The Fantasmatic Logic of Social Innovation:
The Case of Auckland's The Southern Initiative

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Abstract

Established in 2012 in response to socio-economic challenges in South Auckland, The Southern Initiative (TSI) promises "transformational social, economic and physical change" through social innovation and entrepreneurship (Auckland Council, 2018b). Social innovation initiatives such as TSI have become a structural feature of post-industrial urban governance and the subject of significant academic scholarship since the 2010s. This research has been largely limited to conceptual considerations and analysis of local instantiations of social innovation. This article seeks to use the case of TSI to explore the macro relationship between social innovation initiatives and urban capitalism. In particular, I focus on the means through which TSI articulates the causes of social issues in South Auckland and the solutions to these promises. Utilising Glynos and Howarth's Lacanian-inspired logics approach, I argue that TSI illustrates a central contradiction driving social innovation policy discourse; while these discourses promise transformational change in response to socio-economic challenges, they foreclose upon the structural causes of these challenges and, as a result, are limited to minor interventions that are incompatible with the original mission. In response, a fantasmatic logic has emerged in which the promise of TSI can be reproduced by restaging these challenges as the more manageable failures of individuals, whānau and communities. As such, TSI policy discourse is especially 'sticky' because it offers the possibility of community change without having to engage in radical modes of institutional or macroeconomic transformation.

Keywords: Auckland, inequality, logics approach, social innovation, urban capitalism

Introduction

Auckland, New Zealand's primate city, dominates the country's economy and is New Zealand's gateway to the world (Insch, 2018). It also contains the most marked expressions of the inequality that has been a dominant feature of New Zealand's economy since the country's 1980s neoliberal reforms (Harris, 2013; Kelsey, 1997; Terruhn, 2020). A recent review report from The Southern Initiative (TSI) noted that:

> Tamaki Makaurau [Auckland] has experienced a sustained period of economic success primarily due to population growth and its strategic location within Asia-Pacific but the benefits of the region's success have not been felt by all, particularly in the south and west of the city. (The Southern Initiative, 2018)

Indeed, in 2020, Auckland was ranked as the seventh least affordable city in the world in terms of house prices (Roy, 2020a). In the same year, 5000 Aucklanders were on a waiting list for state housing (Roy, 2020b). Moreover, in 2017, over a quarter of young Māori and Pasifika Aucklanders were not in employment, education or training (Webb, 2017). This deprivation is concentrated in the south and the

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west of the city where Auckland's Māori and Pasifika populations are over-represented (Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development, 2020).

It is this deprivation and spatialised disparity that drove the creation of TSI. Established in the first iteration of the Auckland Plan (Auckland Council, 2012b),[2] TSI is a place-based programme that initially covered four South Auckland local board areas: Māngere-Ōtāhuhu, Ōtara-Papatoetoe, Manurewa and Papakura. Aiming to achieve "transformational social, economic and physical change", TSI seeks to 'unleash' "human and economic potential in an area of Auckland with high social need, yet with significant economic opportunity" (Auckland Council, 2012b, p. 41) through social innovation and entrepreneurship.

TSI is part of a turn to social innovation among post-industrial urban policymakers. *Social innovation* represents an approach to social challenges that came to prominence as a form of urban governance in the early twenty-first century (MacCallum et al., 2009; Mulgan et al., 2007; Pol & Ville, 2009). At their core, social innovation initiatives provide a novel solution to social challenges and establish new social processes and narratives in response to these challenges (Cajaiba-Santana, 2014). Social innovation remains a fluid concept, however, especially in public usage (Bragaglia, 2021). As a result, while academic research has sought to both clarify and complexify definitions of social innovation (Marques et al., 2018; Moulaert et al., 2013), the term has been co-opted by a wide range of actors such that initiatives labelled social innovation can potentially both challenge and legitimise the hegemony of neoliberal forms of urban governance (Fougère & Meriläinen, 2021; Fougère et al., 2017).

In this article, I explore the means through which TSI utilises the fluidity of social innovation discourse to respond to the tensions within neoliberal governance in Auckland. Specifically, I use a Lacanian analysis of the fantasmatic logics that animate a given discourse, a method popularised by Glynos and Howarth (Glynos & Howarth, 2008a, 2008b; Glynos et al., 2009), to analyse TSI strategy documents from 2017 to 2021. In this analysis, I seek to understand the fantasmatic logics through which TSI frames both the causes of deprivation in South Auckland and the new solutions and processes required to respond to these issues.

Through the analysis of TSI documents, I argue that TSI illustrates a central contradiction driving social innovation policy discourse; while these discourses promise transformational change in response to socio-economic challenges, they foreclose upon the structural causes of these challenges, specifically New Zealand's neoliberal shift in the 1980s and early 1990s and the global "new urban crisis" of inequality experienced in post-industrial cities (Florida, 2017). As a result of these local and global structural shifts, TSI is necessarily restricted to limited innovations that foreclose upon the possibility of transformational change. In response to this contradiction between TSI's mission and its method, a fantasmatic logic has emerged in which the promise of TSI can be reproduced by restaging these challenges as the more manageable failures of individuals, whānau and communities. As such, TSI policy discourse is especially 'sticky' because it offers the possibility of community change without having to engage in radical modes of institutional or macroeconomic transformation. As a result, I argue that social innovation initiatives like TSI act as a form of what Schubert (2019) calls "disruptive maintenance", wherein social innovation projects are only able to promise transformational change by disavowing the causes of the challenges they address.

