlines	1 Letter to the Editor

Discussion: Cultural governance discourse and neo-liberal political practices

As the affordable housing crisis unfolded and intensified to incorporate more than public housing tenants, such as first home buyers and private renters, new ‘bold’ initiatives and ‘priorities’ were readily accepted in the news frame. Faith in social policies was represented with headlines reinforcing neo-liberal political practices and discourses of flexibility, responsiveness and ‘new’ ways of operating. Headlines described ‘visions,’ ‘renewal,’ ‘boosts,’ ‘rescue,’ ‘big plans,’ ‘some relief,’ ‘good news,’ ‘vital needs’ and ‘secure’ funding ‘flowing’ into communities and the building industry. Institutional and elite discourses were normalised in the press and part of the everyday understanding or taken-for-grantedness of housing policy operatives and goals. The ‘facts’ of an affordable housing crisis are not merely described in press coverage, rather they are ‘worked’ and imbued with additional subjective meaning, as Stone (1989: 282) acknowledges “political actors use narrative storylines and symbolic devices to manipulate so called issue characteristics”.

Headlines in the cultural governance frame can read like government promotional rhetoric with definitive statements and categorical assertions that the government is taking the necessary action to solve the housing crisis. The argument that neo-liberal capitalism portends the death of politics by hiding its own ideological underpinnings in the dictates of economic efficiency such as the ‘needs’ of business and empowered communities, the ‘value’ and benefits of the free market, resounds through the cultural governance frame (Hirst and Thompson, 1999). The end of political dialogue and debate is replaced with a frame that unequivocally replays the government line and, as a result, becomes dissociated from anything beyond itself (Hirst and Thompson, 1999: 31). These headlines skate on the periphery of social change language in that they help determine beliefs about the past and present in favour of one course of action and give the misleading impression that this action will necessarily eventuate with positive benefits for the target groups of public and social housing tenants. The cultural governance discourse inhibits discussion about the effects of policy and the desirability, or otherwise, of new governance arrangements or quasi-state organisations. Policy discussion or debate is confined to other

frames and arenas of conflict. The problems of housing affordability and the lack of housing for public tenants are not related to: the economic systems of inequality which produces high unemployment and inadequate wages for living standards; the financial system of money lending and interest rates; the political system heavily influenced by neo-liberal economics or the retraction of the welfare state.

In the framing literature, valence refers to the degree to which affective attributes of news, written in positive, negative or neutral tones, shape readers perceptions of those attributes (McCombs, Llamas, Lopez-Escobar and Rey, 1997). In this study it was evident an 'economic consequences frame' was often used to describe housing affordability and public housing issues in terms of the economic costs *and* benefits; the actual or potential impact on an individual, group, institutions and region. Gamson (1997) suggests that this frame is often used by journalists and news producers to capture readers interest, or to personalise the issue, by making it seem directly related to the readers. With only a small percentage of the readership living in public housing, employing an economic consequences positive tone contributes to readers interpretation that government spending is occurring where it is most needed and where its knock-on effects change a larger affordability problem.

The government and the media create an intertextual relationship where new practices of working and evaluating their performance in relation to each other emerge. Media genres, such as press releases and newspaper feature articles, hold a prominent role among the genres of government (Franklin, 1998) as an emphasis on promotional discourse often supersedes traditional political discourse. Such shifts indicate movements towards the question 'how was the government's message or policy received and promoted' rather than 'what political debates and dialogue were generated through the communication of the housing policy.' The media is part of the government's fundamental processes of policy reconstruction – they rely on the media to 'sell' the reform and 'sell' the policy as a solution to existing problems that they were not necessarily responsible for. In turn, one of the main roles of government communication is to publicise a new policy through positive press coverage, promotional brochures and websites, by promoting its value and significance (Ryan and Selth, 1991). Relying on government and institutional sources meant that the government and Housing Tasmania were incorporated as active participants or 'information subsidies' (Berkowitz & TerKeurst, 1999) in journalists framing action. The state government and Housing Tasmania took a proactive 'new managerial' role in issuing press releases, securing interest through their Media Office, employing Communications Managers and external consultants to better 'communicate' their policies to the public. A discourse of cultural governance incorporates less diverse stakeholder opinions concentrating more on 'like' or similar messages. In the 46 headlines reviewed only one included an advocate/NGO source. The support of TasCOSS, as the key peak body for social services in Tasmania, is to be taken as a cue to readers to interpret the housing policy as worthy of serious consideration and seen as already endorsed by interest groups with expert knowledge about the problem. However, these headlines do not present evidence to support the claims, instead the source becomes the factual basis for the claim.

The main themes in this cultural governance discourse are the pro-activeness of the government to identify and commit funds to the housing problem, making it a Budget

priority, and moving forward with sound management practices that maximise the state's investment by opening public housing up to market forces. These headlines serve to reinforce the ubiquitousness of neo-liberalism. They presuppose that readers' hold the same line that 'something must be done, something needs to happen' (Fairclough, 1995 building on Altheide's idea). The cohesive lexical devices used in headlines aim to orientate the reader to interpret government action and policy reform as commonsense and necessary (Marston, 2004). When elements of neo-liberalism are accepted or endorsed it's 'ownership' demands loyalty. This means that neo-liberal practices become unassailable and equated to a 'total' ideology. When one component, such as widening governance out to other sectors, is accepted other principles are deemed to follow-suit and also be accepted. The question of who should act, according to the cultural governance frame, concur with a promotion of government policy of new partnerships or 'working together' models with commercial and NGO sectors. For example the headline (H42) 'State vision for suburb renewal: Scheme to wed private, public housing' triggers a discourse of visionary joined-up solutions where the reliance on the government is shifted to broker or enabler, rather than sole provider. The governments' positive message has been accepted by the local media as being compatible with attempts to boost the declining public housing stock, rising waiting lists and pressure on rental markets in Tasmania. To summarise, the state government and Housing Tasmania are recognised as legitimate, official sources who receive significant media coverage based on their status and the expanded opportunities to be 'in the news.'

In recognising the potential limitations or shortcomings of headline analysis, this section attempted to go beyond an assessment of the cultural governance discourse in one 'moment of time'. Instead, headlines over several years were reviewed and an aligned theoretical exploration of media discourse formation, via the device of framing, was undertaken. Emerging discourses – like support for the *AHS* prior to and during its implementation – connect themselves to existing macro-discourses such as the cultural governance frame. The cultural governance discourse in the press coverage of public housing and *AHS* issues indicates one component of the social relations between the media and the state and one understanding of new modes of governance. This research demonstrates that the process of writing about the *AHS* in news stories encodes cultural understandings and official sources' views in news content. Hence 'public housing' as a theme was rewritten to consider the new governance processes beyond cyclical changes in press coverage (Papadaki & Grant, 2001). Tuchman (1991: 90-91) described how the process of transforming events into news discourses feeds on itself:

"it resembles the hermeneutic circle. Official interpretations set the news frames inherent in packaged stories; these packages are in turn interpreted by officials who use them as guides to action. Interpretation spawns interpretation; news makes news".

This section presented a critique of the cultural governance frame in the reporting of *AHS* and public housing in three local Tasmanian newspapers in the early 2000s. The overexposure of the problematic nature of public housing still exists in newspaper coverage but, critically, it coexists alongside persuasive frames of cultural governance. The next and final section of the chapter explores the parallel discourses communication consultants employ to describe their social relations and lived experiences of working with

DHHS and/or Housing Tasmania on AHS and related housing promotional material. These accounts show contradictory elements coexist in actors' discourses – neo-liberal political practices influence their hybrid positioning in support for market-driven messages and the positive exploitation of media discourses like the cultural governance frame, despite recognising a need to work closely with the state and for greater community participation to legitimatise policy change.

Interviewee findings: Promoting the AHS through outsourced consultants

For Housing Tasmania, improving the image of public housing and social housing – its governance structure, neighbourhoods and communities – constitutes a key focus of communication strategies. This section draws on interviews with eight external communication designers and marketers who discuss the merging of commercial and social marketing techniques and the conundrum of creating “*targeted communications products free of ‘internal bureaucratic language’*” (Interviewee 4).⁶⁵ Interviewees described their positions variously as: Advertising Director, Creative Designer, Communications Specialist, Marketing Creative Executive and Copy Writer. All tertiary educated and aged between late 30s to late 40s, the eight interviewees worked for either small-medium businesses or were the owner/operator of their business.⁶⁶ Two interviewees worked for franchisees of national advertising agencies. Two interviewees were female and both were joint owners of their business.

Career pathways included journalism, public relations and photography. Most interviewees described themselves as ‘always having worked in communications.’ All interviewees had worked with Housing Tasmania or tendered for a project but some were unsuccessful. Some interviewees, hoping to secure work with Housing Tasmania in the future, already held a significant portfolio of work with DHHS and other key agencies. The work parameters for external ‘creatives’ are set by the tender or project specifications, placing them somewhere along a scale of, at one end, relative autonomy to develop ‘concepts’ based on the ‘project brief’ to, at the other, being constrained to adhere to government agencies directions and pre-written copy.

Interviewees’ careers mirror the 1990s trend for the public sector to apply marketing strategies and planning tools (Kickert, 1997) in their relationship with ‘citizens’. This discursive shift emphasised customer and ‘user-pay’ rhetoric and other individualising and ‘active’ forms of citizenship in order to ‘sell’ policies (Buurma, 2001). Emerging ‘new hybrid partly promotional genres,’ including the use of synthetic personalisation in ‘information’ published by governmental agencies, became more widespread as

⁶⁵ The Tasmanian Government ‘Register of Communications Consultants and Service Providers’, at 20 January 2005, listed the winning consultant for 278 consulting projects across 13 government agencies. Communications are contracted out on an ‘as is needed’ basis. The communications functions include Communications Strategy and Planning; Creative Advertising; Events; Graphic Design; Market and Social Research and Evaluation; Marketing; Media; Multimedia; Multiple Formats; Photography; Printing; Productions; Public Relations; Research, Writing and Editing; Signage, Banner, Badges; Training and Web Services.

bureaucracies moved increasingly towards using consumerist approaches to sell or market ideas and policies (Fairclough, 1993). In keeping with this trend and broader neo-liberal political practices, Australian SHAs established 'marketised' policy frameworks. At the level of communications, this was aimed at informing and persuading citizens of the value and benefit of new social policies, while promoting changes in attitudes, perceptions and behaviours.

From 2002, Housing Tasmania began to endorse overt communications agendas via social marketing methodologies and outputs. A newly established internal position, Communications Manager, was funded with the brief of increasing positive communication between the agency and tenants; perhaps in readying tenants to the 'necessary' changes in their social and governing relations to the state.⁶⁷ External consultants were contracted for key tasks including the development of an appropriate Division-wide communications strategy and for the AHS's public promotion to smaller contracts, such as the design and printing of the 'Community Chat' newsletter.⁶⁸ As the AHS framework required significant community and commercial backing, and support for recurrent funding, a multi-medium social marketing communications campaign was established. According to Buurma (2001), social marketing campaigns position citizens by focusing on the social behaviour to be influenced; the 'necessary' culture change. Housing Tasmania's campaign was designed to persuade citizens to think 'differently' about who is affected by affordability issues, possible changes to housing systems and levels of involvement by multiple stakeholders. Thinking differently meant understanding, 'owning' and supporting the merits of the AHS, embracing a cultural shift that considers housing tenants outside of the prevailing stereotypes and recognises the 'value' of extending the provision of housing to more than just the government. As a process, this accentuates the attempt to make neo-liberalism unassailable; it is 'all or nothing'. As van Dijk (1998: 156) asserts:

"legitimizing discourses presuppose norms and values. They implicitly or explicitly state that some course of action, decision or policy is 'just' within the given legal or, political system, or more broadly within the prevalent moral order of society".

Non-state actors' utilisation of communications techniques is also documented in international housing studies. In the UK registered social housing organisations and landlords competed to "attract more economically active households into their stock" (Cope, 2000: 37) through a range of private-sector initiatives such as estate-agent style social housing shops, recruiting social housing staff trained in marketing techniques, and the establishment of central marketing teams by local authority housing departments (Cole *et al.*, 2001; Flint, 2003). Improving the image and desire to relocate to or remain in

⁶⁷ The 'Community Chat' newsletter was created in response (a 16 page glossy A4 newsletter sent to all public housing clients). This was followed by a focus on rewriting and designing other communications brochures and materials – some outlined key policies and procedure such as the *Essential Maintenance Package*, *Streets Ahead Incentive Program*, *Village Life (Kingston supported accommodation)* – redesigning the Departmental and Divisional website (relaunched in April 2005) and creating multiple strategy framework documents, brochures, information sheets, newsletters and evaluation reports to promote the AHS.

⁶⁸ This chapter focuses on Housing Tasmania contracts primarily within the fields of Communications Strategy and Planning Market and Social Research / Evaluation; Marketing; Media Printing; Productions; Public Relations and Research, Writing and Editing.

social housing neighbourhoods and communities through 'rebranding' and developing communications campaigns functions as a new attempt to reduce long-held stigma towards social housing tenants (Vale, 1995 and Taylor, 1999).

The discursive preference for 'good neighbourhoods' and 'safe, strong and resilient communities' in Housing Tasmania's policy and social marketing 'products' coincides with the Commonwealth governments policies and deregulated market values.⁶⁹ Neighbourhoods, communities and tenants are given a new moral responsibility for helping rejuvenate the way a place is defined and perceived. This positioning of the 'people' in terms of their responsibility and enterprise towards promoting individual and national well-being has occurred over the past three decades throughout Western democracies (Rose, 1999), its visibility in policy or promotional discourse in Tasmania is relatively recent. Hence the thesis' concentrates on the AHS as an example of neo-liberal political practices in Tasmania. 'Housing communications' are uniquely 'place based' and bound by the urban built environment. Whether responding to changed government priorities to address systemic problems, such as housing affordability, or in the hope of encouraging greater community participation among social housing tenants, the communications messages also involve social marketing principles. But despite the transformative power of cultural responses in housing and place-based marketing – from encouraging 'creative clusters' and refashioning cityscapes to mass marketing of new slogans or ideograms representing a 'better future' – their capacity to empower disadvantaged communities is often overestimated and remains fraught with uncertain impacts.⁷⁰

A consistent view amongst these interviewees was that the social relations between Housing Tasmania and the public were best articulated and envisioned when an attempt was made to deliver a whole-of-government approach i.e. where the policy campaign was connected to and/or in limited conflict with other policy areas.⁷¹ Trans-governmental policy responses incorporate the ideology of 'joined-up' solutions and those working in the creative industries see themselves as bringing together a network of stakeholders – from government agencies, industry, trade, academia, research and educational and professional bodies (O'Regan, 2002). Of these interviewees, several were disappointed when DHHS or Housing Tasmania had not capitalised on some social mileage or positive press from other campaigns – they cited examples where local communities were transformed when young people had access to a skate park or when the opportunity to link road safety messages or early-home education to public housing programs had been overlooked. Further, these interviewees talked of Housing Tasmania's need to "*positively exploit*" aspects of the cultural governance frame with the media more.

Three of these interviewees indicated that government agencies have a particular internal socialisation and acculturation process that, in turn, affects the way in which language is "*tightly bound*" (Interviewee 1) and "*often saying very little but is very convincing*" (Interviewee 4). They also indicated the local press, too, was convinced by some of the bureaucratic language and unproblematically repeated it in the cultural governance discourse. Different

⁶⁹ Including strategy framework documents, brochures, information sheets and newsletters.

⁷⁰ Extensive literature on the level and extent to which this prescribed participation is empowering and emancipatory for social housing tenants is debatable (Cairncross *et al.*, 1997; Carr *et al.*, 2001).

⁷¹ Appendix B details the interview questions.

interpretations of the dual rationalities of government and subject positions (as active consumers and responsible citizens) hold key points of contestation between creatives and Housing Tasmania employees. A male interviewee talked of “*fear and desire as the two major motivators in all social activities*” (Interviewee 7). For creatives then, the emotive drawcards of messages far surpass the unpacking of policy frameworks. Broadening ‘local knowledge’ of different combinations of tenure, different and overlapping community needs and different modes of government is difficult to achieve within the consultants parameters of creating a multipurpose ‘tag line’ or selecting representative photographs for all brochures and strategic frameworks. A common assertion, shared by over half of the interviewees, was that difficulties arose from creative limitations and constraints when writing social marketing documents:

“Where the brief is very specific, where the government agency knows exactly what it wants and how it wants it, you have to be prepared to do it their way”(Interviewee 4).

In this regard, it can be inferred that interviewees perceived their governing relations with the state as ‘transactional’ and their social relations with the state in relatively close terms (see Figure 14). Beyond collating the details of the project and attending necessary meetings as part of their contractual obligation, these interviewees held the view that they needed to work closely with the state to translate the policy messages and showcase them in a persuasive way to the public, creating headway in public housing change. Professional communicators contributed to the adeptness of the cultural governance discourse to funnel public opinion into support for policy change. In a similar way, press journalists have traditionally been seen as ‘gatekeepers’ in media studies. Communication and marketing specialists talked of the contingent conditions that either constrained or enabled their social relations with the state. Though, ultimately, more than half of the interviewees reproduced language representative of the cultural governance discourse in their expression of ideas or in their marketing output. Communication experts demonstrated Fairclough’s (1993) ‘new hybrid partly promotional genres’ in working with the government to sell ideas and policies along consumerist lines. They invariably talked of a seamless merge between social and commercial marketing practices to win support for housing policies, and develop customer-driven and market responsive messages. Housing Tasmania’s reliance on paternalistic and internally created messages was criticised for failing to ‘connect’ with readers.

Figure 14 Communications governing mode and social relations grid

Actor group	Governing mode	Proximity of social relations
Communications specialists	Transactional	Close

For one interviewee – who talked in a way that indicated his embeddedness to the state – the government still failed to capitalise on the value of a cultural governance discourse in mitigating against negative news stories:

“They need to stop shifting their sole focus onto crisis issue management. They are trying to change journalists’ minds about what they were going to write which will never work. They need to be focusing on making it easier for the journalist by building in education and site visits to openings and user-friendly policy statements [...] Journalists are notorious for

being fed stories and with a lot of space to fill each day, a well crafted social marketing campaign can get a lot of free press” (Interviewee 3).

Here, positive news press was seen as a key causal mechanism for later uptake of policy messages in brochures. To achieve a story line these interviewees stated that they often had to remind the government to use the press to their advantage, maximising positive press by writing ‘easy to use’ press releases and repeating main messages, often in various formats from ‘Letter to Editors,’ policy brochures, web pages and tenant newsletters. In broad terms, ‘easy to use’ press releases for example are those that read as ‘objective enough’ to print without change, again reproducing the ‘accepted’ language of neo-liberalism. Discussing how policy messages gain community acceptance, one interviewee commented on the use of familiar time-worn images and language in brochures, but also noted public housing is still not tenure that most audiences imagine their future in:

“We know that good press is as important as clean, visually appealing brochures for a policy launch. We have to find images in the policy brochures that resonate with simple messages. Like ‘people living in harmony’. An elderly tenant out the front of a secure looking place that’s doesn’t have graffiti and isn’t surrounded by high fences. A single mum cooking in her clean kitchen. We want to evoke the banal response that these guys are just like us and with a good housing policy more people like them will get a Housing Tasmania property. And that will take pressure off my kids when they are looking for somewhere to rent before they buy” (Interviewee 4).

This quote indicates the positionality of public housing tenants – good but ‘other’ – and the effects of creating a more affordable housing system for middle-class families unlikely to directly benefit from more public housing. Affordable housing was seen as an incontestably positive term that should be used frequently. It held similar features with the unassailability of neo-liberalism:

“‘Affordable housing’ is a very, very nice phrase. There’s no one who can argue, when they hear the phrase affordable housing, you cannot argue with that. It’s just ‘great’. Social housing is contrived, it sounds like it’s come out of a focus group [...] It doesn’t sound like the language of the people who live there” (Interviewee 1)

The process of merging social and commercial marketing was described within a ‘normalising’ discourse and considered a necessary model for campaign success. A Hobart based interviewee explained processes of mixing these two traditionally separate entities with the aim of developing customer-driven and market responsive messages:

“I bring the rules of commercial marketing to the social marketing space [...] By translating those rules to social marketing we are now calling them ‘stakeholders’ rather than customers but we still need to understand their hopes, their dreams, their aspirations, their fears, their frustrations [...] When you understand who you are talking to you can write the brief [...] social marketing clients often make the mistake, they start off with objectives that are internal but these don’t necessarily reflect what the stakeholders wants” (Interviewee 5).

The constraints of adopting paternalistic communications messages or internal policy ideas were raised by all (eight) interviewees who expressed concern that Housing Tasmania messages could easily have been read as directive rather than informative. Hemmed in, on one side, by 'being told what to do or how to behave' and, on the other, by being told how effective the agency and service is, tenants were perceived as being removed from the centre of these types of communications. These two positionalities replicate the duality of neo-liberalism. Consider the three quotes below:

"The paternalistic messages are things like 'we have allocated more money,' 'the government is committed to spending this,' 'the government is working very hard' [...] the stakeholders don't really care about or want to know that" (Interviewee 8)

"The more internal and bureaucratic the language the harder it is to communicate. There's nothing that gets under the skin" (Interviewee 1)

"Top down messages are really inflammatory" (Interviewee 4).

Additionally, communication specialists often held conflicting or contradictory views about government messages. At times they talked in purely pragmatic terms – about what would work to persuade the target audience – with little reflection of the value of the policy. Interviewees argued that writing 'less' reduces ambiguity – hence preferring repetition of simple, relatively bland messages to convince the public of a policy's 'commonsense.' However, they also claimed that the message should be tailored towards stakeholders needs and wants and not be an expression solely of 'government spin.' The reason interviewees gave for advocating the use of promotional language that *"hides opposition and limits diversity of meaning to a small range of positive interpretations"* (Interviewee 7) was based on the contentious nature of the political landscape. The preferred reading of policy shifts becomes a matter of logical commonsense, for example 'change requires financial investment', 'proper returns on financial investments can be achieved', 'the market can allocate resources best for returns on investment' (see findings in Chapter Ten on pseudo-market discourses). It can be concluded, from the interviewees' responses, that neo-liberalism was not perceived as a clear-cut, top-down impositional discourse applied by the state or Housing Tasmania onto powerless tenants or unsuspecting homebuyers. Framing research clearly indicates that unambiguous 'decoding' of a headline or message does not necessarily prevail. Policy solutions presented in the cultural governance frame may not be interpreted or accepted by all readers. Policy solutions, just like social problems, remain contested (Hastings, 1999). But ways exist for the government to promote moral discourses within policy implementation process in order to limit divergent interpretations, as Edelman (1988: 104) writes:

"While coercion and intimidation help to check resistance in all political systems, the key tactic must always be the evocation of interpretations that legitimise favoured courses of action and threaten or reassure people so as to encourage them to remain quiescent. Allocation of benefits must themselves be infused with meanings: whose well-being does a policy threaten and whose does it enhance".

Conclusion

The relationship between structural tendencies, new policy endorsement and the way these are constituted in relation to, and mediated through, the press and marketers and communications specialists emerges as an important research consideration for the circuit of governance analysis. Public housing funding sits within governmental decision-making processes and structural constraints as the previous two chapters outlined. Yet, according to the cultural governance news frame, the *AHS* proposes an innovative way to handle the impact of financial constraints and encourage a cultural shift in tenant behaviour. Hence, this news frame indirectly attempts to reassure the public that structural inequalities are being addressed and the people currently unable to secure public housing will be able to in the immediate future. It is as though the state can still fulfill its traditional role but in a much less costly manner. Accommodated within regular press coverage, this frame has a narrow localism compared with, for example the structural diagnosis frame which incorporates the Federal funding arrangements and associated fractured relations, national trends and affordability comparisons. Importantly, the preponderance of headlines that utilise the cultural governance discourse effectively serves to silence other discourses evident within the structural diagnosis frame. Rather than witnessing the shift towards a more skeptical and probing media, this chapter argues that the dominant framing is in favour of a neo-liberal regime of broadening involvement in housing to other sectors (this common-sense neo-liberal approach) leading to the further integration of housing into capital and market mechanisms.

Governments' use of public relations, marketing and communications experts has "greatly enlarged the potentiality for deception and diversion from the issues that affect well-being" (Edelman, 2001: 89) by accentuating positive versions of government action. This analysis found headlines attempt to persuade readers to envisage the *AHS* policy change as the 'answer' to housing shortages which fosters the false "belief that remedial measures have been taken ignoring the historical record of [policy] failure" (Edelman, 2001: 90). The local media and consultant marketers established a successful cultural governance frame to minimise public resistance (Ross, 2000) and to sway, educate or inform the public of the *AHS*'s purpose and 'likely' benefits.

The existence of a concurrent moral code discourse (e.g. social pathologising frame in the press and 'insider' groups, such as tenants, calls for 'ethical self-government' – see Chapter Seven for further elaboration) contributed to the strength of the government and Housing Tasmania's argument to 'take immediate action.' While the cause of the housing 'problem' is often maligned to 'bad tenants' and is endogenous in this frame, it potentially colludes with a larger rationale for a shift in 'how things are done.' Again, tenants negative subject position functions to "immobilize opposition and mobilize support" (Edelman, 1988: 104) for the *AHS*. The cultural governance frame in the press, policy brochures and government statements incorporates 'good' tenants as exhibiting deserving 'selfhood' (Gardiner, 1999: 48). The next chapter considers the social relations public housing tenants experience with Housing Tasmania and the key enabling and restraining factors that impact on their tenure during the *AHS*'s movements towards new governance. Using the typology of proximity, I argue that 'distant' tenants involved in an interaction (rather than transaction or compliance) with the state hold a range of competing interpretations about the state's role in managing new tenants with complex needs living in their neighbourhoods.

CHAPTER SEVEN: DIFFICULTIES WITH 'DISTANT' RELATIONS: PUBLIC HOUSING TENANTS AND THE STATE

Introduction

Public housing tenants are another key group of actors within the circuit of governance framework. This chapter considers individual interpretations of governing and the changed social relations that tenants experience with the state as a result of neo-liberal political practices. This includes their reactions to quangos and the role of self-governance. After thematically analysing focus group and interview material with thirty-five (35) public housing residents, I applied the typological framework to assess the proximity of social relations between tenants and the state. The explanatory and analytical framework through which the tenant interview and focus group data is interpreted builds on the ontology of critical realism, with explanations emerging from tenants' key themes via retroductive processes. A critical realist approach generates degrees of divergence and convergence on the ways social relations with the state can be enacted in changed housing provision arrangements. Such proximities to the state unfold in three distinct tenant groups. Metaphors of proximity were used namely 'distant', 'close' or 'neutral' social relations as the measure of proximity sheds light on the connections actors imagine they have with the state, influencing their governance views and positionality.

From a critical realist perspective, understanding tenant explanations of causal mechanisms that reproduce social reality and thus new governance practices is necessary before transformation or change to current policy priorities, from such understanding, is possible. Building on the earlier outlined critical realist argument that structure has a real existence that relates to the underlying individual embodiment of power or disadvantage, this chapter analyses tenant positions on the governing and self-governing components of their own neighbourhood or community.

This chapter concentrates on the discourses enunciated by disgruntled self described 'good tenants' with 'distant' social relations to the state because they illustrate the friction in dialectical processes of neo-liberal governance. They also represent the largest body of research participants. Reforms to public housing are not easily accepted by tenants who have lived in public housing for an extended period, and who have a strong sense of the traditional role of the state. The gradual incorporation of neo-liberal ideas into an array of economic, social and political arenas also means that these tenants are, to varying degrees, conversant with some of their proposed benefits and taken-for-granted elements. Tenants too, like other actor groups, integrate competing and contradictory discourses to assist them in negotiating their needs with the state. This corresponds to Flint's (2004) idea of tenants reconfiguring 'politics of behaviour', while at the same time they question neo-liberalism's conception of limited government intervention. Distant tenants utilise a discourse that denounces the governance and relational restructuring of the state in two primary situations. First, when new modes of governance seem to provide less services and certainty than public provision and second, when the state fails to perform a traditional enforcement role when governing problematic tenants. Drawing on empirical findings, this chapter examines, through thematic analysis and retroductive processes, the

absorption of neo-liberal ideas in tenants' discourses and the fissures that surface from their difficulties in reconciling the expectations and previous experiences of state relations with the new social relations outlined in the *AHS*.

The analytical framework used to interpret the interview data in this chapter focuses on the real underlying mechanisms reproducing social reality, and thus changes in tenant composition and daily life in public and social housing. The research findings are then directly related to the critical realist emphasis on possibilities of transformation from understanding change, exposing the need to consider the implications for tenants of 'actually existing neo-liberal' changes to governance modes. Concentrating on 'distant' tenants proves an analytically and conceptually stronger lens through which to consider structural and actor tensions.

Tenants' discourses and ways of relating oscillate between potentially contradictory interpretations and enactments of governance creating fissures between neo-liberal economic and social democratic politics. In effect, these discourses present a parallel problem and challenge, applying and rejecting component, contingent elements of new social governing practices. As Lawson (2006: 89) reminds us housing and housing relations are not static, rather they are "surrounded and sustained by an environment of path-dependent and dynamic institutions." To guide the search for the causal mechanisms of 'actually existing neo-liberalism' in public housing governance change, it will be argued that emergent relations between the state and tenants must be reasonably examined.

As stated in Chapter Four, making a clear distinction between structure and agency is methodologically important because it becomes the vehicle to examine the interplay between human action and social structure. Archer writes (1998: 203) this is "crucial for theorising about the vexatious fact of society, whether our preoccupation is with everyday personal dilemmas or with macroscopic social transformations." Data analysis is conducted by critically rereading interview transcripts and interpreting key themes to determine the mechanisms, contingencies and strategic events that have either reinforced or undermined tenants' social relations with the state. As the nature of social and physical reality is stratified, not all regularities and underlying generative forces within the social relations between tenants and the state can be immediately observed. Viewing the *AHS* as an intervention designed to 'produce' greater efficiency in housing for people in most need, does not readily pinpoint the multiple individual or attitudinal, institutional and societal processes that the policy is embedded within. Nor does it reveal the level of choice available to tenants in terms of their acceptance of the policy or desire for a close, distant or neutral social relation with the state. Here, again, critical realism enables ontological depth for the consideration of the mechanisms, regularities and context of their place within the circuit of governance. Using a retroductive process, it was evident that 'distant' tenants explained their connecting mode of governance with the state as an interaction.

Tenant Discourses

Actors use language to articulate the importance of their needs and to make obscure other people’s needs. Tenants endorsed a strong state model and pushed for greater regulation.⁷² As evidenced from the data, this thesis suggests that individual tenants selected components of neo-liberal political and governing discourses in unconventional, contradictory ways – on the one hand, tenants were keen for the state to expand its role and on the other, they reinforced the need for tenants to take responsibility for themselves and be empowered. Flint (2004: 5) refers to the latter perspective as a legitimating process of “deepening and widening of tenant responsibility” in ethico-political ways. Tenant views were expressed in an everyday vernacular. In analysing the data it is revealed that tenants’ reproduce, contest or elasticise dominant ideologies within the prevailing institutional structure. During the focus groups and one-to-one interviews, tenants described how they understood housing policy reforms and reconfigured relations with the state and the degree to which these “deeply embedded” structures (Giddens, 1984) were accepted or challenged by their social action.

Tenant Participants

Thirty-five (35) public housing tenants in Devonport, Launceston and Hobart participated in the research (see Figure 15).⁷³ As detailed in Appendix D, tenants were asked general tenure questions; their attitudes and actions towards their community and neighbours; contact with Housing Tasmania and frequency; difficulties in living in public housing; and views on the AHS public housing objectives. Length of residence in public housing varied from one year to 55 years – of these 22 participants tallied over 15 years; two recently started their first public housing contract and five had re-entered public housing after periods: living in other tenures, being homeless or in precarious arrangements such as sleeping in their car.

Figure 15 Gender and Location of Tenant Participants

AREA	WOMEN	MEN	TOTAL
Devonport	2	5	7
Launceston	4	0	4
Hobart	12	12	24
TOTAL	18	17	35

Two-thirds of the research participants were 55 or over and living alone. Eight tenants, all younger than 55, had children living at home with three of these tenants (the only ones in the overall group) expressing a desire to purchase their current residence.⁷⁴ These three

⁷² But a straight Marxist interpretation would fall short in identifying and critiquing tenants’ simultaneous support *and* conflict with the state.

⁷³ Focus groups were conducted in March 2006 and interviews in August 2007. See Chapter Three for greater elaboration of methods.

⁷⁴ The AHS included the continuation of the Streets Ahead Incentive Program (SAIP) to assist eligible Housing Tasmania tenants to buy their Housing Tasmania houses at a purchase price of \$115,000 or less; and ongoing support for housing loan assistance through the Home Ownership Assistance Program (HOAP). A feature of the AHS was a revised sales program of 600 identified Housing Tasmania properties for sale over

participants were supportive of the *AHS* initiative but had no first-hand dealings with its process. Seven tenants stated they had a mental illness or severe learning disability.⁷⁵ Four tenants were in paid employment; one tenant was employed by Housing Tasmania for 'caretaking' duties. Overall, tenants had a fragmented understanding of the *AHS* aims and little actual experience of it being implemented or seeing the results emerge in their neighbourhoods or communities. Only six tenants commented directly when questioned on the *AHS* objectives. More frequently tenants mentioned how new housing policy "*missed the mark*" on housing allocations and contractual enforcements. For instance they argued Housing Tasmania did not house 'similar' tenants alongside each other, creating harmonious communities within estates and Housing Tasmania did not follow-up with routine checks to ensure new tenants were 'regulated'. Most of the participants opposed greater concentrations of Category One tenants, i.e. tenants deemed to be first priority on the public housing waiting list, often having complex needs – because an inevitable result would be the further entrenchment of public housing's low status and negative impacts on their quality of life. Neo-liberal political practices were infrequently identified with only three tenants commenting on "*newer ways of thinking about things*" such as responsible self-governance or the contraction of state services as stemming from a change in political ideology.

Metaphors of proximity are used to describe the degree to which tenants felt connected to the state. As indicated earlier a scale of 'distant', 'close' or 'neutral' social relations was used:

1. *Distant* social relations with Housing Tasmania: Most of the interviewees belonged to this group. They were long-term tenants who stated they felt neglected by Housing Tasmania's inactivity and general remoteness. As unproblematic tenants without any ongoing, significant needs they thought that Housing Tasmania showed little interest in them. To build the desired close relations with the state, they argued that their 'good' behaviour should be rewarded. These rewards would incentive and encourage less conforming or disruptive tenants to modify their conduct. Defining their relationship with Housing Tasmania as 'distant', these tenants claimed the state's main priority should be to act as the 'regulator', enforcing policies that minimise the 'risk' associated with deviant or new tenants with complex-needs moving into public housing. These tenants constitute the main focus of this chapter as they discussed, with greatest force (in terms of quantity of comments and in cross-section of themes) how internal contradictions within their social relations and discursive explanations co-exist. Adhering to a belief in neo-liberal ideals of self-governance they simultaneously espoused concerns that governing-at-a-distance undermined the strength and institutional power of the state. The intersection of their social relations with modes of governance is represented in:

the next four years to existing Housing Tasmania tenants and/or low-income earners interested in entering into home ownership.

⁷⁵ This observation is only relevant in terms of the subsequent discussion and analysis of discourses about newer tenants with complex needs moving into properties and public housing communities.

