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Economic Governance for a Globalising Auckland?

Political Projects, Institutions and Policy

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**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Geography,
The University of Auckland
March 2007**

Abstract

Economic Governance for a Globalising Auckland? Political Projects, Institutions and Policy

In the context of a peripheral, small and largely resource-based economy, New Zealand's economic policy makers have for long faced the key challenge of influencing global connections of local actors in value-adding activities. This dissertation seeks to interpret the nature and trajectories of governance activities relating to economic processes in Auckland, New Zealand's largest city-region, in the 1990's and 2000's. This period, a time of neoliberalising political-economic conditions following intensive economic restructuring in the 1980s, saw a re-entry of central government to the governing landscape of Auckland. The research focuses on how regional actors such as the Auckland Regional Growth Forum, the Auckland Regional Economic Development Strategy and the business-driven initiatives of 'Competitive Auckland', 'Committee for Auckland' and the 'Knowledge Wave' conferences, gradually became aligned with an emerging governmental project from central government that re-defined perceptions of and expectations about Auckland's economic role.

The research approach is informed by several literatures, especially those of the regulation, actor-network and governmentality schools. The different questions that spring from these literatures enable scrutiny of Auckland's institutional developments in terms of the identification of interdependencies amongst governing interests, the nature and degree of mediation of investment processes from institutional experimentation and the possible emergence of effects from new governance arrangements. The thesis situates and uses the policy and academic positioning of the researcher to develop methodologies to interrogate the emergence of the material and discursive dimensions of the regional economic governance framework of Auckland.

This thesis argues that ongoing institutional experimentation has been both a pre-cursor to and an active ingredient in the re-appearance of the New Zealand central state in Auckland's economic governance. Importantly, governing is increasingly complex; and about mobilising a range of actors by influencing their perceptions about governing and investment goals through discursive governance practices. In this context, current socio-

economic interventions can be best understood as contingent assemblages of governing resources, producing discursive alignments of interests that lead to a re-working of processes and practices of the state-regulatory apparatus. The effects of the institutional developments on private investment decisions are largely unknown however. While the emerging institutional framework for economic governance involving Auckland is increasingly embracing Auckland's globalising character, influencing the city-region's economic participation in the globalising world economy may be harder to achieve as a political project than current policy rhetoric implies. Theoretically, this research challenges territorial conceptualisations of political economic management and contributes to the wider development of a relational-institutional framework for understanding sub-national economic governance.

Keywords: Auckland, globalising economic processes, economic governance, state, institutions, policy, knowledge, contingency, regulation, discourses

I dedicate this doctoral thesis to my parents. To the late Annemarie Wetzstein, my mother, who raised me as a child of GOD, who instilled in me the value of ‘working hard’, equipped me with a strong sense of right and wrong and taught me to care for other people. To the late Klaus-Peter Wetzstein, my father, who inspired me with his humanism, vast knowledge, gentle nature and always great support. I miss our laughs.

Ich widme diese Doktorarbeit meinen Eltern. Fuer Annemarie Wetzstein, meine Mutter, welche mich im Glauben an Gott und in christlicher Naechstenliebe erzogen hat, mich lehrte hart zu arbeiten, richtig zu handeln und Menschen zu helfen. Fuer Klaus-Peter Wetzstein, mein Vater, der mich mit seiner menschlichen Art, seinem immensen Wissen, seinem gutmuetigen Wesen und seiner steten Unterstuetzung praegte. Ich vermisse unser gemeinsames Lachen.

Acknowledgements

This research project would not have been possible without my primary supervisor Professor Richard Le Heron. His inspirational role modelling, the amazing level of insight he possesses, his academic and personal guidance, and his constant support were a solid fundament for my achievements. I would also like to acknowledge Associate Professor Larry Murphy, my co-supervisor, for his approachable and friendly style, his helpful advice and general inspiration. Many thanks to you both.

I am indebted to the ARC, and in particular the Socio-Economic Group. I would like to acknowledge especially Lesley Baddon. She opened doors to fascinating work opportunities, trusted in my potential, was very insightful and always happy to share her knowledge. I would like to thank Kelvin Norgrove, who gave me the first opportunity to apply my academic knowledge in a policy environment.

I would like to acknowledge my friends, colleagues and the academic and administrative staff at the School of Geography and Environmental Science. Special thanks to Edwin Massey, Eugene Rees, Chris McDowall and Corina Buckenberger. I also owe a special thank you to my colleagues at local government, in particular Stephen Horsley, Carole Canler, Evelyn Marsters, David Lindsey and John Wadsworth. Many thanks to my good friends Graeme, Jacques, Tanya, Ernst and Tina from this side of the world, and Stefan, Thomas, Heike, Katz and Trevor from the other side.

I would like to express my great appreciation to the informants who contributed to my research; for their shared insights and the time they granted me. I thank the University of Auckland, for a welcoming and stimulating professional home, funding and conference support as well as for the chance to visit the second Knowledge Wave conference.

I am deeply grateful to my family - their love, support and prayers - from the other end of the world, and from within New Zealand. Special thanks to Uwe. I acknowledge my grandparents, for teaching me to work hard and to be humble. I would like to give thanks to Shuo, for her love, practical help, encouragement and thought-provoking discussions. Thank you Saffron, for proofreading my thesis and for just being a great friend. I would like to acknowledge Jessica for having been a wonderful motivation and good friend.

I would not be here writing these words without Wendy. Her deep love, wonderful friendship and her selfless support helped me through the most difficult times in my life. I miss our stimulating conversations and your unique source of spiritual guidance.

As Christian, I believe the strength to write this dissertation has come from GOD. His unconditional love for me opened up this amazing opportunity; and through HIM this project has become deeply embedded in a purpose-seeking life journey.

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Abbreviations

ACC	Auckland City Council
ARC	Auckland Regional Council
AREDA	Auckland Regional Economic Development Association
AREDF	Auckland Regional Economic Development Forum
AREDG	Auckland Regional Economic Development Group
AREDS	Auckland Regional Economic Development Strategy
ARTA	Auckland Regional Transport Authority
ATAG	Auckland Transport Action Group
BCG	Boston Consulting Group
DIA	Department of Internal Affairs
DoL	Department of Labour
DPMC	Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
EDA	Economic Development Agencies
FDC	Franklin District Council
GEUDO	Government Economic and Urban Development Unit
GIF	Growth and Innovation Framework
IA	Infrastructure Auckland
INZ	Industry New Zealand
JOG	Joint Officials Group
KEA	'KEA' -Expatriates-Network
LEED	Local Economic and Employment Development
LGA	Local Government Act
LGNZ	Local Government New Zealand
MCC	Manukau City Council
MED	Ministry of Economic Development
MfE	Ministry for the Environment

MMP	Mixed Member Proportional Parliamentary Representation
MoRST	Ministry of Research, Science and Technology
MoT	Ministry of Transport
MoWD	Ministry of Works and Development
MRI	Major Regional Initiatives
NSSC	North Shore City Council
NZIER	New Zealand Institute for Economic Research
NZTE	New Zealand Trade and Enterprise
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PDC	Papakura District Council
RDC	Rodney District Council
RGF	Regional Growth Forum
RGS	Regional Growth Strategy
RLTC	Regional Land Transport Committee
RLTS	Regional Land Transport Strategy
RMA	Resource Management Act
RPP	Regional Partnership Program
SLG	Strategy Leaders Group
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
SOE	State-Owned-Enterprise
TEC	Tertiary Education Commission
TLA	Territorial Local Authority
WCC	Waitakere City Council