PLANNING'S 'FAILURE' TO ENSURE EFFICIENT MARKET DELIVERY: A LACANIAN DECONSTRUCTION OF THIS NEO-LIBERAL SCAPEGOATING FANTASY

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Our contemporary neo-liberal governance model often places a heavy burden on planning to take the 'responsibility' for the failure of market-lead governance to successfully deliver its policy promises of betterment, security and, consequently, future enjoyment. These include promised, but often unachievable policies, such as those of increased global competitiveness even for areas of structural economic and population decline; or housing affordability in areas of significant population growth and constrained land availability. Resultant policy failures then tend to result in a scapegoating response where planning is held responsible. Examples include that economic development, or housing affordability, is directly obstructed as a consequence of planning impediments, such as unnecessary regulatory controls or process delays. All of which are claimed to hamper efficient market delivery, hence 'planning' is to blame.

To deconstruct this neo-liberal fantasy that planning often impedes, or fails, in its responsibility to ensure policies for market-lead success, the paper will first document several exemplars of this scapegoating process. It will then briefly explore the role of fantasy and ideology in governance policy formulation and, from a Lacanian perspective, the theorisation that underlies this process. Having laid the necessary foundation, it will then investigating the role of the 'scapegoat' in ideological fantasy formation for public policy facilitation so as to explain why planning is often placed in this role, and why this role is often ideologically necessary, at least for neo-liberal governance, when planning undertaking its statutory responsibility of facilitating the public interest.

1. Introduction

In numerous countries, especially since the 2008 world recession, planning has been placed in the role of scapegoat for neo-liberal governance policy failure. Indeed, since at least Van Hayek's (1962 [1944]) arguments that bureaucratically directed state planning must be inherently inefficient in comparison to the steering mechanism of the 'invisible hand' of the market, planning has been repeatedly castigated as an impediment to human freedom and unfettered growth. This is particularly the case in our contemporary world constituted by a hegemonic ideology of neo-liberal globalisation where consumer choice, competition and the market is enshrined as supreme; furthermore, this ideological perspective also largely underpins and frames contemporary planning (Gunder, 2010; Metzger et al, 2014; Taşan-Kok and Baeten, 2011).

Yet, even in our neoliberal world there is still a recognition for the need of governance regulation on matters of conflicting landuse, public safety and environmental protection, as well as a need for strategic planning to give spatial governance expression to the future co-ordination of the economic, social, ecological and cultural dimensions of a geographically defined polity, especially for infrastructure and related public policy interventions (Sager, 2013). However, this often positions planning in the frame as an impediment to the effective workings of the market. Here, planning can become a readily-to-hand scapegoat for contemporary governance policy failure when it is asserted

that planning policy and processes are impeding or distorting an efficient and hence competitive market place (Allmendinger and Haughton, 2014). This paper will explore the role of planning in this light from the perspective of ideological fantasy formation.

This exploration is important because it sheds light on a necessary responsibility of planning to often act as a key statutory check and balance against negative market externalities and even outright market failure. Yet, this is a responsibility that often positions planning as the 'scapegoat' impediment in opposition to popular aspirations for a superficially better entrepreneurial world without regard to the consequences, such as those created by unfettered growth. This paper argues that planning, when undertaking its statutory empowered responsibility of looking after the public interest, also often provides additional value-added to society, or at least factions within that society, by providing governance with a justification, or scapegoat, as to why its policies and the promises that they make are failing. Further, this justification as to why a policy, such as the provision of accordable housing, is being impeded, by the identified 'villainous' agency of planning, actually helps to sustain popular believe that the fantasy promised, such as affordable housing for all, will eventually be fulfilled, once this scapegoat is appropriately dealt with. But, of course, the latter never somehow occurs, since planning actually performs a necessary and important regulatory function and, as this paper will discuss, the actual impediments to policy success are generally more fundamental and have little correlation with planning agency.

Moreover and essentially, the initial promised fulfilment of generally any policy that contains 'feel-good' utopian values, of easy liveability, affordability or global economic or other similar desirable success, is eventually displaced and supplanted by new desirable policy promises (Gunder and Hillier, 2009). These subsequent promises provide resolution of more recently emerged issues requiring address, so as to engage with these newly emerged 'pressing' problems and fulfil a polity's resultant newly constituted 'most important' desires. At least that is, until the policy circle continues into its next evolutionary cycle of promises and subsequent impediments to their resolution (Gunder, 2015). With planning often playing important, if diverse, roles including that of policy implementer and sometimes that of policy impediment, at various stages of this evolving governance process, with the popular media also often contributing an important role in disseminating information and shaping ideological attention about the policy process and why it is, or is not, succeeding (Clifford, 2006; Gunder, 2011, 2015).