Figure 16 Distant tenants’ governing connections and social relations grid

Typology Group	Governing connections	Proximity of social relations
Public housing tenants	Relationships	Distant

2. *Close social relations with Housing Tasmania:* Eleven tenants defined an easy, accessible relationship with the state; and described being “*listened to*” and “*positively supported*”. They claimed Housing Tasmania made a significant beneficial difference to their life during a crisis – generating a sense of mutual respect and commitment. Interpreting other tenants ‘distant’ relations they argued tenants should demonstrate reciprocal behaviour: “*pull their weight*” and “*initiate contact when they need something otherwise how are they [Housing Tasmania] going to know your needs*”. New and long-term tenants who were allocated appropriate housing in a short timeframe expressed high levels of satisfaction with services. This was based, in part, on their expectations that they would be waiting for a longer time. In these cases the experiences of the service greatly exceeded expectation. New tenants were pleased with the quality of their unit or home: “*They gave me a place in the area I wanted...I’m a single mum. I told them I wanted to live near my mum. I got a house on the top of the hill and we can see my mum’s house from ours. It’s great. They listened and gave me what I needed. I think I could talk to them about my needs and they’d find a way to help*”. Other tenants talked of the assistance Housing Tasmania gave them after they had other serious life concerns. An elderly male tenant talked of the support after having major surgery: “*At the moment Housing Tasmania has been really good with me. I’ve had a few problems and they’ve been there all the time for me. They’ve put me in the right accommodation close to the shopping centre. I had a triple bypass and Housing Tasmania came up with the goods. It (housing allocation) was quick and they put in handrails. I wasn’t too good at the time. Their help made a big difference.*” An elderly woman elaborated on the reciprocal nature of her relations with the state: “*Housing Tasmania put in railings and ramps after my hip replacement. Whatever I’ve asked for I’ve got. I’m a good tenant and they know they never need to worry about anything from me. When they want me to help out at the community centre and get enough tenants to attend their information meetings I get the word out. I see it as part of how we work together for each other.*”
3. *Neutral relations:* These tenants held no strong opinion either way about their social relations with Housing Tasmania. Two of the four tenants grouped in the neutral relations category said they were pleased with the speed they were allocated a house or unit and with housing services overall but felt that more contact with staff could be of an unnamed benefit. Raymond, in his early 60s living in a Housing Tasmania property near his daughter and young grandson, said “*Housing Tasmania responds to people’s concerns by making people calm, writing letters [pause] it’s not like the bad old days when they come into our life and take over [pause] though I guess Housing Tasmania could have more frequent contact with tenants. Our manager has over 600 properties to manage so we hardly see her!*”⁷⁶ Another tenant, Jack, explained “*I’m glad I’ve got a home. I don’t think it’s anything special that I’ve got one. That’s what governments should do. Look after their people and the people should behave*

⁷⁶ Not real name - pseudonyms are used for tenants.

and live well. I don't need to have anything to do with Housing Tasmania. I just get on with living happily on my own."

Figure 17 Framework of social relations ‘proximity’: public housing tenants and Housing Tasmania

Status of relations	Qualities of participants relationship status
Distant	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 20 of 35 research participants- Felt <i>“out of the loop,” “of little interest to Housing Tasmania,” “ignored,” “forgotten”</i> by the state- Described themselves as <i>“good tenants,” “unproblematic,”</i> requiring no additional support services. Not seen as <i>“important”</i> as a result- Mostly long-term tenants- Mostly women over 55
Close⁷⁷	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 11 of 35 research participants- Positive experiences and examples based on receiving greater support/assistance than expected; help in employment, accommodation, mental health, disability and debt matters- Felt Housing Tasmania was responsive and <i>“easy to contact”</i>.- Described a comfortable relationship with the state- Almost half of this group were men
Neutral⁷⁸	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 4 of 35 research participants- Described Housing Tasmania as largely effective in its remit- Inaction and passivity demonstrated by statements such as <i>“quietly getting on with living here without anyone noticing me,” “don’t want any trouble,” “couldn’t go back to living in my car”</i>- Participants imagined that a ‘closer’ relationship with the state would be of some (often undefined) benefit to them.

⁷⁷ While a reasonable number of tenants indicated a ‘close’ relationship with Housing Tasmania the main focus of this chapter is on the ‘distant’ group as they merge and challenge key aspects of governance processes into their actual and imagined relations. ‘Close’ tenants tended to recount positive stories of being assisted more than they anticipated and then, in turn, demonstrating active connectedness to the state.

⁷⁸ The smallest group of ‘neutral’ tenants are not further elaborated on in the thesis – the important point here was that three main social relations connections or proximities existed in the interviews/focus groups. Neutral tenants tended to be male, relatively new tenants with few comments or observations about governance changes that were in process.

Figure 18 Tenants views based on social relations typology of tenants, state and the AHS

Social relations	Tenants role and obligations	States role and Obligations	AHS role and obligations
Distant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personal responsibility for actions - Belong to community - Behave in accordance with rules & moral code - Pay rent on time and look after property 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Greater surveillance and process for probation period followed through - Minimise 'risk' to 'innocent third parties' (i.e. existing tenants) - Rehouse or evict tenants who do not comply and enforce policies on anti-social behaviour - Review contracting and outsourcing policies and procedures - Carry out property maintenance and repairs in a timely manner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appropriately house tenants (sensitive tenant mix, more disability housing) - Requires ongoing funding - Communicate stages and benefits to tenants
Close	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personal responsibility to community - Greater opportunities and assistance with non-housing issues or difficulties - Articulate needs and contact Housing Tasmania for support or enquiries - Greater education of tenants about mental health & disabilities to increase community cohesion - Pay rent on time and look after property 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding and sensitive enforcement of policies (e.g. rent arrears) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Home purchase schemes - Requires ongoing funding - Enabler of housing assistance of integrated service approach
Neutral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appreciate being housed and quietly 'get on with it' - Pay rent on time and look after property 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase meaningful contact with tenants (from written communication to more Tenancy Manager visits) - Carry out property maintenance and repairs in a timely manner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unsure of AHS implications for their tenancy

Almost three quarters of the interviewed tenants attributed significance to their daily interactions with neighbours; prefacing the regularity of contact as evidence of their

'normality' and the strength of 'bonding capital' in their community. This is an important factor as the social relational rationalities of neo-liberalism feature strongly in tenant discourses – both in terms of what the state should contribute to and regulate and in support for self-governance.⁷⁹ In particular, women noted their social life was primarily organised around close neighbours, expanding out to their adult children living nearby in other public housing estates or suburbs. Outside networks for tenants who were no longer, or never had been, employed or volunteering, were reduced. Their lives were characterised by a sense of locatedness with other tenants, reinforcing the pull of the everyday locale of life. Three women from the same elderly complex in Launceston identified their friendships as central to their socially "*rich life*" with "*something on every day*". Wayne, a tenant in Hobart said he finally "*felt comfortable. I know what to expect and what goes on day-to-day around me*". For these tenants having a 'bounded' sense of home was an enhancement rather than a detriment to their quality of life. Without a 'social buffer' (Wilson, 1987) of families from working and middle classes professions, tenants lived primarily among themselves. 'Routinisation', a fundamental concept of Giddens' 'structuration theory' (1984) is valuable here in demonstrating tenants' connections to their place and surroundings: "Ordinary day-to-day life [...] involves an *ontological security* expressing an *autonomy of bodily control* within *predictable routines*" (Giddens, 1984: 50, original emphasis). Daily routines, such as chatting to neighbours, builds ontological security in the familiar, respect for predictability and patterns and the repetition of everyday life (Cohen and Taylor, 1992).

Routines 'slot' in social interactions that mark out the rhythm of a day and expose fault-lines where routines are disrupted by deviant or other behaviour. Henri Lefebvre emphasises the connection between routine life and the dynamics of the urban in a "contrasting diptych" (Lefebvre, 1991: 35) of the simultaneous misery and power of the everyday. This parallels how tenants who describe themselves as 'distant' fluctuate between a discourse of being neglected and forgotten by the state to that of connectedness to their home and neighbours, making it impossible for them to want to live anywhere else. An appreciation of the positive features of tenants' everyday life, community or neighbourhood was evident in their reflections on past events.⁸⁰ Sharing stories of life in public housing served as self-evaluating points of reference, often reaffirming tenants' competence in dealing with problems and seeking assistance from state institutions when necessary. This corresponds with Percival's (2001) research on older tenants in local housing association accommodation in the UK. He suggests recollections are valuable because they remind people, and their immediate audience, of their skills in coping with struggles and major life events. At its best, the very act of reminiscing becomes a socially enjoyable and personally meaningful exercise reinforced through the communal experience of neighbourliness. From the interviewees, twenty tenants expressed a sense of retrospective hope or nostalgia for the past – commonplace in accounts of working class culture (Williams, 1957) – specifically concerned with the personal effects of changes to the public housing tenant mix. Avoiding an overly static depiction of life 'yesterday', one can

⁷⁹ Relational interactions encourage actors to change the cultural and practices of governing by acting together – whether through ideas of mutuality, 'partnership' programs or 'working together' AHS tasks.

⁸⁰ Nisbet (1980: 49) interpreted this effusive term 'community' as "any relations with a strong measure of personal intimacy, emotional depth, moral involvement, social cohesion and sustainability". While some scholars link community to location, others argue that concentrating on 'place' negates power relations (Harvey, 1990).

assume, although there were tensions and problems, these tenants either had more coping mechanisms or support systems in the past or felt the state was “doing more” to eliminate community antagonisms. Another interpretation could be that the state were providing similar services but society has changed so significantly that the gap in living standards between themselves and home owners, for example was, and appears to be, greater. Several tenants discussed protective measures such as reducing their friendships to a small circle of neighbours. Yet, similar to other studies, tenants showed no intention of leaving, often citing connections to other residents as a key advantage of their current home.⁸¹

Furthermore, Vale’s scholarship on public housing in the United States indicates a distance between policymakers and broader societal assumptions about housing desirability with tenants’ sense of home. Vale (1997) found that, despite widespread assumptions that most residents of large public housing projects in America’s inner cities would welcome the opportunity to leave such places, a sizeable number of residents would prefer to stay. His research, drawing on in-depth interviews with 267 residents of five public housing developments in Boston, examines why two-thirds of these respondents wanted to stay and the factors affecting those wanting to leave. Vale concludes that urban planners and policymakers face a challenge of reconciling the need to develop and sustain stable public housing communities while still providing avenues for residents to move to less impoverished neighbourhoods.

Vale is supportive of the moral and political imperative to ameliorate conditions in the most difficult and ‘worst-off’ public housing developments. His earlier work challenged the utility of the term ‘severely distressed’ public housing proposing that the state should view them as “furthest along a continuum” (Vale, 1993: 147 and 2002: 4). Relying on a paradigm of ‘problem projects’ resonates with the way the Tasmanian press used the cultural governance discourse to substantiate the need for changes to social housing. A ‘problem projects’ lens neglects a thorough understanding of which type of systematic reforms could be incorporated into policy change. The main issue for Vale was that little was known about residents’ assessments of their own communities, which presented a significant oversight when wholesale demolition and significant reconfiguration in mixed neighbourhoods was being proposed. Public housing did not fail everyone everywhere equally hence the need for further localised understanding of community needs and housing designs. A key finding was that the public housing developments could be a source of empathy and community for residents, who often expressed a strong ambivalence about whether it would be better to remain in their neighborhoods or to leave. Vale (1996) described this place attachment as “empathological,” which “marks the uneasy confluence of social center and economic wasteland.”

As discussed in Chapter One, Housing Tasmania structurally altered over the course of participants’ tenure as a result of a number of factors including incongruous political shifts, leadership changes, agency restructuring, the promotion of CRA over public

⁸¹ While poor non-housing outcomes are recorded for public housing tenants and low-income private renters in receipt of government assistance, a dominant finding in this literature states the “presence of a strong community may be the product of disadvantage since this has the effect of concentrating life within the local area” (Mullins and Western, 2001: 4). It can be inferred that the downside for these tenants’ is that their connectedness compacts greater structural inequalities.

housing, associated budgetary constraints and other human services advancing ahead in priority. Tenants had a high degree of full time presence in one community with minimal social relations with Housing Tasmania. Tenants' accounts point to instances where they both frame Housing Tasmania as a coherent entity – with the need to apply macro-force to intervene and regulate – and as a more dispersed body with variable enactments of policy being delivered by staff, with much more capacity for building 'close relationships'. This contradiction exemplifies actors' incorporation and rejection of alternative possibilities in new modes of governing. Pusey (1987) writes on the ways in which neo-liberal technologies of rule and rationalities of governing such as self-governance and 'civic responsibility' colonised the 'lifeworld' and lived experiences of individuals to suppress their competency in articulating structural emancipatory potentials. Tenants' experiences and discourses replicated Pusey's analysis. For example, several tenants raised the view that causal mechanisms that other newer tenants use that lead to regular patterns of behaviour such as being threatening, intimidating or playing loud music early until 2am. For these distant tenants, the AHS should counter these causal mechanisms through the establishment of alternative ones introduced through greater regulation and enforcement of supervision, rules or tenancy reviews. The remainder of the chapter covers central issues in the discourses of 'distant' tenants particularly those that centred on the juxtaposition of state enforcement and mutual responsibility.

The interplay of two roles: structural and social

In his influential book, Steven Lukes' (1974) argues that the exercise of power is influenced by how the interests of powerful groups can be used to influence political agendas, often to the detriment of less powerful groups. In Lukes' 'third dimension' structures of power can be accepted and internalised unquestioningly or without, as critical realists mention, observation or possibility to observe such compliance. This view, then, challenges the space allocated and utilised by tenants in their social relations of proximity to the state. Opportunities to air their concerns about new housing allocation systems or more tenants with co-morbidity issues does not equate with changes to the AHS or indeed tenants skills in arguing for such change. Hence exerting influence within the circuit is variable and can fluctuate in line with a number of emergent, contingent factors (Cairncross, Clapham and Goodlad, 1994: 180). Lukes' (1974) pushes us to radically broaden our understanding of what constitutes power by considering how actor's preferences can be shaped in ways that are contrary to their best interest. What it is to be a tenant cannot be explained at the level of the individual but only in terms of their relation to the state or to homeowners and vice versa. The powers tenants can draw on depend on both their relation to the state and others within the circuit and to relevant parts if the contexts such as NGOs that may be taking over their tenancy.

'Social structures' (Bhaskar, 1989; Archer, 1995) between Housing Tasmania and tenants rely on following internal dynamics already determined by social positions. In the case of public housing, specific factors (such as receipt of welfare benefits, moving into existing tenant communities or being prioritised on the waiting list) compound the degree to which a tenant is required to adhere to structural rules. A tenant's pre-existing role directs much of their action and contains possible transgression from the norm. Hence 'distant' tenants' support for these roles was articulated in a discourse of state *and* tenant responsibility. The disappointment and frustration tenants' voiced was based on two factors: that new tenants were not abiding by contractual obligations about how they

should behave in public housing; and the state's perceived neglect caused by its retraction and support for new governance modes.

'Promise-keeping' acts bind individuals to specified future conduct "even if fulfilling the promise at the time would be contrary to immediate self-interest" (Galston, 2003: 212). For long-term tenants

"radical departure from the institutional order is seen as a departure from the natural order. In other words, institutions produce structures which impose a set of rules and definitions of appropriate codes of behaviour constraining people's actions and interactions" (Saugeres, 2000: 589).

But within this internalising process of state-knowledge tenants actively negotiate their agency and degree of 'responsibilised' action. As such, tenants felt displaced by the state's failure to reproduce what they saw as the pre-existing structural norms which dated back to when they moved into public housing, often decades ago. Interpreting their views and the frequency of specific themes, I suggest that neo-liberal political practices replaced pre-existing structural orders through a retraction of state presence in their tenancy contract; reinscribing the parameters of the 'promise-keeping' rules.

Tenant participants, in effect, were signaling to wider public policy debates. In the UK and the USA polemic on appropriate, effective use of regulative coercive measures sits within broader arguments on welfarism and 'conditionality' (Flint, 2003). At the same time, Australian housing policies were being reshaped by restrictions that accentuated welfare contractualism and redirected funds from public housing to CRA. These academic arguments are echoed in this research when 'distant' tenants promoted the explicit enforcement by the state of contractual obligations on individual tenants' lives. Thus the state's policies were seen as inadequate instruments because governing-at-a-distance was a socially (not economically) ineffective mode of governance and destructive to the traditional role of the state. The spatial dimension of government power relations (Miller and Rose, 1990; Dean, 1999) considers distributional power and regulation across physical and governance 'territories' starting from a reworking of Latour's (1987) parent theory of 'action at a distance.' 'Distant' tenants, living in largely homogenous neighbourhoods in an era of 'individualisation' see themselves as dependent on the state and/or Housing Tasmania as a central governing institution. Yet they also adhere to neo-liberal ideas on the need for self-governance. Their homogeneity means that they voice more conservative views about family values and moral self-worth. Less well-resourced in social, cultural, network and financial capital to adapt to neo-liberal transformations, these tenants prescribed greater state institutional governance at a time when neo-liberal practices aimed to supersede old ways of governing.

Rose (1999: 50) argues governing "'at a distance' becomes possible when each [individual] can translate the values of others into [his/her] own judgements, such that they provide norms and standard for [his/her] own ambitions, judgement and conduct". Without making any overt ideological connections it seems these tenants, remarking on what they interpreted as the shortcomings of local embodiments of 'governing-at-a-distance,' had far fewer qualms about expectations of self-governance. In this way, Rose's (1999) concept of an individual's relationship to governing-at-a-distance is reaffirmed. In sum, these tenants

mobilised a discourse of the inseparability or parallel nature of governance of the self with an active governing state. Governing-at-a-distance attempts to inculcate ethical technologies and self-control in the governed without the regularity of contact with the state or utilising earlier social relations practices. The *ad hoc*-ness and uneven merger of complexity and fragility in today's state practices replicates tenants' contradictory critique of the state's role.

Tenants views on the state's role

For 'distant' tenants, despite the promotion of a multitude of new governing strategies within the AHS, only one type of social relationship with the state was worth pursuing as they connected to self-governance facilities. Here interviewees prioritised greater state involvement to address causal mechanisms such as housing structures (supply, allocation policies, spatial concentration of complex need and other disadvantaged groups) and activate individual attributes (personal resilience to maintain sound mental health; friendship and social networks). This is in direct opposition to the technologies of governance (see Fraser and Gordon, 1994) as enunciated in the AHS which strive to produce a balance between minimising tenants' dependency on Housing Tasmania and fostering individual self-reliance. These tenants did not accept that NGO 'experts' could provide and deliver housing as efficiently as the state. Their views can be interpreted as arguing that 'top-down' orchestration by the state was necessary to:

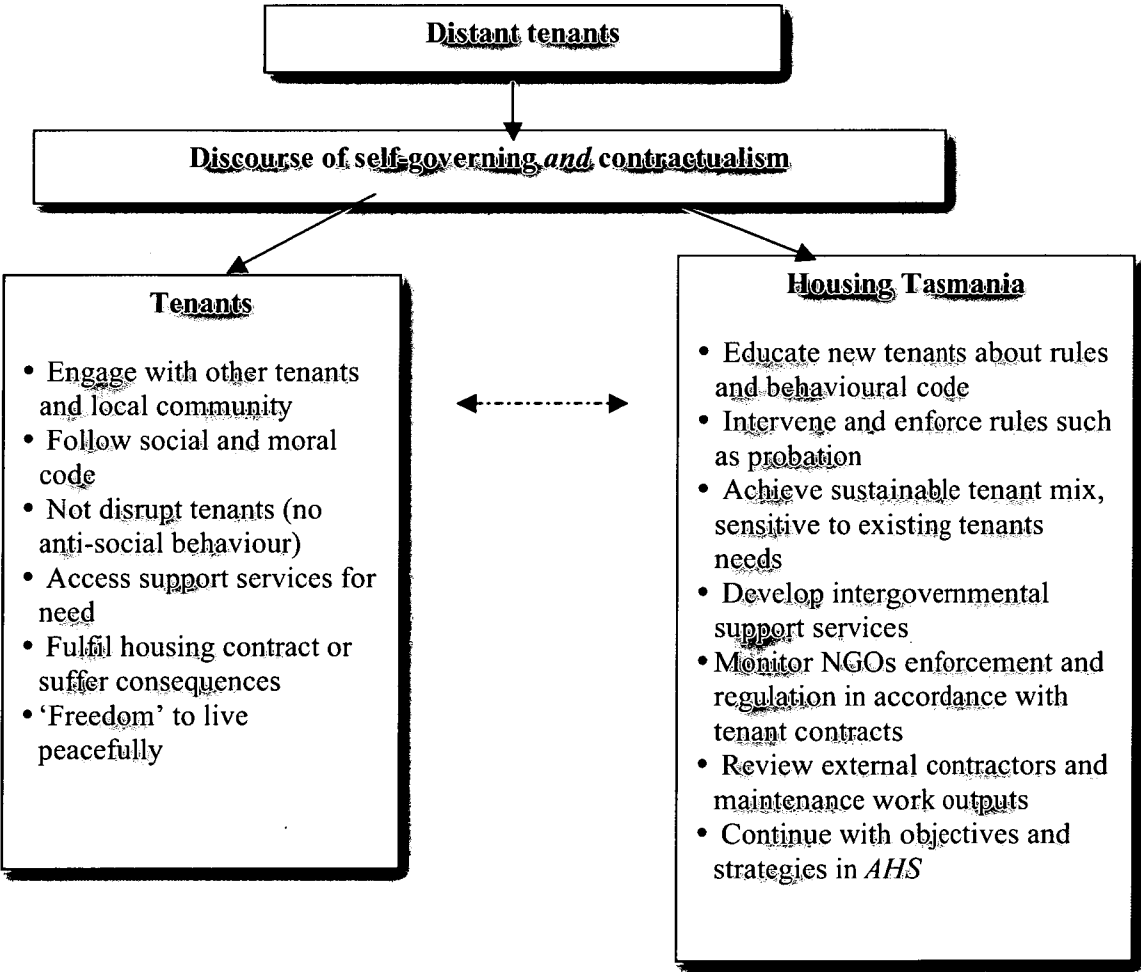
- Map Housing Tasmania applicants housing needs before allocating housing
- Consider the effects of co-morbidity and complex needs clients in relation to existing tenants
- Assess whether early intervention models would work if structurally supported.

At a time when the capacity and legitimacy of central political institutions and delivery of public housing were being reconfigured, tenants maintained resistance to 'whole governance' change. These tenants did not imagine or articulate any political, cultural or social problems associated with overt regulation of their housing tenure and its institutions through bureaucratic rules. Instead, the discourse tenants used was similar to a discourse widely used in the community sector – that of a '*whole person*' approach. The ideological discourses that underpin tenants' desire for greater regulation and control of their neighbours' behaviour included:

- Their belief they were entitled to live in a neighbourhood 'free' from disruptions in their social life
- Their view that harsher regulatory processes is the only way these disruptions are reined in
- Rewarding their 'good' behaviour could reinforce social and structural expectations of tenancy and
- Likely deficiencies in an expanded role for NGO and quasi-state housing provision (these will be covered in the remainder of the chapter).

Tenants did not follow the shifts in ideological and governing mechanisms from ‘welfarism’ to ‘neo-liberalism’ with all its ramifications of a different way of governing. For tenants, the states retraction from official duties signalled a lessening of ‘bureaucratic authority.’ New tenants were not seen as ‘representative’ of the existing ‘collective’ and, as such, it was seen as the state’s responsibility to rise up to their expected, legitimate, governing authority and re-establish order and promise-keeping rules. For ‘distant’ tenants the enhancement of their liberty and security in public housing is to be achieved in parallel with the enhancement of the powers of the state. The discourses of ‘distant’ tenants and their social imaginings of their role and that of the state are outlined in Figure 19. These confirm the neo-liberal paradigm in several key ways: attitudes to self-governance, contractual obligations, enforcement and intervention based on failure to function efficiently in social housing.

Figure 19 ‘Distant’ tenants social and discursive relations between tenants and Housing Tasmania



Freedom and conditionality

While tenants agreed their rights were the same as private renters under the Residential Tenancy Agreement, they argued inequalities existed with other tenancies as they had to “put up with” circumstances private renters would not. Antonia, a long-term resident in Launceston, described and compared her ‘good’ tenancy to that of her neighbour:

“I’m a very good tenant. I don’t make any noise late at night. My house is tidy and my garden is well looked after. I have a neighbour who plays terrible music with lyrics that just sounds like swearing. He’s got cars parking and driving in and out all day and night. His friends ignore the signs about visitor parking areas. And there are a lot of us oldies in and around him”.

The re-workings of tenants’ citizenship means neo-liberal discourse and policy agendas demand tenants uphold their individual ‘freedoms’. Freedom is not the power to act as one likes rather, as a

“structuring theme of contemporary government itself [it relates to the embodiment and] [...] belief that human beings are, in their nature, actually, potentially, ideally, subjects of freedom and hence that they must be governed, and must govern themselves as such” (Rose, 1999: 63, 62).

The material and technical skill of neo-liberal political practices relies on utilising the notion and quest for freedom in governance structuring and policymaking. For example, in reinforcing this ideology and rhetoric, tenants argued that personal freedom needed to be enhanced by the regulation of those who exploit or abuse their (own or others) freedom. Tenants here also held contradictory perspectives. Most distant tenants argued that the primacy of individual liberty should be recognised (a neo-liberal principle) but this could only be achieved by a strong state model (a social-democratic principle).⁸² Wendy Brown (1995: 6) makes the pertinent point that

“freedom is neither a philosophical absolute not a tangible entity but a relational and contextual practice that takes shape in opposition to whatever is locally and ideologically conceived as unfreedom [whatever] the dominations they are designed to contest and the privileges they are designed to protect”.

These public housing tenants called for ‘conditionality’ on housing contracts through the use of probation periods, inspections and judicial action being taken against serious anti-social behaviour. They endorsed disciplinary policies that advanced regulation and control for the sake of “the (unspoken) premise that tenants are unwilling to accept their responsibilities” (Jacobs *et al.*, 2005: 3). In its contemporary governance form, setting themselves and difficult tenants ‘free’, distant tenants end up espousing a problematic notion that bears an uncanny resemblance to a mechanism of unequal power. Yet whilst neo-liberalists fix their anguish on the state’s intentional coercion of freedom (see Martell,

⁸² ‘Freedom to’ and ‘freedom from’ is an important distinction in political science. In this case, tenants are talking more of freedom from disruption and abuse from other neighbours.

1993 on this idea), these tenants' firmly argued an interventionist state necessitates effective self-governance within tenant communities.

In practical 'actually existing neo-liberal' terms, what occurs is the remit of modes of governing-at-a-distance expands with tenants acting as vocal proponents of self-responsibility, freedom and choice, for example choosing how and when to confront or negotiate with difficult tenants. Neo-liberal ethico-political strategies such as those rationalities which promote an active and moral self-conduct (see Bevir and O'Brien, 2001 and Amin, 2005) repositioning tenants into accountable actors, capable of assisting the state to achieve desired policy outcomes. But the promotion of self-regulation or mutual obligation ignores structural causes of multiple disadvantages (Shaver, 2002). Coupling tenants' responsibilities with property contracts endorses individual freedom reinscribed in the economic 'rational' realm. Oppressive 'new' ethico-political community activism (Everingham, 2003) functioning along predetermined paths of governing "are fundamentally assisted by the current proclivity to subsume divergent governing practices with the *post facto* rationalisations of neo-liberalism" (Askew, 2008: 101). Using retroductive analysis, it argued that the socio-cultural governing assumption in the contract arrangement is based on tenants fulfilling their obligation to maintain the property, respect their neighbourhood environment, pay the rent and regulate their behaviour in accordance with Housing Tasmania rules. A regime of surveillance and harsher controls constituted some tenants (new or complex need) as actually or potentially of greater risk than existing tenants. Comparing her experiences with other tenants, Mary wonders whether the regulation processes are in operation:

"I want to know what has happened to the three month probation period [...] we have some very different people living around us now. We were told everyone is on a three and six month lease and will have inspections [...] no one has visited me yet" (Mary, Hobart).

More punitive action in the form of 'spot inspections' was seen as one way of forcing or coercing new tenants to 'toe the line' in Antonia's view:

"By giving people fourteen days notice they can disguise the problem. They can clean up and act okay when they are inspected. They need to do a lot more 'spot inspections' [...] Then tenants either have to change how they live or Housing Tasmania will see how they really are" (Antonia, Launceston).

While Arthur thought more discretion could be used by Housing Tasmania to assess some 'risky' tenants more frequently:

"There is a system in place but I think they [Housing Tasmania] need to do some properties more and some less regularly" (Arthur, Devonport).

'Keeping' one's property was directly linked to two factors: self-agency and state enforcement. It was thought appropriate, by some tenants, that new regulations and tougher controls on behaviour could be instigated to capitalise on the current condition of high demand significantly outstripping supply for public housing. In other words, new tenants "would have to realise housing is conditional otherwise your 'right' to housing is forfeited to the next person on a long waiting list" (Mary, Hobart). Mary's comment goes against the

very universality of public housing provision. For tenants using this discourse the result of problematic or ineffectual behaviour almost matter-of-factly leads to exclusion. This demonstrates that despite having experienced some level of marginalisation from the broader community, tenants were largely disengaged with the consequences of de-institutionalisation for many potential tenants. This also presents another contradiction in their discourse. The more structure these tenants demand from Housing Tasmania, the less their position and relationality to other tenants can be seen as egalitarian or conducive to all individuals freedoms. Here they conform to neo-liberal political practices such as incentives and rewards for responsible market activity. Their 'value' system has a danger of excluding and reproducing systemic inequalities for some tenants. 'Problem tenants' would, in most circumstances, fit the label of 'vulnerable tenant' (Watt, 2006) suffering from ill physical or mental health and experiencing difficulties such as extended periods of unemployment, incarceration, homelessness, institutionalisation or precarious housing. Getting tough on nuisance and annoyance by removing security of tenure or enforcing surprise inspections was seen as reasonable despite an eligibility criterion that only accepts people on very low-incomes and people in crisis. For distant tenants, inappropriate housing allocations were seen as state decisions based on what housing was available rather than considering the 'whole person' and matching their housing need to the more place-based dynamics of existing public housing estates and communities. Structural difficulties of allocation were contextualised by tenants in regards to insufficient housing stock and targeting eligibility.

Distant tenants described how it was the state's responsibility, in tenancy management, to minimise or mitigate 'risks' associated with new complex needs tenants moving into public housing neighbourhoods. Hence the 'problem' of tenant control was respecified as a pattern of state management of risk. Tenants described their own psychological stress in coping with the introduction or greater concentration of people with complex needs. Distant tenants opposed a spatial 'reunification' with 'hard to house' applicants. They described the 'chaotic lifestyle' of difficult and/or new tenants, upsetting existing tenants' routinised ways of life, sense of community, safety and use of public space (Brown, Harris and Hepworth, 1995).⁸³ Housing scholars, such as Harrison (2001: 103), acknowledge that low-income and social housing tenants are "themselves [...] disempowered by violent, racist or criminal neighbours". If housing tenure and the unequal distribution of housing stressors are to be viewed as a relational resource linked to psychological characteristics such as self-identity, security, mastery, self-esteem, aspirations and overall life satisfaction (Nettleton and Burrows, 2000), consideration needs to be paid to specific vulnerabilities that existing and new tenants face. People have different thresholds to cope or withstand change or difficult circumstances. It is important to note that in this research tenants provided accounts where they were personally negatively affected by a neighbour's behaviour – often emotionally expressed as anger, frustration or fear. Their discourse was not malicious or based on pre-judgement, rather experiences seemed to be the key determining factor driving the discourses and their calls for social action that they utilised. There was a perceived danger that the 'other', the stranger who remains strange because of their behaviour and/or difference, or because they have not become known for various reasons, was starting to "take over" (Antonia, Launceston).

⁸³ This term has been used to refer to drug users behaviour in other literature (Spooner *et al*, 2001).

These criticisms against other disruptive tenants can be explained as resulting from neo-liberal policies and practices entering the lives and housing arrangements of these long-standing tenants. Neither neo-liberalism nor social housing should be read as a fixed category – no one group of tenants is distinct and can be easily mapped onto the more neo-liberal elements of the AHS. The contested and contradictory aspects of tenants' discourse illustrates that 'actually existing neo-liberalism' is as much a socio-economic process that modifies the way tenants' view the need for a particular type of regulated social responsibility. The common-sense logic of neo-liberalism serves to reproduce a stratified and unequal distribution of housing and justification for including and excluding certain types of households based on their inability to adhere to 'common-sense' ways of living.

Over half of the tenants interviewed stated they were not willing to 'tolerate' tenants with bad behaviour until these tenants learned new practices or were adequately supported by outreach workers, preferably from Housing Tasmania. Tenants who had not previously been exposed to the more unusual, loud or unpredictable aspects of mental illness expressed how they were unable to handle even relatively sporadic episodes of mental illness from new neighbours. In accordance with a critical realist view that knowledge is transient and socially produced, tenants supported the process of de-institutionalisation in principle but the model of integration was contested. For example, Lucy, a long-term tenant living in Hobart, questioned the allocation of housing in an elderly unit complex to a young person with a mental illness:

"It's okay for clients to be mixing. To mix the young and the old together. But not if the young have schizophrenia."

Vivian, a tenant in her seventies, explained how more young people with complex needs had moved into her block and were having difficulties with basic self-care:

"He couldn't cook. He would ask me to smell meat for him, open tins. He didn't even know how to boil a jug. I don't think it's a good idea to house them with other tenants who are independent. They need a lot of assistance and support from professionals, not from other tenants."

Tenants with complex needs were seen as a group that required comprehensive support from Housing Tasmania to sustain their tenancies. Many tenants expressed strong views about these tenants' needs and their difference to long-standing tenants:

"There is no supervision about their medical needs and their treatment. A lot are unable to look after themselves because they have been institutionalised for 30 or 40 years" (Antonia, Launceston).

"Housing Tasmania is stuck with the 'too hard basket'. It is a very bad mix...we pay for residency and these people aren't able to be residents" (Lucy, Hobart).

This upset in their community meant tenants wanted familiarity and safety through sameness not 'learning' through diversity in population or other tenants from mixed

community theories. The fragility of once strong social network of 'like' tenants was exposed by tenants with complex needs moving in:

"We get a lot of 16 and 17 year olds. It's not just them that cause a problem, it's their friends. They give them a 3 bedroom place and they have kids who are homeless or in and out of Ashley (Youth Detention centre) staying with them" (Dermot, Hobart).

"There's a man upstairs with a dog. When he's on his medication he's okay but when he's not he's troppo. I don't understand why they mix us like that. Most of us are older women by ourselves. I recognise that there is integration and that there is some value to it. But we don't want to move. We like the area. All us old girls like being together. It's Housing Tasmania, they just don't look after us. My decision to stay is because of my friends here and they are ruining that" (Mary, Hobart).

Some tenants thought there might be ways Housing Tasmania could assist a mediator and educator, promoting greater understanding and less fear:

"There is no communication between us. We are either overwhelmed or underwhelmed by people with complex needs in buildings...Maybe it is about education and communication. Instead of being fearful, if we know something about it then maybe some fear can be reduced" (Jill, Hobart).

In acknowledging the housing shortage and the material effects of targeting, long-term tenants repeatedly sanctioned greater control of those that *"have to remain"* (Lucy, Hobart). Critical of the ways in which tenants with mental health issues or complex needs had adversely affected the social fabric of their public housing complex or estate, these distant tenants realised high densities of vulnerable tenants remain very difficult for housing authorities to manage. Their comments conformed with Taylor's view that these estates and complexes are *"difficult to live in [and] difficult to get out of"* (Taylor cited in Morris and Winn, 1990: 161).

Only one alternative interpretation of state decision-making was revealed. Tilda and Betty, both in their late sixties, were neighbours in a small Housing Tasmania complex. They raised their respective families in public housing and now both live alone. Whilst also objecting to the increased number of people with complex needs in their neighbourhood, they did not see all new tenants as problematic. Interestingly, these tenants recounted how the *"grandmas"* in their housing estate welcomed an immigrant Sudanese family – attending the father's graduation party, forming friendships with the children and meeting other Sudanese families through their interactions. Women in these neighbourhoods seemed to be more community minded, talking of the naturalness of community participation as almost an extension of 'mothering work' (see similar findings from Naples, 1998; Peel, 2003). Tilda and Betty described the success of these new tenants in terms of reciprocal relations between existing and new tenants and effective state decision-making in allocations:

"Housing Tasmania achieved a balance. They put one family in with us who doesn't have any problems and who have real aspirations to make something of their life. They also

needed social networks as they have no family contacts in Australia. That suited us and our close knit, mostly single, elderly group of women" (Betty, Launceston).

Illegitimate self-governing versus 'natural' self-governing?

Tenants' perceived many of Housing Tasmania's actions as indicative of "*absolving themselves of responsibility*" (Mary, Hobart). A case in point was Housing Tasmania's recommendation that tenants handle neighbourhood conflict themselves or contact the police. Tenants' interpreted this as the state retracting from the inner workings of "*life in public housing*" (Vivian, Hobart). Some of the tenant participants linked the states abandonment of its 'natural' or traditional role to the "*power of Category One priorities to take over all our community*" (Wayne, Hobart). As Flint (2003: 24) notes reconceptualisations of agency and responsibility "*do not equate to less governance rather conduct is regulated in different ways*". Tenants asserted if the state used tenancy management mechanisms it would prevent serious neighbourhood issues. Dean from Devonport said:

"They [Housing Tasmania] don't manage difficult situations at all. They tell you the standard answer, to call the police. The police sometimes turn up and when they do it is a good result".

