Cultural tourism clusters: experiences from Ireland

CRRED
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Cultural Tourism

- Numerous definitions
- Part of the ‘amorphous economy’ (Krugman, 1991).
Cultural tourism: a public policy perspective

- Interdependence of arts and tourism
- Festival Tourism
  - estimated to be worth €200m (Fáilte Ireland: Supporting Festivals and Cultural Events to Enhance the Tourism Product, 2006).
  - 144 festivals were supported with grant-aid of €3.4m in 2005 (Fáilte Ireland Annual Report, 2005).
  - €5.6 million was provided by the Arts Council in 2005 to 56 major festivals
- “Research indicates that significant additional tourists can be attracted here by the quality of the cultural and heritage product. It is patently clear that the potential of Ireland’s cultural and heritage attractions, including music venues and performing arts facilities, needs to be better developed and marketed.” Tourism Action Plan Implementation Group (2006, p. 20).
### ‘Iconic attractions’ - Top Ten Fee-Paying Visitor Attractions, Ireland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attractions</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2001 Ranking</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Dublin Zoo</td>
<td>772,322</td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Guinness Storehouse</td>
<td>738,000</td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Trinity College / Book of Kells</td>
<td>467,513</td>
<td>(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Bunratty Castle &amp; Folk Park</td>
<td>307,145</td>
<td>(5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Waterford Crystal</td>
<td>303,000</td>
<td>(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Fota Wildlife Park</td>
<td>301,313</td>
<td>(8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Blarney Castle</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>(6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. St Patrick's Cathedral</td>
<td>275,922</td>
<td>(7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Rock of Cashel</td>
<td>245,316</td>
<td>(9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Bru na Boinne</td>
<td>216,957</td>
<td>(13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL VISITS (1-10)</strong></td>
<td>3,927,488</td>
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The cluster concept

- A small but growing literature in tourism which addresses the implications of clusters for enhancing tourism growth.
Figure 1: Tourism Clusters

Firm strategy, structure and rivalry

Factor Conditions
- Scenery, landscape

Related & Supporting Industry
- Accommodation
- Food & Beverages
- Retailing
- Transportation

Demand
- Cultural pursuits, cultural infrastructure, soft-adventure, leisure activities, i.e., visits to castles, historic homes, gardens, art centres, festivals, hill-walking, etc.
Tourism Clusters (Porter, 1991; 1998; Rosenfeld, 2004; Jackson and Murphy, 2002).

- Attract needed services and infrastructure to a region
- Generate demand for firms with similar and related capabilities
- Require both cooperation and competition
- Underpinned by networks and based on social values that foster trust, encourage reciprocity and sustained collaboration
- Community culture with supportive public policies, at national and local level
- Institutional involvement, associations and organisations providing training, education, information, research and technical support
- Private Sector Leadership and Innovation
Research Questions

- Do cultural tourism clusters exist in regional areas of Ireland?
  - i.e., do certain areas have a cultural identity to which artists, tourists and entrepreneurs are attracted and provide a terrain in which new ideas, new products, new opportunities can be explored, discussed, tried and tested?

- What are their characteristics and the implications of clustering for policy makers?
Research Design

- Exploratory, qualitative
- 2 Case Study Regions
- Semi-structured interviews (40)
- Criteria for Selection: well established; innovation; linkages with leisure/tourism/other sectors; enhancement of audience experience/array of tourism experiences; contribution to local economy.
- Case Protocol (Yin, 1994)
- Data Analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1984)
Case study regions
Data Findings: Characteristics of Tourism Clusters

- Services and infrastructure
- Firms with similar and related capabilities
- Cooperation and competition
- Underpinned by networks
- Community culture with supportive public policies, at national and local level
- Institutional involvement, associations and organisations providing training, education, information, research and technical support
- Private Sector Leadership
Figure 1: Cultural tourism cluster, influential actors

- **Government**, direction and provision of infrastructure and funds.
- **Regional Branding**
- **Civic leadership**, direction and deployment of local cultural resources; underpinned by networks, strong community culture, institutional involvement.
- **Sophisticated local demand** expanding to international markets, generating opportunity for the tourism industry (seasonal).
Business researchers are devoting more attention to different forms of clusters (Markusen, 1996).

Markusen’s (1996) concept of the “state-anchored cluster”

The triple helix model, based on University-Industry-Government relations (Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff, 2000).
THANK YOU!

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