Where local and global meet

The multi-layeredness of processes of globalization played out in Pakeha owned engineering SMEs in Auckland, New Zealand

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The multi-layeredness of processes of globalization played out in Pakeha owned engineering SMEs in Auckland, New Zealand

Masterthesis ter afronding van de Master Multiculturalisme in Vergelijkend Perspectief Culturele Antropologie

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Content

Preface

One year ago, January 30, 2013. *It is around 10pm Ilsa and I are back in our room at the hostel in Mt Eden, one of Auckland, New Zealand, its suburbs. We're staying there for the first two nights. After a flight of more than 24 hours we arrived at Auckland Airport a few hours before, did some groceries at Countdown and ate a pizza. Looking both in our Lonely Planet, we are planning what to do and see before we start our bachelor research in Auckland. We are both really excited to be here and want to see so much more then we would be able to. Deciding that it might be better to make a more concrete plan tomorrow, we're going to sleep.*

February 1, 2014. *I'm back in Auckland it is my first night, this time in a different hostel than last year. When Ilsa and I finished our bachelor research I decided to go back for my master research. I have just finished my quickly cooked dinner and on my way to my room. After closing the door I start realizing I'm really on my own this time, without Ilsa. I start eating the liquorice my friends gave me back home and the chocolate bar I bought doing groceries earlier that day. It is the same chocolate bar, the one with smarties in it, Ilsa and I treated ourselves on so many times last year. Then I brush my teeth and get in to bed. I'm going to sleep that night longing to last year and feeling a bit homesick.*

In front of you is my thesis established for my master's degree in Multiculturalisme in Vergelijkend Perspectief Culturele Antroplogie, at the Utrecht University, the Netherlands. Starting off I want to speak out my appreciation to the people that helped me with establishing this thesis. First I want to thank my supervisor Rutger-Jan Scholtens, for his guidance and involvement, his feedback and advices, during my research design, my fieldwork, and the writing of my thesis. I also want to thank the Fowler family for their hospitality when I needed it the most during my fieldwork and for their help with my research. Next to that my thanks goes to Professor Spoonley and Trudie Caine from Massey University, Albany Auckland and Professor Seidel and Dr. Sheppard from Auckland University for their professional insights and research directions. Thanks to all my informants I spoke with, a few of them that have become my friends. They all made my research possible, I'm very grateful to all of them. They will remain anonymous in this thesis. Finally I want to thank my friends and family for all their support and a special thanks to Ilsa and my aunt Joke for all their feedback while writing my thesis.

Chapter one: Introduction

"Well, this is the company I work for. As I told you earlier on, it is just me and my boss. His name is Andy[1]. Funny guy, we work well together." The room we entered has two desks. We start talking about the weather, it is officially Autumn, but it still feels like a summer day, there is no cloud in the sky and it is still warm enough to go to the beach for a swim. "If I did not had to work today I would probably go to the beach, why aren't you?" "Well, because I am doing my research, remember." Claire is wearing a dark blue t-shirt, shorts and jandels[2]. I ask her if she wears that most of the time in summer. "Yes, my boss is ok with it, so why not." "How did you start working here?" "My father knew this guy that knew Andy." There are a few posters on the wall in the back next to a white door and a calendar, there is a picture of Mount Cook on it. It brings me back to last year that I have been there with a friend and fellow student Ilsa. I tell her about it and ask her if she has been there as well. "No I haven't, but I want to though. Tourists always seem to see more of the country than locals do." She walks up to the left desk. "We like keeping copies of houses we designed and drew. My boss does the designing and I do most of the drawing." Next to the two desks there is a drawing table in the middle of the room. "Can you show me where you are working on now?" "Sure." She turns on the lights from the drawing table. "Well these are the drawings I am working on now." "It is a house right? Where will it be located?" "Not that far from here, two blocks up on Kingsroad." She asks me if I want something to drink and points at the water cooler in the corner. "My boss keeps me hydrated." She walks up to it and fills herself and me a cup. I ask her what her boss is up to at the moment. "I do not know. Calling people. Might be upstairs, or something." She ask me what I want to see and know. I ask her about the house on Kingsroad and if most of the houses the company designs are in Auckland. "Yeah, most of them are in this area." She offers me a chair that was set in another corner of the room and she puts down at her desk. I tell her that I do not want to keep her from working. She responds with a smile and says that she does not mind. "My boss is probably having a break too." I ask her what she knows about the clients the company gets. "I do not know, my boss usually arranges that kind of things. But most of it are people he knows, I think, or people get in contact with us through previous clients."

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[1] Andy is not his real name, I choose to use fictitious names for most of my informants to protect their privacy,
[2] Jandels is kiwi for slippers.

Claire works at one of the small businesses in Auckland on the North Shore area[3] of Auckland, a structural engineering design company that employs two people. Although the larger enterprises (that employ more than 100 people) employ almost half of the labour market of New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand 2013), 99 percent of New Zealand businesses are small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs[4]) that employ fewer than 100 people (Ministry of Economic Development 2011 in Smallbone, Deakins, Battisti & Kitching 2012). Smallbone, Deakens, Battitsti and Kitching (2012) state that most decisions are made by their owner managers. 90 Percent of these SMEs have fewer than six employees and even 69 of the 90 percent have no employees at all (Smallbone, Deakins, Battisti & Kitching 2012). Or are as they would call themselves 'self-employed'.

Engineering SMEs

The fact that 99% of New Zealand businesses are SMEs made that I had to focus on a specific type of industry, to get a more in dept study. To find out how processes of globalization are played out within SMEs I choose to focus on an industry that is evident in New Zealand. For this I choose engineering companies, more particular structural, civil and mechanical engineering SMEs. Walking or taking the bus through Auckland showed me that there are a lot of engineering companies around and that there is a lot of development going on. Looking back on last year, while doing research for my bachelors in Auckland, a lot more houses have been build or are being build in and around Auckland, like in its suburbs, comparing to last year. This is mainly considered to be because of the population growth of Auckland. Figures from the 2013 Census show that '*Auckland region had a census usually resident population count of 1.42 million, up about 8 percent since 2006. Just over half of New Zealand's population growth since the last census occurred in Auckland.*' (Statistics New Zealand 2013).

The distinction between structural, civil and mechanical engineering I made because of their differences in markets. 'Civil engineering is a broad field, encompassing a number of fields of engineering. The infrastructure of cities, including sewers, roads, the traffic system, buildings, and much more were all built by civil engineers.' (University of Southern California 2014[5]). In New Zealand this field of engineering is mostly combined with

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[3] The North Shore is a suburb area, part of Auckland.
[4] This abbreviation will be used from now on for small- and medium-sized enterprises.
[5] Source: www.usc.edu, consulted on May 23, 2014.

structural engineering[6]. 'Structural engineering is concerned with the structural integrity of all sorts of structures from skyscrapers and buildings to bridges and dams. Structural engineers have to calculate load dissipation, stress, strain, and compression to see if a building design is feasible. Mechanical engineers have to design, develop, produce, control, and operate machines and mechanical devices. Two main areas of mechanical engineering are design and controls, and thermal sciences' (University of Southern California 2014[7]). In New Zealand structural and civil engineering SMEs are more aimed at the 'local market' and mechanical SMEs have a more 'international market'[8]. From now on I will distinguish two types of engineering SMEs: structural/civil and mechanical.

Corporate Anthropology in SMEs

While starting my masters I already had the idea of going back to Auckland, New Zealand. During my bachelors research I have been to Auckland, New Zealand, together with Ilsa de Jong, introduced the preface and vignette above. Doing our research about feelings of home and national identity, among Pakeha, New Zealanders of European descent, and 1.5 Chinese migrants, in a society influenced by processes of globalization, we found out that New Zealand society has an informal character. This informal character not only influences feelings of home and national identity, but it also influences the labour market (Bosch & De Jong 2013).

Learning more about the growing popularity of the field of Corporate Anthropology, doing fieldwork among businesses, and finding out that this is mainly done in bigger multinational companies like Cefkin (2010) shows in her book, I got interested in doing research within smaller companies. Since SMEs make up for 99% of New Zealand's businesses it is especially relevant to do research among these companies in this context.

First I will give more grip to the location of my research Auckland, New Zealand and show further why it is an interesting location for this research.

Auckland New Zealand

New Zealand has a relatively young history. The composition of New Zealand society is constantly changing. When in 1840 the 'Treaty of Waitangi' was signed, New Zealand

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[6] Information for this I gained from different short conversations, interviews and participant observations.
[7] Source: www.usc.edu, consulted on May 23, 2014.
[8] Information for this I gained from different short conversations, interviews and participant observations.

became an independent British colony. Within the 'Treaty of Waitangi' the bicultural society was recognized, confirming the official equal partnership of Maori, who are recognized as the indigenous people of New Zealand, and Pakeha, New Zealanders of European descent. Although in practice there is still a struggle for equality and preservation of Maori cultural heritage, the 'national identity' of New Zealand is influenced by both Maori and Pakeha (Rata 2005 & Hill 2010).

