

Cultural tourism clusters: experiences from Ireland

CRRED

Thursday, May 22nd, 2008

Dr. Breda McCarthy
Department of Management & Marketing
University College Cork
Ireland



Colláiste na h'Ollscoile Corcaigh

Cultural Tourism

- Numerous definitions
- Part of the 'amorphous economy' (Krugman, 1991).

Cultural tourism: a public policy perspective

- New Horizons for Irish Tourism: An Agenda for Action (2003)
- 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

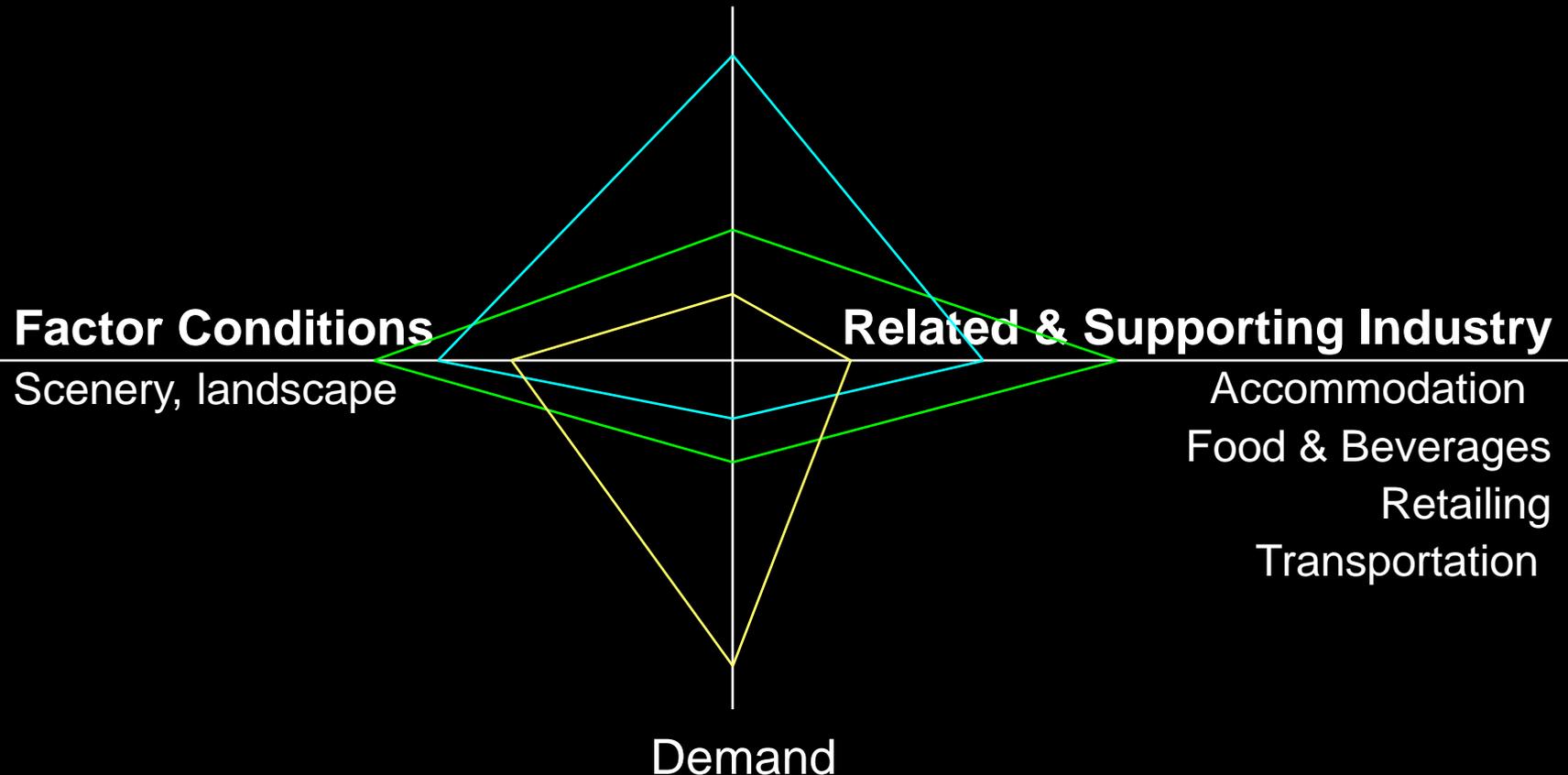
		2003	2001 Ranking
1	Dublin Zoo	772,322	(2)
2	Guinness Storehouse	738,000	(1)
3	Trinity College / Book of Kells	467,513	(3)
4	Bunratty Castle & Folk Park	307,145	(5)
5	Waterford Crystal	303,000	(4)
6	Fota Wildlife Park	301,313	(8)
7	Blarney Castle	300,000	(6)
8	St Patrick's Cathedral	275,922	(7)
9	Rock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