An understanding of the ideological fantasy dimensions that underlie this process is important for both planning theorists and practitioners, as it will better assist both groups with their academic or professional practice in the wider social world. Further, this understanding, at least as developed in this paper, is very much at odds with the dominant neo-liberal worldview and its simplified utilitarian economic underpinnings. This is because 'economics ignores the role of the unconscious and fantasy in market behaviour'; in contrast, the psychoanalytically derived philosophical approach drawn on in this paper 'is determined to bring such forces to the limelight', for 'psychoanalysis and economic reflection are no strangers' in the works of both Freud and Lacan from which this perspective is derived (Stavrakakis, 2012, p.2293). Further, one 'can summarize two steps [that] the analytical and critical benefits of focusing on fantasy [provides]… how fantasy may serve to bolster certain ideas that are not only contestable but also normatively suspect [and]… it reveals how a subject can get hooked into its logic, in the sense that the subject becomes strongly attached to or gripped by it' (Glynos, 2012, p.2406).

In understanding the ideological dimensions of public policy implementation, Stavrakakis (2007, p.180) argues that a traditional scientific focus on knowledge and rational textual argument is inadequate, rather he contends that 'we need to shift our attention from knowledge and consciousness

to another level, to the level of an often unconscious enjoyment'. In this regard, this Lacanian derived approach supplements discourse theory by adding an extra-discursive element to the conceptual framework, which is the subject's conscious and unconscious relationship to desire and enjoyment (Žižek, 1989, p.125). Importantly, 'the Lacanian concept of enjoyment is necessary to explain why some discourses', even though they are internally illogical and 'incoherent are preserved and maintained over time' and may even constitute dominant public policy narratives (Engelken-Jorge, 2010, p.77).

In this regard, failing fantasy narratives are 'commonly sustained through positing scapegoats, and in the case of neoliberalism the chief scapegoat is the opposition of free trade, namely socialism—or rather, the "paranoid construction" of a caricatures and stereotyped socialism ostensibly corrupting the capitalist system' (Fletcher, 2013, p.806). And is not the term 'planning', perhaps with the words 'state' and 'central' removed and perhaps 'spatial' added, not the main bureaucratic apparatus of this chief scapegoat remaining under contemporary neo-liberal governance, especially after the demise of socialism across much of Europe and the rest of the world (Allmendinger and Haughton, 2010)? Accordingly, does this not rather sets up spatial, or other, 'planning' as the chief remaining scapegoat of neoliberal governance, even though society needs this important regulatory apparatus of spatial planning for governance to function, especially at the local area level, as even Margret Thatcher was forced to implicitly acknowledged some thirty years ago (Allmendinger, 1997)? Indeed, Fletcher (2013, p.806) asserts that 'socialism (in the guise of state regulation) serves just this role within the fantasy space of neoliberal discourse'.

To deconstruct this neo-liberal fantasy which asserts that planning often impedes, or appears to fail, in its responsibility to ensure policies for market-lead success, the paper, after first documenting examples of this scapegoating process, will introduce an outline of the basic Lacanian theoretical conceptions of the subject, fantasy and desire. It will then briefly explore the role of ideological fantasy in governance theory (Gunder, 2015), prior to investigating the role of the 'scapegoat' in ideological fantasy formation for public policy facilitation, so as to explain why planning is often placed in this role.

Prior to beginning this important exploration, it is important to establish that the concept of an ideological fantasy is not just the illusion attributed by Marx as false consciousness, 'which pits "misrecognition"… against a "true objective knowledge"', even though there are dimensions of illusion often embedded in ideological fantasy, as will be discussed in the following sections (Glynos, 2001, p.193). Indeed, scholars 'have for a long time recognized that the issue of contested realities goes much deeper than a "false-consciousness" picture of the world suggests' (Glynos, 2014a, p.185). Rather than differentiating between a dichotomy of either an objective social reality somehow knowable via representation through rigorous scientific enquiry versus an alternative of delusional fantasy, this paper's psychoanalytical constructivist understanding positions fantasy, 'animated by logics of desire and enjoyment', covariant with one's discursive interests and principles, which are constituted by normative justification and epistemological scientific validation, as **both** facilitating the organisation of a subject's social reality and, where collectively shared, that of a subject's wider culture (Glynos, 2014a, p.185). In doing so, fantasy's contribution simplifies society's anxiety provoking complexity as well as its many inconsistencies and uncertainties, resulting in an apparent social reality that appears as a coherently materialised, yet simplified, whole (Gunder, 2011a, p.333). From this perspective, any society's shared social reality is, and will always remain, highly ideological and any resultant dominant consensual worldview is hegemonically successful largely through its promises of security, harmony and future enjoyment, even though, in actuality, this ideological framing, 'shaped by narratives and the media in democratic polities', may be often contrary to the interests of the majority of its citizens (Glynos, 2014a, p.188).

