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Real Ireland- an Investigation into US Tourists' Holiday Photographs

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**REAL IRELAND – AN INVESTIGATION
INTO US TOURISTS’
HOLIDAY PHOTOGRAPHS**

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ABSTRACT

Drawing from literature straddling tourism, marketing, geography and anthropology, this thesis investigates how US tourists consume and thereby make sense of Ireland as a place through practicing photography as part of 'being a tourist'. The constructivist approach to this research facilitated an exchange of ideas between the researcher and the participants. This exchange between the researcher and the participants, in which knowledge is not discovered, but rather created, informs the hermeneutically-situated methodologies sometimes used by constructivists. The thesis, therefore, employs a suite of participant-focused, hermeneutically-situated methodologies, including in-depth interviews and focus groups to produce a phenomenographical account of how the participants made sense of Ireland as a place.

A three-phased approach was taken to collecting the primary data. The first phase used in-depth interviews and photo-elicitation techniques to explore a selection of induced images of Ireland with US tourists prior to visiting Ireland. This phase in the research took place in JFK airport in New York, and the key themes to emerge from the photo-elicitation work categorised photographs used to market Ireland as: "indicative of Ireland", "stereotypically Irish", or "it could be anywhere". Phase two of the research made use of in-depth interviews to collect and discuss photographs taken by the participants from phase one while they were on holiday in Ireland. The key themes to emerge from this phase in the research reflect the participants' pre-visitation imagined view of Ireland as: green; rural; beautiful; Irish people; symbols of Ireland; religion. Phase three of the research involved eight focus groups with US tourists on their last night in Ireland. During the focus groups each participant was asked to submit a selection of their photographs that, in their opinion, truly represented Ireland as they experienced it. The themes which emerged from this phase of the research reflect the intensity of emotion and enchantment experienced by them with Ireland as a place during their holiday. Their photographs offer a window into their world, and how they view Ireland as an enchanting place, where enchanting people live, and where it is still possible to experience an enchanting way of life.

This thesis captures the essence of the participants' sense-making of Ireland by discussing with them the photographs taken by them on holiday. This thesis reveals that by looking at organic images of destinations, but more importantly, by taking their own photographs while on holiday, tourists play an active role in their own seduction and enchantment with places. The thesis concludes that tourists pass through a cycle of enchantment and meaning, as they make sense of places by taking photographs. It is also clear that tourists legitimise their imagined view of places by seeking out and taking photographic evidence while on holiday, to prove that their imagined view of place really exists.

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis, which I now submit for examination for the award of PhD, is entirely my own work, and has not been taken from the work of others, save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

This thesis was prepared according to the regulations for postgraduate study by research of the Dublin Institute of Technology and has not been submitted in whole, or in part for another award in any Institute.

The work reported on in this thesis conforms to the principles and requirements of DIT's guidelines for ethics in research.

DIT has permission to keep, lend or copy this thesis in whole or in part, on condition that any such use of the material of the thesis be duly acknowledged.

Signature _____ Date _____

Candidate

DEDICATION

For my father, Victor Gabriel Ruane 1935-1984

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My mother Kathleen Ruane for all the prayers!

To my wonderful sons, Cian and Cathal Ruane, you truly are amazing and have grown into two fine young men during the endless long nights and weekends that your stressed-out Dad was studying.

My dearest friend Fionnuala for the many lunches, coffees and texts and the endless motivation to keep going; the darkest hours are truly always just before the light. Thank you!

To sum up, this thesis has been a journey of discovery, not only in pursuit of knowledge relating to the subject matter under review, but also about myself as a man, father and lecturer. My experiences of being a PhD student can best be encapsulated in the following quote:

“...it doesn't matter how you get knocked down in life because that's going to happen. All that matters is you gotta get up”

(Ben Affleck, 2013)

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

“Contemporary tourism is intrinsically constructed culturally, socially and materially through images and performances of photography, and vice versa”

(Larsen, 2006: 241)

1.0 Introduction

The above quotation encapsulates the subject matter under investigation in this thesis, which looks at how tourists consume and make sense of places they visit by taking photographs. This sense-making begins long before the tourist visits the destination, through a process of “elaborative imagination” (Belk, Ger and Askegaard, 2003: 341). Belk et al. (2003) define elaborative imagination as the process whereby tourists begin to imagine what it might be like to visit a destination by looking at images used to market it. Destination marketers rely on images for their ability to connect emotionally with people. This is because images form an essential part of a destination’s brand (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Jenkins, 1999). Images can imbue meaning about the destination (Shih-Shuo, Chen and Liu, 2012). Bearing this in mind, Anderson (1991) contends that destinations are ‘imagined’ spaces in the minds of tourists and potential tourists. Using Ireland as a case study, this research examines how tourists from the United States of America ‘imagine’ and become enchanted with Ireland, in response to images that collectively form Ireland’s destination brand. Destination brands rely heavily on images to seduce potential tourists, and engender emotional reactions from them about places they may wish to visit (Westwood, 2011). Indeed, Belk et al. (2003)

argue that as consumers we allow ourselves to be seduced into buying various products and services by looking at images in a variety of media. Upon arrival at the destination, tourists capture their own images of the destination by taking photographs. Tourists' photographs are therefore of interest to this research, as they can be used to explore the construction of place, thereby contributing to our understanding of place-making and sense of place. Bearing this in mind, this research is informed by the philosophical belief that tourists construct their own social realities in how they make sense of places.

1.1 Background to the Research

Morgan (2004) observes that people have been representing places in various ways for centuries, from the first cave drawings that are still evident today, to more contemporary forms of representation such as technology allows. Today, places are represented visually, in text, as well as in spoken language. Places are, therefore, immersed in representation so much so that to be a place at all means to be part of a sensuously qualified world. Tourists, through their travel behaviour, experience and engage with this world. They tour, consume and make sense of places and cultures that have been produced, presented and represented through tourism marketing (Morgan, 2004). While the concept of place is somewhat ambiguous, Morgan (2004) draws attention to the way in which the visible representations of a place reflects, communicates or expresses the emotional attachments of its people. Indeed, visual images of places become the means by which place "is imagined, produced, consumed and contested" (Morgan, 2004: 173).

Conceptualising places as visual representations is not a new phenomenon in tourism literature (MacKay and Fesenmaier, 1997; Morgan and Pritchard, 1998). Visual

representations enable tourists to form perceptions about what the destination might be like to visit. However, Garrod (2008) points out that while place perceptions enjoy consistent attention by anthropologists and cultural geographers, there appears to be less attention given to perceptions tourists have of destinations. Moreover, those studies that have addressed destination perceptions have done so predominantly using quantitative techniques (Jenkins, 2000). Consequently, qualitative studies of peoples' perceptions of destinations using participant-generated visual data, such as tourists' photography, are comparatively rare (Jenkins, 1999; Garrod, 2008). Furthermore, where photographs have been used, their contribution has usually been restricted to that of visual prompts used to help elicit verbal responses from research participants, as opposed to being the primary data source in the study. There are some exceptions to this, such as the work carried out by Jenkins (1999), Garrod (2008, 2009) and Scarles (2009).

In focussing on tourist photography, this thesis draws attention to the performative nature of taking photographs, which may involve several people. Accordingly, Robinson and Picard (2009) point out that tourist photography is "littered with performances involving those taking the photographs, those in the photograph, those outside of the frame and those who will later work with the photograph itself as a catalyst for storytelling" (2009: 13). They argue that taking a photograph involves framing the world and may require a certain amount of self-editing where certain landscapes, or people, are left in the frame while others are excluded (Robinson and Picard, 2009). Modern technology in the form of digital cameras facilitates this type of 'on the move editing' where tourists can review and decide whether or not to keep an image, before moving on to the next shot. In taking a photograph of a moment in time,

tourists are in essence liberating the moment and making these moments in some way objective (Terdiman, 1993). Robinson and Picard (2009) contest that objectifying the world through photographs can be viewed as a way of reifying what is shown. Even so, the photograph rarely, if ever, is allowed to speak for itself, or indeed speak at all. Consequently, the act of framing the holiday in photographs is part of a performance, which over time has become part of the wider 'doing' of tourism (Robinson and Picard, 2009).

1.2 Conceptual Framework

Image plays an important role in the construction of places. Consequently, space becomes place through a process of interaction by people with images of the world around them (Tuan, 1977). Larsen (2006b) tells us that tourist places are rich in meaning and myths which are circulated and maintained through imagery in a diverse range of media. Bearing this in mind, Gunn's (1972) seminal work on induced and organic destination images underpins this research. Figure 2.1 in Chapter Two presents the conceptual framework informing this thesis, and is a base from which to begin exploring destination image.

