



2005-9

The Influence of Social Milieu on Tourism Development

Theresa Ryan

Dublin Institute of Technology, theresa.ryan@dit.ie

Ziene Mottiar

Dublin Institute of Technology

Bernadette Quinn

Dublin Institute of Technology

Follow this and additional works at: <http://arrow.dit.ie/tfschmtcon>

 Part of the [Tourism and Travel Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Ryan, T., Mottiar, Z., Quinn, B.: The Influence of Social Milieu on Tourism Development. Atlas Annual Conference. Barcelona, 2005.

This Conference Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the School of Hospitality Management and Tourism at ARROW@DIT. It has been accepted for inclusion in Conference papers by an authorized administrator of ARROW@DIT. For more information, please contact yvonne.desmond@dit.ie, arrow.admin@dit.ie, brian.widdis@dit.ie.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 3.0 License](#)



-- The influence of social milieu on tourism development

Authors:

Theresa Ryan, PhD Student,
School of Hospitality Management and Tourism,
Dublin Institute of Technology,
Cathal Brugha Street,
Dublin 1, Ireland.

Phone: (01) 4024327 E-mail: Theresa.ryan@dit.ie

Dr. Ziene Mottiar,
Lecturer Tourism Economics,
School of Hospitality Management and Tourism,
Dublin Institute of Technology,
Cathal Brugha Street,
Dublin 1, Ireland.

Phone: (01) 4027559 E-mail: Ziene.mottiar@dit.ie

Dr. Bernadette Quinn,
Lecturer Tourism
School of Hospitality Management and Tourism,
Dublin Institute of Technology,
Cathal Brugha Street,
Dublin 1, Ireland

Phone: (01) 4027557 E-mail: Bernadette.quinn@dit.ie

Topic: Tourist planning and management at the local and regional level

Destination planning and development has been at the forefront of tourism academic and policy attention in recent years. Despite its importance, the factors that cause tourism development remain under researched. While models such as Butler's (1980) tourism area life-cycle model provide a conceptual framework for explaining the life cycle of a tourism area (Agarwal, 1997), few articles comprehensively explain the factors that lead to successful development. Some factors which have been discussed are the importance of local participation and local control (Gormsen, 1981), transport hierarchies, speciality and co-operation, (Miossec, 1976), and location and physical attributes of the area (Lundgren, 1982). However findings in other related literature suggest other factors might also have a role to play.

Literatures on regional development in economic geography, (e.g. Marshall, 1920, Pyke and Sengenberger, 1992; and Dei Ottati, 1994), have identified social relations as key factors in regional development. Social milieu looks at how firms and communities can be bound together by a common identity (Mottiar, 1997). The existence of a social milieu facilitates and encourages trusting relations between firms, individuals and local institutions in an area. It can lead to a pervasive atmosphere of support and trust that is evidenced through business and social networks and social cohesiveness, which are key factors to enhancing regional growth. This article argues that the existence of a social milieu can also be an explaining factor in tourism destination development. Inter-firm relations, co-operation, networks and trust are consequences of a social milieu and are identified as having a strong influence on economic development (Zeitlin, 1992). This paper presents an overview of the significance of social milieu on tourism development in a developed tourism area in Ireland.

The research reports the findings of a quantitative and qualitative case study undertaken in Killarney, County Kerry, a developed tourism area in Ireland. Killarney has a history of tourism activity dating back to at least the 1800s and is acknowledged as being one of the longest established tourist areas in Ireland. In its classification of tourism areas in Ireland, the Irish national tourism development agency categorises Killarney as a 'developed', as distinct from a 'developing' or 'specialist' tourism area.

The findings point to the existence of a strong social milieu within the tourism area and indicate that this has had a profound influence on tourism development. The industry is characterised by a myriad of personal contacts that is significant in that it has resulted in strong ties between tourism suppliers that has influenced their willingness to co-operate with each other for mutual benefit. It is argued that the social milieu evident in Killarney in terms of social cohesiveness and informal and formal inter firm relations has played a significant role in the development of this destination and has resulted in, for example, the development of marketing groups, the emergence of new tourism products and services, and referral systems between hotels and other smaller businesses.

The research answers questions such as: How has the existence of a social milieu influenced tourism development in Killarney? What are the conditions that have resulted in this social milieu and in what way is it evident? In summary, it explains the way in which a social milieu has played an important role in the development of tourism in Killarney and these findings are important for both the discussion on destination development within Eastern Europe and for destination development in general.

References

Agarwal, S. (1997): The Resort Cycle and Seaside Tourism: An Assessment of its Applicability and Validity. *Tourism Management* 18.

Butler, R.W. (1980): The Concept of a Tourist Area Cycle of Evolution: Implications for Management of Resources. *Canadian Geographer*, xxiv, 1, pp. 5 –m12.

Dei Ottati, G, (1994). 'Trust, interlinking transactions and credit in the industrial district'. *Cambridge Journal of Economics* Vol. 18 pp.529-546.

Gormsen, E. (1981): The spatio-temporal development of international tourism: attempt at a centre-periphery model, in *La Consommation d'Espace par le Tourisme et sa Preservation*, CHET, Aix-en-Provence. pp. 150-170

Kerry County Council, (2003). *Submission to the Tourism Policy Review Group, Department of Arts, Sport & Tourism*. Kerry County Council. Tralee

Lundgren, J.O.J (1982): The Tourist Frontier of Nouveau Quebec: functions and regional linkages, *Tourist Review*, 37 (2), pp. 10-16.

Miossec, J.M. (1976) *Eléments pour une Thèorie de l'Espace Touristique*, Les Cahiers du Tourisme, CHET, Aix-en-Provence. Cited in: Pearce, D. (1995), *Tourism Today, A Geographical Analysis*, Second Edition, U.K., Longman Group Limited.

Mottiar, Z (1997) Unpublished thesis *Industrial districts and industrial clusters compared: Applications to Ireland*. Dublin City University

Pyke, F. and Sengenberger, W. (1992): Industrial Districts and Local Economic Regeneration: Research and Policy Issues, in Pyke, F. and Sengenberger, W. (eds.) *Industrial Districts and Local Economic Regeneration*, Geneva: International Institute for Labour Studies, pp.3-30.

Zeitlin, J. (1992): Overview and comment, in Pyke, F. and Sengenberger, W. (eds.)
Industrial Districts and Local Economic Regeneration, Geneva: International Institute
for Labour Studies