(Re-)Assembling Place in the Global Countryside

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Presentation slides available at www.global-rural.org
“there is a discernable privileging of urban over rural in scholarly accounts of globalization” Hogan (2004) in Journal of Sociology, p 22
The global countryside
Dairy export trade relations
The Global Countryside

- Stretching and multiplication of trade networks and relationships
- International migration in, from and through rural areas
- Growth and increasing reach of transnational corporations in rural economies
- Relocation of rural manufacturing industries and foreign direct investment
- International investment in rural land
- Intensification of international tourism to rural areas
- Extension of global mining, energy and forestry industries into new rural frontiers
- Imposition of transnational conservation reserves and regulations
- Displacement and hybridization of rural cultures by global culture
The Global Countryside

Globalization does not mean that rural areas are all becoming the same

The global countryside is a differentiated space

*Key question is how globalization is reproduced through rural places, and why it has different outcomes in different rural localities.*
37 case studies in 14 countries
Over 580 interviews + archival research, surveys, ethnography, field observation, documentary analysis, participatory research methods
“The landscape of the global countryside is inscribed with the marks of globalization”

Above: New farmers in I-lan county
Left: Green party election leaflet 2016
Tengtou, China
Xinxian county, Henan province, China
Xinxian County Bureau of Labour
Scheme to place local migrant workers in employment in Japan and South Korea
“Chengzhenhua”
‘Townification’
Vila Fabril, Brazil
“Before we didn’t even have proper houses. Now we have proper houses.”

Return migrant from Ireland, Vila Fabril
Queenstown, New Zealand
Rockbourne Rural Residential Subdivision, Wanaka

9 exciting 1 acre lifestyle blocks available for private sale

These sections are situated on the Wanaka/Hawea corner and are only 2 minutes drive from the Wanaka township. The sites are zoned rural residential and will have sealed road access. Sites are serviced with water, power and phone. The sections have commanding views of the local mountains, and offer lots of space away from the busy town. Lot 9 has a lovely 3-bedroom house with a large office/workshop/garaging and sleepout.

For further information or viewing, please contact:
Daphne Morshuis (0274) 336-870
Fax (03) 443-8175
email Rockbourne@actrix.co.nz

NEW RELEASE
Priced from $195,000
“In effect, Queenstown and the surrounding area has become a global playground with properties attracting global interest ... We have sold to a United Nations of buyers” Estate Agent

In early 2000s, up to 25% of property sales were to overseas buyers
“We don’t want to become the Aspen of the South Pacific. We ... shouldn’t become a community of millionaires and multi-millionaires.”

Warren Cooper, Mayor of Queenstown, *Otago Daily Times*, 09/11/00
“It’s rural butchery. We came here with dreams and ideas”
In-migrant from London, quoted in *Mountain Scene*, 8/11/00

“People go to Queenstown above all because of its unique beauty. It is unlike anything else in the world. If you cover it with suburbs, then that will have gone.”
Sam Neill, quoted in *The Dominion*, 5/12/00

Global Rural Tourism

Ring of Kerry, Ireland
The search for ... adventure

Queenstown, ‘Adventure Capital of the World’
THE BEST PLACES to Go Ziplining IN SOUTHEAST ASIA
The search for... the exotic

Daintree, Queensland, Australia
Making the exotic familiar
The search for ... authenticity

Mata Pequena, Portugal
Stundars, Finland

Bog Village, Ireland

Fencible Village, New Zealand
Landscapes of global agriculture

‘Mar de plastico’, Almeria, Spain

Picture: Low Orbit Tourist
Crete

Shandong province, China
The global encroachment of the industrial crops

Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil
Manawatu, New Zealand
Imports of whole milk powder to China

Source: FAOStats
Expansion of dairy industry in New Zealand

Intensification in traditional dairying areas

Expansion of dairy farming into new areas, especially South Island

Conversion of forest and sheep and beef farms to dairy

Numbers of dairy cattle in New Zealand, 1955 (left) and 2005 (right)
Dairy Conversion

New buildings – milking sheds etc
New fencing
Planting of maize for silage
New power lines
Improved roads
New processing plants
Increased irrigation
The landscape is now the wrong colour....

“I feel it would be a catastrophe to see the Mackenzie Basin as green pasture land with herds of dairy cows grazing across the vista with a mountain backdrop. The reason I go to the Mackenzie is to see the different landscape; the barren yet beautiful tussockland is unsurpassed.”

Letter to Timaru Herald, 4 June 2009

“Even the colours are changing, the mosaic of tawny wheatfields and sheep country now broken by interloper greens and a more diverse palette of crops.”