Harrowing living circumstances, where tenants felt they could not redress neighbour problems because of fear for their safety or recrimination, were featured in participants' contributions in focus groups. Being asked by Housing Tasmania to "*handle*" (Mary, Hobart) or "*sort out*" (Dean, Devonport) disputes with neighbours was seen as more evidence of their distance from the state. In this way, tenants' did not endorse aspects of everyday performances of 'self-governance' within an assemblage of broader neo-liberal reforms in self-sustaining communities through individual action. Tenants missed the 'hands-on' state and firmly argued that the state should be responsible for settling disputes, not themselves (as would be expected in the private rental market). For example, Guiliana knew repercussions were inevitable if she confronted disruptive neighbours:

"Our housing officer said if you have a dispute with your neighbour you will have to settle it yourself. So the end result is that our tyres are slashed, or we are yelled at and abused or we don't do anything. We need solutions that are driven by Housing Tasmania. Maybe if they relocated successfully [...] put more people in the right area to start with" (Guiliana, Hobart)

Others outlined the state's responsibility when tenants felt threatened or in danger:

"The answer is not to get tenants to sort out these problems. We are afraid already" (Agnes, Hobart)

"The problems are noise, drunkenness, bad language. In forty units there are only seven women and it's frightening. My neighbour plays guitar and puts his bass amplifier on the window ledge. I'm not going over to tell him anything" (Jill, Hobart).

Tenants did not explore the idea that anti-social behaviour, in these instances, was as much a response to social exclusion and social deprivation as it was to not caring about

others.⁸⁴ The exclusion of those who are truly disadvantaged results from policy changes enunciated in a language that distinguishes between individuals who are active in moral and self-responsibility and those who are not. Reminiscent of Levitas' notion of a moral underclass discourse, tenants' emphasised the "moral and behavioural delinquency of the excluded themselves" (Levitas, 1998: 7). This moral dialogue between tenants centred on the 'how and why' other tenants should comply with behavioural norms. Hence tenants viewed the social norms as a type of 'moral responsibility' towards others thus power is operationalised in constructing a moral system, and definitional support system, that is accepted by society. Rose (1998: 186) writes

"In this way, bonds between individuals are rendered visible in the moral form, and made governable in ways compatible with the autonomy of the individual and the reproduction of the collective [...] the self must govern itself communally in the service of its liberty, autonomy and responsibility".

The subject of government is reinscribed into a subject of self-government endorsing personal responsibility. As Amitai Etzioni, an American communitarian argues, tenants' discourses alluded to the operative goal of a singular moral voice of community "to encourage one another to adhere to behaviour that reflects shared values and to avoid behaviour that offends or violates them" (1997: 124). As a neo-liberal policy, the *AHS* contains a hybrid mix of statements that assert new governance modes advancing a range of corporatist powers and less explicit ways in which tenants are empowered to 'sustain' their tenancies. These tenants' took onboard the need to regulate their conduct and behaviour in line with structural norms and to participate in 'good neighbour' practices.

Distant tenants, though affected by welfare changes and 'customerisation' in housing, were not able to be as active as neo-liberal reform intended (e.g. their age precludes them from employment, before considering any other barriers). The permanency of living in public housing for these tenants meant they were far less inclined to define themselves purely in individual 'client' terms or see their social relations as unique, one-off transactions with the state. Primarily, then, for long-term tenants being a 'good' tenant was about behaviour and fulfilling the 'social contract' rather than one's activity in the labour market or broader community. To tenants way of thinking their own behaviour shows they respect themselves and others and, thus, the rules of the institutions. As well as making a distinction between themselves and 'new' tenants, some long-term tenants argued positive behaviour could be achieved via incentives and rewards for tenants who live well together. To these participants the state had not shown a sustained, 'whole-tenant' approach encouraging what Rose (1990: 170) has dubbed "active practices of self-management" in accordance with collective allegiances in public housing estates. Self-conduct provides a moral and linguistic divide between 'types' – them and us; long-term tenants, new tenants; rule abiding, rule breaking – by encouraging a language of difference that taken to its extremes triggers or compounds withdrawal behaviour (Saunders, 2005). In many ways the tenants they are taking issue with have repeatedly been subject to control and surveillance through societal, media, legal and medical

⁸⁴ Hunter (2001) writes of the tensions and difficulties in 'solving' anti-social behaviour. She notes noise "can have profound effects upon victims [hence] punitive action does indeed solve their problems and provide peace of mind" (Hunter, 2001: 233). However, evidence indicates if difficult tenants are moved the 'problem' usually relocates, with tenants continuing the same behaviour elsewhere.

discourses and political practices. An ubiquitous discourse of self-governance fails to acknowledge the diversity among tenants and levels of disadvantage impacting upon a person's self and community mindedness or ability to comply with rules. Tenants' reactions to a new distributional political agenda serve as a reminder of the unequalness of political agency. Internalising codes of behaviour and rules of conduct, these distant tenants consciously and unconsciously discipline themselves to achieve the peace amongst neighbours they believe they deserve.

Current debates on the emergence of an 'ethical turn' in the social sciences have brought into sharper focus the ways in which judgements about ourselves, or neighbours, and 'them' are formed, reproduced and woven together in a moral responsibility frame. The ways in which people act transcend the discursive and elucidate the gaps between policy enablers and constrainers and contradictions in peoples' actions, especially when neo-liberalism demands individuals practice their 'freedoms', exercise their independence and autonomy and make rational decisions based on self-governing practices. The moral impact of regulating one's conduct indicates the desire to belong to an existing group or body of residents. In this way, some tenants argue that it demonstrates a new residents' commitment to a collective group and awareness of simultaneous responsibilities – to self *and* to other. This pluralism of discourses exemplifies a range of 'legitimate' ways of living in public housing; often similar to neo-liberal doctrines. Responsible self-conduct was normalised as a necessary feature of cohesive tenant relationships. As a neo-liberal proponent, Francis Fukuyama (1996: 357-8) writes of the need for individuals to undertake a degree of self-governance and self-restraint at levels below the state to avoid anarchy:

"If they are not tolerant and respectful of each other or do not abide by the laws they set for themselves, they will require a strong and coercive State to keep each other in line. If they cannot cohere for common purposes, then they will need an intrusive State to provide the organization they cannot provide for themselves".

I interpret tenants discursive accounts as indicating that they held neo-liberal views in relation to other tenants (where they perceived themselves as superior) but they also held the view that the traditional state should regulate crises (where they perceived themselves as inferior). Using critical realist ontology and retroductive epistemology applied to the interview and focus group, tenants were divided into their degree of social relation proximity. Then through a process of abstracting and testing causal modes – e.g. do distant tenants talk about the state's role in terms of practices of checking and enforcing? – the tenants' discourses are explained as being causally contingent on the amount of disruption tenants' feel and experience as a result of housing change.

Tenants articulated a need for state enforcement to ensure compliance. Disruptive behaviours marked tenants out for more paternalistic sanctions such as greater surveillance and control. Opposing ideologies on 'living together' and behaviour are seen as issues that the state must regulate and constrain. In these accounts, tenants who had not caused any problems or disputes, had connections with neighbours and live according to the nuances of the daily routines of place, see themselves as the more 'legitimate' tenant. Those that could not (often in the case of people with complex needs) or do not (tenants disrespecting access to shared areas or noise rules) behave well were described in an 'othering' way. Dichotomies of 'bad' tenants came up against 'good' tenants:

"These people get away with blue murder" (Clem, Launceston)

"[Bad tenants] have no responsibility. They do the wrong thing and the way they behave shows us they have a complete disregard for the neighbourhood" (Agnes, Hobart)

"It's like they put all the baddies together and before long everyone thinks it's like that" (Jill, Hobart).

New modes of social governing?

For distant tenants, the discourse of public housing as a necessary welfare measure endures (Mee, 2004). Tenants are supportive of Housing Tasmania *"keeping public housing in the AHS and not completely getting rid of us"* (Arthur, Devonport). The beginnings of a 'free market' solution have not stacked up. New governance approaches to correct the 'mistakes' of years of state intervention and provision with the introduction of non-state housing providers was seen as a fallacy. From a longitudinal perspective state regulation was seen as more effective in the past and a steady decline – resultant from the acceptance of neo-liberalism as a majority agenda – of funding and procedural supports indicates the 'mistakes' over time. In this way, tenants had not accepted all aspects of the media's cultural governance frame. For these tenants, state imposed order, rather than new governance modes, remained the answer. The piecemeal relations tenants had experienced with NGOs and community housing organisations were unsatisfactory, often aggravating tensions between existing and new tenants. Discussions on components of the AHS, aimed at building new 'partnerships' with market based and community organisations, had no leverage with these tenants.

When tenants mentioned the need for Housing Tasmania to regulate tenants' behaviour more or deliver greater 'whole-of-government' collaboration they incorporated wider notions of 'right and wrong.' A sense of the 'right thing' for the government to do was legitimated in a status of provision. Generalisations about structural processes seemed to both register dominant governmental discourses and challenge their operational success. Hence contracting was not providing 'value for money' or adequate service so tenants proposed a reversal back to dedicated Housing Tasmania staff undertaking gardening and maintenance – unperturbed by issues of cost. Marketised or outsourced housing services, for example gardening and housing support services for tenants with mental health issues, were seen as weak solutions that had, to date, failed to deliver the promised 'value for money' or greater efficiency. Again falling back on state responsibility, tenants claimed structural limitations existed in detecting and effectively responding to the vulnerabilities tenants with complex needs face. Creating sustainable communities and neighbourhoods with limited disruption was seen as a key goal still not developed sufficiently by Housing Tasmania in the AHS.

Cynical about the 'working together' philosophy of the AHS, tenants only backed it under the proviso the state maintain control, regulation and review of NGO practices and, in turn, NGOs enforce clients' codes of conduct. Tenants were largely oblivious to the AHS

operational priorities and mechanisms of retraction from direct provision and the strengthening of a social housing system. In contrast to the AHS goals, a key restraining factor in tenants' lives was the insufficiency of recently outsourced support services to follow-through the transition of new tenants into existing communities. Several tenants' reiterated problems existed with some service providers' methods in supporting people with complex needs in public housing demonstrating the organisation's lack of responsible service provision and accountability:

"[The Community organisation] put young people in some of these units [...] and they have serious problems [...] they put them in and don't come along and check them once a fortnight or once a week. It's only when we ring up and complain about their noise or behaviour that they then come back in" (Mary, Hobart)

"[The Community organisation] get the house through Housing Tasmania so they should show some responsibility so new tenants don't get a bad stigma. Instead no one cleans their places there" (Agnes, Hobart)

"[there's the] bloke that [Community Organisation] put into the house and left without any other support so of course he's causing trouble" (Joe, Hobart)

"They access housing for people with drug abuse issue. If the client has problems six months down the track [The Community organisation] wash their hands of them. They are not really a Housing Tasmania client. First they are [The Community organisation's] client and they should support them" (Dermot, Hobart).

Unlike 'close' tenants more mutualist approach, these tenants were not convinced by the practices or rhetoric of new 'partnerships' of experts stepping into the states previous role reducing its position to 'enabler.' Housing Tasmania as a public sector governing institution was seen as having a responsibility to tenants to ensure fair access to housing services and minimise the gap in living standards – while mutualism and neo-liberalism argues that this does not necessarily translate into public responsibility directly providing these opportunities. The increase of people from "outside the communities of inclusion" affects tenants lives and they note a sharp failure of what Rose (1999: 259) dubbed "quasi-autonomous agencies working within the 'savage space', in the anti-communities' on the margins" to adhere to governmental instrumentals in the desired fashion.

Conclusion

This chapter focuses on the dominant discourses used by tenants who described their social relations with Housing Tasmania as 'distant' and imagined their connecting mode of governance as that of an interaction. The focus of this chapter was to make explicit, through a process of abduction and retroduction, tenants' discursive practices to illustrate the complex simultaneous denouncement of state retraction and new governance modes within an integration of self-governing practices that enhance such retraction and governing-at-a-distance mechanisms. Critical realism is useful in observing the underlying social relations between tenants and the state and recognising the limitations of what can

be observed. Critical realist ontology, by rejecting a fixed view of the object or phenomena for explanation, addresses the multiple and non-linearity in tenants' discourses.

Complications and contradictions emerged in the vernacular expression of tenants lived experiences of social governing, the beginnings of the *AHS* and fragmented application of a range of neo-liberal political practices. Tenants described shifts in their social relations with Housing Tasmania, before the *AHS* and during its implementation, as involving a number of key aspects. These include the state's failure to maintain an interventionist active role and a working mechanism to externally and internally cultivate tenant dispositions to behave in a way that fulfils their social and moral obligations to each other and their community. The duality of neo-liberalism appears in tenants' discourse as a system torn between retrenchment and incentive structures. Arms-length or governing-at-a-distance modes were described as a major reason why tenants were left to handle difficult tenants with little meaningful structural support.

This chapter analysed how discourses of self-conduct favoured greater state usage of punitive behaviour policies to regulate new tenants, especially people with mental illness and complex needs. In justifying their views 'distant' tenants relayed accounts of ongoing disruptions to their daily life inducing levels of fear, anxiety and latent prejudice about changes to housing allocations. At its most limiting, this discourse can be interpreted as recast paternalism in the guise of contractualism. At its most liberating, this discourse challenges the marginalisation of the state in generating a sustainable community for a diverse tenant base. In essence, tenants merge two contradictory views of neo-liberal political practices and changes – 'distant' tenants discursively reject *and* naturalise these positions. Emerging rationalities of public and social housing governance sit alongside, in peculiar often contradictory ways, tenants' endorsement of moral and aesthetic self-regulation between tenants and Housing Tasmania. The reshaping of tenants' identities and relationships were usually expressed using the vocabulary of responsibility.

CHAPTER EIGHT – NGO DISCOURSES OF ACQUIESCENCE: COMPLIANT GOVERNANCE AND NEUTRAL RELATIONS

Introduction

The NGO and voluntary sector in housing and welfare areas has grown considerably over the past five years; partly as a result of greater interest in multi-stakeholder contributions to social problems and partly as a result of greater state reliance on non-state sectors (Keen, 2006). Their relevance, too, has broadened and become more embedded in state policies. For example in the 1970s NGOs and the voluntary sector focused largely on community development practices and by the early 2000s NGOs were adopting more business-like approaches. One effect of the introduction of neo-liberal practices, as argued by Dean and Hindess (1998), is that the founding philanthropic and social welfare values of many NGOs have become subordinate to market-oriented values and ways of operating. Applying this to the housing sector, it is apparent that while the community and social housing sectors remain small, the actual and discussed reconfiguration of housing relations and provision to NGOs and community housing associations has been significant. Alessandrini (2002: 29) writes “increasingly market-like structures and behaviours of organisations presently located in civil society” are overlooked, leaving “many significant, influential and valid social groupings and activities not obviously fitting into one or other category”.

Australian SHAs attempted to systematically administer some governance and regulation changes and funding restructuring measures learned from the UK experience of public housing devolution.⁸⁵ These changes included offering financial incentives to encourage larger providers to move into procurement and ownership of housing as a means of leveraging government resources, some transferral of assets to social housing providers, an emphasis on greater economies of scale and improving choice for housing clients. The purpose of these policy shifts was the expansion and improvement of the efficiency and performance of the NfP housing sector. Aware of national change and the contraction of housing affordability throughout regional housing markets, the Tasmanian Government implemented the *AHS* reiterating this emphasis on increased capacity for the management and delivery of housing to include a range of non-profit and private sector organisations. However, little ‘evidence based’ research has been conducted on NGOs new functions, outputs and performance (Gilmour, 2009) because of the rapid growth in NfP developers, service providers and builders’ in affordable and social housing.

⁸⁵ These changes, however, were inconsistent across state and territories e.g. in Tasmania and Queensland greater importance was placed on a substitution role growth providers could play, especially for high needs client groups. Whereas in Victoria and NSW, it was envisaged that ‘a continuum of options’ be supplied by NGOs and affordable housing providers to low and moderate segments of the market. At the same time the Commonwealth has promoted national plans for social housing reform that focus on the increased role NfPs should play either in replacing the state or in providing an alternative to current housing provision (see Chapter Eleven for further critique of the latest changes in the Tasmanian and national agendas).

The contingent and complex ways in which NGOs function in relation to the state and within a market system have triggered the emergence of heterogeneous discourses. Again, the divergence within these discourses reinforces the duality of neo-liberal political ideology and practices and the difficulties in reconciling market and social forces. NGO actors attach different meanings to the *AHS* distinguishing three particular modes of governance (compliances, interactions, transactions) and proximities of social relations (close, neutral and distant). The findings in the next three chapters are based on interviews conducted with 22 senior employees and board members of community housing organisations, NGOs and NFP service providers during 2005 and 2007 (see Figure 20).⁸⁶

Figure 20 Typology of discourses and research participants

Main discourses used by NGOs	Organisations	Interviewees
Discourse of acquiescence	5	9
Discourse of social entrepreneurialism	6	9
Discourse of pseudo-markets	3	4

From the transcripts I was able to group actor accounts and discursive preferences into three understandings of new modes of governance. The first group of smaller NGOs invoked a discourse of acquiescence to the state’s demands the subject of this chapter. These actors embodied principles of social democracy believing in the need for mutual acceptance of government rules but still aspiring to change the rules from within through negotiations and iterative policy making. They were least likely to support neo-liberal practices, market coordination approaches and radical shifts in governance. Through the process of the *AHS*, other NGOs indicated they had the interest, financial acumen and organisational capacity to undertake housing development, manage their own assets and commit to state government regulatory requirements including a strategic growth plan. These organisations utilised either a discourse of social entrepreneurialism, which attempted a balance between the twin pillars in the *AHS* of social justice and a successful market economy (Chapter Nine) or a discourse of pseudo-markets (Chapter Ten).

The second group of NGO actors described themselves as having close relationships with Housing Tasmania. They were a ‘coalition of the willing’ – NGOs who supported the language and practices of a social market approach and were able to exploit it for its entrepreneurial ends. Although they were reluctant to talk of themselves as being competitive with other NGOs for government contracts, their discourse indicated they reacted to the incentives and quasi-market approach to structuring social housing provision in competitive ways. These actors operated as the parameter or boundary setting element of neo-liberal notions of governance. Overall, these actors tended to utilise a discourse of social entrepreneurialism. Actors using the third discourse (covered in detail in Chapter Ten) can be interpreted as being ‘purist’ in their support for market-

⁸⁶ These interviewees were selected for a number of key reasons including: attendance at the *AHS* Stage One Review stakeholder consultations and were actively aware of the policy polemic; being a community organisation, not-for-profit or NGO; perceived as a primary stakeholder in that they delivered housing services, or were central to new organisations like TAHL; being a housing advocacy or peak body with state-wide relevance.

driven housing provision. For new modes of governance to work efficiently, in their view, the state would need to retract to a minimal level freeing up market opportunities to answer the affordable housing crisis and lack of housing supply in the overall market. These circuit of governance actors talked of a two-tier pseudo-market approach: that of firstly “empowering” their own organisation, before secondly using their surplus funds in a commercially viable way that would be responsive to needs. To them their organisations strengths were in working outside structural limitations. In one case, the stakeholder organisation had secured private equity and developed a trust model with their organisation retaining 51% ownership. They realised that necessity required some interaction with the state but they were less willing to negotiate on property rights issues such as ownership of title.

The chapter starts by outlining the key characteristics of NGOs before contextualising the divergence within NGO discourses. The main body of the chapter considers the views informing some NGO actors’ preference for a discourse of acquiescence. Actor interpretations of Housing Tasmania’s policy adjustments and tightening of long-standing contracts (timeframes to achieve outcomes, budgets and/or overall client numbers) are analysed. Second, other contingent effects of neo-liberal political practices, such as marketisation mechanisms and the rhetoric of a ‘continuum of service’ are reviewed.

Features of NGOs with interests in housing

In the housing domain, some key tangible assets of NGOs and NfP housing organisations include all or some of the following:

- Provide long-term rental housing to preserve housing affordability
- Originate from a grassroots base in their local community and housing market, priming them to know and act on local, diverse housing needs
- Operate from an ethos of community and personal development
- Diversity in their size, location, founding purpose, services and functions
- Value and work towards forming collaborative partnerships or networks with other community based agencies to strengthen their advocacy capacity and bring provide a range of services and benefits to tenants
- Use practical ways to foster tenant empowerment and self-reliance by encourage tenant ownership and participation in the running of the organisation
- Their profits or surpluses cannot be distributed to their shareholders or members, instead they are legally required to reinvest this amount to sustain the organisation and provide additional services
- Cannot collect tax revenue and are not government organisations
- Can receive government funding which usually required regulation to ensure its accountability
- Innovative and sufficiently flexible to create new ways of working to meet complex, changing and diverse housing needs (Milligan *et al*, 2009).

Wolch (1989: 201), writing of the rise of the voluntary institutions rubric in the US which the Australian experience has replicated in many ways, coined the term ‘shadow state’ referring to this sectors role as

“a para-state apparatus with collective service responsibilities previously shouldered by the public sector, administered outside traditional democratic politics, but yet controlled in both formal and informal ways by the state”.

When shadow states deliver previous state-run programs, governments often direct or reduce their overall commitment to welfare state provision as these initiatives are already being provided within a market system. The *AHS* promulgates a legitimating rationale for their policies based on the benefits of alternative financing and delivery modes supplied by shadow state institutions. Importantly, some scholars argue NGOs are now much more unambiguously framed as the agents of service delivery (Foster and Plowden, 1996). The specialist areas of the 14 organisations who participated in this study included employment, direct tenancy, crisis and supported housing assistance. In some organisations housing was within a broader remit of aboriginal, youth, seniors, refugee, migrant, disability, mental health and drug and alcohol services. Peak bodies covered advocacy groups in low income, public housing, student and private rental sectors, with small representative from nationally affiliated organisations. A ‘peak body’ is a NGO that consists of smaller organisations of allied interests, providing a strong collective voice for lobbying government, community education and information sharing between member organisations and interested parties (Melville, 2003). By functioning as an intermediary, peak bodies play an important role within the circuit of governance in their capacity to develop, monitor and communicate government policy and its impacts on the sector(s) the peak body represents.⁸⁷

Derived from the coded data, the three main discourses NGOs utilised are by no means a definitive catalogue of all organisations with an interest in housing provision. It would be naïve and remiss to assert that these three groupings of NGOs hold the same level of commitment or support across individual actors within the criterion defining each group. Other academics have attempted to clarify community organisation roles through framework of ‘insiders’, ‘outsiders’, ‘service providers’ and campaigners’ (Craig, Taylor and Parkes, 2004). But I argue these distinctions were inadequate in reflecting the complexities, policy environment and strategic choices of these organisations in relation to governance modes. As a policy community, the array of actors attentive to housing issues is diverse with circuit of governance actors varying in size, budgets, political cachet, organisational capabilities and target client groups. What was being contested – the governing and social relations – varied between individual organisations, as actors discourses revealed. NGOs political engagements were ongoing, fragmented and substantively different from each other. As were their ways of ‘doing business’.

⁸⁷ Relationships between government and peak bodies are largely seen as negative despite the income of most peaks being derived from federal and/or state/territorial government funding. In research conducted between 2002-2004 in which 142 peak bodies were interviewed nationally, less than 20 per cent said they had an amicable relationship with government and in nearly 8 per cent of them relationships had completely broken down (Melville, 2003). But the Tasmanian contributors (6 peak bodies) were happier than other state participants with two indicating that they had a good working relationship with the government and none stating their funding had been reduced. One Tasmanian peak body talked of the harmonious interaction with the state government being based on “close, cooperative and collaborative, even personal, relations between peaks and the government bureaucracies responsible for them” (Melville, 2003: vi).

Context of Findings: understanding NGOs within the circuit of governance

A discursive approach reflects a growing interest in housing studies and urban sociology of the role language plays in changing governing structures and policy practices. In detailing the multiple discourses NGOs employ, it is evident that an overly general 'NGO' collective voice offers few meaningful insights to the thesis questions. Tensions endemic to the position of NGOs between state and market led to fissures within normative views of how entrepreneurial NGOs could be, how 'social' they should be and what opportunities for expansion ought to be pursued. Differences in NGO power correspond with differing levels of access to Housing Tasmania and the State Government and their aligned institutional standing. For example each discourse included specific nuanced interpretations of partnerships, advocacy coalitions and the role of the media. The private discourse of actors (i.e. in individual interviews as opposed to comments in public consultation) charts the variance in their belief and motivation as to how they, as "a society of organisations" (Drucker, 1993), can make a greater or lesser difference to the coordination of housing strategies in a marketised governance environment.

Interviewees using a discourse of acquiescence saw themselves on the periphery of housing policy despite the embedded nature of their work in social, economic disadvantaged communities on housing issues. In contrast, interviewees employing the language of pseudo-markets sought ongoing distant social relations with the state to advance their contractual transactions. Again this indicates the contingent structures of constraint and opportunity that vary between NGOs and their variety of experiences and conditions within housing service provision and different localities. Ruth Levitas' recent work (1996, 1998) on exclusion has informed the thesis' understanding of discursive categorisations and applications across social policy issues.⁸⁸ The primary objective in developing an interpretive methodology that joins like-themed actors together under their discursive characteristics is to show how circuit of governance actors' views towards new governing modes also legitimates various institutional responses to the parameters of policy intervention in affordable housing. For this reason I reviewed existing frameworks that effectively highlighted the disjuncture between government statementality or policy rhetoric, as discussed in Chapter Four, and multiple actors' political and social responses.

The impact of neo-liberalism is demonstrated by tendencies and patterns within policy priorities and interaction styles. One trend has been new public management's (NPM) role in recasting the relationship between NGOs and the government. It was espoused that NPM enabled the public sector to recognise the value of 'negotiation' within and across sectors and the necessity of integrating dispersed networks. This marked a movement away from traditional models of hierarchical control or rational choice (Davis and Rhodes, 2000; Considine, 2001). The downside of the new managerial focus was evident in interviewees' accounts of difficulties in advocacy and policy work during a time of increased client service demand. Stemming from NPM, an additional expectation exists for these NGO organisations to be active participants in consultation processes that widen participation in legitimating policy decisions (Bridgman and Davis, 2004). However, these new developments in policy-making architecture and membership did bring more

⁸⁸ For instance Levitas' (1998) work on British politics and social policy provides an effective backdrop to assessing how such categorisations can be methodologically and theoretically elaborated on.

stakeholders into the fold and need not always be seen as oppressive. Marsh (2000: 198) contends the proliferation of interest groups and social issue movements is a near permanent organisational expression of a pluralised society with underlying force:

“Unless political leaders can persuade the community to jettison some of its varied aspirations, a new level of pluralisation is here to stay”.⁸⁹

The broader argument of the thesis is that government ‘restructuring’ entailed an economic imperative with an ideological and political shift towards an entrenchment of a neo-liberal narrative. Economic shifts, as precursors to a nuanced form of privatisation of welfare provision from the state to the informal, market or voluntary sectors (Leat, 1986: 290-291), impact on social reactions, attitudes and actions. Managerialism and other features of neo-liberalism are not interpreted by these actors as being ‘apolitical’ even when the devolution of public housing provision to a number of local housing providers or third sector organisations is being tightly framed in terms of policy, responsibility and financial control. Clarke *et al* (1994: 230) writes that the proliferation of managerialism signals

“one of the clearest indications of the processes of restructuring in state organization [marking] a significant shift away from the old assumptions which dominated the cultures of professional bureaucracies”.

What is less clear is whether a ‘new regime’ has been created *in full* as policy experimentation predominated in the implementation of the AHS and more generally, a commitment to adaption and ongoing restructuring is a feature of neo-liberalism. Each of the three groups utilised an order of discourse, producing and interpreting their own discursive practice to extend and rearticulate their current order of discourse, or as Fairclough (1992: 97) writes “new discursive hegemonies”. This expression marks some of the shifting territories between ongoing struggles within processes of social change, exposing the critical realist perspective that it is impossible for an actors’ position or a social meaning to be finalised or closed (Chiouraliki and Fairclough, 1999: 114). The discourse types influence the social relations in and between actors and institutions. Struggles at the local order of discourse generate vitality and recapture relevance within the public housing policy community. The order of discourse represents the dialectical relationship between discursive and material social change. For example, interviewees using discourses of acquiescence registered their ‘being-in-the-world’ from a position of weakness rather than dominance. They were aware of the articulation in their social relations of a constant inequality.

Interviewees described struggles to preserve their existing role and to transform the field into a larger space for them to work in, while coming up against significantly more powerful forces such as marketisation. As a result they found it more difficult to preserve

⁸⁹ Interest pluralisation – when stakeholders share aspirations and a common purpose – is a new way in which the direction and lack of engagement by the state post-AHS is being challenged. For example two years after participating in the AHS Stage One Review process many NGOs were actively campaigning and forming advocacy coalitions to debate, with both sides of politics, the need for ongoing financial and political support to redress a number of affordable housing issues.

and prioritise collectivist principles of social justice and rights which previously constituted substantially more of their work. Social relations between these NGOs and Housing Tasmania were tense when a) a policy change was perceived as having accelerated b) it was not well communicated or failed to involve policy communities in its development c) policy change was not in synchronisation with other orders of discourse or new emerging fields and d) when actors had not been aware of what these new changes were or would mean for their work and organisation (see Chiouraliki and Fairclough, 1999: 117 for analysis of similar dilemmas). Critically, the ways in which these organisations and actors appropriated state discourse shows the level to which they were passive, accepting or resistant towards it. Actors generate representations of what they do as a part of what they do (Chiouraliki and Fairclough, 1999: 25). NGO attitudes and discourses were complex and variable, making it more difficult to air collective grievances and translate them into political action towards public housing process change.

Discourses of reluctant acquiescence: Ambiguous relations and compliant governance modes

Interviewees from NGOs who employed this discourse claimed they had limited capacity to challenge decisions made by the state because of constraints inherent in their reliance on partial or full state funding to deliver their services or programs. They frequently described feeling “disempowered” and “misunderstood” by Housing Tasmania, possessing “limited power” in their relationship. Examining the everyday working discourses of key actors illustrates how areas of contradiction emerge and overlay governing connections and the relational politics of implementing public housing change (Marston, 2004). Prevailing issues for these actors centred on the constrained actions available to them within a “response” mode, often concerning reductions to their service. Key functions involved “short-term reactive policy work” (Keen, 2006: 34) to counteract procedural shifts seen as detrimental to their clients rather than proactive negotiations with the state.⁹⁰ Similarly, their day-to-day practices changed during 2004-2007, forcing them to confine their focus to housing or working with Category One tenants. For them, Housing Tasmania falls significantly short in mapping out how governance changes were to evolve, and alter priorities, expand participatory practices or feedback mechanisms with actual and/or potential housing partners.

Figure 21 Actors using discourses of acquiescence: governing modes and social relations grid

Actor group	Governing modes	Proximity of social relations
Smaller NGOs using discourses of acquiescence to state directives	Compliance	Neutral - ambivalent

Utilising discourses that described them as both compliant and acquiescent to Housing Tasmania’s governing rules generated neutral (or ambivalent) social relations towards the state. In adopting this position, these actors can be characterised as disgruntled and pragmatically accepting of existing arrangements (see Beedle and Taylor-Gooby, 1983 for their application of similar ideas). Often these interviewees were long serving employees who had experienced a number of ‘incarnations’ of neo-liberal political practices through

⁹⁰ Such as long-standing practices like transitional accommodation agreements, transferring properties or rental costs.

successive state and national leaderships. This left them with a sense of needing to endure the changes rather than resist them, as they assumed the new practices inevitably would not “*stand the test of time*” (NGO 3, Program Manager 2). Lodged between not being completely subsumed into the state and not being able to act entirely independently from the state created a tension in their social relations, governing connections and attitude towards Housing Tasmania. Flynn (1988: 309), charting changes to British social housing provision in the 1980s, writes that for smaller housing associations and tenant groups (or “the residual minority”)

“political acquiescence may be a pragmatic response to the coercion of circumstances and difficulties of everyday life”.

Discourses of acquiescence used by these Tasmanian NGOs accord with similar reasons Flynn proposes. Inertia prevented these actors from reconfiguring their relations with the state to their collective ‘good’. On the other hand, system loyalty kept their organisation in operation and was a central component in the functioning of housing programs funded by the state. Essentially, for these actors, the backbone of Tasmanian community are publically funded services led by an enabling, active state who provides ongoing support for intractable social problems. Without the state these actors claim, representing a wider social democratic argument, that universal programs and services would not be delivered at all. Given their size they perhaps exhibited a heightened awareness of the need to maintain a strong state despite neo-liberal pressures for a residual state. They stated clear-cut limits needed to be set on the role of markets in society and in the provision of affordable and social housing. Without these not only the long-term viability of these organisations is under threat but the role of the modern state is in jeopardy. These interviewees were passionate about their jobs and organisations but disillusioned by the larger policy process they operated within. Government discourses of organisational efficiency, performance reviews and quality assurance frameworks were viewed with cynicism and indicated a new structural relationship with the state where the governments’ political agenda was reinforced through the techniques of management reform (see Clarke *et al.*, 2000). As Stoker (2006: 131) succinctly tells it

“the paradox is that a little cynicism [in democracy] is healthy, but too much is a corrosive force”.

Being cynical prevents actors maximising less ideologically compliant or materially reliant ‘opportunities’ with the state. Complacency was likely to have dramatic consequences if Housing Tasmania moved towards selecting only a few ‘growth providers’ or key housing associations to work with. In contrast to definitions of shadow-state institutions, several of these interviewees argued the government had not truly devolved its power to third sector organisations, despite neo-liberal rhetoric indicating that this was a central aim. In their view the state still:

“picks and chooses [when it] intervenes and changes how it wants something to run, despite all the evidence indicated why it shouldn’t be altered” (Community Sector Organisation 3, Manager 1).

Some participants questioned the premise under which the AHS policy statements about new models of housing and the role for community, voluntary and business sectors to work together were made. They noted fluctuating neo-liberal tendencies, on the one in 'pulling-back' from some government services and, on the other, strongly controlling and intervening in some services that seemed to be operating independently in the market. One interviewee said *"other aspects they [Housing Tasmania] remain front and centre, funding it [...] then they promote governance processes that pull them out of future housing provision on the same scale. Those dynamics mean that we don't necessarily see what their policy rationale is or their processes or implementation"* (NGO 3, Program Manager 2). The state remained the power base or major source of power within the circuit of governance and a "pivotal institution" (Hirst and Thompson, 1996: 409) for stakeholder connections with housing. Interviewees agreed being competitive was an economic and political truism but there remained strong expectation that Housing Tasmania continued to lead and control public housing provision and management.

Outsourcing, privatisation and other market inspired practices was dominant and seen as not in tune with clients needs. All interviewees within this discursive group were adamant that *"Government's shouldn't be getting out of these services"* (Advocacy Organisation 2, Employee 1). Seeking to contract non-profits was less about the state's interest in fostering "qualitatively new value to the public service system" (Considine, 2003) and more about the state reducing budgets by contracting out programs or services that remained difficult or elusive to manage, in this case because of tenant composition. Hence, these interviewees felt outside the 'real' working of a public story around housing service provision. For this group of interviewees, the major locality of power within the circuit of governance rested with the state when the locality of politics resided at the grassroots level with organisations like themselves. Two interviewees described the governments' neo-liberal practices as negatively constraining the state's level of direct involvement in housing provision:

Advocacy Organisation 1, Employee 4: "Aren't we talking about a government that wants to get out of housing? It's a government that no longer sees its role in providing these services. It sees these services as belonging more appropriately in the private sector and is in a process of transitioning away from that provision through so-called partnerships to the goal of no longer being involved because that is not part of what government these days should be doing"

NGO 5, Program Manager 2: "While we can talk about creative ideas like new forms of housing for the elderly and about supporting various vulnerable groups – better ways to give them housing, find them housing, support them in housing. But we're swimming against the tide because that's not what the government is looking to do. There's a trend driving the shrinking public housing sector".

Actor agency seemed weakened and exhausted by a cycle of resource deficiency and previous conflict with the state on how to carry out their work and meet their clients' needs. Newman (2000: 47) makes the connection between state's neo-liberal reform agendas and an ill-at-ease pairing of social goals with economic goals, such as curtailing public spending. Holding more 'old-fashioned' ideals about the role of NGOs, these interviewees described processes whereby they sought to either: mitigate conflict, resolve

it to some level of mutual satisfaction, comply with hierarchical rules or learn to exist within the space minimising the discomfort. They had little clout and minimal bargaining or nuisance power to reach the status of respected partner or viable macro-scale participator and hence their discourse favoured a fallback position of acquiescence. Their frustrations with Housing Tasmania were borne out of espousing new ways of doing business and working with NGOs and public housing tenants. These interviewees claim that their organisation and the aims of redistributive social democratic social housing policy were being undermined by a series of ongoing and thorough policy redirections including funding reductions and tighter targeting of service users or housing tenants. Housing scholars argue that this trend (see Orchard and Arthurson, 2005) signals a 'reformulation' or contraction of what the state should provide and how social housing providers within a 'post welfare state' (Jamorozik, 2001: 35) should operate.