Once formed, induced and organic images are not consumed in isolation, but instead are interpreted by tourists through their interactions with their physical surroundings, other people and personal experiences they are exposed to (Relph, 1976). Furthermore, tourists make sense of and personalise these images in ways that reflect their own needs, desires and preferences. All of this may happen before they physically encounter the destination. Further support for this claim comes from Delfin (2009) who points out that tourists arrive at their holiday destination with their own plan, prepared to make

their choice of destination conform to their fantasies about what it might be like. The literature on destination branding, and specifically destination image, draws attention to how tourists develop preconceptions and explains in detail how tourism organisations go to great lengths to try and influence and control the process.

Upon arrival, tourists continue to make sense of destinations in ways that matter to them. Specifically, they seek out what they consider to be real and authentic experiences, taking from the destination the kind of meanings that resonate with their imagined view as to what is, or is not, authentic. Delfin (2009) points out that “all tourism destinations are, if nothing else, places where people are encouraged to craft their own ideal temporary realities, often with few similarities to their everyday lives” (2009: 141). Crafting these realities may involve staying in tourist accommodation, dressing in holiday attire, buying souvenirs, being in the company of family and friends or others. One of the most obvious things that people do that identifies them as tourists is taking photographs.

Photographs offer indisputable evidence of daily life (Sontag, 2002). Photographs also help us to remember holidays, to capture our children at different stages in their development, to express ourselves, to construct our view of the world around us, or to alter other people’s perception of the world (Badger, 2007). Hall’s (1997) hermeneutic circle of representation draws attention to tourists’ photographic behaviour. He argues that upon arrival in the destination, tourists seek out and take photographs of iconic sites that they first became aware of in induced destination imagery. By taking photographs, tourists construct the destination that is meaningful, authentic and real for them, and become active agents in their own enchantment with place. Bennett’s (2001) theory of

enchantment offers potential new insights into why tourists seek enchantment. They capture photographic evidence of the place they have come wanting to see, and they take it home with them in the form of photographic memories, later displayed on their mantelpieces, Facebook or Pinterest pages.

Scarles' (2009) Framework of Visuality for Visual Practice offers a base from which to explore further how through practicing photography, tourists are seduced and enchanted by places. This thesis argues that tourists, through their photographic behaviour, process various messages they have been exposed to regarding destinations, thereby playing an active role in their own seduction as defined earlier (Belk et al., 2003). In doing so, they reconstruct them into meaningful visual messages in the form of photographs (Stylianou-Lambert, 2012), which they use to legitimise their imagined idea of places and local people. This thesis therefore, uses tourists' photographs to gain insight into how tourists form and express attachments, emotional connections and enchantment with destinations. Empirically, this research draws on a study of US tourists visiting Ireland to develop its investigations.

1.3 Research Context: Ireland's Destination Image

Irish culture or Irish identity can never be perceived as self-contained, unchanging or closed; instead it is always in a state of flux (Fagan, 2002). Throughout Ireland's history, Ireland's brand identity has performed well on the international stage in regard to its perceived image as a tourist destination. This is because representations of Ireland and Irishness have a wider allure, and occupy an interesting place in the broader global consciousness (Markwick, 2001). The sources of these various representations of Irishness are of interest to this research in terms of how US tourists imagine Ireland

as a destination. Ireland has a long association with the USA, largely due to emigration and the “wistful and nostalgic yearnings” of its large emigrant diaspora (Patterson, 2011). Ireland finds expression in the imagining of its many emigrants and their descendants as exemplified by Patterson (2011). Much of the interest in Ireland by US tourists is due to the fact that over 34.5 million Americans claim Irish ancestry (American Community Survey, 2012). In fact, the USA is Ireland’s second largest source market, attracting 935,000 US tourists from January to September in 2013 (Tourism Ireland, 2013).

The task of promoting Ireland as a destination in the USA is currently the responsibility of Tourism Ireland. Formed in 1996 as a result of the Good Friday Agreement between Great Britain and Ireland, it uses a variety of media to market Ireland in the USA. Photographs used in print and online advertising are one of the tools used by Tourism Ireland to communicate Ireland’s destination brand objective in the USA. The brand objective states that Ireland should be perceived as an aspirational, iconic and accessible holiday destination that targeted US customers are highly motivated to visit (Tourism Ireland, 2013). One of the primary motivating factors for US tourists to visit Ireland is a desire for authentic experiences that are delivered and enhanced by genuine interaction with the people of Ireland (Tourism Ireland, 2013). The Gathering, a recent initiative on behalf of the Irish government to attract people of Irish descent back to Ireland in 2013 to revisit their roots, created many opportunities for such encounters. It was particularly well received in the USA, and has resulted in a 14.6 per cent increase in tourists from North America (USA and Canada) to Ireland, to date. Much of its success in the USA can be attributed to the fact that it reignited Ireland’s emotional brand in the minds of US tourists, who responded to the personal invitation by the Irish

government to visit the home of their ancestors. Using the success of The Gathering as a springboard, the Irish government is currently working on another compelling reason for tourists to visit Ireland, titled the Wild Atlantic Way.

The Wild Atlantic Way is a concept designed around a 2,400km drive that will extend from Donegal in the north of Ireland, down to Cork in the south, along Ireland's Atlantic coastline. Billed as Tourism Ireland's "hottest property" in 2014 (Slattery, 2013), it will showcase Ireland's raw natural beauty. As a concept, the Wild Atlantic Way is designed to trigger the "must go now" impulses of holidaymakers in North America and mainland Europe. This thesis, therefore, offers timely and interesting insights into how tourists from the USA interpret Ireland as a destination by taking photographs while on holiday. Analysis of their photographs indicates that the West of Ireland holds particular attraction for US tourists because it represents real Ireland for them as they imagined it.

The West of Ireland's connection with the USA is further highlighted by the fact that for much of Ireland's aviation history, Shannon Airport, and before that Foynes flying boat station, were the transatlantic gateways through which US tourists accessed Ireland. In fact, until 2005, all transatlantic flights into and out of Ireland were compelled to stop off in Shannon airport, as a result of a bilateral agreement signed in 1945 between the then Irish and US governments. The Open Skies agreement, signed between the USA and the EU in 2007, further opened up the market, and allowed carriers from both the USA and the EU to fly into and out of airports of their choice. By 2008, airlines operating between Ireland and the USA were free to fly directly to Dublin without the need to provide any services to Shannon. The net impact of these

changes to Ireland’s aviation policy has resulted in most US tourists now arriving and departing from Dublin airport. This created certain challenges regarding gaining access to US tourists in terms of this research, as will be discussed later.

1.4 The Research Process

Figure 1.1 presents a circular model of the research process (Veal, 2011). It starts with a review of the literature which informs the research aim and objectives, and ends with interpretation and writing up of the final thesis. Flick (2011) argues that a circular model research process is appropriate for qualitative research because all of the stages are interlinked. Sampling decisions are taken during the data collection process, and analysis begins immediately after the first interview or focus group takes place. A circular approach to the research also allows for refinement of the research objectives after the initial analysis of the data (Veal, 2011).



Figure 1.1 Circular Model of the Research Process

1.5 Research Aim and Objectives

The primary aim of this thesis is:

To investigate how tourists consume and thereby make sense of the places they visit through practicing photography as part of 'being a tourist'.

This aim is addressed in the context of US tourists who visit Ireland, and informs the following research objectives:

- **Research Objective One:** To examine destination image literature in order to understand the role image plays in the branding of places as tourist destinations.
- **Research Objective Two:** To understand how tourists form certain perceptions about places prior to visiting and how they make sense of them by being tourists upon visitation.
- **Research Objective Three:** To review sources of influence on Ireland's destination image since independence.
- **Research Objective Four:** To establish how images of Ireland are interpreted by US tourists in the context of their own cognitive construction of Ireland.
- **Research Objective Five:** To compare the photographs taken by US tourists while on holiday in Ireland with their preconceived ideas about Ireland prior to visiting.
- **Research Objective Six:** To investigate how the photographs taken by US tourists function as devices/tools by which their construction of Ireland can be explored.

