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Harvesting Debt:

Hub South-East Scotland, Austerity and Public Procurement

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Declaration of Originality:

'I hereby declare that this dissertation has been composed by me and is based on my own work'

Abstract:

This dissertation examines HubCo, a public-private partnership which procures and/or finances and maintains small-scale public infrastructure across the South-east of Scotland. The company, in addition, provides strategic support services to help public authorities rationalise their spatial footprint and cope with austerity. I explore how the partnership allows private companies to access greater business opportunities in guaranteed markets. When providing private finance, HubCo is constrained by accounting rules deciding whether investment is on-balance or off-balance sheet, a judgement centred on who bears which risk. As privately financed projects are seen to transfer most risks to the private sector, they are off-balance. As a result, choosing HubCo's more expensive but off-balance procurement route is a tempting option for authorities pressured to cut on-balance costs. Further, HubCo, when advising public authorities, promotes an exciting journey of change to package funding cuts. Squeezed between this persuasive narrative, the political imperative to keep investments off-balance, the resort to technical artifices and the need for investment to stimulate the economy, where to articulate political challenges? And lastly, who profits from all these convoluted and sometimes contradictory schemes?

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My thanks go to all interviewees who kindly offered their time, with a special thank to HubCo's secretary for her precious help. My excuses and thanks salute Jan and Tom for bearing through our year together and mostly the complexity of what follows now. My thoughts go to the Pentlands because watching them reminded of the sky, to Danny for your patience, generosity and feel for words, to Hamish for your presence, and to mum&dad because that's where things started.

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Introduction:

> “My colleague Andy Kerr asked the SNP to end the uncertainty surrounding public building projects by dumping the Scottish Futures Trust[…]. For the sake of Scotland[…], [Mr Swinney] should accept the Labour amendment, drop the plans for a Scottish Futures Trust and do what the construction industry is appealing for by bringing major infrastructure projects to market now, even if that means using public-private partnership models.”(David Whitton, 13/11/2008)

This statement was delivered in answer to a presentation to the Scottish Parliament by John Swinney on the Scottish National Party (SNP)’s proposal for a Scottish Futures Trust (SFT)[1]. Opposition Labour had already deemed the SFT a ploy for more Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), yet in this intervention, David Whitton (Labour) urges the Scottish Government to invest, even through PPPs, to rebuild the economy (Parliamentary records, 13/11/2008). Labour, adamant supporters of PPPs/PFIs[2] in Scotland when in power, hold a contradictory position. They criticise the SFT for promoting PPPs yet demand growth at all costs. John Swinney’s response that “[M]ore than £1bn-worth of construction work is under way, [and] under the infrastructure investment plan, authorities will invest another £1bn,” fails to mention where the investment comes from.

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[1] This dissertation is filled with acronyms and subtle distinctions (e.g.: between the Hub initiative and the HubCo). These are listed in Appendix 1 of the dissertation.

[2] Trying to understand the difference between Public Private Partnerships and Private Finance Initiatives, I was grateful to this clarification: “PFI and PPP projects are very similar. PFI is a particular method of financing private investment which requires the private sector design, build, finance and operate facilities. PPP is a generic term used to describe partnerships which involve more flexible methods of financing and operating facilities and/or services.”(Centre for Public Services, 2001) I will show that HubCo is always a PPP and sometimes sets up PFI-like contract.

This exchange introduces the three themes of my dissertation. First, this intervention takes place in November 2008, just as one of the major crises of contemporary capitalism unfolds. Within a year, the UK government's debt jumped from £69bn to over £156bn (Rogers and Kollewe, 2013). From 2010 onwards, the Conservative-led administration used this as an economic argument to impose 'austerity', cutting public budgets and privatising core services, whilst pinning this indebtedness on an extravagant state rather than on the financial crisis. Austerity policies created a double bind: government needed to tighten its belt *and* solve the 'crisis' through investment. To deal with this conundrum, the Scottish Government (SG) introduced several complex entities. I focus on one: the Hub initiative. This structure appears to respond to previous critiques targeting PFIs yet leaves the essential features intact: it facilitates borrowing from the private sector and enlarges the role of the building industry beyond its traditional one of infrastructure construction to new ones of financing and maintaining public buildings. Secondly, the discourses to justify this new scheme gives a large role to questions around 'uncertainty,' and who can best 'deal' with it. The dissertation follows how the definition of uncertainty shifts but inevitably favours private sector interests. Finally, Whitton's quote reveals the existence of what Logan and Molotch called a "growth-coalition" in which "the desire for growth creates consensus among a wide range of elite groups"(1987:50 in Macleod, 2011). Labour, the SNP and the Conservatives agree; the debate is absent. Growth and thus investments must be secured at all costs, through publicly borrowed money and/or through new schemes to disguise borrowing from the private sector.

Since 1992, UK governments have tested innovative ways of procuring public infrastructure. The most infamous remain the PFI schemes which obligate the central and local governments to pay more than £215bn worth of debt instalments to private corporations over the next 30 years[3](Jowsey 2011). Regan et al describe PFIs as "long-

[3] Pollock et al (2013) provide a higher estimation. They argue that annual repayments could reach £8bn across Britain, and run for 30 to 60 years, bringing the total repayments between £240 and £480bn.

term contractual arrangement[s] or franchise[s] under which a private firm finances and manages the production of goods and/or services for, or on behalf of, the state.”(2011:364) These projects enact the radical shift envisioned by neoliberal ideologues. The state would transform itself from being the provider public services towards becoming the client and complaisant regulator of the private sector (Hall, 2005). This belief rests on what Barnekov et al name ‘urban privatism’ “an underlying confidence in the capacity of the private sector to create the conditions for personal and community prosperity.’’(in MacLeod, 2011:2637) In Scotland, these schemes were heavily criticised by the SNP, which promised to offer alternative mechanisms for funding and delivering public infrastructure (Pautz and Bailey, 2012). The SG created the SFT, a publicly owned company established to safeguard the public interest; it would manage the innovative income streams and steward partnerships with the private sector. Launched officially in 2008, within two years it had implemented the ‘Hub’, which provides a “new public-private partnership approach to establishing a strategic long-term sustainable programme of procurement of community based developments”(HubCo, 2010:3). Five regional ‘Hubs’ were created; they brought together private company consortiums, various local authorities and the SFT. Such structures driven by the austerity imperative to “do more with less” echo the “leaner operating models, driving new rounds of innovation in outsourcing and privatisation” produced by conditions of “ordinary austerity” that Peck (2012:629) noted in the USA. The creation of HubCo demonstrates how even though the SG follows a more ‘progressive’ version of crisis-treatment through increased investment instead of resorting to budget cuts alone (Kitson et al, 2011), many of these investments are set within PPP schemes which reinforce private sector power, profit and influence.

I study one particular ‘Hub’ company created in 2010 –Hub South-East (hereafter HubCo). What is HubCo and what does it do? The simple answer is that HubCo brings together public sector participants (hereafter Participants), a semi-public institution (the SFT) and a private consortium (Space Ltd.) with their respective interests to deliver services, save money and make money. HubCo provides Participants two distinct services. One is to deliver, finance and maintain infrastructure projects designed according to the needs of Participants. The other is to provide strategic consulting services and help the public sector 'rationalise' its footprint through encouraging joint-working across public sector departments and a more flexible use of working spaces. Lefebvre reminds us that "space [is] simultaneously a product of social practices and their facilitator."(in Stanek, 2011:141) I here tread the fine line of examining both HUbCo's practices and how they came into being, by looking through which procurement routes public infrastructure is delivered; why these routes are attractive and why HubCo says they are; and what are the ideologies which HubCo attempts to enshrine within the building process itself. Above, I referred to the national imperative to tighten the belt *and* to spend; I argue that HubCo helps public authorities do both.

My methodology chapter presents the methods I used to analyse the organisation and the ideology propping up HubCo. The literature review examines the changes in the relationship between the state and the private sector under neoliberalism that fostered ideologies and practices which brought HubCo into being and which HubCo further reinforces. Chapter One introduces the literature assessing UK-based PPPs/PFIs, and comments on the Local Improvement Financial Trusts (LIFT), precursor to the Hub model. In my empirical chapters, I apply Lefebvre (1996)'s three levels of analysis and examine the *practices and services* introduced by HubCo, the *discourses* produced to justify them and the *space of representations*, which I here understand as the possibility for addressing (or not) political[4] questions throughout the HubCo process. Chapter Two describes HubCo's organisational and financial structure and role in procuring public buildings. Of particular importance are both the amelioration of the previous PFI model it introduces, and the continuing significance of

[4] In the dissertation, I use the word political, to reflect Rancière's (2000) understanding of it. He understands it as a process beyond 'politics' which refers to the prime debate over what are the ways to share reality, what are the alternatives, what should happen, rather than discussions and choices within a set framework. Here it is about questioning the framework, not only the options.

risk. Chapter Three describes and analyses the discourse produced by HubCo and the SFT. Buzzwords that claim HubCo's procurement route is better 'Value For Money'(VfM), because it promotes joint-working and helps regeneration hide the reality of higher debt. Along the same line, the imperative to do more with less is portrayed as stimulating innovation. Chapter Four explores how HubCo's approach depoliticises the essential matter of how public infrastructure should be procured and designed. These three chapters testify to the ongoing appropriation of the critiques of neoliberalism to give a greater moral appeal to new rounds of privatisation.

Methodology:

This research challenged me. Until now, I had not researched economic geography, did not understand what cash/flow/equity/debt meant and was not familiar with the Scottish administration. To understand the HubCo company, which by its very purpose brings together competing actors, goals and concepts, I 'followed-the-money' by collecting strategic documents, parliamentary records, writing Freedom of Information (FoI) requests and conducting interviews with key stakeholders. I focus on a corporation that produces spaces. My analysis thus considers non-territorially fixed processes rather than specific sites. I explore the practices, possibilities and ideologies created in the procurement and production of space. This decision continues to challenge me ethically as my text has taken a theoretical stance rather than a pragmatic approach proposing solutions.

1. *Follow-the-money*

Geography abounds with follow-the-thing narratives which showcase the complex networks, differing regulations and inequalities in the geography of production and consumption (Cook et al, 2004). One essential 'thing' is money or capital. Christophers wonders: "Can and should we endeavour to 'follow' this thing, money?"(2011:1069) I took his call seriously and 'followed' the money from the outcome – a building – back to the involvement of contractors, HubCo, public authorities or the SFT. Christophers argues that following money is essential to defetishise it and understand "who makes money *from* money."(2011:1082*)* By looking at the distribution of profits, risks and power, I describe the social and economic relationships sustained and re-created through money's circulation and who profits from those relationships. I considered documents from the Parliament, SFT, HubCo, the NHS and CEC; examined business plans for Edinburgh-based projects; and wrote FoI requests. I learnt the language of finance. I dug up HubCo's structure going over these legal documents. To articulate Massey's challenge "to hold on to both the general movement and the particularity of circumstance,"(1984:8) I conducted interviews with Edinburgh-based project managers.

2. Interviews

Aldred (2007, 2008) studied a similar scheme, the LIFT program in England, by interviewing key players, observing national gatherings of the LIFT network and collecting relevant documents. Similarly, I was drawn to speak with the 'elite' – contractors, public sector partners and HubCo managers – rather than the wider public: they were the people most likely to know the HubCo structure from within and to produce legitimising discourses. I address several issues raised by the literature on elite interviews: definition, access, transparency, hierarchical relationships and positionality (W.Harvey, 2009). I define 'elite' as people managing HubCo projects. Access was straightforward, I approached HubCo, arranged an interview with their CEO, and, through their secretary, met various HubCo intermediaries in the CEC, the SFT and the NHS. Although, the interviews referred to HubCo's projects in Edinburgh, most of my analysis took on a systemic approach. My results probably apply to the five Hub initiatives, though all involve different companies and people. I interviewed nine persons, recorded each interview and wrote notes on how the interview went. Each interviewee signed a consent form and was guaranteed anonymity (see Appendix 2). Although I developed a questionnaire schedule (Appendix 3), similarly to Mikecz (2012) each interview allowed me to refine my questions and develop my vocabulary. Some interviews turned out to be less 'useful' than I expected[5], partly because I developed my research questions concomitantly with my interviews and document collection. This trial-and-error approach responded to the complexity of HubCo's process. I address the questions of transparency and power now.

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[5] Of the 9 interviews I realised, 6 people are mainly quoted in this dissertation.

3. Ethics

I break down ethics in two segments. One segment is attentive to my epistemological and normative stance (Sayer, 2007). Here I answer Bourdieu's challenge to the "privilege of a knowing subject [me] arbitrarily excluded from the efforts of objectivation."(2000:119) I believe it is crucial to understand and analyse economic and policy processes and I do so through a Marxist framework and discourse analysis methodology. I chose to study HubCo, however engagement "[needs] not to be solely *constructive* engagement."(Peck, 1999:131) I assume my position of critical outsider offering few practical solutions. My notes after the interview with HubCo's CEO however reflect my ongoing dilemma:

> "[The secretary] says how interested she is in the dissertation. How will she receive it? My pragmatic self knows they are doing a good job with limited possibilities. My critical self has spent hours reading obscure documentation and believes HubCo is just another PFI with few changes and more glitter. Both selves clash because both points of view are valid. Following the first one I could try to make HubCo better. Following the second, I produce a brutal critique that leaves little hope. So what do I study?"

The second ethical question addresses how to obtain data and conduct respectful interviews. All documents were publically accessible and their use raises no ethical issues. I agree with Kvale that interviews inherently "are neither ethical or unethical,"(2006:497) but rather that the researcher should be attentive to 'giving back,' establishing consent, issues of domination and transparency (Ryen, 2004). In terms of 'giving back,' unlike McDowell (1998) who helps interviewees challenge gender relations in the workplace, I offered nothing but a grateful ear. Interviewing 'elites' prompts one to wonder whether a different moral code should apply depending on whether one studies 'up' or 'down'(Bardshaw, 2001). Smith (2006) criticises this dichotomy, believing that it stems from a conception of power that does not recognise power's fluidity and complexity. Each interview, whether with an elite or not, should prompt similar concerns around power. Whilst she might have a point, I chose not to be totally transparent. I didn't challenge the benefits of urban regeneration or the problems of PPPs and presented myself as "sympathetic to those being interviewed."(Cochrane, 1998:2124) I believe this was central to gaining access and that the process was not about establishing equal/caring relationships, but about approaching people in powerful positions. I aimed not to judge them as individuals but to identify the institutional logic they expressed. I was polite and grateful for interviewees' time. I remain so. The analysis of their discourse testifies to my position, that of a critical geographer[6], and to my emphasis on understanding the different forms of neoliberalism promoted by austerity governance. Interviewees were open to explaining HubCo, in part, I believe, because they saw engaging with HubCo as an uncontentious process. Whilst they believed there were no problems, only facts, in what they said, I did not.

4. *Analysis*

Cochrane (1998) argues for a form of "committed scepticism, [so that] one does not simply believe the stories the elites tell about themselves,"(2130) but nevertheless seriously analyses how these stories build particular discourses. Discourse, different from and embedded in, social life reflects and impacts upon social life (Fairclough, 2005). Lees describes discourse analysis as the grasp of both the "interpretative context, that is the social setting in which the discourse is located [and] the rhetorical organisation of the discourse, that is the argumentative schema that organise a text and

[6]And in a footnote, I can also add that as a student and 'young creative graduate', I have seen and experienced many of the flexibility schemes and mentalities that are being promoted by HubCo and SFT. They are both weirdly familiar and liberating: in my life, I do chose to work in cafes, share desks or working and living area. However, I know the difference between having the luxury to choose to work sometimes in a café, and having to work in a café because there is no office space left.

establish its authority."(2004:104) To understand the administrative and financial organisation of HubCo, I cross-checked interviews with documents. This helped me produce a technical assessment of HubCo. There are distinctions between what HubCo does and what promotional documents and actors say HubCo does. In HubCo's rhetorical construction, the 'trickle-down' of ideas is not obvious. The SFT promotes policy briefs; HubCo re-articulates these in strategic documents; public actors internalise certain themes whilst technical teams tell me another story. However, the general discourses and practices I encountered recount the rise of public sector practices based on business models and the de-politicisation of public practices. This story reflects the wider shifts imposed by neoliberalism which I address now.

