Out from the shadows? Voluntary organisations and the assembled state

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Abstract

As literature on the 'shadow state' shows, the voluntary sector has long served as a necessary conduit through which states orchestrate the governance of various populations. However, relatively little is known about the active role that voluntary organisations play in shaping and mobilising the capacities of the state to advance their own projects and interests. We draw out aspects of post-structural theories of the state, and particularly assemblage thinking, that provide the conceptual and analytical tools with which to explore how voluntary organisations may exceed their common positioning as co-opted by, and subservient to, the state. Through empirical research on homelessness policy development in Australia, we show how locally-embedded voluntary organisations in Australia and the United States acted strategically and engaged transnationally—through material practices and multi-sited labours—to create opportunities to shape formal state agendas at national and sub-national levels. The activities and influence of these voluntary organisations are illustrative of the assembled nature of state capacity.

Keywords

Third sector; civil society; welfare states; social policy; Housing First

Introduction

In early August 2018, 800 delegates across government, voluntary and research sectors gathered in Melbourne, Australia for the National Homelessness Conference. With the problem of homelessness showing no signs of abating, the Housing First model was high on the agenda. Housing First programs involve up-front provision of permanent housing coupled with client-

directed support services for 'chronically' homeless individuals, and stand in contrast to traditional treatment-led approaches (Baker and Evans 2016; Evans et al. 2016). Among several presentations about the Housing First model was a keynote address by Juha Kaakinen, CEO of a Finnish voluntary organisation called Y-Foundation, in which he reflected on his experience leading efforts to apply the Housing First model in Finland. Hailing from a country that has "almost eradicated homelessness", the conference conveners positioned Kaakinen's work "as a guiding example" for continuing efforts in Australia (AHURI 2018: n.p.). Yet, Housing First was by no means new to the Australian audience. Some ten years earlier, a loose coalition of voluntary organisations began experimenting with Housing First programs in cities around Australia, then in close collaboration with experts from New York City-based voluntary organisations renowned for pioneering the model (Parsell et al. 2014; Baker and McGuirk 2017, forthcoming). The National Homelessness Conference was a moment, then, in the *ongoing* project of Housing First promotion and, once again, the expertise and examples of innovative, internationally-situated voluntary organisations were front and centre.

The Australian experience is consistent with shifts taking place across liberal democracies of the Global North, which have installed Housing First as a 'new orthodoxy' in homelessness policy and services (Hennigan 2016: 1419). Discursively, shifts have occurred in how homelessness is understood by state and non-state institutions (as a problem to be addressed with housing not simply bio-psycho-social treatment) and how the homeless population is conceptualised (as containing sub-populations of chronically, episodically and transitionally homeless persons that are best managed through different types of interventions). Materially, shifts have occurred in state-based reform projects, public policy frameworks and program funding, in ways that make Housing First interventions possible. The implementation of Housing First requires activating the institutional and financial capacities of formal state agencies, but as the opening vignette would suggest, state capacities are formed through engagements with non-state actors, situated both domestically and internationally. Focusing on Australia's implementation of Housing First programs, this paper explores the role of voluntary organisations (by which we mean non-government, non-profit organisations concerned with the provision of services) in assembling the state's capacities. As literature on the 'shadow state' shows, the voluntary sector has long served as the necessary conduit through which formal state agencies orchestrate the governance of marginal populations (Wolch 1990). However, relatively little is known about the *active role* that voluntary organisations play in shaping and mobilising the capacities of the state to advance their own projects and interests,

or about how they enact this role. Less still is known about the ways in which voluntary organisations *act beyond their local and national context*, through transnational networks, to advance those projects and interests. We seek to address these relative absences in critical studies of governance, the state and the voluntary sector.

In the next section, we bring literature on the shadow state into conversation with post-structural perspectives. Through this discussion, we argue that rather than seeing the voluntary sector as simply an instrument bent to the pre-constituted will of the neoliberal state, the voluntary sector often steers or 'works' the apparatus of the formal state toward its own normative and practical ends. We draw out aspects of post-structural theories of the state, and particularly assemblage thinking, that provide the conceptual and analytical tools with which to explore how voluntary organisations may exceed their positioning as co-opted and subservient. Following this, we outline the case study and methods, before discussing the ways in which voluntary organisations have been involved in implementing Housing First programs in Australia, which we take to be illustrative of the 'assembled' nature of state capacity. We show how locally-embedded voluntary organisations—in Australia and the United States—acted strategically and engaged transnationally to create opportunities to shape government agendas at national and sub-national levels. We conclude by noting that voluntary organisations rarely operate from a position of relative power, but their positioning in evolving governance configurations can activate capacities that enable them to effect change within formalised state institutions.

Situating state–voluntary sector relations: Shadow states, porous states, assembled states

Literature on the shadow state offers a way to understand the political-economic function of the contemporary voluntary sector. Wolch's (1990) influential account examines the causes and repercussions of changing relations between the state and the voluntary sector. Economic and welfare state crises, beginning in the late 1970s, have underpinned efforts to reallocate responsibility for human/social service provision from the local and national state to an enlarged voluntary sector. In a transition from the Keynesian welfare state of the mid-1900s to an ascendant neoliberal post-welfare state from the 1970s onward, the state has moved away from many of its previous service provision roles to a more facilitative role, whereby the voluntary sector takes responsibility for service provision duties. The boundary between the state and voluntary sector has blurred and, in Wolch's (1990: xvi) terms, the voluntary sector has been incorporated into a shadow state, defined as "a para-state apparatus comprised of

multiple voluntary sector organizations, administered outside of traditional democratic politics and charged with major collective service responsibilities previous shouldered by the public sector, yet remaining within the purview of state control".