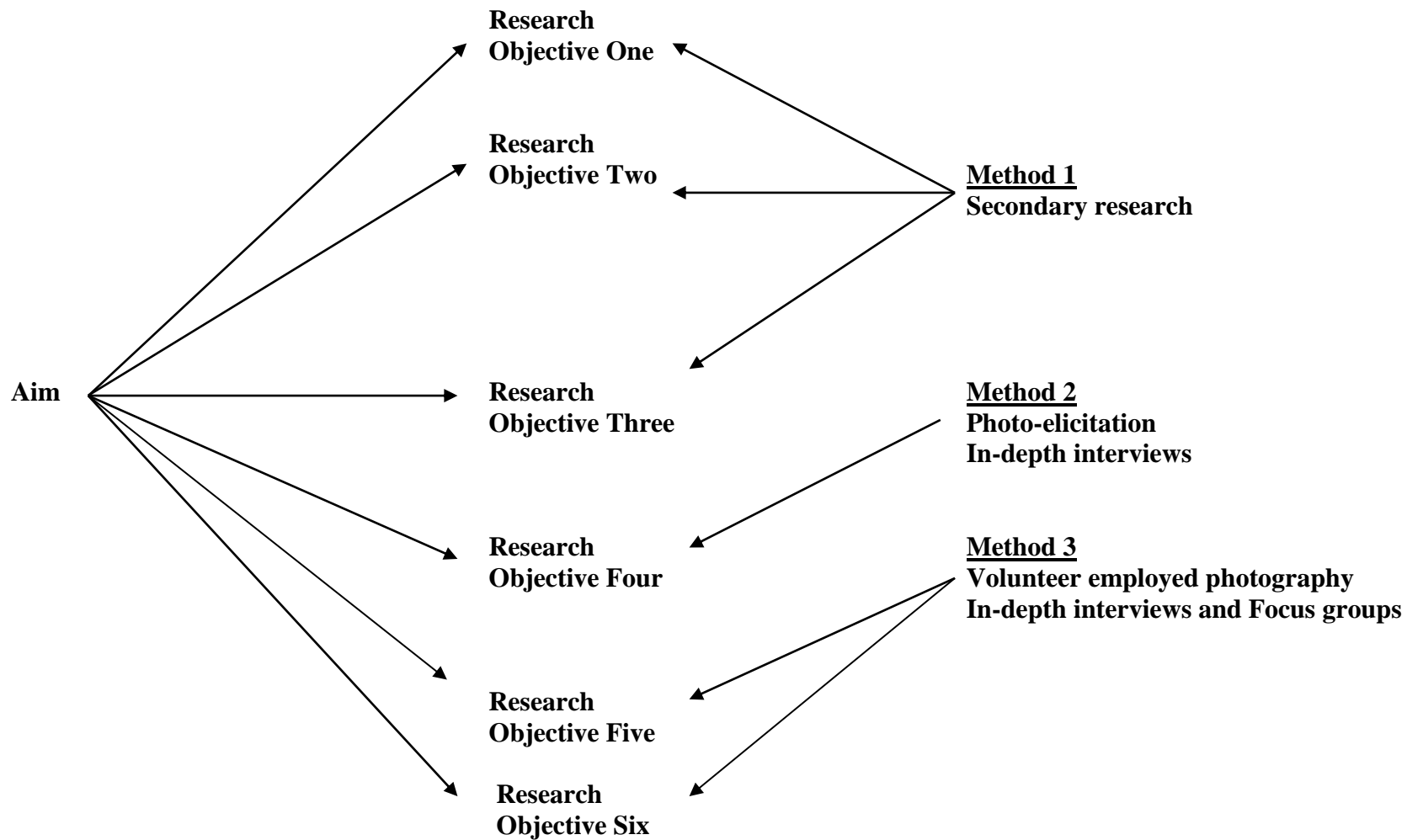


Figure 1.2 Aims and Objectives Linked to Methods

1.6 Structure of the Thesis

While this chapter has set the context for the research, Chapter Two, together with Chapter Three, presents the conceptual framework for the research aim and objectives identified in Chapter One. Chapter Two discusses the literature related to tourism places as brands, focusing in particular on destination images used to create emotional destination brands. Specifically, it discusses the various image formation agents that contribute to the construction of places as tourism destinations, and the impact such images have on the overall destination brand. Chapter Three reviews the evolving literature related to place and sense of place. It discusses the role played by perception in forming tourists' ideas about places. In forming perceptions about places from a variety of sources, tourists become seduced by place marketing. Once in the destination these perceptions evolve as the tourist engages with the destination. By taking photographs, tourists become co-producers of destinations through their embodied interaction with places, and become active agents in their own enchantment with place. Chapter Four is a contextual chapter which reviews Ireland's destination image over time, and addresses Research Objective Three. In particular, it draws attention to the various stakeholders in the Irish tourism industry that have played an influential role in constructing Ireland's destination image abroad. Where appropriate, plates depicting visual representations of Ireland which have been used in promotional material and popular culture are inserted into the chapter to provide a visual context. The use of these plates draws attention to the visual nature of destination image, and prepares the reader for the empirical data to follow.

Chapter Five presents the methodology devised to address the research aim and related objectives. It discusses the research approach selected to study the research aim, and

justifies the philosophical assumptions on which the research is based. This chapter also reviews the extant literature related to the use of visual methodologies in tourism research, and argues for their use in this research. The three-phased approach to gathering the empirical data is then discussed based on the pre- and post-visitation influences on destination image, as discussed in Chapters Two and Three. Phase 1 looks at the pre-visitation images and expectations the participants had of Ireland, while Phases Two and Three address the post-visitation experiences, and examine the photographs taken by the participants while holidaying in Ireland. Chapter Six presents the findings from the empirical research in the form of themes arising from the seven stages of analysis of the data collected in Phases One, Two and Three of the primary research. Chapter Seven then interprets these findings in the context of the literature. It presents empirical evidence and comprehensive understanding of how tourists make sense of, and become enchanted with places through their own photographic behaviour. This behaviour is conceptualised in the literature as tourists reifying (Robinson and Picard, 2009) their experiences of place. Chapter Eight discusses the empirical contributions arising from the research, as well as the epistemological considerations and implications for policy makers. It also provides some suggestions and directions for future research.

The next chapter, Chapter Two, forms the first of the literature chapters focusing attention on the role of destination branding in constructing places as tourism destinations. In particular, it draws attention to the use of emotional branding to create a personal dialogue between the destination and tourists and potential tourists, based on images used to promote the destination.

CHAPTER TWO

TOURISM PLACES AS BRANDS: CONSTRUCTING DESTINATION IMAGE

2.0 Introduction

Chapter Two, together with Chapter Three, presents the conceptual framework for the research. In the context of achieving the overall aim of this thesis, a number of research objectives were identified and presented in Chapter One. This chapter addresses **Research Objective One:** *To examine destination image literature in order to understand the role image plays in the branding of places as tourist destinations.* Specifically, this chapter focuses attention on the role of destination branding in constructing places as tourist destinations. This review is necessary in order to present how places are constructed as tourist destinations through images used to brand the destination. The literature on destination image is pervasive, and yet inherently relies on concepts and definitions that are, in some cases, thirty years old. Even so, these concepts and definitions are still relevant today for the way in which they conceptualise how images are used by destination marketers to shape peoples' ideas about places in tourism contexts.

Destination images are of interest to this research because they are used in a diverse range of media, and contribute significantly to the way in which stories and allegories are brought to life and made real for tourists and potential tourists (Larsen, 2006b). Images used to brand destinations present individuals with unique opportunities to personalise their relationship with places (Morgan et al. 2011), thereby altering the places' meaning for them.

Upon visitation, destination images become more relevant for tourists as they interact with the destination, leading to a reappraisal, or modification of the image (Morgan et al., 2011). This will be further explored in Chapter Three. Accordingly, Hosany and Gilbert (2010) observe that tourism as an experience is rich in emotions, in which tourists play an active role in producing and interpreting destination brands in terms of their emotional meaning. Destination marketers are always searching for a deeper understanding of how tourists imagine destinations in order to construct more desirable brand images (Hankinson, 2004). Hence, there remains a need for research that looks at the role images play in destination marketing from the tourists' perspective. Later in this thesis, Chapter Three explores these concepts of how tourists form and (re)form places through their photographic behaviour upon visitation. In taking photographs, tourists make emotional connections with the destination brands, and in doing so, form their own interpretations of place. This chapter discusses destination branding and destination image as conveyors of emotional meaning for tourists, which in turn contribute to their perceptions about places.

2.1 Branding

Kotler and Armstrong (2001: 301) define a brand as “a name, sign, symbol or design or a combination of these, that identifies the maker or the seller of a product or service”. Further support for this claim comes from Simões and Dibb (2001) who argue that there is more to branding as a concept than simply giving a product or service a name. Brands signify identity, and in this regard the concept has successfully been applied to destinations in terms of images used to promote the brand. Brand image is discussed in this thesis in terms of constructing places as destinations. Brand image can be defined as the perceptions about a brand that become associations held in the customers'

memory (Lane Keller, 2003). These associations come in many different guises, such as McDonald's association with cleanliness and value for money, or Mercedes-Benz's strong association with performance. Once established in the minds of customers and potential customers, these associations make up the brand's equity, which occurs when customers have high levels of awareness and familiarity with a brand. Having argued that brands play an important role in creating awareness about a product or service, Anholt (2006) observes that the true value of a brand ultimately resides in the mind of the consumer, in terms of the latter's ability to retrieve the brand image from memory given a relevant cue. A relevant cue can be a tagline, such as in the case of India, "*India, incredible India*", used in conjunction with images of India to communicate the brand promise (Lane Keller, 2003). Herein lies the justification for the approach adopted in this thesis of focusing on branding in terms of how places are constructed as tourist destinations, by virtue of the images used to market them.