Given the earnestness with which the organisation addresses social issues, critiquing social innovation measures and TSI specifically feels ill-spirited. The work itself is admirable and actively supported by the Auckland Council; TSI was one of the few institutions within the Council's remit to avoid

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[2] *The Auckland Plan* (Auckland Council, 2012b) is now archived and no longer publicly available on the Auckland Council website. A pdf of the report is available from this author on request.

post-COVID funding cuts (Latif, 2020). TSI has created and supported several worthy and influential initiatives, from trades training to healthy food initiatives and support for new parents. It has also leveraged its institutional power through mechanisms like social procurement to produce transformational outcomes for some individuals. The well-meaning advocates, co-designers and policymakers in TSI, however, undoubtedly have limited power to make macroeconomic structural changes. And that is the point: anti-poverty measures in Auckland, and across the post-industrial world, have limited capacity to engage with the levers that matter. Instead, as this article argues, the social innovation discourse embraced by TSI acts as a fantasmatic logic that maintains the possibility of transformational change while foreclosing on both the possibility of structural change and the causes of the social issues it is addressing.

The article begins by reviewing debates within the literature on social innovation before turning to the establishment of TSI in the context of these logics of social innovation. A Lacanian method of discursive analysis is then outlined before applying this method to TSI.

The rise and fluidity of social innovation

Social innovation was first used as a pejorative synonym for the utopianism of socialism in the nineteenth century (Teasdale et al., 2021) before re-emerging in academic and political discourse in connection with community development issues from the 1960s (Bragaglia, 2021) and then becoming used as a "counter-reaction to the positivist belief in technology" in the 1970s (Marques et al., 2018, p. 499). From the mid-2000s (MacCallum et al., 2009; Mulgan et al., 2007; Pol & Ville, 2009), however, a new wave of social innovation discourse emerged in which the concept has been institutionalised as a policy tool in the field of new public management (Lévesque, 2013), especially in European liberal democracies (Bragaglia, 2021). Equally, social innovation initiatives have become especially prevalent in urban governance (Ardill & Oliveria, 2018; MacCallum et al., 2009; McFarlane et al., 2021), particularly concerning intercultural, deprivation and sustainability issues (Angelidou & Psaltoglou, 2017; Mieg & Topfer, 2013).

At its core, *social innovation* refers to new solutions to social challenges. Moreover, as Bataglin et al. (2020, p. 452) argue, social innovation includes both these novel responses and the establishment of new social processes. For example, Cajaiba-Santana (2014, p. 44) defines social innovation as "new social practices created from collective, intentional, and goal-orientated actions aimed at promoting social change through the reconfiguration of how social goals are accomplished". As such, Wittmayer et al. (2019) suggest that social innovation initiatives not only seek to address an unmet social need in a novel way, but they also construct "narratives of change".

Conversely, there is a tension in academic scholarship on social innovation (SI) between readings of social innovation as inherently elusive such that "defining univocally what social innovation stands for is impossible and probably also a pointless effort" (Bragaglia, 2021, p. 105) and those researchers who argue that any ambiguity around social innovation needs to be met with greater "conceptual clarity and solid theory" (Pel et al., 2020, p. 1). Notably, Marques et al. (2018, p. 506) express a fear that "SI will remain a well-meaning concept used to talk vaguely about a more equitable world, while being used for a variety of unconnected and contradictory purposes".

In response to this concern, a strand of research on social innovation has emerged that has sought to clarify definitions of the concept and categorise instantiations of the concept. For example, Moulaert, working with a variety of collaborators (Lévesque, 2013; Moulaert et al., 2019; Moulaert et al., 2010; Moulaert & Nussbaumer, 2005), has rigorously developed a reading of social innovation as a bottom-up process of empowerment to meet the needs of local communities. Equally, several researchers have developed nuanced readings of different modes of social innovation, making distinctions between radical forms of social innovation that seek to achieve structural changes and those that either work alongside existing systems or rely upon the work of individual agents. For example, Cajaiba-Santana (2014) divides

social innovation into agentic and structuralist approaches. Likewise, Unceta et al. (2020) distinguish between individualist, regional/national, and organisational social innovations approaches, and Fougère and Meriläinen (2021) make a distinction between social innovation for vulnerable communities and social innovation for society.

Perhaps most influentially, Marques et al. (2018) categorise social innovation into structural, radical, complementary and instrumental forms. Where structural forms of social innovation, such as trade unionism or environmental movements, seek to achieve widescale social change, such radical social innovation programmes as time banks or eco-towns attempt to stimulate significant change within a given context. By contrast, complementary approaches work alongside existing institutional frameworks without seeking to radically reshape them or influence structural power relations. Finally, instrumental forms of social innovation occur when the term is co-opted by actors to "rebrand existing agendas in a way that is more appealing to stakeholders" (Marques et al., 2018, p. 497). Marques et al. (2018, p. 504) argue that the instrumental appropriation of social innovation:

> …allows those who want to push back against these trends to galvanise political, social or even business support for social welfare initiatives. Calling such initiatives SI allows them to demand action on issues such as poverty, social exclusion or gender discrimination, while using language (particularly the word 'innovation') that resonates with current political narratives about the superiority of market-based approaches to solving welfare issues.

