

Media Representations of Crime: The Case of International Tourists in New Zealand.

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Abstract

This research is informed by media reports of past and current acts of crime against international tourists in New Zealand; acts which could potentially have a negative impact on the tourism industry of New Zealand and on its “clean cut” image. New Zealand prides itself on being a thriving, sustainable, clean, and relatively safe country to visit. This view is perhaps best reflected in the Tourism New Zealand marketing campaign, 100% Pure New Zealand.

Taking a qualitative approach, this research analysed media reports during the period 2004-2010. The thesis also utilises Pizam’s (1999) ‘Tourism Crime and Violence Typology’ to classify acts of crime committed against international tourists visiting New Zealand and it endeavours to draw a picture of the agencies involved in the aftermath of each criminal act (such agencies could be law enforcement, community, tourist industry, visitors, businesses and government agencies). The thesis then discusses how the media portrays the strategies used in the recovery stage after a crime has occurred. The thesis concludes by suggesting that more research is needed on the aftermath of crime against international tourism including a detailed study of each of the agencies involved in order to understand the strategies they have in place and to find out if collaboration occurs among them.

Finally, this research contributes to the discussion of the importance of studying crime within the tourism context. It also highlights the need to further understand how New Zealand as a country deals with crime against international tourists as there is a need to establish sources of suitable information for use by future visitors.