Because of the changes in the immigration policy in 1991 migration flows changed. The main change was setting in motion a point system, whereby the movement and mobility of more highly educated people to New Zealand was encouraged. Highly educated migration was preferred. The flows of migrations became more divers and especially migration from Asian countries grew (Bell 2002). There is still a strong growth in immigration. In 2013 immigration has increased by four percent and emigrations has decreased by six percent (Statistics New Zealand 2013). As found out during my bachelor research, the meaning of the bicultural national identity in Auckland is transforming to an inclusive national identity, whereby the trend of growing cultural diversity is accepted. The majority percentage of the population in Auckland does not sense a threat of harm to national identity although there is an increase in cultural diversity (Bosch & De Jong 2013).

More than one third of the population of New Zealand lives in Auckland region. Although Auckland is not the capital of New Zealand, it is the biggest city of New Zealand. Auckland region counts more than 1.4 million inhabitants (Statistics New Zealand census 2013) as mentioned before. The city is located at the smallest point of the North Island of New Zealand. The city counts more than 200 districts since the aggregation of multiple cities and city districts in 2010 (Bosch & De Jong 2013). Attached in appendix 1 are maps of New Zealand and Auckland.

Sheppard, one of my expert informants, states in an interview with her, that the location of the country makes it less attractive for multinational corporations to settle. She is a senior lecturer in Management and International Business Department in the Faculty of Business & Economics at the University of Auckland. This does not mean that there is no international business at all, or that SMEs are not part of international flows or aware of processes of globalization. It is interesting to look at how processes of globalizations are played out in these SMEs, because of the way New Zealand is geographically and historically positioned "*New Zealand is a very neutral country, it does not have a lot of loading, it is not a*

threatening country. This makes that a lot of countries have their door open for New Zealand."

New Zealand is part of the OECD, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. '*The mission of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is to promote policies that will improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world. The OECD provides a forum in which governments can work together to share experiences and seek solutions to common problems. We work with governments to understand what drives economic, social and environmental change. We measure productivity and global flows of trade and investment. We analyse and compare data to predict future trends. We set international standards on a wide range of things, from agriculture and tax to the safety of chemicals.*' (OECD 2014[9])

To meet the demands and necessity of SMEs going overseas, council policy in protecting New Zealand businesses in Auckland is aimed at growth (NZTE 2014[10]). Sheppard also argues that because of "*the GDP of New Zealand being rather small it's not really attractive for big multinational companies to settle here, so not attractive by default. There is not much of a threat in that.*" So the goal of council policy is competing on the international market and supporting businesses in going international. The council stimulates this in different ways. By setting up free trade agreements between New Zealand and China and New Zealand and Australia. And by helping businesses going overseas. The main organisation that is focused on helping businesses with going international is the New Zealand Trade Enterprise. '*We support businesses to grow and succeed internationally. Our services are focused on refining strategy, improving performance, building global networks, and in-market support.*' (NZTE 2014[11]).

This thesis will give insights in how the processes of globalization are played out in engineering small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The research question central is: '*In what way are global processes interpreted and played out in Pakeha owned engineering SMEs in Auckland, New Zealand?*'. At first it is important to look at different theories about 'globalization' and 'being global'.

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[9] Source: www.oecd.org, consulted on June 4, 2014
[10] Source: http://www.nzte.govt.nz/, consulted on March 11, 2014
[11] Idem.

Globalization and being global

Tsing (2005) states that 'globalization' contains different processes. She states that 'globalization' is not something that influences the local context of meaning implemented from above and outside. It is not an all-embracing process that effects the globe as a whole. Through cultural dialogue universals are created. Universals are generalized concepts that we need to understand each other, like home, wilderness, and land. But these universal claims don't make everything everywhere the same. To give a 'grip' to these universal assumptions, global connections have to be studied according to Tsing. These global connections can be divided in three different scales, the local, the regional and global, that all influence each other (Tsing 2005). When studying how 'globalization' is interpreted and played out in a certain context it is important to look at cultures and their connections (Tsing 2000).

'A global framework allows one to consider the making and remaking of geographical and historical agents and the forms of their agency in relation to movement, interaction, and shifting, competing claims about community, culture, and scale. Places are made through their connections with each other, not their isolation' (Tsing 2000:330).

These global connections are important because there it is that cultures meet, are in dialogue with each other and new ideas about universals are created. That is why she speaks of societies and their interconnections, they are made through cultural encounters and people meeting people and their dialogue. For cultural analyses it is important to look at what 'projects of globalization' do in the world and how they affect the local context of meaning and the agents, individuals, within (Tsing 2000 & 2005). Or as Ho (2005) found out in her research on Wall Street, we have to be more careful and on guard when we look at what 'being global' and 'globalization' entails. Being global can mean different things and is context-dependent, that is why she speaks of global as being dialogical constructed (Ho 2005). So by looking at engineering SMEs it is important to look at different processes of globalization and find out what it means on a local level. Like Huby, Harries and Grant (2011) show:

'This dissolution of the distinction between the global and local and the consequent 'flattening' of the social field has two implications. First, we must be attentive to the ways in which networks are constituted in everyday practice and in so doing, be critically cautious of

assuming any a priori principle of structuration that is posited as somehow being both greater than and inhabiting this everyday practice. Second, we must also be particularly attentive to the various techniques by which a 'global' or 'macro' envisioning of reality, the 'big picture' (Latour 2007:187), is constituted in everyday practice' (Huby, Harries & Grant 2011:218).

Methodology

Being back in Auckland, New Zealand, it was more challenging than I expected, comparing to the time I spend there during my bachelors research. The idea of getting started right away was disrupted by finding proper housing, and being on my own this time made it also not easy. Starting off my research I had difficulties with understanding and applying the ideas of Tsing (2000), her use of scales and processes of globalization, instead of considering globalization as one big process that hovers above every society and influences it.

Letting go what I think processes of globalization could entail was my first struggle, as a passage from my first report to my supervisor shows: '*By writing my notes down I noticed that I have to be careful not to look at the situation in a way that I interpret as being processes of globalization. Especially the notes I made during participant observation are interpreted by what I think are processes of globalization, like owning a car that is from a German brand as noticed in my vignette. That's why I started with writing down more reflexive notes. They are part of my research as well.'*

But noticing this struggle and letting go my own biased ideas of what processes of globalization could entail meant for me not taking in consideration my own ideas and observations for a period. While talking to people or while writing my reports I left out my own ideas. Thinking about the colleges dr. Mommersteeg gave on being in the field during my bachelors, reminded me of the importance of keeping track of your own ideas and thoughts, so I was still taking separate notes about them.

Knowing that 99% of New Zealand businesses are SMEs I had to further delineate my research population during my fieldwork. Another passage from my first report: '*I'm still struggling to draw a line where to stop. Because now it feels like the whole of New Zealand is of interest for my research and the whole world around as well. Most people who do not own it or work for small businesses, do business with them or live in houses that are (partially) build by small businesses, buy things from different businesses, walk past them, provide to or make use of certain services of small businesses and you name it.'*

After figuring out I wanted the focus on engineering SMEs it also became more clear how to approach my informants about processes of globalization. I choose engineering SMEs because of ongoing developments in Auckland, New Zealand, as mentioned before, and meeting a lot of engineers at that time as I did last year during my bachelors in New Zealand. I already interviewed one of the professors from last year and two engineers. Through a dating app, I also used back in the Netherlands, and joining a site for social meetings called Meet Up, I already had met and knew a few engineers or people working at engineering companies socially.

On a social level, after working hours, people working at these SMEs were willing to make time for me and speak informally about my research. Especially informal conversations gave me very useful information for my research. I did not realize it would be so hard to really do research among engineering SMEs, on a more company level during working time, about the subject I choose for my research. Without direct self-interest for these companies, not contributing directly to business objectives, made me being there more a hassle and taking up their time; "*Are you ready now?*" "*I have to finish my work.*" "*We have a deadline to catch.*" So although they were helpful on a company level the time they wanted to invest in my research was limited.

The data is collected by desk research and qualitative methods of data collecting like informal conversations and semi-structural interviews, thirteen interviews among people working at engineering SMEs and three expert interviews, and participant observation. Focusing mainly on four SMEs of different sizes. Two mechanical engineering SMEs, one specializing in conveyor equipment and the other in design in aviation tracking devices, one structural engineering company and one civil and structural engineering company, both specialized in design.

All my challenges, were part of and make my research contribute to on how to give more grip to processes of globalization and showing how multilayered these processes can be. Because of the relatively small amount of data collected during my research this thesis has to be seen as a explorative research and can be a starting point for further research to processes of globalization in SMEs.

Overview

'*In what way are global processes interpreted and played out in Pakeha owned engineering SMEs in Auckland, New Zealand?*'. To give an answer to this central research question this thesis is structured as follows.

At first a description of how globalization is part of mechanical engineering SMEs will be given. Central to this is the ability of doing business overseas and the importance of mobility of people, products, production processes and capital. Next to that the changes in technology and its effects on transnational communication will be described. The focus will be on doing business overseas and the role of policy. In conclusion the concepts of disembedding and deterritorialization will be described.

In the next chapter how technology could be part of communication on a more local scale and standardization of products, production and knowledge. This will be discussed in the context of both types of engineering SMEs: structural/civil and mechanical. A bridge will be made to the last chapter that standardization does not mean global uniformity and could make the question arises: Can we describe it as processes of cultural heterogenization and homogenization?

Central to the last chapter will be the experiences of the people within the engineering SMEs, that influences their perspectives on the organisation they work for or own; How processes of globalization are part of this. And why it might be better not to ask the question of cultural heterogenization and homogenization, but describe it as a process of '*dubbing culture*' (Boellstorff 2003)?