Changes to 'long-standing business'

Noting differences in the housing sector over time, these interviewees said their organisations were able to fill a market niche and respond to market incentives by providing government funded programs or setting up programs to help vulnerable clients. These NGOs argued that their programs demonstrated their ability to adapt their services to differing market cycles and conditions. However these behaviours were interpreted differently by Housing Tasmania. If we interpret the actions of these NGOs as being market oriented (in their ability to respond to the unmet dispersed needs of their clients) then discordant discourses about government regulations appear as fissures centred on the duality of neo-liberalism. In their view, DHHS and Housing Tasmania wanted the market to provide housing and related services to social housing tenants and yet when NGOs operated as market players they were informed that the market, too, was an inefficient mechanism as it was taking too long to reduce the backlog of need. Then the government intervened to produce the outcome they desired.

The main distinction between NGOs and private sector entities is their primary emphasis on the 'whole person' mission of their services rather than either the achievement of public policy goals or profit maximisation. These nine interviewees stated the aims of many of their programs were being negatively affected as a result of their changed relations with Housing Tasmania. Their organisations provided housing tenancy and support programs to high need clients who had often experienced multiple crises impacting on their ability to maintain a lease. Rehousing required a range of intensive support services such as helping a client choose a property, setting themselves up materially, moving-in, accepting the limitations of the property, functioning effectively in the geographical locale, knowing how to access and use public transport and local services and practising the financial and household skills necessary to maintain a tenancy. Tailor-made programs meant the length of support varied depending on a clients' previous length of homelessness or time in unsuitable housing. To these smaller usually more narrowly-focused NGOs, the value of their assistance helped clients in the short and long-term but also meant future costs to the state were reduced as a client's capacity to cope or remain in a Housing Tasmania property was greatly enhanced. But, the AHS was seen as changing the working relationship between Housing Tasmania and their organisation as new program contracts

were stipulating shorter time periods between, for example, transferring a client's lease from being with a NGO to becoming a tenant of Housing Tasmania.

The organisational complexities, values and operational functions of NGOs were thought to be largely overlooked by the state. Immediate demands of assisting vulnerable clients who have already fallen through the 'gaps' have been reshaped to fit new politically pressured spaces of social support and services delivery (Larner and Butler, 2004). The state's rationalisation program worked against the approach of non-government service providers who ask clients about their housing preference *before* assisting them to attain it, rather than offering a particular type of housing. Their clients' housing preferences are often based on proximity to family, connection to the local neighbourhood and other issues of affordability, security and any housing adaptations required. These NGO providers talked of the importance in helping their clients' by focusing on their pressing 'ordinary' needs which are likely to change as people's capacities and preferences alter the longer they living independently.

Analysing the contingent conditions that impact on the housing needs of tenants, NGOs talked of providing structured and holistic individual plans to assist each of their clients. These interviewees' interpreted the dynamism of their approach as making a much needed difference. Clients were not expected to fit into a 'one size fits all' tenancy agreement. This resonates with Bleasdale's (2007) research on people with complex needs. Bleasdale (2007: 16) notes that for some NGO services the

"emphasis is placed upon the growth and development of an individual, the building up of strong community relationships, and the inevitability of changing needs as the person's experience, confidence and independence grow."

Hastily assembled or undisclosed policy changes were seen as a feature of neo-liberal political practices. Similarly the incompleteness of follow-through, communication or financial resources created governing anomalies and constraints on their housing practices. Hence for these interviewees their acquiescence was compounded by their fragmentation from other resources and NGOs, again reinforcing feelings of compliance. *Ad hoc* changes to policy or unannounced contractions to services had a negative impact on their service planning. Imposed policy changes by Housing Tasmania with little or no external involvement left them little room for negotiation. The example below highlights how some NGOs were informed of policy changes without prior consultation, resulting in multifarious effects on their day-to-day work and client outcomes. This case also contradicted the policy discourse of Objective 1 in the *AHS* aimed at developing long-term, secure and stable tenancies through across Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP).⁹¹

Community Organisation 1, Manager 1: "We had an agreement with Housing Tasmania that stretched back eleven years [...] We'd put someone in one of our properties for a period of up to 12 months to work out their serious and compounded problems and how they

⁹¹ SAAP is a support program funded by both Commonwealth and State Governments assisting people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, through a range of support and supported accommodation services. There were 41 Tasmanian organisations in 2000-2001 receiving SAAP funding.

impact on their housing [...] Then we'd help our client apply for a property transfer [...] so Housing Tasmania became their landlord and then they stayed in the same property and community where they'd already made contacts. But Housing (Tasmania) decided that wasn't the way they wanted it to go anymore. Twelve months [with a NGO] was now seen as too long. [...] Their response is 'we can't afford to maintain a relationship like this with limited housing stock.'"

Despite their overall compliant mode of governance, in the relative privacy of individual interviews, these participants stated they were not supportive of a new governance approach if it were to fundamentally change the way they do business and *"expect even more from us"*. Actors commented on the changes to current practices that would impact on their administration, management and operations. These NGOs were aware of the wider implications of a neo-liberal political culture and policy environment and its direct correlation to how their organisation was now expected to operate. Policy changes were interpreted as part of the states emphasis on building consumerist markets within the provision of housing to the very needy. Performance management, target setting, quality assurance, *"doing more with less"* and *"being smaller and clever"* were examples presented by interviewees. Shaw (2004: 24) describes this as an inevitable tension developed out of *"the centralising logic of managerialism and the decentralising strategy of governance"*.

The already limited organisational planning of these NGOs was seen to be curtailed by unforeseen procedural changes thrust upon them by the state. These small NGOs were often involved in the delivery of one main housing program, commonly funded by a single government agency, such as DHHS or Housing Tasmania. Funding was minimal which tended to reinforce sectoral poverty, create problems with 'capacity building' and limit management and staff numbers. Caught in a bind, their organisation was unlikely to grow by securing competitive tenders for increased funding when their existing resources were so limited. 'Efficiency' for these organisations was more about seeing as many clients as possible and meeting contracted stipulated goals, often including stated qualitative service standards but not a focus on 'value for money'. Haward and Zwart (2000: 34-48) argue that 'efficiency' in local government reform can be defined in different ways

"as allocative efficiency – defined as 'maximising the use of resources at the least cost' [...] or by utilising the concept of 'X efficiency' or dynamic efficiency. X efficiency focuses on the benefits made by 'stimulating organisational improvements' emphasising that 'efficiency' is not only gained from economies of scale".

Levels of autonomy began to blur with the imperative to maintain funding, a contract or *"regular business"*. One interviewee (NGO 4, Program Manager 1) talked of the need to *"put your head down and say nothing"* given their organisation was dependent on government funding tied to and based on performance outcomes. The rigidity of new working practices imposed by the state resulted in NGOs inability to meet their *"usual"* clients' needs and, on some occasions, staff cutbacks. She continued:

"Losing a contract might mean we close down a section in our office or that staff are made redundant [...] we are working on the tightest of margins" (NGO 4, Program Manager 1).

Additionally, the “*randomness of policies and policy change*” created a tension where interviewees thought their power was being neutralised by Housing Tasmania realignment of priorities. In many ways their social reality contrasted to that presented by actors from Housing Tasmania (see Chapter Five). Underlying interviewees’ remarks was a sense of injustice and inequality. Interviewees used the terms “*fairness*,” “*belief in our clients*,” “*client-driven services*,” “*flexible*,” “*normalising*,” “*positive and supportive*” and “*active participation*” to describe their organisational responses to their clients. Most frustratingly for these interviewees the nature of their work drastically changed with the mission of their organisation being “*watered down*” and “*compromised*”. For example another interviewee (NGO 10, Program Manager 2) said that he considered the NGO he worked for had the right “*hardware*” as evidenced by ongoing success in meeting tenant housing targets. He did not think that these “*fundamentals*” should be changed despite pressure by Housing Tasmania to push them in a new direction. These interviewees shared the view that NGOs would not benefit from being forcibly changed or ‘disembedded’ from their current practices to only be ‘reembedded’ in a dubious ‘better’ planned and rationally designed system (see Bauman’s ideas on the problematic of ‘reembedding’, 2002: 27). Again these interviewees saw narrowing the scope of their service to fewer clients or offering a more ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach contradicted the AHS policy. Cutbacks to the available housing or duration of a program effects the efficacy of vulnerable tenants already accessing additional support programs to overcome or ameliorate their ‘risk’ issues in maintaining a public housing property. To recap, neo-liberal policies were seen in stark contrast to the rhetoric of support for vulnerable tenants and the need to adequately resource both the community and NfP sector and early interventional programs that focused on stabilising marginal communities and “*upholding tenants rights*”.

Clashes with discourses of marketisation and choice

Small NGO actors within the circuit of governance were less inclined to see their ‘new’ work as contributing to the social skills or empowerment of their clients. Instead they felt they had minimally been able to address the housing crisis because of program contractions. Some of these stakeholders interpreted state ‘tactics’ as having the effect of institutionalising the neo-liberal agenda in community organisations that do much of the support work with public housing tenants. Government emphasis on the centrality of the market, or on the economic costs when determining management decisions, manifests itself pervasively in the manner in which policy is created and implemented (Hase, Phelps, Saenger and Gordon-Thomson, 2002). These NGO organisations experienced difficulty navigating their own mission when they were so deeply embedded within a larger, more powerful institutional governance structure. To them, genuine community development and social democratic aims of sharing power and ‘voice’ between institutional actors and decision-makers that govern everyday experiences had taken a “*back seat*”.

Cochrane (2004: 481) makes the point that underpinning new forms of governance has been a series of assumptions about welfare provision – to whom and how it should be delivered – as exemplified in the ‘modernisation’ (Finlayson, 2003) process that occurred

in the UK and Australia under the Blair and Howard governments respectively.⁹² The broader context of marketisation is that over the past three decades the post-war welfare state has been increasingly destabilised and challenged (Rose, 1996). Economic language has infiltrated social policy in such a way as to alter the political orientation and 'taken-for-grantedness' goals and activities of publicly provided social services (Dean and Hindess, 1998). Another frustration for these NGOs centred on the difficulties in ascertaining accurate information from Housing Tasmania about the rationale and application of policy and procedure changes. Here an interviewee described the changes to rental costs and the knock-on effects to community tenancy services:

NGO 10, Program Manager 2: *"They want to change the way they charge us rents which will in actual fact mean they'll double the rent [...] Their letter to us says 'as per the Community Tenancy Guidelines'. I've been trying to get hold of the guidelines for the last couple of months but no one seems to be able to find them. We've done a ring-around with other services who run community tenancies and no one else has been approached about a rent change and no one has a copy of the guidelines. We don't have much power to do anything though. If they want to increase them they can increase them."*

This group of NGOs shared the view that Housing Tasmania and the commercial sector did not fully appreciate the integral nature of the work of NGOs in the overall housing system, instead preferring to prioritise measurable outputs that resonated more comfortably with NPM culture. Some interviewees considered this element – of being "stuck" in a compliant governance mode and weak neutral social relations – as an ongoing embedded obstacle in their social actions. Their lack of power to adequately define the significance of these values meant they were unable to use them to set an agenda and, in turn, influence policy. A challenge lay in communicating their work in concrete terms without narrowing it to an unacceptable inflexible delivery model or target group. Being accountable to both Housing Tasmania and their own organisations client base reinforced their differences in values; pulling them both ways.

These NGOs said they were running on "close to empty" and attributed the efficiency of their services down to personal commitment rather than expansive budgetary resources. They talked of belonging to a pool of like-organisations, all competing through structural necessity, for funding and unable to initiate new ways of operating or collaborating. Entrenched boundaries and established "favourites" within government tended to marginalise these relatively fatigued third sector contributors. In a time of general underfunding across SAAP services, some of these actors talked of being sensitive to their precarious existence and limited power to argue for either more funding or ongoing services in the current environment. They believed Housing Tasmania embraced the ethos of economic rationalism as evidenced in policy and administrative decisions. Nodal neo-liberal discourses, such as NPM processes, were described as part of the governments 'checklist' approach to management; focused on short-term results and removed from holistic support principles that added real social benefits to clients. Interviewees thought

⁹² Features of the attempt to 'modernise' include the rise of state-sponsored managerialism, a focus on 'community' governance and the management of communities, the prominence of partnerships and increased emphasis on multi-agency and cross sectoral ways of working, new regulation and auditing processes increasing the number of targeted interventions and tighter central control over financial and other resources (Cochrane, 2004: 483).

reducing budget costs occurred without adding an equivalent net social gain or betterment to staff, processes or community sector capacity. In the opinion of one interviewee

Advocacy Organisation 1, Senior Employee 1: "The story from the government is that there isn't any more money, 'get used to it'. We get this new SAAP QA program because they say 'with QA across the board, we will be more effective' [...] the danger is you have a QA framework that doesn't have much flexibility [...] and we pride ourselves on being flexible [...] building services that suit the clients not make sure the clients fit our structure".

Totalising managerial terms such as 'continuum of service' came under criticism for their irrelevance to actual procedures and the hollowness of this type of 'support':

NGO 6, Program Manager 1: "Housing Tasmania uses phrases such as 'continuum of service' but you can drive a semi-trailer sideways through the whole thing [...] There's no drug and alcohol outreach services for a client in their homes, so if they can't get to a meeting then they're struck off the list [...] If the worker doesn't get to see your flat with the cans or drug paraphernalia around or how you've cleaned up and stopped, it's hopeless [...] Home visits are a real indicator of how you are doing and if you are likely to be able to keep your tenancy."

'Whole-of-government' approaches similarly were "plastered all over the glossy policy brochures as if it is really going to happen" (NGO 6, Program Manager 1) with an effect of, as Orwell wrote, anaesthetising its readers to its 'true' meaning. For them, scarcity and prioritisation stifled practical operations of choice. 'Choice' appears as a dominant strand in neo-liberal political practices and social policy reforms. Clarke *et al* (2006: 327) notes the discourse of choice has become

"a term that expresses what seems to be the core practice of a consumer society: self-directing individual agents encountering a multiplicity of possibilities created by many providers".

A substantial body of literature in social sciences reflects on the conditions and consequences of choice addressing its ethical and political desirability and the difficulties in administering choice equitably and effectively (Potter, 1994; Bauman, 1998; Taylor-Gooby, 1998). Actors utilising the discourse of acquiescence questioned the 'reality' of choice, framing their concerns around program limitations and a lack of housing supply. The governments' version of choice was not seen to equate with a process of selecting 'personalised' support services to sustain a tenancy, or a property that matched a client's long-term needs. Highly disadvantaged, their clients were unable to drive service provision or improvements. Their view echoes Clarke *et al*'s findings that insufficient "system capacity" exists creating a "dislocation between the promise and practice of choice" (2006: 330). Several interviewees contested the notion of choice and 'appropriate housing' when supply of public housing was residual and a priority-points allocation system existed:

"If a client is offered 'do you want this? We don't have anything else'. There's no choice" (Advocacy Organisation 2, Employee 3)

"In realistic terms what are our clients' chances of getting an appropriate housing that matches their disability or aged needs or whatever it may be? [...] It comes down to communications and resources. There aren't enough resources so they shove people into inappropriate places and there's no way out for them" (NGO 10, Program Manager 2).

Formal social relations with Housing Tasmania: moving from neutral to close?

Faith in increased levels of participatory governance and the development of a 'shadow state' was lowest within this interviewee group. For these stakeholders, the government managed to retain control while partly pulling back on longstanding agreements and contractual processes, resulting in a sense of either reluctant acquiescence or paralysis. 'Third way' governance based upon partnerships, contracting and/or competition was seen as not serving anyone, bar the government, well (Leazes, 1997). To them, competitive tendering and the lack of open disclosure about future funding inhibit inter-organisational collaboration between NGOs. Thinking strategically i.e. beyond the level of one's own organisation occurred only to discuss shared problems:

Advocacy Organisation 2, Employee 3: "We talk about the difficulties we all face and the lack of resources"

Repeating academic perspectives that the rise of contracting marked a new phase in public sector management (Davis and Rhodes, 2000), one interviewee read it as an end:

Community Organisation 1, Manager 1: "Competitive tendering has killed it all. The SAAP IV restructure is a good example. No one knew if they had to tender for their funding. We had months and months of everyone looking at each other thinking 'are you guys setting up to go for our funding?' And that doesn't really make for cooperative lobbying".

These NGO actors acknowledged formal opportunities existed to meet with staff from Housing Tasmania but many occasions were fraught with power imbalances – part of the outcome of complying with the state. For example, an interviewee discussed how the composition of meetings impacted on his competency to present a counter-argument to government decisions:

NGO 7, Program Manager 1: "The last meeting I attended had a Service Centre Manager, a Community Tenancy Manager, two people who wrote a report on direct tenancies and community tenancies and one other person from Housing (Tasmania). I was outnumbered five to one. To put it mildly I got chewed up and spat out rather quickly".

A few participants said they did not have a good mechanism to tell the government their needs and issues:

"We fit on the margins of the Affordable Housing Strategy which is not where we want to be. It has caused us considerable anxiety [...] finding ways to be heard" (NGO 4, Manager 2).

Interviewees said “plugging away” (NGO 4, Manager 1) and attending consultations and meetings with Housing Tasmania was politically necessary, even though they felt relegated to a discounted peripheral space. Non-participation would indicate to the state disinterest or criticism and contravened the social democratic position of these actors. Bragg (2003: 1) writes that NGOs are stretched in new governance ways such as being “asked to comment on an ever increasing number of initiatives” which require time and strong policy analysis skills in the relevant area to be of any real use. While Keen’s (2006: 38) research found similar attitudes:

“some NGO participants argue that a few of these consultation exercises can be tokenistic, if NGOs ignore consultation they are affected by the consequences of poor government decision-making from bureaucracies removed from the day-to-day efforts of these delivery services”.

But support for principles of social democracy in social relations with Housing Tasmania did not transpire into NGO organisations and staff feeling any more informed or incorporated into state processes:

Community Sector Organisation 2, Employee 1: “It feels more manipulative rather than ‘real participation’. They’ve not disclosing things in the same way we are or giving feedback to us. We just need to comply. Go along with their rules”

Community Sector Organisation 2, Employee 2: “I find the term ‘consultancy’ a bit hypocritical [...] they call it the ‘Housing Community Provider Consultancy Meeting’ when it’s usually them delivering something and you have to wear it”

Advocate Organisation 3, Employee 1: “We’ve [Community Tenancy] had a restructure in the past twelve months. It’s based on the Community Tenancy review which hasn’t been made public. That’s fair enough, they’ve [Housing Tasmania] paid for it. But to use that as the reason to change some of the policies and procedures without giving us some sort of clarification of the reasons why [...] there’s no consultation, there’s no negotiation”.

These circuit of governance actors explained a desire for their social relations with Housing Tasmania to be closer and based more on listening and co-researching rather than on being instructed or directed by the state on what and how to do their business. These actors exhibited proficiencies similar to those Peter Saunders (2005: 137) writes of in his analysis of community agencies working with poor people and their uniqueness in “often knowing most about the gaps in, and failings of, current programs and what needs to be done ‘on the ground’ to improve things”. For them, future close interactions could be achieved if Housing Tasmania and the State Government were willing to

“listen and take on board our knowledge and experience of clients’ needs and the complexity of what we deal with” (NGO 4, Manager 1).

They maintained that genuine communication between both parties required a new way of interacting. Being ‘told’ what to do and how rather than participating in a dialogue, albeit a discordant debate, limited support for housing policy change and its prevailing

AHS discourse of 'new ways of working' together. Describing the importance of a future deliberative relationship, one interviewee claimed that it rested on regarding NGOs differently:

"Even if nothing else changed from the AHS [other than] Housing Tasmania developed some statements that showed some respect and understanding [for us] rather than being told 'that's just how it is'" (Advocacy Organisation 2, Employee 2).

During the implementation of the AHS, these actors argued that the government perceived them as underdeveloped in comparison to larger non-profits who were seen as having reached "a more sophisticated management capacity" (Donoghue and Tranter, 2005). One Executive Director stated:

"They don't quite understand exactly who we are and where we're coming from which makes us awkward" (Advocacy Organisation 2).

While the state might see these actors as lacking 'capacity' (see Chapter Five) these actors thought the AHS was largely inconsequential because very few of their clients received assistance. One interviewee noted that *"since the AHS we have housed 3 people in private rental in the last 18 months"* (NGO 10, Program Manager 2). The ideology behind the AHS seemed incompatible with what they believed was necessary to adequately and simultaneously address the affordability problem and expand and improve the public housing sector.

Conclusion

Housing policy is affected by broader social policies and the wider economy. Deregulation, liberalisation and the restructuring of assets occurred across government portfolios. The AHS can be read as a managed approach by the state to reshape the housing sector – decreasing the scope of public housing and recasting it as a 'safety net' tenure only, building a social housing and private rental sector with the proviso that eventual homeownership remains the universal goal of all households. The issue of affordability has become embedded in SHA's policies and the national housing agenda. In these policy frameworks, affordability, it is argued, can be best served by wider governance models ranging from quasi-state providers picking up one end of the market and NGOs catering to the 'average' public housing tenants and the state continuing to house the most difficult, high-need or hard to house tenants. Tensions within the structural implementation of Stage One of the AHS policy and the enactment of these processes indicate part of the rationale for co-existing divergent discourses within NGO actor groups.

Separating out these discourses is principally an analytical device that has purchase because they also emerged as accurate empirical descriptions. The three NGO discourses, or in Max Weber's terms ideal types, show how within a circuit of governance different institutional actors respond and relate to state policy shifts in various ways. Competing discourses do not presume actors actively choose, at will, which discourse best suits. Rather the permutation of neo-liberal political practices in housing is contested and actors display discourses as part of their own political project. These discourses – whether

newspaper headlines, tenants views or a threefold model of NGO actors – function together as a matrix of interconnected concepts that, in turn, determine our social world understanding and our action “without denying the material character of social relations” (Levitas, 1998: 3). Applying a critical realist interpretation, we note that a range of ‘open’ experiences emerge in relation to one another. For the actors examined in this chapter, a discourse of acquiescence to the state most closely resembles how they experienced their interaction and tightly regulated contracts.

Fragmented social relations between these NGOs and local institutions of the state reveal critical points of discontent and policy disagreement on the effects of neo-liberal discourse and structures. For the interviewees using a discourse of acquiescence, social relations with clients’ dominated their main work tasks rather than prioritising their governing connections with the state; as these in many ways were outside their control. Among this group of actors, many saw a significant part of their own and their organisation’s work halted or threatened by neo-liberal political practices and perceived social capital in the housing sector as being eroded by the dominance of market forces. The Tasmanian government was in the position of defining housing services provided by organisations and nominating which clients were to be housed as well as overall unit costs and the duration of services. This group did not see themselves as venturing into unexplored models of governance territory or in designing new programs that would have extraordinary results. Instead, their goal was to maintain the status quo and survive in their current form, or as close to it as possible, rather than being subsumed into another organisation or boxed in by the state. Unable and ideologically reluctant to compete with larger NGOs, these actors talked of how the state had changed and the expectations of the state’s role had shifted as new modes of governance and other market-driven approaches dominated housing policy. These small-scale providers can deliver many advantages within a housing system model outlined in the *AHS* such as accountability at the community level and the delivery of services that satisfy their clients and most other services connected to them. Yet their governance and relations were highly dependent and far more reliant on the state than other ‘stakeholders’ in the circuit of governance. Reminiscent of arguments that the state and market operate according to cycles, these actors presented a discourse of acquiescence that was not total – they aspired to a changed relationship with the state, resulting from a weakening of neo-liberalism’s hold in housing policy.

CHAPTER NINE: SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURIALISM IN NGOS: EMERGING CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS WITH HOUSING TASMANIA

Introduction

Contradictions in dynamic circuit of governance actor discourses were not necessarily the results of 'illogical thinking' but rather demonstrated the proliferation of conflicting political paradigms and internal clashes that already existed within social relations with the state. The thesis argues neo-liberal modes of governance are characterised by fluid sets of relations. Some relations can be interpreted as corporatist where the state partially shares and 'opens up' housing authority to a number of interested, and often competitive, NGOs. A process of abduction is used to consider the characteristics of a range of NGOs and their respective causal powers and limitations or possible liabilities. Then the analysis turns, once again, towards a critique of actors' views, in light of their dialectically related interaction, compliance or transaction with the state. Using this process it was easier to discern that within the circuit of governance surrounding the AHS some NGOs and NfP organisations exhibited considerable support for entrepreneurial ways of connecting with the state and with other organisations, whether commercial or community.

This entrepreneurial spirit changed the shape and role of NGOs, moving away from 'merely' delivering government funded services into operations where they take on greater financial responsibility and risks, more akin to private sector providers. These NGOs are typically larger, more financially independent and are characterised as being hybrid or balanced organisations that apply a commercial discipline to a social purpose (Barraket, 2008). Many of the NGOs interviewed in this chapter have grown considerably in size (both staff numbers and actual clients) and increased their expertise to include housing alongside employment, financial support services, community capacity building, indigenous employment and mentoring, social policy advocacy and research. Their growth has been determined by their level of integration within the machinery of governance and the degree to which they influence policies and programs (see Mullins and Murie, 2006). Thus these actors utilising a discourse of social entrepreneurialism can be interpreted as uniting elements of both government and market logic in distinctive ways. Some academics, such as Milligan *et.al* (2009) assert that these commercially savvy-socially driven organisations have become the bedrock of the affordable housing provision system in Europe, setting up possible pathways in Australia. For many of these interviewees, stock transfer was an attractive future option because of its potential cost efficiency and financial growth for their organisation i.e. capacity to attract a larger revenue stream by charging higher rents as they would be covered by CRA.

The divergent discourses that circuit of governance actors employ highlight the spectrum of changes that have occurred in Tasmanian housing policy, public housing tenure and policy implementation processes. Institutional shifts have reshaped governance with a larger number of housing providers tendering for contracts, new welfare payment assistances such as the CRA, and more managerial practices impacting on social relations

between actors and the state. This became part of a hegemonic vision that required competition and entrepreneurial leadership to build a strong social housing sector. Emerging in the policy field, support was forthcoming from a range of actors which both legitimated the role of these actors but also the social logics that underpinned the change. This chapter examines the discourse of entrepreneurialism as articulated by a subset of nine NGO actors from six organisations. These interviewees acted as ‘social entrepreneurs’ within a mode of governance that was more relationship driven and close in proximity to state decision-makers (see Figure 22). They relationally situated themselves as ‘most compatible with the state’ in comparison to their peers. While the diversity of opinion held by these actors – seeing themselves as simultaneously complementary, supplementary and adversary to the state – makes it difficult to represent this discourse as a clear-cut paradigm shift in thinking, it is fundamentally different to other NGO discourses (as outlined in Chapter Eight and Chapter Ten).

Figure 22 Actors using discourses of entrepreneurialism: governing modes and social relations grid

Actor group	Governing modes	Proximity of social relations
More prominent or growing NGOs using a discourse of social entrepreneurialism	Interactions	Close

Figure 23 Participants in NGO discursive groupings

Differentiating feature of NGO group ⁹³	No. of organisations	No. of interviewees
Discourse of social entrepreneurialism	6 organisations	9 interviewees

Discourses of social entrepreneurialism: endorsing neo-liberal approaches?

Shaped by the ‘new working together’ imperative articulated in the *AHS*, their relationship to the state was discursively characterised as endorsement for social market governance ideas and processes. These actors also imbued, in their relations with the state, significant confidence and independence. This enabled them to simultaneously put their ‘hand up’ and volunteer to be the new housing partners with the state in social housing provision and, separately, agitate and establish diverse advocacy coalitions to rally together at public events, calling for ongoing funding (such as Stage Two of the *AHS*) and government commitment to affordability issues. These NGO actors were well-positioned at the start of the *AHS* and, in this way, can be seen to endorse change in a manner similar to business elites or political leaders. What appears to be ‘a moving to the right’ or support for the market economy in their pursuit of entrepreneurial activities was countered by their push for NGO and community sector action and legitimate representation at policy

⁹³ Interviewee participants were allocated a number based on order of interviewing not on the group they were subsequently identified as belonging to.

decision-making meetings. Inherent tensions in the distribution of power between NGO actors exist. Some NGOs embody intensive power in their ability to tightly organise and mobilise advocacy events of prominence. As the structural and organisational logistics of the state begin to change these NGOs are primed for adaption and change, as many of them rapidly grew from 2004 to their current position of 'market' strength.

In the previous chapter I indicated the prevalence of competing discourses within NGO actor accounts. This chapter continues the analysis by recognising the diversity of opinion that existed on how neo-liberal political practices 'play out' in housing policy and governance arenas. Almost half of the interviewees expressed interest in providing housing services and program delivery. The remaining interviewees were influential well-resourced organisations who shared a substantial history in providing a combination of the following areas aged accommodation, crisis services and emergency accommodation, women's shelters, transition houses, homeless services, outreach program services and case management support, community tenancies and direct tenancy programs. Given housing was their main area they were often less concerned with 'person' aspects or non-housing outcomes. As one interviewee explained:

"We are a housing provider. We don't tend to get involved in people's lives. We promote people to be independent. We respect their privacy and independence and would refer them to people who have the skills to do it. We have good connections with Employment Plus in Rosny and employment consultants in the Hobart office and particular people in different NGOs who we've built up relationships with through networking over the years" (NGO 3, Manager 1).

Three interviewees worked in research, policy development and advocacy on social and economic policy issues impacting on low-income and disadvantaged Tasmanians for non-profits and peak bodies. Two other interviewees worked for national organisations describing their role as local though essential to the ways larger 'territorial policies'. Four interviewees worked for the major Church provider agencies. The non-profit welfare sector in Australia is dominated by several large organisations primarily older, faith-based services (Industry Commission, 1995; Berman *et al.*, 2006). Their success is partly due to their abilities in diversifying funding from multiple sources to effectively respond to changes in economic and political environments. Other factors contributing to their success included reputation, public profile, support and networks provided by religious affiliations, independent funding sources through investments and property established over time. All nine interviewees described housing as a key issue for their organisation with one interviewee summing up this link as:

"At every level of our business, in some ways, it's about housing. We provide services to a range of disadvantaged clients. We have relationships on their behalf or we advocate for public housing tenants" (NGO 2, Manager 1).

NGO stakeholders discussed the outcomes and achievements of the AHS in relationship to their organisations practices, at times challenging the state housing agencies *modus operandi* and at other times, aligning themselves to a macro-discourse of necessary change for 'success'. An interviewee described how the AHS

"puts housing back on the agenda and a level of government support for low income families with such a pledge of money" (NGO 8, Senior Officer 1).

Other interviewees summarised their organisations' perspective that over the past two years:

Advocacy Organisation, Manager 1: "Despite the best of intentions by the state, the housing boom has mitigated many of the objectives of the AHS (and) successfully lessened the problem"

NGO 7, Manager 1: "Things have gotten worse. That's the awful truth. Fifteen years ago people said 'oh we have a housing crisis' but you could get a 2 bedroom place for \$80 a week. Well now I'm afraid we have a problem. Before it was more or less a media campaign".

Support for the AHS was tempered with concern and caution about the ramifications if the government stopped or retracted the funding for Stage Two of the AHS. It was argued that *"pulling back on their commitment"* (NGO 2, Manager 1) would have long-term detrimental effects for low income earners and the services currently providing housing support and programs. Additionally, it was suggested that trust and belief in the governments' genuinity to pursue 'new models' and 'shifted thinking' would be greatly tarnished should the policy terminate.

What melded these organisations into a discursive group was their agreement that the third sector plays a pivotal, trusted role in the community of governance. As autonomous critics, these non-profits asserted that their social actions and social practices demonstrated their legitimacy, public credibility and trustworthiness. These organisations are both not entirely profit driven and not entirely altruistic. They had internal goals of efficiency and effectiveness in the context of outcomes for clients, as well as external contractual requirements. Interviewees confirmed Salamon's (1994) notion that the non-profit and government sectors are *complementary*, engaged in a 'partnership' relying on public-choice and transaction-cost theories. From a complementary reading the relation involves the state choosing to contract NGO welfare and housing agencies

"to deliver services because it can be a cheaper option, because the local knowledge of welfare agencies frees governments from the need to develop complex knowledge of the heterogeneous preferences of citizens, or because welfare agencies can take on the task of sorting out 'free-riders' by using their local knowledge to customise services" (Berman et al., 2006: 86).

The contemporary proliferation of NGOs as organised, financed and co-opted extensions of the state exists at the regional scale in Tasmania. This reiterates Peck's findings (2004: 397) that many NGOs *"deliver services and operationalise discourses that were once the privileged province of nation, state and their local outposts"*.

Young (2000), writing on public policy, proposes three types of social relations between NGOs and the state:

1. A supplement for government failure (see also Weisbrod, 1977 and Billis and Glennerster, 1998)
2. Complementary partners with the state (see also Salamon and Anheier, 1998)
3. Having an adversarial relationship where governments control, regulate and monitor non-profits through contractual and funding constraints while non-profits agitate for social programs, criticise governments for policy shortfalls or inactions and “champion unpopular policy ideas” (Berman *et al*, 2006: 80).

The research findings in Chapters Eight to Ten on NGO discourses accord with Young’s (2000) observations. In describing their working role and sense of their organisation’s social relations with Housing Tasmania, overwhelmingly most of these social entrepreneurial actors explained how they provided *supplementary* benefits to government support, *complementary* programs funded by the government and an *adversary* stance to ensure the stories, experiences and needs of low income and disadvantaged Tasmanians were heard and acted on. In short, they claimed to bridge Young’s (2000) framework of either/or supplementary, complementary and adversarial social relations with the state by holding these positions simultaneously and from a position of “*growth or improvement*”. Importantly, actors relying on a discourse of social entrepreneurialism tended to manage and negotiate their contradictions – between supplementary, complementary and adversarial functions – more than actors using acquiescence or pseudo-market discourses. For example, a Chairman of NGO 8 Board explained:

“Our business development side should fill gaps that aren’t currently being met by policy. At the service delivery level we’re bound by current government policy and our contracts. We’re happy to deliver the programs the government wants. On our advocacy level, we have a strong voice in the community sector that’s well regarded by government policy makers and our opinions are always sought on housing and affordability. We push for change where we think policy is inadequate. These functions are not ‘all or nothing.’ At the end of the day, it is government policy and funding which is going to finance the majority of the work we do but our business development thinking is to supplement this” (NGO 8, Chairman 1).

Organisations sought alternative funding sources or were aware they would need to reduce services. This meant they accepted new logics about their need to be ‘entrepreneurial’, to think outside the conventional ‘funding box’ and behave in business-like ways. Distinct ‘comparative advantages’ of the non-profit sector exist in their characteristic ‘blurring’ and flexible structures of being and, -or, -both bureaucracies and association groups. Billis and Glennester (1998: 91) write that when dealing with clients who have complex needs, such as public housing tenants, comparative advantages matter because “the gap between users and those in authority can be less, given the potential for greater motivation, sensitivity to, and knowledge about client need”.⁹⁴

⁹⁴ Though this advantage potentially decreases as an organisation increases in size, differentiates services or separates stakeholder roles (Billis and Glennester, 1998: 96-97).

Generally, interviewees accepted the current political economy of housing and its activation in terms of delivering, more 'efficient' ways of providing services rather than centralised government provision. The promise of rhetoric such as 'strengthening communities' (Rose, 1996) rang true for these NGO interviewees. They stated their organisations held the necessary structural flexibility to respond to the market in ways that a bureaucratic state institution could not (see Esping-Andersen, 1990). Adding to Ulrich Beck's pithy observation grounded in individualism that "how one lives becomes the *biographical solution of systemic contradictions*" (1992: 137, original emphasis), these interviewees assumed that flexibility equates to new ways of working together with staff from other third sector organisations in coalitions to advance new governance mechanisms. This interpretation of flexibility differed from 'straight' neo-liberal rhetoric. Hence for these actors, flexibility, openness to new practices, market influences and ways of doing business were seen as positive aspects of a person's agency and the upside of neo-liberal political practices. Across the three NGO groups the same themes emerged in the interviews but critically they were shaped by different discursive choices and explanatory systems. Another way to interpret the emergence of new neo-liberal or entrepreneurial discourse into the everyday language of these actors would be to draw on Fairclough's (2001: 124) discussion of the incorporation of 'new public management' discourse by politicians and senior management of organisations. He describes this discourse as impacting on pre-existing structures as they "drill their way down" into normalised accounts of one's own practices.

Proving organisational capacity to the government

For actors who had more recently commenced negotiations with the state to deliver housing programs it was imperative to "*prove themselves*" to the state. They sought to actively develop a public narrative confirming their organisational identity as a "*safe*" viable NGO, evidenced in their ability to link two seemingly incongruous positions of being "*spontaneous and responsive*" and also "*predictable and purposeful*". They enacted "*uni-directional learning processes*" to understand what the government needed and applied it to their business processes. These interviewees described NPM priorities in positive terms such as involving "*streamlining*", "*regularising*" and routinising an arms-length governance model into their own. Private sector management thinking has influenced NPM. It stressed 'quality', 'customer satisfaction', cultural change alongside organisational restructuring and talked of the institution as a singular entity with all employees sharing homogenous values. The government, through tender processes and policy statements, both emphasises the importance of the community sector and influences the type of management the community sector applies to itself.

