THE POLITICS OF SPACE AND TIME WITHIN MARKET-CENTRIC URBAN POLICY: THE CASE OF THE BONNYRIGG LIVING COMMUNITIES PROJECT

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Abstract

This article provides a discourse analysis framework that explicitly interrogates how conceptions of space and time are implicated in the discursive processes of urban policy making. Urban policy increasingly delineates social subjects and geographical space according to internationally mobile discourses of urban and social pathology, but local actors construct these discourses as localized urban 'realities' with corresponding market-based solutions. Reporting on a five-year study of the Bonnyrigg Living Communities project in Sydney, Australia, the analysis demonstrates how employees of the state-, non-government- and private-sector institutions reimagined and (re)coordinated time and space within this public housing estate redevelopment project, according to market-centric logic. Using the spatial metaphor of 'invited space' (Cornwall 2004) and the temporal metaphor of 'imaginary time' (Hawkings 1988), the analysis shows market-centric approaches reconfigure and demarcate space and time in specific ways. These allegorical forms showcase the power relations inherent to the structure of market-centric policy formation.

Introduction

While significant investment in public housing in the post-war period created major social and economic benefits in Australia, by 1990 the state and territory housing authorities were facing increasing maintenance backlogs, a deteriorating housing stock and reductions in direct funding from the federal government. Public housing allocation policies tightened to target the most 'disadvantaged' within society and large public housing estates became increasingly associated – within policy and media texts – with unemployment, civil disobedience and crime (for civil disobedience, see Lee (2007); for social housing allocation policies and disadvantage, see Hall and Berry (2007) and Berry and Hall (2009)).

Much of the political will and justification for moving to the market in Australia is tied up in the states' and territories' (in)capacity to supply and fund public housing to meet demand. While public housing is a key component of affordable housing in Australia, Hall and Berry (2007) found that total public housing stock has continued to fall over the last decade. This trend has been attributed to a suite of compounding factors, the most significant include: increased operating costs for housing authorities; the tightening of allocation policies for public housing to the point at which public housing now only houses those with the 'highest need' within society; and a political commitment to the market for the provision and management of social housing (Housing NSW 2005; NSW Government 2005b; NSW Government 2005a).

The objective of this article is to examine a case that exemplifies one of the trajectories of this commitment to the market; the entry of the private sector into the provision of affordable housing and social housing management. The study draws on the Bonnyrigg Living Communities Project (BLCP), a A$733,000,000 redevelopment of a public housing estate 30 km southwest of Sydney, Australia by public–private partnership. The overall argument is that an analysis of urban policy discourses will benefit from a theoretical framework that explicitly analyses the socio-spatial and socio-temporal dimensions of policy (Lefebvre 1991; Richarsdon and Jenson 2001). Drawing on a variety of theoretical traditions, from philosophical conceptions of time and space to sociological theories of language, I show that urban policy discourses are shaped by power struggles over conflicting agendas and contested spatiotemporal meanings (Richarsdon and Jenson 2001, 8; Fairclough 2003; Harvey 1996; Sassen 2006). I will illustrate how conceptions of space and time are implicated and interconnected in the discursive process of urban policy making.

In terms of urban space, imagine a conversation between an economist, an urban planner and a public housing tenant over the optimal use of the accumulated capital in a piece of land or a selection of housing stock; or the appropriate mechanism for providing affordable housing; or the time horizon (residual life) of an existing public housing estate (Harvey 1996, 229). Think about the ways in which these social actors might analyze the redevelopment of a public housing estate being undertaken by public–private partnership. Harvey (1996) argues there is no logical way to resolve the conflicts that necessarily ensue as a result of these diverse spatiotemporalities – the bringing together of different constructions of space and time as subjective experience (Harvey 1996; Cornwall 2008; Lefebvre 1991):

> We here identify the potentiality for social conflict deriving entirely from the time horizon over which the effect of a decision is held to operate. While economists often accept the Keynesian maxim that 'in the long run we are all dead' and that the short-run is the only reasonable time horizon over which to operationalise economic and political decisions (Harvey 1996, 229)...Internal spatiotemporal organisation of the household, of workplaces, of cities, is the outcome of struggles to stabilise or disrupt social meanings by opposing social forces. (Harvey 1996, 230)

While these diverse loci of inquiries, the different orientations to knowledge production and the different subjective frames might produce tensions between opposing social *realities*, the location and structuring of time and space within neoliberal regimes is also structured by a set of characteristics that have a degree of ideological consistency (Urry 1985; Peck and Tickell, 2002; Peck 2010; Harvey 1990a, 2005). These ideologically mediated conceptions of time and space are not, as has been well documented, a set of *a priori* conditions that transcend ideological and subjective conditions (Lefebvre 1991; Richarsdon and Jenson 2001; Osborne 1995). Analytically, these socio-spatial and socio-temporal relations can be conceptualized in terms of their symbolic (ideological) and the material (subjective) effects. Time and space are not absolute entities, time "is a relational construct that is performed and experienced in relation to space" (Power 2009, 1024). Time is embodied in the social and material relations of space, with each social actor bringing with them a different discursive frame with which to interpret the spatiotemporal dimensions of their experience (McCann 2003).

The broader struggles to set the parameters of time and space within urban politics have been demonstrated by theorists such as Lefebvre (1991), who shows how social relations are reproduced through space, Bauman (2000) who focuses on the role of spatial ordering in the capitalism system, or Urry (1985, 2000) who draws attention to mobility through space as a way of understanding the material practices in society. In urban studies, the research attention consolidated on how social actors draw on various policy discourses to analyze structural problems according to geographical scale – the representation of the social world through the political division of geo-political space (McCann 2003; Lefebvre 1991; Brenner 2000; Agnew, 1997). Lefebvre (1991) shows the analytical focal points of space and time are a precursor to the division of scale, and he argues these concepts should be separated as both literal and metaphorical analytical focal points within examinations of social relations (also see Urry 2000). Taking up this position, this article explores how market-centric discourses also individualize and spatialize social subjects and physical space with ideological specificity within different geographical scales (Lupton and Tunstall 2008), ranging from the subjective body to the global capitalist system (Richarsdon and Jenson 2001). I conclude by arguing that conceptions of space are intricately connected to conceptions of time. It is thus important to detect specific interactions – analytic borderlands[1] – where social actors from different spatio-temporal orders intersect precisely on questions of conceptualizing space and time (Sassen 2006, 385). These analyses seek to capture the discursive processes of policy making, however elusive, rather than merely recording the policy outcomes.