Social scientific accounts of state–voluntary sector relations have focused mostly on the extent to which states control the voluntary sector, limiting its autonomy in the pursuit of state agendas. Mitchell (2001: 167), for example, states that "the general effect of the rise of these shadow state voluntary institutions was to help entrench the original economic policies of neo-liberalism in a hegemonic and recursive process." Summarising the shadow state literature, Fyfe and Milligan (2003: 401) note that "the increasing dependence of voluntary organizations on state grants and contracts, combined with increased administrative oversight and regulatory control, may simply reinforce state authority over welfare provision and may lead to an increase in state penetration of everyday activities." More recently, DeVerteuil (2017: 1527) discusses the evolution of the voluntary sector into a "component of the subservient shadow state".

Yet, it is worth noting that Wolch's (1990: xv) original account goes to some lengths to point out the "dialectic of state–voluntary sector interdependence", not just the dependency of the voluntary sector on the state. While there has always been more than one direction of influence, we know far more about how formal state agencies exert influence over the voluntary sector than we do about how "voluntary groups have marshalled their influence in order to shape state policies and programs" (*ibid.*). A small number of studies have begun to pursue a co-constitutive understanding of state–voluntary sector relations (Larner and Craig 2005; Trudeau 2008; Rosenthal and Newman forthcoming). These relations can be conceived, following Rosenthal and Newman (forthcoming: 6), as a form of heterarchy, where governance "is understood as involving a multitude of variegated public and private actors and relationships that operate through multiscalar and multiactor networks" (see also Jessop 1998). Advocating a 'relational view' of the shadow state, Trudeau (2008: 670), for example, notes that relationships between state and non-state institutions have grown more complex and are arguably different from those that emerged during the 1980s", when the shadow state concept was first developed. He notes that "differentiated arrangements of power between government and [voluntary] sectors" (p. 670) have created opportunities for voluntary organisations "to negotiate or inflect state influence, pursue independent agendas, and influence state agendas" (p. 672).

Rather than the voluntary sector existing in a uniformly subservient, subjugated relation to the state, there is an interplay of influence that determines the capacity to govern. Formal state agencies and agenda undoubtedly continue to remake the voluntary sector, but so too the voluntary remakes the state. Thus, we believe studies of state–voluntary sector relations can benefit from at least three things. First, we claim that the co-option of voluntary organisations by formal state agencies, implied in the shadow state metaphor, exists among a variety of possible relations between voluntary organisations and the state, and is best not assumed in any given case. Second, we argue that it is often necessary to look beyond the local and national scale to comprehend the influence of the voluntary sector on the state. As our opening discussion of the Housing First model in Australia made clear, voluntary organisations are not always tethered to the realm of domestic affairs. Voluntary organisations are more likely than ever to have transnational networks and, in some cases, global esteem that can be mobilised to influence state projects and agenda (see for example Bulkeley 2005). In the following section, we explore how the nature of state–voluntary sector relations are inflected by multi-scaled and multi-sited labour to illustrate this point. Third, we suggest that post-structural readings of the state offer insight into the practices through which the state itself is constituted. We begin with conceptions of states as 'porous', 'prosaic' and constituted as heterogeneous assemblages, before extending to the further insights enabled by assemblage thinking and the notion of assembled states as a lens through which to reconsider the understanding, role and potential efficacy of voluntary organisations in relation to the state.

Post-structural theorisations of states

While accepting the realities of state power (Whitehead 2008), post-structural conceptions of the state reject essentialist state theory in favour of a notion of states as peopled and dispersed, with capacities that are constructed relationally, materially and across multiscalar networks (Painter 2006; Allen and Cochrane 2010). A key contribution of post-structuralist thinking is the assertion that, notwithstanding their appearance as such, states are neither pre-existing nor inherently unified, structurally coherent objects in terms of ideology, rationality or practice. Their apparent coherence and the notion of their existence outside or separate to 'civil society' or 'the economy', capable of intervening in these spheres from without, is an *effect* of processes of discursive, practical (and territorialised) production (Kuus and Agnew 2008; Painter 2006; Mitchell 1991). It follows that, rather than operating with coherent identities, agenda and

capacities to exert authority, states are complex terrains of contestation[1] marked by incompleteness, compromise and regular failure (Robertson 2010), and by an uneven capacity to enact authority across territories and domains. Diverse, sometimes contradictory political projects are differentially assembled and operationalised via networks of people, institutions, knowledges, texts, technologies and practices (Larner et al. 2007, Askew 2009). Achieving 'stateness' (Painter 2006) results from the provisional orchestration of these complex networks, despite the contradictory and diversely-motivated interests they bring. Yet achieving stateness requires drawing together actors, interests and capacities found both amongst, in Painter's (2006) terms, nominally state and nominally non-state organisations. Thus the coherence of the state at any given time is provisional and achieved in practice, belying its existence as a totality. It is better conceived as a fluid orchestration of multi-vocal, cross-cutting and conflicting interests that habitually work across any notional boundary demarking domains inside/outside the state.