Chapter two: Doing business overseas

'[Globalization] refers to the <u>intensification</u> of global <u>interconnectedness</u>, suggesting a world full of <u>movement</u> and <u>mixture</u>, <u>contacts</u> and <u>linkages</u>, and persistent cultural <u>interaction</u> and <u>exchange</u>.' (Inda & Rosaldo 2002:2)

There are many theories about what globalization could be or what it entails and how it effects societies. That is why Eriksen states that: *The very popularity of the word globalization signals a need for caution* (Eriksen 2014:1). Having said that, this chapter will start with a few ideas and theories of what globalization could entail.

Lewellen speaks of the legion of definitions given to globalization, across different disciplines and expertises. In his own definition he speaks of more than only economic processes, his definition is about the *flows of trade, finance, culture, ideas, and people brought about by sophisticated technology of communications and travel and by the worldwide spread of neoliberal capitalism, and it is the local and regional adaptations to and resistance against these flows* (Lewellen 2002:7).

Nijkamp calls globalization a 'vogue word' referring to the increasing interest for the concept. He describes it as the broad area of *'increasing internationalisation of markets, changing consumption patterns and the shifting of industrial activities all over the world. The driving forces are, inter alia, the liberalization of international trade, the rise of new markets, technological developments in the field of telecommunications and decreasing transportation costs.'* (Nijkamp 2003:1)

Eriksen states in his book that the main characteristics of globalization are that '*it standardizes, modernizes, deterritorializes, and, by dialectical negation, localizes people, since it is only after having been globalized that people may become obsessed with the uniqueness of their locality. I emphasize that although globalization is driven by powerful economic and technological forces, it takes place between people; the transnational webs of the world depend on interpersonal trust, and people often use the opportunities offered by globalizing processes in unexpected ways.* (Eriksen 2014:17)

In conceptualizing globalization Harvey describes it as *'the manifestation of the changing experience of time and space'*. He captures these changes by the concept of *'time-space compression'* and with this he means the shrinking of the globe where distance and time become more and more irrelevant. (Harvey 1989 in Inda & Rosaldo 2002). Hannerz states that the way people are interconnected is changing. Transnational contacts are increasing and

technologies of mobility make it easier to cross borders (Hannerz 1996). Herod states that international could simply be understood as the process of reaching beyond national borders (Herod 2009). The acceleration of transport and communication has increased the past years and is still increasing, this process contributes to the integrating of the world (Eriksen 2014). How these processes of globalization are of importance for mechanical engineering SMEs will be central in this chapter. The focus will be on physical mobility of people and products, the mobility in production processes and capital, and transnational communication and policy. This will be concluded by the concepts of *disembedding* and *deterritorialization*.

Physical mobility: flows of people and products, transport

Spatial movements of people and goods have shaped a dynamic geographic landscape. Our era is no exception to this historical trend. Indeed, our modern world is in a continuous state of flux. Modern transport systems have created an unprecedented rise in mobility, both regionally and worldwide (Nijkamp 2003:1).

Nordstrom also shows in her book the intensification of mobility of people and goods. Although describing the illusions of the legal and illegal she states that '*today, distance is a red herring: it is as easy to ship commodities between continents as towns. Markets are everywhere concurrently centre and periphery.*' (Nordstrom 2007 xix).

Freeman argues that to exam how globalization affects economies, we have to look at the flow of people. He states: '*people flows are fundamental to creating a global economy and that the interplay among immigration, capital, and trade is essential to understanding the way globalization affects economies.*' (Freeman 2006:2). Although keeping in mind the vagueness of speaking off a global economy, the flow of people is part of looking at processes of globalization and global connections. Appadurai describes that one of the landscapes of globalization is the movement and mobility of people and persons. He calls this ethnoscapes, with this he means the '*landscapes of persons*' (Appadurai 2002). I will show next how the mobility of people and products is of importance to mechanical engineering SMEs.

Flytrackcom[12] is a company that specializes in aviation tracking devices. The company not only manufactures parts of their product in other countries, but also has three people working

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[12] Flytrackcom is not a real company name, I choose to use fictitious names for all SMEs to protect their privacy.

overseas, two of them work in the United States and one in Canada. All three work in different locations. William is shareholder in this company he started with two of his friends. He is in his late twenties and most of the time comes to work in colourful blouses, jeans, rolled up to slightly above his ankles, and black chucks. He is no exception, most of the people working in the company wear comfortable sneakers and jeans. Only Milly, in charge of marketing, comes in wearing a black pencil skirt and jacket with on her feet black pumps or other more neat clothing. Both of them go overseas regular to sell their products or meet with partners and clients overseas. Their market is mainly overseas, almost all of these trips go to America, the country where they sell most of their products. Like William mentioned *"So I have to fly out to the US a lot"*. So for them being able to do business is based on mobility and the flow of people international. Like Appadurai (2002) and Freeman (2006) state by looking at global connection, the flow of people is an important factor. Professor Spoonley from Massey University states that nowadays flying from and to New Zealand has become a lot easier and that this makes up for an increase in movement of people and not only migration. "*There are more and more new flights from Auckland Airport and there is a new airline, Southern China. Flying has become cheaper and more easier.*" This makes it for companies like Flytrackcom more easy to actually do business overseas. Nick, Williams brother who works as a customer experience manager for the company, states "*It is actually rather funny, a lot of the clients over there think we are this big American company, when we actually are this small New Zealand based company.*"

The scaffolding company that Anne works for as a management assistant not only shows how the flow of people is part of their business, but also the flow of products. Part of their scaffolding material comes from abroad as the following vignette shows:

"Why did you choose to do business with a Dutch company?" Anne walks up to an open closet, takes out a leaflet and hands it over to me. It is the one from the company that provides them a certain kind of product. "It is important to look further than the products New Zealand has to offer, especially Europe has some good quality products. Have you noticed how empty it was downstairs?" The main office of the scaffolding company is located on the second floor. Before entering the building you have to walk down a long driveway and pass the workplace where the scaffolding material is located. Men in orange jackets and helmets are moving the material by hand or with machinery. "Normally the material is almost all the way up to the driveway, but now the workplace is almost empty. That is how good business is

going for us." She walks back to the closet and takes out another leaflet. "This is the one from the German company we do business with."

As this part of the interview with Anne shows the company is both supplied by a Dutch and German company. *"It was really nice when Gerard came over just to look how business is going here. This tall big guy, well not big, he is rather skinny, well you know what I mean. He is a funny guy, for a Dutch guy especially I think. You hear a lot about the Dutch not being funny."* Or *"We do a lot of business with this German company, they have a guy here in Auckland, that is really nice, his name is Ulrich, typical German name I know right."* Anne is very positive about the way her boss Mitchell runs the company. Working there now for ten years she noticed how much of a difference it makes to use quality products, even if they have to come from abroad, and how this can be improved by searching for the best products that fit their clients. So for the scaffolding company the flow of people and goods is part of improving quality. This is also shown by the fact that Auckland has direct sea links to 176 ports in 69 countries (Auckland Council 2014[13]). As mentioned labour migration is also part of the flow of people and can be a means to skill improvement.

"Juan, how is the translating going?" "I think I'm halfway now, I'll try to finish it today or tomorrow." William and Juan are talking about translating there manual in Spanish for their new client in Argentina. "It becomes harder and harder to meet their demands, they make up more and more, so I really want to finish it now." Juan, who has dark brown hear, almost black, is wearing a black t-shirt and trousers, heads back to his desk and starts working.

Although they have people working in South America, that functions as 'middlemen', the company is in charge of the trading process and meeting the demands of the clients. The recently hired Juan, from Spain, is the thirteenth member of the team. He just finished his degree and working for the company makes that his visa is extended. The fact that he is fluent in Spanish was an important factor for William to hire him as the new sales person. As mentioned in the introduction the changes in New Zealand immigration policy made a change in flows of migrations. Research from the OECD, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, concluded that '*New Zealand, Australia and Canada are three countries that are to a larger extent than the rest of OECD countries characterised by*

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[13] Source: http://businessaucklandnz.com/sectors/exporting, consulted on July 16, 2014.

selective immigration policies where immigrants are supposed from the beginning to provide for themselves either by work or by being provided for by their family'. Due to these policies employment rates among immigrants is relatively high in comparison to the other OECD countries (OECD 2001 in OECD 2008[14]). But not only physical mobility of people and goods are part of doing business for mechanical engineering SMEs in Auckland New Zealand, communication across borders is of importance as well.

Transnational communication

'Communication practices include interpersonal communication and mediated communication. At the societal scale, it is mediated communication that constitutes the symbolic environment in which people receive, process, and send the signals that produce meaning in their lives. The dynamics and effects of mediated communication depend on the culture, organization, and technology of specific communication systems' (Castells 2013:xix).

Through communication technologies there is a reconstruction of social relationships, Castells captures these changes by his concept of the *Network Society*. He states that these changes are based on the *transformation of space (the rise of the mega-metropolitan region), time (rise of the networked enterprise), culture (the shift from mass communication based on mass media to mass self-communication based on the internet), crisis of the patriarchal family with increasing autonomy of its individual members, substitution of media politics for mass party politics, and globalization as the selective networking places and processes throughout the planet* (Castells 2013:xxvii). He states that these changes do not lead to the end of community or total isolation, but the combining of online and offline interaction (Castells 2013).