2.2 Destination Branding

The previous section introduced branding as a concept, drawing attention to how brands are used to create awareness in customers and potential customers. This section considers the branding of destinations in terms of building relationships with tourists and potential tourists. Morgan et al. (2011) observe that destinations compete in attracting visitors, residents and business by branding the destination. Cooper and Hall (2008) point out that destination branding as a key concept in destination management is further compounded by the competitive nature of the tourism industry. New Zealand, for example, competes with approximately 90 other destinations for only 30 per cent of the worldwide market (Piggot, 2001). Consequently, Morgan and Pritchard (2002) argue that the ability of a destination to brand itself is crucial to its success in an

increasingly discerning market where product parity, substitutability and competition further complicate the task for destination marketers.

Branding destinations involves constructing a set of physical and socio-psychological attributes and beliefs associated with the destination, which then become known as the 'brand'. These physical and socio-psychological attributes of the brand are centred around two main promotional platforms - people and places (Gilmore, 2002; Hall and Williams, 2004). Many academics often question whether destinations can ever be brands (Morgan et al., 2011). This is because destinations as brands are an elusive and contested concept, and often misunderstood (Morgan et al., 2011). They contend that there is a need for more understanding in this area because destinations that possess genuine brand equity build emotional connections with tourists that shape their perceptions of the destination. Furthering this concept, Urry (2007) refers to destinations being constructed in ways that are saturated with emotions. He argues that these emotions form an integral part of how destinations are imagined, or, in terms of destination branding, how they are portrayed. All destinations consequently strive to appeal to tourists on an emotional level. Kolb (2006) defines this type of speciality branding as emotional branding.

2.2.1 Emotional Branding

Kolb (2006) observes that once destination marketers have created a basic brand concept for their destination, they may wish to consider more advanced branding models, such as emotional branding. Gobé (2010) points out that emotional branding is a tool for creating a personal dialogue with customers. He argues that customers today expect their brands to know them intimately, and be aware of their personal needs and

wants. However, many brands fail to pay attention to understanding their customers. One of the fundamental mistakes of destination marketers is only thinking about destination branding in terms of increasing market share, when, in effect, the brand should be about increasing mind and emotion share (Gobé, 2010). Furthermore, the success of a brand is about much more than the logo, or in the context of a destination, the images used to promote it. It is about using these images to build an emotional connection with tourists and potential tourists. It is in this context that emotional branding is of interest to this research.

Emotional branding is predicated on building the brand around a specific lifestyle (Kolb, 2006). A case in point is Mardi Gras in New Orleans in the USA, which is a good example of emotional branding in action. Described as a licentious emotional brand, it targets sexually liberated individuals. Famous for promiscuity and ritual disrobement (Shrum and Kilburn, 1996) in exchange for coloured beads, New Orleans' Mardi Gras attracts people in search of wild abandonment. Specifically, the purpose of emotional branding, therefore, is to cultivate a relationship with consumers who are attracted to a particular lifestyle (Kolb, 2006). In terms of destination marketing, Morgan et al. (2004) suggest that "brand winners are those places rich in emotional meaning which have great conversational values and high anticipation for tourists" (2004: 4). Ireland's destination brand is a case in point, in that it is recognised internationally as a country rich in culture and history, as well as for the perceived friendliness of the people (O'Leary and Deegan, 2005).

Assuming then that emotional branding succeeds in attracting tourists to visit, Morgan and Pritchard (2002) suggest that increasingly what differentiates one destination from

another is its capacity to develop a brand that has empathy with the destination's values. The battle to win tomorrow's tourist will be won not using figures and price, but hearts and minds. Winning the hearts and minds of potential tourists necessitates looking at the destination from their perspective. Such research will help us to better understand the personal relationships tourists form with destinations. Joyce (2007) observes that personal relationships between tourists and destinations are firmly based on expectations, and more importantly, how these expectations are formed. Similar to relationships between people, tourists like to know what to expect from a destination, and tend to set their expectations high. Images used to create the destination brand help in setting these expectations. Success occurs when the tourist experiences positive affirmation of their expectations. Meeting tourist expectations results in a bond being formed between the tourist and the destination brand based on trust, otherwise known as brand loyalty. Loyalty to a destination brand can include entire countries as brands.

2.2.2 Branding Countries - Telling a Story

Thus far this chapter has focused on branding, and in particular on promoting destinations as emotional brands. In this regard, Copeland (2011) argues that a brand is what sets you apart, distinguishes you from the competition, and builds loyalty or repeat visits in terms of destinations. Certainly this is the case in terms of how countries position themselves as destinations. O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy (2000) argue that conceptualising a country as a brand is commonly accepted in populist resonance. In terms of what makes a successful country brand, much can be learnt from general branding theory. Copeland observes that "good brands are suffused with attitude and they have soul" (Copeland, 2011: 185). Getting people to connect with the 'soul' of a country involves telling a unique story about the country, and communicating that story

as an integrated narrative that is illustrated using images and symbols of national identity.

Symbols of national identity, such as a nation's name, flag, music, food and dress all form part of a nation's brand architecture that is used to promote the country as a tourist destination (Tasci et al., 2007). Accordingly, symbols, stories and images used to brand a country should take potential tourists from a position of unawareness regarding the country being branded, and what it has to offer, to awareness (Yüksel and Akgül, 2007). Furthermore, Nickerson and Moisey (1999) point out that a state-wide branding strategy directly relates to the images potential tourists have of the country as a whole, as well as the kind of relationship they have with it. This view is also held by Gartner (1989). Certain countries are perceived as having particular attributes that transcend into daily life, and consequently the country of origin becomes a factor in the overall brand image of any products made in that country (Anholt, 2006). For example, some consumer brands are directly linked with national affiliations such as Swiss chocolate, Japanese electronic products, Italian sports cars and Irish culture, landscape and people. However, a country is not a product, in that it cannot be brought back home with the tourist. Conceptualising countries as brands in terms of their tourism product is a more difficult concept to market due to the inherent intangible components. Branding a country, therefore, might be explained in terms of a multitude of different elements that reflect the country and how it is perceived abroad (Anholt, 2006). It includes the people who inhabit a fixed territory, share key elements of daily life and a common culture.

Despite the acknowledged benefits of constructing and maintaining countries as strong and assured tourism destination brands, sometimes countries fail in their attempts to do so. Haiti is an example of a country that has struggled in terms of its perceived image due to its association with violence and voodoo (Avraham and Ketter, 2013).

Prebensen (2007) proffers some possible reasons for this. There are numerous factors that obstruct the process of branding a country. Failure to select the right attributes on which to build the brand image is a case in point. Secondly, the brand image selected may not please all stakeholders, such as balancing attracting foreign direct investment against images of untamed landscapes. Finally, it is often necessary to pool resources in branding projects because individual tourist attractions, or even destinations, are too small to create critical mass. This may result in trade-offs having to be made regarding which regions within the country to focus the marketing efforts on (Prebensen, 2007). Accordingly, she argues the starting point in branding a country must be a fundamental understanding of the targeted tourists' image of the destination. Only then can the right image be formulated to give meaning and saliency to the brand (Freire, 2009). Invariably, an understanding of image as a concept, and the role image plays in modern society, is also necessary for successful branding.

2.3 Image and the Visual Domain

Having discussed branding as a concept in terms of how it is used to brand destinations or countries, this chapter argues that image plays a pivotal role in this process. Many battles for brands take place in the visual domain (Schroeder, 2006). Williams and Newton (2009) argue that one only needs to stop and take a look around the modern world in which we live to realise the pervasive role image plays in our daily lives. To

further illustrate the power of images, it is estimated “that the average American views between 3,000 and 4,000 media-generated images daily” (Williams and Newton, 2009: 4). Indeed, Morgan (2004) points out that people have been interpreting and representing the world in which they live visually for over nine thousand years. Urry and Larsen’s (2011) hypothesis that vision is central to the tourism experience in terms of what they describe as the tourist gaze is a highly-contested idea. They contend that this “visual sense” allows tourists to “take possession” of scenes and the environment (Urry and Larsen, 2011: 158). However, as will be discussed in Chapter Three, the gaze has moved on to include the body. Schroeder (2006) argues that studying images allows researchers to gain a more in-depth (yet never complete) understanding of how images embody and reflect the world in which we live. Indeed, imagery in the context of how people become aware of places they visit can take many forms; images can be visual in nature in the form of photographs and art, or can be vocal as narrated in plays, music and poetry, as will be discussed in Chapter Four. Essentially, this thesis argues that the images used by destination marketers, together with non-tourism related images become a key component of the destination brand, thereby constructing tourism places in the minds of tourists and potential tourists. Having argued that image lies at the heart of the lived experience, this thesis now considers the role of destination images in the branding of places.

