



*Approaching mobile urban policy:*  
the geography, politics and practice  
of mobilising policy

Tom Baker

PhD Candidate  
University of Newcastle  
Australia

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# Geographical contexts of policy mobilities

## *Neoliberalising policy movements*

1. Policy mobilities as key means through which **extra-local** neoliberal logics interact with **local** context and circumstance

And (but?)

2. Policy mobilities as lens into processes through which **multiple** modes of governance (neoliberalism among others) interact to produce hybrid forms



# Geographical contexts of policy mobilities

## *Urbanising policy movements*

Increased significance of urban scale as key scale of governance through post-national rescaling

→ related to achievement of political projects and policy experimentation

# Case Study

## *The 'Common Ground' Supportive Housing Model*

- Policy model combining permanent accommodation with personalised support services aimed at rough sleeping homeless.
- Argued to be morally superior, more effective, and cheaper than transitional approaches.
- Originated in New York in 1990 and one of the largest supportive housing organisations in the USA.

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- Since 2005, 5 Australian cities have funded Common Ground facilities in a context largely unfamiliar with Supportive Housing models.



Times Square, New York



Elizabeth St, Melbourne

# Characterising urban policy mobilities

## 1. *As techno-political*

- Political – because it is **selective**, **subjective** and **power-laden**
- Technical – through practices such as calculation, enumeration and definition, which **appeal** to a sense of objectivity

(see Prince 2009)



Cost comparison graphic  
from Pathways to Housing  
New York

# Characterising urban policy mobilities

## 2. *As socio-cultural*

- The state and policy as ‘peopled’ (Askew 2009)
- Attention to **experiences, actions, and understandings** of policy actors *and* to **places and events** created in process of mobilisation

(see McCann 2008, 2011)



R. Haggerty of Common Ground  
New York at South Australian  
Thinker in Residence Public  
Lecture, 2006

# Characterising urban policy mobilities

## 3. *As spatial*

- a geography of **people, objects, relations, imaginaries** and **places** that constitute the mobilisation process
- suggests a **scaled** and **networked** geography



R. Haggerty with South Australian political and business leaders at SA Thinkers in Residence Dinner, 2006



US Interagency Council on Homelessness Executive Director Phillip Mangano with South Australian Social Inclusion Commissioner and UK and Canadian delegates, 2007



# Research agenda

To investigate the role and nature of urban policy mobilities in Australian urban governance by :

1. developing an approach capable of incorporating the peopled, practiced, and processual character of urban policy mobilities;
2. assessing how different modes of urban governance are articulated through the mobilisation of urban policy;
3. investigating the varied geographies of policy mobilities pathways by focusing on its scaled and networked character;
4. investigating the practice of urban policy mobilities by attending to its socio-cultural and techno-political dimensions.