This conception envisages state authority, not through notions of spectacular expressions of power, but rather as fragmented and porous, enacted through its infusion into the social relations of the everyday. This notion of the 'prosaic state' (Painter 2006), actualised in everyday practice, reorients the analytical focus towards more 'mundane' and processual aspects through which states are practiced, their identification as a coherent entity produced and their claims to authority realised through social and material practice. Indeed it is through practice that 'the state' operates as a political reality, "not as an actual structure, but as the powerful metaphysical effect of practices, that make such structures appear to exist" (Mitchell 1991: 94). The state is not 'a thing', a given and powerful structure. Its reality and power are structural effects, realised in practice.

Crucially, this practice entails a porosity and fluidity in the actors that constitute state effects or statisation (i.e. domains becoming defined through relations with and the symbolic presence of the state) (Painter 2006). Statisation can be advanced by nominally-state and nominally-non-state actors: either can contribute to and be mechanisms for enhancing statisation or, indeed, de-statisation. This fluid notion of the state and the dynamics and processual nature of its enactment suggests pathways and entailments for voluntary organisations other than those

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[1] Structural state theories accept the complex and contradictory nature of state institutions, yet tend to see these as resolved and resolvable within a notion of the state as a coherent system. Post-structural views are less reliant on the notion of a tendency towards systemic coherence.

arising from the notion of the shadow state. Thus the state cannot be said to be stabilised, to have authority or the pre-determined capacity to exert it. Rather states are understood as composed of heterogeneous actors that work across notional state/non-state boundaries, wherein "multiple strategies, texts and technologies jostle in the performance of administration and governance" (McGuirk and O'Neill 2012: 1378). The state conceived in this way as porous, prosaic and practiced is less easily understood to be structurally saturated by neoliberal, disciplinary or austerity-oriented aspirations, technologies and practices, nor necessarily capable of confining nominally non-state actors (such as voluntary organisations) to subservient roles in the shadow state.

Assemblage thinking and states

Post-structural accounts of states often loosely engage the concept of 'assemblage' to represent states' "heterogenous, constructed, porous, uneven, processual and relational character" (Painter 2006: 754) and to capture the complex, fluid and unbounded nature of their practice. Yet a more thoroughgoing engagement with specific concepts and commitments associated with assemblage thinking (AT)—especially its insistent emphasis on the inherent instability of socio-material ordering and the necessity of ongoing labours, material practices, friction and accommodation (Swanton 2013)—can, arguably, be deployed more precisely in ways that productively open up the 'blackbox' of practice (Prince 2010) and help unpack the relational co-constitution of states and voluntary organisations.

Three key aspects of assemblage thinking are particularly relevant here. First, with strong affinities to the notion of prosaic states, AT provides for a finer-grained lens on state formation and the creation of state effects as they are (and must be) enacted in the socio-material 'frictions' and negotiations of mundane practices. Moreover, AT's commitments to "the uncertainty, nonlinearity and contingency of change" (McFarlane and Anderson 2011: 162) ensures that, while mundane practice is centred in analysis, it is not assumed to be contained by inherently coherent forces. Empirically-rich accounts of practice can reveal how structural effects are realised through a congested field of projects, actors and ambitions wherein there is no assumption that these are guided by any single logic, temporality or spatiality (Baker and McGuirk 2017; Fuller 2013; Prince 2010) and "relations may change, new elements may enter, alliances may be broken, new conjunctions may be fostered" (Anderson and McFarlane 2012: 126). This lens on mundane practice resists working from theoretical abstractions (such as the shadow state), but traces 'how things happen' without relying on abstract conceptions of

processes (e.g. subservience) or pre-formed social categories (e.g. state or non-state) that can occlude attention to process and practice prior to their investigation (Acuto 2011; Müller 2015). Rather analysis works empirically from the ground up to reveal how the relations constituting the assembled state are dynamically established: settled, unsettled and resettled (see Caliskan and Callon 2010; Farías 2011).

Second, AT insists on the distributed nature of agency, drawing equivalence between human agency and the effectivity of matter. While post-structural approaches widely note that the assemblages that constitute states are heterogenous, AT insistently draws our attention to the effectivity of material mechanisms, technologies, objects and techniques and their intertwinement with human agencies (Baker and McGuirk 2017, Farías 2010). Bringing the 'forgotten many' (Jacobs 2006) into view can provide a richer view of the affiliations that form around processes of state formation, giving the appearance of coherence, while also revealing the potential for materials to force an assemblage out of its current configuration and to 'jump into trajectories that are neither foreseeable nor controllable' (Henry and Roche 2013). Recognising the agency of non-human actants—statistical and calculative techniques, modes of visualization, forms of monitoring performance, texts, data, categories, performative routines, narratives, as well as the agency of affect, emotion, and various forms of aspiration—provides an incisive lens through which to understand the multiplex resources required to shape and hold in place the relations that constitute states. Without denying the structural qualities obtained by such relations, this same lens equally suggests insight into how these can be reworked (Marcus and Saka 2006, McGuirk et al 2016).

