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TOURISM:

GLOBALISATION AND UNEVEN DEVELOPMENT

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by

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ABSTRACT

Globalisation and uneven development of tourism results from unequal power relationships within and between producers and consumers. The relative strengths of exogenous and endogenous influences have shaped a phenomenon marked by extensive spatial and intensive economic integration. Of the exogenous influences the major influences are technology, education, world trade and finance. Internal drivers include changes in demand, sustainable development, technology, globalisation of operators and industrial concentration. Whilst tourism is both cause and consequence of globalisation reflecting and incorporating changes in economy and society and has emerged to become a fundamental characteristic of consumer society in the late 20th century it is also the 'Cinderella' of economic geography.

In the long boom following the cessation of war in 1945 entrepreneurial investment in transport and accommodation and their coordination by tour operators led to mass tourism as a natural response to the demand for holidays. Increased competition during the 1980s stimulated a move to deregulation and restructuring in a move to create more efficient systems of organisation and management. The disintegration of vertical integration and its replacement by contracting out aspects of production and service delivery to other producers and suppliers depends on an efficient system of information and data transfer. However, from the early 1980s the onset of a more market driven economy provided the incentive for horizontal alliance formation as strategic planners sought to 'buy out' opponents and capitalise on their combined strengths. Thus a variety of strategic alliances leading to concentration of control and convergence of supply marks the current phase of tourism production. Information systems and technology which have enabled these changes to take place may be seen as the lubricant that allows the production of the tourist experience.

The uneven distribution of tourist attractions is a reflection of the nature of, and the ways in which, attractions are recognised and signposted. Mass tourism attracted to sun, sand and sea is focussed on those locations where the resources are accessible. Consequently uneven development follows as investors capitalise on

the ready demand for accommodation and a wide variety of services. This form of tourism is clearly driven by political economy with the power of the producer focussed on a relatively small number of places catering for large numbers of tourists. The divergent demands of independent tourism can be argued to be market, or consumption led and comprises many widely dispersed destinations and attractions each catering for relatively low numbers of tourists.

Global patterns of tourism development are reflected in the New Zealand situation. The country is integrated into global systems of transport and accommodation, finance and insurance. Mass tourism is an important aspect of some markets whilst independent tourism characterises other markets, consequently the uneven spatial development which characterises tourism elsewhere in the world is mirrored in New Zealand. The concentration of mass tourism on a few destinations contrasts markedly with the widespread distribution of independent international and domestic tourists.

Key words:

Tourism development; power relationships; alliances; integration; globalisation; uneven development;

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