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[1] Saskia Sassen (2006: 385) uses the heuristic device of "analytic borderlands" to shift the analytical emphasis from a "line separating two different orders" to a view of 'analytic borderlands' that incorporates a "complex zone marked by specificity". This allows Sassen (2006: 379) to "take what is commonly represented as a line separating two differences, typically seen as mutually exclusive, into a conceptual field – a third entity – that requires its own empirical specification and theorization". Sassen (2006) uses this to investigate a shift from the "bureaucratized time" (p.384) of public accountability to the "accelerated time" of private financing (p.385).

Analyzing the Discourses that Constitute Market-centric Social and Urban Policy

> Capitalism has 'universalized' history, in the sense that it has established systematic relations of social interdependence on a planetary scale (encompassing non-capitalist societies), thereby producing a single global space of temporal co-existence or coevalness, within which actions are quantifiable chronologically in terms of a single standard of measure: world standard time (Osborne 1995, 34).

Urry (2000) argues the state, as the "manager of everyday life" (Gregory and Urry 1985, 26), is permitted to restructure civil society through the construction of the social and physical environment. The important features of the city should be seen as those "which pass through the household, through civil society, not through the private or public enterprises located within that area" (Gregory and Urry 1985, 35). However, the discourses of market-centric social and urban policy represents "the locality as facing a hard and unavoidable set of truths imposed by the global scale" (McCann 2003, 163). This scalar representation of the political economy of the city sees the wellbeing of citizens, and the proper functioning of the city, as connected to the adoption of globalized market-centric policies (Harvey 2005, Brenner and Theodore 2002; Larner 2005; Peck 2010; Prince 2012). According to this governmentality, the coordination of time and space at the *local*-level should be mediated according to *global*-level market-centric discourses (Burchell et al. 1991; Fairclough 2003; Harvey 2005).

In a neoliberlized city, the sectioning off of both physical urban landscapes as well as the different social groups that inhabit them, now involves the handover of these urban spaces, as well as the welfare of these social groups, to private interests (Larner 2005; Larner and Butler 2005; Peck 2010). Or put less abstractly, the sectioning off of public housing estates and public housing tenants in a neoliberalized city can involve the state handing over the physical infrastructure (public assets) and the welfare of citizens to private and non-government actors (NSW Government 2011; NSW Department of Housing 2004c). While states might construct these programs, including public-private partnerships, as "partnerships" with property developers and non-government organizations, the risks associated with the speculative redevelopment of public housing estates are not always, if ever, completely deferred from the state to the private interests through these programs (Jefferies and McGeorge 2009; Hodge 2006). The institutions that are accorded the legal right, by virtue of government or through the construction of funding agreements, to define the nature and scope of urban interventions bring with them conceptions of space and time that affect the way we understand the world to be (Harvey 1996). Space and time

> provide a reference system by means of which we locate ourselves (or define our "situatedness" and "positionality"...) with respect to that world. It is therefore impossible to proceed far with a discussion of space and time without invoking the term "place." (Harvey 1996, 208)

Within the ideological project of neoliberalism, conceptions of time and space are brought together to define place; however, the political project of neoliberalism is neither monolithic nor unified (Harvey 2005; Peck and Tickell 2002). At the macro-level, the ideological manifestation of market-centric urban and social policy will be diverse and historically and geographically specific (Bondi and Laurie 2005; Larner 2009). While at the micro-level, the disciplining effects of institutional sites, as well as a range of internationally mobile urban and social policy discourses, will shape how social actors develop policy (Marston 2004; Burchell et al. 1991; Prince 2012). Macro- and micro-level spatial and temporal factors can appear to be both distinct and stable or dialectically connected and fluid; therefore, they remain important sites for analyses within neoliberalized political projects (Peck and Tickell 2002; Fairclough 2004; Harvey 2005). Within this conceptualization of place – defined as the bringing together of specific ideologically mediated constructions of time and space – the political processes that constitute policy development are contingent on: (1) the historical, geographical and political location of 'place' at the macro-level; and (2) the discursive/political demarcation of time and space at the micro level.

The analysis of the BLCP presented below focuses on the discursive construction of place, by way of an investigation into the demarcation of time and space at both the micro- and macro-levels. An overview of the analytical tool deployed to undertake this analysis is provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1 – The discursive construction of place through the demarcation of time and space: Micro- and macro-level considerations

	Macro-level considerations	**Micro-level considerations**
Time	*Representational time*: The nodal points or historical location that situate the *subjects* and *objects* of policy.	*Representations of time*: Discourses of social and urban *pathology* that demarcate time according to market-centric *solutions*. *Social practice*: The disciplining effects institutional sites have on social actors and their constructions of time(frames). As well as the lived experience of social subjects within specific demarcations of time.
Space	*Representational space*: The complex symbolisms that define (codify) geographical sites that become the *objects* of policy.	*Representations of space*: Discourses of social and urban pathology that demarcate space according to market-centric solutions. *Social practice:*[2] The disciplining effects institutional sites have on social actors and their constructions of social and institutional space. As well as the lived experience of social subjects within specific demarcations of social space.

Source: Author from Fairclough (2003, 26-27; 1992, 73), Foucault (1969) and Lefebvre (1991, 33 & 36).

Within the ideological project of neoliberalism, while there may be a diversity in the political and market mechanisms that social actors deploy in different countries at different times, the urban and social policies that structure these programs might also be discursively linked, in part, to market-centric understandings of urban and social governance (Fairclough 1989, 1992, 2003). At the macro-level, while the market mechanisms might be diverse across different regions at different times, these projects may have similar political or ideological objectives (Harvey 2005). They might employ

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[2] In Lefebvre's (1991) conceptual triad for analyzing space, he uses the term *spatial practice*. By contrast, Fairclough (2003) uses the term *social practice* in his dialectical model of discourse analysis. While Lefebvre and Fairclough's terms are similar, their terms are not precisely aligned. Lebefvre (1991: 34) suggests "like all social practice, spatial practice is lived directly before it is conceptualized", while in the context of the discursive construction of social and urban policy, Fairclough's thesis might suggest that the *social practice* of policy formation conceptualizes time and space before it becomes the lived experience of a social subject. Then at other times, Lefebvre also uses the term *social/spatial practice*.

similar concepts or deploy similar terms to describe and understand various urban *problems* and their *solutions* (Marston 2004; Peck 2010; Darcy 2010). The concepts used in urban and social policy are, therefore, politically mobile between diverse geographical regions and policy contexts globally, despite local differences in market structure, urban form, social demography and so forth (Gruis and Nieboer 2004; Darcy 2010; Prince 2012).