Thirdly, AT focuses on the incessant and multiple forms of labour (e.g. calculative, material, affective) necessary to hold together the heterogenous assemblages that constitute states and state power. But in recognising the essential nature of these labours, it does not privilege any given scale or assume any notion of hierarchy prior to practice (Prince 2010; Allen and Cochrane 2010). Rather it recognises that assemblages are "stitched into place by fragmented, multi-scaled and multi-sited networks of association" (Jacobs 2006: 3). While the various forms of assembling involved in statisation (e.g. policy programs, laws and regulations, complexes of service provision), the production of state authority and the formation of the relations that constitute states may be assembled over time in particular locations, their constitution through the laborious drawing together of resources, elements and relations is entangled across scales and sites. Notions such as 'macro-structures' or 'extra-local forces' are

not separable from those closer in, but must be understood topologically as part of relations and dynamics drawn across multi-scaled practices (Farías 2011). AT thus recognises assembled states and the power relations inhered within them as geographically unbound, their spatialities not pre-determined but fluid, being defined in practice as various political actors are drawn within reach in relation to particular problems (Allen and Cochrane 2007). AT-informed analysis thus does not presume hierarchical lines of authority, but rather traces the labours through which assemblages are composed and enacted across sites and scales, opening analysis out to incorporate multiple scales and temporalities. This receptiveness to multiscalar, multi-sited labours is productive for understanding how complex institutional relationships that configure assembled states are brought together contingently and how forms of authority and power are negotiated, displaced or reasserted in ways that by-pass hierarchical understandings (Allen and Cochrane 2010).

Post-structural conceptions of the state are not unique in their attendance to the practiced, relational constitution of the state and state capacity. Yet, compared to more structural accounts, they offer a view that is less ordered, less systematic, less shaped by intentional forces, more open to the pragmatic and affective (see Painter 2006). Assemblage thinking on states offers particular analytical tools highly receptive to the mundane socio-material practices and multiscalar labours that shape state effects and enact state capacity. When it comes to considering the voluntary organisations and their co-constitution of states, AT provides a lens through which power relations are not predetermined, and in which the hierarchical power relations between constitutive elements and actors can never be guaranteed but are achieved in socio-material, everyday practice and through multiscalar, multi-sited labours. Thus states cannot merely be understood as sites fully colonised by any singular rationality, political project or unified direction (e.g. neoliberalism) in which voluntary organisations are predestined to be subsumed into subservient positions. There is no necessity that they will be contained (more than provisionally) to enrolments in subservient relationships as 'junior partners' with the state (Trudeau 2008) or are straightforwardly co-opted by state institutions with which they work. Indeed, in the following sections as we turn to analyse the roles of voluntary organisations in implementing Housing First ideas in Australia as a formal state approach to addressing homelessness, we draw on assemblage thinking to suggest how socio-material practices and multi-sited, multi-scaled labours position voluntary organisations as co-

constituting stateness[2]. We suggest that this can occur in ways that cannot be assumed to locate voluntary organisations as inevitably coopted or subservient but as capable of shaping state rationalities, objectives and practices.

Context and methods

Chronic homelessness is an increasingly popular object of intervention by governments and service providers, and the Housing First model—itself born of a voluntary organisation—has emerged as a popular programmatic response formally incorporated into homelessness policy associated with formal state agencies and related service provision models (for an overview, see Baker and Evans 2016). In countries of the Global North, homelessness has traditionally been addressed through treatment-led approaches, wherein a person initially receives compulsory (and often rigidly structured) treatment services, with progression to permanent housing contingent on adherence to treatment and navigation through multiple time-limited accommodation settings. Many practitioners, researchers and policy-makers now recognise that treatment-led approaches are innately ill-suited to those deemed 'chronically' homeless, namely those who have been homeless for long periods and who typically grapple with physical/psychological/behavioural conditions that make treatment adherence and precarious housing circumstances difficult to navigate (Evans et al. 2016). In this context, Housing First programs—which involve upfront provision of long-term housing *before* the provision of (non-compulsory) treatment services—have become a widely promoted type of state-sponsored, state-integrated intervention for a chronically homeless sub-section of the larger homeless population.

In Australia, explicit engagement with Housing First ideas began in 2005, with a visit by Rosanne Haggerty, founder and then executive director of Common Ground, a New York City-based voluntary organisation who had forged their own service model based on Housing First ideas (see Table 1 for a summary of the features of the 'Common Ground model'). As part of the South Australian state government's Thinkers in Residence program, designed to bring "new ideas into the state [of South Australia] and [translate] them into practical solutions" (South Australian government 2011: n.p.), Haggerty delivered public lectures, consulted with

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[2] An enduring tension in accounts, like ours, that seek to denaturalise the ontological assumptions around 'the state' is acknowledging the (albeit provisional) material presence of state agencies and 'state effects' (Mitchell 1991). In this paper, we persist in using the terms 'state' and 'state agencies' to acknowledge this political reality, but often use them in conjunction with the pre-fixes 'formal' and 'nominal'.

government and non-government stakeholders, and produced reports advising the government on 'solutions to solve homelessness'. Shortly after Haggerty's residency, Australia's first Common Ground project was announced, involving the construction of a dedicated building in the city of Adelaide. In the wake of Rosanne Haggerty's visits to Adelaide in 2005-6, a number of voluntary organisations from around Australia began to independently approach her for advice and assistance on establishing Common Ground projects (Interview #9: Executive Director, Australian Common Ground Alliance). Between 2005 and 2012, eight Common Ground projects were announced, located in six of Australia's eight state/territory jurisdictions, including Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory. During this period, a wide range of policy actors from Australia and the United States debated, promoted, learned about and taught Housing First ideas to one another and to the public. The Housing First approach and the various voluntary organisations who delivered Common Ground projects across the Australian states effectively co-constituted the capacity of formal state agencies to address homelessness and homelessness service provision.