While researchers have attempted to classify instantiations and theories of social innovation with increasing clarity and complexity, public use of the term continues to attract a wide range of actors who can co-opt discourse of social innovation to suit their purposes with scant regard for academic classification. Indeed, as Bragaglia (2021) argues, the slipperiness of the concept explains part of its appeal because it acts, as Edmiston (2016, p. 2) puts, "as a unifying policy concept around which diverse stakeholders can coalesce and organise". For example, Bragaglia (2021, p. 106) cites the European Commission's (2013) definition of social innovation which highlights an "indeterminate quality" which makes social innovation "adaptable to a variety of situations and flexible enough to follow the twist and turns of policy that everyday politics sometimes make necessary".

As a result of its productive ambiguity, Bragaglia (2021) argues that social innovation functions as what Pollitt and Hupe (2011) had called a magic concept. By evoking a sense of "novelty and improvement" in the name of the public good, the ambiguity of social innovation leads to "rhetorical advantages and the broad alliances that they are capable of triggering" (Bragaglia, 2021, p. 104). Moreover, Bragaglia (2021, p. 107) argues that the "'positive aura' of social innovation is often amplified and takes on the contours of a panacea to all contemporary issues". Similarly, Fougère et al. (2017) highlight the 'win-win' positivity of social innovation discourse in EU policy. In this sense, as Bragaglia (2021, p. 110) suggests, while social innovation is a cohesive concept when viewed through a bottom-up lens rooted in local contexts, "social innovation also presents some rhetorical advantages that have made it particularly attractive to policy-makers". Thus, while definitions of social innovation in research have become increasingly refined, in urban governance social innovation continues to act as an "empty signifier which grips subjects through fantasy" (Fougère et al., 2017, p. 827).

Fougère et al.'s (2017) understanding of social innovation as an empty signifier that can be occupied by a range of positions allows a different form of analysis. Rather than reading social innovation programmes through a pre-established taxonomy or evaluating the results of a given programme empirically, positioning social innovation as a discourse – or, as shall be more precisely articulated in the following section, a fantasmatic logic – allows us to critically explore the means through which a given

social innovation programme can be co-opted by hegemonic neoliberal political and economic logics despite the intentions of the actors involved.

Indeed, while the earnest and inclusive liberalism of social innovation discourse may be seen as an interventionist reaction against economistic neoliberalism, Fougère et al. (2017, p. 820) suggest that it is "tempting" to see social innovation as "a discourse largely in line with contemporary neoliberal hegemony". For example, in their analysis of European Union social innovation policy, Fougère et al. (2017, p. 820) argue that "rather than being a transformative discourse within European Union policy, European Union social innovation policy discourse reinforces neoliberal hegemony by (re) legitimizing it."

While structural and radical forms of social innovation present themselves as a progressive or emancipatory alternative to urban neoliberalism, social innovation policy and practice are neither inherently radical nor transformative. Instead, the language of social innovation can and has been readily co-opted by instrumental actors to maintain existing power relations in the name of the social good. It is in this neoliberal context that TSI has emerged in Auckland, to which we now turn.

Auckland, neoliberalism and inequality

Neoliberal modes of governance have been dominant in Auckland for some time. Set in motion by the national structural adjustments that came to be known as the 'New Zealand experiment' (Kelsey, 1997) and reaffirmed by the establishment of the 'super-city' in 2010 (Chen, 2014), Auckland's Council's business-friendly approach is dominated by a focus on innovation and productivity (Auckland Council, 2012a, 2014).[3] As has been the case globally, the neoliberal governance of Auckland has had significant socio-spatial economic consequences (Terruhn, 2020). Moreover, according to the latest available research, deprivation in Auckland is focused in Māori and Pasifika communities. Aucklanders of European ethnicity earn 20% more than Māori Aucklanders and 30% more than their Pasifika counterparts (Auckland Council, 2018a).

Driven by both the global trend towards neoliberal governance and local factors, most notably the deregulating Employment Contracts Act 1991 and the welfare reforms of the 1990s (Easton, 2020), many Māori and Pasifika peoples in South Auckland are at risk of falling into an underclass through "the slow violence of poverty" (The Southern Initiative, 2021a, p. 11). As seen in Figure 1, deprivation is concentrated in the south and the west of the city where income, occupational status and qualifications levels are notably lower than the rest of Auckland (Auckland Tourism Events and Economic Development, 2020).

