

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

# **Tensions, Strategies, and Expectations: Neoliberalism and Community Arts Agencies in Aotearoa New Zealand**



A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts in Sociology  
at Massey University, Albany,  
New Zealand

Sarah Louise Teideman

2018

## **Acknowledgements**

I am grateful for the opportunity and the privilege to complete this thesis.

Thank you to; my supervisor Dr Warwick Tie, to Dr Trudie Cain, my family and friends, and the community arts organisation who were my case study.

A special thank you to my son Blake who has tread this journey with me one foot at a time.

You have all been part of this adventure. Your insights and collaboration have been invaluable to this project.

I hope that the work presented here does justice to the contributions you have all made.

## **Abstract**

This research explores the relationship between neoliberalism, political artistic practice (artistic formalism), and organisational form. It identifies the emergence of a new kind of organisational form as being significant for the mediation of neoliberal governance and political art: the community-based cultural organisation (Aimers, 2005). A case study is presented of this new form of art agency. That case study builds through a research design involving the thematic analysis of interviews undertaken of key personnel in such an agency. The findings of that case study suggest that neoliberal policy has changed how the agency organises itself to meet its goals and the goals outlined in the sector policy. The implications of those findings include; increased awareness about the new arts agency and the socio-politico-economic position they occupy; a call for sector participants seeking change to consider the role of form in how they organise; and, for there to be greater consideration of how the arts and culture sector is organised through policy in light of the impact of neoliberalism.

# Table of Contents

<b>Chapter One: Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter Two: Neoliberalism</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<i>Capitalism</i> .....	11
<i>Contradictions</i> .....	12
<i>Crisis</i> .....	16
<i>A Field of Myths</i> .....	17
<b>Chapter Three: Artistic Formalism and Organisation in the Field of Art</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<i>Brecht</i> .....	28
<i>Benjamin</i> .....	31
<i>Adorno</i> .....	33
<i>Summary</i> .....	38
<b>Chapter Four: Organisational Formalism and Arts and Culture Policy in Aotearoa New Zealand</b> .....	<b>40</b>
The Organisations .....	41
<i>The Ministry for Culture and Heritage</i> .....	41
<i>Creative NZ</i> .....	42
<i>Auckland Council</i> .....	43
<i>Ministry of Social Development</i> .....	44
<i>Strategies in aid of neoliberalism</i> .....	45
<b>Chapter Five: Methodology</b> .....	<b>53</b>
<i>Research Design</i> .....	53
<i>Research Questions</i> .....	56
<i>Interview Questions</i> .....	58
<i>Research ethics</i> .....	64
<b>Chapter Six: Case Study of a New Community Arts Agency</b> .....	<b>65</b>
<i>The Arts Agency</i> .....	65
<i>Tensions</i> .....	67
<i>Structure and Organisation</i> .....	68
<i>Environments of engagement</i> .....	71
<i>Systems of Measurement</i> .....	75
<i>Empty Signifiers</i> .....	79
<i>Summary</i> .....	81
<b>Chapter Seven: Discussion: Strategies, Implications, and Expectations</b> .....	<b>82</b>
<i>Infrastructural Strategies</i> .....	83
<i>Discursive Strategies</i> .....	85

<i>Affective Strategies</i> .....	88
<i>Summary</i> .....	90
<b>Chapter 8: Conclusion</b> .....	<b>92</b>
<i>Summary</i> .....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<b>References</b> .....	<b>96</b>
<b>Appendix A</b> .....	<b>103</b>
<b>Appendix B</b> .....	<b>105</b>