2.4 Destination Image - Bringing Places to Life

It is generally accepted that to market a place as a destination, the place must first be constructed in the minds of potential tourists, and then brought to life using imagery (Garrod, 2009). The purpose of destination branding, as already discussed, is to deliberately evoke a consistent set of emotions about a destination, and in doing so, to

foster recognition of the destination brand. Fostering such recognition regarding place requires destination marketers to connect the destination's emotional strategy to its visual identity (Boatwright and Cagan, 2010). In this regard, the branding of places through images is now a well-practiced and diffuse phenomenon (Hankinson, 2004). Branding places using images works because images inspire, motivate and capture the cultural consumption of destinations. Indeed, since its emergence as a concept in the 1970s, destination image has become one of the most pervasive tools used in the marketing of tourist destinations (Shani and Wang, 2011). This is evidenced by the variety and scope of the research related to destination image, as highlighted by Pike's (2002) review of 142 different articles looking at destination image. Used as part of the overall branding strategy for a destination, images perform important functions, purveying messages about the destination, plus stimulating emotional reactions from people. This is because destinations are prone to iconographic interpretation (making products saleable by imbuing them with desirable images), thereby contextualising them as constructs of both understanding and sense-making (Sternberg, 1997). Images are also important influencers of decision making in that they facilitate the vicarious consumption of destinations by tourists who 'imagine being there' simply by looking at images of the destination (Jenkins, 1999; Beeton, 2005).

2.4.1 Using Photographs as Visual Cues in Destination Marketing

Photographic images are particularly suited to destination marketing by providing visual cues for potential tourists to imagine what the destination may be like. Above all, to photograph is to confer importance and meaning on the chosen subject (Sontag, 2002). To photograph is also to connect emotionally with the subject matter within the frame of the camera. Photography as a medium represents a useful tool for manipulating

destination imagery by acting as a conduit for the construction and projection of what is ultimately viewed by the tourist in promotional material. Albers and James (1988) argue that what the potential tourist sees as replication of a real and credible source of information can be a subjectively-created composition with the intention of branding the destination and attracting tourists. In other words, images used to brand destinations are not always a true reflection of what the tourist may end up experiencing upon visitation. This is particularly so regarding photographs, because people perceive that 'the camera never lies'. Consequently, people are always disappointed when the camera is 'found out' telling a lie, when it is revealed that a picture was 'set up', or manipulated on a computer (Badger, 2007). Herein lies a problem for destination marketers of how to successfully brand a destination, and build brand equity using photographs, when photographic images from non-tourism sources, such as the media, might project an entirely different, albeit more realistic view of the destination (Gartner, 1993; Morgan, Pritchard and Piggott, 2002).

Specifically, Govers et al. (2007) point out that secondary, or non-tourism related sources of information, have a direct impact on generating pre-visitiation images of the destination. This is of paramount importance in our dis-intermediated world which is dominated by social media. For example, Facebook and Pinterest allow users to share photographs and film that they take of places with their circle of friends, which in turn, shape the destination for other people who have yet to visit. Destination images accordingly function as the vehicles by which prospective tourists are virtually transported to a destination: whilst looking at images in brochures and other media, they are assessing them against their preconceived ideas about the destination (Pearce, 1982). Defining destination image in terms of the saliency of the different types of

images tourists are exposed to, and the influences on those images, is consequently a necessary part of understanding destination branding.

2.4.2 Defining Destination Image

Shani and Wang (2011) state that a wide variety of definitions for destination image have emerged since it was first posited as a term back in the early 1970s. Gunn (1972) is accredited as a pioneer in forming a working definition of destination image, and her research is still considered to be one of the seminal works today. Indeed, a number of common themes have emerged from the various approaches to defining image, and they are presented in chronological order in Table 2.1. These various definitions suggest that image is formed/created/constructed in the minds of tourists, based on perceptions they have about a destination, and are, therefore, intangible.

Author	Year	Definition
Gunn	1972	Images are either formed organically or induced
Hunt	1975	Images are perceptions held by potential visitors about a destination
Lawson and Baud-Bovy	1977	Images are expressions of all objective knowledge, imagination, impression, prejudices and emotional thought an individual or group might have of a particular destination
Goodrich	1978	Images generate the right message for a destination and can increase the likelihood of potential visitation
Crompton	1979	Images are the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person has of a destination
Phelps	1986	Impressions or primary or secondary perceptions of a place
Gartner and Hunt	1987	Impression that an individual holds...about a state in which they do not reside
Pearce	1988	The term 'image' implies a search of the long-term memory for scenes and symbols, panoramas and people
Richardson and Crompton	1988	Perceptions of vacation attributes
Gartner	1989	Underlying concept which when formed correctly will force a destination into a traveller's mind
Calantone, Bennetto and Bojanic	1989	Tourists' perceptions of a tourist destination
Woodside and Lyonski	1989	Images form associations, create an awareness and help to categorise possible choices of destinations for tourists
Reilly	1990	Not any one individual trait, but rather the total impression that an entity makes
Um and Crompton	1990	A gestalt or holistic construct
Gilmore	2002	Evoke a vision that everyone associated with the destination can relate to

Table 2.1 Definitions of Destination Image

Sources: (Echtner and Ritchie, 1991; Embacher and Buttle, 1989; Ashworth and Goodall, 1990; Ahmed, 1991; Kotler et al., 1993)

Upon reviewing the definitions presented in Table 2.1, Gunn's (1972) contention that images are either formed organically or induced is of particular relevance to this thesis. This is because it draws attention to the various sources that influence how tourists come to know about places as destinations. In many cases images are not produced with the explicit intention of promoting tourism or branding a destination. Places are often constructed in literature, the arts, music and popular culture, as will be discussed in an Irish context in Chapter Four. This is because people read books, visit art galleries, listen to music and engage with popular culture, thereby forming certain ideas about what places might be like to visit.

Crompton (1979a) offers insights into the role played by people in destination image formation. He defines destination image as “the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person has of a destination” (1979a: 18). Most of the research that has looked at the beliefs and ideas tourists have of destinations has focused on lists of attributes of the destination, and fails to acknowledge the more holistic impressions and emotional connections people form of, and with, destinations (Echtner and Ritchie, 1991).

Lawson and Baud-Bovy (1977) observed the importance of the holistic component of destination image. Their definition considers the personal images and the stereotypical images shared by all stakeholders associated with a destination’s image. They state that tourist destination images: “...are expressions of all objective knowledge, imagination, impression, prejudices and emotional thought an individual or group might have of a particular destination” (Lawson and Baud-Bovy, 1977: 10). Consequently, their definition is a more all-encompassing place from which to start exploring tourist destination image.

Conceptualising destination image as a holistic construct is further supported in the literature by Um and Crompton (1990). They argue that destination image is a gestalt or holistic construct that has many influences. The next section will discuss these influences in order to better understand how images are formed, and from what sources.

2.5 Influences on Destination Image

Govers and Kumar (2007) and Shani and Wang (2011) observe that images are shaped in people’s minds by numerous influences, including visiting. On the other hand, tourists who have never visited a destination or thought of doing so, can also possess images of the destination (Leisen, 2001). In order to better understand how tourists imagine places as tourist destinations it is necessary to examine how these images are

first formed, and by what means. This thesis focuses on two main sources of influence - popular culture and destination marketing. Popular culture in the form of film (Beeton, 2005; O'Connor et al., 2008), television (Smith et al., 2010), magazines, newspapers, the arts and social media inform people's image of places. Likewise, destination marketing uses images produced by destination marketing organisations which appear in brochures (Quinn, 1998; Jenkins, 2000), guidebooks (Lew, 1991), destination advertisements on television and travel programmes, websites dedicated to sell the destination (Cooper and Hall, 2008) and postcards (Pritchard and Morgan, 2003). The argument for such an approach is that tourists rely on mental representations to help them imagine what it might be like to visit a destination. Studying these mental representations in order to unravel, and thereby explain, the images tourists have of a particular place poses certain challenges for researchers due to the complexity of destination image formation. The literature on destination image acknowledges this complexity, as well as the inherent difficulties destination marketers encounter in trying to operationalise destination image, as outlined by Echtner and Ritchie (1991). While recognising the work done by Echtner and Ritchie (1991), more research is required that acknowledges how images used to position the destination brand (Hankinson, 2004) are interpreted by, and emotionally relevant to tourists. Figure 2.1 provides a conceptual framework from which to begin studying destination image, and the various influences on destination image.