Literature Review

> "The economic and social order of the wealthy democracies is still a capitalist order and can be understood, if at all, only with the help of a theory of capitalism."(Streeck, 2014:ix)

This literature review introduces two of the fundamental drives which sustain a capitalist economy. The private sector can secure its drive for growth by getting more when putting in less (intensification) and/or by creating new markets (extension) (Harvey, 2010). As the shift towards neoliberal practices and policies has gained speed, the state has changed its role. Public sector actors increasingly both promote market expansion and present themselves as businesses (Brenner and Theodore, 2002). HubCo's practices and goals reflect this shift. Further I show how the latest version of capitalism – neoliberalism – has successfully absorbed critiques of the previous stages of capitalism – state-planned Keynesianism. The evolution of calls for participatory planning and community participation in the UK demonstrate this point. First progressive demands, both notions mutated into central features of New Labour and Conservative agendas. Lastly, I examine how neoliberalisation, as a process, has uprooted the basic conflict over who should benefit from shared resources (Swyndegouw, 2011).

1. *Capitalism*

In the simplest terms, capitalism can be described as the historical imposition of a new system of economic and social relations. This system seeks money for its own sake and to make more money, rather than as exchange or a measure of value. Commodification, one of the key social relations introduced, refers to how goods and services produced by human labour and defined by their use become commodities to trade defined by their price[7] (Marx, 1928). Marx theorises two opposing classes in conflict over the distribution of resources, one which owns the means of production against one which sells its labour to survive. This conflict and capital's fundamental drive for growth develop new economic and political systems through a dialectal process. The word 'dialectical' refers to the expression of capitalism, like all systems, as both material and social, and in continuous movement: each conflicts' achieved outcome has an impact on future possibilities and holds the potential for its overcoming (Charnock, 2012). Geographers analyse the dialectical process through the inherently uneven production of social and physical landscapes (Smith, 1984; Harvey, 1989). Capitalism creates conditions for different rates of growth and thus opportunities to exploit the value-gap between two sets of conditions; produced landscapes in turn both limit and enable future prospects. For example, gentrification which is classically "the transformation of a working-class or vacant area of the central city into middle-class residential and/or commercial use,"(Lees et al, 2008:xv) results from the exploitation of the rent gap[8]: discrepant rates of return for building stock enable the capture of property by private developers at low cost and its revaluation at a higher price (Smith, 1979). This process displaces poorer residents and changes the social fabric of the city and thus also the possibility for change (Slater, 2009). Yet this seesaw of development and inequality is necessary to establish and perpetuate conditions for growth. These conditions are created by two related drives: intensification of the rates of return on investment and extension a process Harvey names 'accumulation by dispossession'(2004).

The introduction of new technologies, the rationalisation of production and labour efficiencies allow for a few pioneering firms to intensify their rates of return on

[7] I introduce the notion now, because in this dissertation the commodification and 'proper' allocation of risk is central to the justification of PFI/HubCo.

[8] Here in no way do I want to underplay the cultural and social drivers of gentrification (Ley 1996), which as Lees et al (2008) show are no longer opposed to the economic ones. Rather, I just examine the structural economic factors which are at play in gentrification and exemplify one of capitalism's tactics for growth.

investment. As these techniques slowly benefit all firms by spreading throughout the market, rates of return decline for all. Indeed, in the classic Marxist formulation, only labour produces value. As intensification strives to diminish work-hours and the size of the workforce to cut costs, it initiates a tendency towards long-term falling rates of profit (Holgerson, 2015). The capital produced as surplus and the labour made surplus (that is superfluous) need new profitable outlets (Harvey, 2010). The production of new landscapes for profit becomes necessary. 'Creative' destruction – the destruction of previously produced assets and infrastructures – enables the reproduction of a landscape and establishes ground-zero production opportunities (e.g.: after a war) or higher profits (e.g.: the re-qualification of land-use). This process epitomizes the intensification phenomenon (higher use) and the extension drive (production of a virgin territory) and acts as a useful reminder that the survival of capitalism depends on a violent[9], political and contested process (Harvey, 2010). Extension, or what Harvey (2004) names 'accumulation by dispossession' to flesh out its political and human consequences, is a concept Rosa Luxemburg is credited for developing from Marx's work. It refers to the opening of "new frontiers for capital to re-establish the conditions for accumulation."(Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013:9) Both literal and figurative territories hitherto shielded from capitalist relationships are reined into the logic of capital seeking surplus value. The appropriation of physical space (see Li, 2012) allows for the absorption of unused surpluses of capital and labour into the construction of new landscapes and the production which can then follow (Arrighi, 2004). As markets penetrate into non-material domains, they commodify previously free or socially provisioned goods "where overaccumulating capital [can] invest in them, upgrade them, and speculate in them."(Harvey, in Hodkinson and Essen, 2015:73) The ongoing financialisation of everyday life, whereby financial instruments and rules define,

[9] I use the word 'violent' to refer to both the material violence –land grabbing, destruction or dispossession- and the metaphorical violence which is shines socially when doesn't feel at home in a landscape that has gentrified or when one cannot access services because these have been commodified. I believe dispossession is violent because it has, especially under neoliberalism, produces a landscape of no alternative. I address this in my last section, looking at how neoliberalism has magnified the 'post-political' order.

measure, trade and control investment in the production of human needs, constitutes the most recent extension drive (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013). Both the practices and ideologies of HubCo reflect how the processes of intensification, extension and rampant financialisation are now essential categories in the procurement of public infrastructure. Further, HubCo represents a particular reconfiguration of the public sector ethos and its relationship towards the 'market.'

2. Neoliberalism

In the 1970s as various crises challenged both the Keynesian-Fordist and Developmental economic models, previously segmented liberal interests colluded to promulgate a new version of capitalism: neoliberalism (Peck, 2004). Hall deems this 'revolution' to be "grounded in a radical remodelling of state and economy and the 'colonizing' of civil society by a new neo-liberal common sense."(2005:319) This common sense upheld the belief that economic growth could *only* be achieved through a redefinition of freedom as freedom for and of the market: there would be no alternative (Peck and Tickell, 2002; Bourdieu, 2002). Broadly speaking, neoliberal policies aimed to bring about the withering of social protection and labour rights; unregulated and open competition[10]; increased 'flexibility' which I see as increased pressure on workers to accept new demands on their time and working conditions; the extension of market discipline to public sector services and the commodification of previously publicly provided goods (Brenner and Theodore, 2002). This hardly accomplished the advertised weakening of the state but rather the re-invention of its relationship to the private sector (Aalberts, 2013). Increasingly, the state reconfigured its "relation to society through economisation,"(Madra and Adaman 2014:706) 'depoliticising' the economy whilst concomitantly increasing the role of large corporations in public life (Streeck, 2014). In conceptualising the state, Brenner and

[10] It is easy to be fooled: increased competition actually promotes global consolidation and conglomerates; rather than having a 'true' competition, we are much closer to processes of monopoly construction and the 'vertical integration' of the trusts system of late 19th century.

Theodore (2002) argue that a process of *rolling-back* in terms of social welfare and service provision was mirrored with a process of *rolling-out* growth-seeking strategies entrusted to the private sector. On every scale of government, public authorities reframed themselves as “territorially rooted economic actors in and of the market, rather than external complements to it.”(Smith, 2002:434) Authorities were encouraged to adopt a new entrepreneurial role and suspend ‘normal’ rules to produce a landscape geared towards growth (Harvey, 1989; Swyndegouw et al, 2002; Hall, 2005).

Cities and their public infrastructure have become an important arena of experimentation in which neoliberal processes are enacted since cities provide abundant sites for the ‘sinking’ of surplus capital (Harvey, 2010). The urban scale exemplifies the continual investment/divestment seesaw and the increasing role of the state in producing uneven landscapes geared towards growth per se that deepen wealth inequality (Smith, 1984; 2002; Macleod, 2011). The wealth of literature on gentrification demonstrates how, at first a rather local process of displacement and social polarisation, gentrification has now become a global strategy for wealth creation increasingly sponsored by the public sector through large-scale ‘regeneration’ schemes (Smith, 2002). Similarly increased competition for large-scale development projects, mega-infrastructure or global events highlights the importance of the urban scale for the realisation of neoliberal goals and the pressure upon cities to privilege economic growth (Swyndegouw et al, 2002). The promotion of the New Public Management (NPM) ideology by public authorities supported the redirection of urban policies (Hall, 2005; Streeck, 2012). NPM seeks to re-shape the public sector’s subjectivity on the model of private sector organisational culture. Employees would be expected to demonstrate ‘strategic leadership,’ ‘flexibility,’ and take on more responsibility. NPM additionally introduced business measures such as Value for Money (VfM) to assess the success of public action (MacLeod 2011; Asenova, 2013). NPM was justified by the active imposition of a meta-narrative, that portrayed the welfare state as inefficient, slow-moving, out-of-date, bureaucratic and stifling of creativity (Hall, 2005). Those critiques had previously been progressive complaints for a more democratic and liberating state. The rise of NPM practices and the changing relationships between the state and private economic actors highlight the absorption by capitalism of previous critiques and the importance of narratives in sustaining the ongoing rolling out of neoliberal beliefs.

3. *Critiques and capitalism*

From its beginning, neoliberalism built its legitimacy through an "ongoing dynamic of discursive adjustment, policy learning, and institutional reflexivity."(Peck and Tickell, 2002:392) Capitalism, in order to survive, needs to produce ideologies which people can internalise as subjectivities (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013). Chiapello and Boltanski (2005) show that 'the spirit' of neoliberal capitalism adopted in the 1980s by corporations stems from the liberal critique which demanded more freedom, flexibility, joy and creativity in society and the workplace. The management handbooks they analysed emphasised the need for more flexibility, innovation, networked governance, rule-by-project and workers' self-management (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005). Here, the discourse of neoliberalism strives for and produces a new sense of self which echoes earlier calls to democratise decision-making and demands for more autonomy and self-development in the labour process (Blondy, 2005). Similarly, the various buzzwords which pervade new policy announcements - project, empowerment, community, localism, or participatory planning - hold sway precisely because they were concepts carried by actual needs for reform and progressive yearnings. The evolution of participatory planning offers a stark example of the corruption of radical ideals by neoliberal policies.

Historically and politically, planning can be seen as one source of power wielded by the state to check the 'greed' of capital. Planning as "conceptualising the possibilities that time offers space,"(Abram and Weskalnys, 2013:2) is ideally a process to manage the legacies of the past, to organise the demands and relationships of the present and attempt to control the future. As such, planning inherently mediates “some of the central tensions in capitalist nation states,”(Abram & Weskalnys, 2013:5) that is how to secure economic growth and development without creating so much social disruption that workers cease to be productive (Lefebvre, in Stanek 2011). This is a fundamental political question: a conflict over what is best and for whom (Pacione, 2014). Democratic and participatory planning symbolises the fundamental contract between the state and its citizens: those affected by a decision should have a right to take part in the decision-making process (Vike, 2013). Whilst the high-growth Keynesianism (1945-1970s) in ‘advanced’ economies the state was heavily involved as planner of the economy and provider of services (Peck, 2004), planning itself however tended to become deemed bureaucratic, centralised and institutional. In opposition, calls for ‘participatory planning’ and community empowerment demanded more decentralisation and direct democracy (Gough, 2000). Marginalised groups mobilised to legitimise their place-based demands (Chambers, 1997). This locally-grounded activism reflects a radical understanding of politics which brings alive Lefebvre’s call for a ‘right to the city’ where dwelling itself opens a right to political power.

Yet governments are increasingly appropriating this community empowerment agenda or at least language to decrease governmental responsibility and promote neoliberal views (Gough, 2002). Since the late 1990s, UK policies have sought to introduce greater community participation and assigned its implementation to the government (Raco, 2003; MacLeod and Johnstone, 2012). The government invoked community empowerment to give a “more progressive and sympathetic cachet,”(Cochrane, 1986:51) to the reform of its functioning, to justify austerity and to promote growth-based dreams. In 1997, the Labour government’s ‘Third Way’ brought ‘community’ to the forefront of urban policy (Cochrane, 2003). In its call for modernisation, the Third Way envisioned a shift from bureaucracy to community, the decentralisation of authority through participatory management, and the revitalisation of community through a new sense of civic responsibility which, it was declared, would overcome social exclusion, enable social capital and reform the welfare state (Cochrane, 2003). The communities deemed for renewal were often denigrated as problem areas "containing intractable forms of criminality and apathy."(Atkinson and Helms, 2007:2) Yet communities also held the solution: community regeneration. Similarly, in 2010 the Conservative's notion of a 'Big Society' narrated the myth that the welfare state had produced broken, dependent and dysfunctional communities, which should be re-empowered to create "active, participative and responsible communities."(Hancock et al, 2012:352) Communities could now be engaged in good (neoliberal) governance and supported to "play a bigger role in shaping and providing services."(Lowndes and Pratchett, 2012:25; Durose et al*,* 2013) 'Community' is recreated as "the *object* of governance […], the *desired outcome* of governance […] and the *subject* of governance."(Clarke et al, 2013: 126) Yet nowhere is it the *actor* or *producer* of government policies. The discourse of community, as mobilised by various British governments, demands that people perform an active civic responsibility, self-manage and compensate for the inadequacies of market mechanisms and the welfare state (Raco, 2003).

Again, this highlights the striking ability of capitalism to absorb critique and resistance, as the notion of community was first "mobilised by poor people themselves in an oppositional mode, resisting the impoverishment created by neoliberalism."(Gough, 2002:417) Yet as Swyndegouw et al (2002) show, many large-scale projects do not face resistance. Indeed, projects and policies geared towards 'community empowerment' are couched in a language chain of unchallengeable values (Painter et al, 2013). Citizenship, community, governance, regeneration, participation, planning and empowerment are combined as warm 'buzzwords' in such a way that their heterogeneous meanings are melted into a fuzzy rhetoric (Cornwall and Brock, 2005). This expropriation of language makes it hard to articulate a political discourse of resistance: how does one oppose being empowered? Further, the neoliberal subjectivity promotes itself on grounds shared by progressive thinkers: the belief in and the fight for "the existence of forms of subjectivity that enable people to make choices."(Blondy, 2005:500) The consensus built around exciting and progressive concepts, "helps to render 'natural' and uncontestable that which is not necessarily so.''(Finlayson 2003: 67)

4. Post-political order

The previous sentence describes the gradual imposition of neoliberal beliefs as a hegemonic ideology. It becomes common sense, natural and uncontestable. Common sense as defined by Bourdieu is "a stock of self evidences shared by all, which within the limits of a social universe, ensures a primordial consensus on the meaning of the world, a set of tacitly accepted commonplaces which make confrontation, dialogue competition and even conflict possible."(2000:98) Neoliberal economic choices are presented as stemming from a natural "*reason* that can accommodate a certain degree of political variation and […] a range of [economic] epistemological and methodological diversity."(Madra and Adman, 2014: 711) Whilst internal adjustment is allowed, neoliberalism's premises can't be questioned: "There is widespread agreement over the conditions that exist and what needs to be done."(Rancière, 2003:2)

Many philosophers believe this shows the rise of a 'post-political' order (Mouffe, 1998; Rancière, 2000). They make a distinction between a 'police/politics' order and a 'political' one. The former seeks to create "order by distributing places, names, functions,"(Ranciere in Swyndegouw, 2011:6) answering the question of who should go where. The distribution is state-instituted, material, and social. The Political by contrast regards the prime conflict as being over the repartition of resources and over who belongs: who should get what. Those not named or placed will challenge the police order. They seek equality. A 'political' moment then is the disrupting activity of making demands for equality or for another ordering of reality. The rise of a post-political order refers to how these political demands are increasingly marginalized and repressed and their very existence challenged. Swyndegouw (2011) grounds these philosophical terms. Neoliberalism, he says, has brought about "the slow erosion of the public sphere," "the suturing of the political by a consensual mode of governance," and how increasingly "'doing politics' is reduced to a form of institutionalised social management whereby problems are dealt with through enrolling managerial technologies and administrative procedures."(2011:3) Politics become a consensus towards growth, which seemingly doesn't require making decisions that can divide and separate (Swyndegouw, 2011). This neoliberal agreement reconceptualises the public as users/consumers/clients rather than citizens, favours technical economic decisions over political choices and restricts the time and means needed to be political[11](Streeck, 2012).