Auckland's ethnically orientated socio-spatial inequality is not unique. Globally, the post-industrial cities that emerged out of the crisis of deindustrialisation and the emergence of neoliberal governance have been marked by the allure of what Scott (2011) calls "cognitive-cultural capitalism" and Florida (2002) celebrated as the "creative city". Equally, however, a range of urban theorists (Florida, 2017; Mollenkopf & Castells, 1991; Nijman & Wei, 2020; Sassen, 1991; Scott, 2011) have identified a central contradiction within this new urban economy: the driving forces of urban economic growth – immaterial production and the return to the city centre – have also become the causes of inequality and social-spatial polarisation. Indeed, empirical research has consistently shown a relationship between cognitive-cultural cities and inequality, including in the United Kingdom (Lee & Clarke, 2019), North America (Breau et al., 2014; Florida & Gaetani, 2020; Zimmerman, 2008), Europe (Bayliss, 2007; Vanolo, 2008) and Australia (Atkinson & Easthope, 2009).

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[3] *Auckland's Economic Development Strategy* (Auckland Council, 2012a) is now archived and no longer publicly available on the Auckland Council website. A pdf of the report is available from this author on request.

Figure 1: Auckland prosperity by local board
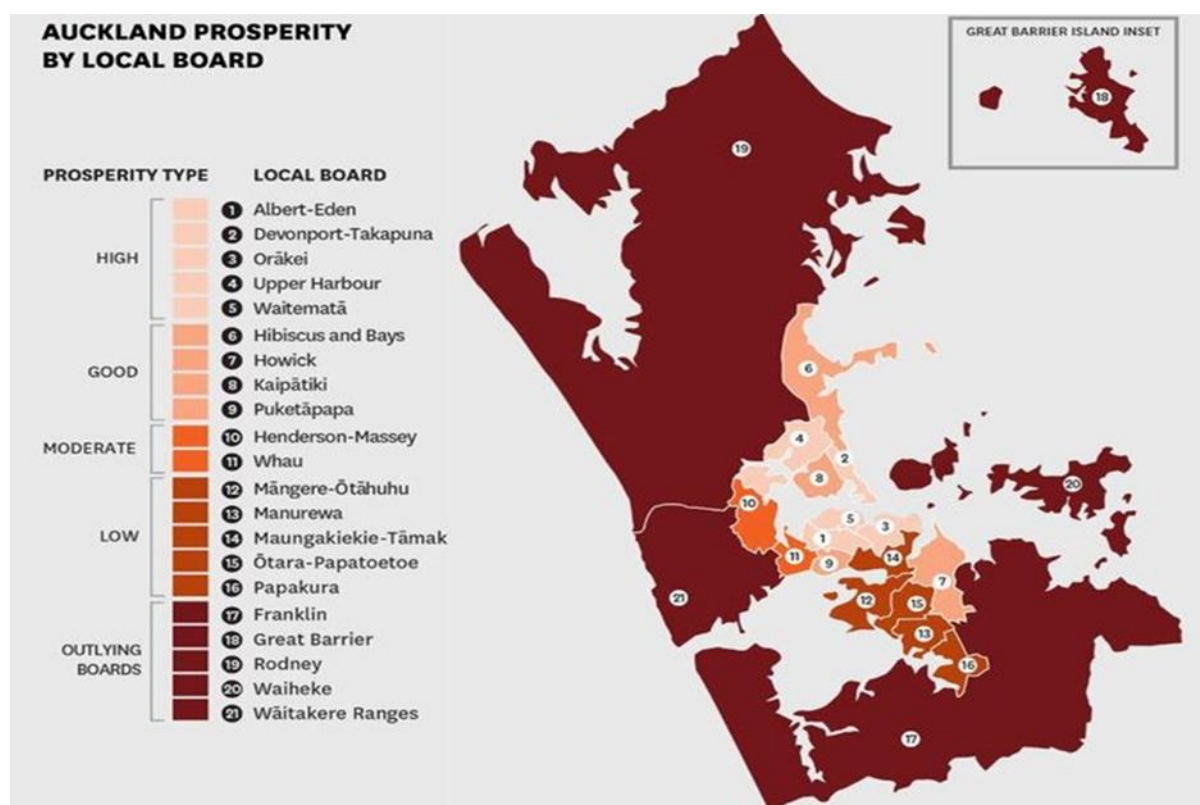
Source: Auckland Tourism Events and Economic Development (2020).

Conversely, in response to this inequality, creativity and innovation discourses and their instantiation in policy have proved resilient. Indeed, an increasingly common response to this apparent contradiction within neoliberal urban capitalism has not been to dismantle the systems that create it. Instead, urban policymakers have continued to embrace the creative city and innovation strategies that are thought to offer urban vibrancy and to generate top-line growth (Peck, 2020; Zukin, 2020). Moreover, stripped of alternative policy-making measures and budgets, social innovation programmes have become a popular response to urban social challenges caused by cognitive-cultural capitalism. For example, amid the European debt crisis, the Bureau of European Policy Advisers (BEPA) stated that "at a time of major budgetary constraints, social innovation is an effective way of responding to social challenges, by mobilising people's creativity to develop solutions and make better use of scarce resources" (Hubert, 2011, p. 7).