This global conceptual transfer is exemplified by similarities between the analysis of local urban and social *pathology* in the U.K., U.S. and Australia according to the 'neighborhood effects' thesis (Arthurson 2004), combined with the introduction of private housing as both a financial and moral *solution*, that have been extensively noted (Imbroscio 2008; Arthurson 2005; de Souza Briggs 2003; Mathers et al. 2008). The discourse(s) of neighborhood effects travels readily between these three continents, irrespective of the differences in the social, cultural, market, housing and political contexts of the respective countries and localities (Darcy 2010; DeFilippis 2007).

More importantly perhaps, state actors animate these discourses in social and urban policy as localized urban *realities* with corresponding market-based solutions (Marston 2004). Within the context of neoliberal economic restructuring, Arthurson and Jacobs (2004), following Levitas (1998), have shown this animation process requires the physical space to be subjected to financial assessment and the social spaces to be moralized. Then new timeframes need to be *imagined* to structure the delivery of the urban and social policy programs. To provide an analysis of these discursive processes, within the context of the discourse analysis framework provided in Table 1, the following section outlines the two metaphorical constructs that will be used to present the analysis: *invited space* and *imaginary time*.

Invited Space

> To speak of 'producing space' sounds bizarre, so great is the sway still held by the idea that empty space is prior to whatever ends up filling it (Lefebvre 1991, 15).

There is a long history of philosophical and scientific thought[3] that has focused on space covering many centuries, and arguably, even millennia (Aristotle 1988; Heidegger 1927; Lefebvre 1991; Leibniz 1695; Spinoza in Bennett 1996). Lefebvre (1991) posits that the historical roots of our current conceptions of space can be found in the philosophical contribution of René Descartes (1644), who – he believed – brought an end to the Aristotelian conception of space (and time), which held that these were amongst the *a priori* set of laws with which metaphysics was concerned. After Descartes, according to Lefebvre (1991, 2),

> mathematicians appropriated space, and time, [from philosophers] and made them part of their domain, yet they did so in a rather paradoxical way. They invented spaces – an 'indefinity', so to speak, of spaces.

Lefebvre (1991, 27) redraws this distinction between the practico-sensory spaces of philosophers and the physical spaces of mathematicians. The definitions of the social and physical spaces that are constituted in policy draw on both philosophical and mathematical distinctions, and these can be teased out through an analytical process. Further, these distinctions are not simply abstract constructs, they function with material affects and individuals and institutions respond according to these constructions (Harvey 1990a, 418). Therefore, while the differentiation of public housing estates from other urban categories might be a policy construct, the urban landscape and peoples' very lives are framed by these categories.

When we conform to, or challenge, these spatial categories we are implicated in the social production or reproduction of a social or urban *reality* (Harvey 1990a; Fairclough 1992). Public housing tenants' lives are defined in social and urban policy, and the public imagination, in terms of the 'spaces' they occupy. Therefore, space is one of the "primary means of both individuation and social differentiation" (Harvey 1990a, 419). Consequently, the term 'space' should not be understood

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[3] In *The production of space,* Lefebvre (1991) explored the move from philosophical to scientific theorizations of time and space and the epistemological importance of this movement.

as solely geographical or physical space, nor as universally constructed or experienced by social subjects. Space encompasses *geo-social* (social groups) and *socio-moral* (ideological) spaces[4] that are constructed and experienced by different social actors in diverse ways (Levitas 1998; Lefebvre 1991). The spaces (personal, communal, cultural or political) occupied by social subjects do not automatically accord with the socio-moral spaces constructed by states and institutions (Harvey 1990a). As a function of discursive practice, social actors demarcate spaces at different levels of language practice with different degrees of abstraction for political purposes (Fairclough 2006; Foucault 1969).

At the macro-level, the physical demarcation of public housing estates is often defined with a degree of commonality by different social actors. In the BLCP case, in 2001 it was commonly accepted by the state and public housing tenants alike that the 81-hectare Bonnyrigg estate (Estate), which including 927 dwellings, was bound by Bonnyrigg Avenue, Cabramatta Road, Edensor Road and Smithfield Road (NSW Department of Housing 2007). Nonetheless, the socio-cultural relationships to this Estate were not mapped onto the physical landscape using a common set of cultural referents (Mohr 2003, 4). Public housing tenants, and employees of the state and private sectors, often ascribed different meanings to the Estate, individual dwellings and the surrounding suburb (Darcy 2010; Stubbs et al. 2005). Tenants' narratives often invoke notions of home and constructions of place; these might stretch back into the past to outline how a public housing tenant grew up in the suburb, or project into the future to discuss family plans that might span generations (Singer 2011; Arnfield 2008; Jarvis 2012).

Cultural and ideological subjectivities are important to the way in which social subjects attribute meaning to both geographical and social spaces within public housing estate redevelopments. Within this analytical frame, public housing estate redevelopments might be understood to encompass ideological and moral spaces that bring people together through geographical, sociological and emotional relationships with other social actors and institutions. In these spaces, different social subjects' identities are constructed through micro- and macro-cultures of values and meanings, and the market-centric coordination and demarcation of various spaces becomes an important factor within the analysis (Rose 2003; Peck and Tickell 2002; Marinetto 2003).

Andrea Cornwall's (2004, 2008; Brock et al. 2001)[5] spatial metaphor of "invited space" is a useful construct to investigate the power and politics of these socio-moral policy spaces. The social spaces various social actors create, for specific purposes, and within which they invite particular social subjects and insitutions. While the deployment of the concept of 'invited space' has been largely taken up in deliberative democracy (Carson 2008; Buccus et al. 2008; Dryzek 2006; Hajer 2003) and international development (Anjaria 2009; Goldenberg 2008) analyses, it also has broader utility for social policy analysis. Cornwall argues,

> In any given place, there are many different domains for participation. Officalized spaces...exist alongside unofficial spaces and spaces of everyday life (2004, 78). Talking in terms of spaces ... allows us to think about the ways in which particular sites come to be populated, appropriated or designed by particular actors for particular kinds of purposes; its metaphorical qualities allow attention to be paid to issues of discursive closure,...to the absence of opportunity as well as to the dynamism of political agency in forging new possibilities for voice (2004, 75).

Cornwall (2004, 83) draws attention to the power relations that circulate within social spaces, and to questions of agency, the lived experience of social subjects, and the subjugating affect institutional sites have on social actors (Foucault 1969). What happens within political institutions is shaped by their configuration, their 'conditions of possibility' (Foucault 1969), but these sites are also "constantly in transformation as well as potential arenas of transformation" (Cornwall 2004, 75).

