



UNIVERSITY
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Travel Journalism, Cosmopolitan Concern and the Place-Branded Environment

by

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- McGaurr, Lyn 2010, "Travel journalism and environmental conflict: A cosmopolitan perspective", *Journalism Studies*, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 50-67.
- 2012, "The devil may care: Travel journalism, cosmopolitan concern, politics and the brand", *Journalism Practice*, vol. 6, no 1, pp. 42-48.
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The research associated with this thesis abides by the international and Australian codes of human and animal experimentation, the guidelines by the Australian Government's Office of the Gene Technology Regulator and the rulings of the Safety, Ethics and Institutional Biosafety Committees of the University.

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Abstract

The physical environment is a mainstay of the international tourism industry and a component of many place brands. It is also a global asset and, increasingly, a source of conflict and concern. Drawing on a case study of United States and British travel journalism about Australia's island state of Tasmania, this thesis asks how cosmopolitan concern and place branding interact in the production of travel journalism about tourist destinations experiencing environmental conflict. Rather than concentrating on production in the newsroom, however, its primary interest is what happens in the field. By interviewing travel journalists and actors who have sought to have their messages publicised in overseas newspaper and magazine articles about Tasmania as a holiday destination, the case study weaves together internalist and externalist perspectives. Combining these with textual analyses of travel journalism and other documents, it explores both professional cultures and the evolution and circulation of cosmopolitan and place-branded discourses and frames.

Much international travel journalism mediates commercial tourism for consumers, but it also produces and reflects local identity on the cosmopolitan public stage. The travel media's reliance on the tourism industry for content and advertising makes it susceptible to reputation management via place branding. This is because government tourism office staff and the sources they recommend are often key contacts for its journalists, whether or not they accept free travel and accommodation. But as this case study reveals, some transnational travel journalists demonstrate cosmopolitan predispositions that can lead them to be reflexive about the way they represent places, and to draw on broader networks for information and opinion.

This thesis finds that place branding shapes consumerist cosmopolitan discourses in ways that appeal to transnational travel journalists and are consistent with the commercial constraints of the travel media, thereby contributing to the circulation abroad of representations that depoliticise landscapes contested in the news media. Associated with this, travel journalists reporting on nature-based destinations sometimes build narrative strength by mediating forms of cosmopolitan concern for the environment that are consistent with place branding. This, in turn, positions readers as members of imagined cosmopolitan communities, enhances the journalist's cultural capital and functions textually to frame destinations, the tourism industry and the travel media as environmentally responsible. If governments lose control over nature-based brands during periods of environmental conflict, however, travel media institutions may see value to their own brands in calling places to account. This presents travel journalists and sources with interest-group sympathies an opportunity to contribute alternative, politically charged meanings and symbols to international flows of cosmopolitan concern.

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