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



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)

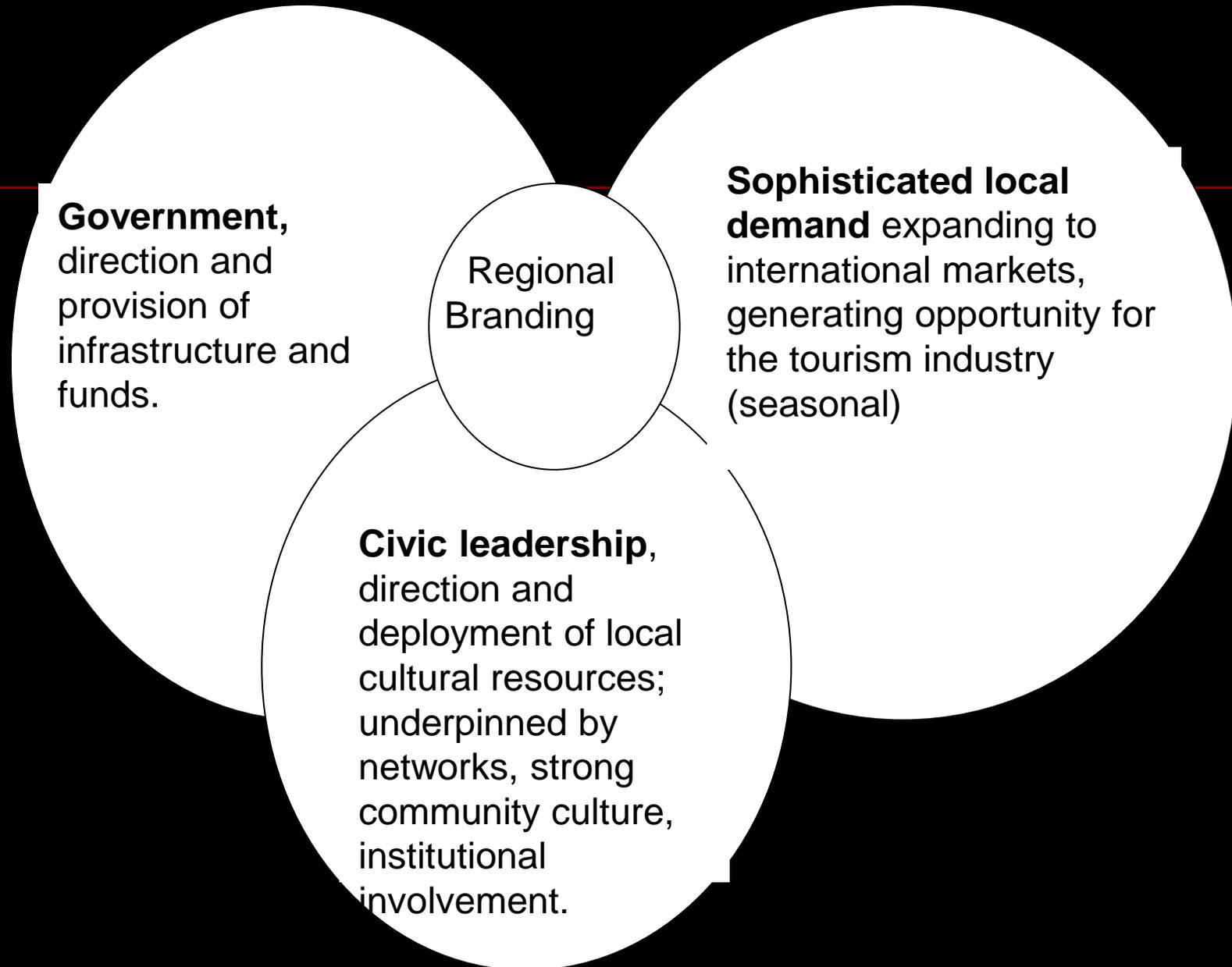
Case study regions



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



Literature - cluster forms

- 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!

Dr. Breda McCarthy – b.mccarthy@ucc.ie