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[4] Lefebvre (1991) defines these as *mental*, *physical* and *social* space.
[5] The 'invited space' construct comes from work by Karen Brock, Andrea Cornwall and John Gaventa (2001) and started as 'invited participation'. In its original form, the authors were questioning the legitimacy and expansion of spaces for citizen participation in state governance. Cornwall (2007) further developed the construct in *Spaces for change* with Schatten and Coelho and in the *Tyranny* series (Cooke and Kothari, 2001; Hickey and Mohan, 2004).

Lefebvre (1991) showed the demarcation and boundaries between institutionally mediated spaces are both constructed and unstable:

> Those who participate in any given space are also, necessarily, participants in others; moving between domains of association, people carry with them experiences and expectations that influence how they make use of their agency when they are invited to participate, or when they create their own spaces (Cornwall 2004, 78, drawing on the work of Lefebvre).

In this article I use the concept of 'invited space' to refer to these institutionally mediated spaces to draw attention to the ideological construction and function of the socio-moral political spaces.

Imaginary Time

Stephen Hawking (1988) popularized the term 'space-time'[6] in the late 1980s in his book *A Brief History of Time*. While Hawking was discussing the science of the universe in this book, he interestingly referred to time as socially constructed with the concept of 'imaginary time'. Hawking argued:

> This might suggest that the so-called imaginary time is really the real time, and that what we call real time is just a figment of our imaginations ... So maybe what we call imaginary time is really more basic, and what we call real time is just an idea that we invent to help us describe what we think the universe is like ... which is real, 'real' or 'imaginary' time? (1988, 147-148).

Hawking's imaginary/real dichotomy of time is useful for understanding how time is demarcated/experienced by social actors for the purpose of delivering social policy. In philosophical terms, I have constructed the imaginary/real with reference to: Aristotle's (1961) 'lived time'/'universal time;' Ricoeurs' (1990) 'phenomenological time of the soul'/'cosmological time of the world;' and Heidegger's (1927) framework for demarcating the subject of 'subjective time' and the object of 'objective time.'

> Ontologically speaking, there is no distinct 'calendar time' as such, only the *calendarization* of cosmological time. The difference is internal to social practice...chronological time is a relative historical novelty as the dominant form of social time-consciousness. (Osborne 1995, 67)

In the context of conceptualizing policy *problems* and their *solutions* (Wildavsky 1979), time, like space, is a form of human intuition (Martin 1974, 41). New timeframes might need to be created for the latest policy program – a case in point was the introduction of time-limited tenure for public housing tenants in the state of NSW in Australia under the Reshaping Public Housing reforms (Martin 2006; NSW Government 2005b) – and these new temporal referents might not be readily incorporated into the lives of the social subjects who become the recipients (subjects) of the policy programs (Jarvis 2012).

Further, when institutions create urban or social policy by demarcating (*imagining*) new timeframes for including or excluding different social subjects, the lived experienced (*reality*) for different social subjects of the broad temporal dimension of the policy program can be unpredictable and diverse. Each social subject's experience of time, it seems, is constructed by more than the passing of minutes, days, weeks and years; a key constituent of their experience of time is bound by the socio-moral spaces they are invited into as well as their biography and subjectivity (Jarvis, 2012). In terms of individual agency, Helen Jarvis (2011, p.3) argues that our lived experience and personal recollections of the temporal dimension of our biography are important, for these "bear witness to intimate details and experiences of social and demographic change". While structurally, Fairclough (2003, p.151) reasons that in any "social order, there will be different co-existing space–times" – different ways in which constructions of space and time are brought together. In terms of the

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[6] Fred Hoyle's (1955) space-time was, perhaps, the theoretical beginnings of Hawking's work.

imaginary/real dichotomy of time: structural factors shape how social subjects *imagine* new demarcations of time; while biographical factors shape how social subjects experience a temporal *reality*.

Different structural space-times can run in parallel while others can be chained together when they are built into policy programs, and state housing authorities are then forced to mediate between the local and the global, the short- and long-term, and the financial and interpersonal affects of their social policies and practices (Harvey, 1990b; Fairclough, 2003). Harvey (1996) uses the term spatiotemporality to describe the subjective experience of locating in these interlinked space-times, as they operate through particular social institutions, social relations and cultural identities (Harvey, 1996; Lefebvre, 1991; Fairclough, 2003). Importantly, however, at the macro-level of policy development, and the micro-level of social practice and lived experience, these experiences are constituted and mediated through the conceptualization of (practico-sensory and physical) space and (imaginary/real) time within social and urban policy.

The Politics of Space and Time within the Bonnyrigg Living Communities Project

The study area was the 81-hectare Bonnyrigg Public Housing estate in southwest Sydney, Australia. In late December 2004, the New South Wales Government announced the Bonnyrigg Living Communities Project and the states' first public housing estate redevelopment by public-private partnership. In 2004, the Estate included 927 dwellings comprised of 812 public housing, 13 Indigenous Housing, 3 community housing and 99 privately owned dwellings, with a population of approximately 3,100 (NSW Department of Housing 2004b: 16). The state housing authority originally developed the green field site as public housing in the late 1970s, using the 'Radburn' design principle (Birch 1980). With the exception of some individual dwellings sold to private investors by the state housing authority over the past 30-years, the private housing was predominantly located in a small enclave in the southwest corner of the Estate. The remaining public stock was owned and managed by the state housing authority until BLCP project announcement.

Operating within the neoliberal urbanization of Australian cities, the BLCP public-private partnership is a single contract arrangement between the state housing authority and a private sector consortium company for a 30-year period that covers the delivery of physical infrastructure as well as a range of social objectives. The suite of social deliverables includes tenancy management, 'community building' and 'community consultation'. The contract is managed under a performance based fee structure and will see an increase in the net housing stock across the estate from about 900 to 2330 dwellings over the next 10-20 years. In pursuit of policy objectives to deconcentrate public housing and create a 'social mix', the ratio of public to privately owned housing stock in the neighborhood will be reduced from about 90% public and 10% private to about 30% public and 70% private. A non-profit housing manager, under contract to the private sector 'partner,' is to manage the public tenancies for 30 years (NSW Department of Housing 2007).

Symbolic Representations and Subjective Experiences of Space and Time
(Re)imagining the Estate to Justify the Policy Intervention

In 2004, the state housing authority provided housing assistance in various forms to over 420,000 people in NSW (NSW Department of Housing 2004a). Historically located within a neoliberal political economy, under the centre-right Howard government in its third term, an acute social interventionism was established around a range of politically sensitive issues in Australia, including immigration and welfare reform. Following the U.S. Workfare (Bertram 2004) and British New Deal (Millar 2003) welfare-to-work programs, the government introduced the Welfare to Work policy reform package in Australia. Like its U.S. and U.K. counterparts, and in the face of a mounting body of literature calling the ideological footings of this approach into question (Arthurson and Jacobs 2004; Levitas 1998), these new discourses of social reform discursively constructed the urban poor as welfare dependent and socially excluded, and sought to mandate their entry into employment (for a discussion in the U.S. context, see Hackworth 2005).