2. The role of planning as scapegoat in contemporary neo-liberal governance

Planning is often blamed for the failings of contemporary neoliberal governance and those of wider society. Allmendinger and Haughton (2014, p.29) go so far as to assert that in the UK, 'neo-liberal discourse seems to require a demonization of planners and planning as a bureaucratic, anti-enterprise form of social engineering that is forever "locking up jobs in filing cabinets"'. In my own country of New Zealand, the Minister of Finance and Deputy Prime Minister Bill English has recently pointed his 'finger at local government planning rules, saying they are a major cause of poverty and inequality because they drive up the price of houses' (Small, 2014, np). The current UK Chancellor (at time of writing) stated in a commentary in the Financial Times:

> In a global economy, where skills and capital are more mobile than ever, our planning system is a deterrent to international investment, and a barrier to the expansion of home-grown enterprise.
>
> When planning acts as a brake on growth, and on the much needed new jobs and new businesses, reform is imperative… Reforming a slow and inefficient planning system will be good news for the small business looking to expand; for the young family hoping for more affordable house prices; and for the community wanting to decide on their own future. (Pickle and Osborne, 2011, np)

The UK Guardian Newspaper observed that '[d]esperate for someone to blame for the lack of growth, David Cameron has fallen back on the Margaret Thatcher's old bogey, local government, and the bugbear of planning control' (Jenkins, 2012, np). Indeed, a recent UK planning professional trade publication has reported a headline that: "The planning system is to blame for Britain's overpriced housing and struggling retail sector, according to research by a think-tank" (Webb, 2014). Similarly, a US think tank of acknowledged right-wing perspective went so far as to blame urban planning for the 2008 world recession:

> big government not only let the crisis happen, it caused it… it all started with the [housing] bubble. But what caused the bubble? The answer is clear: excessive land-use regulation… It almost exclusively struck states and regions that were heavily regulating land and housing.
>
> The key to making a housing bubble is to give cities control over… "growth-management planning." If they have such control, they will restrict such development in the name of stopping "urban sprawl" – an imaginary problem – while their real goal is to keep development and its associated tax revenues within their borders. Once they have limited rural development, they will impose all sorts of conditions and fees on developers, often prolonging the permitting process by several years. This makes it impossible for developers to respond to increased housing demand by stepping up production. (O'Toole, 2008, np)

It does not take much effort to find similar evidence from other right-of-centre neoliberal regimes and their voice-pieces that planning is often asserted as the cause for many of their country's problems. Further, considerable criticism has been made by academics of planners and their professional institutions for not better defending planning against these ideological attacks and the resultant negative imagery of planning consequentially projected in the popular media (Clifford, 2006; Gunder, 2011a; Tewdwr-Jones, 1999). As Allmendinger and Haughton (2014, p.30) observe in regard to

planning's lack of development of a robust defence against its scapegoating, at least in the UK, a 'more compliant scapegoat for neoliberal ideologues and scaremongers could scarcely be imagined, so naturally like all bullies they keep coming back'. To begin to theorise how and why this process works in ideological formation and contemporary society, a brief précis of the Lacanian subject and its relation to fantasy formulation is necessary, as developed in the following section.

3. The Lacanian subject, fantasy and desire

For Lacan (2006), it is a fundamental 'lack' that constitutes both the subject and the subject's engagement with fantasy. This 'lack', (and *jouissance* – enjoyment – which will be discussed in detail shortly) relates back to our initial infantile relationship with our first caregiver – Mum – and the fictional sense of post-natal wholeness that this relationship created for the new born. It is the growing infant's emergences from a relatively simple state of biological existence into the symbolic order of language and culture that creates a traumatic separation from this primordial Other. This lack 'results in deep loss (of enjoyment), a loss we are never able to forget', so we constantly seek to duplicate this primordial fulfilment, but without success, only generating dissatisfaction, as this 'enjoyment is always deferred, with the result that we continuously miss our goal, yet keep coming back for more' (Kapoor, 2014, p.1128). Moreover, this:

> "lost object" is primordial in the sense that it is something we never had – and for this reason impossible to recover. Nevertheless, it is said that this lost object structures the desire and being of the subject. So enjoyment is linked to impossibility and its fantasized outcomes. (Glynos, 2012, p.2404).

In other words, our very 'subjectivity is a function of being interpellated into the symbolic order', which Lacan calls the 'big Other', where we 'henceforth experience ourselves as fundamentally lacking' and our attempts to forever replicate this misleading primordial fantasy derived from 'our unconscious conviction that we were once whole and completely satisfied' are forever without success (Ruti, 2014, pp.304-305). Accordingly, subsequent new fantasies then play on the subject's mechanism of perpetual hope – desire – that this primordial fantasy of wholeness and complete satisfaction will someday return, even though it no way reflects the rather terrifying actual reality of our infantile pre-symbolic existence.

Lacan's triad registry of the Symbolic, Real and Imaginary is the basis on which this theorisation of our inter- and intra-psychic life is developed. Subjectivity and resultant human agency is fundamentally constituted by the inability of the subject to fully represent itself in the Symbolic order of words, knowledges, understandings, values, and beliefs, which, in aggregate, these signifier chains incompletely construct as society and social reality. For in the symbolic order 'the subject is never fully equal to itself, it is only constituted discursively via a signifier representing the subject for another signifier' resulting in the symbolised subject being fundamentally incomplete and lacking (de Vos, 2014, p.87). For 'once we (as human animals) enter language, we are thoroughly denaturalised' as 'we are unable to relate to the world directly any more, since it is always mediated by and through language' and 'because we are linguistic beings and the symbolic order is lacking, so are *we* lacking, always divided and alienated (from the world, from our own biological instincts)' (Kapoor, 2014, p.1122 – emphasis in original). Lacan (2006, p.678 – emphasis added) asserts that assimilation into language and resultant culture 'castrates' us from our biological instincts, that is '[t]he cut made by the signifying chain is the only cut that verifies the structure of the subject as a discontinuity in the <u>real</u>'.