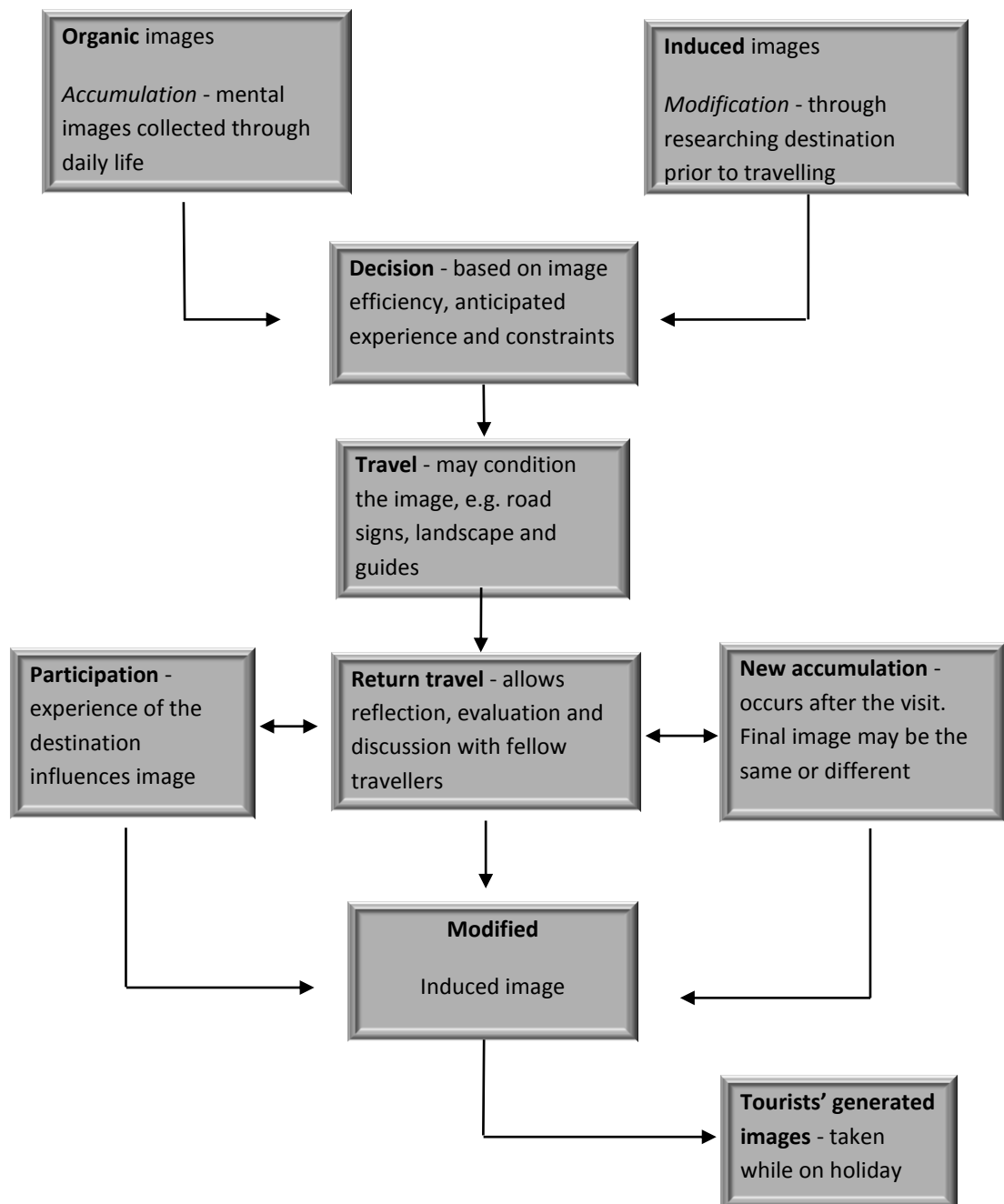


Figure 2.1 Organic/Induced Influences on Image

Source: (Author, after Gunn 1972: 120)

According to Gunn (1972), tourists are exposed to a variety of images related to the destination at different stages in the decision-making process. This pattern of influence in terms of how images are formed is also supported by Echtner and Ritchie (1991, 1993). They argue that these components can be contextualised as functional or tangible attributes (induced imagery), or psychological or intangible (organic imagery).

Consequently, they relate to the more holistic characteristics of the destination as perceived by the tourist. The psychological or intangible characteristics of destinations that inform the tourist's imagined image are of interest to this thesis because they relate to emotional brands. Also of interest is how images associated with destinations are perceived by potential tourists, in terms of their emotional connections with places pre-visitation and post-visitation, as will be discussed in Chapter Three,. This is because the image tourists have of destinations changes after visitation (Echtner and Ritchie, 1991). Therefore, they argue it is better to separate images held by people who have yet to visit the destination, from those who have visited. Separating the pre-visitation and post-visitation images of tourists, such as the approach adopted by the three-phased approach to this research, allows for a better understanding of how visitation impacts on tourists' images of place. It also helps to identify the sources of influence on their pre-visitation images of place, whether organic or induced. However, in preparation for the findings, which will be discussed in Chapter Six, it is necessary to first define what is meant by organic and induced influences.

2.5.1 Organic Influences

Organic images are formed from sources not directly associated with tourism, or originate from daily life, as already identified in Figure 2.1. Specifically, news stories, documentaries, movies and other outwardly-unbiased sources of information form autonomous images (Gartner, 1993), as presented in Table 2.2. Tasci and Gartner (2007) advance our understanding of these autonomous images further by drawing attention to 'autonomous image formation agents' (2007: 414). Given that they are not produced by tourism bodies or with the purpose of stimulating tourism, they are perceived by tourists as more believable (Gartner, 1993; Sussmann and Ünel, 1999).

Table 2.2 clearly identifies that from a credibility and market-penetration point of view, autonomous image formation agents are the most important.

Image Change Agent	Credibility	Market Penetration	Destination Cost
Overt Included i Traditional forms of advertising (e.g. brochures, TV radio, print, billboards, etc.)	Low	High	High
Overt Included ii Information received from tour operators, wholesalers	Medium	Medium	Indirect
Covert Included i Second party endorsement of products via traditional forms of advertising	Low/Medium	High	High
Covert Included ii Second party endorsement through apparently unbiased reports (e.g. newspaper travel section articles)	Medium	Medium	Medium
Autonomous News and popular culture: documentaries, reports, news stories, movies, television programmes	High	Medium/High	Indirect
Unsolicited Organic Unsolicited information received from friends and relatives	Medium	Low	Indirect
Solicited Organic Solicited information received from friends and relatives	High	Low	Indirect
Organic Actual visitation	High	...	Indirect

Table 2.2 Gartner's Typology of Eight Separate Image Formation Agents

Source: (Gartner, 1993: 210)

Hence, Gartner's (1993) typology is still relevant for today's destination marketers, because it highlights which information tourists are most likely to use and rely on in terms of the destinations they may wish to visit.

2.5.2 Induced or Included Influences

On the other hand, induced or included destination images originate from the deliberate construction of imagery in the form of advertising projected in brochures, travel magazines, on television and over the internet by destination marketers (Sussmann and Ünel, 1999; Chen and Hsu, 2000; Chen and Kerstetter, 1999; Echtner and Ritchie, 1991; Gartner, 1989, 1993; Lubbe, 1998; MacKay and Fesenmaier, 1997; and Milman and Pizam, 1995). These images are used to brand places as tourism destinations, and in today's technologically-advanced world, they can be viewed by potential tourists on the move using their smart phones, iPads, and other such devices. Hence, images used in this manner to convey messages about the destination must be clear, up to date and mean something on an emotional level, or the tourist will be less likely to visit (Prentice and Andersen, 2000). Consequently, induced image formation agents may do more harm than good to the overall image of a destination if they contrive to create unrealistic expectations for potential visitors. This is because destination images perform many important functions in destination marketing. Firstly, destinations with strong, positive and recognisable images are more likely to be selected by tourists (Hunt, 1975; Goodrich, 1978a; Pearce, 1982; Woodside and Lysonski, 1989; Ross, 1993). Secondly, destination image also contributes to the images tourists take away in their mind post-visitation (Chon, 1990; O'Leary, 2001; Beerli and Martin, 2004).

Having argued that destination image has a variety of sources and influences, Stabler (1988) offers a framework of destination image formation that brings together supply factors and consumer factors. It clearly illustrates the role image plays in marketing places. Stabler's framework also draws attention to the role of the destination marketer in controlling destination image, and is therefore important for two reasons. Firstly,

information transmitted from the supplier (the destination) through marketing the destination's unique attributes in the media influences how tourists imagine the destination.