'Proving their mettle' was discussed in terms of necessity – "*needing to*" and being "*up to them*" to show their worth and skill set to Housing Tasmania – rather than the state validating their public discourse on new partnerships and 'community capacity' building. In a policy environment where averting risk is discursively and ideologically significant, these stakeholders willingly took on the responsibility of showing market relevance, quality, timeliness, flexibility and internal capacity to withstand pressures and make appropriate risk judgements. Reducing 'risk' emerged as a central element within actors discourses – this time taking a lead role in more neo-liberal framings of the need for new

funding and partnership relationships to replace existing housing structures (Culpitt, 1999). The consequences of contemporary 'risk' discourses and a focus on flexibility

"impact upon how we think about *ourselves*, which, in turn, alters the nature of the social relationships and of our capacity to provide social support or 'care' for others" (original emphasis, Nettleton and Burrows, 1998: 154).

The growth of the 'independent sector' also means NGOs accepted greater responsibility for social welfare provision in the form of housing despite the details 'in process' as the AHS was unfolding. They ascribed meaning to specific knowledge and capital in assisting homeless and disadvantaged people before overlapping it on a more general integration of housing into their remit of 'capabilities'. There is a chance that these NGOs have underestimated what will be required by them to perform and deliver to the scale 'new governance' and 'growth providers' demands. Being 'innovative' still calls for having resources; 'learning' to do things differently and 'better' might rely on superior 'hardware' or external research findings, or a reliance on creating 'lean systems' that, in turn, effect staff numbers, work duties and levels of satisfaction. Having a flexible close relationship with the state is seen as being innovative and demonstrating credibility. These stakeholders were willing participants to a re-branding process that more readily engaged in the links between their service and housing, accepting a seat at the proverbial governments table to discuss their "*contribution to housing solutions*". With an onus on proving to Housing Tasmania they were capable of change, new players in Tasmanian housing services viewed their relationship with the state as progressing:

NGO 3, Officer 1: "*This is a step for us. We now have our own housing discussions with Housing Tasmania. It puts it clearly on our local agenda*"

NGO 8, Senior Policy Officer 1: "*We've been negotiating with them about a particular property, one of the things that has come up in discussions is this word 'trust'. Where we are sort of saying 'you can trust us, and we can trust you, can't we?' If government is giving money to NGOs for housing. It's a risk for them and there is this relationship based on trust that has to be developed. They have a stock of houses they want to shed so they can be redeveloped or improved for affordable housing. But they have to put their money where their mouth is. To hand those properties with cheap prices over to make it work, otherwise it can't be modernised and dealt with. And they have to have the element of trust even though it might all happen through contracts*".

Imperfect information and unpredictable conditions within the housing system creates uncertainty and unknown risks for both the government and NGOs when developing contract relationships and the mechanics of stock transfer processes contain elements of risk for organisations and individual tenants in increased rental costs. Contracts can specify outputs or outcomes, practices and behaviours, while clarity of purpose supports greater capacity to mitigate conflict (Brown *et al.*, 2007). Trust is seen as an essential component in order to fulfil effective contracts and aim to achieve the elusive 'win-win' outcomes (Brown *et al.*, 2007). Through the social relations between these actors and the state, trust was being established and entrepreneurial discourses were being legitimated. Unlike more sceptical actors in Chapter Eight, these interviewees talked of how trust preserved a way of behaving in the current housing services contract and shaped

perceptions and imaginings about future contract and interactions with the state and other actors. These actors talk of trust as a contingent condition – the amount of trust developed between themselves and the state causally influences the future likelihood of securing contracts. Being seen as trustworthy means that these NGOs proved their transaction viability with the state – they are seen to be able to perform transactions as expected, with reliability and meeting housing outcomes. A few interviewees, experienced with ‘change’ management processes within housing, did not see it as controversial to “*update*” or “*review*” their organisation’s brief. Recent literature on the political, contractual and funding dimensions of the relationship between governments and NGOs in Australia have focused on the impacts of marketisation, contracting and ‘market-style’ regimes on organisations (Alessandrini, 2002).⁹⁵ Norman Fairclough’s (1992: 207) definition of marketisation or commodification applies to these housing changes:

“the process whereby social demands whose concern is not producing commodities in the economic senses of goods for sale come nevertheless to be organised and conceptualised in terms of commodity production, distribution and consumption”.

Considine’s (2003) research found that factors such as government control via contracts, competition with the commercial sector and pressures to maximise financial sustainability caused NfP organisations to adopt similar entrepreneurial behaviours, lessening their social justice and community development mission. With the convergence of the state and economic realm, the NGO and NfP sector might be squeezed into a service provider role, as evidenced in contractualism. However, many of these actors held favourable interpretations of the marketisation discourse prescribed in the AHS and related initiatives. These actors were not locked into a discursive space of justification. There was a readiness to deliver community and social housing services and their ‘new way of doing business’ was perceived as being internally ‘owned’ by staff, well mapped-out and not risky. Their departure from those who use discourses of acquiescence is obvious in their focus on “*expansion*” or as Ferguson and Gupta (2002) term it an ‘encompassment’ based on working with the state in new governance models. One could argue that the more these NGO actors behaved or enacted their social processes in this way, the more these ‘strategies’ became institutionalised within, and disseminated across, the organisation. Indeed this filtration strategy casts light on the ways in which neo-liberal ideologies become naturalised and taken-for-granted.

While actors experiencing compliant modes of governance felt constrained and limited by their social interaction with the state, these actors saw the governments’ reaction to rule-following as positive and, somewhat ironically as ‘empowering’. They envisaged and claimed to experience ‘rule-governed’ social practices based on common understandings. Meanings imputed by their actions had the desired effect or result. Hence the social relations between themselves and the state sustained the actions of each other. They had a well-established ‘sense of the game’ and could improvise and adapt to emergent or

⁹⁵ Critics of marketisation claim that governments applied these reforms to meet budgetary imperatives for cost-cutting (Saunders, 2002). This is contested by others (Dalton, 2009) who site negligible change in the ratio of Commonwealth social outlay relative to GDP.

contingent conditions. Diverse situations required skilled instinctive understanding of what was appropriate and what would be understood. Thus these social relations do not close action down. These interviewees ascribed to the idea that

“humans act in the context of social relations with others [...] mutually demand from each other appropriate forms of conduct. Individuals are not determined by rules; nor do they follow rules alone” (King, 2004: 62).

Talking in an animated, optimistic way about how clients’ would benefit from their expanded housing provision, these actors expected their social relations and dialogue with the state to be on more “*equal footing*”. Moving into engaging with the state more, through close relationships, was not seen as a collapse of their social mission. They did not see themselves as conformists to the directions of the state. Social entrepreneurial NGOs utilised a normalised neo-liberal script reiterating the practicality of accountability and close management of both funding and new housing agreements with the community sector, especially during a time of policy transition. Stringent monitoring requirements were seen as inevitable and largely valuable but associated administration costs were criticised. Interviewees, with new interests in housing service delivery, thought that:

“We will be identified as the ‘new kids on the block’ which creates a separation. I think Housing Tasmania will have a watching brief on us to see how we are going” (NGO 8, Senior Officer 1),

Political institutions rely on stakeholders’ involvement in policymaking to counterbalance the level of variety and complexity in public policy issues and to uphold principles of democracy. Recently, public management research used the term ‘venues of influence’ to describe how stakeholders or policy actors are categorised according to the roles they play in determining a government agency’s actions (Waterman, Rouse, and Wright 1998, 2004). Waterman *et al* (1998) found government agencies responded more substantively to actors with more direct hierarchical control over their budget, organisational structure and decision-making. These are characteristics of social entrepreneurial actors. Organisations have internal structures, explicit hierarchies and supposedly, operate according to rational, coherent decision-making principles making it possible for human agents to create change and meet objectives (Donnison and Ungerson, 1982). The stronger the internal structure the more appealing the organisation is as a ‘venue of influence’.

Enthusiastic discourses of change within a variegated neo-liberalism

NGO actors drawing on this discourse tended to perceive governance as emerging through the development of complex networks and the rise of more ‘bottom-up’ approaches to decision-making rather than the hierarchy implied in a ‘venue of influence’ analysis. Following this line of argument, support for governance models was in response to a convergence of political imperatives to address the issue of ‘trust’ and the management drive to improve service delivery (Pierre and Peters, 2000; Blacher, 2005). The devolution of housing provision to NGOs and market-operators implies a number of significant new constraints and opportunities would emerge in social processes, organisational cultures and management developments (Lowndes, 1999). For example in this new mindset the role of the manager had greater credibility across private and public

organisations as the driver of the necessary culture and organisational change and as a capable actor able to manage problems (Peck and Theodore, 1999). To the extent that the AHS set a new agenda in public-social housing, change was seen as inevitable and advantageous. Change in NGO organisations related to change in systems of governance, political economy approaches and the role of the state. Durable NGOs, such as these larger NGOs, were reshaped by their social processes and actions in relation to the state and the AHS. As these actors accepted a coalescence of state/non-state relations and governance modes, a 'reweaving' of relations (Fairclough, 2004) between 'new' discourses with 'old' discourses, changes in habits and action, in organisational processes and definitions of goals, emerged. The entrepreneurial spirit 'naturally' existing in the spontaneous order of a society, ensuring individual freedoms and the efficient allocation of resources are to be equally pursued. Because NGOs are competent they can also access the relevant markets and achieve desirable housing outcomes giving more 'choice' to clients. This reinforces the neo-liberal perspective of moral virtue – the actor is willing to accept the risks associated with free markets and to change, where necessary, to fully participate.

Partnerships were interpreted by actors as active structures to register a place for themselves and their organisation in improving what was being delivered and in creating a "*better future*" for public housing practice. Partnerships, as a new approach to governance, coincided with entrepreneurialism or privatism in the provision and regulation of social life (Harvey, 1989a). The seriousness and complexities of the deficiencies in public housing provision and the affordable housing crisis meant NGOs saw 'partnerships' as a viable, responsible solution to stimulate social change. Collaboration and partnerships became a discursive process in which collective actors acquired a shared identity to overcome extant social problems. But as Rummery (2006: 224) notes assumptions about partnerships have, to date, been unaccompanied by empirical evidence. Similarly, these interviewees believed in the value of partnerships and were willing to be part of a partnership process but had no examples or prior experiences to indicate the success, or otherwise, of such a relationship with the state. Partnerships in this context emerge as

"not only as an essential adjunct of policy but as the most important foundation of the government's strategy towards urban areas" (Bailey *et al.*, 1995: 1).

As with other circuit of governance actors, these interviewees maintained several concurrent and potentially contradictory ways of thinking and interpreting policy and events. They accepted and utilised integrationalist discourse triggering a powerful colonisation of regular social welfare terms with more dominant economic and market discourses and imperatives. NGO actors operated as though an orderliness of social relations and human interactions with Housing Tasmania existed. This order was improved on by the rhetoric and discussions of dispersing power to multiple housing providers. In several respects, interviewees' discursive and cognitive frame – accepting organisational change, sector growth and the uptake of a vocabulary influenced by marketisation – marked a clear shift in how they imagined themselves a decade or two ago. This highlighted the ways in which 'new ways of thinking' and talking about public housing and non-state roles were affected by economic and individualistic justifications for reforms, such as a reduced welfare state. Just as Nigel Thrift (1997: 52) illuminates the linguistic wordplay of business elites in explaining organisational change, using upbeat

metaphors of 'dancing' or 'surfing' in preference of more common terms such as engineering'; 'teams' and 'coalitions' instead of yesterday's 'cultures'; and 'networks' and 'influences' replacing 'control', similarly, these stakeholders repeated terms such as "flexible in delivery", "building capacity," "maximising capacity", "sustainabilities," "viable", "respond creatively" "enhancing" and "building partnerships". The language they used reinforced their view they were part of a governance process; not excluded or uncertain of their role; or ambiguously placed or misunderstood by the state. The 'nominalisation', or linguistic shift from verbs to a particular class of nouns to represent social actions and process, demonstrates the prevalence of an 'immediate worldview' and the centrality of 'here and now'; a kind of present orientation. The life narrative of the organisation needs to be very contemporary in order to satisfy emerging governance requirements. Fairclough (2004: 10) calls this

"a disembedding, dedifferentiation and time-space distantiating of actions and processes from concrete and particular to an abstract representation of them".

'Organisation' is then contingent on actors reproducing these 'now' verbs to substantiate their "distanced meanings" (Iedema, 2003: 73). The language of neo-liberal political practices infiltrated their thinking and discursive explanations. These stakeholders used metaphors of change to reiterate their perspective that third sector involvement in housing would be advantageous. By using marketised language a blurring or blending (Prince, 2001) of the logic of the state and the logic of the market occurred. Two actors working in Hobart based organisations elucidated this point well in the following examples:

NGO 3 Manager 1: "For the past five years or so the more business development stream of thinking in our organisation has come about as a result of necessity. We're so reliant on government funding and the issues that it causes like starting and stopping and staff levels. It became an issue of financial sustainability. It's about our organisation being able to roll with the punches a bit more. The goal was to enable us to have unencumbered funds that we could direct in an area that we felt was not currently being met by government programs"

NGO 8, Chairperson: "We've had to increase our government protocol for a number of reasons. It's a requirement of government funding, certain standards, business etiquette and accountability for public money. Government has a responsibility to check that it is spent correctly".

NGOs that enable their staff to contribute in socially, strategic ways for the advancement of socially-driven housing policy points to a belief in social relations of mutual trust, relative independence and cooperation with the state. This position, however, is largely not supported by the neo-liberal political practices transforming the delivery of social housing. Moreover, the priority of the social over the market did seem to slip and weaken when actors talked of the value of social entrepreneurialism, employing a business manager and working to capitalise on their strong economic leverage.

The concrete events of social life provide a useful illustration of how 'marketised' social processes emerge and are operationalised – these NGOs in turn exhibit 'marketised' characteristics. The organisational structures of these willing NGOs and the agency of individual staff members in following through with organisational action coalesce to

produce causal effects on how non-state organisations change in response to neo-liberal policy demands. One interviewee explained their organisation's need for a full-time Business Development Manager to carry out market activities:

"...in recognition of the need to develop independent funding sources. Aside from our interest in housing, we run community enterprises that operate commercially but provide supported employment opportunities for employees. We also want to build up philanthropic donors, bequest programs, corporate supporters, anything that is not tied to a government contract" (NGO 8, Chairperson).

The data from the interviews with these NGOs demonstrated that their organisational culture and individual interpretation of its strengths serve to act as the integrating mechanism for more economic relations with the state while enhancing their socially driven 'outcome' of delivering housing to former Housing Tasmania tenants. Instrumental goals and cultural agreements interconnect in the prominent discourse of social entrepreneurialism between NGOs and the state. This premise is expressed in their 'close' social relations and interactions characterised by mutual support – partnership creation, support for changed practices and responsibilities.

New roles and modes of governance are emerging for Housing Tasmania and NGOs in delivering housing policies. A focus on connecting stakeholders, enhancing partnerships, developing new ways to work together and areas of mutual interest and cross-boundary cooperation are in response to shifts from, for example, government to governance, from closed structures to open systems and from power to empowerment (Pinnegar, 2007). Neo-liberal political practices placed constrictions on the possibilities and opportunities that actors imagine they can activate to transform the current operational paradigm. But social action generates possibilities to challenge or modify existing practices through 'rational agency'. According to Bhaskar (1998: 660-661) for an agent to act independently of social structures she or he must possess the cognitive skills to act in one's best interest; be empowered and resourceful in order to do so and have the disposition or motivation to follow through with one's actions (also see Lawson, 2002).

The underlying factors which have shaped the states 'enabler' rather than provider discourse is the advancement of a type of neo-liberal political practice. Stressing the perceived limitations of failure of the welfare state, the emerging structures reflected the neo-liberal interpretation of what was deemed appropriate and cost-effective. These interviewee comments indicate how the impact of neo-liberalism has sought to ensure the co-option or collusion of leading NGOs in the values and processes of the state. Thus, rather than promoting different or alternative voices, Housing Tasmania and the state accept and reward stances and voices that are congruent with its practices and needs. Interviewees argue that they fostered – through necessity – such transformative practices. Transformations occur both in structures (not as marginal readjustments) and to other structures. Transformational shifts in the ordering of social relations e.g. between NGOs and the state, between tenants and the press and between tenants and the broader community, exist in the process of social change.

Sites of internal contradiction: replicating the duality of neo-liberalism?

Although there was consensus across all actors that Tasmania was experiencing a chronic housing affordability problem, there was not a sense that the solution offered by the state was entirely adequate, of sufficient pace or the only 'commonsense' policy response. Most of these actors advocated a greater role for government in addressing housing affordability and increasing public housing stock, hence their support for the AHS. Acknowledging their organisation may benefit from greater funding and the opening up of government services to a quasi-market approach, these actors were less inclined to support the view that new modes of governing would necessarily achieve greater 'choice' for public housing tenants. One interviewee expressed her concerns about the quandary of the notion of 'choice' and its relationship to other ideological notions of equality among 'rational' actors:

"I get very uncomfortable about this notion of choice [...] The choice approach would say 'well tenants should be prepared to pay a premium for living in the inner city' [...] but do they really have a choice? Is it an entirely free choice if you don't drive or your kids who you don't see very much live in this area and you want to be close to them, or you are on the methadone program in North Hobart and you need to live close so you can access it every day [...] The choice argument assumes a whole lot of things that aren't necessarily there" (NGO 3, Officer 1).

The lack of substantive choice for tenants was integrated with the view the market is not designed to deliver socially acceptable outcomes. Talking of the unique role third sector and faith-based organisations provide, two Managers described their function and values as socially-minded not market-driven:

NGO 7, Research Officer: "Even at the basic level, on the subject of housing and homelessness and the rest of the cycle, you can ask the question who really would be interested in these people? A normal commercially-driven organisation probably won't be. Most NGOs would have somewhere in their mission statement downward a brief about helping people with housing. I think religious organisations are there because of what they want to do and how they want to assist everyone, regardless of what they financially get back"

NGO 8, Senior Officer: "The community sector doesn't have the resources but it does have the commitment in regards to the care for disadvantaged people whereas the capital is in the private sector but they don't have a duty of care or a commitment to assist disadvantaged people. Basically the private sector is driven by profit and most of the people who are disadvantaged have failed in the market economy not just in employment terms but also in education and training terms".

Summarising the key components that actors using social entrepreneurial language use to explain the rationale for government transferring housing stock, two Managers focused their argument on criticising the unsustainability of public housing because of heavy targeting:

NGO 3, Manager 1: *"Housing Tasmania is running public housing into the ground because of the ideological belief of small government: 'We don't provide a service, we regulate it'. I think that's what driving the transfer of stock and the focus on growth providers in the community housing sector. It's the belief that it's not government business to provide housing, 'we'll farm it out to the NGOs or the private sector'"*

Advocacy Organisation, Manager 1: *"On a state level they could stop targeting. They could increase their income by having diversity in tenancy mix and with that they could build more properties. Public housing has always provided affordability and security of tenure. That's become untenable and unviable and public housing is unsustainable because of the heavy targeting. They're not running a business, they are running the program into the ground because of the ideological belief of small government".*

Almost half of these NGO interviewees perceived a failure of the state to specify in sufficient detail the way in which TAHL, as a new quasi-market body, would be regulated and operate in order to meet social justice outcomes and to alleviate the immediate pressures on the waiting list by housing applicants from Category One. Strong regulation of stock transfer was widely considered necessary, by these NGO actors and those in Chapter Eight, to provide assurances to tenants, government and private sector partners and to indicate government commitment to further investment in the sector. Difficulties were envisaged by actors in the handing over of state housing responsibilities and allocative processes to NGOs and quasi-state institutions without stipulating any long-term or ongoing increases in fiscal capacity for these actors to carry out these additional responsibilities. A smaller number grounded the emergence of neo-liberal ideologies more at the national level, as a pressure from the Commonwealth Government placing significant constraints on states and territories because of the CSHA debt, for instance

"The debt has an impact on state level policies and creates difficulties. How does that translate into a State Labour government that is quite progressive, on social issues at least? The big question is how do you manage Federal pressures against State goals?" (NGO 2, Manager 1).

Peak body interviewees cited an existing argument about the community sector's current incapacity to manage stock transfers. Academics, such as Berry *et al* (2006), have likewise noted these deficiencies:

"because of its small size and lack of financial management skills, the community housing sector currently is poorly placed to take over the management through stock transfer from the SHAs. This suggests either that new forms of independent social landlords might have to be developed to manage not just the housing stock but also the restructuring of land and other capital assets, or that initiatives might have to be undertaken by the SHA themselves" (Berry et al, 2006: 314-315).

Others read it as symptomatic of under-resourcing and its concomitant narrowing of the likelihood of attracting 'experts' to careers in NGOs:

"If you paid people in the community sector decent wages you wouldn't have to increase their capacity. You'd get people with capacity applying for the jobs. [...] This is the sharp

pointy end and unfortunately people at the sharp pointy end get paid less so it attracts people with less skill and less 'capacity' in the first place. Once you build capacity people go and get a job somewhere else. We're like a little mouse running around a wheel" (NGO 7, Manager 1).

The challenges of unified coalitions

Aligned missions between the Housing Tasmania and NGO housing agencies were seen as an important feature in preventing conflict and in generating greater trust between both parties. However, when agreed purposes were not met in a timely manner, by stalling on the overall policy as in the case of the delays in establishing TAHL and in the later decision to scale back Stage Two of the AHS, disappointment led to the formation of fervent advocacy coalitions. In Chapter Seven I explored how, for some NGO actors, the pressures of competitive tendering for funding and programs overshadowed any successes won from broad-sector advocacy. By comparison, these actors espoused the sector's unity and achievements in gaining significant traction on affordable housing issues. Insisting on a unified coalition assumes that solidarity is a necessary prerequisite for political action. A campaign organiser and policy officer noted:

"The sector has got to a point where the issue is so big and so all encompassing that we have to do something and we're really willing to work together to achieve it. I think there are really positive relationships between different people, particularly between the larger organisations" (Advocacy 2, Policy Officer 1).

In the 1980s Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith developed the advocacy coalition framework (ACF) to overcome the shortcomings of the policy stage models.⁹⁶ 'Advocacy Coalitions' develop out of groups with shared perspectives on the nature and effects of a 'social problem' and 'best' solutions "who show a non-trivial degree of coordinated activity over time" (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1993: 25). Provisional unities develop when focusing on very narrow concrete actions that articulate central concerns requiring purposeful government sign-off or endorsement. Burton proposes that the ACF represents

"something of a bridge between (the positivist and constructionist dichotomy), recognising the fact of advocacy and trying to account empirically for why some succeed and others fail in advancing their policy preferences" (Burton, 2007: 179).

Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1999: 120) argue that over the course of a decade – an imagined timescale for a policy – more external events occur that serve as critical prerequisites to major policy change including the development and influence of social

⁹⁶ Policy stages can be linear or cyclical in sequences and vary in number but principally 'values' are treated as exogenous in that they have been determined by legitimate politicians and can then be applied to appraisals of alternative policy options. Rationality, therefore, is borne out of these political values and the basis from which to determine the best 'match' between values and a policy solution. Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier (1993) among other commentators outlined the main criticisms of the policy stages model namely how it fails to identify any causal mechanisms for policy development, negates historical and temporal change, inaccurately describes actual processes and fails to properly theorise and interconnect the non-policy world and the material reality and the immediate policy system.

movements, changes to the government in office, or an overarching policy decision such as a revised commitment to social justice or neo-liberal market reforms. Interest in the external shocks plays a significant role, according to Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1999), in that they effect and change the core programmatic belief systems of non-state policy actors. Bridgman and Davis (2004: 25) restate a critical realist perspective suggesting that

“this model reminds us that policy-making is an ongoing dynamic, rarely one-off, and involves powerful interests other than government.”

Though as Keen (2006) points out their critique fails to delve into the role of NGOs in policy work. For Burton (2007: 183) and others, the ACF reconciles “the competing significance of agency and structure in social relations”. He notes the value of the ACF is its movement

“beyond the limitations of the [policy] stages model and some of its questionable assumptions of political neutrality and rational behaviour, [but] for some it still does not go far enough in acknowledging the social construction of reality in policy processes and the epistemological impossibility of objective knowledge” (Burton, 2007: 181).

Applying the ACF to NGOs activism, these actors claimed advocacy coalitions were most effective when they had achieved buy-in from a cross-section of organisations of varying size, scope and communicative expertise. Forming a united coalition of third sector organisations to address and make prominent the effects of public housing waiting lists, unaffordable private rents or the lack of crisis accommodation required collaborative social relations between same-sector organisations and common ideological positions. According to one interviewee, this change coincided with the AHS:

“Since 2004, I think it has become more of a focus and an understanding amongst bigger NGOs that if they put their heads together and work together they can get things done. They can have an impact. A collective impact, as well as with TasCOSS. Their Executive Director was a very good operator in terms of getting a ‘coalition of the willing’ together” (NGO 8, Senior Officer 1).

Resistance to neo-liberal dominance also emerged in the need to ‘maintain the rage’ by forming divergent advocacy coalitions and platforms for debate and public communicative dialogue. By working together for a definable goal, these interviewees argued the establishment of an ‘Affordable Housing Crisis Coalition’ in 2005, during the lead-up to the State election, enabled them to collectively develop policy positions centred on retaining social housing at 6 per cent of the housing system and reactivating the AHS in full. The coalition was disbanded in 2006 as:

“we thought the thing that makes these coalitions work is that they are short-term and goal driven. We achieved our goals so we dissolved the group after the election” (NGO 3, Manager 1).

With “no movement in housing” (NGO 3, Manager 1) the key community sector organisations re-formed to update existing policies and to gather sector-wide support for

flagging up the housing crisis as the core priority for state social policy. This appropriation of activism reminds us of the recent 'argumentative turn' in policy analysis which draws attention to the complexity of relationships between agency, identity and institutional structures and the existing 'difference' within policy discourse. Policy-making and policy-review processes are contests over ideas, practices and assumptions, exposing them to a 'shake up' in form and direction (Graycar and Jamrozik, 1989). Unpacking dimensions of power relations, Stewart Clegg (1979: 79) writes that coalitions can exercise influence over housing issues through their capacity to

"articulate concepts at the structural level, which can explain the emergence and non-emergence of issues and interests, and their relationship at the level of action. What this implies is some theoretical criteria of the significance and rationality of these issues and interests which are evident in both social action and inaction, and some ways of specifying how and why these theoretical criteria could be acceded to".

Again fissures erupted within circuit of governance actor discourses. Accepting social entrepreneurial discourses, these actors sought to initiate a problematic dialogue with the state where they assumed they occupied equal positions of power. This positions them within a more liberal model where the end-goal is that unity and agreement between the state and NGOs is possible and desirable. Rather a social democratic model – that of the more troubled and perhaps ineffectual actors in Chapter Eight – implies a struggle to articulate the social parameters of issue debates with the state that will not be compromised. Yet when actors using a social entrepreneurial discourse embark on advocacy coalitions and public calls for changes they are behaving in more socially democratic ways – albeit they interpret their actions as showing leadership akin to entrepreneurialism. Dialogue with the state, for these actors, was still fraught with challenges but unlike actors who felt they inevitably submitted and acquiesced to the state, these actors saw negotiations as possible and mutually beneficial. Interviewees described the communicative action and public dialogue generated from events such as the Housing Advocacy Day held at State Parliament, Hobart in October 2007, as demonstrating a large *"physical presence with 120 Tasmanians coming together to represent their shared perspective on the way forward for housing policy"* (Advocacy Organisation, Manager 1). Community sector press releases described the event as:

"the culmination of the whole Tasmanian community sector coming together to call for more investment in affordable housing – Anglicare, TasCOSS and Shelter are facilitating it [...] we need more houses on the ground and particularly social housing. If we don't act now, the situation will get worse".

In defining their NGO social relations in collective terms these actors were mobilising 'third way' thinking and discourse that seeks to balance the state and market by rejecting notions of 'choice', 'market hegemony' and 'individual freedom' preferring a "renewed commitment to equality" (Saunders, 2002: 250) through their social presence and articulation of social needs. Talk about housing needs was opened up to all community sector organisations and to people experiencing housing stress or homelessness. First-hand accounts became an effective tool for this group:

"Stories are the way to do it. [...] MPs hear what it's like to live in unaffordable rental or crisis accommodation. Our aim was to make it more immediate and it's harder to dismiss someone's story because you are dismissing the person as well" (NGO 8, Senior Officer 1).

Real people talking about the real difficulties they had experienced in their life were seen as useful devices:

NGO 7, Research Officer 1: "Politicians don't understand what 'complex needs' mean, they just don't get how complex it is but when you have someone explaining the impacts, it manages to breakdown some of those concepts for them a bit"

NGO 3, Manager 1: "We tried to throw out the invitation as wider as possible and include concerned members of the community so we could say to the government that 'look this is not just the usual suspects, it's a really broad support base for this policy position and for the need to do something about housing now.'"

The change generated by the interaction with the state should be viewed 'internally' where it takes the form of releasing causal powers to these NGOs and to tenants and communities involved in advocacy coalition interventions. Interpreting this change from a critical realist perspective demonstrates that the action of these NGO stakeholders either makes the AHS work or not while the causal potential of the AHS takes the form of providing a rationale for housing change and the resources to enable it to work or not. Looking at the generative causation, it becomes obvious that the capacity for social change is triggered in positive conducive circumstances which tend to be the space in which these NGOs operate (in comparison to NGOs in the previous chapter).

These quotes indicate that many actors embraced the language and policy directions of Housing Tasmania imagining their organisation as part of the government espoused innovative solution, while also finding their emerging power in unifying support within their sector. These organisations can be described as learning and changing as evidenced by their adversarial relations focused on bringing together a range of tenants, community sector agencies, activists, academics and interested citizens to push along an agenda of participatory and consultative interaction. This means actors using an entrepreneurial discourse functioned as a 'networked' structure, able to plug into or generate connections between housing actors or with the state in potentially new, vibrant ways. Extending participation in advocacy coalitions to include constituents effectively serves to:

- Counteract the usual limitations on community sector/NGOs feedback mechanisms which in turn impact on the effectiveness of their work (Smith Sreen, 1995) and
- Disassemble structures of networks that reflect the broader pattern of structural inequality within society (Marsh and Smith, 2000: 7).

Such advocacy events directed attention away from the usual social pathologising of disadvantaged people, whether homeless, with complex needs, or on the public housing waiting list. The intention lies in generating greater understanding of the social mechanisms of inequality, such as the housing shortage that produces or sustains

deprivation (Giddens, 2000). The human side of political activism puts a voice to concepts, statistics or emotionless discourse about entrenched problems. When people are forced to sleep on a friends' sofa because the waiting list for public housing is so long, the reality of inequalities that our community tolerates become apparent. Collective agreement was reached by the coalition that the core priority for the Government on social policy must be the crisis on public and affordable housing. A united position was borne out of an explicit process of naming up and repeating the main problem and how it manifests itself in so many peoples' lives with such dire impacts on families, mental and physical health, loneliness and isolation, educational and employment chances and poverty. Iris Marion Young (1997), in identifying ways in which contemporary democratic practices have missed the mark in failing to incorporate the lifeworlds of those most immediately affected by a policy, advocates for a communicative democracy where measures designed to facilitate communication about differences in values and experiences become a resource for better democratic practice, including policy formulation and implementation. Social entrepreneurial actors interpreted their ACF as achieving these ends.

Joining categorised people under a collective banner of 'housing advocates', while supporting people to state their personal (categorically related) experiences, disables social pathologising. This suggests in analysing the formation of the working class as a collective historical agent the group coalition moves towards a 'class for itself' identity purporting that to achieve goals 'in their interest' they need to unite and "realise for themselves what their interests are" (Jenkins, 1996: 88). Undeniable housing problems were revealed when people talked for themselves, showing the extent and credibility of NGOs claims and validating the evidence of a housing crisis. Talking about the causes and consequences of a shortage of public housing also points to the areas of action, what's missing and what would make the most positive difference to people's lives. As Mark Peel (2003) argued in *The Lowest Rung*, poor people need to be listened to and not spoken with or about. Descriptive accounts of the housing crisis, photographic exhibitions from people on the public housing waiting list and a series of policy documents are ways these third sector actors sought to ensure the government not "*escape their responsibility*" (NGO 2, Manager 1). Interviewees saw themselves as pushing the boundaries of normal performance of NGOs. To them, rallying together beats sending off press releases or attending individual meetings with the Minister for Health and Human Services.

Having brought together people who are categorised within the bureaucratic practices of government of the modern state as 'public housing applicant', 'homeless', 'unemployed' or 'public housing tenants with complex needs' with members of a collective, there is an attempt to destabilise or prize open how the effects of categorisations can be systematically concealed and separated out from a 'macro' problem. It was clear these interviewees believed in the benefits of their collective capacity to publically articulate the need for more public housing and apply pressure on the Tasmanian government to increase Housing Tasmania's budget. In a sense this means the focus was taken off the relativity of resources that defines tenants or public housing applicants 'lack' (for example owning a house, of being employed, of having financial resources) and instead illuminated on the relationability of processes that give rise to social exclusion (Giddens, 2000; Saunders, 2002) – a key theme of 'third way' or social market governance approaches and politics. These actors rejected housing inequalities on behalf of those who have "neither the economic nor political power to reverse this process of cumulative decline" (Saunders,

2002: 176). Furthermore, operating from a values-based framework these community sector organisations saw themselves as seeking to “expand moral space” (Edwards and Sen, 2000: 614) by bringing about change through collaborative public sphere dialogue.

There is a growing body of literature that advocates more deliberative and participative approaches to public engagement with decision-making at all levels of policy-making (Healey, 1997). Clark *et al* (2001) has shown evidence of the benefits of state’s subscription to act, from the outset, on the findings and opinions gathered from processes of public engagement and how agencies are able to then progress towards prioritising policies that move in the direction of the stated goal, for example affordable housing. Similarly, contemporary international planning literature indicates that local planning processes can benefit from directly involving multiple stakeholders who have an interest in or may be affected by planning outcomes (Cuthill, 2004; Mega, 1999; Gleeson and Low, 2000, Francis-Brophy, 2006). These interviewees thought their connected collective engagement with the state showed that what was required was

“better connected policy responses based on more sophisticated and robust analyses of underlying causes and possible solutions” (Burton, 2006: 173).

They argued it was possible to chart their proposals to the state to the eventual implementation of the *AHS*. The focus of dialogue with the state tended to centre on the ways in which the implementation of new governance models occurred and the associated skills deemed necessary to perform these new functions. In contrast, the public sphere dialogue centres on the housing system as a whole and the policy imperatives needed to advance the ‘system.’ Marsh and Smith (2001: 530), endorsing policy network theory, argue a considerable degree of policy is made by relatively small groups of closely linked actors. These interviewees confirming Marsh and Smith’s findings asserted their role in policy-making was significant.

Conclusion

It has been argued that these actors interpreted the decentralisation of public housing as an effective, more responsive way to deliver housing and its associated services. These NGOs saw their own organisation as best placed to take on the modern challenges of organisational change within variegated neo-liberal approaches. Yet, in adhering to some social market governance ideas they did not subscribe to the normative perspective of neo-liberal political practices or ways of conducting their business with the state. The enactment of the *AHS* was seen to rely on these NGOs – for ideational support, implementation in new partnership roles and independent critique. The role of the state was still seen as very important. Durable NGOs using a discourse of social entrepreneurialism, reshaped by their social processes and actions in relation to the state and the *AHS*, respond, contingently, to practices which are ‘becoming’ institutionalised. Often debates about state interactions, supplementary roles or advocacy stances provide a context for discussion, action or resistance but do not become institutionalised into the organisations structure. As these actors accept a coalescence of state/non-state relations and governance modes a ‘reweaving’ of relations between ‘new’ discourses with ‘old’

discourses; changes in habits and actions; in organisational processes and definitions of goals emerge.

The struggle to accommodate dimensions of opposing discourses, and the ideological principles which stand behind them, meant that the stance and actions these NGOs took within new governance roles were increasingly interpreted as attempts to reconcile neo-liberal imperatives with a continued commitment to state assistance in their funding of housing and in other services. In this sense, the reconfiguration within the housing system that the AHS promoted reflected an attempt to construct and 'roll-out' (Peck and Tickell, 2002) neo-liberal ideals embedded through the support and involvement of NGOs. As argued earlier in Chapter Five the proposed reduction of state-provided public housing, through modes of governance and an expanded social housing sector was accompanied by the state attempting to assert and maintain control through regulation. Neo-liberal practices such as stock transfer were on the AHS agenda but the state priority centred on it determining the rules and structural constraints that selected which NGOs and other organisations ended up being key providers, funding models and client programs. Mixed actor discourses replicated the duality of neo-liberalism as social relations with the state were not fixed and paradoxes emerged within contrasting forces of economic rationalism and public good.