The Lacanian concept of the 'Real' is simply a placeholder term for some noumenon (in contrast to an observable phenomenon) that somehow disrupts signification. But it is a noumenon in a non-Kantian

'sense' of the word, since it does not exist-in-itself, as it is 'nothing at all, just a void, an emptiness in a symbolic structure marking some central impossibility… a certain limit which is always missed' (Žižek, 1989, p.173). Indeed, the Real is 'the immanent obstacle, stumbling block, of the Symbolic order itself' (Žižek, 2008, p.319). This is especially apparent when we try and represent the Real in the Symbolic and, at best, can only signify some of the symptoms that it's inconsistencies produce as the Real's excessive impossibility overflows 'our illusions of order and coherence' undermining the 'Symbolic attempts to create coherence' (Fletcher, 2013, p.798). In doing so, 'the Lacanian [R]eal ruptures the complacency of the prevailing symbolic, rendering it less securely authoritative than it pretends to be' (Ruti, 2014, p.299).

The Imaginary is the third element of Lacan's triad, which embodies our attempt through fantasy to conceal this elemental disjuncture between the Symbolic and Real, which Žižek (1989, p.118) called the "screen concealing the gap". Fantasy plays an important role in concealing the Symbolic order's disruptive relationship with the impossibility of the Real. In this regard, 'fantasy denotes a framing device which subjects use to "protect" themselves from the anxiety associated with the idea that there is no ultimate guarantee or law underlying and guiding our social existence' (Glynos, 2012, p.2405). Fantasy allows us to meaningfully structure social 'reality, often in the least expected scenarios, ordering our emotional investment within a larger narrative of reconciliation and stability… fantasy is what attempts to conceal all fissures… turning our worldly experience into something coherent and appealing' (Bloom and Cederstrom, 2009, p.163). Accordingly, 'fantasy shades into reality in a myriad of subtle and not so subtle ways [so that social] reality is overdetermined by fantasy' (Glynos, 2014a, p.185). Indeed, in this regard, fantasy functions as 'a means for an ideology to take its own failure into account in advance' (Žižek, 1989, p.126 – emphasis in original).

'The essential kernel of fantasy is its capacity to organize' and sustain desire over time for the subject, 'not to represent [social] reality in a faithful way' (Glynos, 2014a, p.183). Lacan called the pursuit of desire: *jouissance*, which is 'a basic compulsion to enjoy; to achieve consummate satisfaction and therefore heal the gap, or "wound" in the order of being' (Žižek and Daly, 2004, p.3). But the fulfilment of desire – which would mean the loss of the 'lack' that constitutes the subject, is impossible – so *jouissance* has components of both enjoyment and pain in the pursuit of a satisfaction that can never be fully achieved. Or in the context of hegemonic ideology, '[j]ouissance is the paradoxical satisfaction in dissatisfaction that results from the repeated failure to obtain the full enjoyment subjects are promised in hegemonic discourses' and the fantasies that they propose (Müller, 2012, p.282). Indeed, '[j]ouissance elucidates why people become so attached to cultural values and socio-political systems, and why power can turn out to be so intractable, persistent and enduring' and explains why an individual or society 'has trouble giving up such things as racism, materialism, sexism or religious fundamentalism because one enjoys them; they give one a certain sense of stability and fulfilment, despite the fact that (and sometimes because) one may well know they can be pernicious and cruel' (Kapoor, 2014, p.1129 – emphasis in original).

Accordingly, '[i]n the fantasy-scene desire is not fulfilled, "satisfied," but constituted' (Žižek, 1989, p.118). Moreover, 'through fantasy, *jouissance* is domesticated' (Žižek, 1989, p.123). In other words, 'the aim of fantasy is not to satisfy our desire, something that is ultimately impossible'; rather its aim is 'to construct it and support it as such: through fantasy we "learn" how to desire' (Stavrakakis, 2000, p.89). *Jouissance* often concerns 'the excessive satisfaction or kick we get from doing something transgressive, irrational or even wrong', it often 'involves the intense pleasure taken from pain, a kind of idiotic stupor that often makes us ask for more even though we well know the risks' (Kapoor, 2014, p.1128). Indeed, fantasy 'relies on the dialectic of the promise of enjoyment on the one hand and the *jouissance* that subjects procure from failing to obtain this enjoyment on the other hand' (Müller, 2012, p.282). Through this process, 'fantasy's promise to deliver the desired satisfaction at some future point

conceals the impossibility of this promise, the Real-Symbolic gap it obscures, and the symptoms that signal this disjunction as well' (Fletcher, 2013, p.799).