Table 1: The Australian Common Ground Alliance's key criteria for Common Ground projects. Source: (ACGA n.d.)

Common Ground criteria	Explanation from the Australian Common Ground Alliance
Quality, permanent, affordable housing	All tenants pay between 25 and 30% of their income in rent. They have a lease or residential agreement, with no limits on the length of tenancy, and the same rights and responsibilities as residents of any apartment building.
A diverse and sustainable social mix	Common Ground buildings house a mix of formerly homeless people and low income tenants (for example, students or workers on low wages), generally in a 50:50 ratio.
Proactive on-site services	Support services are located on-site and focused on helping tenants maintain their tenancies and connecting them to the local community. Engagement with services is voluntary and not a condition of tenancy.
A safe, secure environment	Safety and security are key elements in the design of Common Ground housing sites, usually provided by on-site 24 hour concierge service and other appropriate (non-intrusive) security measures.
Separation of tenancy management and support services	Common Ground buildings, in general, are managed and supported by two distinct services: building/tenancy management and on-site support services. Service and property management coordinate approaches for addressing tenant issues, with a focus on fostering housing stability.

Before turning to examine this co-constitution and the opportunities it entailed for voluntary organisations, some explanation of methodology is warranted. In 2010-11, we interviewed 26 key informants associated with the implementation of Housing First programs in jurisdictions around Australia, and in the United States. Interviewees were situated in various domestic-jurisdictional contexts (city-level, state-level and federal-level). United States-based interviewees were included in the research if they had a demonstrable involvement in

promoting Housing First ideas in the Australian context. Interviewees included politicians, civil servants, voluntary organisation managers and consultants. Interview data were complemented with analysis of secondary data, sourced from print media coverage, websites, government documents, reports by voluntary organisations, and transcripts/slides from public presentations. Data were analysed thematically for insights into the rationales and practices behind the mobilisation and ultimate implementation of Housing First ideas. In 2015, Common Ground (NYC) was renamed Breaking Ground. We use the name Common Ground because the events described in this paper took place before the name Breaking Ground was adopted.

Voluntary organisations and the implementation of Housing First in Australia

While shifts in the policies and agendas of formal state agencies have many parents, voluntary organisations are often overlooked as key players in initiating, guiding and co-constituting such shifts. Informed by a theoretical emphasis on the state as assembled through mundane, socio-material practices and multi-sited labours associated with a range of nominally state and non-state actors, this section focuses on the roles of voluntary organisations in Australia's implementation of Housing First programs between 2005 and 2012, a period marked by intense activity. We focus, on the ways in which voluntary organisations—working across scales, and connecting Australia and the United States—deployed expertise and exploited multi-scaled partnerships with one another to (re)position and (re)calibrate states' willingness and capacity to govern homelessness. We consider how these voluntary organisations' material practices and multi-sited, multi-scaled labours positioned them, not as subservient junior partners to agencies of the formal state but rather as constitutive elements in states' homelessness policy and service delivery. In doing so they shaped policy and modes of service delivery that accommodated favoured rationalities and practices without these being straightforwardly co-opted into any overarching state rationality (neoliberal or otherwise) or hierarchical relations of authority. While the retrenchment and reorganisation of states' capacities to address deprivation and socio-economic inequality, reflective of neoliberal ideology, has undoubtedly altered the operating environment for voluntary organisations, the practices and initiatives we describe have been deployed to a range of ends (Campbell 2016). To draw out our arguments, in what follows we focus on two domains that shape how voluntary organisations' associated with Housing First programs come to co-constitute the capacity of the formal state: (i) the deployment of expertise and (ii) the mobilisation of multi-scaled partnerships with one another.

Voluntary sector expertise

The implementation of Housing First programs as effective state-sponsored responses to homelessness in Australia was catalysed and calibrated by the way voluntary sector expertise was mobilised by nominally state and nominally non-state actors (Painter 2006). This required both multi-sited labours of storying and narrating (Cameron 2012) and socio-material practices that drew on the material agency of images and maps, graphical devices, data and forms of calculation, and affect. US-based voluntary sector actors were mobilised as 'international experts' and acquired influential roles in the Australian discussions through which solutions to homelessness were framed and the Housing First approach incorporated as part of formalised state responses. Sam Tsemberis, founder of New York City-based voluntary organisation Pathways to Housing and widely acknowledged to have pioneered the Housing First approach, was one such expert. However, the story of the expertise of Common Ground's founder, Roseanne Haggerty, was circulated and influentially mobilised to great effect in achieving Housing First's integration into the capacities of formal state agencies to respond to homelessness in the Australian context. So much so, one public servant ventured: "it's hard to separate out at times whether it's Rosanne or whether it's [the] Common Ground [model itself that is convincing]. I think the things are inextricable" (Interview #16: public servant, state government, South Australia). On her 10th invited visit to Australia, Melbourne newspaper *The Age* reported: "Haggerty is something of a celebrity philosopher among social housing organisations and government who are steadily embracing the Common Ground concept" (Skelton 2009: 9). Purposefully invited to Australia by state agencies, housing organisations and homelessness voluntary organisations, Haggerty's expertise became persuasive amongst state policy actors: as one voluntary organisation manager put it "her presence here really started pushing things […] she wowed a lot of people when she was here" (Interview #22: manager, voluntary organisation, Victoria). As we suggest below, as a voluntary sector actor, Haggerty came to 'wow' or influence Australian policy actors—politicians, public servants, and local voluntary organisations themselves—and, in turn, catalyse the implementation of Housing First programs, infusing them and their associated rationalities into state agencies' responses to homelessness.