The 'circuit of governance' actors examined in this thesis were moving simultaneously through the circuit, relating with the state on one-off issues and more sustained contact influencing their every-day work practices. The circuit itself holds various routes and points of greater or lesser proximity to the state. These NGO actors sought integration or were integrated more closely within the governance model. Receiving a greater share of the state 'power supply' meant, at the same time others were repelled or blocked from additional 'current'. The cumulative power of the circuit of governance is its capacity to give institutional force to the policy process by simultaneously limiting actions, problems and solutions and opening up the circulation of ideas between actors aimed towards the same end-result. Both state and non-state actors become carriers of discourse while containing key sites of discourse. During the implementation process of the AHS, its policy ideas were naturalised and made 'thinkable'. Meanwhile debate on the AHS took different forms, applied differing discursive priorities and was framed by the utility actors gained in their social relations and negotiations with the state. Potentially, it remains open as to whether these NGOs can lead on social reform to ensure the additional TAHL houses are built and fairly distributed to tenants in most needs. Ensuring NGO independence – through future advocacy coalitions and other sites of intervention – remain problematic particularly whether they can promote an alternative social and political agenda to neo-liberalism. By examining the potential of some NGOs to advance social as well as entrepreneurial goals, this chapter sought to contribute to the development of theoretical explanations grounded in empirical cases of different variations of 'capitalism' and 'actually existing neo-liberalism'.

The data from the interviews with these NGOs demonstrated that their organisational culture and individual interpretation of its strengths serve as the integrating mechanism for more economic relations with the state while enhancing their socially driven 'outcome'

of delivering housing to former Housing Tasmania tenants. Instrumental goals and cultural agreements interconnect in the prominent discourse of social entrepreneurialism between NGOs and the state. This premise is expressed in their 'close' social relations and interactions characterised by mutual support – partnership creation, support for changed practices and responsibilities. Yet these NGOs also identified as a 'coalition of the willing' held two conflicting viewpoints which seemed to duplicate the inner contradictions of neo-liberalism. These actors indicated entrepreneurial rationales and perceived themselves as competent actors breaking beyond hierarchical state control. At the same time, these actors thought their close relationships with the state enabled them to engage in adversary relations with the state when the social ends of the AHS were interpreted as halted or weakened. The next chapter presents a final discourse of pseudo-markets that was adopted by a small number of interviewees advocating for less state intervention and regulation in housing providers' day-to-day practices.

CHAPTER TEN: PSEUDO-MARKET DISCOURSES: NGO SUPPORT FOR TRANSACTIONAL MODES OF GOVERNANCE AND DISTANT STATE RELATIONS

Introduction

Having established in Chapters Eight and Nine that NGOs connect to state governing practices in contingent multifarious ways, questions remain as to how the most conservative market-oriented end of the NGO spectrum discursively positioned itself. What discourse did these actors utilise to support their preference for transactional distant state relations? How did this group substantiate their push for retracted state involvement in social housing and what role did they imagine or envisage they would play in affordable housing delivery? Predominantly these actors championed partnerships with private investors and tenant selection processes based on 'best fit' into housing estates or new buildings (see a differing perspective from the state in Chapter Five). The perceived strengths of social and community housing were seen to outweigh an underfunded and dilapidated public housing model. While these actors agreed that the housing supply undoubtedly needed to be increased – a central tenet of the *AHS* – they differed from other NGOs in:

- Their attitudes on how the *AHS* should achieve greater supply
- The need for transactional modes of governing and more independent social relations with Housing Tasmania and
- Their views on tenant composition in affordable housing properties within the social housing sector.

The discourse presented in this chapter exemplifies an orthodox or 'pure' strand of classic economics. Considering the twin pillars of the *AHS*, these actors strongly favoured the second aspect – market efficiency – over the first aspect of social welfare. Several scholars have noted divergence amongst NGO organisational approaches and operating values. For example, Alessandrini (2002: 13), comparing Texan (USA) and Tasmanian (Australia) NGOs, developed a typology of non-profit human service organisations based on their level of market orientation. She described the final and fifth category in her typology as those organisations that are in many respects indistinguishable from commercial businesses: the 'pseudo-market entrepreneurial type' organisations. This thesis adapts this term to the discursive preferences of some NGO actors. I argue that the various modes of governance associated with neo-liberal political practices have contradictory effects and articulations. The discursive account of these actors distinguished them as being market-driven actors who argued that was possible to make rationally bounded informed choices based on maximising returns for their own organisation.

The discourse of pseudo-markets relied on a repositioning of public housing tenants to that of housing consumers who could satisfy their individual housing requirements through appropriate market choices. Their neo-liberal notion of empowerment unmistakably reinforced the primacy of marketisation in housing relations. Empowerment and participation, for these actors, had nothing to do with the social democratic ideas of public good and services (this contrasted to other actors in the circuit of governance, for example NGOs in Chapter Eight). Again turning to their view on tenants, these actors argued that tenants needed to individualise their process of empowerment to first ensure they would be eligible for social housing and then access the marketplace in all facets of their life. In particular, critiquing the nuanced ways in which neo-liberal political practices allow no other option to be considered feasible or undertaken, these actors demonstrated how market solutions were projected as the best way to solve entrenched housing issues. When the market cannot entice 'clients' to behave in the way that adheres to market values, the state need only intervene to regulate and ensure market solutions were not blocked or diverted by other interest. Universal rights and needs do not enter a pure market inspired interpretation. Investors are privileged over tenants, as tenants need to "learn" how to behave as market actors despite living in quasi-market social housing (see Chapter Seven for tenants' interpretation of these governing relations). Any limits on laissez-faire approaches through market protection and support were dismissed. The new doxa of market supremacy was favoured by these actors in several key ways including organisational approaches and endorsements of more conservative aspects of neo-liberal political practices and the merits of transactional, distant relations.

Interpreting the intentions of the AHS: policy experimentation and TAHL

As argued throughout the thesis, the AHS policy contained elements of both the social democratic tradition, for example the attempt to re-inscribe regulation and a strong state role in housing, and a nuanced neo-liberalism promoting greater market inclusion and collaboration across sectors and stakeholders. Mixing divergent ideological goals meant a contested, dynamic form of governance was inevitable. Historically, factors exacerbating the inefficiencies in public housing provision include, but are not confined to, changes in public finance regulations, maintenance repairs and modernisation costs and impacts on rent levels, tenants' rights and participation, changes in consumer expectations and housing needs, statutory housing quality requirements, demographic changes and labour market shifts (Nygaard, *et al.*, 2008). These factors combined to negatively affect the opportunity cost of public housing ownership and the degree of control over an asset's utilisation and value. In this way, for the actors considered in this chapter, market-oriented reforms were central to producing greater equity for suppliers – NGOs could utilise CRA and leverage funds in ways the public housing sector could not. This adds to NGOs competitiveness and capacity to 'close the gap' between social and private rental rates (Berry *et al.*, 2008). However the flipside of this is that rents are pushed up in some high-value areas, again reducing affordability and tenant choice.⁹⁷ This is another major neo-liberal political practice that encapsulates the state stepping away from formal housing provision to subsidy assistance. Criticisms of the CRA include its exclusion of the

⁹⁷ As outlined in earlier chapters, CRA is a cash supplement paid to eligible private renters who are in receipt of Centrelink benefits (SCRGSP, 2007).

working poor (Hulse & Burke, 2000) and negation of multifaceted issues related to the availability and quality of rental housing, location, tenant support needs and rights.⁹⁸

As discussed in Chapter Five delivering affordable housing through a partnership arrangement was problematic for the Tasmanian Government and Housing Tasmania. After the failure of the Macquarie Community Partnerships plan to coordinate the leveraging of private investment into affordable housing provision, the state talked of 'rethinking' how it could still achieve its multi-governance goal and reallocate funds to support further policy experimentation possible. In 2007, after more policy experimentation the State Government decided not to follow-through with Housing Tasmania's interest in 'growth providers'. Instead a public company limited by shares was established as a housing intermediary, with the aim of increasing the supply of affordable housing in Tasmania. The Tasmanian Affordable Housing Limited (TAHL), in receipt of \$6 million per annum for the years 2007 – 2011 (DHHS, 2006) was charged with the task of providing and head-leasing 700 properties on crown land on behalf of low-income earners. TAHL modelled its corporate structure on that of the Brisbane Housing Company (see Milligan *et al* 2004).⁹⁹ The \$6 million was allocated to cover the gap between the rents paid by tenants and the market return required by the investors. With this in place, TAHL was set to become the largest single provider of affordable housing in Tasmania thereby radically changing the social housing environment. The TAHL Board comprised an ordinary shareholder (the Minister for Housing) and six initial community shareholders appointed for three years representing the major NfP sector agencies in Tasmania. The ordinary shareholder appointed two Board Directors and the community shareholders appointed four.

TAHL was formed as a subsidy for new supply with the market providing housing and the government meeting cost differences between tenant capacity to pay and market rent. One espoused key advantage of this type of government intervention was that it provides a higher short-term yield but a major drawback or risk was that it could be an expensive model over the long-term. Following other affordable housing companies and large housing associations across Australia, TAHL could borrow funds and develop, own and manage property, but at the time of writing it has not yet had the working capital or balance sheet and revenue stream to carry out these tasks. TAHL was funded by the Tasmanian Government under a recurrent funding model whereby TAHL could lease new supply from private developers and investors to sublet to public housing eligible applicants at income-related rents, with supplementary government funding being used to provide a 'negotiated' market return to the property owner.

Prior to TAHL being established the government developed the Affordable Housing Organisation (AHO). Acute tensions between NGOs and the state surrounding the progress of reforming the AHO into TAHL forced state and non-state actors to re-evaluate

⁹⁸ The success of the CRA has been under-fire, with statistics indicating in 2007 that 35 per cent of CRA recipients were living in housing stress (Scullion, 2007).

⁹⁹ In 2002, Brisbane Housing Company Ltd (BHC) was founded as a joint initiative of the Queensland Government and the Brisbane City Council – contributing \$50 million and \$10 million respectively as foundation equity over four years (capital and land). The Company's central mission was to increase the supply of housing for low income people in inner Brisbane (defined as a 7 km radius of the CBD). Initially, the Company had no balance sheet or revenue, only committed capital.

their commitment to new governance processes and future expectations. A seemingly contradictory position emerged for these actors. In part the *AHS* endorsed a partnering ethos and discourses of social inclusion, at the same time, partnering relations favoured stakeholders with more orthodox market characteristics and entrepreneurial practices. TAHL evolved, despite extensive delays in finalising funding arrangements, as a central 'invisible presence' in the reassessment of the *AHS*. 'Invisible' as its 'form' was slow to emerge and yet constituted many existing NGO members and stakeholder relationships. 'Presence' because it became the key new governing model the state and Housing Tasmania promoted to the public and the NGO sector. Experimenting with new governance models and hot-on-the-heels of corporate partnership failure, TAHL appeared as a glimmer of hope capable of uniting sectors and increasing stock without the state taking sole financial responsibility. TAHL grew in significance as the government lost traction on other *AHS* outcomes and during the temporary shelving and eventual downsizing of Stage Two of the policy.

The rental scale of TAHL, the quango set up by the state, was set at 10 percent more than Housing Tasmania and other community housing providers – equating to 30 percent of the tenant's income without CRA – plus TAHL would receive all applicable CRA. The scales of statehood, for these actors, should be reduced to their minimum preventing it from being a strong mechanism 'interfering' in the market and supply of a cross-section of affordable housing. While the cost of establishing TAHL remained a point of contention and uncertainty for other NGO actors (see Chapters Eight and Nine), this group asserted that TAHL exemplified effective new governance.

Characteristics of pseudo-market-oriented NGOs and quangos

The four interviewees (working in three organisations) who shared similar discursive and ideological values accentuated the benefits of comprehensive change from one modality of centralised government to a governance model that emphasised the multiplicity and substantively different relations between NGOs and the state. Representing a minority cohort of new and existing NGOs and quasi-state bodies or quangos seeking ownership transfer of public housing to their organisation, these interviewees pursued ways to access private finance against the value of housing stock. In upholding the view that the 'best answer' to the affordability crisis and the shortage of public housing sits within the interconnections between sectors (i.e. commercial, government and NGO), these actors embodied a 'can do' separatist attitude that believed in free market mechanisms. These interviewees were from one quango and two well-resourced larger, diversified NGOs. Their management roles were professionalised, often with backgrounds in the corporate sector.

While the smallest group to form from the interviews, their opinions magnified a 'purist' line of subordinating concepts of the social to those of the economy in their everyday work and housing processes. For these actors, transferring properties and titles to NGOs was seen as the natural course of a true partnership and network relationship – almost akin to Rhode's (1996, 1999, 2000) 'governing without government' thesis. Typically they embodied neo-liberal characteristics such as suspicion towards the state and felt the need to check the state's performance against the market order. Yet, as this chapter's argument develops, it was apparent that these actors suffered from the duality of neo-liberalism in

that they wanted both limited state involvement *and* active state funding or regulation to enable free market mechanisms to be unconstrained. New governance relations, though ‘enjoyed’ at a distant and in more transactional terms, were seen as possessing much needed ‘right answers’ to housing difficulties (see Figure 24 and 25). So much so these answers are discursively irrefutable and self-evident. New social relations were being forged between the state and these NGOs and quangos often with tensions centred on the proportion of state involvement and the effectiveness of collaborative mutual programs. Critical realism is incorporated in the analysis to encourage a deeper understanding of the discourses about the AHS than just the extent to which actors are involved in pre-set controlled activities related to new governance. It invites a critical analysis based on considering how measures of proximity in social relations, modes of governing connections and political ideology intersect when a government favours a neo-liberal approach.

Figure 24 Framework of social relations ‘proximity’ – NGO Group 3 and the state

Actor Group	Governing modes	Proximity of social relations
Small number of resourceful NGOs and a quango using a pseudo-market discourse	Transactions	Distant

Figure 25 Participants in NGO discursive groupings

Differentiating feature of NGO group ¹⁰⁰	No. of organisations	No. of interviewees
Discourse of pseudo-market	3 organisations	4 interviewees

Many of the views these actors held were virtually indistinguishable from what an interviewee from a private sector corporation might say on the same issue. Market orientations traversed all their attitudes towards the housing market and the state. Making their organisation competitive was their primary goal – not meeting the needs of clients as in the case with actors in Chapter Eight or in balancing growth and altruistic concerns as the actors in Chapter Nine were motivated to consider. Occasionally still tendering for contracts, these organisations felt removed from the traditional NGO model and aligned themselves with only a few other leading NGO organisations (those that they were negotiating or working with). These organisations were diverse and differentiated, often operating over a number of sites in Tasmania. Income was generated through government contracts and funding, as well as entrepreneurial activity, private sector contracts in non-housing areas and some accumulated funds from previous financial years. In many ways their organisational structure granted them a higher degree of autonomy and independence from the state than other smaller or less entrepreneurial NGOs. Divergence existed across the three organisations in their views on the degree the state model should facilitate housing services and retract from public housing; and the experienced or imagined benefits from a distant transactional relationship with the state. Overall, there

¹⁰⁰ Interviewee participants were allocated a number based on order of interviewing not on the group they were subsequently identified as belonging to.

was a lack of contextualisation of the multiple constraints hampering Housing Tasmania. For example, these actors were adamant that Housing Tasmania's under-utilisation of their assets led to the public housing crisis. The only obvious solution to them was to develop new community and social housing models and for the government to take an expedient step back. Actors were critical of the state's performance and management of housing to date:

NGO 6, CEO 1: "The States may well argue that they get \$20 odd million and pay \$18 odd in interest. Too bad. That's poor commercial practice. You've got a big stock of houses and how are you leveraging the values or the equity in those houses to fund other things?"

NGO 11, Manager 1: "They can't manage their balance sheet. They're lazy assets. They (Housing Tasmania) are not leveraging the value of those houses to invest in other things. They can borrow against them. My solution is to sell them".

Aligned with this was their view that the state was slow to build up these new governance models and retract their involvement:

"I think what's important here is the [new governance] model needs to be relevant because what's happened is governments have not been quick enough to respond to the changing market" (NGO 4, CEO 1).

The profound restructuring of public housing was interpreted by these actors, at its most extreme end, as eventual withdrawal by the state. In this way they advanced a market-like approach akin to 'choice based' social housing where applicants, as part of their housing contract, agree to play a role similar to that of 'customers' in market transactions rather than 'welfare recipients.' This would reorganise the existing stock; though a key AHS objective was to increase available properties rather than reduce them through sales or demolition. By definition, stock transfer is the formal handover of state-owned and operated housing assets to organisations outside the public sector.¹⁰¹ Nygaard *et al.*, (2007) writes that stock transfer can also be interpreted

"as attribute spin offs that allows an alternative owner to extract value that has hitherto remained un-captured or it is believed (assumed) that the original owner cannot capture as efficiently as an alternative owner. [...] This implies, in turn, that the transfer of ownership from the public sector entails a redistribution of property rights or a new delineation of property rights, which enables the redirection of parts of an asset's value or attributes to another use—for example, to a use valued equally or more highly than its ex ante use".

Nygaard *et al.*'s (2008) work provides an interpretation of the way the political economy of property rights is reflected in the restructuring of social housing in the UK and the relationship between governance and incentive structures in the restructuring of neo-liberal economies. Essentially, Nygaard *et al.* (2008) argue that stock transfer is a policy of delineating ownership of different attributes of the housing stock which is crucial to the

¹⁰¹ In the UK oppositional campaigns to stock transfer talked of it as 'privatisation' and were often successful in defeating transfer proposals (Pawson, 2005).

functioning of the emerging governance structure and the ability of stakeholders to extract value from ownership. There are parallels and implications for Australia, as Nygaard et al (2008) and more recently Pawson and Gilmour (2010), notably in the extent of the 'transformation' from state owned and managed to NGO and housing association provided. The interpretations of these Tasmanian actors on stock transfer models resembled the UK model where new housing organisations were created to take on the ownership of the former local authority stock. Here, TAHL was set up to build properties and house public housing applicants while other organisations were expected to change form and 'build capacity' to become new or better housing providers.

Market assumptions of neo-classical economics ignore the diversity and plurality within markets that is social and cultural in origin, not economic. For example the social construction of public housing has contributed to new investors' understandings and rationalities of the likely things to happen to social housing properties. Economic incentives will not in isolation or entirety change and influence all actors' actions. Other researchers have found similar occurrences. Smith et al. (2006: 82) considers the role of property professional or exchange agents such as estate agents, financiers, solicitors in the Edinburgh owner-occupied market via "a qualitative investigation of the trade in places that drives the economy of housing." Pahl's (1975) earlier work also considered the behaviour and role of gatekeepers and urban professionals in framing perceptions of the housing market. The actors in this chapter see themselves as objective, rational economic actors operating in accordance with traditional economic models. But when the market operates in an 'uncharacteristic' way or outside their expectation, they responded in ways that could make the market more volatile or less affordable for tenants. One example of this is the difficulty in getting investors to act rationally and invest in properties without consideration of who might be housed in their asset. These actors responded in a supply side manner by tightening the criteria for housing, making it impossible for high complex needs clients or people with behaviours considered undesirable such as smoking to be housed.

Early stage mutualism versus separatism?

Market theory, as described by Slater and Tonkiss (2001) offered these actors a broad set of coordination responses or framing positions to social problems evident in housing. Some actors were more amenable to the notion that relations between the state, the market and NGOs should not centre on power conflicts. In the hope of expanding their profit base into delivery of housing service these stakeholders thought that "*natural synergies*" existed in their core business to make the step into housing effectual for the state, their organisation and clients; though as the next section in this chapter indicates the 'mutual' benefits were under-realised. Mutualism, as Galston (2003: 207) reminds us, acts as a moral frame emphasising the reciprocal and mutual responsibility stemming from, in this case, 'transactional' arrangements founded on 'choice' and 'contract' in the pursuit of a new AHO to which all parties could equally contribute. Mutual dependence with the state was interpreted as a valued part of their distant social relations. Importantly, it should be noted their view of 'distant' relations with the state differed greatly to public housing tenants' definition. Being mutually connected through ongoing transactions enabled their organisation to keep a distance from the state in order to "*get on with it*". Once "*everyone knew the score*", 'close' relations were viewed as a deficit mechanism that would stifle everyday work practices and serve as a constraint to the freedom inherent within

mutuality and market mechanisms. Moreover, these actors' linked governance modes and proximities of social relations (i.e. transactional and distant) with prior success, growth and eventual surplus in their core business areas, in some cases of up to \$2 million.

However, 'mutualism' was seen as underdeveloped by the state. This caused unnecessary delays to governance models getting off the ground. A senior manager at a diversified NGO (NGO 11) recalled his frustration with the state when they did not respond to his commercial-minded proposal:

"I went along to Housing Tasmania [...] and told them about the profits we had and that we wanted to use them. We asked what we could do [...] They never got back to us. We then employed an ex-Senior Housing Tasmania employee [...] as a consultant in the community sector. He had credibility and he described us as 'potential problem solvers'. Okay, they didn't know us and we were crossing this supposed expertise line from employment into housing. But our expertise is really in getting things done and I'm not sure if that's what the public sectors expertise is. In lots of way they are bound by what they are allowed to say, and what the Department and the Ministers expectations are [...] We suggested that we operate as the interim Affordable Housing Organisation (AHO) on their behalf until the AHO was ready and hand it back over to them and then off we go. We were ready to run about 2 years ago and [the then Minister] told us he wasn't. Their view was 'thanks very much for the offer but we will be ready in a few months'. Of course it's not practically possible if it's driven by the government".

Further, this actor's volatile relations with Housing Tasmania were exacerbated when their first endeavour into multi-stakeholder housing developments fell short of policy promises and were criticised by the media for remaining empty after completion because of state administrative delays. One of the units was later sold to recoup some of the costs of the development – not the original intentions (Worley, 2007). A significant degree of ego or 'personality' in their decision-making and rationale for how they arrived at such 'good' innovative ways of being was evident. Individualistic market mechanisms therefore informed their discursive expression and use of personal pronouns to separate their entrepreneurial autonomy to that of a much slower moving state. Alternatively, this could be interpreted as the interviewees attempting to gauge the levels of support from within their client base, colleagues and management team for particular new directions in their organisation or ways to redirect surplus finances.

These actors, highlighting the paradox of neo-liberal economic versus social concerns, were located in a problematic discursive space in that they agree with market efficiencies and the need for the state to pass over housing to multiple stakeholders but they were not immune to engaging with the language of social inclusion and the need to tackle housing affordability for reasons of 'social good'. One actor discussed how the NGO he worked for was interested in housing as a complementary activity to existing human service provision which opened opportunities for capital growth for the NGO and some usage of surplus funds in a socially-minded investment based way. Though still frustrated with the state's operating principles one interviewee used the language of 'strategic management' to describe how his organisation could contribute to social action:

"We decided a large part of the answer to the problem [...] that was missing, was a willingness to actually do something and take a risk [...] We started to read that [...] the government wanted to tackle public housing waiting lists. We thought maybe there was something we could do to align our ideas with the government strategy" (NGO 11, Manager 1).

Dilemmas surfaced for these actors in their need to combine social and economic goals with economic imperatives driving their operations and structure. One actor claimed the government failed to specify in sufficient detail the way new models, such as TAHL, would operate in order to meet social justice outcomes *and* to alleviate the immediate pressures on the waiting list by housing applicants from Category One. These actors discursively presented themselves as leaders who were taking a different tactic on increasing housing supply. In this case, we can see the space in which these actors interpreted themselves as being outside the norm of the NGO mould:

"People look at us in different ways. Some look at us like piranhas, others are quite fearful of us, others pat us on the back and say 'good on ya'. That's other stakeholders in the community sector" (NGO 11, CEO 1).

Another actor saw TAHL as operating within its bounds, noting:

"The Chairman has made it pretty clear that he's not going to be taking too much notice of the strategic planning that has been provided to the AHO from the government because he wants to do all that himself which you expect as an independent organisation" (NGO 4, CEO 1).

One interviewee argued the interventionist state had been the chief impediment to growth in public housing supply and diversification within the social housing model. Confident that the state should *"sell the housing"* or *"pass over the stock and move out of the picture"*, this group of actors stressed that Housing Tasmania failed to understand market imperatives. Their understanding of mechanisms and recall of key events indicated that they felt autonomous from the government, despite playing a pivotal role in the AHS and/or being state funded. These NGOs did not articulate a need to 'prove themselves', as other NGO actors did or legitimate their goals to the state. Generally, they presented views that indicated they were not always in agreement with the government's political priorities or rationale. They described themselves as propelling and accelerating change. Using their social commitment as a *"compass which directs us"*, they talked of being powerful actors able to back their plans up with management and financial resources. Separating themselves from social entrepreneurial NGOs, these actors' acknowledged the value of research and advocacy but stated their objectives were more active; and thus of an implied higher order; through the application of a business model. Prescribing to their own originality and leadership in creating new modes of governance and ways to achieve social and market objectives, interviewees said:

NGO 6, CEO 1: *"We don't see our role in lobbying or advocacy. We pay a membership to TasCOSS and they go and do that on our behalf [...] Our view is that it obviously needs to be changed so we should do something about it. When people say 'look what they've done' then we can say 'why don't you do it too?' And show them how"*

NGO 4, CEO 1: *"We're alert to the social dynamics in the community. We're aware of those issues but we are not advocates. We live and die on how many houses we get built".*

'Learning' is not privileged, as it was by social entrepreneurial actors or staff from Housing Tasmania. Moreover, knowledge of entrenched problems such as housing can be 'read', understood and acted on rather than campaigned for or rigorously planned. Here two of the four interviewees' talk of their 'unique' organisational models; their separateness from other NGOs and the state:

NGO 4, CEO 1: *"We are our own model. We are ourselves. I had to do the research to do the business, so I've read it and can move on"*

NGO 11, Manager 1: *"Our model has private equity in it which means we are very different. We developed a trust model. We sought private equity partners in this trust to combine their money with our money then we borrowed some money and started our first project. We effectively own 51% of the Trust".*

They differentiated their organisation from other NGOs in their knowledge and expertise (of market investment generally and with professional management and Board competencies); their diligence in following through with their strategic plan and their relationship with the private sector (contracting real estate agents to handle management of housing and working in partnerships for employment and retraining programs). Internally competitive, these actors were motivated to remain, in their estimation, a leading NGO, with an emphasis on seeking the 'best' board members to secure strong transactional connections with senior government and commercial sector personnel. This concurred with their re-assessment of organisational values and an awareness of the need to integrate a 'new spirit of capitalism' to stay afloat and succeed (Bauman 2000: 40; Boltanski and Chiappello, 1999). The application of commercial principles in social housing crossed over into professional management practices (Pryke & Whitehead, 1995); staff and Board recruitment and an increased dependency or, at least, dialogue with private investors. Anecdotal examples from these actors indicated their desire to be a 'step ahead' of the status quo; at times seeking to illuminate an unknown future that created opportunities for their clients and yet remained productive and market viable:

"the media were reporting people living in tents in St David's Park and in the hills in Risdon Vale. We thought we could do something socially [...] and if we did it the right way, we could have an economically viable model that would be sustainable in the long-term by joining it with what was happening in the investment market in terms of property" (NGO 4, CEO 1).

Organisational approaches during hybrid neo-liberal times

Existing within a social and community framework, two of these non-state housing actors argued their organisations did not operate outside the long-term commitments to their social justice principles and constraints of ethical obligations in serving their target groups. They stated it was not entirely the pursuit of profit and the rational calculation of gains and losses that influenced their actions and determined their direction:

NGO 4, CEO 1: *"We were doing well, we were offered more and were earning good profits [...] We realised we had a moral obligation to do something as significant as possible with it and not to frittle profits away as some examples have done, on very small-scale local initiatives. Profits can also get frittled away in non-profit organisations by management investing in itself which is code for giving itself pay rises or flash cars. We see ourselves as lean and mean and having an obligation to the community"*

NGO 6, CEO 1: *"We made it pretty clear in the information memorandum that we had a social objective. That investors had a financial investment and we had a social objective. We'll be targeting low income earners [...] and an eligibility criteria based on income will determine who will have access to the housing. We see that as our primary purpose"*.

Thinking about how to frame their organisation in a contemporary changing environment, and what form it would like to operate in and ideologically be in the future, these organisations described previously opposed positions being integrated in a 'both/and' model. One CEO (NGO 4) elaborated, in length, on being a 'social responder' with long-term market intentions:

"I see there are two ways to look at life as a community organisation and one of them is to be a social responder [...] someone who goes out and seeks government contracts to deliver services that fit with a particular policy need. But after a while you get drawn into the contracting and you become captive to the contract and the social and policy guidelines of a particular flavour of government at that particular time. [...] The other one is the economic driver [who'll] sit down and say, 'here's a problem with poverty,' 'I can provide them with a job' or 'I can create the employment opportunities that provide the jobs and training.' They're creating community infrastructure of a social nature and contributing to the economy by pulling all those things together. We're starting to see ourselves as an economic driver, that's where we would like to grow to. Yes we'll still do the social responder but we're not going to be the social responder who avoids the economic driver capacity or leaves that for someone else".

TAHL, as a quango, was established to pursue particular housing agendas set by the state. These eventuated with limited connectivity to socioeconomic relations or the recipient tenant community and little sensitivity to local organisational dynamics within the existing NGO sector. Their discursive preferences reiterated a 'top-down' approach, problematic relations with local chains of accountability, while their social actions indicated a deterministic, non-negotiable manner. These actors advanced a call for greater legitimacy for enterprise culture and a tightly disciplinary state. Other NGOs were written-off as less effective economic actors and, on a hierarchy of action, investors trumped tenants. Their discourses mirrored fundamental components of one end of the spectrum of neo-liberal discourses. Almost 'simulating' egalitarianism three NGOs described a world of change and uncertainty that inevitably we all must face; all relatively equally with no explicit reference to structures of power and authority, exploitation and domination other than that of the state over the people and the 'bad tenants' over all others. Discrepancies within the housing market and the overzealous unsustainable 'bubble' of housing prices were dismissed. Their discursive support for neo-liberal political practices such as the CRA, left many areas unanswered: will their form of social

housing alleviate or exacerbate housing inequalities and pressures on the current waiting list? Or lead to a new neo-liberal phase of 'self-governance' and 'self-responsibility' thereby assisting less 'needy' tenants? Does this minimise or intensify the likelihood of governance failure to make 'real' inroads into the public housing crisis?

Two stakeholders voiced an economic rationalistic perspective that markets and prices are the only reliable way to set a value on housing, with the market always, in principle, delivering better outcomes for investors and tenants than the state. Uncompetitive and lacking an entrepreneurial drive the state proved itself to be incapable of handling the reality it was given. Direct government involvement distorted or intensified the affordable housing problem hence innovative new players were vital to finding and implementing new solutions. Extending this point, two actors talked of the Federal-State model being outdated:

NGO 6, CEO 1: "The problem is they [Housing Tasmania] are holding onto a model that is stuffed. It's broken and they are caught with assets that they are can't leverage in a commercial sense. Their maintenance backlog is huge. It's too late for them to leverage funds on their assets now [...] They haven't created any extra value for the organisation. None. In fact quite the opposite has happened"

NGO 4, CEO 1: "The whole system is a complete mess in terms of how we incentivise people and how we look after people. The system is archaic and needs to be re-built based on how it fits with other asset or investment classes. We need to look at how all the steps between homelessness and investors work and how that system works compared to superannuation and shares".

Little research has been undertaken into the mechanisms of accessing private sector finance for affordable housing developments or analysing the motivations of investors, hence many of the issues these actors raised were speculative (see Guy and Henneberry, 2000). 'Stretching' the supply-side through the AHS, however, is based on social inclusion and meeting a larger proportion of applicants in social housing than the public housing sector previously absorbed. Targeting supply subsidies also means private financial institutions are more likely to provide additional finance. Setting an acceptable price for the investment triggers attraction by private finance. These actors talked of the need to incentivise investors as affordable housing does not conform to usual investment parameters. Translating characteristics of the investment, such as benefits from regular income, were seen as important ways to steer investors away from concerns about 'who will live in the property?' Knowing an investor's strategic rationality was interpreted as beneficial to actors, such as TAHL, if they communicated advantages over disadvantages. Shoring up investment, they argued, involved promoting the asset class and the location or market of Tasmania through the language that investors understand.

"Affordable housing is nothing more than a numbers game for investors and builders. They need to get a return out of it [...] We're competing with other assets, shares, superannuation and other classes of assets for returns. Our return is lower in some cases than those other classes of assets but our income and our security is very strong. We have guaranteed income for the investor, unlike shares which go up and down [...] We need to get people interested in us as an asset class, in terms of property but we also need to get

them interested in and be really confident about Tasmania as a place to invest. So there is competition amongst other states as well" (NGO 6, CEO 1).

Investors' decisions are partially constitutive of the markets within which they act and factors such as the willingness or capacity to trade properties affects market liquidity. Guy *et al* (2001), writing on the importance of perception in investor's decision-making, notes that contrary to the popular misconception that investment appraisal is sophisticated, rational and objective, the personal perception and its associated prejudices come into all calculations including the rate of return. Minimising perceptions of risk associated with public housing tenants was seen as a necessary way, by these actors, to frame new housing assets and promote investment. Weighing up the "as-if" (Beck *et al.*, 1994: vii) components to risk in housing were commonplace for this group and deeply embedded in the personal or individualised sense of what might be at risk. These actors argued that commercial stakeholders ought to be disinterested in the 'business' of TAHL (providing housing to public housing tenants) and only interested in the return on their investment and the extraction of dividends.

Equally, future tenants were seen as having to acquire 'new thinking'; usurping the notion of 'deserving' anything from the state, such as lease length and rental levels. Some tenants were described as complacent and overly reliant on the state, either caught in an intergenerational trap or more bluntly system abusers. 'Short term' pain for tenants was considered a necessary ingredient for long-term social and economic gain with by-products of uncertainty and insecurity if tenants could not behave like market actors. Tenants' attitudinal changes were seen as significant to the success of social housing. Strong supporters of individual responsibility, these stakeholders reiterated a conservative neo-liberal line that guaranteed tenure was an antiquated fallacious ideal:

NGO 6, CEO 1: "We will be able to help a certain section off the waiting list as long as they are prepared for the fact that they are not going into public housing. Their rent will be subsidised but it's not the same formula. They've got to get it out of their heads that they can have something for nothing and that there is 'forever'. Nobody else in working life gets anything forever. Nothing is guaranteed. I can't guarantee that I can pay my mortgage, as much as I'd like to think that it will never be a problem"

NGO 6, Manager: "We're helping fix the problem or attempting to from the other end. And hopefully that can soak up people before they get to Category Two and Category One and into the really bad basket. There are several ways you can attack the problem. Let the social side of community housing attack the top and we'll attack from the bottom and wither it away a bit".

Additionally, 'withering' the housing problem away involved reinventing the function of the market and the remit of 'freedom' and democracy in ways that cohered to strict neo-liberal principles. Within their use of neo-liberalism, democracy was defined as the free expression of all people. This stance does not recognise the uneven relations of power inhibiting the full expression of a range of interest groups and people. The vision of neo-liberal political practices for these actors is that housing can become more flexible and responsive to the needs of most people when a range of quasi-state, NGO and private investors participate in expanding housing provision and services. Jamrozik (2001, 2005)

extends our understanding of the modern welfare state by demonstrating how its form and conceptualisation has altered over time, despite our taken-for-granted assumptions about it. Ideological changes in social policies, Jamrozik (2005) argues, create and reinforce inequity and social division. The 'post-welfare state' (Jamrozik, 2001: 35) means long-term provision of state support to citizens – whether in the form of housing provision or benefit payments – is seen as detrimental and parasitical to recipients behaviour, their capacity to function as market actors and motivate themselves to self-govern. The views that these interviewees held reinforced market modes of housing provision, again eschewing direct government intervention.

Emphasising new ways of delivering housing services to public tenants reflected the structure and workings of neo-liberal political practices and its primacy on individual rather than governmental responsibility. This neo-liberal logic and the discourse of these stakeholders did not adequately address problems facing the immediate needs of applicants and larger structural factors within a public housing sub-market. Supposed increased 'choice' does not, in the TAHL model, lead to increased tenant participation in core decision-making, for example the layout of physical structure, prohibitions on smoking in properties and owning a pet. Aligned to tenants shifting their expectations and relationships with housing providers, these actors stated the need to placate investors by encouraging them to imagine their investment without imagining the tenant body living within the properties. Tenants then act as a disincentive unless the risk of their occupancy is minimised by a guarantee on returns. Questions of tenants plagued some of these organisations:

"The most common question is around the tenant. You can get people interested and explain the good returns and then we can offer them leases that are government backed and then they ask us 'where are the tenants coming from?' And you indicate from the public housing waiting list and then investors get concerned about their property, 'is it going to get banged around?' (NGO 6, CEO 1).