It is within this political and economic environment of immaterial production and inequality that Auckland's The Southern Initiative (TSI) has emerged as the city's primary means of responding to deprivation and social issues. In the following sections of this article, I mobilise TSI as a case study to explore the means through which the organisation negotiates the tension between social innovation discourse and urban equality. This analysis begins with a methodological reflection on Glynos and Howarth's logics approach, which will then be applied to TSI policy discourse.

A logics approach to policy analysis

A Lacanian method of analysing discursive environments has been popularised by a range of post-Lacanian theorists who emerged from the Essex School of Discourse Theory (Glynos et al., 2009; Howarth et al., 2000). Following Laclau and then Žižek's Hegelian-Marxist reworking of Lacan, the likes of Daly (1999b, 1999a), Glynos (2001, 2008; Glynos & Stavrakakis, 2004, 2008), Howarth (Glynos & Howarth, 2008b; Howarth et al., 2000) and Stavrakakis (2000, 2007) sought to develop a method of Lacanian analysis of

social life that developed upon Laclau's post-Marxist discourse theory (Laclau, 2003; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985).

In particular, Glynos and Howarth have articulated a logics approach (Glynos & Howarth, 2008b, 2008a) that has been applied across a wide range of fields, including social innovation (Dey et al., 2016; Fougère et al., 2017) and policy analysis (Clarke, 2012; Papanastasiou, 2019; West, 2011). The logics approach is orientated on a social ontology that highlights the "radical contingency" and "structural incompleteness" (Glynos & Howarth, 2008a, p. 6) of social relations whereby meaning is differential and thus there are no positively existing signifiers that mean in and of themselves. Consequently, both language and our realities are negatively charged and radically contingent. As a result, the stuff of politics and ideology is to attempt to reframe meanings and temporarily 'fix' preferred readings of certain signifiers like social innovation.

For Lacan, however, attempts to stabilise meaning are doomed to failure and instead reveal the presence of what he labelled the "*Real*", which Daly (1999b, p. 78) defines as the "primal point of possibility and impossibility for all objectivity". The Lacanian Real marks the ontological point of failure of symbolisation – the point that resists symbolisation within a given discourse – as well as the ontic instantiation of that impossibility in discourse. The presence of the Real may exist as a structural distortion within a discourse, such as when a national myth is unable to acknowledge any readily accessible yet conflicting events or data points. For example, in Aotearoa/New Zealand where there is considerable affective investment in the nation's 'clean, green' national mythology, there is a stubbornly awkward tension about acknowledging the existence of ecological degradation. As an illustration, when the then New Zealand Prime Minister John Key was presented facts about the country's water quality in a 2016 BBC interview, he outright refused to accept the research and instead reasserted the '100 per cent pure' slogan ("Key Rejects BBC Criticism", 2016). Here the ecological degradation acted as an instantiation of the Real because it could not be acknowledged without the discourse fracturing. Alternatively, the Real may appear as a sudden eruption that cannot be accounted for within a hegemonic narrative, such as that which drove the moral panic within conservative media in the UK during the movement to topple monuments to slave traders in 2020 (Martin & Andrews, 2020).

Glynos and Howarth's logics approach attempts to capture dialectical movement between the presence of the Real caused by the radical contingency of social relations and attempts to fix meaning. Here Glynos and Howarth (2008a, p. 11) focus on what they call "regimes of practice" and seek to understand the "transformation, stabilization and maintenance" of these regimes by capturing the "purposes, rules and ontological presuppositions that render a regime possible, intelligible and vulnerable".

In the analysis of regimes of practice, Glynos and Howarth deploy three logics: social, political and fantasmatic. An analysis of *social logics* seeks to understand a regime in itself, characterising the parameters of this practice as well as asking "*why* and *how* they came about and continue to be sustained" (Glynos & Howarth, 2008a, p. 12, emphasis in original). By contrast, *political logics* provide critical explanations for the development of a given regime, considering its "construction, defence, and naturalization", as well as the logics through which it is contested and disrupted (Glynos & Howarth, 2008a, p. 12). Having largely outlined the social and political logics of social innovation and the emergence of TSI, this article focuses primarily on the fantasmatic logics that propel TSI. This focus facilitates understandings of why these logics grip policymakers.

Glynos and Howarth (2008a, p. 12) argue that *fantasmatic logics* extend upon the operation of social and political logics by demonstrating "*why* specific practices and regimes grip subjects" (emphasis in original). Here fantasy, often identified as ideological fantasy to give the signify a socio-political focus, consists of the stories we tell to construct a meaningful sense of reality. Moreover, if the realities we construct can never escape the sense of lack that defines the human condition, fantasmatic narratives

function to explain and pacify the presence of lack *qua* the Real. Fantasy, therefore, is a narrative that seeks to conceal the radical contingency of the social order and our subjective experience (Glynos & Howarth, 2008a, p. 12). As such, Žižek (1989, p. 45) argues that the function of (ideological) fantasy is "not to offer us a point of escape from our reality but to offer us the social reality as an escape from some traumatic, real kernel".