We can understand and reflexively engage with 'the content of fantasy by exploring, for example, its ideals, the obstacles to achieving such ideals, the way challenges can be overcome, the vision of a successful outcome, and the imagined consequences of failure' (Glynos, 2012, p.2405). In doing so, 'while there is something important we need to hold on to about the force of enjoyment that is distinct from the specificity of normative content, we should also acknowledge how fantasmatic content, animated by logics of desire and enjoyment, can hook up with normative content in multiple overdetermined ways' (Glynos, 2014a, p.185). In this regard, 'Lacan (2006) helps us to comprehend how fantasy bridges our psychic life (the Imaginary) with socially constructed reality (the Symbolic) and prevents us from encountering, what Lacan calls, the Real', that 'which is outside everything that can be (legitimately) symbolized, is literally too terrifying and must be avoided at all costs' (Fotaki, 2010, p.641).

4. Fantasy and Scapegoats

Ideology helps to obscure the terrifying contingency of the Real that defies the symbolic order by typically proposing 'some utopian horizon which explicitly or implicitly promises some fullness to come, and it does this through fantasy' (Engelken-Jorge, 2010, p.75). From a psychoanalytical perspective, 'fantasies are not designed to allow us to flee an unsatisfactory world, but rather to render the world satisfactory by reassuring us that the Other – the social environment within which we struggle to find our bearings – possesses the correct, calming, or consoling answers to our most pressing questions' (Ruti, 2010, p.2). For planning and governance, these are questions of how to assure the subject a good life and a good city, perhaps by making our cities more liveable, sustainable, 'world class', or such like (Gunder and Hillier, 2009).

Yet, in most cases, policy responses to these broad questions can seldom deliver actual success. Or even if they do for some, this is not without cost for others. My city of Auckland's Council promises Aucklanders that the Council will make Auckland 'the most liveable city in the world', yet up to 89 percent of the population of some wards in the south of Auckland continue to live in areas of high urban deprivation (Auckland Council, 2012, p.92). Moreover, the same Council is not prepared to fund its own identified policy initiative necessary to overcome this identified deprivation, simply because 'not all local [community] boards [of the Auckland Council] backed the project' (Baker-Wilson, 2014, np). Consequently, to 'retain its grip, every hegemonic ideology needs to take into account in advance its own failure and to condition its own transgression' (Stavrakakis, 2010, p.15). In this regard, 'fantasy is understood to operate at different phases of the policy process, for example, formulation, public justification, as well as implementation' (Glynos, 2012, p.2383).

Where the ideological potential is failing to be achieved, the 'fantasy locates the object of satisfaction as somehow *still in the picture* – still there, *not yet lost'*, so that the fantasy constructively shapes social '"reality" by guiding the way the subject historically weaves (and symptomatically distorts) the denials of loss into the fabric of its "reality"' (MacCannell, 2007, p.171, emphasis in original). Here the 'failure to achieve happiness in the present can even extend one's investment in a certain path of action: if the more one waits, *the more one gives up, then the more one waits, the harder it is to give up*' (Ruti, 2014, p.303 – emphasis in original).

Indeed, 'the more invested we are in the guarantee that fantasy conjures, the more susceptible we become to what we could call the "theft of enjoyment" temptation', which 'involves projecting the inherent impossibility linked to subjectivity as such—the idea of a split subjectivity—onto an external

figure who is then treated as an obstacle to the realization of our ideals: [perhaps] the inefficient or lazy public servant' (Glynos, 2012, p.2410). Moreover, once a governance policy fantasy becomes non-delivering – say for liveability – this failure often receives a further explanatory narrative as to why the desirous fantasy has failed, cannot be permitted, or is being prevented by some pernicious influence, or terrible Other. Significantly, this de-stabilizing fantasy is 'not benign in nature', rather it often is predisposed to 'be perpetrated by malicious forces aiming to destroy what an individual' believes as being most valuable, such as the right to an affordable dwelling unit or a decent job (Bloom and Cederstrom, 2009, p.165). In the case of South Auckland, accordingly to my Deputy Prime Minister Bill English, this malicious force is 'local government planning' that 'drive up the price of houses' causing 'poverty and inequality' (Small, 2014, np). Yet, this is the same local government that promises to make Auckland 'the most liveable city in the world' via a statutorily required spatial plan, legislated by the same current government in which English is the Deputy Leader (Auckland Council, 2012)!

Under the theft of enjoyment narrative, 'the concept of scapegoat plays an important fantasy role in suggesting that our enjoyment might be regained, but only as a state of future potential, if we maintain the prevailing ideology by being resolute against this "thieving" Other' (Gunder, 2011a, p.334). Further, fantasy facilitates the structuring of 'enjoyment embedded within scapegoating stories, an enjoyment which energizes a range of pre-emptive political logics… [so that scapegoats] embody an obstacle to an ideal which is [actually] preserved by the scapegoating process' (Glynos et al, 2012, p.312). Moreover, the role of scapegoat provides support to a fantasy, as by erasing this 'disturbing excess… from the picture, the picture will be that of a harmonious Whole' (Žižek, 2014, p.324). Indeed, Stavrakakis (2007, p.241) contends that fantasy does not only act 'as a screen which promises to fill the lack in the Other, but also as what "produces" this lack'.