Initially the concept of the 'user' promised to recognise use-value over exchange-value. Instead it has taken a consumeristic approach and increasingly reduces use to service (Stanek, 2011). This process "[partitions] the public to different sites: users to their services, inhabitants to their neighbourhoods and citizens to politics."(Clarke et al, 2013:137) Each to one's specified role and no spilling over. This is especially visible at and reproduced through the urban scale (Swyndegow, 2011); in participatory planning for example communities are called on to be engaged as users yet never are citizens called upon to discuss "the very opportunity of projects, to raise the discussion to a more general level, i.e. to simply do politics."(Blondieux 2002:9) This division marginalises citizens' alternative form of actions such as "disruption, objection, raised voices and organisation" in favour of a legitimate performance of what a citizen should be or do (North, 2003:122; Fraser, 2003). The rise of a technocratic approach to politics means that increasingly one discusses project's or policies' technical consequences and management. "The aim is not anymore to discuss the most legitimate actor to guarantee the universality of public services or even about the necessity of such

[11] The current management of the Greek 'crisis' – one should remember that it was provoked by neoliberal decisions as much as by structural problems - offers a chilling reminder of the power of neoliberal reason over democratic power. The denial of Greek citizens' right to determine their future transforms them in victims or individuals affected by the crisis and unable to challenge it politically.

universality, but to judge which actor is the more adapted in terms of profitability and efficiency."(Quentin, 2005; Swyndegouw et al, 2002) Finally, austerity politics further restrict the time and means necessary to do politics. Vike (2013) argued that time, once allocated at a pace slow enough to discuss, change, challenge and implement decisions based on the trust of mutual interests has been replaced by 'market time,' which overloads local administration now lacking the means and time to address their growing responsibilities. Public services are pressured into reaction rather than reflection (Vike, 2013).

5. Conclusion

I show how strategies to secure economic growth are articulated with a renewed vigour through the imposition of neoliberal practices. Cities and urban governance offer striking examples of 'accumulation by dispossession' and entrepreneurial mimicking. Further, I also underline the difficulty of sustaining critiques, as these are quickly incorporated into subjectivities that further justify the extension of market rule. This leads to a situation many scholars have described as post-political, knowing well that even if cities have never really been democratic, public authorities are increasingly heralding austerity and the involvement of the private sector as the solutions to what they regard as runaway budgets (MacLeod, 2011). For Hall (2005), the adoption of the PPP model for public service delivery in the UK epitomised the shift towards neoliberal management. I now demonstrate how HubCo similarly exemplifies the de-politicisation and privatisation of public services. Whilst, this literature review provides a slightly pessimistic vision of the possibility for the political critique of capitalism, the concept of dialectics demands that one should not abandon the possible. Indeed, as Lefebvre recalls: "to think about the city is to hold and maintain its conflictual aspects: constraints and possibilities."(1985:110) When I critique HubCo, I understand that it ameliorates previous PFI schemes in an extremely complex legal and structural framework yet I also dream of what could be different.

Chapter 1: PFIs and LIFTs, entrenching of neoliberal logic

1. *Private Finance Initiatives*

The impulse to resort to PPPs came from the Conservative government to finance infrastructure building through private debt rather than taxation or gilt-based borrowing (Hellowell and Pollock, 2007). Since, this policy has been appropriated by the New Labour and the Coalition administrations; together they signed more than 700 PPP/PFI deals to provide hospitals, schools, highways, and bridges throughout the UK. 'Partnership' means that services remain publicly funded, regulated and serviced, and that there is an expanded opportunity for the private sector to finance, design, build and maintain public buildings (Shaoul, 2005; Jowsey, 2011). In practice, the state enters a long-term service contract which supports vertically integrated oligopolies and/or monopolies (Pollock, 2004). Contracts provide a publicly-backed cash flow in the form of a *unitary charge*. The *unitary charge* covers the reimbursement of the *availability charge* which pays for the provision of an asset - interest and principal of the loan, life cycle costs and shareholder dividends - and the *service charge* to cover the hard and/or soft services provided by the facility management contractor (Hellowell and Pollock, 2007). In Scotland, the £5.2bn investment in PPPs/PFIs has created a public sector cash liability of £22.3bn (Jowsey, 2011). Annual payments have now reached £1.04bn. This figure does not take into account the new NPD scheme which entails the borrowing of a further £3.5bn (Scottish Budget, 2015-2016; See Appendix 4 for Scottish PFI/NPD projects). To explain and assess PFI schemes, I present the relevant financial and administrative terms.

Public authorities sign PFI contracts with a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), a shell company set up by a consortium of financial institutions and construction/maintenance companies. The SPV secures a mixture of *equity* capital and *debt* (senior and subordinate) funding (Pollock and Price, 2013). Senior debt, as it is guaranteed by the state, involves low risk and thus low interest rates; it often represents 90% of the debt incurred (Pollock and Price, 2013). Subordinate debt is paid after senior debt and involves more risk which justifies greater interest rates. Equity, that is money invested in the SPV rather than borrowed by the SPV[12] similarly carries higher risk and only provides dividends after profits are generated. Both equity and subordinate debt act "as a financial buffer by diverting commercial risk from the main source of funding and so reducing the overall cost of finance."(Pollock and Price, 2013:6) In lay terms: if the project fails (the risk aspect), subordinate loan and equity shareholders will not be reimbursed. I address the contrasting technical evaluations, question how value-free the tools to choose PFIs are and how PFI contracts entrench private sector values and commodify risk.

PFIs are promoted as enhancing 'proper' risk allocation, the positive contribution of competition towards efficiency and innovation, the flow of information, certainty about life-cycle costing, and the incentive to complete work on time and within budget (Shaoul et al, 2007; Jowsey, 2011; Regan et al, 2011). In addition, working in 'partnership' is touted as unlocking a 'synergy effect' in contrast to traditional procurement methods portrayed as bureaucratic, segmented and inefficient (Regan et al, 2011). Yet, PFIs have also been criticised for producing opaque contracts without clear accountability lines, higher total costs hidden by the unitary charge[13], high legal tendering fees, rigidity and a loss of public sector construction intelligence (Froud and Shaoul 2002; Shaoul, 2005; Bailey and Asenova, 2008). Further, PFIs have promoted a monopolistic tendency in public service procurement; firms "squeeze out competition,"(CPA, 2014:4) and become too big to fail, forcing the government into supporting them. This reality is far from the open and competitive market promoted in literature supporting PFIs. In addition, independent external evaluations emphasise that

[12] However often investors and creditors are the same institutions.

[13] Hellowell and Pollock (2007:353) for example show that in one Scottish hospital, annual payment to the private partner represented 13.5% of the total capital invested, a charge incurred for the next 30 years…

risk transfer was not apparent, information and monitoring poor, VfM not secured, borrowing costs consistently higher than public bonds and lastly that equity shares were yielding returns almost 10% above the market rate whilst being "contractually protected and underwritten by government."(Shaoul et al, 2007; NAO 2009; Cuthbert and Cuthbert, 2008; Pollock and Price, 2013:11)

The very tools to assess a traditionally funded project versus a PFI have been challenged as biased and revealed to be based on accounting 'tricks.' Shaoul argues that the seemingly neutral calculation of VfM in the Public Sector Comparator (PSC) mechanism[14] is "entirely hypothetical" and creates "an artificial advantage for PFI options."(2005:452) Many emphasise that the main reason for PFIs is political: PFIs are counted as off-balance sheet (Pollock et al, 2009). Public authorities can thus borrow beyond the legal limits of capital borrowing[15]. This crucial administrative advantage made PFIs the "only game in town."(Pollock et al, 2009:2) Further, the government provided capital support to PPPs loans but not to alternative funding mechanisms such as the Prudential Borrowing Framework (PBF) which borrows through conventional bonds (Bailey and Asenova, 2011). In a system where the promise of infrastructure building remains a potent election strategy, local authorities use "whatever means of capital procurement available […]; pragmatism overrides principled objections."(Bailey and Asenova, 2011:447) Stated simply, the selection of PFIs over traditional procurement is politically and ideologically driven and supported by a technical discourse used to thwart discussion.

Further PFIs contract have supported the transformation of public sector to promote private sector interests. Shaoul et al believe that the inherently biased evaluation of PFIs testifies to a "wider policy to develop [private operating

[14] This mechanism is used by public authorities to assess which option of a PFI or publicly financed [traditional] scheme is the most efficient and offers the best VfM.
[15] Pollock et al (2013) note: "nearly 96% of all UK hospital schemes were off-balance sheet; that is, excluded from public debt figures."

industries].”(2007:163) Harvey early on argued that “local government has in effect ended up underpinning private enterprise.”(1989:12) PFIs provide a blatant example of public authorities supporting the reallocation of resources from the public sector to financial capital by creating and protecting opportunities for private profits. Further, PFIs help embed private sector notions as ‘common sense’ and reinscribe the myth of the incompetent state (Shaoul, 2005). When introducing PFIs, the government judged their use “to be non-problematic.”(Shaoul et al, 2007:163) Rather, private sector involvement would solve the problems caused by the bureaucratic state which instead should focus on supporting economic success through the creation of markets (MacLeod and Johnstone, 2011).

Finally, PFI contracts introduce a new need to “identity, measure and manage risk.”(Froud, 2003:568) Contracts classify risk as ‘macro’ (legal, social, natural, political and government policy); ‘meso’ (project selection and finance, residual risk, design, construction, operation); and ‘micro’ (relationship, third party). Each risk can be allocated by contract to the state, the private sector partner or both (Bing et al, 2005). This allows uncertainty, what “we simply do not know”(Keynes in Froud, 2003:569) to be conflated with risk, “the chance that things will go wrong.”[16](Froud, 2003:570) ‘Risk’ can now be calculated, and managing risk can become a commodified service which informs policy choice. The PFI contract entrusts the provision of risk management services to the market because of the market’s assserted superiority (Aldred, 2008). Yet if the private sector “is responsible for service *provision*, the public agency is responsible for service *delivery*.”(Shaoul et al, 2007:168) The private company can disappear, the state’s duty of care cannot. In the advent of service failure, the public sector, still bound by the contract, remains responsible without having the power to control the private

[16] Froud cites the confusing language used by the Treasury: ‘‘a distinction is sometimes made in the financial literature between risk and uncertainty, ‘risk’ being used when probabilities can be precisely estimated and ‘uncertainty’ when they cannot be but [the Treasury] later states that risk is used to cover the two scenarios of risk, referring to the likelihood of something going wrong, and uncertainty, meaning that the outcome of a course of action is indeterminate or subject to doubt.’’(2003:57)

company. The political push for PFIs has privatised future profits through contractualised and secured income streams and the public assumption of risks and uncertainty. This section provides examples of the shifts addressed in my literature review; the next section examines the LIFT program, a precursor and inspiration for the Hub scheme.

2. Local Improvement Finance Trust

> "The LIFT initiative was founded in 2000 as a vehicle for partnership between the public and private sectors for regeneration and the development of facilities for primary care and community services […] LIFT is a proven value-for-money vehicle which can help to overcome some of the practical estate issues which prevent local stakeholders joining together to meet the needs of the local community by accommodating multiple services, […] under one roof. Rather than looking for alternative modes of delivery, most local authorities […] are able to engage with their LIFT partners to make full use of this proven and successful model and save expensive additional procurement costs."
> (LIFT Council, 2015)

Started with £195m, the LIFT programme aimed to leverage £1bn of private sector investment by 2010 by creating a simplified one-size-fits-all model allowing the introduction of the PFI model into hitherto un-economical contracts[17](Musson, 2008). LIFTCos are PPPs that procure small buildings under a long-term procurement arrangement; the public sector has a greater participation in the board of LIFTCos than in PFIs. Forty-nine LIFTCos across England have been set up between local authorities, private sector consortiums and public/private Partnerships for Health (Holmes et al,

[17] HM treasury guidelines recommended against PFI projects for contracts below £20m because of the high fixed administrative and legal costs. (Musson, 2008)

2006). The current total asset value of LIFT projects is estimated at £2.5bn (LIFT Council, 2015).

Arguments in favour of LIFT mirror the wider PPP context: increased savings, efficiencies, on-time delivery and/or that the social benefits of better facilities outweigh the increased costs (Ibrahim et al, 2008). In the blurb above, LIFT schemes are presented as promoting VfM by becoming the only reasonable procurement model and helping joint-location. Similar arguments are voiced in favour of HubCo. Aldred's three year-long study reflects how these 'achievements' allow for the partial privatisation of public services and the reinforcement of the belief in private sector's superiority.

LIFT projects entrench the differentiation of roles, publics, services, and assets; who can own, finance, control, benefit from or be responsible for a project. Each service can be commodified and financialised. Whereas previously the scale of PCTs or community building was not market-friendly, bundled projects enable companies to provide services in secured 20-25years contracts with exclusivity clauses (Aldred, 2008). Discursively, the justification of LIFT rests on the belief that LIFT achieves better VfM because risks are defined, measured and allocated contractually. Yet, there is no risk. Local authorities guarantee these projects' returns (Aldred, 2008a). Further, whilst a contract should establish clear roles and disciplinary mechanisms to prevent or punish failure, here the public sector cannot let the private company fail. It would damage itself (as a shareholder), its reputation (as a service provider), election possibility (as a public representative) and public mission. The contract thus creates the aforementioned double bind where the state limits its power while it retains responsibility for delivering services. In addition, LIFTCo's emphasis on 'one-stop shops' as providing desirable flexible private sector qualities, is based on the underlying critique of the rigid 'silo mentality,' each department working disconnected from the others, of bureaucratic institutions (Aldred, 2007; 2008a). LIFTCO thus mainly reproduces the already described neoliberal 'tale:' the failed bureaucratic state can only be overcome through the introduction of market mechanisms. This is inherently paradoxical. The state chooses to erase itself but can not disappear: it is needed “to create and populate contractual structures that will enable the exercise of the ‘private sector virtues’ that it seeks.”(Aldred, 2008a:29)

I find the chart produced by the Community Health Partnerships (2013) for the ten year report on LIFT initiatives revealing of this new ethos (See Figure 1). Improved health outcomes are presented as stemming from social inclusion[18], improved services,[19] business growth[20] and an improved property market[21]. All targets are equated, and capitalistic goals are inscribed into public sector values. The bottom equation “financial benefits ⇔ economic benefits” further demonstrates how entrenched financial profits are now to public infrastructure procurement. Aldred argues that LIFT symbolises contemporary UK governance, whereby the state constructs “complex, quasi-private layers within itself.”(2008b:41) Indeed, LIFT schemes have become “models for provision throughout the UK,”(LIFT, 2015) and inspired the SFT proposal for Hub. Though illuminating on many points, Aldred’s study does not address the consequences of space rationalisation, urban regeneration and place-making promoted by LIFT. I hope to address this gap when looking at HubCo.