Activating the capacities of Haggerty's expertise to position a voluntary organisation initiative at the core of state-based homelessness responses required labour. Some of this work took the form of storying her expertise as being born of her practitioner experience. As the South Australian government's Thinkers in Residence program emphasised:

> Rosanne Haggerty is a leading creator of solutions to homelessness [...] A committed social service champion and determined leader […] Rosanne conceived and founded Common Ground in New York City. This ingenious and highly effective not-for-profit housing development and management organisation provides innovative housing opportunities for homeless people. The Common Ground model has been successfully adapted worldwide. (South Australian government 2011: n.p.)

Such storying of her experience built claims to authoritative knowledge of creating solutions in an effective and innovative (voluntary) organisation that could underpin state agencies' embrace of Common Ground projects. Equally, other voluntary organisations circulated similar claims of practice-based knowledge and success. For Victoria-based voluntary organisation HomeGround Services (2008: n.p.), Haggerty was a "renowned pioneer in the field of ending homelessness […] developing more than 2,500 units of permanent supportive housing in the USA". Putting the significance of practice-based knowledge more pointedly, Brisbane's *Courier-Mail* opined: "Haggerty's not just about sprouting theories about how to fix homelessness. She does fix it" (Noonan 2006: 44). This storying effectively worked its way into the discourse of formal state agencies as they adopted the Housing First approach. The state Housing Minister responsible for implementing Victoria's Common Ground project, for instance, pointed to the longevity of Haggerty's practitioner success: "it's not based on a one-year whim. She's been at it a very long time, and I think the power of her message is both her longevity of working in the area, but also her practice experience" (Interview #21: housing minister, Victorian state government).

Narrating Common Ground model's origin story—its establishment and apparent successes in the 1990s in midtown Manhattan, perceived by many Australian policy actors as the most testing of urban crucibles—worked to provide legitimacy to the approach. Media reports rarely neglected pointing out that Common Ground was a 'New York model' or a 'Big Apple plan' for Australian homelessness policy/programs (Bibby and Murray 2009). Despite the sometimes throw-away nature of such references, the model's toponymic association with New York City was not inconsequential. It allowed Common Ground's emergence to be woven into the larger, stylised story of Times Square's post-1990s urban renaissance. The media, for instance, reported that Haggerty had "found a way to use good design and business savvy to take the blight out of the city" (Gordon 2010, n.p.). The laborious practice of circulating specific forms

of storying and stylised narration across multiple sites, by multiple actors, did much to legitimise Haggerty's expertise. As one voluntary organisation manager noted:

> you're in one of the biggest cities in the world, capitalism gone rampant, a welfare state that doesn't exist, where poor people die regularly. [...] clearly she's got some skills […] I can't even begin to imagine how I would even have done that. (Interview #1: manager, voluntary organisation, New South Wales)

The New York City origin story's impact was apparent to Haggerty, who reflected:

> I think that it does provide credibility […] if you're from a small town in the United States it probably would be hard. Even if you had exactly the same idea and exactly the same success, it may be hard for a larger community or metropolitan region to take the idea seriously, but the fact that we've made this work in a big, complex, fast environment, I think there's an 'alright, if it works there, it's standing up to some real pressures'. (Interview #10)

Storying is, of course, a socio-material practice dependent in part on the effectivity of material actants—in this instance, images and maps, graphical devices, data and forms of calculation—that facilitate the ways in which voluntary organisations could 'become state', effectively informing rationalities of addressing homelessness, influencing agenda and shaping the emergence of formal state capacities in this domain. For instance, in a 2009 presentation in Sydney, Haggerty located the work of Common Ground in the context of Times Square's urban decline via a PowerPoint slide containing a photograph of decrepit, municipal bankruptcy-era New York City (familiar to Australian audiences through television and films, such as *Taxi Driver*, *Midnight Cowboy*, etc), followed by photographs of Common Ground facilities and, in particular, their signature redevelopments of formerly derelict midtown hotels. The photographs positioned Common Ground as part of the vanguard of New York City's renaissance, building its legitimacy and suggesting its capacity for effectively delivery of desired policy outcomes.

Maps, quantitative data and forms of calculation also worked to demonstrate the effectiveness of the Common Ground model, translating its success for Australian policy actors who might question its applicability to the Australian context. Haggerty's presentations often included

research evidence to support the case for Housing First approaches generally and for the effectiveness of the Common Ground model in particular. They included quantitative data to demonstrate the Common Ground model's cost effectiveness, as well as maps illustrating reductions in homelessness in Times Square. At a public address in Adelaide, Haggerty (2006, n.p.) showed her audience a cost-comparison graph to argue for the applicability of the New York City experience for the Australian context:

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

Beyond the rational appeals that quantitative data make to Australian policy actors, material practices that provoked affect and an emotional engagement with Housing First approaches also accounted for how Common Ground projects came to co-constitute formal state capacities to respond to homelessness. At a Haggerty presentation in Sydney in 2009, 'before and after' photographs of formerly homeless persons who had been housed in Common Ground facilities persuasively made the case for the program's effectiveness as delivering policy results. On the left of the slide was a picture of a homeless man on the street, eyes downcast, draped in blankets and tattered clothes; on the right of the slide was a picture of the same man, now transformed, looking well-presented and staring confidently into the camera's lens. Such material practices had powerful effects on policy actors, including the South Australian State Government's Thinkers in Residence program organisers (South Australian government n.d: n.p.) who, recounting one presentation, said it provided "inspirational examples of how long term rough sleepers have not only been housed, but have been able to re-engage with a fuller and richer life outside the street environment they have known".