Wolf shows how means of communication have changed: '*Transatlantic communication has evolved from sail power to steam, to the telegraph, the telephone, commercial aircraft, and now to the Internet'* (Wolf 2001:177). This is also present in mechanical engineering SMEs.

William turns on the big computer screen located on the wall opposite of the entrance. Everybody grabs a notebook and starts standing around the small table that is in front of the screen. On the screen Luuk and Charles appear. "Where is Tom?" Milly, who is still wearing

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[14] Source: www.oecd.org, consulted on June 4, 2014.

a leg bracelet from the surgery she had, is leaning against the high chair in front of her. Tom appears on the screen next to the square we are visible in. "There you are Tom, you look tired what happened?" Billy is making a comment about him not wearing his glasses and looking red and tired. "Well you would not believe it, but I actually had to run over here." "Hurry up Sara, we are starting." "Sorry, coming." Sara gets up from her chair and joins us in front of the screen. "Ok who wants to start, shall I give it to you first Mark?" William hands over the flat microphone to Mark and he starts talking. It is Luuk his turn, saying what he has been up to and have planned for today, everybody present in the room is finished. He is talking about the fact that he might have found a new big client over there. When he is finished William asks him about a German client they have, and if he has been in contact with him."I need to talk to Ulrich, would you be able to contact him and ask if he can give me a call?" "Ok, yes I will do that."

Every morning at 9.00 am daily business is started at Flytrackcom. As mentioned in the paragraph of transport the company has three people working overseas. To be able to do business together they have a daily meeting, the '09.15 WIP', where they use internet to make a conference call that enables the people working overseas to join in. During this daily meeting the central objective is to discuss where everybody is working on and what that means for the company.

Bill works as a mechanical engineer for a company called Assembly Line Development company, or shortened ADC. ADC specializes in the manufacturing of automation equipment, '*particular equipments for the handling industry, such as conveyor and related components, like conveyor machines that move boxes or any other products.*' For them the acceleration of communication is also of great importance to do business. He speaks of the importance of e-mail contact within the company and their clients overseas. "*Only our bosses go overseas most of the time, well and the two sales representatives, but they go less often.*" The rest of the assignments they find on a forum for these kind of product demands. Companies that are in need of a certain kind of product put their demand on this forum and then the battle to get the job starts.

Seidel a professor in Mechanical Engineering at Auckland University, who I interviewed, recently started his own business in software for sustainability. He mentioned that they purchased a mailing list of the sector they want to reach through their consultant. The mailing list contains potential clients, mainly in Australia.

Both Bill and Seidel state that for mechanical engineering SMEs globalization lies in the fact that they have business 'overseas'. Bill states: "*globalization is the fact that we can sell our products overseas.*" As I have showed here not only for them processes of globalization lie in the ability of doing business overseas, for all informants of mechanical engineering SMEs, I spoke to, this is the case. Through the flow of people and goods and transnational communication the main focus is on realizing selling products overseas. This is part of processes of *disembedding* and *deterritorialization* as I will conclude in this chapter.

Disembedding and deterritorialization

Network technologies are the medium for this new social structure and this new culture. And this is a global network society, as globalization is a network of networks. (Castells 2013:xxvii)

Cherny states that globalization grows from international and transnational spaces of policy. He also states that the new forms of political power are less vertical and more horizontally stratified. These are structured by economical and social linkages across borders. He concludes that: '*globalizing the policy process involves the continual and growing interaction of both old and new elements of the political opportunity structure, giving political entrepreneurs considerable scope to shape that evolution. It strengthens the hand of transnationally linked interests and actors shifts the balance of agenda setting, policy bargaining, and policy outcomes toward globalizing coalitions and protocoalitions.*' (Cherny 2010 in Coleman & Sajed 2013:63/64). Eriksen (2014) states that the networks across borders become more and more denser, faster and wider every year. With this increasing mutual dependence comes the need of a more international need of collaboration and international agreements. Giddens describes processes of globalization as the *disembedding* of local processes, which makes that people are more and more linked. An increase in the level of time-space distanciation and the stretching out of correspondence from only local to also distant social relations, practices, and events, makes that '*an intensification of worldwide social relations occurs which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa*' (Giddens 1990 in Inda & Rosaldo 2008:11). Eriksen states that '*globalization means that distance is becoming irrelevant, relative or at least less important*', Like Giddens he calls this process

disembedding (Eriksen 2007:8). Technological and economical changes are part of this process of globalization, but have cultural and political implications (Eriksen 2007). These processes of disembedding are put in motion in different ways. Eriksen (2014) states that for integrating people all over the world in a more integrated system the disembedding of certain denominators is necessary. '*As a rule, anything that can be accessed anywhere is disembedded*' (Eriksen 2014:19*).* Giddens states that *'One main contemporary form of disembedding is deterritorialization, which takes place when something is "lifted out of" its physical location'* (Giddens 1990:21 in Eriksen 2014:19). Appadurai (2002) describes that movement and mobility not only involve people crossing borders as well as products and capital, but also technology. He calls this *technoscapes*: '*the global configuration, also ever fluid, of technology and the fact that technology, both high and low, both mechanical and informational, now moves at high speeds across various kinds of previously impervious boundaries'* (Appadurai (2002:50). For mechanical engineering SMEs technology is of great importance in different ways.

Castells states that through these major social, technological, economic, and cultural transformations society transformed in what he calls the *network society*. To the increase of incapacity of political institutions and a new international division of labour power relations changed. He states that these networks do not stop at the borders of the nation-state. (Castells 2010).

Juan is working in sales at Flytrackcom. Doing business in different places and nations around the world means that his day starts at 1 pm and finishes at 9 pm (he just started working there). Mart started that day at 5.30 am to do the early shift that ends at 1 pm. "*Especially the Americans have the urge to call at any time when they need help with the product, Europeans like to figure it out by themselves.*" So for the company it is important to be available for customers and clients overseas, although it means working according two different time zones. Working across these different time zones is made possible because of the technology they make use of described earlier, especially international communication.

Not only time can become *deterritorialized*, also money as in the case of ADC. Talking about the way they compete on the international market Bill is not only talking about in which countries they sell their product, but he also mentions the currency that they use, and it is not in New Zealand dollars, but US dollars:

"A typical sight installation may cost in the region of 1 to 4 million US dollars and our confreres would be a small percentage of the whole job. About 80 percent of the product of conveyors manufactured go offshore into countries from the UK, Europe, Africa, the US, and Australia. 50 Percent would go to Australia, 30 percent to America, and the remaining percentage to other countries. Globally we are a very small conveyor manufacturer and compete against large European and American companies."

ADC also has a distribution agreement with a German company as it shows on their website: '*It is with great pleasure that ADC announces its exclusive distribution agreement with ...'* (company website 2012[15]).

Mechanical engineering SMEs in Auckland, New Zealand, do have business overseas. The main part of their market is international, like America and Russia. As shown, by using theories of Eriksen (2007 & 2014), Lewellen (2002), Nijkamp (2003), and Hannerz (1996), processes of globalization could be found in how society and its markets are changing and what role technology has in these changing market. The focus is on how to be able to do business overseas, reaching clients and how to be able to maintain this international market. For people involved in mechanical engineering SMEs processes of globalization lay in the technology that enables them or their products to move across borders and communicate transnational. The way mechanical engineering SMEs do business shows the changing in markets and what role technology has in this. By concluding this chapter *disembedding* and *deterritorialization* (Eriksen 2007 & 2014) could be stated as one of the processes of globalization that is part of and influences these mechanical engineering SMEs. This means that distance and time become more irrelevant and processes are lifted out of its local context. Like in the case of doing business for mechanical engineering SMEs, it is less bounded to one local place, but, because of technology, happens in different places.

As Tsing states mobility is not for everybody the same, global flows depend on *'material and institutional infrastructure of movement'* (Tsing 2000). That does not mean that people that do not have the ability to 'move' are excluded from the system. As she shows scale making is an interconnected and interdependent system, because it is created through dialogue and the local does influence regional and global and vice versa (Tsing 2000). Although the opportunity in

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[15] Source: website of the company, consulted on June 6, 2014.

New Zealand is there as mentioned in the introduction structural/civil engineering SMEs mostly do not have business overseas, and have a more 'local' market.

The next chapter will focus on how standardization and technology can be described as processes of globalization played out in both types of engineering SMEs, structural/civil and mechanical.

Chapter three: Standardization and technology

In contemporary organizational landscapes so much that goes on is embedded in relationships that cross spatial boundaries and boundaries between what we conceive of as different organizational levels. Moreover, the relationships are not just between people, but also between people and human artefacts such as IT products and systems (Huby, Harries & Grant 2011:210)

Since the recession in 1973 the political and economic landscape changed. A different regime of capital accumulation was set in motion, that of flexible accumulation. Harvey states that the capitalist system ensured that changes occurred in all levels of the market. Companies turned more divers, economic power became more centralized and outsourcing became part of the market. Next to the changing of places of production, new technology changes the way of production itself. Postmodernity meant that the market became increasingly characterized by flexibility. The labour market changed radically and labour processes, markets, products, and patterns of consumption became more flexible (Harvey 1990). Product invention meant satisfying a greater range of market demands and a change in organization of companies and production (Harvey 2000 in Inda & Rosaldo 2008). Koene, Garsten and Galais also point out the changes in society and what this means for stability on employment and the community. '*With globalizing financial flows, forms of production and organizing work are transformed in line with new templates, and labour markets are being re-regulated. Organizations in flux and transformation may provide lesser degrees of stability than they used to do, in terms of long-term expectations of employment and community.*' (Koene, Garsten & Galais 2014:25). Harvey also states that because of the implementation of 'selling lifestyles', the importance of style, trends and fashions in product marketing the service industry and demand for creativity and activity skills grew. Products became more aesthetical and 'internationally styled' (Harvey 2000 in Inda & Rosaldo 2008).