Around the time of the BLCP announcement, the Australian Federal Government's "Furthering welfare reform" [package]... tackled the twin goals of lifting workforce participation and reducing welfare dependency" and presented this move as a matter of "sustainability" (Commonwealth Government 2005, 1). In Australia, these welfare programs were accompanied with federal industrial

relation policies that eroded working entitlements for employees, especially in the low skilled labor market (Jacobs et al. 2004). The state housing authority responded in Bonnyrigg by stating,

> The Living Communities program aims to make public housing estates safer and more attractive places to live, to improve services and provide residents better access to better education and employment opportunities, and to support and strengthen local communities (NSW Department of Housing 2004c, 1; 2004d, 8).

The BLCP policy response was framed within the now normalized economic policies of earlier neoliberal era. From the late 1990s in Australia, there was a move toward public-private partnerships – a specific political-commercial space – for the delivery of urban and 'social' infrastructure, led by the states of New South Wales and Victoria in Australia. These states sought to "realise land value, to provide a lesser number of high quality dwellings with low maintenance costs," especially in suburban areas, which included many public housing estates (Australian Housing Research Fund 2000, 5). This flagged a distinct move away from an "asset-based management" approach to public housing policy and further positioned Australian states and territories for a move towards the market (Hall and Berry 2007). In this new policy discourse, the term 'partnership' now replaced 'privatization' as the "dominant slogan in the rhetoric of public sector reform" (Wettenhall 2003, 77).

The BLCP deployed a distinctly different conception of the term *social* PPP than other PPP projects operating at the time. While Jefferies and McGeorge (2009) draw on the distinction between *social* and *economic* provided by Argy et al. (1999) – economic infrastructure (e.g. roads, tunnels, bridges), and social infrastructure (e.g. hospitals, schools, prisons) – the BLCP has specific social objectives that are related to "building community" and reducing "social exclusion" (NSW Department of Housing 2004b), which were clearly outside the remit of the bulk of the other PPPs procured between 1988 and 2010.[7] The discursive strategy of the BLCP *reimagined* the physical landscape of the Estate, as well as the geo-social spaces that tenants were constructed within, in terms of the prevailing discourses of urban and social pathology within *social* market-based policy interventions in the U.S. and U.K. (Pokin et al. 2004; Mathers et al. 2008). The term 'community' was deployed as a socio-moral term, signifying Estates as unsustainable, weak, unsafe, unattractive and without a sense of belonging (Housing NSW 2005), as shown below.

> Community regeneration aims to build strong and sustainable communities in disadvantaged social housing estates by working in partnership (2005, 1)…The aim of the program is to build opportunities for community participation, boost well-being and a sense of belonging (2005, 2)...[The] Department will work with residents to strengthen their community, make their suburb a safer and more attractive place to live, and improve community services, education and employment opportunities (2005, 4).

Therefore, the BLCP is a political and ideological response to an urban *problem* that is self-referential in that the discursive construction of the *solution* also contains the *problem*. For example, the texts that accompanied the BLCP announcement signified the physical space as old, worn out, of poor quality; and the geo-social space as problematic, as stated below.

> Bonnyrigg is a "Radburn' Estate ... some old and worn out houses will go ... we need to replace and upgrade poor-quality public housing ... we will find ways to upgrade public safety ... create opportunities for local people to improve education and skills and find jobs ... like many public housing estates, it is a community with strengths but also some social problems ... the first thing we will do is consult with local residents. (NSW Department of Housing 2004d, 1)

The convergence of international discourses upon local policy making and the rationale behind the division of geographic space in Bonnyrigg were clearly expressed within the city's landscape (McCann 2003, 165). In terms of place, regionally, the Estate is located within the key growth area of

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[7] Also see the Minto redevelopment project in Sydney Australia.

the Sydney basin, often defined as the geographical space within the motorway loop[8] (NSW Government 2005a; Transport NSW 2010). The Estate is well connected to two of the five key growth cities (no more than 20 km to each city) and the two proposed major centers (no more than 10 km to each major centre). Locally, the Estate is surrounded by the residential suburbs of St Johns Park, Mount Pritchard and Bonnyrigg Heights, all of which have experienced significant median house price increases since 1998 (Judith Stubbs and Associates 2007; Fairfield City Council 2005). Therefore, a significant amount of idle capital, in purely economic terms relating to the land value, had accumulated at the site by 2004 (NSW Department of Housing 2007).

Harvey (1990a, 419) argues, "each social formation constructs objective conceptions of space and time sufficient unto its own needs and purposes of material and social reproduction and organizes its material practices in accordance with those conceptions." The BLCP localized strategy required the urban and social *problem* – the need for the redevelopment of the public housing estate and the amelioration of urban poverty – to be constructed as one of urban and social decay related to not only the physical space, but also to those who inhabit this geo-social space. Then to operationalize the BLCP policy intervention, the state housing authority created specific timeframes that accorded to broader globalized market-centric – public-private partnership – discourses. However, while the disciplining effects of the institutional sites of government shaped how state actors created the policy spaces and informed who they would invite into different spaces (Foucault 1969), the private sector actors and tenants experienced these demarcations of space differently as shown below (Jarvis 2012).

Invited Spaces: Mediating between Local and Global Space-Times

The obscurity of time means we always have to conceptualize time through a cultural marker such as a clock or calendar (Urry 2000, 105). Osbourne (1995) argues three features are common to such cultural markers and hence constitutive of chronicle time:

> (1) a founding event, axial moment, or zero-point in relation to which every other event can be dated; (2) a temporal direction defined with reference to this zero-point; and (3) a unit of measurement…most fundamentally, the day, the month, the year (1995, 67).

The division of calendar time in the BLCP was clearly informed by the state's project management schedule for the redevelopment[9], and the three broad temporal phases are relatively easy to describe. In Phase 1 of the BLCP, the period prior to December 2004 and the BLCP announcement (the zero point), the state housing authority designed the redevelopment project and drafted the private-sector contracts. Despite a commitment to involve public housing tenants in the redevelopment project (NSW Department of Housing 2007), in this phase the state housing authority did not invite public housing tenants into this policy making space (Rogers 2010). Instead, the state housing authority drew on a range of national and supra-national political and economic discourses to frame the BLCP.