The lens of expertise, notwithstanding its specificity, provides insight into the mundane, socio-material practices and the multi-sited labours through which Housing First-related voluntary organisations were assembled into the state, co-constituting states' capacities to address homelessness and deliver homelessness services. As the following section makes clear, however, while Housing First and its related voluntary organisations may be effectively

gathered into the assembled state, this is not to suggest that this necessitates a subservient role. In what follows, we advance this argument by considering how voluntary organisations draw on partnerships in ways that serves their capacities to exert influence, to pursue agenda, and coproduce the governance of homelessness, even as they are configured within states.

Voluntary sector partnerships

Work on state assemblages has drawn attention to the importance of topological networks in the organisation of government and politics (Allen and Cochrane 2010). Complementary work on policy mobility has revealed how formal policy approaches are frequently assembled via influences, devices and practices from 'elsewhere', carried via the workings and material practices of a band of 'kinetic elites' (McCann 2011; Peck and Theodore 2015). While it is tempting to attribute the influence of forces from 'elsewhere' to relations of hierarchy and hegemony, it is more productive in terms of our argument to consider how state capacity is assembled as local actors (including in the voluntary sector) labouriously build relations and partnerships transversely, reaching across scale to "draw in apparently distant others to be active political participants and partners" (Allen and Cochrane 2010: 1085). The influence of elements from 'elsewhere' then depends on the strength of partnerships assembled with territorially-embedded 'domestic' actors. Such partnerships involve nominally state actors and nominally non-state actors becoming imbricated in the creation of states' capacities as they relate to the contested terrains across which formal state agencies must operate. Furthermore they involve intersections with porous state institutions interested in new forms of practices (McGuirk and O'Neill 2012, and see Le Heron 2007). Rather than being necessarily supine to international expertise, devices and practices from elsewhere, territorially-embedded state and non-state actors can strategically engage with such forces to suit their territorial interests. Territorially embedded policy actors look for policies, forms of expertise, and material techniques "that can be helpful practically, but also politically" (Temenos and McCann 2012: 1393) in governance contexts that are invariably defined by multiple motivations, agenda and opportunities. They selectively engage in partnerships "to reinforce their position, to develop political initiatives, to resolve or generate political controversy, and to build political power and authority" (Cochrane 2011: xi). This was certainly the case with the implementation of Housing First programs in Australia, where partnerships between Rosanne Haggerty and local voluntary organisations were critical.

Local voluntary sector actors recognised a political opportunity in Haggerty and her Common Ground model. In a 2008 issue of the homelessness service sector journal *Parity*, Stephen Nash, the CEO of HomeGround Services, explained his organisation's motivations. Under the heading 'What is so special about Common Ground?', Nash (2008: 24) explained:

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

The Common Ground model was not particularly distinctive in its ability to address chronic homelessness more effectively than other comparable supportive housing models (Parsell et al. 2014). What distinguished it was that Haggerty's reputation within the Australian context, and her association with the demonstrated effectiveness of the Housing First approach, meant it had a better chance of being accepted by key state actors and decision-makers and, thus, being incorporated into (porous) state practices. In interview, HomeGround's CEO explained the organisation's reasoning further. As well as pointing out Haggerty's profile as a respected expert, he emphasised the power of the Common Ground 'brand' as an effective material device in advocacy work:

> We've latched on and made the most of the brand and the generosity and leadership that they've [Common Ground NYC] shown. […] there were hundreds of supportive housing providers [from the United States that could be emulated in Australia]. But there were certain things about Common Ground that were really attractive and easy to promote […]. So you had a brand and you had an amazing communicator and leader [in Rosanne Haggerty] out there that we were able to talk about in numerous presentations in all sorts of places, in public and private, promoting this. (Interview #7: manager, voluntary organisation, Victoria)

In the eyes of local voluntary sector organisations, the Common Ground model offered a tangible, readily understood brand that would likely gain political traction. Local voluntary organisations mobilised the Common Ground model as a political resource, rather than simply an instrumental solution to chronic homelessness, in significant amounts of lobbying work.

The brand and reputation secured the attention and support of other policy actors to implement the Common Ground model. The deployment of credentialed experts and innovative policy 'fixes' whose reputation stems from their connection to particular locations—in our case, New York City—is a recurring feature of contemporary policy mobilisation (Peck and Theodore 2015; McCann 2011). Indeed studies of drug harm reduction policies illustrates how voluntary organisations have habitually drawn on transnational networks to support and advance their work in local contexts (McCann 2011; McCann and Temenos 2015)