Inda and Rosaldo state, by using the theory of Harvey, that: '*This flexibility is aimed at reducing the turnover time of capital: the amount of time necessary for money furnished to fund new production to be recovered with at profit through the sale of services an goods. In other words, the goal is to speed up the process of both production and consumption, for, as the old capitalist adage says, time is money, or rather time costs money*' (Inda & Rosaldo 2008:9). They state that these processes both have to do with organizational shifts as well as 'new technologies of electronic control'. These have improved the methods of communication

and information. Together with rationalizations in methods of distributions this makes that there is an increase in mobility between markets (Inda & Rosaldo 2008). Appadurai (2002) his idea of *technoscapes* could also be used to explain global configuration of technology on a more local scale for both mechanical and civil/structural engineering SMEs. Eriksen (2014) states that: *'Globalization entails comparability and shared standards where there were formerly none. The rapid increase in the use of English as a foreign language is suggestive of this development, as is the worldwide spread of similar hotels and shopping centres, as well as the growing web of international agreements and industry standards'* (Eriksen 2014:17). *'Standardization'* is one of the main characteristics of globalization (Eriksen 2014) and of significance for both types of engineering SMEs, structural/civil and mechanical. Central to this chapter are communication within companies, the process of standardization and technology on a local scale, *'industry standards'*, and the *'idea of global uniformity'* in both types of engineering SMEs.

Technology and communication on a local scale

As described in the previous chapter modern technology changed the way of communication and society into what Castells calls the *Network Society*. The internet made modern communication a mix of online and offline communication (Castells 2013). Tyler, Wilkinson, and Huberman state that the most important form of online communication is e-mail; *E-mail has become the predominant means of communication in the information society. It pervades business, social, and technical exchanges and as such it is a highly relevant area for research on communities and social networks.* (Tyler, Wilkinson & Huberman 2005:133). As I will show here e-mail is still of importance for engineering SMEs.

Bill speaks of his personal need for the use of e-mailing within the company, to prevent miscommunication *'I prefer my bosses sending me my assignments by e-mail as well, if there is any disagreement about them, I just show them the e-mails. Then it is not my fault if I forgot about something. It is not that I do not like face to face communication, but I just like to have both, affirming things by e-mail'.* Although mailing might be the most important form of online communication in general, it is not the only form, especially not within engineering SMEs.

It is Tuesday midday, a nice summer's day. The North Shore beach is not packed and most of the people there are fully dressed and not aimed at a day at the beach. Rory, who has short dark brown hair, is also wearing his white blouse, blue tie, black trousers and black shoes. We are sitting on the edge of the lawn, a kind of wall that separates the grass from the beach. He tells me about the meeting he had earlier that day. "To keep track of how projects are going we make use of Aconex. I have to upload my documents and drawings on there." I ask him further about what Aconex is and he explains to me that it is internationally used software that a lot of engineering companies use to collaborate on different projects. It is used to exchange information and work together on different projects.

Rory works for, ZXC Consulting or shortened ZXC. The company is located on the second floor of a building in the North Shore area. You enter the company through a transparent door. They are specialized in designing buildings and assist on existing buildings in protection of earthquake wind and gravity. He states that for engineering SMEs that do not have business overseas globalization lies in the fact that they make use of standardization of production and knowledge. Like the software Aconex they use for the design and the drawing. But this is not only a design and drawing software, it is also part of internal communication.

'In construction and engineering, Aconex is the world's most widely-used online collaboration platform. Using Aconex for your project means all documents, communication and business processes can be managed in one agreed and consistent way. Document management means Manage the flow of drawings, BIM and 3D models, contracts, reports, schedules and other documentation, between all project participants. Project communication is about correspondence and documents on what is happening on the project, by retrieving and tracking mails and progress. And process management gives the standard industry processes around RFIs, bids and tenders, and management of vendor data and cost information' (Aconex 2014[16]).

Rory told me the company consist of 35 people, managers, engineers and draughtsmen. The rest of the staff consisting of 16 people works at their Christchurch, New Zealand, office. They not only communicate within the part of the company on the Nortshore, also with their Christchurch office through this software. As mentioned Aconex is an internationally used

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[16] Source: www.aconex.com, consulted on June 18, 2014.

software, mainly used for project communication, it is not the only software used in engineering SMEs.

Standardization in knowledge and software

'Consistency in operations is necessary for an organization's survival and growth. It is difficult to achieve consistency because of the employees' different ways of performing the same task. Employees' education, experience and skill levels determine their own styles and differences in their styles cause variations in process output. If process master's (best performers in a process) ways of performing their own tasks can be well documented, then a company will be able to standardize its operating procedures in their best forms. And, when employees follow these procedures, variations will be minimized and best quality products or services will be offered to customers' (Ungan 2006).

Ungan shows that standardization benefits the quality of products (Ungan 2006), but how is that on an 'international' or 'global' scale? Moving back to Appadurai (1996) his theory about scapes, '*by technoscape, I mean the global configuration, also ever fluid, of technology and the fact that technology, both high and low, both mechanical and informational now moves at high speeds across various kind of previously impervious boundaries. Many countries now are the roots of multinational enterprise: a huge steel complex in Libya may involve interests from India, China, Russia, an Japan, providing different components of new technological configurations'* (Appadurai 1996:32).

As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, Inda and Rosaldo state improved the methods of communication and information together with rationalizations in methods of distributions make that there is an increase in mobility between markets (Inda & Rosaldo 2008).

Not only does ZXC make use of the software Aconex. *We have the experience and capability to design and document a wide variety of projects including those of a significantly larger scale. Our staff are supplemented from time to time with contractors. Our office is fully equipped with the computing capability to analyse all buildings in house and all our draughtsmen use AutoCAD computer draughting software* (company website 2010[17]). This

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[17] Source: website of the company, consulted on June 2, 2014.

does not mean only structural engineering SMEs make use of it and ZXC is not the only engineering SME that uses AutoCAD.

It is Friday afternoon, I am at Bill's house. Together with him, his brother, Maximilian, Sam and a French lady, Nicole, they know from church, we are having dinner. As promised to Bill I cooked him and the rest dinner, homemade pizzas. He told me that it would also be a great opportunity to interview his friend Sam, a civil engineer at a structural/civil engineering company. Me being there and talking about my research really wakes up the engineer in them and they start talking about their jobs. I understand a few things but it becomes harder and harder because of all the terminology. Then I hear one I do recognize, AutoCAD. I remember my brother, who is also studying engineering, saying he needed a new laptop because of the program AutoCAD being too big for his old one and needing it for his studies. Getting back to the present I ask what the program is about. They tell me it is a designing program they both use. Although Bill is a mechanical engineer and Sam a civil engineer, this does not mean they do not have similar interests in certain engineering projects. After us finishing all the pizzas Nicole and I make the desert of apple crumble with ice cream. Sam and Bill switch on the computer. Sam is talking about some new method the company is interested in using and looks it up on YouTube. They both watch the clip and start talking about the method. I only hear something about cutting metal with it and decide asking about it later during the interview with Sam.

Interviewing Sam he speaks of the rapid rate of change in certain engineering techniques across borders. It is important to keep up with these changes in different ways, like through watching movies on YouTube to get the latest insights on techniques that are being used. The flow of information and technology could also mean the standardization in the product itself.

Standardization in the product itself

'The main argument in favour of standardization was proposed by Levitt (1983) who argued that the forces of globalization driven by technology were homogenizing markets, and that marketers needed to take advantage of this trend by following a standardized marketing strategy. This homogenization of demand expresses itself in a worldwide consumer demand for high quality and low costs due to the impact of technology. In addition, Levitt argues that

firms could take advantage of technology by adopting a standardized approach that will result in products of high quality and low costs for world markets' (Viswanathan & Dickson 2007:48).

Vistwanathan and Dickson state that there are different theories about standardization, what it could entail and how it could be described. Although resource allocation is only one, it is an important aspect of marketing programs and often used as describing it (Viswanathan & Dickson 2007).

Terry, who works for a mechanical engineering SME that installs industrial air-conditioning, states that for them standardization is in the drawings itself and the making of the air-conditioning. *"They are all internationally designed."* He is a mechanic for the company and states that for them globalization is also in the fact of standardization of production, *"well I think that is the closest we come to globalization."* Most of the industrial air-conditioning they install are delivered at their company packed in boxes in readymade parts they only have to put together. Only a few parts they make themselves through the drawings they get delivered. When he tells me this I see myself and my mom putting together Billy, the famous IKEA closet designed by this Swiss company IKEA Group that has 303 living warehouses in 26 countries (IKEA 2014[18]).

The standardization in the product itself could also be supplying standardized products. Them selling their product overseas according to certain standards set by their clients. As described in the previous chapter, the company Bill works for, ADC, designs and produces products mostly sold offshore in different countries. Part of their clients they find on an online forum for mechanical engineering companies from all over the world. To be able to do business and compete with different engineering companies in these different countries, part of their product must be standardized and fit the demand description.