In Phase 2 of the BLCP, from the announcement of the BLCP to the signing of the BLCP public–private partnership contract by the private-sector contractor in December 2006, the state housing authority created two invited spaces. Within the first space they invited the private sector to undertake contractual negotiations. Within the second space they invited tenants and other residents to conduct 'community consultations.' The contractual requirements of this neoliberalized urban redevelopment project 'mandated' distance between these two spaces (NSW Department of Housing 2007). As such, the state housing authority did not invite public housing tenants into the space constructed to negotiate with the private sector. Instead, they demarcated an entirely new socio-moral space that would operate for a specific period of time, within which public housing tenants could be invited; a space discursively termed "community engagement" by the state housing authority (Coates et al. 2008). This strategy shaped how public housing tenants' could self-organize in this space and limited the types of resistive mechanisms they could deploy against the state. When tenants' created alternative

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[8] The 'Motorway Loop' is colloquially defined as the area inside the M7 Westlink, the M5 Motorway and the M2 Motorway (see: The Sydney Metropolitan Strategy).
[9] For a more detailed analysis of the division of calendar time and the three phases of the BLCP see Rogers (2010).

independent tenant-organizing spaces, these too where colonized by both state- and private-sector interests (for a detailed discussion of tenant organising in the BLCP, see Rogers 2006; Rogers 2010).

In Phase 3 of the BLCP, from the signing of the BLCP contract deeds by the private-sector contractor in December 2006 for a 30-year contract period, the state housing authority withdrew from direct 'community engagement' with tenants and required the private-sector contractor to develop its own tenancy management and 'community engagement' spaces. As in Phase 2, the state housing authority did not invite public housing tenants into the newly constructed space to contract manage the private-sector contracts, as shown in Figure 1 overleaf.

As shown above, the key constituents in the process of social reproduction were the symbolisms that the state housing authority used to codify the Estate and tenants before announcement in Phase 1. While we are adept at identifying the nodal points that contain a *period of time*, or locating *a point in time* in which an event or events take place like those noted above, the way the relationships between these measuring devices and time is mediated are more complex (Rogers 2010). The BLCP constitutes a politics of struggle over setting the spatial and temporal dimensions of the redevelopment project that was clearly informed by neoliberal ideology. By analyzing the subjective experience of the practico-sensory spaces of Phase 2 of the BLCP below, I will provide insight into the contestation over spatiotemporal meaning in the BLCP.

Imaginary Time: The Subjective Experienced of the BLCP in Phase 2
In Phase 2, the private sector actors and tenants experienced the temporal dimension of their invited spaces by way of different subjective frames. The two invited spaces had different space–time dimensions that were mediated by the globalized space-time of Invited Space 2 and the localized space-time of Invited Space 3 (see Figure 1 overleaf). Harvey attempts to capture the collapse of social space and time; and the more applied aspects of Harvey's (1996, 242) "space–time compression" bring into focus the subjective dimensions of social space and time and their connection to the local and global. In the BLCP the state housing authority held the power to design and co-locate within these two parallel invited spaces in Phase 2. The state housing authority alone was privy to both: the complex issues and selection processes operating in the globalized private partner (neoliberal) selection space; and the rising concerns and requests from public housing tenants and other residents in the *localized* 'community engagement' space.

In Invited Space 3, the state housing authority provided tenants and other residents with broad information about the BLCP. However, there was specific information that could not be communicated to tenants accurately due to either commercial-in-confidence stipulations or simply because the state housing authority did not know, or could not predict with any certainty, the answers to some questions that related to the procurement processes occurring in Invited Space 2 (Sheller and Urry 2006; Urry 2000; Harvey 1990a). In Invited Space 2, the social relations and the social identities were constructed around the BLCP financial and contracting functions. While in Invited Space 3, the social relations and the social identities were constructed around a physical site and the lived experience of tenants, no doubt defined by housing tenure type, but connected more importantly to the geo-social space by memories of the past, questions about the present and concerns about the future (Rogers 2010; NSW Department of Housing 2007).

Through the BLCP, Invited Space 2 was chained together to other space–times and built into the globalized social practices of private contracting and financing with long procurement timelines. By contrast, Invited Space 3 was chained together to another space–time and built into the localized social practices of public housing estate management, where tenants wanted immediate answers to questions that would have a significant effect on their lives. The state housing authority was forced to mediate between these local/global, short-term/long-term and financial/interpersonal social practices when they chained together these two invited spaces (space–times), since different social subjects were invited into each space and the time compression was not comparable across these sites (Darcy 2010; Rogers 2010).