Consequently, fantasy acts as the crucial mechanism to hide the contradictions and fissures in social reality. In doing so fantasy constitutes the frame that enables desire for something, but then does not fulfil the desire. Indeed, the promise of fantasy to supply the desired fulfilment at an unspecified future time obscures the very impossibility of the promise to deliver, often through deploying a process that evokes a scapegoat as to why the fantasy is failing to satisfy its desired promise. This results in 'the disjunction between the Real and the Symbolic' being 'further sutured by positing the infiltration of' some kind of evil Other (Fletcher, 2013, p.799). This is "an external element, a foreign body introducing corruption into the sound social fabric"' (Žižek, 1989, p.126). Hence, 'what is excluded from the Symbolic… returns in the [R]eal as a paranoid construction of' the culprit that has been repressed' (Žižek, 1989, p.127).

Here the neoliberal governance policy outcome might be for affordable housing for all, which the fantasy promises, but the planners impede through their needlessly restrictive landuse controls which drive up the cost of land and whose time consuming approval processes add further needless additional expense to the selfless developer. In this example, the planners are the scapegoats that prevent the market and its efficiency from doing its 'thing' and providing affordable housing for all. Yet, in this situation the 'planners' function as 'nothing but a fetishistic embodiment of a certain fundamental blockage' (Žižek, 1989, p.127). Further, by identifying 'planners' as this blockage, they provide veracity to the policy fantasy's future promise of affordable housing, by implying that this will still occur, only once these dreadful planners are dealt with by the necessary change of legislation, or however the resolution is proposed. Yet, somehow this resolution never seems to quite occur, or work out!

Of course, it is not the planners that cause this blockage of housing affordability. Rather the cause is the very nature of neoliberal capitalism to bid up land rents and housing costs to the highest exchange

value that a society can sustain. That is, at least until the next capitalist crisis and resultant market contraction. This inherently produces housing costs that largely exclude entry for those on the margins, high risk sub-prime lending aside, while benefiting both established affluent home owners and their lending and related institutions with their capitalist gains, at least until the next recession, or worse, occurs (Aalbers and Christophers, 2014; Dean, 2013; Harvey; 2014).

Žižek (1989, p.127) attributes this scapegoating process 'to identification with a symptom'. In this case, the need for neoliberal government/governance to require a planning regulatory function, which generally has a statutory responsibility to regulate built development, much of it profit driven, so as to protect the public interest by ensuring a minimally acceptable build quality that curtails adverse safety, amenity and environmental effects, at least to a societally set acceptable standard. That there is a need to regulate property development in this regard, especially where it is concerned with profit maximisation, is 'clearly a social symptom: the point at which the immanent social antagonism assumes a positive form, erupts on the social surface, the point at which it becomes obvious that [neoliberal] society [and its market logics] "doesn't work", that the social mechanisms "creaks"' (Žižek, 1989, pp.127-128). Perhaps best put into context by Dean (2013, p.144), who contends that in the lead up to and aftermath of the 2008 recession's speculative American housing bubble and the sub-prime loan transference of debt to those 'seemingly furthest from Wall Street', 'the increase in the number of poor people isn't a social problem, it's an investment opportunity', where the neoliberal capitalist 'system turns in on itself and feeds on its own excesses'.

Accordingly, 'one of the ideological strategies is to fully admit the threatening character of a dysfunction, and to treat it as an external intrusion, not as the necessary result of the system's inner dynamic' (Žižek, 2008, pp.388-389). Consequently, resolution is achieved by producing the scapegoat 'to cover up, and divert attention away from, the [polity's] internal troubles (the Real)', so that 'once the scapegoat is removed or eliminated, the [polity and capitalism] will recover its (impossible) harmony' (Kapoor, 2014, p.1133).

5. Disavowal, Repression and Primal Dependency

Generally 'markets are treated as a neutral means of coordinating supply and demand in a way that achieves a set of substantive aims' (Glynos, 2012, p.2384). Yet, 'the critique of market capitalism often becomes coterminous with a critique of those logics of fantasmatic desire and enjoyment that buoy up everyday consumptive patterns' (Glynos, 2012, p.2379). Neoliberalism, like any 'ideological system binds people to it by seducing them (through *jouissance*); it creates a series of lacks, and through a cycle of satisfaction-disappointment (and hence postponement) is able to endlessly stimulate and redirect our desires (for consumption, wealth, jobs, etc)' (Kapoor, 2014, p.1134). At the same time the neo-liberal fantasy has to disavowal and conceal its contradictions, be they devastating Gini coefficients that symbolise exploited labour and resultant marginalised home-owners and renters; or, the global ecological crisis and the loss of bio-diversity and climate change that unconstrained global capital consumption induces (Gunder and Hillier, 2009; Harvey, 2014). As a consequence, every hegemonic ideology, including neo-liberalism,

> needs to take into account in advance its own failure, its own limits, and to condition its own (partial) transgression. Here, we see the lacking "other'" an incomplete power structure, indirectly acknowledging this lack, allowing a certain degree of dis-identification, providing a breathing space for its subjects, on the condition, of course, that this remains under control: 'Ideology is effective precisely by constructing a place of false disidentification.' (Stavrakakis, 2012, pp.2297-2298 – emphasis in original)

In this regard, 'neoliberal analysts tend to engage in a sort of "fetishistic disavowal" (Žižek, 1989, 2008)—a simultaneous admission and denial—often superficially acknowledging yet ultimately dismissing for the most part potential critiques concerning the presence of essential contradictions in the performance of neoliberal mechanisms… something generally known yet rarely openly voiced' (Fletcher, 2013, p.797). This ideological disavowal is what permits ideology to work, even in the planning office, and not just for wider society (Gunder, 2014). This keeping quite and dismissing contentious issues is also called repression.