[18] With the resolution, once cannot read, but social inclusion is measured by “engagement, employment, facilities”

[19] “quality, efficiency, linkage”

[20] “turnover, productivity”

[21] “environment, new investment, image”

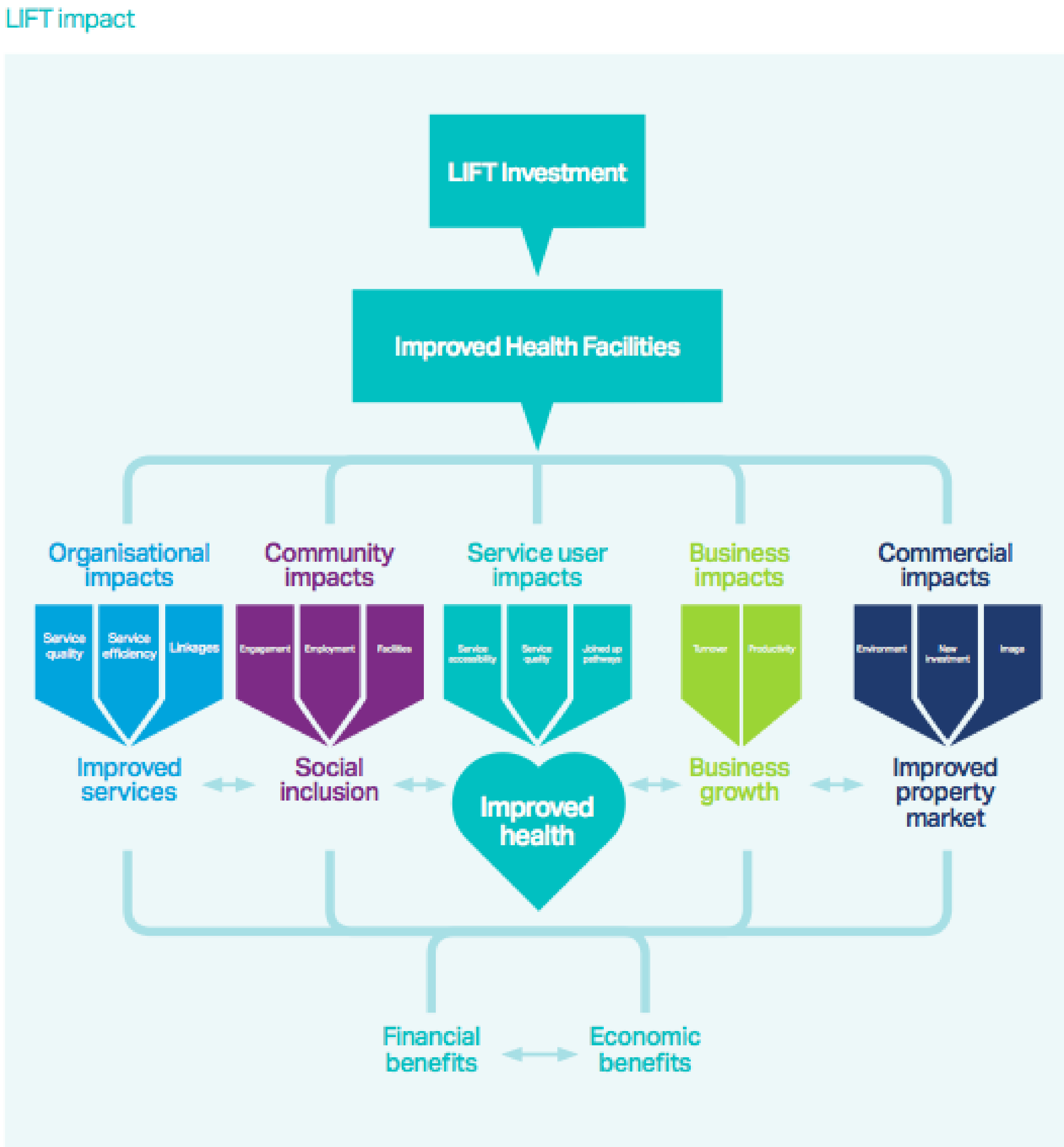

Figure 1: LIFT Impact (Amion Report, 2014:3)

Chapter 2: Hub South-East Scotland

This chapter brings together various documents, FoIs, and interviews to describe the legal structure of HubCo, and the role it has carved for itself in the procurement and financing of public infrastructure. I argue that HubCo can be seen as a structured response to the problems created by the very institutions and ideologies it serves; in so doing, it also entrenches these ideologies.

1. *Structure of HubCo*

HubCo is a public-private partnership established to procure community infrastructure in the South-East of Scotland. By bundling small projects, HubCo "generate[s] sufficient project size, volume and deal flow to attract private finance into the delivery and long term management of [services],"(NHS, 2010:5) HubCo has delivered £45m-worth of buildings and is to set partake in another £209m-worth of projects (HubCo, 2014:2, see Appendix 5 for a list of all HubCo projects). Equity and working capital are shared between public and private sector partners. Ten public authorities, "Participants," own 30% of the shares of HubCo: five Councils (City of Edinburgh, East Lothian, Borders, Midlothian and West Lothian Council); two regional NHS boards (NHS Lothian, NHS borders); Fire and Rescue Authorities; the Scottish Ambulance Trust[22]; and Police Scotland. Participants are designated as ShareholderA. The SFT owns 10% of the shares [ShareholderB]. The private sector partner SPACE Ltd owns 60% of the shares [ShareholderC]. SPACE, selected by way of "competitive dialogue,"(Fire and Rescue, 2010:2) was created specifically to bid for the HubCo contract and combines three companies: GallifordTry, Fulcrum and AECOM[23]. GallifordTry is a construction group which runs Financing and Facilities Management

[22] Because of its Trust status, it cannot enter the Territory Shareholders' Agreement and thus own shares.
[23] Previously it was Davis Langdon but the small consulting firm was bought by AECOM

branches; it owns Morrison Construction, a building company which is one of the Tier 1 contractors[24] of HubCo. Fulcrum provides strategic asset, estate and development management services (Fulcrum, 2015); they are involved in four LIFT projects. They are owned by Meridiam a "leading investor in public infrastructure" whose business model is built "exclusively on the equity financing of projects sponsored by public authorities for the benefit of the community." Meridiam manage $3bn worth of assets (Meridiam, 2015). AECOM are a large company created to "design, build, finance and operate the world's infrastructure" with an annual revenue of $19B and nearly 100 000 employees (AECOM, 2015). HubCo's CEO, Martin explained that HubCo's staff come "primarily(…) from the private sector consortium." When reading about HubCo's corporate structure, I wondered who really controls it. Ross, a project manager in the Council's procurement team uttered similar concerns:

> "For a long time, we thought it was a bit of the tail wagging the dog with the Tier1 contractor […]. Actually it's […] Morrison's or Graham's [Tier 1 contractors] that are dictating most of the things, they just go to HubCo, and then HubCo passes it to us."

The Territory Partnering Agreement (TPA) and the Territory Shareholders Agreement (TSA) define partners' roles and responsibilities. The TPA sets public authorities in a 20-year contract (5 years extendable) with HubCo. For the first ten years, Participants have to offer HubCo the first opportunity to "bring forward proposals for Qualifying Projects."(Fire and Rescue, 2010:11) Participants need not accept HubCo's bids except for NHS services which have signed an exclusivity clause for projects above £750,000. HubCo provides pre-agreed assessment mechanisms, the Key Performance Indicators, and template documents. Two boards manage HubCo: the Board of Directors in which the private consortium has a majority share and Participants have veto and safeguards procedures and the Territory Programme Board on which Shareholder A and

[24] Tier1 contractor are contractors which get the bulk of the building contract, which they can then distribute along their chain of Tier 2 contractors, or other subcontractors.

B sit. It oversees HubCo's strategic development, approves new proposals, manages the provision of services and reviews the financial performance and community benefits of HubCo projects. The corporate structure

> "is not intended to allow an *individual* Participant to put a spoke in the wheel in relation to HubCo's delivery of a given project, nor in […] the ordinary conduct of HubCo's business. [However], the checks and balances within the corporate structure provide significant protection for the *collective* interests of the Participants."(Fire and Rescue, 2010:8)

I asked, Nick, an SFT staff member to explain each entity's role. Figure 2 is an enriched version of his flowchart.

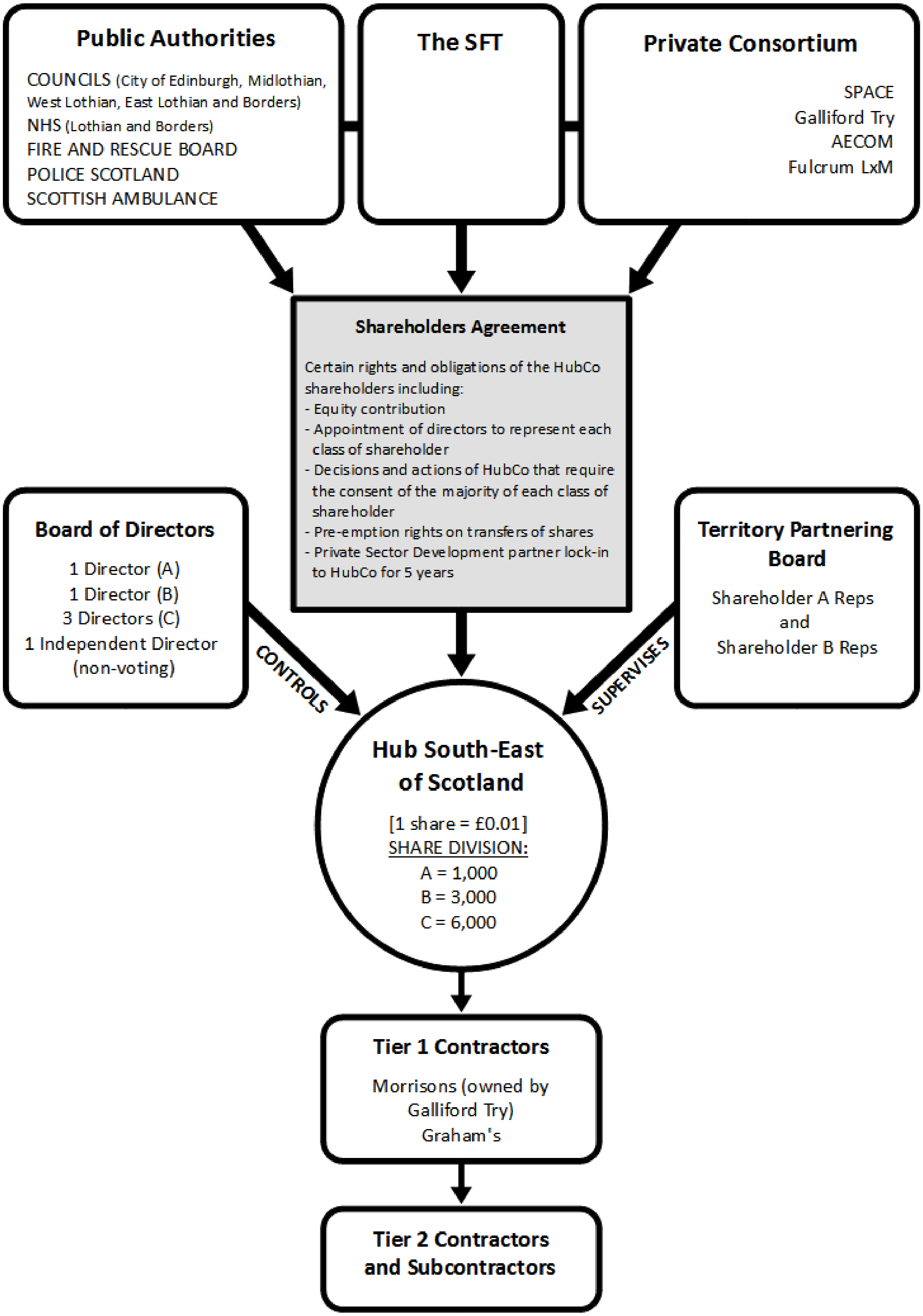

Figure 2: The legal and financial structure of HubCo

2. *What is the SFT?*

The SFT is an independent company “wholly owned by Scottish ministers.”(SFT, 2015) Originally an SNP-led attempt to propose alternative not-for-profit trusts supported by bond borrowing, the SFT has become “a mere advisor for local government borrowing from already existing and used sources.”(Pautz and Bailey, 2012:48) Tasked to deliver SNP’s electoral promise to match Labour’s previous infrastructure investment, and impeded by the capital borrowing restriction on the SG, the SFT introduced new methods of public procurement and funding: Tax Incremental Funding[25], the Growth Accelerator Model[26], the NPD[27] structure and the Hub partnerships (Asenova, 2013). Together, the SFT claims, they will “unlock nearly £6bn of additional investment into Scotland(…) over and above capital budgets, which will allow vital investment in infrastructure to continue(…) that would otherwise have to wait many years before construction could start.”(SFT, 2015) The SFT does not provide this funding; it arranges it and then presents it as a consequence-free investment answering prescient needs. Finally, SFT provides “project expertise and commercial advice”(Asenova, 2013:113) to help the public sector save money. This advice produces an interesting spatial narrative which I analyse in Chapter 3.

[25] TIF is basically a way of harnessing gentrification’s windfall profits; it allows local authorities to borrow money for infrastructure investment based on the premise of “additional business tax revenues arising in the future from the hoped for increases in property values”(Asenova, 2013:113)
[26] Previously named the Regeneration Accelerator Model. The City of Edinburgh was the first to experiment with the scheme to finance the development of the St. James Quarter (CEC, 2014)
[27] The NPD model was designed to curb the excessive rates of return in PFIs; returns are capped to ‘normal’ market rates and any surpluses are passed to a charity as there is no dividend-bearing equity (Hellowell and Pollock, 2009; Asenova, 2013:121)

3. *What does HubCo do?*

HubCo delivers “partnering services to the Participants to support the planning, procurement and delivery of infrastructure projects – developing proposals and […] delivering those proposals through its supply chain.”(Hub, Briefing paper:4) HubCo acts as a “one stop shop: I can go to HubCo, we can agree on a cost and then technically speaking they should go away and in two years time, I’ll have a nice new building.”(Ross) As HubCo has gone through a competitive dialogue process, HubCo’s chain of suppliers - builders, cost consultants, engineers, and architects - are available for Participants to use without having to abide by the burdensome OJEU process[28](Hub FAQ). As a result, Donald, an NHS project manager claims the “deal happens faster.”

For each project, there is a strong emphasis that land should remain publicly owned. The Participant then calculates the Affordability Cap (AC), which defines “the maximum available capital and/or revenue which can be committed […] [and] is set [at a level] which HubCo is comfortable enough with to accept but which is sufficiently challenging [to deliver VfM].”(SFT, 2012:2) The AC is built by benchmarking metrics of comparable projects. Thus it accounts for contractors’ built-in overhead, yet in addition, it sets an allowance for construction risk. Figure 3 illustrates this process, there the construction risk is set at 10%; advice documents mention a similar figure. In Participant’s cost estimation the potential for risk is thus taken into account.