Figure 1 – Diagrammatic Representation of BLCP Invited Spaces
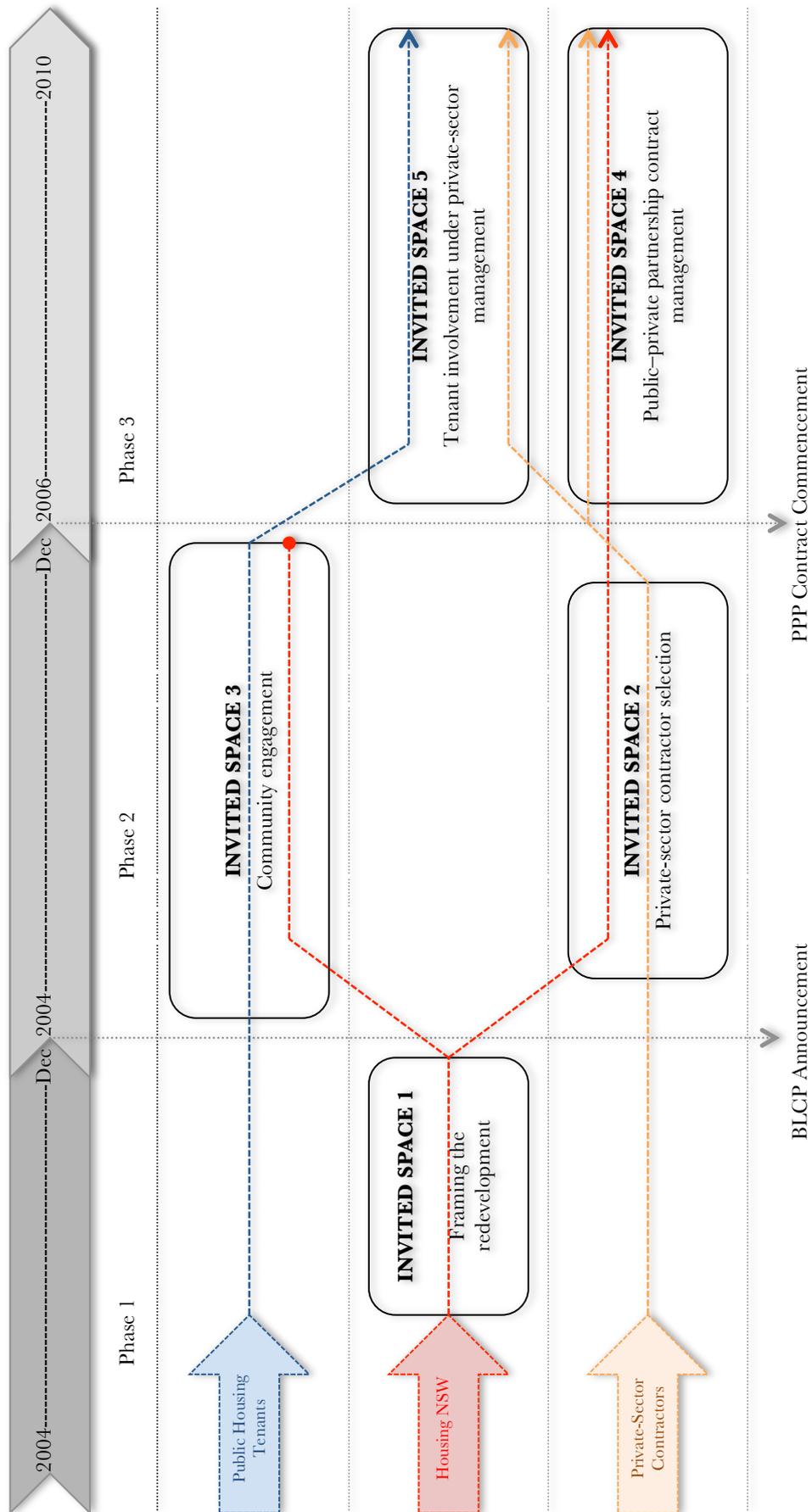
In short, the state housing authority was time poor in the globalized space–time of private contracting and financing (Invited Space 2) and was busy attempting to secure a private-sector contractor as BLCP procurement milestones failed to be realized (Fairclough 2003; Harvey 2005). Meanwhile, in the localized community engagement spaces (Invited Space 3) they appeared time rich, running additional capacity building projects in attempts to 'keep the community engaged' and to ameliorate the frustration and uncertainly articulated by public housing tenants (Rogers 2010), as the following statement shows:

"It's frustrating! Two years now and we don't even know who is going to do it [the redevelopment], or who [private partner] is going to run it." (Quote from a tenant interview)

One of the clearest examples of the state housing authority's attempt to mediate between these two conflicting spatiotemporalities was demonstrated by their *timeless* timeline (see Figure 2 overleaf). Throughout Phase 2, tenants and other residents became increasingly concerned when BLCP milestones were not realized. Typical comments included:

"To reduce stress, the project has to speed up the process, and the community should be kept informed all the times." (Quote from a tenant interview)

"A lot of them [community engagement activities] are positive and some parts are negative, because they keep changing their minds. They keep changing the answers when we ask the same question." (Quote from a tenant interview)

The Community Building Team identified this as a 'key community concern,' and as Phase 2 progressed, tenants became increasingly frustrated by the changing messages and timeframes being offered by the state housing authority in the 'community engagement' events (Sarkissian Associates Planners 2005). By 2006, tenants were skeptical of the timelines and messages being provided by the state housing authority in 'community engagement' processes, as shown below:

"[We want] something more positive. Not 'we might do this in January, or we may do this, or now we've changed our mind, it will be a further six years down the track.' Half of them [community members] won't participate for that very reason. It's always being delayed. They [community members] want to know, the majority of people in this particular housing suburb want to know what's going to happen to them tomorrow, not two years from now." (Quote from a tenant interview)

Or this comment from another public housing tenant:

"We went to the [capacity building] workshop before, and talked a lot to the social worker [state sponsored consultant], and we can't get the answer yet. We told her we're very worried. We asked when are we going to move and when are we going to come back? She said 'no worry, just relax, up to one year, or more than one year.' That's why, when they say next week we are having a meeting or a workshop, we just worry what's going on, or what is happening." (Quote from a tenant interview)

In response to these concerns, in 2006 the state housing authority created the Bonnyrigg Living Communities Timeline text that, due to the unpredictability of the private sector contractor selection processes (Invited Space 2) and the increased frustration of the public housing tenants (Invited Space 3), did not contain any dates (temporal references) (see Figure 2 overleaf).