Repression occurs at both the conscious and unconscious level and our observable material actions – agency – is driven by both levels of mind. We all have ideas that are inappropriate, unseemly, dangerous, or unrealistic, or simply in contrast to the objectives of important others, such as our employer, and these ideas are likely to generate disapproval, or even punishment (Gunder, 2014). So we intentionally try and shelter ourselves from the penalties of considering or even acting on these thoughts and desires by simply forgetting them, pretending to not be aware of these thoughts, literally by pushing them from our consciousness. But, of cause these repressed thoughts still reside in our unconscious, and these repressed desires, even though out of conscious consideration, still continue to drive aspects of our agency, which may result in our developing and undertaking actions that achieve the fulfilment of often unseemly, dangerous or unrealistic aims. But we tend to be unaware of these unconscious desires and how they may still dominate our individual actions.

Indeed, the task of the clinical psychoanalyst is to bring this unconscious repression into consciousness for the analysand. So that the troubled patient seeking help is enabled to understand the fundamental Thing that is shaping and motivating their desire and the resultant often repetitious suffering it tends to induce in their actions. Psychoanalysis has the clinical objective to facilitate the analysand's ability to say: 'Enough!' or at least mitigate these repressed thoughts and desires' most painful dimensions by loosening their grip on the subject's compulsion (Ruti, 2014, p.304).

There are two types, or levels, of repression for Lacan. The first is fundamental or primal repression that constitutes, or accompanies, subject formation for the young child and which constitutes our most fundamental desires (as discussed in a prior section) and the second is symbolic or surplus repression (after Marcuse) that is constituted in the social pressure that forces compliance to the moral codes, norms and standards of the symbolic order – society – and/or the demands of the 'big Other' (Ruti, 2014, p.308). The latter, might be said to correspond to Foucault's normalisation, or Butler's performativity. This symbolic repression is shaped by our inherent socialisation, our desire to be wanted and be considered a 'good' person by others, once assimilated within the discourses of culture and society (Gunder, 2011b).

Neoliberalism has produced a 'traumatic reality of intensified vulnerability that has been created by governmental and corporate abandonment of most of the citizenry', which has occurred through the dismantling of the welfare state and its replaced by an autonomous model of individual competition, where success accrues to the few and results in an extensive symbolic repression, or perhaps more correctly, after Freud, a disavowal, maintained by a fetish structure oscillating between two contradicting fantasies (Layton, 2014, p.171). The first is a fantasy of mastery and independence that we either are, or, at least for most of us, that one-day we will be, competitively successful in our neoliberal social reality (Glynos, 2014b, p.8). The second is a fantasy of dependence that we are somehow still loved and protected by the symbolic order, Lacan's 'big Other', or perhaps better phrased: 'Caring Other', acting as a metaphorical sublimation of our desire to return to our primordial fiction of wholeness with our primordial caregiver (Glynos, 2014b, p.9). Yet the 'fantasies endemic to narcissistic neoliberal subject formation are produced in part by the radical split between autonomy and connection… in the autonomy fantasy, we imagine ourselves self-sufficient and omnipotent,

needing no one (the entrepreneurial self); in the fantasy marked by neoliberalism's degraded state of dependency, we fantasize that we will be loved and taken care of without having to make any effort' (Layton, 2014, p.171).

In looking after the public interest, planning is aligned with the weaker second fantasy of dependency, which is that social reality, as materialised traditionally in the role of the state, will somehow still care and look after you, by protecting you from the non-Caring Other, say 'big business'. But this latter fantasy is a negative one of failure under the dominant neoliberal discourse, where one is lacking competitive success due 'to failures of *individual* choice and responsibility', which makes you both weak and dependent on the Other for your own wellbeing (Hamman, 2009, p.50 – emphasis in original). Accordingly, this weaker fantasy's alignment with planning's agency for the common good tends to alienate popular support for it. This is because alignment with the dependency fantasy, at least under neo-liberal values – makes you a societal looser and failure!

Rather, an alignment with the stronger neo-liberal fantasy of the 'omnipotent solution resolves', at least at a superficial level, many of 'the problems of abandonment, danger and helplessness' that largely pertains to the fundamental trauma underlying the weaker fantasy's basic premise of dependency. While the sublimation of the fundamental desire for a return of primordial Mum with her promises of completeness and comfort is no less needed, an alignment with the omnipotence fantasy allows more 'psychic room' for new sublimations for alternative fantasies. These might be dependency fantasies of a more personal, or market base provision, ones that are less dependent on neo-liberal governance/government for their fulfilment, even if no more able to sate the underlying desire propagating them (Layton, 2010, p.307).