[28] The OJEU process stands for need to respect European Union Procurement Directives. This means that for any public procurement above a defined threshold the bid must be advertised following specific delays and following specific criteria for awarding or rejecting the contracts. This process is supposed to “open up public procurement within the European Union and to ensure the free movement of supplies, services and works.”(Designing Buildings website, 2015) The public sector is obliged to be ‘fair’ and use the OJEU process.

Project Description	2 storey community resource centre comprising primary health care, library, police station, dentist. Ground conditions unknown. Brownfield, City Centre Site. Estimated gross internal floor area (GIFA), $3000m^2$					
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Basket of similar projects, tender price data excluding prelims design fees, construction stage risk. Adjusted for UK location and inflation to anticipated financial close date	2001	1640	1793	1770	1705	2033
Deduct price of external work	(253)	(26)	(312)	(347)	(201)	(124)
Deduct price of any project abnormals	(102) Piling		(85) Piling			(237) Atrium and Air-Con
Adjusted tender price data	1644	1640	1396	1423	1504	1672
Intelligent prime cost building only benchmark (mean of above)			1546			
Add site specific external works assessment			120			
Overall Prime Cost Total			1666			
Add From Relevant TPA: Prelims 10% OHP 3.5% Design Fees 8% Const Phase Risk 1% Hubco on-cost 1.5% 24% (say)			399			
Overall Intelligent construction cost benchmark	£2065/ m^2					
Estimated Gross Internal Floor Area from Accomodation Schedule	X $3000m^2$					
Intelligent construction cost	£6,195,000					
Project Specific Assessed Risks: Ground Conditions 200,000 Inflation above that estimated 85,000 Planning conditions 150,000 Enhanced energy perf. Design 75,000 City Centre logistics neighbours, 100,000 Crane oversailing etc 610,000	£610,000					
NPR Affordability Cap	£6,805,000					

Figure 3: Example of an Affordability Cap Non-School project (SFT, 2012:6)

With the AC determined, the Participant transmits a New Project Request (NPR) to HubCo. HubCo then submits a Stage 1 proposal which Participants examine. If agreed, a Stage 2 process is engaged, which adds greater detail to design, costs, finance and other characteristics. When all details are agreed upon, HubCo and the Participants reach Financial Close: they sign the contract and designate the Tier 1 contractor (See Figure 4). The SFT validates the whole process through Key Stage Reviews (SFT, 2014:3).

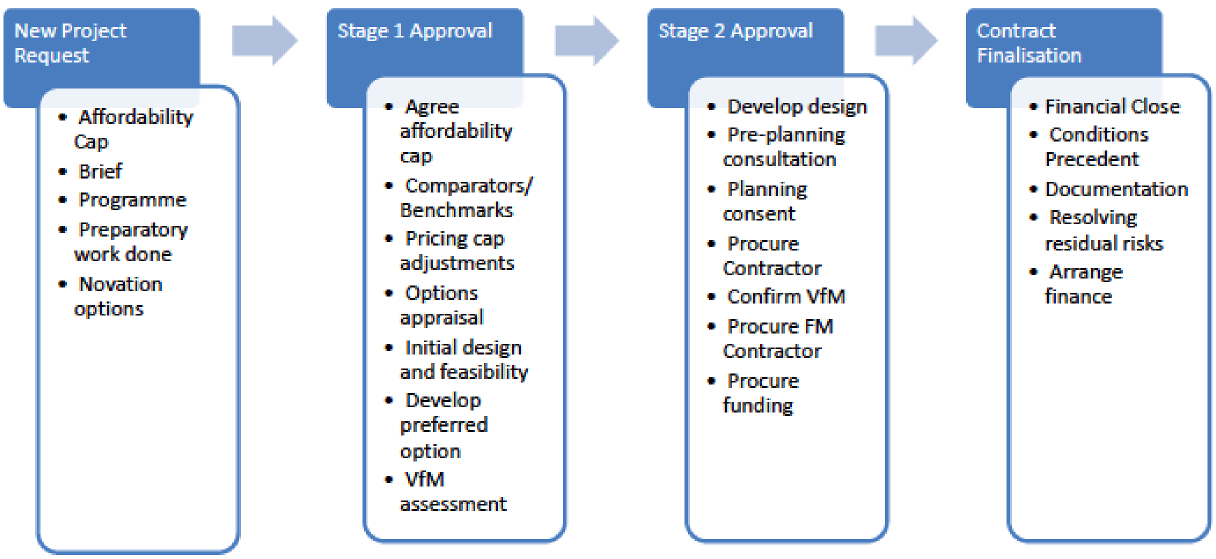

Figure 4: The project development process (SFT, 2013:7)

By entering the HubCo system, private companies gain a privileged position that allows them to bid for jobs and sign secured contracts: "GallifordTry gets opportunities to become involved in building things, maintaining things and financing things."(Martin) In addition, HubCo staff members, seconded by SPACE provide services for which HubCo receives a 1.3% Project Development Fee. They "[bring] the team together [...] coordinating [the procurement process]."(Martin) Donald presents this management role as a technical role to ensure:

> "[T]hat [Tier 1] interface correctly with us [NHS][...] so it's really two sides of the project management coin, with us doing the client-side role and them doing more the project management."

Secondly, HubCo provides "strategic support services."(HubCo, 2014:1) Norman, another NHS project manager exclaimed: "HubCo seem interested in everything we do!" HubCo can help Participants "identify strategic service priorities, [or] reconfigure existing estates assets."(HubCo, 2014:1) Finally, HubCo helps procure both Design and Build (DB) and Design, Build, Finance and Maintain (DBFM) projects. The two routes differ: one is traditionally-funded, the other is funded through private finance (Fire and Rescue, 2010).

4. *Financing*

In DBFM projects, HubCo sets up an SPV called Sub-HubCo. A Sub-HubCo is a shell company which shields HubCo from risks; if projects fail only the Sub-HubCo is held financially responsible. However, HubCo stays in charge. It determines "what the financing terms are"(Nick) and whilst "the council […], the consortium [and SFT] invest into the vehicle […], HubCo itself supervises it."(Martin) In a DBFM project, Participants raise funds through senior (90%) and subdebt (10%)[29]. For senior debt, public authorities benefit from a private funding deal with NordLB Bank secured by the SFT. Upon reaching Financial Close, senior debt is secured at a fixed interest rate, which "can be reviewed if interest rates fall."[30](Nick) My FoI request to know the rate of interest charged by NordLB got this response: "The information was provided to SFT following a competitive process on the basis that it would be held as confidential. Disclosure of this information would prejudice substantially the commercial interests of both Aviva and NordLB and could reasonably be considered to provide a commercial advantage to competitors;" Nick supposed it amounted to 5%[31]; a recent article in *The Guardian* quotes SFT's chief executive: "The interest rates on debts incurred by the projects [are] very competitive, at 3.5% to 4%, and capped for the lifetime of the contract."(Carrell,

[29] For the James Gillespie Campus DBFM project in Edinburgh, the distribution is as follows: Senior debt (90.3%), Subdebt (9.6%) and equity (0.1%) (FoI request 09/07/2015).
[30] I have not been able to substantiate this quote.
[31] He described the rate as based on the PWLB rate, with added elements.

27/07/2015) By contrast, the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB), which is the traditional source of loans for local authorities, offers loans at 2.93% (DMO, 2015). For subdebt, all partners can invest in proportion to their shares. However, "the opportunity [to invest] is not always taken up"(Nick) by Participants; GallifordTry Financing or AECOM are thus the major providers of subdebt. As a reminder, subdebt is both the most risky debt and the most profitable[32]. Finally, in a DBFM project, Participants sign a maintenance contract, which provides the maintenance company hired by Sub-HubCo a secured income for 25years. Figure 5 illustrates how DBFM projects are financed[33]. Figure 6 charts these options and introduces a key accounting difference between DB and DBFM: whether they are capital or revenue financed.

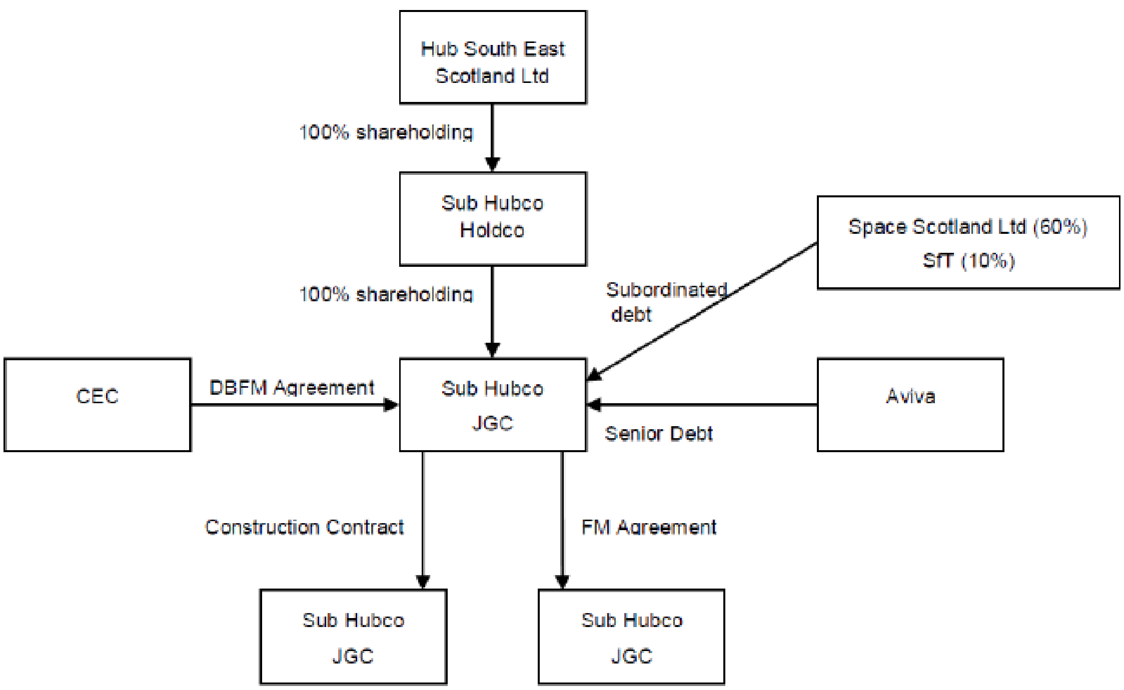

Figure 5: The Sub-HubCo financing model of James Gillespie Campus (SFT, 2013:28)

[32] I have not been able to determine whether returns on equity and subdebt are capped; I know they are for the NPD model, I assume they are similarly capped for Sub-HubCo; I cannot assert that.

[33] There are several mistakes in this chart; first not all the subdebt is showed (only 70% of it is covered); second it mentions Aviva, which is the bank providing senior debt in the West of Scotland. Yet it is the clearest example I could find.

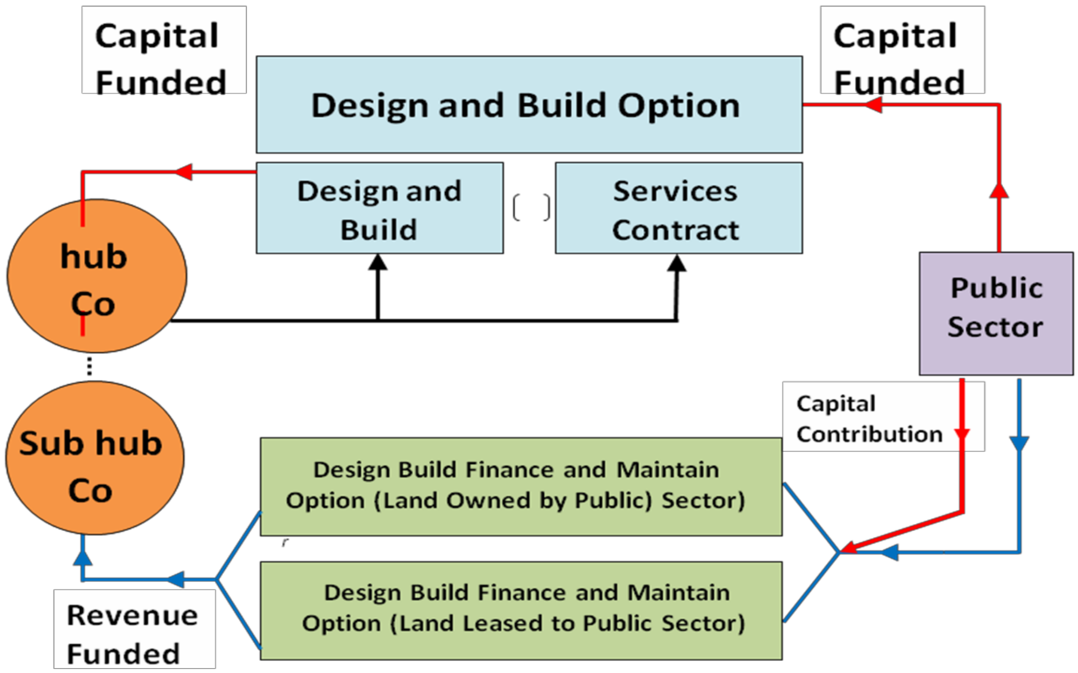

Figure 6: Financing Options for DB and DBFM projects (Hub Briefing Paper: 6)

5. Political construction of bias

The central difference between DB and DBFM projects is how they are accounted for. DB projects are 'capital' projects and on-balance. DBFM projects are 'revenue' projects, they depend on future revenue and are paid via unitary charges; they are off-balance. Rules established by the Manual on Government Deficit and Debt determine each project's accounting status. One examines who bears the construction, availability and demand risks[34](CEC, 2014). To achieve an off-balance status, two of these three risks have to be born by the private sector, then seen to control the project. This is a technocratic illusion. As explained above, the state cannot let projects fail. Finally, Participants can add 'capital contribution' to DBFM projects to decrease their overall senior debt; here 'capital contribution' refers to publicly raised funds - this capital is thus cheaper than senior debt.

[34] As my post-scriptum in Appendix 6 shows, this is of central importance and an ongoing source of uncertainty and change for the Hub and wider NPD program.

The DBFM formula attracts public authorities because debt incurred in revenue-funded projects “doesn’t have negative revenue consequences on [public authorities’] operating budgets.”(Nick) As the SG does not have access to the PWLB and cannot issue bonds, it also favours the DBFM option because its off-balance sheet status allows the SG[35] to invest beyond the borrowing constraints set by the Westminster government. Increasingly, the need to keep projects off-balance means that public safeguards are slowly eroded and that best financial options are discarded. The SFT has changed the previously described public guarantees “to satisfy requirements that the public sector are not considered to control hub companies even from the position of a minority shareholding through the ability to exercise vetoes.”(Ayrshire Council, 2015:5) Similarly, achieving off-balance status discourages capital injections:

> “It is better VfM for Local Authorities to inject their own existing capital resources or funds sources from the PWLB into Hub DBFM projects rather than utilising externally sourced finance due to their lower cost of capital […] but the SFT’s interpretation of ESA95[36] which it is stressed is **not** subject to further discussion […], is that as an absolute maximum 45% of the capital cost of a hub DBFM project can be financed via a capital contribution […]. Whilst it is clearly understood that, from a cost of finance perspective this is not an optimal solution, the need for a project to meet the requirements of ESA95 and not take excessive construction risk takes precedence over the absolute lowest cost of finance.”(SFT,2013)

This briefing note demonstrates the political imperative for public authorities to choose DBFM routes. Limits to budgetary deficits, which aim to sanitise public finances, are

[35]In the current devolution agreement, the SG’s “public financing is constrained by capital *and* revenue budgets, private financing is limited only by the latter. This regime creates a *budgetary incentive* to favour private over public finance even where the long-run cost of private finance will be higher.”(Pollock and Hellowell, 2009:407)

[36] European Accounting rules are now in the process of being re-adapted. The new rules might challenge the status quo and interpretation hereby provided, a change I address in my post-scriptum (Appendix 6).

bypassed in favour of more costly debt 'that doesn't appear' because investment must occur. SFT's guidelines illustrate how austerity is a presentational technique rather than a reality. Austerity asserts that public authorities are reducing spending when policies actually sustain private markets and tweak regulations to profit corporate interests.

