

Connecting and changing places: globalisation and tourism mobility on the Otago Peninsula, Dunedin, New Zealand

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Abstract

Globalisation, localisation and tourism are processes that are closely interconnected. They relate to historical mobilities and non-mobilities of humans, ideas and capital that impact on environment, economy, culture, politics and technology. Yet, these impacts on local tourism destinations are not well researched.

Small destinations are not researched in relation to the impact of globalisation and tourism over time. The thesis develops an historical understanding of globalisation, localisation and tourism within the context of the Otago Peninsula in Dunedin, New Zealand. It portrays the 'glocalisation' processes, the specific mix of local and global forces that shaped the Otago Peninsula and created the basis for the current conditions, especially for tourism.

The research on the Otago Peninsula clearly identifies different stages of mobilities to the place, generally following a similar pattern to other places in New Zealand settled in the latest phase of colonialism. The first settlers, the Polynesians, were followed by white explorers, sealers and whalers at the beginning of the 19th century who exploited a local resource that was valuable to international markets. After the over-exploitation of the resource white settlers arrived to 'conquer' nature and to improve on their living conditions in a new country. They provided the basis for the following mobilities by developing or facilitating a local, national, regional and international infrastructure. Towards the end of the 19th century the major European migration had ended. The next major mobility movement was recreationists from the close urban centre of Dunedin who used the infrastructure on the Otago Peninsula at weekends, as time, money and technology limited mobilities to places further away. From the 1920s onwards, when these limitations were reduced by, for example, a better infrastructure and new technological developments such as the car and more disposable income and time, New Zealanders started to more widely discover their own country. Finally, international travellers started to arrive in the 1960s after the main obstacle, the distance and time needed to travel to New Zealand and the Otago Peninsula, was reduced by technological development, especially airplanes. During all of these phases of mobility, the Otago Peninsula became increasingly interconnected with other places on the globe, creating the conditions for tourism.

In this study, within the context of the phase model of mobilities, a variety of research methods were used to assess the impact of globalisation, localisation and tourism on the Otago Peninsula. These methods include literature, newspaper, local promotional materials and photographic images analysis, as well as participant observation and historical interviews.

The research clearly highlights the changes to the Otago Peninsula created by historical events that happened as a consequence of human mobility. Internal and external conditions at different geographical scales, ranging from the local to the global, changed the economy, the environment, culture, politics and the use of technology on the Otago Peninsula. The place was (and still is)

constantly glocalised. Consequently, international tourism, as one of the more recent forces, has to be managed within this historical framework of stretched social relations, the intensification of flows, increasing global interactions and the development of global infrastructure and networks.