New Zealand Geographic, 2010

Mackenzie Basin, South Island, New Zealand
Cutters Way
Near Nambour
Queensland
no more

dim rhagor
Acland, Queensland
“I haven’t decided whether to leave yet”

Acland’s last resident
The Global Countryside

➢ The interconnection and interdependence of rural areas around the world through transnational networks

➢ Produce often small-scale incremental changes in rural localities that have a cumulative impact

➢ Manifest in the landscapes of rural places

➢ Repeated patterns of similarity in rural landscapes

➢ But rural places are not all becoming the same, globalization processes have different outcomes in different places

➢ Reflect a relational view of globalization as described by Doreen Massey and others
The Global Countryside

“The reconstitution of rural spaces under globalization results from the permeability of rural localities as hybrid assemblages of human and non-human entities, knitted-together intersections of networks and flows that are never wholly fixed or contained at the local scale, and whose constant shape-shifting eludes a singular representation of place. Globalization processes introduce into rural localities new networks of global interconnectivity, which become threaded through and entangled with existing local assemblages, sometimes acting in concert and sometimes pulling local actants in conflicting directions. Through these entanglements, intersections and entrapments, the experience of globalization changes rural places, but it never eradicates the local. Rather, the networks, flows and actors introduced by globalization processes fuse and combine with extant local entities to produce new hybrid formations. In this way, places in the emergent global countryside retain their local distinctiveness, but they are also different to how they were before.”

An Assemblage Perspective

- Extending this analysis by drawing on ‘Assemblage Theory’
- Derived from work of Deleuze and Guattari, developed by Manuel DeLanda
- Assemblages are coming-togethers of heterogenous components
- Society as “an assemblage of assemblages” (DeLanda, 2016, Assemblage Theory)
- Globalization as interactions between assemblages of varying type, reach and spatial fixidity
An Assemblage Perspective

Principles for assemblages

➢ Assemblages can be comprised by human and non-human components
➢ The components of an assemblage can perform material and expressive roles
➢ Assemblages are held together by territorialization (which can be literal and/or figurative)
➢ Territorialization describes the tendency of an assemblage towards homogeneity; Deterritorialization describes divergence and increasing diversity
➢ Assemblages are given meaning by coding (names, maps, statistics, regulations, conventions)
➢ Assemblages are constantly changing and with each change there are multiple possible forms that an assemblage can take (‘possibility spaces’)
➢ Most changes are minor and incremental, but critical thresholds may be passed where there is a qualitative change in the nature of the assemblage
Places as Assemblages

- Places are comprised by **human and non-human components**
- The components of a place perform **material** (e.g. housing, employment, transport) and **expressive** roles (e.g. contributing to a sense of place)
- Places have coherence through a territory and a social structure (**territorialization**)
- Places foster a sense of community to promote shared identity (**homogeneity**), but migration, social stratification and economic diversification are all **detrimentalizing** pressures
- Places are **coded** by place names, maps, planning documents, statistics, by-laws, local cultural conventions etc.
- Places are constantly changing and with each change there are multiple possible forms that a place can take (**possibility spaces**)  
- Most changes are minor and incremental, but **critical thresholds** may be passed where there is a qualitative change in the nature of the place
Globalization impacts on places through the interactions between place-assemblages and the translocal social, economic, cultural, political and technological assemblages that overlap spatially with them, and which act as vectors that connect places with other places.

➢ Export markets
➢ Commodity chains
➢ Transnational corporations
➢ Migration flows
➢ Tour operators
Globalization and Place

Globalization effects in translocal and place assemblages are often linked by connective assemblages that both hold translocal assemblages together and provide conduits between places.

- Infrastructure
- Roads, ports, airports
- Technical, legal and financial requirements of vehicles, vessels and operators
- Can facilitate and constrain
Globalization and Place

Globalization proceeds through patterns of deterritorialization and (re-)territorialization in translocal assemblages, which in turn prompt patterns of deterritorialization and reterritorialization in place-assemblages.

- Corporations expanding to new markets
- Corporations imposing standardization
- Migration as deterritorialization
- Multiculturalism as reterritorialization around new hybrid identities and cultures
- Deterritorialization and reterritorialization in the landscape
Globalization and Place

Globalization can prompt processes of de-coding and (re-)coding in place-assemblages, as meanings are re-negotiated and established ‘rules’ no longer hold effectively.

➢ Changes in planning regulations and zoning
➢ New conservation restrictions
➢ More informal changes to local cultural codes
Globalization and Place

The outcomes of globalization processes in places are not pre-determined. For each change to the place-assemblage there are multiple possible futures.

➢ Space for local agency
➢ Most possible futures can be anticipated and planned for
➢ The capacity of local actors to negotiate between possible futures is dependent on their capacity to enroll, engage and code components
➢ These capacities may be constrained by the legacy of past assemblage forms and the territorialization of intersecting assemblages
Globalization and Place

When the Moreton Sugar Mill in Nambour, Queensland closed in 2004 there were several possible futures:

- The mill could have been bought as a going concern
- Local sugarcane could have been transported to another mill for processing
- New uses could have been found for sugarcane keeping canegrowers going
- Cane-farming could end and land converted to other uses
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Critical threshold passed with sugar industry removed from Nambour as a material component
Globalization and Place

The sugar industry lived on as an expressive component in the Nambour place-assemblage

Components of the sugar assemblage attached to new heritage assemblages with new roles
The Global Countryside

➢ A hopeful ending?
➢ Rural places are not immune to globalization
➢ Neither are they inevitably victims of globalization
➢ A new global countryside is being assembled and re-assembled through the interaction of place- and translocal assemblages and processes of hybridization, fusion and adaptation
➢ The unfolding of globalization produces multiple possible futures for places, and the ways in which these are negotiated by local actors contributes to the differential outcomes of globalization between places
➢ We need to better understand how places facing the same globalization pressures diverge in following different possible futures, and capacities and constraints that enable and restrict local actors
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