Standardization of products is both on the supply and demand site for engineering SMEs and is part of the flow of information and goods. But going back to Viswanathan and Dickson (2007) they state that standardization is in fact really hard to define and measure. Next to that, as I will show, it becomes harder and harder to make a distinction between processes of globalization on a more local or global scale. So what does this mean for these engineering companies? And looking broader at Auckland, New Zealand, can there be made a

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[18] Source: www.ikea.com, consulted on June 18, 2014.

distinction between local and global? Looking back at the scales of Tsing as described in the Introduction these different scales all influence each other and it is important to look at global connections, there where cultures meet (Tsing 2000 & 2005).

Does standardization means global uniformity?

Inda and Rosaldo (2008) state that through the deterritorilization of culture there is the idea of a certain power geometry that means the increasing synchronisation of world culture, *the discourse of cultural imperialism regards the globalization of culture* (Inda & Rosaldo 2008:15).

It is a Tuesday night, Claire and I are attending a pubquiz night in. The whole pub is packed. We are joining today with eight people and occupy the pool table. A wooden board is placed on top and two wooden benches placed along the long sides of the table. Most of the questions are about New Zealand and their sports and I have a hard time answering any of them. Claire, who is a born and raised kiwi[19], is only interested in cricket and only knows a few of the answers. Luckily for me one of the topics has a few questions about Europe that I know more about. I am sitting next to Claire and ask her, in the short break between rounds, if she has ever been to Europe. She tells me that she has never been there, but she would really like to go some day. "I really like the architecture, all the old buildings, I would really love to see them. A lot of the designs we do are influenced by European styles." I ask her if she can explain to me in what way they are influenced by them and how they look. "Well you should know, you are from there." She winks at me and explains that it has to do with their colonial past, the layout of the house and the different rooms are influenced by that and also emphasis in the design of say windows and archers.

Claire first had the idea of absence of globalization within the business she works. "*Globalization? No, we are a local company with a local market*", but globalization for them means the idea of certain styles that have an international origin. In an article of the New Zealand Herald about an architectural exhibition: '*Mitchell, one of New Zealand's most experienced and respected architects, said the New Zealand exhibition would be called Last, Loneliest, Loveliest and would respond to the theme Absorbing Modernity: 1914-2014 which had been set by the biennale's director, Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas. "The biennale will*

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[19] Kiwi is another word for New Zealander which is often used by the inhabitants themselves.

examine the relationship between modernisation and national styles of architecture. In particular, it will consider whether national differences are still possible in an age when architecture is increasingly homogeneous. Have we reached the stage where everything looks the same, everywhere?" Mitchell asked.' (Gibson in the New Zealand Herald 2014)

But is this really the case? The article continues Mitchell stating this is definitely not the case and New Zealand architecture has a very distinctive style , does not only knows European influences but also Pacific and an 'own' New Zealand history (Gibson in the New Zealand Herald 2014). As this part of an article in the New Zealand Herald shows, the idea of something as 'being the same' does not mean it is really the case. There are still local translations to certain factors, like in this case a certain style.

Eriksen states that when it comes to cultural dynamics it is hard to answer if globalization leads to more *homogenization* or *heterogenization*. '*In one sense we become more similar. Individualism, which we here take to mean the belief that individuals have rights and responsibilities regardless of their place in wider social configurations, is a central feature of global modernity. It is also easy to argue that similarities in consumer preferences among the world's middle classes indicate flattening, or homogenization. Yet, at the same time, local adaptations of universal or nearly universal phenomena show that global modernities always have local expressions and that the assumed similarities may either conceal real differences in meaning or that they may be superficial with no deep bearing on people's existential condition.'* (Eriksen 2014:16).

These SMEs not having an international market does not mean that processes of globalization are not played out in them. For both mechanical and structural/civil engineering SMEs processes of globalization could be described in a different way. Where technology is an important factor for all these businesses, it is not directly about their people, products and capital crossing borders, but in the flow of information and with this the standardization of different aspects within these SMEs. Standardization could be in the software they use for both design and communication on a more local scale, and in the design of products or the products themselves that they install or produce.

The next chapter will focus on the idea that standardization does not mean global uniformity, but that in the meeting of cultures localization could be the case. Can we describe it as

processes of cultural heterogenization and homogenization? The questions central will be: how are processes of globalization part of perspectives and experiences from the people working in or owning engineering SMEs and how are these perspectives and experiences part of processes of globalization within engineering SMEs? So might it be better to describe it as a process of '*dubbing culture'* (Boellstorff 2003)? As I will show by using the theory of Tsing (2005) these processes of globalization are played out on two scales: local and global.

Chapter four: Local and global

At first I was planning to make a distinction between the three scales Tsing made in her theory about processes of globalization. She makes a distinction in local, regional and global. By making this distinction she also makes clear that these different scales all influence each other and that 'globalization' is played out on all these different levels (Tsing 2005). For people working in or owning engineering SME's in Auckland there is more a distinction between two levels, local and global. My informants argue that local is New Zealand and global is everything overseas and international. Like professor Seidel stated in his interview. "*First we need a strong home base here in Auckland and then we want to go international with it. You need a strong home base to go global. By going global I mean going overseas.*" Or how Rory, working at ZXC, stated it: "*For local I would say New Zealand, the company has clients all over New Zealand. And regional, what do you mean by that? Can you explain what regional could be?*" Regional is not of meaning to most of the people here in New Zealand. By changing it in to national it still would be local is New Zealand and national is New Zealand as well[20].

Appadurai argues that nowadays the modern nation-state finds itself in a dilemma between the opening of its borders to capitalism, to be a player in the global economy, and protecting the sovereignty of the nation-state. There is a dilemma between opening up the borders to international trade and politics and keeping it closed for migration. He states that there is increasing tension between the '*vertebrate*' and '*cellular*' of the nation-state. Vertebrate, on the one hand, adheres to modes of transport and information dissemination, and clings to certain protocols such as laws and safety. Cellular, on the other hand, indicates more and more technologies are developed that provide a more mobile and free way of development. The modern capitalist system cannot be divided into vertebrate or cellular. The tension between vertebrate and cellular, the crisis in which the modern nation-state finds itself in, is in maintaining norms and values that define the national culture in the global world. Modern technologies ensure that the world is getting smaller and movement that goes beyond the state borders has become easier (Appadurai 2006).

'*Increased contact and communication at global levels further collapsed previous geographically bounded understandings of the 'global' and the 'local'.*' (Anderson 1991 in Huby, Harries & Grant 2011:215). As described in the previous chapter, due to transformation

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[20] Information gathered among multiple informants.

in cultural dynamics the question arises if globalization leads to more heterogenization or homogenization? As Eriksen (2014) states it is hard to answer this question. Appadurai states that there are different theories about this question (Appadurai 1996). '*The globalized new economy is bound up with transformations of language and identity in many different ways. These include emerging tensions between State-based and corporate identities and language practices, between local, national and supra-national identities and language practices, and between hybridity and uniformity*' (Heller 2003:473).

One of the ideas on cultural transformation due to globalization is that of Boellstorff. He describes the process of what he calls '*Dubbing culture'*. With his concept of 'dubbing culture' in relation to Gay and Lesbi *'subjectivities'* and their struggles in Indonesia, he gives an alternative for the narrative of global commodification and cultural imperialism. '*In this spirit, I explore how "dubbing culture" might provide a way to understand globalization as susceptible to transformation. I highlight that this suffering and injustice is caused not by a singular "globalization," but by a complex network of interlocking economic, political, and social forces that are not always in agreement or absolute dominance. In terms of the dubbing metaphor, we might say that the voice of globalization is powerful but that that voice does not "move" across the globe. Rather, it is dialogically reconstituted; it is in a constant state of "dubbing."*' (Boellstorff 2003:226).

Huby, Harries and Grant show that there are different theories about describing organizations and defining their structure. The organisation as an entity or the sum of its parts, the people that form the organization (Huby, Harries & Grant 2011:218/219), in the context of this research the people working at or owning engineering SMEs.

Where at my previous chapters the company as an entity was more central, in this chapter the people working at or owning engineering SMEs are, how their personal experiences could affect perspectives on the organization they work for. In this chapter I am getting back to the questions I asked in the previous chapter: How are processes of globalization part of perspectives and experiences from the people working in or owning engineering SMEs? And How are these perspectives and experiences part of processes of globalization within engineering SMEs?

A 'mix' of Local and Global?

'Latour (1993: 117) reminds us that even the most extensive of networks 'remains local at all points' and can only be accessed as local manifestations or interpretations of what may be connecting several people or places. This does not deny the existence of global or 'macro' structures, but moves away from the idea that 'the micro' is embedded within wider or larger sites 'like Matryoshka Dolls' (Latour 2007: 176). Neither does it deny differences in scale. There are blueprints, maps and organizational charts which allow one to envision wider structures and to frame local events within these structures' (Huby, Harries & Grant 2011:218).

Huby, Harries and Grant (2011) show in their article, that processes of globalization, '*modes and technologies of visualization'*, have to be interpreted to be giving meaning to. Interpretation of processes of globalization is also the case in engineering SMEs, these processes are context dependable.