Despite describing the commercial "limitation of needing to house tenants from the Housing Tasmania waiting list" and "that's on the funding agreement, we have no choice" the new organisation, TAHL, indicated a reluctance to house people with complex needs because

"the real and perceived characteristics of tenants are important factors for investors when assessing risk, and are therefore important factors in TAHL's capacity to deliver against its targets" (Flanagan, 2008: 18).

These interviewees presumed their organisation took on high-levels of risk in three key ways: first in vouching for tenants; second, ensuring investors receive their monthly and annually indexed payments; and third, in meeting their obligations to the state i.e. by building 700 properties within the timeframe to budget. Holding strong economic rationalist perspectives, some of these actors saw 'staying fixed' as a default position that invites another organisation to swallow up the gap and outbid or compete with them in state contracts. Capitalising and remaining fixed on past achievements, instead of running further afield to find new opportunities, was a horror to them and an anathema to their existence. They were not trying to entrench and fortify the assets that they had secured, often from another component of government deregulation such as employment services.

In reshaping their organisation they lost staff and divisions which they described as part of the necessary change required to survive uncertain times. These actions received some internal criticism and media scrutiny about the downside of 'success' and the potential incompatibility of economic and social goals:

"We have an interest in a person's success, if I can use that word, as a tenant. Because if people are coming and going out of our properties it means there are times of changeover which we don't get rent for. So we have an interest in people being long-term tenants or living out the time of their lease. If they don't and they swap and change it's going to cost us money. We have a commercial interest as well as a personal interest in them being a successful tenant" (NGO 6, Manager 1).

Actors' enthusiastically claimed the benefits of the market over all forms of government involvement in building and increasing housing stock. Repeatedly, these actors used neo-liberal language to describe how the state should be relegated to delivering support services to housing tenants, acting as a 'facilitator' rather than a direct provider. Describing past events as state failures builds on the legitimacy of this view:

NGO 6, CEO 1: "I think the role of government [pause] my observation about Housing [pause] I think they should be a provider of support for people but I think when it comes to physical housing, the bricks and the mortar, they should be a facilitator not an owner or investor. You wouldn't trust them with any money at all. Seriously, who would give them money to look after Housing. The average punter on the street can make more money than Housing Tasmania out of owning a place, so why would you give them any money"

NGO 11, Manager 1: My view is the world that Housing Tasmania used to operate in has changed. [...] They should only be a provider of the support services for tenants".

One actor called for the abolition of public housing altogether in preference of a free market competitive housing system – where outcomes are determined by the unconstrained forces of private demand and supply. In this light, selling off all public housing was offered as a 'solution.' This quote demonstrates the invisibility of both tenants' needs and humanistic housing support services in their logic for neo-liberal governance models:

"They could sell them at a reasonable price to STEPS on the condition that they would be owned by STEPS and leased to TAHL and TAHL would get CRA and the tenant can pay 20 percent plus CRA. Then the rent STEPS could be getting is reasonable enough to reinvest into the property and themselves and the government end up with a chunk of money where they can pay off the debt and have millions leftover" (NGO 4, CEO).

Unconvinced that research findings demonstrate the cost-benefit of public housing over other housing models, these organisations' firmly refuted research findings, calling them 'myths':

"There are a number of myths about public housing as the only way to do it. That's garbage. It doesn't matter who builds it, as long as you get the right thing built at the right

place that's what it's about. Public [housing] has always been the lower end commodity. Our challenge is to get the private investors to build at the lower end" (NGO 6, CEO 1).

Neo-liberalism marks out its preferences for market rule or unfettered markets over a range of social relations (Brenner and Theodore 2002; Larner, 2003). Distant transactional social relations with Housing Tasmania were at times, however, fraught with difficulties as delays in negotiations and 'due process' slowed progress in developing a number of AHO options and too many constraints were seen as weighing down the new field. For example:

"The figure of 700 properties is directly linked to funding. Housing Tasmania talk about achieving this in four years, but if they just got out of the way TAHL might be able to get on with it" (NGO 6, CEO 1).

These actors interpreted their own organisations' actions as in pursuit of 'right' measures that would reinvigorate the market of a poorly performing 'end' of housing, generating returns for all in a well-functioning market society. Determined to secure an independent place – neither solely reliant on the government for funding nor constrained by private investors' priorities – actors talked of the necessity of distant social relations with Housing Tasmania:

"Our only relationship with Housing Tasmania is over the 100 blocks of land allocated from them for the tender [...] it's in the market now and the waiting list, beyond that we are independent. We have our own monthly Board meetings, our own Board committees and our own policies. Our discussion with DHHS is primarily to review and update progress" (NGO 6, Manager 1).

But these actors also talked of some restrictions – the state should keep the most difficult tenants in public housing and continue to provide services to this highly residualised group; and the scope of some other NGOs activities should be restricted to managerial and administrative tasks directed at improving clients housing related issues such as employment to help them better compete in the marketplace. The interests of the individual or specific group, i.e. housing investor or their own NGO, are privileged and arguments about the public good are replaced with greater choice and market efficiencies. The discourse that these NGOs chose was at the 'hardest edge' of what neo-liberal political practices can deliver in a reconfiguration of housing. Moralistic views that tenants are abusing the welfare system, by expecting security of tenancy, exclude social democratic notions that public welfare, or indeed a safety net of welfare, ought to be maintained.

Conclusion

Chapters Eight to Ten demonstrated divergence in the proximity of social relations and the modes of governing between NGO actors and the state during policy implementation. The 'circuit of governance' represents a way to analyse contingencies within an open system. Adapting to different sets of structural conditions, these four NGO groups articulated distinct ways that certain social structures affected their individual actions and organisational processes. Analysing a housing policy 'in process' surfaced a variety of social powers, such as the emergence of AHOs and coalition groups, evidenced in

changing internal relations. New roles and modes of governance for Housing Tasmania and NGOs in delivering housing were in flux, creating a relativising or redrawing of boundaries between public and private spheres. Throughout the thesis a number of contingencies were revealed, arising from specific definitions of neo-liberal practices in housing and social relations with the state. These include interactions that reinforce dominant neo-liberal ideals of entrepreneurialism and market efficiency.

Interviewees held contradictory views on several key themes. First, on their limitations and capabilities; second, on their existing connection with the state and issues of independence; and third on the partnering of social and economic goals within their work, for example which applicants should be housed and how. Just as two concomitant processes highlight – that of the greater use of private intermediaries for previously state devolved functions and the redeployment of the state to coordinate partnership and integrate new housing approaches – these NGO groups indicated diversity in opinions and imaginings of governance potential.

Neo-liberalism's agenda sharpened the focus on the distinct differences between the state, independent housing providers, non-profit and community organisations as well as the underpinning values of public sector housing being targeted to the very few. Contrary to its intentions, neo-liberal political practices mobilised new alliances and sites of conflict and operationalising mechanisms. The demands of social policy discourse cannot be entirely silenced, despite its subordination (Clarke, 2007), by arguments for 'efficiency'. The three NGO actor discourses – acquiescence, entrepreneurialism and pseudo-market – and their associated repertoires of working reflect the tensions and fissures between neo-liberal theory, decrying state control and strong regulation, and housing policy reality; revealing the state's reluctance to 'step back' and not be the sole determinant of how social housing providers should behave. These discourses interact with the state, tenants and other actors and change over time. But fundamentally their characteristics correspond with the actor groups' interpretation of the AHS and the role of the state in housing as either: social democratic, more social entrepreneurial or more 'pure' market-aligned. Obviously one policy change is not sufficient to establish the utility of the model across NGO or non-state actor relations but, this thesis argues, the analysis of these discourses illustrates that actors affect policy implementation processes and experimentations. In order to understand how that happens, it is important to consider the dual concepts of governing modes of connections and social relations of proximity and how they operate within the duality of neo-liberal change.

A key point of difference between these NGO actors and those interviewed in Chapters Eight and Nine was the sense of governance responsibility and the need for a clear, well-defined and implemented regulatory framework for NGOs and community housing associations to manage new stock. Jacobs *et al* (2010: 31) found that there was support at community organisation and government levels for a process of stock transfer management that was "along the lines to the way that state governments divested the role in managing aged care to not-for-profit providers." Interest in stock transfer was further buttressed because it was perceived as an option favoured by the Commonwealth Government.

In this chapter, the discourse of pseudo-market was considered. A small number of NGO and quango actors utilised language that most closely resembled conservative free-market approaches dominating over the state to achieve housing ends. These multi-function NGOs were in a strong financial position and keen to enter or expand their role in housing as an investor or developer in order to capitalise on government-funding opportunities. Herein was their ongoing conundrum. As advocates for a minimal state they also readily talked of wanting to leverage assistance given by the state to housing tenants and draw on private investors' resources to grow, should recurrent government funding cease.

CHAPTER ELEVEN: CONCLUSION

Introduction

This thesis analyses how the *Affordable Housing Strategy* articulates key aspects of modern societal governance. It considers how actors experiencing neo-liberal political practices discursively account for societal, personal and organisational changes in housing. Empirical analysis of enactments and responses to public-social housing change constitute the findings chapters (Chapter Five to Ten) and collectively register the significance and complexity of contemporary 'governance'. I utilised throughout the thesis a circuit of governance framework, creating the necessary ontological-methodological setting to interpret actors multiple discourses. The 'circuit of governance' of non-state policy actors is essentially a metaphor to make sense of the complexity of the *AHS* policy process. In analysing the contingent conditions which function to either enable or restrain inherent, or necessary, causal powers of social structures and actors involved in the *AHS*, a secondary framework that sits within the circuit of governance was developed. The interconnectivity between governance modes and the proximity of social relations to the state was conceptualised from the empirical data as: three main governing connections with the state: (1) interactions (2) transactions and (3) compliances, and three main proximities of relating to the state: (1) close (2) distant and (3) neutral or ambiguous. 'Proximity' was employed as an interpretative measure that reinforced the circuitry metaphor. It referred to the level of accessibility and comfort actors' perceived they shared with the state in negotiating and communicating their needs.

Alongside this overarching model, at the chapter level, are distinct critiques of particular aspects of society – media and community level, individual actor level and NGO organisational level. At the societal level, I considered the socio-cultural understanding of neo-liberalism by reviewing media headlines and interviewing communications specialists responsible for the production of social marketing documents for the state. In Chapter Six, I argue that this socio-cultural perspective indicated that neo-liberal terminology was advanced in the press and policy documents in the form of a cultural governance discourse, affirming the value of the *AHS*, during the period 2002 – 2004. Turning to individual actors, the thesis included an examination of public housing tenants' discourses. In Chapter Seven the self-governing mechanisms of tenants, who saw themselves as distant to the state and competent regulators of their behaviour, were considered. Tenants held a dual, contradictory discourse that reiterated neo-liberal principles through the endorsement of self-governance while at the same time they called for a stronger, more traditional role for the state, especially in enforcement.

Finally at an organisational level, the thesis critically studies NGOs and quangos from a market coordination perspective. Chapters Eight to Ten analysed actor discourses on governance and social relations with the state finding three prevalent positions: support for social aspects of policy and rejection of market mechanisms over the state (Chapter Eight), an attempt to balance between the twin pillars in the *AHS* of social justice and a successful market economy (Chapter Nine) and strong support for market coordination of housing (Chapter Ten). Despite the divergence within actors' discourses on the governing

and relational effects of neo-liberal political practices they all engaged with some elements of neo-liberal 'speak'. The heterogeneity highlights the disharmony evident in such sizeable and uncertain changes in housing provision.

Examining social relations does not allow us to discover what the best way to live together is, nor do these relations tell us how to achieve a balance between individual goals and the collective good. Rather, social relations enable us to examine the coexistence of various interdependent ways of relating and how these are contingently affected by housing policy or political practices of neo-liberalism. Again, a range of generative mechanisms and associated social relations – on governance processes; levels of proximity with the state; and concerns for long-term viability in changing public housing neighbourhoods or in social care services position – reinforced the connections between the discourses used by circuit of governance actors. I aimed at giving deliberate, purposeful attention to a cross-section of actors who were cast as responsible entities in making the *AHS* policy happen and who also represented societal, individual and organisational levels. Thus, social relations and discursive modes of governance are foregrounded as important elements of a more adequate representation of social structure. The social relations and interdependencies within the circuit of governance are clearly pivotal in understanding actors' social position, and their orientations towards or against neo-liberal practices and attitudes towards housing change. In this, I explored variation in the discourses and the capacity for change, contradiction and inconsistency.

This thesis shows social relations are articulated through governance modes. As Raco's (2002: 451) research points out, social relations "are established differently in different places according to the existing nature of local social, economic and political contexts and the particular ways on which new institutions become embedded within them." Similarly, Coleman (1996: x) earlier claimed "individuals' roles need to be identified in the context of existing social relations." It is argued that key non-state housing actors, living and working in particular contexts, play a role in changing and/or determining these contexts, albeit effected by the dominance of 'actually existing neo-liberalism'.

Implementing change in public housing

Something significant was happening in Tasmania's housing 'imagination' in 2003. At the culmination of six months of state-wide consultations with key people and organisations in housing, the Tasmanian Government began movements towards a multi-provider social housing system; breaking down traditional distinctions between the roles and structures of public, NGO and community housing providers with the announcement of the *Affordable Housing Strategy 2004-2008*. New housing organisations were to develop housing projects for low and moderate income households using a mix of public and private finance, following guidelines set down in national and state government policy and regulatory frameworks. Prior to 2003, the importance of social housing policy was low, having tumbled down a list of priorities in accordance with its underfunding.¹⁰² The entrenchment of neo-liberalism, after the post-war 'Long Boom', served to incentivise and provide greater impetus to the market economy through the partial rolling back and

¹⁰² This decline had not come about solely because of the promotion of neo-liberal ideas in policy, as regime change alone does not sufficiently explain shifts in housing policy (Dalton, 2009).

reduction of direct government intervention and provision of 'public good' services. One of the consequences of the neo-liberal shift toward market reliance in Australia has been an increase in the cost of housing, which impacted on affordability in ownership and rental markets (Gleeson, 2006). Crises in the supply of affordable mortgages and rental housing pushed the issue up slightly, on both the Commonwealth and state policy-making agenda.¹⁰³ One aspect of modern Australian governance was the *AHS*. It set out the provision of housing for a number of groups: low income Tasmanians, for those pushed out of homeownership, those unable to afford to pay private rental costs, and those unable to be housed in a tight public housing sector. Intractable problems are often the substance of social policy. Yet movement away from universalism to targeted welfare and services to people in greatest need means policies such as the *AHS* encompass more than public housing to become electorally popular and publically well-received. This thesis concentrates on changes to the most marginal housing within the system i.e. public housing reform towards more social housing, which was also a fundamental aspect of the post-war welfare objective of universal housing provision. As such the *AHS* articulates, through its housing policy, wider societal changes related to the embeddedness of neo-liberalism.

The growing tensions in housing affordability and difficulties in an under-resourced public housing sector called for interventionist action. Economic 'solutions' emerge out of under-resourcing as new ways need to be introduced, such as governance modes, to produce efficient allocations of scarce resources. The devolution of public housing in Tasmania raised contentious social policy issues for a number of key non-state housing actors and, perhaps with greater foreboding, indicated the breadth of neo-liberal objectives and their uncertain outcomes. The historical formation of neo-liberalism reminds us of the elements it shares with other political ideologies – it is not exclusive, nor exhaustive; it benefits some and disadvantages others; it represents diversified efforts and contingent enactments. Similarly, housing policies such as the *AHS* contain aspects of a neo-liberal agenda and also social democratic ideals. It called for a cross-section of NGOs and NfPs to accept a degree of competitive, market driven pressures before participating in a broadened social housing sector to achieve greater housing options for low income Tasmanians.

The main findings in this thesis indicate that neo-liberal governance, as a recent addition to housing policy in Tasmania, is at a critical juncture. The diversification of public housing stock continues in policy experimentation processes and true reconciliation of the means to achieve this – namely, strong growth providers, a core group of NfPs and NGOs chosen by the state, quangos – have not yet been determined. Instead there is considerable evidence that these will remain in a state of flux, responding to contingent factors and emerging in response to meet the expectations of neo-liberal political practices, while looking after the needs of vulnerable citizens. Arguably, a strength of democratic economies is their ability to adapt to changing and contingent impulse. Critical realism,

¹⁰³ From 2004 to the end of 2007 senior Tasmanian housing officials joined their colleagues across Australia in an intensive period of collaborative policy development under 'The Framework for National Action on Affordable Housing'. The genesis of this framework was the 2003 Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA), which incorporated a new principle to "promote a national, strategic, integrated and long term vision for affordable housing in Australia through a comprehensive approach by all levels of government" (CoA, 2003: Principle 11).

with its emphasis on emergent and contingent factors, hence offers a particularly adept methodology to analyse the pervasiveness of neo-liberal political practices but also varied sometimes conflicting, discursive outcomes that actors use to justify and reconcile competing views.

The twin pillars that the *AHS* was developed from were the concerns for:

1. Social justice and access to affordable, safe and sustainable housing that contributed to the underpinning of economic growth, area vitality and resilient communities within the housing system and
2. The importance of a successful market economy.

This means that some aspects of the *AHS* policy were couched in social justice terms – sharing “the rewards of a strong and growing economy with people on low incomes” and building “strong local communities”. Yet it is especially the second point or pillar above that encapsulates the neo-liberal agenda. Whereas the former point embodies the social democratic legacy, the latter point stresses the subjugation of *all* social relations (hereunder housing) within an economic/market based view of societal governance e.g. the inter-linkages between individual aspects of human existence and the ‘efficient’ functioning of the economic system. The turbulent history of the *AHS* demonstrates the nature of implementing a policy that sits within a broader neo-liberal regime shift – its ongoing experimentation and ‘tweaking’ to become closer to its intention or to alter intentions to suit new circumstances, all the while operating within a field of social relations. The vision of these neo-liberal political practices was for housing to become more ‘flexible’, ‘efficient’ and ‘responsive’ (to use its own language) to the needs of most people via a range of quasi-state, NGO and private investors. With these wheels in motion, when neo-liberalism becomes the orthodox premise for social relations across society, few alternatives can be envisaged or proposed.

Neo-liberalism has accommodated differing regimes from social democratic to laissez-faire market approaches. As this empirical study demonstrates, it is a composite ideological structure that cannot be reduced solely to any of its elements. It is not only an expression of the liberty of the free market, nor the result of neo-conservatism morals. It is both of these and it is interactive in its policy embeddedness. Neo-liberal political practices reveal paradoxical enunciations of a need for a retracted state *and* an intervening state; under the proviso of when necessary, or when the market fails. This duality is clearly articulated in the discourses of state and non-state housing actors. The state’s role continued along regulatory, facilitation and coercion lines, but in new combinations particularly in the allocation and authorisation of resources. Another anomaly within the duality of neo-liberalism is that, despite the prevalence of neo-liberal ideas in the reorganisation of the state, the social expenditure as a percentage of GDP in Australia has grown, and the state welfare system is far from dismantled.

Rather, the supporters of the free market, might agree with this thesis on one point only: the empirical data firmly shows there was no grand neo-liberal plot or conspiracy involved in the formation or implementation of the *AHS*. The powerful actors within the state accommodated role changes as much as NGOs and tenants living alongside new

neighbours accommodated changed governance modes and social relations. The dexterity of neo-liberal political practices in the *AHS* can be equated to maintaining a push for partnerships, greater diversified investment and the capacity of new 'housing players' to deliver services, while changing tactics when first attempts at 'governance' failed. In Housing Tasmania's policy instrument neo-liberal political practices were revealed in *ad hoc* and nuanced processes and strategies. The discourses which structured the *AHS* were drawn from particular elements of neo-liberalism and the language of management, partnerships and social inclusion. Tensions existed because of actor expectations, created over time, about the role the state plays in housing, levels of market coordination, self-governing capacities and socio-cultural understandings of governance changes.

Theory and Methods

At the outset of the thesis I introduced critical realism as a structured ontology for enabling explanation within an open world view. The strength of critical realism rests in its deliberative 'opening up' of theory. Not positivist, myopic and strongly certain, critical realism simultaneously holds more than one 'ball in the air'. Aspects of weak social constructionism are juggled alongside a three-fold distinction of reality. All the while the performer feels the presence of something else – why are contingencies unfolding? What are the underlying and emerging structures, power and tendencies? Does the audience know when to applaud? Is the next act ready to perform? Critical realism was enriched by the use of several frameworks to interpret interview data – governance connections and proximity of social relations. These assembled lens provided a potential way of thinking about the uncertainty, fluidity and challenges of contemporary social governance and multiple shareholder involvement. I sought to delve into what I considered to be heterogeneous actor accounts that can potentially challenge the orthodoxy of neo-liberalism. Neo-liberalism is only unassailable within its own accepted discourses, hence the motivation to analyse what different actors *actually* mean when they talk about it.

Tempering strong social constructionists' view that reality is constructed, I have relied on critical realism's notion of reality constantly undergoing modifications and disjunctures as a result of ongoing discussions and interactions with the state about the *AHS*. Simultaneous, operative generative powers occur within an 'open system'. Each actor group has its own distinct ways of internally being and externally relating to others which, in turn, has its own distinctive generative effects on 'events' within the circuit of governance. No one actor determined the *AHS*. Therefore the social relations and operations of any one generative mechanism were mediated and changeable, complex and contingent. Identifying the properties of any one mechanism, such as the framing devices the local media and communication experts use in headlines on the *AHS* was problematic because they interrelated with social, economic and governmental discourses. Critical realism challenges researchers to understand that not all discourses or events which alter the social relations between individual actors and organisations can be recorded, nor can all regularities be 'found' and cast as certain proof of causality and explanatory meaning. It offers a way to develop and refine, via empirical evidence and theory-testing, practically adequate explanations in order to continue the critique of neo-liberalism. In summary, employing the ontological approach of critical realism, the research focused on the key necessary and contingent conditions pertinent to the neo-liberal changes to public/social housing provision in Tasmania and how these conditions worked together to generate

certain outcomes, encouraged by the state and the development of particular institutions such as TAHL.

Discourses are more than an oral or written expression of ideas. In the thesis they embody the complex interrelationship between actors expressing specific policy and 'lived' rationales, state and other institutions and language itself. Through discursive analyses of the *AHS*, actors illustrated governing practices primarily shaped by the politics of neo-liberalism and the need to find a 'new' position within a changing form. These actors were political in their daily practices and social relations, making it possible to view the interplay of their efforts as governing subjects – to attempt to live harmoniously in public housing; to deliver housing services and retain government funding; to win creative contracts to write government policy copy – and how they made powerful demands in the face of uncertainty on the extension of governance models beyond Stage One of the *AHS*. Actors described a diversity of ends in their own and the states practices. As influential actors, the circuit of governance members effect small everyday decisions that accumulate to policy redirection. Their accounts pointed to the ways they perceived the state to be continually re-structuring itself, shifting the ground and expanding the repertoire of involvement. These were not seen as mirroring strategic intentions or necessarily complete, wholly controlled or predetermined. Moreover, accounts revealed the emergent and contingent nature of the transitive realm of social relations.

The first part of the thesis considers the definitions and histories of variegated forms of neo-liberalism relevant to this study. These are related to the history of public housing in Australia (including structural and funding elements) and Housing Tasmania's neo-liberal enactments and variabilities in 'policy' to 'governance' literature and the development of the *AHS*. These emergent relations are contingently defined and tend to combine or as Lawson writes (2006: 236) become "packaged together to influence housing outcomes."

Circuit of governance model

The circuit of governance model casts attention on the elements that constitute an interactive policy process between discourses. The assembled lens provided a potential way of thinking about the contingency within contemporary social governance and multiple 'stakeholder' involvement. For instance the thesis focused on emerging challenges to the *AHS* when NGOs formed advocacy coalitions and when policy mechanisms did not eventuate as planned and needed immediate revision. This research demanded an engagement with the concept of emerging multiplicities – multiple actors from tenants, contracted social marketers, NGOs and quasi-state bodies, all seeking an active role in governance despite differing interpretations of its application; multiple policy possibilities and formulations along the way, such as the establishment of TAHL; multiple facets to examine via different 'measurements' of analysis, from socio-cultural understandings in the media, individual reactions of tenants and organisational responses from NGOs; multiple fissures and discourses used by actors and the state to explain their actions, such as acquiescence, social entrepreneurialism and pseudo-markets. The significance of this research is the detailing of actor discourses on policy change, the materiality of governing modes and the practices of social relations – by noting how these practices coexist in contingent changing ways.

Drawing on the circuit of governance metaphor, competing discourses indicate that crisscrossing wires run from the state as a major source of power to multiple actors, creating exclusions and elites in the privileging of certain governing modes and specific social relations. Some actors thought Housing Tasmania's approach needed to be true to the traditional role of the state and ensure vulnerable tenants and those on waiting lists were protected. Other actors utilised the language of neo-liberalism to describe their organisations 'improved' aims into housing provision, which was a clear change from their previous more social democratic goals. Policy-makers role, too, then shifts to running a governance system and maintaining stability of the 'housing system' through managerialism. The AHS attempts to straddle the middle ground of sound economic business with efforts towards achieving social justice and equality. The circuit exhibits variations and a degree of instability and mutability. The press might alter its support and application of a cultural governance discourse effected public and advocacy levels of support. Furthermore, links between the state and social marketing consultants may be relatively tenuous until an event in the actual domain occurs, reigniting short-term close transactional working relations. In these key ways, the circuit indicates the emergent spatial boundaries and sociality of actors in governance roles.

The divergent discourses actors employ highlight the spectrum of changes that have occurred in Tasmanian housing policy, public housing tenure and policy implementation processes. Institutional shifts reshaped governance with a larger number of housing providers tendering for contracts, welfare payment assistances such as the increasing number of people receiving CRA, and more managerial practices impacted on social relations between actors and the state. Multiple discursive frames of social relations and governing connections also indicated the complexities and dynamism of non-state housing actors' accounts of policy change. One strong, singular reading and enactment of neo-liberalism does not apply, nor does it match the empirical findings. A critical realist ontology made it possible to analyse, these multi-stranded wires of discursive social relations, within the circuit of governance, overlap with the neo-liberal discourse.

Positioned as a major power source in the circuit of governance model, Housing Tasmania and the state government cannot only be interpreted as *real* mechanisms creating causal events affecting the other actors within the circuit. The state plays an important role in coordinating and regulating governance modes and the economic, political and social relations connected to the AHS' new 'solution'. Governance modes and social relations are by no means a natural or given process or eventuality. Rather, the state mediates them, just as the state mediates the relations of property, finance and welfare. Yet the ability of the state to steer NGOs and private sector institutions and to influence housing market processes is not predictable or guaranteed, as evidenced by the failed Master Partner program with Macquarie and difficulties with Tasmanian Affordable Housing Limited (TAHL). The state's preference for working with one NGO over another may change and lead NGOs might relate in unprecedented ways as new funding becomes available. In examining the discourses staff from Housing Tasmania used and in accounting for political and policy changes, it was noted that historical tensions concerning the nature and political power of government Departments over Housing Tasmania were exacerbated by the TAHL regulatory problems. Pressures stem from the duality within neo-liberal political practices – that policies must allow markets enough 'freedom' to get on with building new housing in a competitive environment, but the state must also

remain active to enforce many neo-liberal practices, and more ironically, regulation that would, in principle, enable some welfare-based values to be retained. Examining the difficulties Housing Tasmania experienced with the *AHS* (such as with Macquarie Community Partnerships or the quasi-state organisation that operated in ways disingenuous to Housing Tasmania's intentions) contributes to our understandings of the compatibility, or otherwise, between empirical and theoretical analyses of neo-liberalism. Their difficulties and constraints revealed fissures between neo-liberalism in practice and its uneven impact as discussed in the theoretical scholarship.

Empirical evidence - heterogeneous discourses and neo-liberal political practices

From the outset, my research into social relations and governance was anchored in empirical and theoretical concerns about the ideologies and practices that influenced public housing restructuring. The experience of Tasmania, with its residual public housing sector and targeted applicant program, follows a similar pattern to that experienced in other Australian states and identified in existing research. As a way of critiquing the contribution of theories of neo-liberalism across advanced liberal economies, I outlined some key characteristics alongside governance mechanisms before tracing their relevance in the policy processes of Housing Tasmania and the *AHS*. After acknowledging the dominance of neo-liberalism in the social, economic and political realm over the past three decades, I then critiqued some recent contributions by a growing number of scholars on the incoherence and hybridity of neo-liberalism (Brenner and Theodore, 2002). The shortcomings of academic studies on neo-liberalism rest on their over-abstraction and lack of 'messy' research considering actual practices. However, the value of a theoretical exploration helped me to consider how I could extend such ideological recognition to see if it matched or offered anything to empirical evidence.

My contention is that the empirical findings confirm much of the scholarship on neo-liberalism, however, an ongoing tension exists between neo-liberal logic (emphasising the market, private enterprise) with social government logic and redistributive powers in actors and state discourses and practices. The strength of the thesis is the analysis of the multiple ways that neo-liberal political practices are embedded in a housing policy, and interpreted and enacted by divergent state and non-state actors. I argued that the 'actually existing neo-liberalism' evident in the *AHS* policy shifts were performed discursively by actors that spoke not only about policy change but, equally importantly, about legitimating state priorities through cultural governing mechanisms, 'the free and unhampered individual' living in self-governed public housing properties, the need to comply to maintain existence and 'ride out the storm', the importance of competitive positioning and effectively proving organisational worth. Actors' heterogeneous discourses value different configurations of ideals along a continuum of neo-liberal political practices. At times, composite views of neo-liberal political practices and more social democratic principles were articulated with peculiarities of each melding or repelling each other. Actors did not tend to utilise all-encompassing framings of neo-liberalism or discursive constructions of unambiguous support. It is more accurate to say that they tended to 'cherry-pick' components of neo-liberal political and governing practices in unconventional and, at times, contradictory ways. But establishing the *AHS* as

the 'way forward' requires an acceptance of new modes of governance in the social relations of actors' within the circuit in a complex, open housing system.

Discourse of distance and duality in the circuit of governance

Senior staff at Housing Tasmania considered responding pragmatically to the AHS and being capable of 'rethinking' policy after failures and governance 'dead ends' as an effective emergent strategy. Just as theoretical understandings of neo-liberalism have asserted, the unequivocal 'hollowing out' or 'rolling back' of the state in housing has not occurred. The state still determines the parameters of partnerships, the funding model and establishment of TAHL and its subsequent transactional distant social relations. The substantive state is an ideal: its central command capacity or status as a major source of power within the circuit shapes the housing environment and the application of the AHS. The uneven political path to instituting neo-liberal governance positions the state as dominant in the production of re-imagining Tasmania's housing sector and the specifications of actors ways of behaving or enacting governance. On analysis it is evident that the state continues to be a strong discursive actor in the circuit of governance. The state provided the resources (contractual, financial and administrative) and yet, it was 'finding its feet' in shifting its power from provider to 'enabler', as it is in this new role that responsibilities for policy implementation with external partners and stakeholders become more vertically shared.

'New statism' opened up new negotiations between the state and viable NGOs and community housing providers. Reliance on contributors – for greater injections of capital and support dollars, management and service delivery of housing – also reoriented the state towards 'rethinking' its traditional role and accepting some value to the market, modernising capitalism and shoring up entrepreneurial opportunism. Enhancing markets through governance processes reduces government. Housing Tasmania and the state Government spent considerable time during the AHS implementation schedule in estimating, 'learning' from and adapting to the critical junctures where the market fails or is inappropriate. In these cases the state argued that it remained determined to provide "safety net" housing for "people on low income who are in most need." For the state, 'new ways of working together' entailed NGOs and community housing organisations demonstrating their capacity to behave as governance actors within the circuit. Yet, at the same time, difficulties arose for the state in recognising and adapting to free market practices. The experience of starting a partnership with Macquarie Bank is the main example in the thesis that demonstrated how the contingent nature of neo-liberal political practices could not be navigated.

Interactions relied on actors promoting descriptions of meaningful links with the state based on shared understanding of needs, social actions and social practices. For 'distant' public housing tenants 'interactions' with the state were too fractured. This meant it was difficult for these long-term tenants to raise concerns about their neighbours or requests for support. Tenants argued they were adversely affected by governing-at-a-distance modes. Tenants' discursive practices illustrated complex simultaneous and contradictory approaches. On the one hand, they denounced state retraction and the weakening of the state through governance modes. On the other, tenants talked of the need for self-governing practices to achieve cohesive living environments which in effect enhance state retraction and governing-at-a-distance mechanisms. Using multiple discourses to account

for their actions or describe their social relations, tenants relied on 'reorderings' of existing state, community and individual demands to assist in their translation and interpretation of recent housing changes. These tenant actors were relatively homogenous and conservative which contributed to their complex interweaving of neo-liberal ideals. Chapter Seven analysed how discourses of self-conduct favoured greater state usage of punitive behaviour policies to regulate new tenants, especially people with mental illness and complex needs. In justifying their views 'distant' tenants relayed accounts of ongoing disruptions to their life which they argued were connected to housing allocations. I argued that tenants' views held contradictory features: as a conservative pathology of complex-needs tenants, recast paternalism in the guise of contractualism, a challenge to the state's marginalised role and the impossibility of the free market generating a sustainable community for a diverse tenant base. The reshaping of tenants' identities amid governance changes and distant social relations with the state were usually expressed using the vocabulary of self-governance and responsibility.

Discourses of interactions and market coordination in the circuit of governance

Fissures within the structural implementation of Stage One of the *AHS* policy revealed an important part of the rationale for co-existing divergent discourses within NGO and community housing actor groups. In order to understand actors' role in implementing neo-liberal political practices and in challenging their legitimacy, it is important to consider governing modes of connections with the state and social relations of proximity to the state and how these operate within the duality of neo-liberalism. Separating out these discourses is principally an analytical device that has purchase because they also emerged as accurate empirical descriptions and it demonstrated the ideological weight of discourses along a neo-liberal continuum. For NGO actors their interpretation of the twin pillars of the *AHS* were the differentiating feature. Actors using a discourse of (1) acquiescence were primarily focused on the social justice and equitable access of housing element in the rationale for the *AHS*. NGO actors using (2) a discourse of social entrepreneurialism attempted to balance both ideological pillars of the *AHS* – social welfare provision and market efficiency. Whereas the final group using (3) a pseudo-market discourse were primarily driven by the free market agenda within the policy. These discourses exposed actors views on the merits of market coordination and governance in housing.

Considering each discourse and its connection to modes of governance and proximities of social relations reveals important findings. For the first group the governance mode of compliance can be translated as an uncomfortable or reluctant acquiescence by actors to the states rules and regulations to achieve a larger governance aim. This position often ran contrary to organisational or individual actors' intentions. Actors using a discourse of acquiescence described their governance mode as compliant and their social relations with the state as neutral or ambiguous. While social democratic in outlook they perceived themselves as having limited access to state decision-making processes and were against market coordination powers in housing. Their goal was humble and based on survival during 'neo-liberal experimentation' that they hoped would not embed itself into all their services. They argued that the state had changed and market-driven approaches dominated housing policy. But their size and reluctance to adapt to market pressures

translated into dependency and higher reliance on the state rather than other 'stakeholders' in the circuit of governance. For them, the aims of redistributive social democratic housing policy were being undermined by a series of ongoing policy redirections including funding reductions and tighter targeting of service users or housing tenants. This 'reformulation' or contraction of what the state should provide and how social housing providers within a 'post welfare state' should operate is a key feature of the new governance modes.

For actors using (2) a discourse of social entrepreneurialism, they perceived themselves as having close interactions with the state (see Chapter Nine). This group of well-resourced NGOs prefaced the necessity of their active involvement in developing interactions with the state to achieve 'best' collaborative results. In short their discourse was that of social entrepreneurialism. They interpreted their own organisations as being sophisticated and well-placed to address modern challenges of organisational change within variegated neo-liberal approaches. However, these discourses were not applied in a ruthless fashion preventing practices of caring, concern about client outcomes or the impact of concentrations of need for existing public housing tenants. Adherence to some social entrepreneurial governance ideas did not prevent them from both agitating and developing coalition groups and recognising limitations in the market system that they were attempting to grow and benefit from. These actors argued that within their deliberative, multiple governance relations – namely complementary, supplementary and adversary – questioning or extending the scope of their role or a particular position was a 'natural' beneficial and mutually appreciated policy stance. The state was still seen as playing an important role in providing the funding and housing services remit. The struggle to accommodate dimensions of opposing discourses and their associated ideological principles meant that the governance actions these NGOs took were increasingly that of attempts to reconcile neo-liberal imperatives with social democratic values. Varied actor discourses replicate the duality of neo-liberalism as social relations with the state are not fixed and paradoxes emerge within contrasting forces of economic rationalism and public good.