6. Conclusion:

HubCo is an amended version of PFI, strikingly similar to LIFT. The returns on equity and subdebt are capped[37]; the public sector can exert some control; projects mostly reach completion faster. Secondly, HubCo offers a clear example of a hybrid structure managed by SPACE Ltd, which is a "constellation of elite, managerial and financial interest."(Peck, 2004:396) The HubCo process provides the companies that make up SPACE guaranteed markets through the vertically integrated chain of procurement. Finally, HubCo demonstrates the slow imposition of a business approach to government; many of the project management techniques and assessment - AC, 'keen pricing,' KPIs - are business tools adopted to prove how 'competitive' HubCo is.

Yet, this competitiveness narrative misportrays how HubCo actually provides an exception to competition rules. Swyndegouw et al noted that "'exceptionality' is a fundamental feature of the new urban policy."(2002:573) HubCo offers an attractive alternative to burdensome frameworks. It bypasses the OJEU mechanism and creates a monopolistic supply chain; it allows capital borrowing limits to be ignored and increases the debt burden. This is paradoxical. HubCo provides a structure to solve the problems created by neoliberal rules to ensure 'fair competition' in public bidding and regulations to bring about a 'leaner state.' Yet this solution strengthens the debt problem and helps secure the role of large corporations. This is far from the neoliberal narrative of fair markets through competition and less involved state. Nonetheless, I show now that this is the very narrative HubCo uses to claims its superiority.

[37] As said above this is an assumption.

Chapter 3: Supporting the ideological front

"We still get a good story from the same people. We were on site, for three nurseries this year. Now! […] And [Tier 1] came looking for another million pounds. Off-costs."(Ross)

For a public authority, choosing the HubCo route is a more expensive way of procuring public infrastructure. Yet, as shown above, a political necessity favours HubCo DBFM projects. Two parallel ideological frameworks drape this political necessity. The first argues that HubCo is a better procurement system through a 'good story' of VfM, joint-working, collaboration and regeneration; I contrast this marketing language with the technical assessment of public sector project managers. The second portrays austerity as a stimulator of innovation; it hides political decisions pushed by neoliberal imperatives under another set of buzzwords. This narrative provides the spatial translation of the spirit of capitalism identified by Boltanski and Chiapello (2004).

1. *VfM: Efficient procurement*

Partnership with a private consortium is presented as helping achieve economies of scale. The Territory Plan states: "The role of the private sector is crucial to the successful delivery of infrastructure. The public sector benefits from a strong and active private sector to provide sufficient competition as a driver for VfM, deploy risk management capabilities [and] develop innovative approaches."(2010:4-5) VfM is demonstrated by market indicators such as "market testing; benchmarking; and competitive tendering;"(SFT, 2013:19) by the "slicker method of getting capital projects to site;"(Ross) and by efficient risk transfer: "HubCo really [does] transfer elements of risks from NHS to the private sector."(Norman) In HubCo projects, Tier 1 and the Participant, through a "combined effort,"(Donald) assess buildings' construction, political and operational risks and arguably distribute them efficiently. For HubCo's CEO, working in partnership from the start helps partners "focus upon the main task which is to deliver the project and not be worried about whether they are going to make enough money."

> Participants' technicians challenge this picture of mutual interests:
>
> "[Though] the idea and the principles look good, I work harder on a Hub project than on a traditional project!"(Ross)

HubCo contracts are "very laborious and thorough for what they are actually doing [...] And the cost of lawyers…"(Ross) Further, it "can be an unduly bureaucratic process."(Norman) Each time public project managers need to speak with contractors, they are supposed to go via HubCo; direct contact "is frowned upon."(Norman) This creates lengthy email exchanges for details. Furthermore, the same task can be replicated throughout the process. For instance, to check costs, the SFT provide cost consultants (free), HubCo provide them (at cost) and finally Participants procure independent ones (at cost) to check that costs are competitive, because they have "trust issues."(Nick) Ross also questioned the market-testing and AC mechanisms:

> "We understand we have to pay a premium for the service, but some [costs] are ridiculously high […]. It's not competitively tendered, it's market tested. There is a big difference: [A Tier 1 contractor] would go to sub-contractors, get prices back and present them to us. But [we feel that] subcontractors' prices are inflated […]. That is immediately just fed through, Hub post it on to us. There is no real safety net […]. [Also] it may be that the people [who] quote for a job aren't necessarily the ones that end up doing it."

In addition, driving the process by value engineering means squeezing subcontractors' fees; architects for example become "quite resistant to do anything extra[…] because they are resentful about the fact that they are not getting paid."(Norman) Finally, no real penalty mechanism or incentive for Hub to finish on time exists. "Because we are a public body, we don't 'do' penalties on people […]. Penalties are very small [1000 pounds/week].”(Ross) Even so, the picture is not black and white. Though “it's almost to the point where now we are going to stop using HubCo[38][…] the attraction is that they take on the risk and they can do it quickly.”(Ross) Ross praised the effectiveness of HubCo for projects where time constraints were tight such as the Rising Rolls Programme. This success was also due to a meticulous public accountant who followed closely all costs. This paragraph challenges the benefits of HubCo on a pragmatic ground; I now introduce the intellectual critique.

2. VfM: Joint-working and space rationalisation

Beyond the partnership between public and private sectors, interviewees and documents praised how HubCo facilitates joint-working across the public sector. HubCo in its own words boosts “co-operation […], collaboration in service delivery, co-location and joint infrastructure planning and investment.”(HubCo, 2014:12) Collaboration is understood as producing buildings that house different services and creating “a partnership ethos.”(HubCo, 2014:8) This helps achieve savings. “Rather than having a council office, [a] NHS facility, [a] GP facility and all the costs associated with the building and running of those facilities, there is a synergy.”(Donald) The Wester Hailes Healthy Living Centre (WHHLC) is such a heralded space. NHS community health services, the Council Children and Family Unit and third sector charities share “this exceptional facility.”(Marie)[39]

This discourse is attractive. It rearticulates an old diagnosis, commonplace since “at least the 1960s” targeting the “lack of holism” of urban policy-making (Gough, 2002:419). Yet, this critique argued for a better state not a leaner one. With HubCo, the discourse of joint-working denigrates the state as a as irredeemably embedded in a silo

[38] I show in Chapter 4 that this is a wish of the technical team, the people in charge might think differently.

[39] There have been numerous and detailed problems, but still people are very happy with the end product, which is quite an amazing facility (Samuel)

mentality in contrast to the HubCo's "holistic approach"(Donald). Further, the joint-working discourse supports selling-off public property under the term 'property rationalisation.' The Territory Delivery Plan demonstrates how the agenda of property rationalisation closely correlates with the Hub initiative:

> "[Public Authorities] should make use of legislation which allows councils to sell assets at below market value if it is for public benefit, where this is consistent with a published policy objective, and would achieve Best Value for the public sector overall; and ensure that momentum is maintained in developing the hub initiative to support joint working across the public sector."(2010:8)

To build the WHHLC, "the sales of building […] were extraordinary. There were huge [public] properties […], which were often prime sites [sold to] gather the money together."[40](George) Similarly, the refurbishment of the Royal Edinburgh Hospital brings

> "The Ainslie clinical services onto this site which will ultimately allow us to reduce our footprint and close the Ainslie hospital[…]. [it] could be developed. And we can use HubCo for strategic support for the disposal of Ainslie[…] [they could help with] land valuation, [or] on how to best regenerate that piece of land."(Donald)

Harvey claims that accumulation by dispossession "release[s] a set of assets at very low cost. Overaccumulated capital can seize hold of such assets and immediately turn them to profitable use."(2003:149) I have not been able to determine what happened or will happen to sold-off properties. What I believe however is that arguments favouring joint-service delivery promise exciting new ways of working across sectors, whilst entrenching the neoliberal critique of the state and allowing the sale of public properties.

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[40] The business plan for WHHLC similarly mentions "The project, when completed, will enable the partners to conduct further rationalization of their property assets through the decommissioning and disposal of Springwell House, Cambridge Street, Longstone Learning Disabilities Office and the Oxgangs Path Social Work Office."(NHS, Wester Hailes Business Case, 2009:11)

3. VfM: Stimulating Urban regeneration

HubCo aims to foster urban regeneration and place-making. Norman believes that "By making an investment in an area like Muirhouse […] [we help] levering extra investment to help the regeneration process. We're sort of a catalyst." Martin and Donald voice similar hopes that HubCo by bringing investment can "creat[e] a whole regeneration area down in Leith,"(Martin) or help place-making:

> "We are spending 17million on providing new facilities […]. But we are also talking to SFT about place-making […]. Can we capture some momentum and make Harrington a better place?"(Donald)

In addition, strategic partnering services can also entail helping to "crystallise initiatives such as 'place-making.'"(HubCo, 2014:4)[41] I have not explored the enactment of this discourse further, but I think it is crucial to mention this added goal which ties HubCo's discourse to the wider regeneration agenda which justifies gentrification and furthers inequality.

4. A new ethos for what to do with space (when austerity is knocking at the door)

Bourdieu cites Pascal's quote, "law was once introduced without reason and has become reasonable."(2000:94) I believe the SFT and HubCo produce narratives to normalise austerity. SFT and HubCo documents mention the "unprecedented and significant change"(Territory Strategic Plan, 2014:2) which public authorities now face,

[41] HubCo's report mentions how the Muirhouse Place Making initiative "was allocated £59,000 of capital enabling funds, [and] completed its initial Place Making study. A further £438,000 of capital enabling funds has been allocated to the construction costs of the works resulting from this study. Following this, a number of additional Place Making initiatives have been initiated by Participants. These include Haddington in East Lothian, Eyemouth in the Scottish borders and four neighbourhood studies in the city of Edinburgh - wester Hailes, craigmillar, Leith and Muirhouse. Enabling funds have been allocated to all of these initiatives and Hubco have seconded a fulltime resource into the council to help take these four initiatives forward."(2014:9)

and alludes to the need to “make new projects happen with no money.”(HubCo, 2010:7) Nick argues: “[The public sector] ha[s] spent an awful lot of money, and it’s only when the money runs out that everyone says oooh maybe we should do things differently.[…] As they say ‘necessity is a mother of invention.’” This again echoes the hegemonic portrait of the state failing. Further ‘money running out/no money’ is a way to refer to ‘austerity’ and normalise it. Yet, all is well; HubCo’s strategic services will “ensure that innovative solutions are found to do more with less.”(HubCo, 2014:13)

I explore one solution HubCo and SFT have sought to introduce: a new spatial imagination for the public sector. I analyse SFT’s guideline document “What can we do with the office?”(2015) I acknowledge that it is only one document, that it provides guidelines which Participants remain free not to follow, that it is difficult to assess its influence. Yet I find it an incredible document, which seeks to refashion public services as businesses and justify cuts with an appeal to reason alongside exciting buzzwords. As it simply argues, “[U]sing workplace intelligently [helps] to cut the cost of business.”(p.5) The document aims:

> “2.To encourage a more corporate and strategic approach to property asset management and the planning of space
> 3.To assist organisations in their journey of achieving a more flexible, nimble and space efficient office portfolio which can deliver improved business outcomes and services
> 4.To develop a common language around workplace and how to measure and benchmark space standards.”(p.4)

Because public services “lack a corporate approach” and “misuse space”(p.9) seeing it as a free cost, there is the need to:

> “[E]nable more flexible and agile work practices. Improvement of poor desk utilisation, and the intensification of space-use needs to embrace as well as new ways of working, best practice space planning,

> rationalisation, and consolidation[42]"

adding later the need for "improved work life balance and improved spatial efficiency."(p.9) Finally, mentioned benefits include:

> "[R]educed operational costs[…], the release of capital value[…], efficiency and effectiveness gains through the creation of more appropriate space-efficient workplaces that deliver business outcomes."(p.4-5)

The document produced a number of figures to illustrate its solutions; enjoy Figure 7, Figure 8 and Figure 9.

[42] This is a direct quote; grammatical confusion belongs to the document.

Model workplace principles identified in Working Beyond Walls

Space allocated by need not status

Reduced storage practices (personal, team and corporate)

Clear workplace policies

Desks shared not owned

Reduced allocation of space for desks

Higher proportion of shared ancillary and support space

Cellular space available for use but not owned

A rich variety of alternative work settings

Increased utilisation of the workplace

Centralised recycling and waste disposal

Rationalised copying and printing

Employees empowered to work across locations

Exploitation of new technologies

Emphasis on sharing not owning

Figure 7: Model Workplace principles (2015:11)

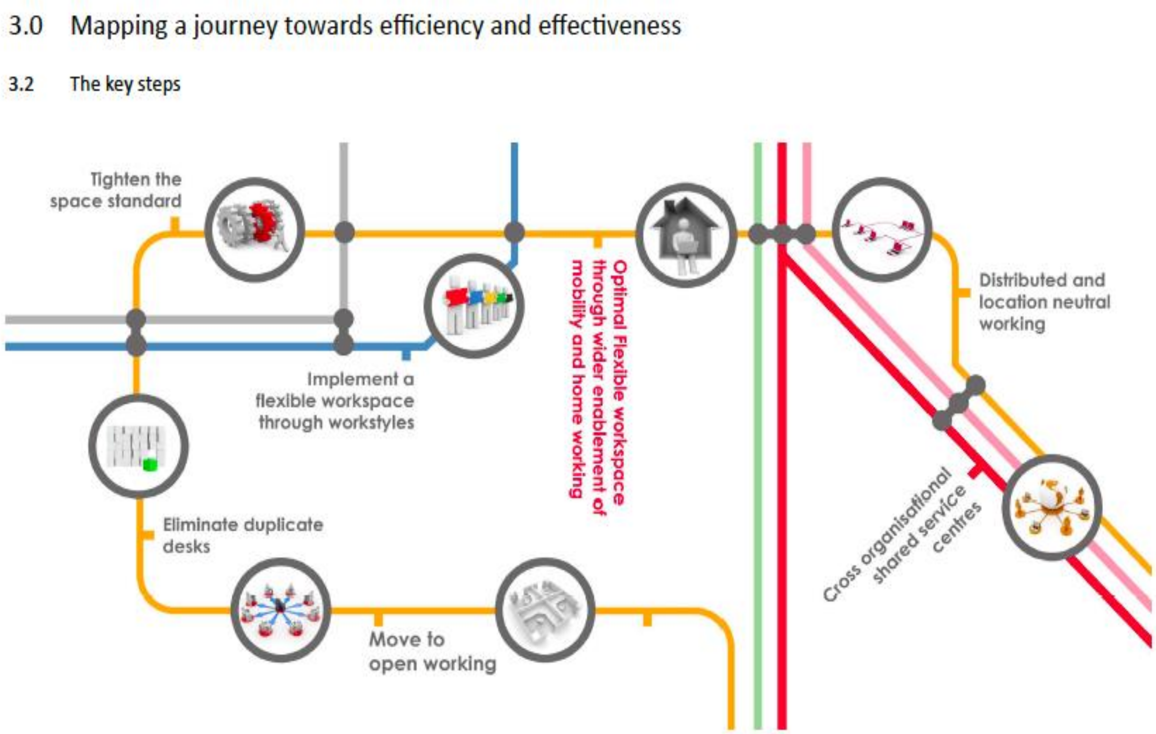

Figure 8: Mapping a journey towards efficiency and effectiveness (2015:16)

Figure 9: Progress towards the distributed workplace (2015:20)

SFT's document lays out a spatial imagination. This "journey of change[43]" promotes "flexible" and "fluid" ways of working from home and/or blurring the "boundaries between work and leisure." Further, it strives for public officers being "empowered" and wanting to work in "any-space/place." I read this goal as no-space/place: nowhere. In trying to promote the freedom to choose to work anywhere, the document attempts to rationalise the imperative to diminish cost associated with space and labour. This goal surfaces in the document's success stories. These focus on hot-desking and on municipal plans to reduce public properties: Glasgow Council's plans to go from 19 properties to 6; Aberdeenshire Council's intention to downsize from 98 properties to 54 and Fife Council's planned shift from 97 properties to 31. This is an ideological manoeuvre parading as cost cutting. In a 'spirit' similar to what Boltanski and Chiapello (2005) identified, it sells the intensification of the public sector spatial footprint, that is reduced working space because of the councils' needs to cut budgets, into an exciting cultural change.