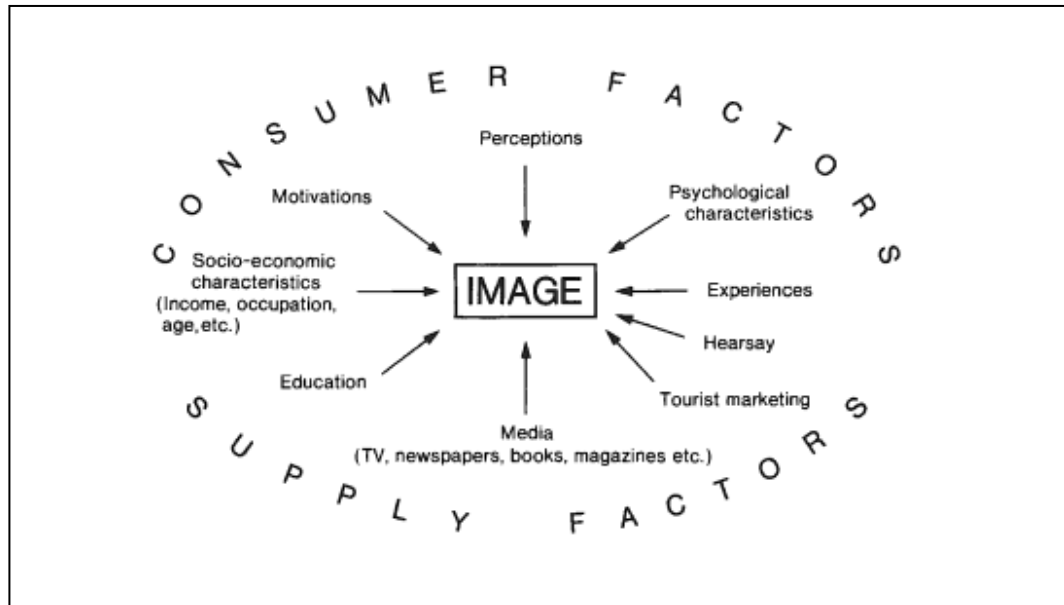


Figure 2.2 Factors Influencing the Formation of Destination Image

Source: (Stabler, 1988)

Secondly, previous experience by tourists, shared through word of mouth (hearsay), also contributes to peoples' perceptions of destination image (Stabler, 1988). Whereas all of the consumer and supply-based factors represented in Figure 2.2 create the destination's image, destination marketers "give it focus" (Stabler, 1988: 144). In other words, someone ultimately acts to co-ordinate and give meaning to the overall message regarding the destination and the images used to construct it.

2.5.3 Summary of Organic and Induced Images

In terms of how both types of images inform destination image, Echtner and Ritchie's (1991) common/unique dimension offers the most in contributing to our understanding

of how destination images are formed and (re)formed. Building upon Gunn's (1972) model of organic and induced image formation agents, they include the truly unique features or what they term as the "aura" of the destination (Echtner and Ritchie, 1991). Destination image and how it is constructed can be conceptualised in terms of the various influences that contribute to image construction. Some of these influences are controlled by destination marketers in the form of induced images used to brand the destination. Other influences on destination image are outside of their control. More importantly, in terms of how these organic images contribute to the imagined view tourists have of destinations, it is their perceived credibility that is of interest to this research. The broader view of destination image, such as that proposed by Echtner and Ritchie (1991), pays equal attention to the more holistic components of destination image. It justifies the approach taken by this research in focusing on how tourists imagine places as destinations. This approach breaks away from the more traditional list of destination attributes which fail to consider the tourist, and how they perceive the destination based on images they have been exposed to about the destination.

Consequently, Gunn's (1972) framework (Figure 2.1) is useful in terms of explaining how images inform tourists' pre-visit perceptions of destinations, leading to modified images after visiting. This is an important concept in the context of this research, for it implies that experiencing a destination somehow modifies or changes the imagined pre-visitation view of the tourist. There is general support for this theory in the findings of a number of studies which show that the images held by return visitors tend to be rooted in reality (Pearce, 1982; Chon, 1990). However, Phelps (1986) found that images of a destination have the potential to fade over time. Chapter Three will begin by

discussing how destination image is perceived by tourists as part of the overall destination brand, thereby contributing to their overall sense of place.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has conceptualised tourist places as brands that are constructed to make an emotional connection with tourists and potential tourists. Images play a pivotal role in visually representing these tourist places. Used by destination marketers for their ability to connect emotionally with people, images form an essential part of a destination's brand (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Jenkins, 1999). This is because images can imbue meaning about the destination (Shih-Shuo, Chen and Liu, 2012).

This chapter has highlighted two types of destination imagery - induced and organic. Induced destination images are highly structured and originate from the destination brand, whereas organic images of the destination are influenced by a variety of sources outside of the control of destination marketing organisations. Both contribute to how tourists imagine places as tourist destinations, as will become apparent in Chapter Six in terms of how American tourists imagine Ireland.

Destination branding, as conceptualised in this chapter, is a way of making sense of places as potential tourist destinations. In essence, destination brands and the images used to promote them are but a constructed version of reality (Cooper and Hall, 2008). Consequently, destination image is influenced by the many induced and organic images received and processed by the tourist (Cooper and Hall, 2008). Cooper and Hall (2008) argue that the formation of a destination's image as part of an overall brand strategy is different from other products in that it is the tourists who ultimately make sense of

destination images by selecting different sources of information. Once tourists arrive in a destination, this sense-making continues, constructing the kinds of places that matter to them, and taking from the destination the types of authentic meaning that resonate with them emotionally. The process by which tourists make sense of the places they visit will form the focus for the next chapter, Chapter Three.

CHAPTER THREE

DESTINATION PLACES: TOURISTS AND THEIR SENSE- MAKING

3.0 Introduction

Chapter Two focused on image formation in terms of the emotional branding which is used to influence how tourists think about, visualise, imagine and make sense of places. This chapter examines the ways in which tourists reinterpret these images through the act of being a tourist, and addresses research objective two.

- **Research Objective Two:** *To understand how tourists form certain perceptions about places prior to visiting and how they make sense of them by being tourists upon visitation*

The central argument percolating through this chapter is that tourists become enchanted with place. Moreover, through performing tourism by taking photographs as part of being a tourist, their enchantment with place continues. In terms of what tourists take photographs of while on holiday, one school of thought suggests that tourists move through a hermeneutic circle of representation, taking photographs of iconic images used to market the destination (Hall, 1997). Hence the performative nature of the tourists' experience of place is also of interest here. However, before moving on to discuss enchantment and how tourists play an active role in their own enchantment, it is necessary to explore place perception. This is necessary because of the generally-accepted view that destination image is affected by perceptions, attitudes and stereotypes that potential tourists form about destinations, and the people who live there

(Moufakkir, 2008). Once formed, tourists' perceptions of places influence the way in which they interpret images used to brand destinations. Destination images therefore, help tourists to make sense of places before they have the opportunity to experience the destination for themselves.

Once in the destination, this 'sense-making' continues whereby tourists photograph, or ignore, various scenes and people they encounter. Consequently, it is through taking photographs that tourists construct an idea of place that is meaningful for them. Further support for this view comes from Rakić and Chambers (2012) who observe that tourists not only consume the places they visit, but they also play a role in their construction and subsequent meaning. Here, particular attention is paid to how tourists confer meaning on destinations and the people who live in them, through the embodied performance of photography.

3.1 Perceptions of Place

Chapter Two discussed the many influences on the image formation process, focusing in particular, on induced and organic sources of destination image. While recognising the role played by destination image in constructing places, equal attention must be given to how these images are then perceived by tourists (Moufakkir, 2008). Kozak and Baloglu (2011) observe that destination image can be both positive and negative. Equally, tourists' perceptions of these images can also be positive and negative and how they interpret them can influence a destination's image (Reisinger and Turner, 2012). Image perception therefore, is important because it shapes the way in which people relate to the world around them and the places they visit (Moutinho, 1987).

Tasci and Gartner (2007) draw attention to the process through which tourists interpret destination images and argue that there can be a vast difference between the image

being projected and how it is received. Further support for this claim comes from Keaveney and Hunt (1992) who point out that tourists react differently to information concerning destinations. If the information relating to the destination is relevant to the tourist's immediate travel plans, it will trigger 'additional information processing' that will be filed away in their memory (Tasci and Gartner, 2007: 415). Through the process of collecting information about destinations tourists form an initial image, or 'mental prototype', of what the place might be like (Tapachai and Waryszak, 2000). By forming an initial image of the destination, tourists become more familiar with it as a place.

Prentice and Andersen (2000) contextualise the concept of 'familiarity' in terms of how tourists perceive destinations. There are many ways in which tourists become familiar with and indeed seduced by destination brands, such as directly, in the form of marketing, or indirectly through a variety of other sources, as discussed in Chapter Two. For example, Belk et al. (2003) argue that consumers allow themselves to be seduced into buying different products and services by television watching, magazine reading and internet surfing, as well as word of mouth conversations. Conceptualising consumers in this way, as agents who play an active role in their own seduction with brands, positions them as co-creators of brands as opposed to just passive receivers. A similar concept can be applied to tourists and how they become seduced by places.