Figure 2 – BLCP *Timeless* timeline
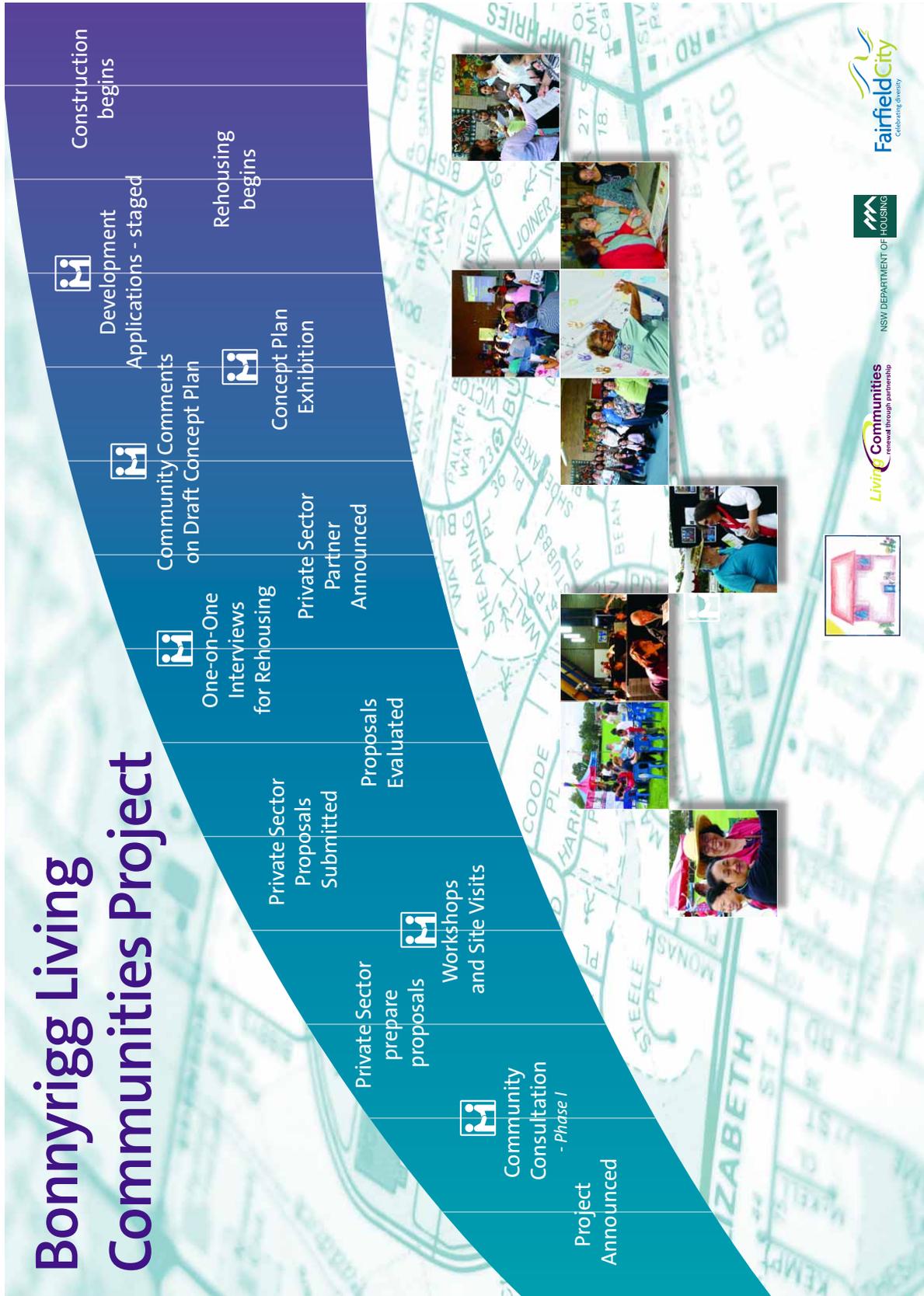
The *timeless* timeline became a discursive tool in the mitigation strategy, to stem rising tenant concerns, that was deployed in June 2006 through the community capacity building workshops. Tenants' concerns and questions related to the rhythm and pace of the localized spaces into which they had been invited: as time had passed and the focus had moved from 'information sessions' to 'capacity building,' they had not been privy to the private partner selection process and were becoming cynical of the public–private partnership model. A state sponsored consultant articulated this as follows:

> Residents wanted to know what would happen to them: Would there be compensation for the improvements they had made to their house? Where would they be located? They challenged the notion that DoH [state housing authority] did not already have a plan. They questioned the role of the Private Partner and found it difficult to understand how DoH would allow the Private Partner to prepare the future plan for Bonnyrigg. (Sarkissian Associates Planners 2005, 13)

This passing of time – the progression of the BLCP – was experienced by tenants and other residents in Phase 2 as a long process of meetings, events and information sessions in which they were constantly seeking to clarify information and understand the redevelopment process that would be guided by the public–private partnership, as shown below:

> "All of us are saying, everybody is saying, that we don't want to live in stress any more. We are very tired and we need to know what is going to happen. Don't show us pictures of things and tell us we're not going to do it. Don't show us plans and say we're not going to do it. Just tell us what you are going to do." (Quote from a tenant interview)

> "Too many workshops we went to, [I'm] quite tired, but we can't get answers yet." (Quote from a tenant interview)

> "A lot of questions that are answered to our satisfaction, not just me, others [agree] as well, are changed down the track." (Quote from a tenant interview)

The above quotes from tenants highlight the tension between the (global) financial and (local) interpersonal social practices made manifest in these diverse invited spaces: the conflict between the lived experiences of tenants being drawn into the redevelopment of their public housing estate by public–private partnership, and the mechanics of procuring a private-sector contractor and finance in a globalized marketplace. This sentiment is perhaps more clearly articulated below by two final comments from long-term residents of the Estate:

> "My children will come and say they want to bring something home, and they say, "Mum, when we are going to move, didn't they tell you!" [I say] Don't ask me this question anymore." (Quote from a tenant interview)

> "Your life is really in their hands." (Quote from a tenant interview)

Conclusion

This article shows that discourse analysis of urban policy will benefit from a theoretical framework that explicitly targets the socio-spatial and socio-temporal dimensions of policy. In the BLCP, the policy frameworks were not constructed within an a-spatial or a-temporal policy environment and then set loose into time and space. The policy frameworks were always in conversation with other policies, discourses and social events. These policy spaces involved complex relationships spanning from the supra-national to the local. It is this politics of mediating – the theorization of a struggle over and between different forms of spatialization and temporalization within policy formulation and experience – which could be called a *politics of time and space* within market-centric urban policy. In the BLCP, the social relations, social identities and social 'realities' were constructed around a physical site and a housing tenure type. However, these are not all that

defines, binds and differentiates public housing tenants from other abstract and arbitrary social categories. The lived experience of public housing tenants is intricately connected to the spatio-temporalities that they inhabit (Fairclough 1995; Harvey 1996). These experiences accumulate from the localized social practices of public housing estate management, but also from the rhythm and pace of their daily lives and their interpersonal experiences that occur both inside and outside of redevelopment projects (Osborne 1995; Fairclough 2003).

These localized space–times are very different from the supra-national space–times occupied by nation-states, federal and state governments and national and international corporations. While connected to the same physical and socio-moral space, the lived experience of tenants is connected in ways that are individually empirical and emotive. The physical space conjures up memories of the past, dreams for the future and concerns about the present for tenants. There is no place within neoliberal discourse to accommodate these experiences – no theoretical apparatus by which to 'rationalize' these very real and tangible psychological responses to the physical and social spaces that public housing tenants inhabit on public housing estates (Lefebvre 1991, 31; Jarvis 2012). Neoliberal discourse and market-centric urban policy is conditional on 'rational' technocratic decision-making and presents little opportunity to make use of these 'lived experience' insights. It is therefore important for social researchers to engage with these spatio-temporalities (Rogers 2012).

Within the current paradigm of public housing policy, social subjects are defined and codified, divided and ascribed new social 'realities' from afar, from different globalized space–times. They are compared and grouped with social subjects living on different continents, or living in similar or different housing types, and with those experiencing similar or different forms of discrimination. Meanwhile these tenants, caught in a local socio-moral space, have little knowledge of the globalized discourses that will shape their future. This limits their capacity to call these policy interventions into question. This study shows that the space-time differential resulted in feelings of fear and stress for tenants. Therefore, experiments in urban governance and civic capacity building involving tenants might be better focused on challenging this neoliberal rationality of government that is normative and exclusionary by bringing tenants into the debates about the global practices of urban redevelopment (Burchell et al. 1991).

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