To reiterate this vital point, a fantasmatic logic is able to grip the subject by making sense of the traumatic presence of the Real, as well as offering the possibility of overcoming this tension by representing the Real in a more palatable form. Moreover, fantasmatic narratives work by offering up the possibility of subjective coherence while maintaining a distance from its structural impossibility. As Daly suggests, the work of (ideological) fantasy involves "an endless (re-)staging of the primordial struggle between the symbolic-discursive order and the Real" (Daly, 1999a, p. 220). The paradox, Daly suggests, is that the most effective means for a fantasmatic logic to promise a sense of fullness is to re-present more palatable obstacles that prevent this closure. That is, if the Real is a structural ontological impossibility within the symbolic order, the dimension of fantasy re-stages this impossibility as a contingent ontic obstacle responsible for our sense of lack. As a result, Daly argues, society is "constituted as a kind of 'whodunit?'" (Daly, 1999a, p. 224).

A logics approach, therefore, seeks to highlight the means through which a given regime is manufactured, maintained and contested as well as why this regime of practice appears 'sticky', despite its ontological contingency. As such, applying a logics approach requires critical analysis of both the discourse produced by a regime and the discourse about that regime. Through this analysis, researchers using a logics approach seek to identify the signifiers that cohere a given regime, the points at which it is contested, the moments in which the Real erupts, and the fantasmatic logics that seek to explain and re-present the troubling presence of the Real (Glynos & Howarth, 2008b).

The following section will apply a logics approach to the analysis of TSI, focusing in particular on the discursive environment in which it operates, as represented by the *Auckland Plan 2050*, as well as TSI's annual reviews from 2017 to 2021, both internal (Auckland Council, 2018b; The Southern Initiative, 2017, 2019, 2021b) and external (Burkett, 2017; Burkett & Boorman, 2020).

The fantasmatic logic of The Southern Initiative

Formed to respond to the clear disparities and social challenges concentrated in the south of Auckland, TSI claims to be "responsible for kick starting, enabling and championing social and community innovation in South Auckland" through "social innovation and entrepreneurship" (Auckland Council, 2018b, p. 69) to tackle "complex socio-economic challenges and [create] opportunities that will benefit the people of South Auckland".

As Wittmayer et al. (2019) suggest, social innovation initiatives construct narratives of change that both explain current issues and articulate a story about how societal transformation is possible. This narrative of change is evident throughout TSI's internal and external review documents. Most notably, TSI positions its work within the systems approach outlined in the explanatory model below (see Figure 2).

In this explanatory narrative, TSI expressly focuses on agential and community interventions, in which those engaged by the organisation use a "think like a system, act like an entrepreneur" mindset (The Southern Initiative, 2017, p. 28). For example, in their review of TSI, Burkett and Boorman (2020, p. 9) note that the "focus of the work is maximising people's aspirations for agency and growth". This political logic, however, forecloses on macroeconomic and political factors. Figure 2, for example, provides no pathway within TSI through which to account for national-level triggers of inequality, such as the welfare and employment reforms that radiated from the neoliberal restricting of New Zealand society in the 1980s. Moreover, the systems approach does not mention the role of benefit cuts in the significant increase in

poverty and inequality in Auckland and across New Zealand over the past 30 years (Easton, 2020; Rashbrooke, 2013) or the rise of the global "new urban crisis" (Florida, 2017).

Conversely, where TSI discourse does acknowledge structural factors, these factors are reduced to community challenges. For example, where its 2017 year in review document recognised that "around the world there is strong agreement the fourth industrial revolution will disrupt occupations and industries in ways we can't predict" (The Southern Initiative, 2017, p. 14), this external threat is re-presented as a lack of suitable skills in South Auckland. Here TSI (2017, p. 16) asserts that:

> We need to ensure our communities are ahead of the game in preventing, mitigating and managing the inevitable changes to our social fabric and way of life. We need to ensure South Aucklanders have the skills to harness change rather than be victims of it. Skills such as complex problem solving, critical thinking, emotional intelligence, creativity and the ability to cooperate, collaborate and negotiate will be crucial.
>
> South Auckland is off to a good start. It is known for its creativity and entrepreneurship, its strong DIY culture and its rich and diverse culture open to innovation. South Aucklanders have all the ingredients to be pioneers, creators and leaders.