As mentioned Rory states that globalization for the company, ZXC, he works for, is in the standardization of practice in knowledge and software. '*The bigger circles of influence'*, he calls this, referring to the fact that these are influences from higher up, not immediately noticeable or thought of. Next to that he speaks of the importance of ZXC specializing in making buildings more earthquake proof. In not every country earthquakes are a hazard. He calls the way they design the buildings as a *'mix of local and global'*.

Kevin and I are sitting on the balcony of my apartment. The sun is still shining, but summer is almost over. Both facing the sun we are drinking a beer together. His first beer in few months. "It is hard thinking what to do with my life now." He recently started working again as an engineer after quitting his job last year. His plans of getting into the Air force are on hold now. "I really wanted to get in and start studying again." Getting into the Air force for him meant being able to study again in different countries at their cost. To get some money for the upcoming period he started working again as a part time mechanical engineer. He quitted his job last year not feeling happy with "being a boring engineer, stuck at a desk most of the time." The Air force was his new found interest and a way out of this life. He told me about his plans a few weeks earlier before hearing that he did not get into the last round after all.

Really happy with making the last round his medical history was a problem after all. "They want to be sure that it is not going to affect me anymore and I could try again next year." He takes a few sips of his beer and stares at the parking garage opposite the road. I do not know what to say knowing how happy he was with having some kind of plan with his life. So I keep quiet for a bit and start staring to the parking garage as well.

This story from Kevin is not the only one I heard during my research about temporariness and flexibility that is part of their life. Especially among young people I spoke with, working at the engineering SMEs, the so called Overseas Experience, OE[21], is a big part of their live and constructing their identity. Last year while doing research for my bachelors I found out that a big part of feelings of national identity for Pakeha lies in the fact of the Overseas Experience. It makes them aware of the world around them and it is a kind of 'rite de passage', knowing what it means to be *'Kiwi'*. They realize that they are more part of, and have more in common with, New Zealand culture and society then the rest of the world, although their roots might be in European countries like England (Bosch & De Jong 2013). Everyone working for engineering SMEs I spoke with has been or is planning to go overseas. Like speaking to Tim, working in the tree cutting business for engineering companies, *"So you are from the Netherlands, I have been there, only Amsterdam though, would like to go back some day. I have met some Dutchies on my travelling as well, cool people."* I ask Tim where else he has been travelling. *"Australia, Asia and Europe, I have not been to America yet, but I am planning to go to South America shortly."* Or Rory who also recently started working at ZXC after his travels through South Africa. For a few of them the job they are doing now is just a means to an end, a temporary solution to get some money and going overseas again.

For most New Zealanders the OE also makes them more open for cultural diversity (Bosch & De Jong 2013). This means that they are not only interested in my stories as a 'Dutchie', but also partially open for cultural diversity on the work floor. Like in the case of Maximillian. He works at ZXC with Bill, they know each other from the church they both go to. Maximillian is staying at Bill's house during the period he is working at the company. Being from Germany he is in New Zealand on a working holiday visa. To earn money for his travels he started working part time at the company. He got acquainted with this job through Bill. Although he is only working part time he already fits right in with the team. Or the story of Juan, who came to New Zealand as an international student from Spain and now works at

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[21] This abbreviation will be used from now on for Overseas Experience.

Flytrackcom. The fact that he speaks Spanish helped that he got hired, his boss William also speaks of the fact that there is a widening of cultural knowledge within his company and that he is looking across borders for the best people who fit the job.

Although New Zealanders from Auckland are very open for cultural diversity, the aspect of the informal networking culture, that is part of their national identity, makes that segregation is still part of society. This also influences people finding a job at engineering SMEs through their network because of this networking culture (Bosch & De Jong 2013). This influences the way local and global are intertwined. Getting back to the theory of Boellstorff of '*dubbing culture*' (Boellstorff 2003:226) and the different scales of Tsing (2005), this makes it very interesting to look at this intertwinement of local and global and how this affects the engineering SMEs and their work floor.

'Acting local thinking global'

Back to Eriksen's question: does globalization lead to more *homogenization* or *heterogenization*? He states that processes of globalization not only could be described as *disembedding*, but also *re-embedding*. *'A very widespread family of responses to the disembedding tendencies of globalization can be described as re-embedding. The fragmented, fleeting social world made possible through strong networks of moral commitment, concerns with local power and community integration, national and sub-national identity politics'* (Eriksen 2007:9).

'Whatever you do for a job, you'll probably find something similar on offer in New Zealand. But it'll come with a distinctive Kiwi flavour. Business in New Zealand is a bit different. It's the combined result of having a relatively small population and a unique way of doing things. The work culture is friendly, professional, and by most standards very informal. Employers, managers and staff are on first name terms, even in large companies. Most New Zealand employers work hard to make their workplaces enjoyable - but in return for a relaxed atmosphere, there is an expectation that people will open up, share ideas and generally contribute.' (New Zealand govt 2014[22]).

The way the business operates is for most New Zealanders really bounded on the way Kiwi's do business, in a less stratifying, informal way on a more horizontal level. Sheppard told me

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[22] Source: www.newzealandnow.govt.nz New Zealand government, consulted on June 20, 2014.

that: "*If you want to speak with one of our professors here, that is not a problem. People are really easy reachable here in New Zealand. It is the same in doing business".* Informants made comments like:*"Being sociable, 'well, 'uhmm', you know what I mean, doing drinks together."* But also, "*they are my workmates and I spend a great part of my day with them, so I have to like them right".* Or Bill talking about his bosses helping out on the work floor he states that there is a rather flat structure. Sam, who is as mentioned in the previous chapter a friend of Bill and working as a civil engineer for a civil and structural engineering SME. He works at a company that provides structural and civil engineering services to clients, like engineering consultant services and on side supervision design. Sam likes the fact that their business trips are aimed at maintaining social relationships within the company and have a certain '*New Zealand cultural twist'*. The fishing trips they make and barbeques they have regularly "*are activities every Kiwi men likes to do and are typical for New Zealand culture".* Not only are business trips affected by that, daily chatter as well. Talking about different sports matches, like rugby and soccer, is as well. These are all aspects described as being part of national identity (Bosch & De Jong 2013).

Describing national identity is also done by the certain attitudes that fit New Zealand culture (Bosch & De Jong 2013). Although contrasting, the people working at or owning engineering SMEs describe their work mentality by hard working and laid back. One of the famous phrases I heard more than a dozen times: "*Kiwi's work hard and play hard".* For them it is about "*keeping it real",* and highly dependable on trust and *'word of mouth'.* As an article in the Auckland Herald (Yellow's 2013 in the New Zealand Herald 2013[23]) showed only half of the SMEs have a website to advertise on, for example the business Claire works for.

New Zealand tries to keep the image of being laid back, but it becomes hard to combine. Engineering SMEs describe the relationship with clients, both within New Zealand and overseas, as social. The main purpose of it is still doing business. Asking about the wellbeing of their clients, and being there where the clients want them to be, could be described as the informality of doing business. But it could also be seen as business mentality and with that formality. They view Auckland, New Zealand, as a global city. People are keen on travelling and proud of their business happening overseas. As long as it is to help enhancing their economic position and their (idea) of open-mindedness, and it having a character of equality, the idea of global is good[24].

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[23] Source: www.nzherald.co.nz New Zealand Herald, Chapman-Smith *Small businesses still sluggish online,* 8th of May 2013, consulted on June 2, 2014.
[24] Information for this I gained from different short conversations, interviews and participant observations.

At first I had a hard time realizing what the quote *"Acting local, thinking global"* meant when Sheppard told me it, but I realize what it means now. Like mentioned the OE, is a big part of being Kiwi as well. They take this awareness with them in every day live and in doing business as well. '*It is travel, that viewing of New Zealand from a distance, which allows young New Zealanders provincial loyalties, and see the country as an entity. Myths, memories and connectedness to home are too deeply ingrained to forget. Indeed, they may intensify as the travellers realize how large the world stage really is, and how small New Zealand'* (Bell 2002). The awareness of their position economically is also part of daily business, especially when it comes to mechanical engineering companies. Although the open-mindedness for 'global' there is only a small part of SMEs that has business overseas.

'*It is paradoxical that while openness to international experience is well incorporated in the New Zealand psyche at an individual level, an insular attitude often prevails at the enterprise level. This is particularly true for small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). By any standards, the involvement of New Zealand SMEs in international markets is limited'* (Bowen, Haworth & Wilson 2003)

When speaking to people working as engineer or working in say the workshop, they were really keen on speaking about their personal stories when it came to movement and mobility; All the places they have been and how much they like travelling. And although they consider the company they work for as operating on a more local scale they consider themselves as thinking more on a global scale.