Australian voluntary sector organisations' nurturing of a cross-scale partnership with Common Ground yielded other strategic advantages that shaped their constructive integration into formalised state practices and their capacity to coproduce states' responses to homelessness. Voluntary organisations were drawn to the Common Ground model in part because of its deployment of a legal device—the registered trademark—that allowed it to operate as a proprietary model. In Australia, 'Common Ground' was a trade mark registered to Rosanne Haggerty, giving her the ability to arbitrate whether certain organisations and projects may use the Common Ground name. In contrast to traditional tender-based approaches to human/social service provision, where governments dictate a service model and voluntary organisations bid to implement it, the Common Ground model could not be easily controlled by formal state agencies, nor could they easily dictate the features of individual projects. If a state agency decided to establish a Common Ground project, it had to accept certain program features, defined by Haggerty (or an authorised body) as constituting the Common Ground model. As a South Australian public servant noted, with the constitution of the model decided by actors outside of a given state agency, voluntary sector actors had greater leverage in maintaining 'the integrity of the service model':

> I think to some extent Common Ground […] is arguably able to define its service model [… Usually, governments] are able to say [to the voluntary sector] 'this is how the service model is, and you tender for it'. Whereas, with Common Ground, it's come from a place of [voluntary organisations] saying 'this is how the model works, do you want to partner with us?' It's more of a partner than a traditional purchaser-provider type role. I think they [voluntary organisations] have somewhat more leverage, given the integrity of their service model and how that's understood. (Interview #16: public servant, South Australian state government)

The efficacy of Common Ground's legal status as a registered trademark was consciously recognised by any voluntary organisations that advocated and implemented the Common Ground model in Australia. As one voluntary organisation manager put it: "the Common Ground model has quite fixed, defined characteristics and that's been useful in the hurly burly" (Interview #8: manager, voluntary organisation Victoria). As formal state agencies incorporated voluntary organisations enacting Common Ground into their response to homelessness and delivery of homelessness services, in effect, these voluntary organisations were better able to withstand coercive pressures to alter the model that might have been associated with the business-as-usual tendering approach, where state agencies invite voluntary organisations to bid for service contracts. They maintained their priorities, aspirations and agenda around appropriate responses to homelessness and could effectively coproduce states' responses. In doing so, voluntary organisations appropriated a quintessential tool of the private (for-profit) sector—the trademark—to their own rather different ends, underwriting their capacities to influence the formal agenda of state agencies in a way that confounds notions that practices commonly associated with neoliberalisation must necessarily be used to extend and shore up neoliberal reform (Ferguson 2009).

Indeed coercive pressures often exerted on voluntary organisations by governments, in part, led a collection of Australian voluntary organisations to establish the Australian Common Ground Alliance (ACGA). On Haggerty's urging, these organisations made contact and, in 2008, established the ACGA. Initially focused on sharing knowledge and experiences with the Common Ground model, over time the ACGA took on the formal role of protecting and promoting the Common Ground franchise in Australia. As the organisation's executive director explained, its role was to "help and monitor the integrity of Common Ground projects in Australia and Common Ground entities in Australia on Rosanne's behalf, but knowing that she is still the person who is the final arbiter (Interview #9). Haggerty saw the ACGA as important to the ongoing integrity of the Common Ground model in Australia, stating that: "membership in the Australian Common Ground Alliance is going to be a key part of outsourcing the policing of the model in Australia" (Interview #10). Thus the ACGA came to operate as an important institutional actor, establishing durable relations between Australian actors and Common Ground staff in New York City. Authorised as licensed agents of the Common Ground model, and with Haggerty and Thérèse Rein (wife of then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd) as high-profile patrons, ACGA members were able to play influential roles in shaping the implementation of the model in Australia. The ability of certain voluntary sector actors to influence the

constitution and arbitration of the Common Ground model through their associations with Rosanne Haggerty and the ACGA is one way in which voluntary organisations sought to realise their objectives through strategic relations with other voluntary organisations. This lateral and transnational network, born of a shared agenda and given additional coherence through the mobilisation of a trademark, gained the capacity to influence states and drive the development of alternative policy frameworks and local initiatives (see Bulkeley 2005).

Conclusion

States take shape through diverse and often conflicting, even contradictory projects, including those related to capital accumulation, preserving and retrenching public services, nurturing and ordering social diversity, advancing progressive and regressive social interventions, and maintaining public legitimacy. Yet the formulation and realisation of those projects rests, perhaps more now than ever, on a range of organisational and individual actors that lie, nominally, beyond the state. This calls into question views of the state as a singular, coherent entity pressing 'outside' actors into servicing its agenda such as those suggested by the metaphor of the 'shadow state'. Developing an engagement with post-structural theorisations, we work with an understanding of states as co-constitutively 'assembled' through mundane, socio-material practices and multi-sited labours associated with a range of nominally state and nominally non-state actors. Focusing on relations between formal state agencies and the voluntary sector, we sought to remain open to the potential for voluntary organisations to shape state agenda and rework the 'rules of the game' that regulate domains of social governance. In contrast to depictions of voluntary organisations as necessarily co-opted, subservient instruments of 'shadow state' apparatuses, our account emphasises the variability of state–voluntary sector engagements and opens up understandings of where and how voluntary organisations might be embedded within particular domains of the 'assembled state', inflecting state practices with their interests, aspirations and values, drawing on transnational connections and diverse devices as they do so. Through a case study of homelessness policy/program implementation in Australia, we foreground the fluid landscape on which voluntary organisations strategically and actively shape the policy priorities, funding arrangements and forms of inter-sectoral engagement associated with state institutions. While voluntary organisations rarely operate from a position of relative power, their expertise and networks can be mobilised to great effect, activating the capacities of formalised state institutions in the service of voluntary sector goals.

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