Figure 2. "TSI at a Glance"
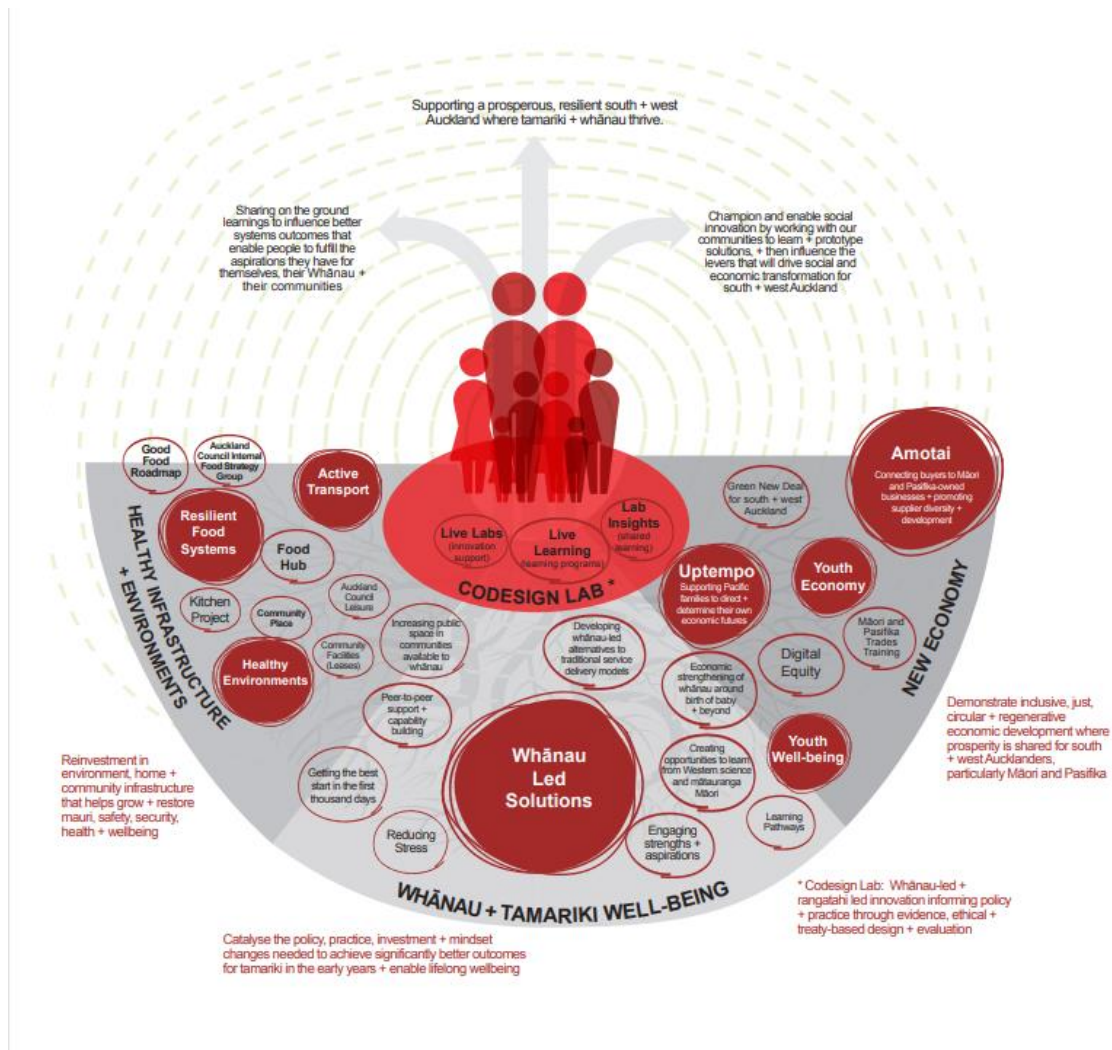
Source: Burkett and Boorman (2020, p. 3).

It is, as Teasdale et al. (2021, p. 426) suggest in their analysis of the social entrepreneurship organisation Ashoka, as if "'new inequality' is caused not by capitalism, but rather by some people not having the necessary skillset to cope with change." Tellingly, TSI asserts that:

> Solutions lie within local communities themselves. Rather than creating more services to 'fix' South Auckland, the Initiative works with whānau [family], local social change agents, grassroots entrepreneurs, businesses and agencies to explore, create and test radical and innovative solutions. (Auckland Council, 2018b)

Or, put otherwise, "only the 'hood can change the 'hood'" (The Southern Initiative, 2017, p. 3).

In disavowing economic structures in favour of local solutions, TSI is necessarily corrective of individuals and communities, not economic systems, putting pressure on the former to change rather than seeking to create changes in the latter. Indeed, it is instructive that the main priority in the first introduction to TSI was "early, strong family attachment and learning opportunities that set children up for success at school and in life" followed by the development of a "clear pathway and support for further education, training or employment for every young person leaving school" (Auckland Council, 2012b). Here, in the Lacanian reading, these macroeconomic factors act as an unrepresentable moment of the Real that distorts TSI discourse; acknowledging that social challenges in South Auckland are largely driven by factors outside of the control of the Initiative threatens the very purpose of the regime of practice and thus forms of a palpable point of tension throughout the strategy documents.

As such, we can identify a governing fantasmatic logic that propels TSI policy. This fantasmatic logic articulates a story in which, if 'innovative' changes are made *to* communities in South Auckland so that they are better equipped to deal with inequality and economic uncertainty, an equitable economy would be possible and South Aucklanders could share in the benefits of Auckland's growth. As such, while insisting that it takes a "strengths-based" approach (The Southern Initiative, 2017, p. 3), TSI tells a story in which both the causes of and the solutions to socio-economic challenges emerge from changes in individuals, whānau and communities in South Auckland rather than larger economic shifts.