Whilst not wanting to fall into simplistic environmental determinism (practices always stretch intended meanings), I agree with Bourdieu's call to examine "the low injunction and silent reminders of the structures in inhabited physical space [which] are one of the ways through which social structures slowly become mental structures and systems of preferences."(1990:255) When public buildings are designed according to this imagination, I fear their design will help reinforce the mental structures neoliberalism seeks to bring about. Of course granting more freedom to workers and encouraging people to work across departments are important (and attractive) goals, however when these goals are inscribed in space, simply put, there are fewer public buildings which means fewer formal places for people to meet public officers. Blomley warns of the power of narratives which help "constitute that which they narrate [….] [and] can render dominant stories persuasive and pre-ordained, making alternative stories hard to tell."(Blomley, 2004:51) By making this 'journey of change' so attractive,

[43] All quotation marks here refer to words used in the document.

the SFT/HubCo are making it hard to imagine why and how it is also connected to less laudable goals.

Furthermore, HubCo's involvement with packaging cuts goes beyond the production of documents. HubCo's workers act as consultants to help local councils deal with and implement cuts. The company has seconded one staff to work on the Better Outcomes through Leaner Delivery (BOLD) team –"the council's corporate change facilitation programme that is utilising the knowledge and skills of staff and partners to help tackle the challenges being faced by the council."(HubCo, 2014:39) The BOLD programme aims to create a "lean and agile" Council[44]. This plan to "reduc[e] cost and improv[e] customer outcomes,"(CEC, 2015:2) epitomises the shift introduced by neoliberalism: the public sector thinks of itself as a business and of its citizens as clients. Restricted by austerity, the council turns its gaze inwards to say that it is doing something. Vike (2013) noted that in times when there is little room to propose political alternatives, the public sector attempts to re-organise services more efficiently or reform working practices. World renowned consultants and similar exciting buzzwords, charts and ambitious targets given these internal adjustments legitimacy. Yet this, I believe, resembles a performance of activity for activity's sake. It is a long way from the political question of how to solve the crisis.

[44] I found the fees set aside under urgency procedures for consultants quite enraging: PwC received £170k for one of its many blueprints, Ernst and Young have a commercial excellence contract, Deloitte were hired at a cost of £248k…(2015:2)

Chapter 4: The Political

I analyse the practices and ideologies previously uncovered in the light of the 'political,' that is the possibility for opposing what it happening and fighting for other ways of distributing power, making decisions, and simply building public infrastructures.

1. Language

The first thing is the complexity of language. I had to (and so did you) row among the constant use of acronyms; the mouthful of buzzwords; the repetitive sub-clauses; the diversions of words' colloquial meanings; and the incredible layers of technical terms. I believe the length of Appendix 1 suffices to demonstrate acronyms' prevalence. Anecdotally, when I was interviewing Andrew, a project manager listened in. She walked me out and thanked me for the interview. She told me she had learned a lot about what she was involved in from hearing her manager explaining the HubCo process to me. Both the obscurity of the language and the complexity of the process support the retreat of the political. How to contest if one does not even understand?

Further, how to contest when words are either given an attractive feeling and/or buried under technical definitions? The previous section provides enough examples of chains of exciting but meaningless terms. They become unchallengeable 'goods:' both rational and with a taste of freedom/creativity/fun. The buzzwords act to distract from the higher cost of procurement and a political choice of austerity. The terms 'revenue-finance' and 'capital-finance' show how meaning can elude HubCo's language. 'Revenue-finance' refers to projects which incur higher debt through borrowing from private sector sources, yet the word revenue sounds positive, as if revenue-financed projects in fact bring in revenue. 'Capital-finance' took on different meanings for different people. For most, it belongs to a 'budget' vocabulary and refers to projects being funded by publicly borrowed money. For Peter however, irrespective of the funding route projects had followed, all projects were capital-funded:

> "Obviously there is money that needs to be capital expenditure in the first place, which I think may well be paid back through a revenue stream […] [Senior debt procured through SFT] is still a capital. For the purposes of the council, you know the pot of money is used for capital, as in, it is a physical thing."

Whilst again this is an anecdote, it illustrates how different meanings hide under words, and the tendency to forget where money ('capital') comes from once it provides funds to invest and build. Finally, I have provided bountiful examples of HubCo drawing upon a technical vocabulary and imposing an arduous process. Not just in documents, but in the very discourses put forward to promote HubCo and in the picture officers paint in interviews, HubCo and the SFT markets themselves as providing technical support over and beyond political choice.

2. *Is it 'political' to choose to work with HubCo?*

In its mission goal, the SFT/HubCo continuum is portrayed as non-political: for instance, Martin argued that "we have to be non-political within our company." Similarly, Nick prides himself "in [SFT]'s independence from SG […]. We were created by the SNP. Having said that […], [now] most people accept us […] as a force for good rather than anything that is politically driven. Hopefully, the evidence-base suggests that we are here to make things better, not driven by politics." Sir Grossart, SFT's CEO put forward this same portrait when presenting the SFT to the finance committee:

> "[NPD/SFT][45] might generate a return, but it will not generate excess profits. You [David Whitton] are trying to push us into some semantic and

[45] His answer is vague and does not allow me to identify whether he refers to the SFT or the NPD model.

> formulaic corset. I understand that you will want to debate these political points with the Government but, quite frankly, as far as we are concerned we are ecumenical[46] and are trying to secure value. As a result, we might use a wide variety of financing methods."(16.03.09, Finance Committee)

But HubCo itself imposes a 'semantic corset' to argue that choosing private financing methods is 'just' a technical exercise. Streeck (2014) notes that the shift towards a post-political order is shown by the shift from policy decisions attributed to individuals or parties who can be held accountable towards policies stemming from market judgements which "seem to fall from the sky without human intervention."(2014:62) The terms used throughout the documents and the HubCo process as presented by the company build a narrative of a value-free, fair and factual institution. When public authorities choose to employ HubCo, it's not a political judgment but a rational technical exercise based on market mechanisms. However, techniques are always value-laden and translate political choices, contrary to the myth that techniques "*in themselves* lack substantive content."(Tribe, in Shaoul, 2005) This dissertation gives examples of how technical actors contest this argument.

Yet for HubCo's CEO, HubCo "is a non-profit making [company](…) because all of the different partners investing in [HubCo] have different interests. The private sector's interest is that they have access to a big pipeline of projects." I believe this clarification plainly states the problem: the public sector is giving a large conglomerate of multinational firms privileged access to public contracts. Once under contract, these firms have a guaranteed income, they are in a monopoly position. This is clearly an 'unfair' economic advantage, which prompts other companies (the newly created SCAPE[47]) to gain access to this closed and profitable system (CEC, 2015). Further choosing to support this company and protect its market results from the political

[46] In the meeting, he uttered the word ecumenical six times.

[47] SCAPE is the same type of conglomerate, with different companies involved and a name that just switches the letters around.

imperative to secure growth. Lastly, 'political' in their descriptions refers to the connection of HubCo/SFT with political parties. I find this deeply ironic given how politically across the board consensus reigns on private financing.

The SFT and what it seeks to implement (NPD, TIF, Hub…) can be seen as the outcome of a 'growth-coalition.' The SFT was advocated by the SNP; yet the NPD structure was first tested by a Lib-Dem council in Argyle & Bute and then introduced to Scotland by the Labour-led administration (Hellowell and Pollock, 2009); the Hub initiative "followed the success of Building Schools for the Future and the NHS LIFT program,"(Asenova, 2013:1011) both Labour policies; Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 highlight how similar both initiatives are; John Swinney admits that "we inherited the HubCo proposal from the previous Administration;"(19.11.2009) the TIF structure is being promoted by the Conservative Government (Danson et al, 2012)… All parties agree over what should be done and how to do it. Private financing is the solution for more investment and to secure this financing, one has to create complex entities "elegantly safeguarded from the electoral process and operating beyond public accountability."(MacLeod 2011:2635) Beyond the opaque language and the cross party consensus, HubCo is also 'safeguarded' from scrutiny through the 'efficient' partitioning of roles during the HubCo process.

3. *Partitioning the public: who sets up and controls what*

When I say partitioning of the public sector, I mean the creation of different entities with different roles that someone from the public can only unravel with great difficulty.Roles – to advise, to decide, to control, or to implement – are divided and shielded one from each other. The SFT claims to re-create "a centre of expertise to help deliver public infrastructure projects. [Participants] use us as […] a public sector corporate memory."(Nick) Yet this centre is located outside of the public sector. Though the SFT claims to "promot[e] the public interest by adopting a public sector ethos,"(Asenova: 2013:115) it is not accountable to the public in the same way as public authorities[48]. Assessing PFIs in Australia, O'Neill (2010) laments the destruction of the corps of civil servants who knew how to deal with the private sector. Similarly, the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland mentions "a growing concern across Scotland that the proven-in-house expertise available to public bodies is becoming increasingly threatened."(2011:10) The SFT provides an answer to the problem introduced by PFI – the loss of public sector expertise, but this answer is proposed within the neoliberal agenda to help the public sector become more efficient by introducing a corporate mentality.

The partition is also visible in the different levels of decision-making: different entities and pressures influence local authorities. The SG preference for HubCo projects overshadows local decisions. The SG provides "financial support to assist the Hub Partners with local project management costs, initial set up costs, procurement support costs and organisational development activity."(Fire and Rescue, 2010:4) The SG also provides revenue support grants, representing 80% of the cost of the unitary charge "if [Participants] go down [HubCo]'s route,"(Nick) whilst also requiring sometimes as "a condition of the funding that [Participants] use the Hub vehicle."(Nick) When I asked how projects were decided upon, Nick answered that once Participants submit a Project Request: "[The SFT] approve[s], [HubCo] appoint[s] [the Tier 1 contractor]." When deciding on a procurement route, Participants are asked as ShareholderA "to act in the best interests of HubCo."(Fire and Rescue, 2010:14) At the council level, there seems to be little feedback between the technical, the financial and the political teams. Peter claims that most technical managers "would rather do anything else than use HubCo. But it's not up to us." Similarly, the technical team doesn't look at the financial aspects of a project: "We don't get involved in […] getting that money, that's for the [the finance

[48] When answering my FoIs, they did not disclose any of the terms of the contract between SPACE and Participants or between NordLB and the SFT, because they claimed this is commercially protected information, which could threaten these companies' markets if disclosed…SFT in addition are not elected.

department] to get me that money."(Peter) Navigating throughout the different levels, I had a hard time understanding why the HubCo route was chosen and who chose it.

Finally, the effects of the partition become visible in the different roles HubCo and Participants assume with when implementing a project. HubCo's CEO believes that HubCo helps the council to "focus on providing teaching service and all the things that they do, so they don't have to worry about the building because we [HubCo] look after that." This description repeats the credo of the private sector's superiority in delivering construction, financing and management services[49]. A similar logic asserts the necessity for risk transfer: the HubCo briefing document praised the reliance on HubCo because, "The risks of property ownership and maintenance is moved away from the Participants, allowing them to focus on service-delivery issues."(2015:9) The public sector's domain is thus reduced to the remaining services not maintained by the private sector.

4. *Partitioning the public: how do we decide?*

The CEO's comment highlights the importance of risk in HubCo's neoliberal tale. 'Risk' is a technical term. It refers to something 'going wrong.' In the construction industry, things often do. PFI schemes and HubCo in particular, turn this potential into a commodity. SPACE profits from delivering 'risk management services;' HubCo is preferred over traditional procurement routes because it 'takes on the risk;' a Sub-HubCo structure is added to shield HubCo from 'risks;' land should stay publicly owned except if there is 'residual risk.'[50] The 'risk' bucket is passed on, to the point where the structure legally responsible [Sub-HubCo] is a shell company, with no employees. This

[49] The AECOM website is filled with promotional videos and lobbying excerpts whose basic line is "PPPs are about allowing the private sector to do what they do well and allowing the public sector to do what they do well."(AECOM, 2015)

[50] Although I have not encountered a scheme where either a Hub or Sub-Hub company had ownership of the land, the option is still available: "in cases where it is deemed appropriate (eg where there is a *meaningful residual value risk to transfer*) the land may be owned by HubCo and the facilities leased to the occupying Participant in which cases the facilities will be owned by HubCo when that lease comes to an end."(Hub FAQ)

tale persists because accounting rules support the fiction that public authorities do not control these projects and, as a result, public authorities can circumvent budgetary constraints. It is not 'their' publicly raised capital, it is borrowed against a future income stream. I have a few comments. The first addresses the DBFM model which HubCo exemplifies.

First, this narrative of risk relies on the belief in the inherent superiority of the private sector in delivering services: the myth of 'urban privatism.' Second, the public sector pays for this risk transfer. Figure 4 shows how 11% of a project's AC is allocated for construction and site-specific risks. The demand 'risk' remains with public authorities, if they chose to decommission a project, they still have to pay the unitary charge[51]. In order for the partnering contract to work as a "disciplinary mechanism, the public sector must be prepared to allow projects to fail […] [and] to punish underperforming firms. Yet this is unlikely and arguably socially undesirable."(Aldred, 2008:34) The public sector cannot 'risk' losing projects. Third, risk has become a political technology, which the resort to DBFM pathways for public construction (through HubCos, NPDs, LIFTCos or PFIs) shows. Behind this technical curtain, public authorities evade their budgetary limits. Arguably, this is not new. Public authorities have favoured PFIs from the start, because they allow this manipulation. Further, I do not believe this is a fundamentally ill-intended strategy on the part of public servants. However under austerity, the Hub initiative allows public authorities to buy time, win votes, and pretend they abide by austerity rules. In Scotland, HubCo adds the necessary 'spirit' to help authorities maintain the austerity myth.

By contrast, I believe HubCo's DBFM projects and vision for the public sector introduce more 'uncertainty' (dare I say 'risk'). Because all DBFM projects share the

[51] It would be interesting to know if termination clauses are included in the contracts, that is if the public authority terminates the contract before it's term date. Having not been able to access DBFM contracts (I had asked for the James Gillespie School one), I still do not know.

same standard contract to keep them off-balance sheet, current discussion of how the new European accounting rules apply to large Scottish DBFM projects are slowing progress on smaller ones. Work on the Northwest Edinburgh Health Centre has been paused until the resolution of the Aberdeen Bypass's status, a fact Steven laments: "Now try to explain to people: we can't start because of this accounting issue […], actually some experts want to have a look at the Aberdeen bypass…It doesn't sound good, or convincing or sensible." People who have been waiting eight years for a new building, have to wait longer because accountants need to examine a project that has nothing to do with theirs. In addition to the austerity constraints, public authorities incur greater costs when procuring buildings through DBFM routes. Moreover, the spatial reorganisation and BOLD programme supported by HubCo off-load uncertainty on public servants. Workers and possibly fewer of them are supposed to do more, with less space and under more 'uncertain' working conditions[52].