As mentioned the OE makes it for New Zealanders that they are more aware of the world around them and influences the way they view New Zealand. This is not only on a cultural level, but also on a business level (Bosch & De Jong 2013). Bill mentioned in an interview: "*We are a company that can compete for assignments, but only the smaller assignments.*" Or as Tim said: *'They kind have this small country complex."*; Rita, "*Well we should support our own country, it's such a small country and such a small market".*; And William "*Yes it is interesting we as a small country do not have the skills and products to close off from the world, we only have expertise in a few things and depend on the other half, like say China and the US. I don't get why people and companies don't see that. We are poorly in it because of our history in selling milk and protein offshore. It makes us get less than the effort we put into it.*"

This also in relation to the fact that going overseas for most companies starts in Australia. Like Seidel mentioned when talking about going global with his company: *"My personal experience with Australia, concerning my business; Australia is the first step. Logistical it is good, flying there you're there in a few hours. I already have a few international clients there. Australia is very short distance for us, like Amsterdam and Hamburg. We speak the same language. We have very similar political and organisational structure. The cultural background has a lot of similarities as well. We both are really into sports, like rugby, cricket and soccer. So it is a relatively easy first step to go international. They have a lot in common, but they are more the smaller brother of Australia."* Sheppard also mentioned that companies can get trapped in Australia, because they think it is easy reachable and they have many things in common, but that can be a dangerous assumption. Or William: *"Well, yes New Zealand has more in common with Australia than other countries, but I think Australia has more in common with the United States. We have to be careful doing business in Australia, sometimes you think you understand what they mean, but it can mean something totally different. It is easy to fly to, I can be in Brisbane, Australia, quicker then I can be in Christchurch, New Zealand."*

By looking at how processes of globalization are played out in engineering SMEs, it is not only the company as an entity, but also the people within that could be considered as a sum of its parts. They influence and are being influenced by processes of globalization. How they view the world around them and their own position within it. This also shows how difficult it is to make a distinction between local and global and the importance of looking at processes of globalization on these different scales and their intertwinement with that. Mentioning that the Overseas Experience, OE, is an important 'rite de passage' for Kiwi's; It affects the way they view New Zealand culture and the appreciation of being Kiwi. The fact that it is aimed at a more equal society where informality is an important part of social contacts. The OE not only influences their perception on their personal life, it also affects their perception on the business they work for or own, or how they decide to do business. It makes them aware of the world around them. It gives them the idea of New Zealand as being a rather small country with a secluded position on the map. For mechanical engineering SMEs this means the need of going international, 'the New Zealand market is too small'. It also means taking the appreciation of certain cultural aspects of New Zealand identity, like equality and informality with them on the work floor. Doing business according to these values means being there and

the importance of 'word of mouth'. As I showed Eriksen (2014) also states that *re-embedding* is part of processes of globalization. This could also be the case when it concerns local identity. For New Zealanders this lies in the meeting of different cultures and with this appreciation for their 'own' and act according to it. So by concluding this chapter, back to Boellstorff (2003), people working at or owning engineering SMEs they are in a constant process of *dubbing culture,* that influences not only how they see New Zealand society, but also its businesses and their own position within both.

Conclusion

Due to its popularity we have to be careful defining the discourse of globalization and describing the processes around it. As I found out during my research, this is harder than I thought it would be. The intentional research question I started off my fieldwork with was: In what way are processes of globalization interpreted and played out in Pakeha owned SMEs in Auckland, New Zealand? It was not the only objective that formed my research, it also became a quest to find out what I would consider as processes of globalization.

I was especially drawn to the theories of Tsing (2000 & 2005) and Ho (2005). Tsing (2000 & 2005) by her use of the idea that processes of globalization are played out in different scales, local, regional and global, and Ho (2005) that processes of globalization can mean different things and is context dependable.

As I mentioned in the beginning of this thesis, the research I conducted is part of corporate anthropology. My research population, SMEs, within this area of anthropology is relatively new, most of the research focuses on bigger multinational companies. Auckland, New Zealand is especially interesting because of its location. It is a very neutral country that does not have a lot of loading, it is not a threatening country, as I showed in my thesis by using quotes of Sheppard, one of my expert informants.

By focusing my research on engineering SMEs the distinction between mechanical engineering SMEs, that do have business overseas, and structural/civil engineering SMEs, that have not, made it interesting to focus on processes of globalization and the idea of the context dependableness of them, referring to Ho (2005).

Before concluding this thesis I want to mention that this is in explorative research, the conclusions I make are based on a minimal amount of data as explained in the Introduction.

At first, in this thesis, I described processes of globalization in mechanical engineering SMEs. I started off with this part of my research because I noticed that for them it was relatively clear that processes of globalization lie in the fact that they have business overseas. The means they where referring to are the fact that transportation has become more and more easy and with this the increased mobility of people and products. Next to that the technology in international communication is important for them. This concerns not only communication with their clients, but also with the people that work overseas for these SMEs. By concluding

this part I showed that the trends of *disembedding* and *deterritorialization* (Giddens 1990 & Eriksen 2007, 2010 & 2014) are part of processes of globalization in these SMEs. As an overarching trend, for these mechanical engineering SMEs business is lifted out of its local context.

Continuing my thesis the focus is on both types of engineering SMEs, mechanical and structural/civil. I showed that processes of globalization are not only linked to having business overseas for them. That although at first glance it is about people, products and capital crossing borders, the way processes of globalization are played out entails more for these SMEs. Not only on an international scale, but also on a local scale communication has changed. Software like Aconex and e-mail have influenced the way people communicate within these SMEs as well. As Appadurai (2002) states that technoscapes could as well be the global configuration of technology on a more local scale. Next to that standardization, is as Eriksen (2014) describes also one of the main characteristics of globalization and, as I showed, part of doing business for both types of engineering SMEs. For them it is standardization in knowledge and software, and products and production processes.

In the final part of my thesis I went back to the scales Tsing (2005) describes, local, regional and global. By not only looking at the company as an entity, but also describing the people within, their perspectives and ideas, the engineering SMEs, I found out the interesting fact that, for them, regional has no meaning. That local is New Zealand and global is everything overseas. That is why the focus is on only the two scales, local and global, when describing in what way processes of globalization are played out in engineering SMEs. While doing my research I found out it is hard to make a distinction between the two scales and it is more about the intertwinement of the two. The Overseas Experience, OE, is an important 'rite de passage', that is part of, and influences both scales; It makes them aware of the world around them and how they would describe 'Kiwi' culture. By using Eriksens (2014) concept of *re-embedding* I showed that this not only influences the way they describe their culture. The OE also gives them appreciation for certain cultural aspects they consider as being *Kiwi*. View of these aspects they hold on to when doing business, like the more informal way of doing it. The OE is not only part of their view on the world, it also is part of how they view themselves and the company within the world. I concluded this part of my thesis that this is why the people influence and are being influenced by processes of globalization played out in engineering SMEs; That when it comes to cultural aspects and processes of globalization this could also be processes of *Dubbing Culture* (Boelstorff 2003) of the people within the SMEs.

Processes of globalization are multilayered and multi-scaled, visible and at the same time invisible. I showed a few of these layers in the context of Pakeha owned engineering SMEs in Auckland, New Zealand. The first layer I described concerns processes of globalization in the context of having business international and the technology that enables this, on a more global scale. The second layer is, additional to the top, also part of processes of globalization that concern technology, but affecting businesses on a more local scale; Both in communication and in standardization. Getting to the end of this thesis I showed that these layers are wrapped around the core; The personal experiences and perceptions of the people within these engineering SMEs. Although they are part of and form the first two layers as well, showing them more central and personal, the complicatedness of how processes of globalization are played out becomes even more clear. It shows the processes of globalization, on local and global scale, work both ways and could be hard to divide. With that it shows the importance of not dividing these processes, but look at their intertwinement and their *'interconnectedness'*.

Epilogue

'The organization as a 'whole' may exist in our imagination only (Cook et al. 2009) and it is perhaps precisely the disconnected and fragmented nature of the networked world, together with ways in which 'wholes' are being assembled and pulled apart, which need to be documented and understood in order for us better to manage organizations' (Huby, Harries & Grant 2011:222).

Nowadays the question arises how contemporary anthropological research can contribute to both theoretical and societal debates. As Huby, Harries and Grant show, doing ethnographic research should be aimed at looking at how networks are created, their *connections, disruptions and intersections*, the flexibility of organizations and follow the flow of information and people.

Looking at how processes of globalization are played out in a society and its organizations within show that it can be found both online and offline. These processes happen at the same time and affect the way society is, and organization are formed. '*The de-territorialization of social relations and the deconstruction of the distinction between macro and micro processes raises the question of how we 'cut the network' (Strathern 1996) so as to create a manageable 'field' for ethnographic research, which also sustains evolving analytical and theoretical interest. The notion of 'following the actors', (e.g. Latour 2007: 11–12), is the key to the creation of the 'fields' of multi-sited ethnographic research, in which the theoretical interest of the research can be fore-grounded*' (Huby, Harries & Grant 2011:219/220). Communication is not always made visible, like through e-mail, and stays partly more hidden than face to face contact. Therefore it is harder to 'see' the emotions behind communication. That is why Ingold (2013) states that through modern technology we more and more lose *correspondence* with the world around us and we need to get back to being in *correspondence*. But since changing this is not really an option in a more and more technological developing society it is important to look at new ways to do research among these changing societies and its organizations within.

Globalization has become a popular discourse and trying to give grip to this concept has not become easier. So why is it important to do research to these processes of globalization? As mentioned getting insights in the flow of people, information, goods and capital is important. Here it is that cultures meet or more important, people are in dialogue and new ideas are formed, ending with Tsing (2000 & 2005).

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Appendix 1

Figure 1: Map of New Zealand[25]

Figure 2: Map of Auckland[26]

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[25] Figure 1: Map of New Zealand, source http://www.lonelyplanet.com/maps/pacific/new-zealand/ consulted on December 31, 2013

[26] Figure 2: Map of Auckland, source http://www.lonelyplanet.com/maps/pacific/new-zealand/auckland/ consulted on December 31, 2013