This fantasmatic logic has become institutionally sticky because it allows for the maintenance of the internal logic of the TSI regime of practice. That is, if the mission of TSI is to achieve transformational change within South Auckland, the specific fantasmatic appeal of the social innovation approach adopted by TSI is that it can articulate this change as a community opportunity rather than a structural impossibility. As such, this fantasmatic logic allows the discourse of social innovation within TSI to function as Pollitt and Hupe's (2011) magic concept by evoking a sense of "novelty and improvement" (Bragaglia, 2021, p. 104) without challenging institutional frameworks inside and outside Auckland Council.

In this logic, TSI forecloses on the possibility of transformational change and re-presents the drive for change on a micro scale. A narrative of change runs throughout TSI policy discourse. Indeed, TSI was established to achieve "transformational social, economic and physical change" (Auckland Council, 2018b). Moreover, TSI's 2017 year in review document states that "We're about transformation and we're about innovation" (The Southern Initiative, 2017, p. 3). Conversely, the agency expressly charged with producing transformational change in South Auckland notes that:

> … we do not attempt to take on grand societal challenges in their entirety, instead we look to identify nimble opportunities for change within the system, seed innovations, test prototypes and support successful efforts to grow and influence other parts of the wider system. (Auckland Council, 2018b, p. 69)

This reduction of transformational change to 'nimble' innovation again reveals the distorting presence of the Lacanian Real within the logics of TSI discourse. Here the economic structures that create the very social challenges TSI was established to tackle seemingly cannot be either symbolised or confronted directly. Instead, this call for innovation acts as a recognition that we must 'go around' the big causes of social challenges in South Auckland. As such, in response to the presence of the Real in the form of the impossibility of transformational structure change, a fantasmatic logic exists in which transformational change is restaged as the frantic and feel-good search for novel solutions to more palatable problems.

This fantasmatic logic is particularly sticky because it is consistent with the political logics of Auckland Council's economic policy discourse (Auckland Council, 2014, 2015; Tātaki Auckland Unlimited, 2020), which focuses on harnessing diversity, creativity and innovation. For example, TSI calls for South Aucklanders to develop "an entrepreneurial mindset that encourages resourcefulness, creativity and vision and builds thriving and resilient communities" (The Southern Initiative, 2017, p. 12). so that South Auckland is "recognised as the enterprise capital of New Zealand" (The Southern Initiative, 2017, p. 4). In this sense, this fantasmatic logic of the transformational change promised by TSI is rearticulated through the political logics of Auckland Council's economic policy, within which economic growth is stimulated by creativity and innovative disruptions that do not disrupt the economic system itself.

This mode of change-without-change reflects Schubert's (2019) positioning of social innovation as a form of disruptive maintenance that reproduces regimes of practice by promising transformational change while foreclosing on the very possibility of this change. In this sense, social innovation initiatives can be Janus-faced: while they can create meaningful change for individuals and communities within a given environment, programmes like TSI can also legitimise the very systems that create these issues. This is what we see in Auckland with TSI. Not only do the fantasmatic logics that propel and solidify TSI foreclose on the possibilities for more radical change, but they also take up the institutional space of transformational change such that there is no metropolitan governmental alternative to specifically address deprivation and disparity in Auckland.

Notably, while acknowledging that the COVID-19 pandemic has muddled the data and the benefits of some of TSI's work with whānau and youth will take some time to accrue, from the point of TSI's establishment in 2012, there has been no observable reduction in deprivation and inequality in Auckland (Auckland Council, 2018a; Auckland Tourism Events and Economic Development, 2020; Infometrics, 2021), despite TSI's remit expanding (Latif, 2020). The transformational change promised by TSI, it seems, is of the people in South Auckland, not of the economic structures in which it operates. Perhaps as a consequence, one of the main 'learnings' reported by TSI is that:

> TSI's work with whānau has demonstrated the implications of toxic stress for whānau and tamariki in South Auckland and that reducing the burden of stress makes a difference. Significantly, change-makers, entrepreneurs, community entities and providers working with South Aucklanders are also experiencing high levels of stress. Service providers are stretched in such a way that bandwidth for change and innovation is limited, and those from South Auckland are driven by additional responsibilities to whānau and community extending well beyond any funding requirements. (The Southern Initiative, 2021b)

Fougère and Meriläinen (2021, p. 8) argue that such a burden is common in social innovation policy practices, which "rely on the immanent capacities of these vulnerable communities, asking them to transform dramatically, in ways that are not asked of 'non-vulnerable' people, and possibly making them even more marginalised in this process". This toxic stress is a symptom of an economy with toxicity, or perhaps just exploitation, at its core. When the burden of that structural inequity is reduced to the capacities

of individuals, whānau and communities, toxic stress becomes part of the social innovation system, co-designed or not.

Conclusion

The case of TSI thus demonstrates the tension in the relationship between neoliberal urban capitalism and social innovation initiatives, suggesting that while the language and the intentions of a social innovation initiative can be radical, these transformational desires can serve to maintain and reproduce neoliberal regimes of practice. As such, while social innovation programmes can challenge neoliberal regimes of practice, the case of TSI provides a concrete illustration of how social innovation initiatives can also serve as a form of disruptive maintenance for post-industrial urban capitalism, promising change by enacting social interventions that preserve the existing order while legitimising and naturalising existing inequities by placing the cause and burden on individuals and communities rather than economic systems.

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