A final third mode of transactions referred to governing connections between the state and non-state actors that functioned along economic rather than social lines. These involved the dominance of capital over social relationships. Limited social relations were perceived as necessary and efficient ways to achieve the 'task at hand'. Two different actor groups – social marketers and NGOs using pseudo-market discourses – described themselves as experiencing transactional modes but from different social relations perspectives; close and distant. External communications consultants (working with the state government on social policy promotions including the *AHS* material) argued they experienced a transactional mode of governing and close social relations with the state. They agreed that the state needed to set out clear task expectations so they could perform their job of promoting the *AHS*. Their views reinforced the cultural governance frame also evident in newspaper headlines. The cultural governance frame was a generative mechanism that attempted to build support for the *AHS* and encourage market-oriented interests and investments, usually before any results emerged. It argued that the *AHS* proposed an innovative way to handle the impact of financial constraints thereby encouraging the need for a cultural shift in tenant behavior. For neo-liberals the strength of the cultural

governance discourse is in its effective silencing of other discourses, particularly more social-democratic ones.

The NGO actors describing their governing and social relations as transactional and distant valued the market as the regulator of housing need and allocation over the state (see Chapter Ten). Depersonalised distant transactions with the state were seen as necessary. A key advocate of transactional relations with the state was the quasi-state body, TAHL, who at the time of the study had no experience in meeting housing targets or in pre-existing structures with the state. Transactions adhered to mechanistic assumptions of neo-classical economics and tended to advocate for a minimal state with a limited role in public housing provision. Market coordination, thus, held the answers to public-social housing problems. Heterogeneity across actor groups was evident in the way some actors perceived, for example, 'close' interactions with the state as an anathema to successful governance practices, while others imagined 'close' interactions would reignite government control and regulation over problematic tenants (see Chapter Seven and tenants use of 'strong state' governance alongside self-governance).

After the AHS: Learning from governance shifts?

Following 2007, the Tasmanian Government was more aware of the various challenges wider governance changes presented for the improvement in access to social housing. Although Stage Two of the AHS did not proceed beyond the pursuit of TAHL and a small number of tasks, affordability was not relegated to its previous decades of stagnation and public invisibility. This demonstrates the ability of market economies to react and respond to contingencies. In late 2007 the Tasmanian Government shifted priority from a discourse on affordability to the problem of homelessness. 'In 2008 the Tasmanian Legislative Council conducted an Inquiry into housing affordability concluding with the recommendation that the AHS be resumed but this was ignored by the State Government. Its terms of reference explored the experiences of individuals living in housing stress; the impact of a lack of affordable housing on the implementation and outcomes of other state Government programs; the effectiveness and limitations of current state and Federal government strategies and services to alleviate the impact of poor housing affordability in the Tasmanian Community. 'Social inclusion' gained currency with new research funding and evidence-based policy approaches emerging from the establishment of a Social Inclusion Unit in the Tasmanian Department of Premier and Cabinet. In rebranding the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Housing Tasmania and public housing were slotted into an 'about housing' theme which included details on 'housing options' such as buying and selling property, emergency accommodation services and renting. By 2009 Housing Tasmania was tucked within the Housing Innovations Unit of the DHHS.

Critically, it is the systemic rather than the social role of housing as expressed in neo-liberal political practices that continues today. Social housing was again more directly emphasised as a key feature within this sustainable system (language that was previously used in the AHS). The then Tasmanian Premier announced a Housing Innovations Fund of \$60 million for social housing and homelessness; with almost two-thirds of the fund allocated for affordable housing supply and social housing renewal tasks. The state's penchant for regulation meant a Housing Innovations Unit was created to manage the

fund and associated initiatives. The Unit was to report directly to the Secretary of the DHHS, not the Director of Housing Tasmania. This separation in reporting lines was a deliberate attempt to achieve greater independence from the public housing agency, Housing Tasmania, also a division of that Department and responsible for the implementation of the AHS (Milligan *et. al* 2009). The timing of the Housing Innovations Fund helped the Tasmanian Government attract national funding. The Rudd Labor Government initiated in 2008 the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) incentive which aimed to support the national addition of 100,000 dwelling units to the affordable rental supply over eight years from 2008/09. If NRAS is allocated to NfPs they can either operate it as a capital grant to meet the upfront cost of a dwelling or as a recurrent subsidy to service the costs of private finance for ten years. Thus, as a partial funding mechanism the NRAS still needs to be combined with additional sources of public (e.g. Housing Innovations Fund money and CRA) and private finance.

The Tasmanian Government selected two NfP agencies – Community Housing Ltd and Mission Australia – as the preferred community based managers of housing and recipients of NRAS incentives. As the Housing Tasmania interviewees indicated in Chapter Five of the thesis their commitment to any one NGO housing provider had not yet been cemented. In particular, one of the discourses these state actors' utilised to validate their governance practices described local NGOs as relatively weak. Questioning their capacity to 'step up' to the needs of the state, they were reluctant to select a local provider in the Expression of Interest to be a Master Partner process (accepting Macquarie Bank proposal which subsequently failed). Significantly, this discourse mobilised by the state and critiqued in this thesis still existed in 2008. The changing character of the affordable housing delivery system in Tasmania clearly preferred larger interstate stakeholders – the two 'winners' were interstate agencies who intended to develop a local housing service in Tasmania. The emergent consequences of the experiences of working with interstate stakeholders in the AHS have been reinterpreted. Now the involvement of larger mainland providers was seen as a necessary shift to overcome an historical lack of sizeable community housing associations in Tasmania.

Similarly, the State Government maintained their interest in commercial reconfigurations of housing and commercial views on which would most benefit the economy. As neo-liberal political practices become more embedded in government operations prominent commercial entities have been contracted to undertake financial and strategic reviews in housing reconfigurations in Scotland (Ernst & Young) and Ireland (KPMG). In the Tasmanian case, it was the accountancy and consultancy firm KPMG who, in June 2009, delivered a review of social and affordable housing for DHHS. It was described as necessary by KPMG for DHHS to 'best position itself' to respond to the latest Commonwealth changes, namely the National Building–Economic Stimulus Plan and the National Affordable Housing Agreement. KPMG provided three options for system reforms but preferred two of them – the creating of a Housing Organisation or the creation of a State Owned Company (SOC) within Public Benevolent Institution (PBI) status. The SOC PBI option was described as providing "the most commercial benefit while ensuring the entity remains closely aligned as a core government function" while the Housing Association was seen as having similar commercial benefits "but is further removed from government" (KPMG, 2009: 41). The Community Housing Federation of Australia (CHFA) raised concerns, among others, of the economic modelling carried out by KPMG and its

assumption of a debt financing model.¹⁰⁴ The criticism was levelled at the widespread push to endorse neo-liberal ways of assessing housing problems and associated ways of responding. KPMG were also providing strategic advice to the Commonwealth on achieving a viable and sustainable community housing sector, funded by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA).

These events post-*AHS* clearly indicate that neo-liberal political practices are still being pursued by the Tasmanian State Government. Systemic change is propagated as foremost; compared with the redistributive goals or social justice premise for providing a small but time and resource dependent component of the housing sector. As the thesis has demonstrated, the duality within the *AHS* advances a need for systemic change that is largely taken-for-granted; it has entered the discourses of the media, professionals in advocacy and the third sector and bureaucrats alike. A slippage occurs between economic and social considerations making the shifts proposed in the *AHS* indicative of a redefined relationship between civil, state and NGO sectors. Economic goals are considered as worthy, or pivotal to, social outcomes. This duality also signifies how the state's size or role in providing for marginal communities and individuals may not altogether alter but the distribution of power and allocation of resources to other stakeholders has fundamentally changed.

The transformation envisaged by the *AHS* remains unfolding and emergent – but the social and political concerns of the actors within a circuit of governance accept nuanced forms of neo-liberal political practices. The ethos of universal provision of housing has lost its 'Keynesian 'edge'. For many actors there was not a trace of sentimentality for a lost welfare state; others thought its humanising functions over unregulated markets remain. Social democratic traditions still exist in the discourses of the state and non-state actors. Neo-liberal political practices should be interpreted as processes that are contingent and multifaceted, thus preventing the formation of a singular site of compliance or acceptance. These processes are contingent not only on the reconfiguration of state institutions and regulations but, importantly, on the social relations and governance modes that actors utilise and live out.

This thesis shows that actors' discursive responses to neo-liberalism's conditioning duality can be contradictory and heterogeneous. Contradictions give rise to multiple discourses that reflect varied individual and organisational aims and constraints, but also competing overarching narrative strategies employed to communicate social policy objectives to a wider audience. Understanding what actors actually mean when they talk about, and with, the neo-liberal governance agenda thus is essential to understand the scope and process of social policy implementation. In doing so, this thesis introduced and applied a novel set of dynamic concepts to explain actors discursive positioning on governance issues. Discursive interpretations form the basis from which different actors participate in collaborative policy processes but also the basis for feedback and policy refinement. As so clearly demonstrated in the thesis, actors invariably struggle to reconcile *AHS* discussions and practice within a coherent neo-liberal agenda. Ultimately though, neo-liberal political practices remained unresponsive to the multiplicity of the discursive interpretations that

¹⁰⁴ CHFA argued that this modelling should also take into account the outcomes of debt financing coupled with a range of levels of public investment.

resided within it. Finally then, this study of actor discourses has wider implications for understanding the complexity of modern governance changes. It clearly demonstrates that the development of efficacious housing policy requires, more than ever, an engagement with actors' interpretations of change and the conditions that made their discourses possible.

POSTSCRIPT

By charting both the fissures and compatibilities between empirical data and theory evidenced by the multiple discourses that constitute actors relations with the state, this thesis points to a number of issues for further empirical and analytical investigation. To conclude I present four potential lines of inquiry for future research. These are:

1. Discursive approaches to housing and multiple actor relations have considerable further potential. The framework of governance connections and proximity of social relations between actor and the state could be adapted i to explore dominate narratives or articulations of 'reality' in other social policy programs. For example a review of the media framing of housing change in other Australian States (see Mee, 2004 for a study in NSW) to determine similarities and differences between regional enactments of neo-liberalism in the public sphere. An expanded discursive analysis within the fields of governance and social policy and housing that extends the insights of these narratives across a wider terrain of public/social housing reforms in Australia would also complement a body of literature on social housing change in the UK Examining funding priorities announced since the Federal Labor government's election in 2007 would also reveal the latest trajectory in the debate on public housing supply.
2. Extending the views of governance as both contingent and hybrid moves research away from more limited classical political theory that fails to recognise tenuous dynamic states and stakeholder processes. More empirical research on the social relations between 'circuit of governance' actors could be undertaken. This study focused on one case study or interplay of social relations between actors and the state rather than 'across' and 'between' circuit members. Considering the knowledge that policy communities share and the connections between actors would add another important dimension to the analysis of the ways ideologies, resistances and constraints emerge within and configure interactions. One of the primary opportunities within theoretically-orientated research is to engage with relational issues as central to housing changes rather than marginal to them. Critical realism places an emphasis on the analysis of multiple conceptualisations of a problem or occurrence. This would be helpful in research on interaction and the synthesis between governance objectives and governance practices.
3. The degree to which daily practices and 'lived' experiences of housing 'work' have shifted as a response to organisational and professional culture change and the diffusion of neo-liberal ideals. This opens up space to investigate the social dynamics of new housing staff compared to longer serving staff and new tenants compared with long-term residents. Building on the ontology from this thesis, critical realism would be beneficial in such an analysis as it registers reflexivity as a central mechanism that mediates the influence of objective social and cultural conditions.
4. Gendered discourses could be overtly tackled by considering how women and men evaluated their practices differently in the housing workplace and/or as neighbours living in disadvantaged communities. What are gendered ideologies

premised on and sustained by – what is their position in relation to other ideologies such as neo-liberalism? How can these discourses influence the material conditions of women and men's lives differently? Feminist research is characterised by self-reflectivity; the connectedness of politics with personal identity and a critique of power dynamics as played out through discourses, patriarchy, institution and other apparatuses. For many third wave feminist scholars, power is conceptualised in a Foucauldian sense as a complex web of interconnected relations acting and managing locally in interactive ways. Gal (1995) argues that comprehensive feminist research considers the study of gendered discourse by examining everyday practices, on the one hand, and on the other, the ideologies about money, men and language that reinscribe or frame these practices within social contexts. In this research I was struck by the number of women working in housing at senior management or leadership level – whether at Housing Tasmania, NGOs or the peak bodies. Also, female tenants who participated in the research exhibited a depth in their appreciation of their housing environment. Many scholars also note the pivotal role women, and mothers in particular, play in disadvantaged communities. Further research could analyse the ways in which enabling and constraining factors affect the relationship between gender and the state. From this perspective, feminist post-structuralist discourse analysis offers valuable insights into how women negotiate governance shifts across a range of organisational or institutional environments.

APPENDICES

The semi-structured interviews included a number of questioning styles including asking for: personal opinion, formal opinion, description, story-telling, classification, or verification of other interviewees data. Once a number of interviews had been conducted I was listening for similarities and differences and following through with related issues that each interviewee might raise (particularly as examples).

APPENDIX A

- I. Interview Schedule: Housing Tasmania staff
- II. Information Sheet for Housing Tasmania staff

APPENDIX B

- I. Interview Schedule: External (non-state) communications specialists
- II. Information Sheet for with external (non-state) communications specialists

APPENDIX C

- I. Interview Schedule: Public Housing Tenants
- II. Information Sheet for tenants

APPENDIX D

- I. Interview Schedule: NGOs and community organisations
- II. Information Sheet for NGOs and community organisations

APPENDIX E

Cultural Governance Frame in the Tasmania press, July 2002 to December 2004

APPENDIX A

Interview Schedule – Housing Tasmania

Interviewee organisational background

Confirm position title and main responsibilities – in terms of *AHS* (has this changed)

How would you describe your work?

Number of year(s) at Housing Tasmania

How many colleagues have left during the implementation of the *AHS*? Where have they gone – why do you think? What effect has this had on its delivery? On staff morale?

Number of year(s) in this role:

Context of *AHS*

Discussion about the formation of the *AHS* – basis policy problem, level of activity and interest from NGOs, links to Commonwealth Government pressures (CSHA and other changes)

What does 'new ways of working' mean?

What are the key elements of your approach to governance models?

How does this differ from the past – traditional role of state?

What have been the main challenges? – And successes?

How would you describe the way Housing Tasmania addresses social justice concerns alongside the drive towards greater economic efficiency? – How does Housing Tasmania handle these dual pressures/concerns?

Discussion about the partnership with Macquarie Bank – How did it come about? Their brief? When you realised it had changed, what were your first actions? How would you describe the immediate effect of its failure? And in the longer term?

Discussion on the EOI process (aim to understand Housing Tasmania's views on NGO sector)

Why did you opt for Macquarie Bank over local providers? How would you describe the local sector – how is it changing – what about its future directions?

How important is it for Housing Tasmania to be flexible and responsive? – and what do you think these terms mean?

Any examples of applying them in the implementation of the *AHS*? Do you view these examples as positive or negative?

Social and governing relations with non-state actors

How do you think tenants perceive Housing Tasmania since the *AHS*?

How have they reacted to TAHL and the potential growth of the social housing sector?

How important are these tenant relations in the process of change?

What do you think the public perception of public housing is compared to social housing?

How important is it to communicate a 'housing system' approach?

What are your working relations with the media?

And the external communications specialists you have contracted? What was their main role – how effective do you think they were?

How would you describe your working relations with NGOs? And TAHL?
(Discussion on different within sector and delays in TAHL and fall-out for Housing Tasmania compared with State Government?)

Do you think these organisations would share the same view of you?

How important is housing as an issue now for the State Government? How has the *AHS* impacted on this?

Is there anything else you would like to mention that we haven't covered?

Information Sheet for Housing Tasmania staff



UNIVERSITY
OF TASMANIA

School of Sociology and Social Work

INFORMATION SHEET

Title of Project

Housing Change: Perceptions of social relations in circuits of governance

Name of Investigators

Researcher/ Interviewer

Ellie Francis-Brophy
PhD student in Sociology
Housing and Community Research Unit
University of Tasmania

Chief Investigator/Supervisor

Dr Keith Jacobs
School of Sociology and Social Work
University of Tasmania

What is the research about?

My PhD research explores the social relations and interactions between multiple stakeholders and the state in the development and implementation of housing policy in Tasmania.

My thesis contributes to the body of literature on neo-liberal market reforms to housing governance in Australia by focusing in the narratives of social change as expressed by those within the policy 'circuit' in Tasmania. Here I specifically examine the perceptions of multiple non-state actors or stakeholders on their relationship with Housing Tasmania, each other and policy change.

Your participation would focus on Housing Tasmania's recent policy initiatives like the *Affordable Housing Strategy* and the establishment of the Tasmanian Affordable Housing Limited. Your views on new ways of working with stakeholders are particularly important and communication practices with tenants and NGOs.

Who is being asked to participate?

I am interviewing a cross-section of people involved in the process of devising, implementing, communicating, working with and reviewing regional housing policy. To date I have interviewed:

- 23 staff or Board members of community sector organisations, housing industry bodies and advocacy groups
- 21 public housing tenants living in Lenah Valley, Clarendon Vale and Risdon Vale
- 3 newspaper journalists and editors.

Participation would involve a relaxed one-on-one interview. The interview will take between 45 – 60 minutes. Participation is entirely voluntary and may be withdrawn at any time without prejudice. With your consent, I will take notes during the interview and tape-record our conversation. Your name will not be used in the thesis.

Your agreement and consent

Before the interview, you will be asked to sign a consent form to make sure that you understand what the research is about and that you have agreed to take part in the taped interview.

Executive Summary on completion of thesis

Upon completion of the thesis, all interviewees will receive an Executive Summary document outlining the main findings of the research and its contribution and applicability to the field of urban sociology.

Contact people

This project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Tasmania. If you have any concerns regarding how this project is conducted you can contact Amanda McAully, Executive Officer of the Human Research Ethics Committee (Tasmania) Network on 6226 2763 or via email Amanda.McAully@utas.edu.au

If you want to discuss this project with my supervisor and Chief Investigator Dr Keith Jacobs, you can contact him on 6226 2928 or Keith.Jacobs@utas.edu.au. If you have any questions about the interview please contact Ellie Francis-Brophy at UTAS on 6226 2334.

Thank you very much for your participation in this project.

Ellie Francis-Brophy
PhD student
Sociology

Dr Keith Jacobs
Senior Lecturer
Sociology

APPENDIX B

Interview Schedule – external communication specialists

Interviewee organisational background

What is your position title?

What are your main responsibilities? How would you describe your work?

How did you come into marketing (Degree? Age? Experience?)

Number of year(s) with organisation? Own- franchise?

Number of year(s) in this role:

How much of your work is with government – DHHS?– Housing Tasmania?

Has this increased over the past few years? Why? (active pursuit of contracts or more government communications resources/budgets)

What are the main differences between commercial and public sector campaigns? (discussion on purpose, language use and educational content of policies)

Attitude towards and understanding of public housing and the AHS

What do you know about the AHS?

What do you think the public perception of public housing is?

Has this changed – is the AHS likely to impact on it? Why/why not?

What is the main message that the AHS should be communicating – in terms of the public/ social housing changes?

Social relations with Housing Tasmania, DHHS, State Government

How important is it to understand policy intentions and main influencers (e.g. NGO and private sector supporters) when pitching and then creating campaigns or glossy policy documents?

(Discussion on answer – very important, why: effects? If not – why not – how can the campaign still work?)

What was your brief on the written/electronic resources?

How independent were you in developing the format/ content, look-approach?

Do you think the government are skilled in promoting their policies – do they work with the press well? Promote good news stories enough? Present policies in interesting, user friendly ways?

Are there any difficulties in getting the state to 'sell' their policy or is this much more commonplace nowadays?

What could (the State Government, Housing Tasmania) do better to enhance general support for the AHS? What happens to this support if they end up aborting the next Stage of the policy?

How do you encourage them to make these changes? How receptive are they to your advice?

What challenges do you face in securing contracts – working to strict briefs – speculating for work – creating ongoing relationships?

Discussion about the appropriateness of using communications materials – in advocacy; by state housing authorities; on housing issues to existing tenants and broader community
Any comments on the way the *AHS* was promoted?

(comments about the work of their peers) – see framework brochure examples and website
– and how the media covered the policy and its implementation.

How do you bring in and address the interests of multiple stakeholders in a campaign to promote the *AHS*?

Is there anything else you would like to mention that we haven't covered?

Information Sheet for external (non-state) communications specialists



UNIVERSITY
OF TASMANIA

School of Sociology and Social Work

INFORMATION SHEET

Title of Project

Housing Change: Perceptions of social relations in circuits of governance

Name of Investigators

Researcher/ Interviewer

Ellie Francis-Brophy
PhD student in Sociology
University of Tasmania

Chief Investigator/Supervisor

Dr Keith Jacobs
School of Sociology and Social Work
University of Tasmania

What is the research about?

My PhD research explores the social relations and interactions between multiple stakeholders and the Housing Tasmania and the State Government in the development and implementation of housing policy in Tasmania.

My thesis aims to analyse the ways that key stakeholders talk about their experiences with and social relations with the state and new forms of governance that, potentially, indicates greater dispersal of power and participation to various 'experts'. I am keen to examine processes of societal change that are evident in people's discourses. Your participation would focus on your involvement in social marketing campaigns and Housing Tasmania's recent policy brochures and documents. By interviewing external communications specialists I aim to better understand how policy shifts are communicated, how state language is changed or emphasised to persuade or educate the broader community of policy changes and priorities. Your views on your changing relations with the state on contracts are particularly important.

Who is being asked to participate?

I am interviewing a cross-section of people involved in the process of devising, implementing, communicating, working with and reviewing regional housing policy. Participation would involve a relaxed one-on-one interview. The interview will take between 45 – 60 minutes. Participation is entirely voluntary and may be withdrawn at any time without prejudice. With your consent, I will take notes during the interview and tape-record our conversation. Your name will not be used in the thesis.

Your agreement and consent

Before the interview, you will be asked to sign a consent form to make sure that you understand what the research is about and that you have agreed to take part in the taped interview.

Executive Summary on completion of thesis

Upon completion of the thesis, all interviewees will receive an Executive Summary document outlining the main findings of the research and its contribution and applicability to the field of urban sociology.

Contact people

This project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Tasmania. If you have any concerns regarding how this project is conducted you can contact Amanda McAully, Executive Officer of the Human Research Ethics Committee (Tasmania) Network on 6226 2763 or via email Amanda.McAully@utas.edu.au

If you want to discuss this project with my supervisor and Chief Investigator Dr Keith Jacobs, you can contact him on 6226 2928 or Keith.Jacobs@utas.edu.au. If you have any questions about the interview please contact Ellie Francis-Brophy at UTAS on 6226 2334.

Thank you very much for your participation in this project.

Ellie Francis-Brophy
PhD student
Sociology

Dr Keith Jacobs
Senior Lecturer
Sociology

APPENDIX C

Interview Schedule – public housing tenants

Tenancy and household

How long have you been living here ? And in public housing?

How did you come to live here?

Did you have to wait long?

What do you think happens to people who are waiting to move into public housing – do you know anyone waiting?

Do you live with anyone? – number of people in your household. Family / kids grew up in public housing?

Role of Housing Tasmania

What do you think Housing Tasmania should do for you?

(ideas: long-term security of tenure, range of support services? Community development?)

Social relations with Housing Tasmania

Describe how you relate to Housing Tasmania (How well connected is Housing Tasmania to what's going on in your building/estate, in your life?)

Has this changed over the years? – in what ways?

Is Housing Tasmania easy to contact and communicate with? (Good relationship with one person? Any examples – how important has this been to your tenancy)

How do you think Housing Tasmania staff treat tenants? (Discussion on interfering or not responding; too regulatory or not enough)

Or is it difficult to get hold of Housing Tasmania staff – example telephone hotlines? Lack of visits and most communication through letters?

If you had a problem would you go to Housing Tasmania directly or to your neighbourhood house or some other advocate first?

How do you think your relationship could improve? What would be the benefits of it improving – for you and for the government?

Relationship with neighbours

Can we talk about your relationship with your neighbours?

Do you like living here? Why – why not? (examples)

Do you think there is a strong sense of community? Has this changed?

Have your neighbours lived here a long time?

Do you socialise together or look out for each other? In what ways?

Or why do you think people keep to themselves here?

Do you have a community tenants association or a group that meets together to talk about issues to discuss with Housing Tasmania? How effective do you think they are? Are you involved?

Problems with neighbours

Thinking about any past or present problems with neighbours

What have they been primarily about – noise and nuisance, dogs or kids, drug or criminal activity, complex needs?

How does Housing Tasmania help you with neighbour problems? Has this changed? How could it be improved? Why do you think Housing Tasmania is responding in the way they are?

AHS

What do you think about the State government's *AHS*? What aspects are most important to you? (examples TAHL, governance modes taking traditional Housing Tasmania role?)

Have you noticed any ways in which new policy changes have affected where you live? Do you think more houses will be built?

Do you think the *AHS* might help get rid of some of the stereotypes of living in public housing?

Do you think public housing has changed over the years (in tenants, in broader community attitudes or in the media)?

Is there anything else you would like to mention that we haven't covered?

Information Sheet for tenants



UNIVERSITY
OF TASMANIA

School of Sociology and Social Work

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PUBLIC HOUSING TENANTS

My name is Ellie Francis-Brophy and I would like to interview you as part of my PhD research project.

Title of Project

Housing Policy: Circuits of governing and communications

Name of Investigators

Researcher/ Interviewer

Ellie Francis-Brophy
PhD student in Sociology
University of Tasmania

Chief Investigator/Supervisor

Dr Keith Jacobs
School of Sociology and Social Work
University of Tasmania

What is the research about?

My research explores the ways in which policies like the Affordable Housing Strategy are implemented and communicated to various stakeholders including public housing tenants, the media and the general community.

Your participation as a tenant would focus on the ways in which you experience 'life in public housing' and how that relates to your relationship with Housing Tasmania.

Who is being asked to participate?

I am interviewing a cross-section of people involved in the process of devising, implementing, communicating, working with and reviewing housing policy in Tasmania.

Participation would involve a relaxed one-on-one interview. The interview will take about 30 minutes. Interviews will be conducted at your local community house. Participation is entirely voluntary and may be withdrawn at any time without prejudice. With your consent, I will take notes during the interview and tape-record our conversation. Your name and address will not be used in the thesis.

Your agreement and consent

Before the interview, you will be provided with a full information sheet about the research and asked to sign a consent form to make sure that you understand what the research is about and that you are happy to take part in the taped interview.

Contact people:

This project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Tasmania. If you have any concerns regarding how this project is conducted you can contact Amanda McAully, Executive Officer of the Human Research Ethics Committee (Tasmania) Network on 6226 2763 or via email Amanda.McAully@utas.edu.au

If you want to discuss this project with my supervisor and Chief Investigator Dr Keith Jacobs, you can contact him on 6226 2928 or Keith.Jacobs@utas.edu.au. If you have any questions about the interview please contact Ellie Francis-Brophy on 6226 2334.

Thank you very much for your views and participation.

Ellie Francis-Brophy
PhD student
Sociology

Dr Keith Jacobs
Senior Lecturer
Sociology

APPENDIX D

Interview Schedule – NGOs, community housing organisations, quangos, advocacy groups

Interviewee organisational background

What is your position title?

What are your main responsibilities – relationship to social housing policy and initiatives?

Number of year(s) with organisation:

Number of year(s) in this role:

Organisation's total number of staff in Tasmania:

What is your organisation's position in advocating for social housing tenants?

How do you work with other NGOs – any housing examples? Has this changed over the last few years – any change since the *AHS*? (discussion on criticisms, communicating back if an advocacy group etc)

Attitude towards and understanding of the *AHS*

What was your organisations involvement in the lead up to the *AHS*? And since? (examples steering committees, more meetings with Housing Tasmania, or more need to tender for contracts and grow organisation?)

Do you think it is time to bring in alternative funding models into housing? Why? With what effects/benefits and to whom?

In what ways would you express this movement to governance modes – do you see it as a push towards a more market oriented system (negatively, positively) or is it a better balance now between social goals and using resources well?

Do you think it will be difficult to maintain advocacy when you become a social housing provider? Main challengers? How do you negotiate your position with Housing Tasmania or the State Government?

(Awareness of trends in other states or in the UK, USA?)

Let's talk about how you envisage the role of NGOs in working with the state:

- What do you see perceive the main changes to come out of the *AHS* to be – for your job – your organisation – your clients?
- How willing do you think the staff of your organisation are in being a social housing provider?
- How does the *AHS* sit with your organisation's broader goals and strategies?

Broader discussion on the changing role of NGOs – any particularities based on the scale of Tasmania. How has your organisation being changing already?

What do you see your organisation's role is in 'changing community perceptions' about social housing?

Social relations and governance

How would you describe your social relations – (define and discuss together) – with Housing Tasmania?

Have these improved or weakened since the AHS? Examples.

How would you differentiate Housing Tasmania's role and your contact with them and the State Government's role and, again, your contact with them?

Thinking of governance models that are being promoted in the AHS:

- How has your organisation reacted to these changes?
- In what ways have you been able to communicate your ideas back to Housing Tasmania?
- And what benefits will tenants receive from the AHS and the strengthening of a social housing sector over public housing?

Any examples

Community Perceptions

What do you think the broader community perceptions of social housing estates are? And NGOs role in social housing provision?

Do you think the existing perceptions can be altered over time? Discussion on the marginalisation of public/social housing in a market driven by private property.

Communications materials

Discussion about the appropriateness of using communications materials – in advocacy; by State Housing Authorities; on housing issues to existing tenants and broader community

Any comments on the way the AHS was promoted – see framework brochure examples and website – and how the media covered the policy and its implementation.

Is there anything else you would like to mention that we haven't covered?

[NB: Questioning depended on NGOs – some had existing housing contracts with Housing Tasmania, some were trying to establish them and some were new organisations like TAHL. TAHL were asked about their process of establishment, delays and what they thought their role was? How should Housing Tasmania operate/function? Working relations with Housing Tasmania? What benefits will tenants have in TAHL properties? What difficulties arise out of new funding options? Finding investors?]

Information Sheet for NGOs



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OF TASMANIA

School of Sociology and Social Work

INFORMATION SHEET

Title of Project

Housing Change: Perceptions of social relations in circuits of governance

Name of Investigators

Researcher/ Interviewer

Ellie Francis-Brophy
PhD student in Sociology
Housing and Community Research Unit
University of Tasmania

Chief Investigator/Supervisor

Dr Keith Jacobs
School of Sociology and Social Work
University of Tasmania

What is the research about?

My PhD research explores the social relations and interactions between multiple stakeholders and the state in the development and implementation of housing policy in Tasmania. Your participation would focus on your organisations involvement in service delivery, social action, campaigning and advocacy about housing affordability and public housing availability.

Who is being asked to participate?

I am interviewing a cross-section of people (including Housing Tasmania staff) involved in the process of devising, implementing, communicating, working with and reviewing regional housing policy. Participation would involve a relaxed one-on-one interview. The interview will take between 45 – 60 minutes. Participation is entirely voluntary and may be withdrawn at any time without prejudice. With your consent, I will take notes during the interview and tape-record our conversation. Your name and address will not be used in the thesis.

Your agreement and consent

Before the interview, you will be asked to sign a consent form to make sure that you understand what the research is about and that you have agreed to take part in the taped interview.

Executive Summary on completion of thesis

Upon completion of the thesis, all interviewees will receive an Executive Summary document outlining the main findings of the research and its contribution and applicability to the field of urban sociology.

Contact people

This project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Tasmania. If you have any concerns regarding how this project is conducted you can contact Amanda McAully, Executive Officer of the Human Research Ethics Committee (Tasmania) Network on 6226 2763 or via email Amanda.McAully@utas.edu.au

If you want to discuss this project with my supervisor and Chief Investigator Dr Keith Jacobs, you can contact him on 6226 2928 or Keith.Jacobs@utas.edu.au. If you have any questions about the interview please contact Ellie Francis-Brophy at UTAS on 6226 2334.

Thank you very much for your participation in this project.

Ellie Francis-Brophy
PhD student
Sociology

Dr Keith Jacobs
Senior Lecturer
Sociology

APPENDIX E

Cultural Governance Frame in the Tasmania press, July 2002 to December 2004

H#	Newspaper	Date of publication	Page	Headline
1.	Advocate	20/06/2002	Page 4	Drop in public housing fire claims
2.	Mercury	06/09/2002	Page 6	Housing estate projects
3.	Examiner	28/09/2002	Page 3	\$2m redevelopment for Burnie's Umina Park
4.	Mercury	25/10/2002	Page 15	Push to secure full funds for housing
5.	Mercury	26/10/2002	Page 9	Anger at \$2m federal cut to state housing
6.	Examiner	28/11/2002	Editorial Page 8	Low-cost housing clearly needed
7.	Advocate	18/12/2002	Page 5	Housing, dentistry 'funding priorities'
8.	Examiner	18/12/2002	Page 6	Low-cost public housing to be Budget priority
9.	Examiner	22/2/2003	Page 15	Good news for Northern jobless
10.	Mercury	18/3/2003	Letters Page 17	The inner city is for low-income families too (Kerr, Duncan MP)
11.	Mercury	06/05/2003	Page 6	Private firms to help ease housing crisis
12.	Mercury	17/5/2003	Page 7	\$8m spree to buy homes crisis cure
13.	Mercury	17/06/2003	Page 24-25	Innovative high-tech tenants develop support network
14.	Advocate	30/09/2003	Page 5	Housing Tasmania has new director
15.	Advocate	15/10/2003	Page 5	Some relief for NW public tenants
16.	Advocate	15/10/2003	Editorial, Page 10	Housing crisis a high priority
17.	Advocate	11/12/2003	Page 11	Affordable housing crucial
18.	Mercury	16/12/2003	Page 1 + 2	\$45m rescue: Bold housing crisis plan to build 420 new homes
19.	Mercury	17/12/2003	Editorial Page 28	Big plan for big problem
20.	Advocate	20/12/2003	Page 4	Two families given keys to new home
21.	Advocate	23/12/2003	Letters, Page 12	Affordable houses for all families (Kons, Steven)

22.	Mercury	24/12/2003	Letters, Page 14	The \$45 million housing strategy (Llewellyn, David MP)
23.	Advocate	09/01/2004	Page 4	Burnie's 'Bronx' has lost stigma
24.	Sunday Tasmanian	18/01/2004	Page 5	Project to help Tassie builders
25.	Examiner	31/03/2004	Page 12	Public housing funding in Burnie
26.	Advocate	31/03/2004	Page 7	Units to get homey
27.	Examiner	19/04/2004	Page 4	\$45m stamp duty windfall to pay for unit renovations
28.	Mercury	06/05/2004	Page 11	Llewellyn orders house for woman
29.	Sunday Examiner	16/05/2004	Page 7	Construction firm's \$15m contract win
30.	Advocate	24/06/2004	Letters, Page 10	Housing (McCoy, S - citizen)
31.	Advocate	3/07/2004	Letters, Page 10	Housing woes (Bresnehan, Mercia, Director of Housing Tasmania)
32.	Advocate	08/07/2004	Letters, Page 11	State policy leads way (Rowell, Mat, Head of TasCOSS)
33.	Advocate	12/07/2004	Page 4	Housing complex ready in weeks
34.	Advocate	13/07/2004	Editorial, Page 10	Public houses a vital need
35.	Examiner	20/07/2004	Page 20	Boost to housing
36.	Mercury	19/10/2004	Page 13	Project brightens up neighbourhood
37.	Mercury	15/11/2004	Page 9	Growing family gets a housing upgrade
38.	Mercury	20/11/2004	Page 33	Brighton mayor backs new housing plan
39.	Examiner	22/11/2004	Page 6	New grants flowing from affordable housing strategy
40.	Mercury	22/11/2004	Page 9	Work starts in Glenorchy on six affordable homes
41.	Mercury	24/11/2004	Page 13	Low-cost housing plan for Kingston's elderly
42.	Mercury	30/11/2004	Page 5	State vision for suburb renewal: Scheme to wed private, public housing
43.	Examiner	30/11/2004	Page 3	Deal aims to change face of housing
44.	Advocate	8/12/2004	Page(s): 1,2	Secure housing: \$5m estate offering peace of mind
45.	Mercury	21/12/2004	Page 11	Revamp for neglected building
46.	Mercury	22/12/2004	Page10	Four new units set for George Town

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