Yet our fantasy aspirations inherently leave us both individually and collectively open to manipulation, be it through mechanisms of governance, the market, or simply traditional political promise (Gunder and Hillier, 2009). Glynos (2014b, p.10) understandably raises the concern of being over-attached to our fantasies, say perhaps that we will soon have that better job or affordable house, and when this is not forthcoming we are then susceptible to being directed to projecting this attachment 'onto an external figure… who is then treated as an obstacle to the realisation of our ideals'. Here, perhaps, the politician's scapegoating statement is most effective. In this type of situation, a key dimension of ideology again works through repression and disavowal, when the actual truth of our situation hurts, such that you may never have that better job or your own home, it is often easier, and less painful, to align with the dominant promises, even if told by a politician you inherently may not trust! Consequently, it may be easiest to simply blame one's misfortune on those socialist planners!

Regardless of the ethics involved in its deployment, or the often obscenities of scapegoating's historical global precedents, scapegoating provides any governance regime, neo-liberal or otherwise, an effective mechanism for its diversion of faults and policy failures. In the exemplars of planning discussed in this paper, the scapegoating process used is one that builds on and re-enforces neo-liberalism's central normative values of individual independence, self-determination and entrepreneurial success, while downplaying the contradicting values of independence, social justice and care of the other (Harvey, 2005, 2014). Indeed, as René Girard's (1987) mimetic theory develops, it is through 'the sacrificial violence of scapegoating' that 'the mechanism central to the construction and maintenance of order' is maintained and this is 'a process able to channel the violence of all against all into the violence of all against one', so as to obscure, in this case, the inherent contradictions imbedded in the contemporary neo-liberal capitalist global order (Brighi and Cerella, 2015, p.19). This includes neo-liberal governance's scapegoating of its own necessary functionary: planning, so as to obscure its fundamental policy contradictions when predicated in the pursuit of

capitalistic wealth creation for the few that merit such reward and to facilitate the exclusion of the vast majority that lack the necessary worth.

Fundamentally, we are constantly driven by our desired seeking of that impossible Thing that we can never find, at best, we can achieve 'only its pleasurable associations' (Lacan, 1997, p.52). Metaphorically, these are associations that governance and its planning agency attempts to promise and even occasionally provides in its spatial policy delivery (Gunder and Hillier, 2009), yet this common good often sits at odds with neo-liberal's fantasy promise of independence, omnipotence and competitive success for the few that are 'truly worthy'. According, a scapegoating process is often deployed that allows governance to channel public dissatisfaction into just one dimension of its failing governance function, which can then be disavowed. Further, this fantasy deconstruction explains one dimension as to why subjects can first develop and then 'enjoy their hatred of big government' as well as how 'this enjoyment blinds them to their "real" interests', while facilitating the interests of neoliberal governance, as this governance process further depoliticises and dis-enfranchises the 'non-worthy' majority from the achievement of their own desires (Glynos, 2014a, p.181 – emphasis in original).

6. Conclusion

> What is so powerful about Lacan's ethics of psychoanalysis as an antidote to the master's service of goods is that it asks, quite simply, that we cease to care about what the big Other wants – that we reject the legitimacy of the Other's desire so as to create space for the truth of our own. (Ruti, 2014, p.313).

This paper has deconstructed the neo-liberal scapegoat fantasy that asserts that planning often impedes, or fails, in its responsibility to ensure policies for market-lead success. It first documented several exemplars of this neoliberal scapegoating process by politicians and their voice-pieces. It then briefly explored the role of fantasy and ideology in governance policy formulation and, from a Lacanian perspective, the theorisation that underlies this process. Having laid the necessary foundation, it then investigated the role of the 'scapegoat' in ideological fantasy formation for public policy facilitation so as to explain why planning is often placed in this role, and why this role is often ideologically necessary, at least for neo-liberal governance, when planning undertaking its statutory responsibility of facilitating the 'common good' and/or public interest. Further, from Lacan's (1997, p.321) ethical perspective, planning in allowing itself to be placed repeatedly in the role of scapegoat, while still attempting to retain and facilitate the attainment of its core values (desires) of protecting the wider public interest, actually makes the profession heroic!

The paper concluded that one thing that fantasies generally 'have in common, including fantasies of independence and fantasies of dependence, namely: the potential of fantasmatic over-investment that springs from the promise of a guarantee, or, to put it in more Lacanian terms, the promise of subjective suture', that is the promise that 'the uncertainties, ambiguities, and ambivalences of [social] *interdependence*' constituting a society will somehow be overcome (Glynos, 2014b, p.10 – emphasis in original). This is a key insight as to how ideology works. The paper has illustrated how the role of the scapegoat helps to facilitate and sustain this suture, by helping to insure faith that the governance policy guarantee will somehow prevail, even when the evidence appears contrary to this success, by identifying, correctly or not, who is impeding this promise. Planning is often socially useful in this role, at least for ideologically driven neo-liberal governance, even if it may be rather frustrating for the planners that are simply doing their heroic best to do their jobs in fulfilling the public interest.

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