[52] The BOLD programme attempts to convince more people "in light of the Council's no compulsory redundancy pledge, every effort will be made to achieve the required reduction in roles on a voluntary basis where possible. The necessary level of cost reduction cannot be achieved solely by redeploying surplus staff elsewhere in the organisation."(CEC, 2015:110)

Conclusion:

After a year of paddling through obscure language, convoluted sentences and meaningless terms, I craved for some bullet-point thoughts. What is HubCo and what does it do?

- Hubco is an entity guided by a growth-logic, formed, populated and promoted by the state and accountable to it on a 40% basis.

- HubCo is controlled on a day-to-day basis by the private sector, for the private sector. It creates more opportunities for large conglomerates to get involved in delivering, financing and maintaining public buildings which had previously been unattractive to business due to their small scale.

- Public authorities have come to support a private monopoly in the name of efficiency. HubCo provides two procurement routes: the DB and DBFM. When in the DB route, the private consortium SPACE accesses a guaranteed market; when working with HubCo Participants are required to use the contractors supplied by HubCo and often belonging to companies making up SPACE. When in the DBFM route, Participants can only borrow senior debt from NordLB; all partners in proportion to their shareholding provide sub-debt. This gives a large role to GallifordTry and AECOM. Finally, when in DBFM projects, Participants are required to sign the long-term management contract with GallifordTry FM.

- HubCo's DBFM's apparatus is a more expensive way of procuring infrastructure, even though it answers several critiques waged against the PFI model.

- HubCo provides strategic support services. In this role, it helps authorities comply with austerity requirements and 'rationalise' their spatial footprint. This is a political imperative for intensification: public authorities see their budgets cut by the central government and need to learn to make do with less.

The HubCo initiative shows the extent of the hegemonic belief in and regulatory imposition of neoliberal doctrines, whereby to solve problems created by neoliberalism, such as burdensome but 'fair' market tendering procedures and budget caps on spending, the political consensus imagines solutions which re-entrench neoliberal values and private interests. When I asked Peter, why the government had not just made councils' procurement teams abide by less strict rules, he answered: "If we had that [more flexible rules to abide by], we could save a lot of money.[…] But our procurement rules dictate that: if you have just made a real mess of one of my jobs, i can't say to you, […] you're not working for me again, like anyone else in the private sector can." Making the public sector resemble the private sector when choosing contractors, is not an option. Yet making public authorities behave like businesses when that allows private companies to provide more services (through their direct and 'unfair' chain of procurement or when providing 'strategic consulting services') is good practice driven by VfM.

Finally this dissertation questions whether investment is always a public good. All through the dissertation, different actors boast about large numbers of 'increased investment' directed to crucial infrastructure. This sidesteps the greater cost of this investment. It is difficult to be critical of new infrastructure, which often "the community has been very vociferous about"(Steven) and of investments which can boost the economy. I however question who harvests the profits from the tools implemented to support the myth of reducing state's debt.

Appendix 1: List of acronyms and financial terms

Availability charge: part of the unitary charge which pays for the interest and principal of the various laons, life cycle costs and shareholder dividends.

Capital Funded: A project funded through conventional borrowing mechanisms, which the public authorities pay by increments.

CEC: City of Edinburgh Council

DB: Design and Build (procurement route)

DBFM: Design Build Finance and Maintain (procurement, financing and management route)

Dividend: amount transferred to equity holders based on the profits of the company and on each shareholder's equity.

DMO: Debt Management Office

Equity: Capital invested in a company, often by shareholders which receives returns as dividend.

FoI: Freedom of Information

HubCo: Hub South East of Scotland

Hub initiative: All the different HubCos set up across Scotland under the management of the SFT

KPI: Key Performance Indicators, measurements set by HubCo to demonstrate its progress and achievements

LIFT: Local Improvement Finance Trusts initiative for the procurement of NHS and community health buildings in England

On/Off-Balance: a status achieved by infrastructure projects according to different rules, mainly assessing which actor bears which risk. . The current introduction of new rules across Europe (ESA 2010) is prompting interesting juggling exercises for public accountants.

ONS: Office for National Statistics

PBF: Prudential Borrowing Framework, a borrowing frameworks through public bonds accessible to local authorities

PCT: Primary Care Trust

PFI: Private Finance Initiative

PPP: Public Private Partnership

PWLB: Public Works Loan Board, the main institution for public loans, accessible only to local authorities

NHS: National Health Service

NPD: Non Profit Development, a variant on the PFI scheme where returns are capped to 'normal' market rates of return

NPM: New Public Management, an ideology promoting the change of the public sector ethos towards resembling that of businesses

NPR: New Project Request, the document Participants must draft to start the procurement process with HubCo

Revenue Funded: a project whose finance is provided through senior and subdebt, and who is covered by the payment of unitary charges.

Service Charge: a part of the unitary charge paid by public authorities to cover for the maintenance and hard/soft services provided by the facility management contractor.

Senior Debt: Senior debt is debt procured from private borrowing which is paid in priority in case of its borrower defaulting. It is less 'risky' and as a result cheaper

SFT: Scottish Futures Trust, the private company set by the SNP to save "money on bricks and mortar" (SFT, 2015) in the public procurement process

SG: Scottish Government

SNP: Scottish National Party

SPV: Special Purpose Vehicle, a shell company set up to shield the main company in a PFI contract from default risks.

SubDebt: or junior debt, is debt procured at a greater interest rate but which is more 'risky' as in the case of a loan defaulting, it is paid after senior debt.

Unitary Charge: The unitary charge is a annual or bi-annual increment paid by public authorities to the SPV structure to cover both the availability charge and the service charge.

VfM: Value for Money, one way of assessing projects, plans and businesses.

Appendix 2: Interviewees: Roles and Names

All these names are pseudonyms, yet if someone knows the HubCo company, they will easily guess who is who, given how few people are involved.

Martin is the CEO of HubCo.
Ross is member of the CEC internal technical procurement team.
Nick is a senior staff member of the SFT, working both in HubCo and in the SFT.
Donald is a senior project manager for the NHS.
Norman is a local project manager for the NHS.
Marie is the head of a third sector organisation.
George is an active participant in that same organisation.
Samuel is the head of a Council social work unit and actively involved in the BOLD programme.

Appendix 3: Interview Schedule

:

Background:

- What were the problems HubCo was set up to solve?
- What is HubCo's purpose?
- What were the financing mechanisms there before? inspirations
- Who were the actors involved in setting it up?
- How was it received at first?

Rationale:

- why was a specifically Scottish mechanism/ procurement vehicule introduced?
- What is the rational behind HubCo?
- Was there any academics reports/ international or national examples that inspired the structure?

Structure:

- How does HubCo work?
- ⇨ Can you draw me a diagram of the different actors involved, and what are their roles?
- ⇨ Why a specific private company, though owned by Scottish ministers?
- ⇨ who are the members on the Board
- ⇨ what are their roles/ responsibilities?
- ⇨ How are decisions made? Structures/plans approved?
- ⇨ Who staffs HubCo and what are their roles?
- ⇨ What is the ownership structure?
- ⇨ Who employs who?
- ⇨ What are the services HubCo provides (support, finance, management, consulting)?
- ⇨ What is HubCo's expertise?

Specific projects:

- ⇨ how are projects selected?
- ⇨ How is the design chosen?
- ⇨ How are private contractors chosen? What is attractive to them?
- ⇨ How are costs calculated? Affordability cap?
- ⇨ How are the risks shared? How are risks accounted for/calculated / paid?
- ⇨ How are the relationships between different actors played out: Space, SFT, council?

- How is HubCo structured financially?
- ⇨ what are the sources of funding?
- ⇨ Difference between NPD, PFI, DB, DBFM, TFI, European Bank Loan, Public Board Loans?
- ⇨ Can you tell me more about the ea and NordLB deals?
- ⇨ How do the sub-hubs work, and what is their benefit?
- ⇨ Who provides the capital, who provides the loans for revenue funded projects?

Specificity of HubCo:

- How does Hub conceive of joint-service delivery?
- How are the various community members involved? Engaged?
- space rationalization/management ethos?
- Property portfolio management? Disposal?
- What is HubCo's role in urban regeneration?
- Does HubCo have a political stance?

Limits/ Lessons:

- What has worked?
- What have been the sources of money saving?
- What has not?
- What brought you to HubCo, what is your background and what has working for HubCo taught you?
- What are the accountability structures build in?
- In an ideal world, how would you imagine urban infrastructure building?

Appendix 4: Scottish PFI and NPD projects and the unitary charge

NPD/PFI projects as of 31st of October 2013, SFT website, 2015
Total capital value: **£**6.18bn

Done deals by Procurement

	No of Projects	Capital Value £m
PPP/PFI	88	5715.2
NPD	5	464.9
Total	**93**	**6180.1**

Done deals by Type

	No of Projects	Capital Value £m	Average cost/project
Colleges	1	8.6	8.6
Hospitals	29	1329.2	45.8
Health (Other)	2	2.8	1.4
Schools	38	3409.4	89.7
Prison	2	112	56
Transport	4	612.5	153.125
Waste Water	9	562.3	62.4
Waste Management	2	46.7	23.35
Waste to Energy	1	43	43
ICT	3	21.6	7.2
Other	2	32	16
Total	**93**	**6180.1**	

Total NPD and Hub DBFM projects, SFT website 2015

Appendix 5: HubCo Projects

In Hub South East Scotland Territory, Annual Report 2012-2013 and 2013-2014

Project Completed					
Project Completed	delivering	Participant	Value (£)	Procurement Route	Tier 1 Contractor
Haddington and St Mary Primary	Primary school campus	East Lothian Council	10.2m	Design and Build	Morrison Construction
East Neighbourhood Office an Library	Community library, meeting space	City of Edinburgh Council	7.7m	Design and Build	Graham Construction
Wester Hailes Healthy Living Centre	Combined health and social work building	NHS Lothian and City of Edinburgh Council	9.6m	Design and Build	Morrison Construction
Lauder Health Centre	New build health centre	NHS Borders	1.3m	Design and Build	Morrison Construction
Rising Rolls Phase 1	3 new school extensions	City of Edinburgh Council	1.9m	Design and Build	Morrison Construction
James Gillespies's Campus	New gym, additional classrooms and nursery	City of Edinburgh Council	4m	Design and Build	Morrison Construction
Gullane Surgery and Day Centre	New build surgery and day centre	East Lothian Council	3m	Design and Build	Graham Construction
Public Conveniences	7 refurbished city centre conveniences	City of Edinburgh Council	500k	Design and Build	Galliford Try FM
Rosewell Primary School	New School extension	Midlothian Council	1m	Design and Build	Graham Construction
Newbridge Primary School	Refurbished Station	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service	600k	Design and Build	Morrison Construction
Tranent Health centre	Refurbished health centre plus new extension	NHS Lothian	900k	Design and Build	Morrison Construction

Project in Construction					
James Gillespies High School	New High School- teaching block, sports and performing arts complex	City of Edinburgh Council	34m	Design, Build, Finance and Maintain	Morrison Construction
SAS Ambulance Station	New ambulance station	Scottish Ambulance Service	2m	Design and Build	Morrison Construction
Rising Rolls Phase 2	4 new school extension	City of Edinburgh Council	3.4m	Design and Build	Morrison Construction
Galashiels Transport Interchange	New interchange	Scottish Borders Council	5.2m	Design and Build	Morrison Construction
CEC Property Refurbishment	Refurbishment at Westfield House and High street offices	City of Edinburgh Council	400k	Design and Build	Morrison Construction
Qualifying Project in Development					
Rosemunt Court Housing with Care	New Housing facilities for older people with support needs	West Lothian Council	7m	Design and Build	Graham Construction
Roxburgh Street Health	New health centre	NHS Borders	1.4m	Design and Build	Morrison Construction
Royal Edinburgh Hospital Campus- Phase 1	New facilities in a phased development	NHS Lothian	45m	Design, Build, Finance and Maintain	Morrison Construction
Lothian Bundle	New partnership centres in Blackburn Firrhill and North West Edinburgh	NHS Lothian/West Lothian and The City of Edinburgh Council	26m	Design, Build, Finance and Maintain	Graham Construction
Newbatlled High School	New high School Campus	Midlothian Council	33m	Design, Build, Finance and Maintain	Morrison Construction

Kelso High School	New high School Campus	Scottish Borders Council	20m	Design, Build, Finance and Maintain	Morrison Construction
Royston Care home	New 60bed care home	City of Edinburgh Council	8.4m	Design and Build	Graham Construction
Duns Primary School	New Primary School	Scottish Borders Council	6.5m	Design and Build	Graham Construction
Windygoul Primary	New Primary School	Scottish Borders Council	4.3m	Design and Build	Morrison Construction
West Calder High School	Refurbished High School with new facilities	West Lothian Council	12m	Design, Build, Finance and Maintain	Graham Construction

Appendix 6: Post-Scriptum

The 31st of July, the ONS ruled that the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) Project funded through an NPD structure and managed by the SFT was to be counted as on-balance sheet. The ONS assessed the three SPV structures set up to procure this projects in accordance with the European System of Accounts (ESA 2010). By contrast, SFT had assessed its projects' status under ESA 1995. The ONS judgment deemed that "Due to the contractual relationships and sharing of directors between the three units, the SPVs should together be considered as one institutional unit for statistical purposes. Based on the Scottish Government's influence over the collective corporate policy of the SPVs, including effective vetoes over key aspects and the accrual of surpluses to the Scottish Government, it was judged that the AWPR SPVs are subject to public sector control."(Dickie, 31/07/2015) The ONS concluded that these SPVs were under public sector control and thus on-balance sheet. The ONS was prompted by the current rolling out of the new ESA 2010 tests and their potential implication for major PFI and NPD across the UK to examine the status of the Aberdeen Bypass. Many other Scottish Hub-provided and NPD projects are now on hold as a result of this judgment. Now counted as on-balance sheet, they are above the capital and revenue limits set by the Westminster Government.

After spending a year understanding HubCo and developing a critique of it, I was pleasantly surprised to see it making the news. That was before reading the conclusions reached by John Swinney and the SFT. They made me want to swallow up my criticisms. Swinney reacted: “This decision published by ONS today, means we need to give further consideration to the contractual arrangements that apply to the AWPR, with a view to securing a private sector classification.”(31/07/2015) The classification of the AWPR as publicly controlled, i.e. on balance, rested in part on the SG’s share in “the economic rewards associated with this asset” and on its control over the SPVs. I suspect that the imperative of securing off-balance sheet status will see the SFT and the SG curbing the little control public entities had over and profit from NPD or Hub structures. Carrell (2015) mentions that “For Hub projects affected by the changes, a 20% stake previously held in each by public-sector partners will be transferred to a new private-sector charity. That will give the private contractors the right to increase their shares in the new companies set up to deliver each project from 60% to 80%.” The public sector involvement I describe in the dissertation is thus promised to diminish.

Apart from me biting my tongue, this shows the previously mentioned absurdity whereby technical rules to ensure that public debt is properly accounted for and to uphold stricter rules on private financing threaten Scotland’s grey arrangements. Instead of acknowledging that austerity does not make any sense and that investment is needed to stimulate this capitalist economy, the solution will reinforce private sector profits and influence. Risk and control are key technical measurement in this accounting game. It also reiterate my point about uncertainty, the NorthWest Bundle DBFM project is still not going to start soon. Further, I do not know whether this is a problem of devolution and Scotland not having enough power to define its own borrowing limits, or whether Scotland would do any better with greater powers.

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