As individuals, people possess the capacity to conjure up images of places not visited. Further supporting this claim, Tuan (1975) makes reference to the ability of all individuals to imagine "in their mind's eye" places that they have never seen or experienced before. He explains this concept further by offering a hypothetical

example of a Scottish farmer imagining what California might be like to visit. The farmer is able to imagine California as a destination, because he may have read something about it, watched a programme on television about it, or heard California described in a poem or a song. These influences combine to form an image in the mind of the farmer as to what California is like as a place. In other words, perceptions lead to the formation of an imagined view of place. In this regard, it is interesting to reflect further upon Tuan's (1975) hypothesis that an imagined destination image is a phenomenon created in the mind of the tourist in the absence of being physically present there, in order to help make sense of what it might be like. Kosslyn (1980) defines imagined images as 'surface representations', which are to some degree pictorial in nature in that they depict a person, object or scene in active memory. Once formed, these images are committed to long-term memory, continuing the sense-making process and becoming 'deep representations' filed away in the mind (Kosslyn, 1980). These deep representations and their associated emotions can prompt feelings of nostalgia whereby images trigger nostalgic remembrances of destinations (Davis, 1973). Equally, deeply felt emotions regarding a yet to be visited place can trigger the phenomenon of "longing for a culturally remembered past that may have occurred before one's birth and hence, has not been experienced personally" (Caton and Santos 2007: 372). Caton's and Santos (2007) hypothesis on longing aligns somewhat with Bennett's (2001) theory of enchantment which has not been applied to tourism to any great degree. The significance of Bennett's theory of enchantment stems from the potential insights it affords researchers in explaining how tourists perceive places and play an active role in their own seduction with place.

3.1.1 Enchantment and Place

Bennett (2001) tells us that enchantment can mean different things to different people: attachment, surprise and wonder, the suspension of time and bodily movement, as well as elements of fear. Images play a pivotal role in prompting such longing, acting as mental maps to help navigate looking back in time. The literature tells us that a sense of place is personal to each tourist (Cross, 2001). A similar concept has been identified in consumer behaviour called “self-enchantment” (Belk et al., 2003: 347). They argue that consumer desire relies directly on the individual’s imagination. Prior research suggests that consumers are willing participants in their own enchantment and that in seeking out nostalgic ideas of places, they allow themselves to be seduced by marketers as mentioned previously (Belk et al., 2003).

Enchantment can occur in villages, stores, dealerships, offices, boardrooms and on the internet (Kawasaki, 2011). This is because enchantment requires us to engage with our imaginations as opposed to our reality. Support for this hypothesis comes from Tymieniecka (2000) who states that:

“The reality within which we dwell does not offer us its final explanation, it is not self-explanatory. The seemingly smooth surfaces of reality are furrowed with crevices that open further and further. Following them falls short of quenching the thirst of our heart for fulfilment”

(Tymieniecka, 2000: 3)

Tymieniecka’s (2000) theory of “aesthetic enchantment” which she states draws on all of the cognitive desires of our souls, has potential to further elucidate tourists’ place meaning and sense-making. There has been much scholarship and indeed debate with regards to what tourists desire when they go on holidays. One point of view put forward in the 1960s and 1970s conceptualises the modern tourist experience as trivial

and superficial (see Boorstin, 1964; Barthes, 1972; Turner and Ash, 1975). An opposing view posited by MacCannell (1973) argues that tourists seek meaningful and authentic experiences. However, these attempts to in some way homogenise the tourist experience were subsequently challenged by Cohen in 1979 in his phenomenology of tourist experiences. He argues that different kinds of people may desire different modes of tourist experience (Cohen, 1979: 180).

Furthering the debate Uriely (1997: 983) draws attention to what he describes as “contemporary trends” in tourism. These are characterised by an increase in niche and specialised travel agencies, a growing attraction of nostalgia, the flourishing of nature based tourism and an increase in simulated tourism experiences. He labels all of these as “postmodern tourism” (Uriely, 1997: 180). The sociological narratives of postmodern tourism present two theoretical frameworks – “simulation” and the “other” (Munt, 1994). Simulation refers to hyper-real experiences such that theme parks and other contrived tourist attractions offer and categorises them as typical postmodern environments (Baudrillard, 1983; Eco, 1986; Featherstone, 1991; Gottiner, 1995; Lash and Urry, 1994; Pretes, 1995). Conceptualisations of the “other” and the postmodern tourist signify a search for the “real” and point to the increasing attraction of the “natural” and landscapes as postmodern expressions (Barrett, 1989; Munt, 1994; Urry, 1990). Uriely (1997) contends that the distinction between “simulation” and the “other” dimensions of postmodern tourism mirrors the divergence of opinion characteristic of earlier ideas of modern tourism. In essence, while simulation-based postmodern tourism traces Boorstin’s 1964 conceptualisation of pseudo-events, the ‘other’ in postmodern tourism follows MacCannell’s hypothesis regarding the search for authenticity (Uriely, 1997). Munt’s (1994) article on the other and postmodern

tourism acknowledges the validity of both sides of the postmodern tourism divide and departs from the earlier tendency to homogenise the tourist experience. Instead, postmodern tourism is characterised as involving a multiplicity of tourist motivations, experiences and environments (Uriely, 1997).

Keeping in mind the multiplicity of reasons why tourists go on holidays, Bennett's (2001) theory of enchantment suggests that for some tourists, they embark on a quest for truth and ultimate fulfilment which is sometimes lacking in their daily lives. Bennett (2001) defines this as a longing for disruption. In seeking enchantment people are looking to be disrupted from their daily life experiences back to a time when life was simpler. Enchantment can therefore be further conceptualised, as an aura or spell that comes over us relating to times and places we may never have visited or experienced: a fantasy world saturated in emotions and what Moore (1997) defines as "moments of transporting charm" (1997: ix). These "moments of transporting charm" align somewhat with feelings of nostalgia as discussed earlier. A problem identified with nostalgia and place image is that "nostalgic images blur distinctions and remove from the image the context of historic reality" (Vesey and Dimanche, 2003: 56). An example might be recalling summers from times past as being warmer, when in fact this may not have been the case. In addition, this practice could also be described as looking at the world through rose-tinted glasses or having a romanticised view of place. Destination marketers profit from selling romanticised images of place to tourists (Vesey and Dimanche, 2003). A central task of this thesis consequently, is to uncover how tourists visualise, think about or imagine places as tourism destinations (Tasci et al., 2007).

3.1.2 Naïve Images of Place

Thus far, this chapter has drawn attention to the way tourists perceive places as destinations and build an imagined view of what they might be like to visit in order to make sense of them. In doing so they become enchanted with place. In some cases these perceptions become naïve images that tourists and potential tourists have about places. Snepenger et al. (1990) define these tourists as destination-naïve tourists. The literature on this category of tourist is underdeveloped with few, if any, researchers focusing specific attention on the phenomenon of destination-naïve imagery. However, despite the apparent paucity of literature regarding the naïve images held by tourists about places they may visit, academics are in agreement that these images are important in terms of constructing an overall picture in the minds of tourists as to what a destination might be like. They are also in agreement as to how tourists form such naïve images of place.

Tourists form naïve images from the way in which destinations are marketed, as well as from how destinations are depicted in popular culture such as film. This theme is further explored in Chapter Four. Indeed, Chakraborty and Chakravarti (2008) argue that naïve images of place can also be perpetuated by tourist-entrepreneurs and locals who construct places for what they describe as gullible tourists. Over time, these naïve images become part of the global narrative associated with the destination and a source of familiarity and sense-making for the tourist. Consequently, in terms of how places are perceived by destination-naïve tourists, naïve images can form the basis of their decision to travel. For example, in research carried out by Shelby and Morgan (1996) they observed that naïve images dominated the perceptions of people who had not previously visited Barry Island, a coastal holiday resort in Wales. Consequently, they

were making sense of Barry Island based on their own naïve images of what it might be like as a place to visit.

However, Prentice and Andersen (2000) state that familiarity in the form of perceptions and naïve images people have about places must not be substituted for actual visitation. While recognising that some tourism enterprises and local people capitalise on gullible tourists and their naïve images of place, visitation still has the potential to transform naïve perceptions of place into a modified, more realistic interpretation. Further support for this claim comes from Shelby and Morgan (1996) who observed that there is a difference between the naïve images tourists have of places and their re-evaluated images after visitation. Having discussed the influence naïve destination images have on how tourists imagine places, attention is also drawn to tourists' stereotypical images of places and the people who live in them (Jenkins, 2000; Leisen, 2001; Echtner and Ritchie, 2003). At this point a distinction is made between naïve images tourists may have of places and stereotypical images. In the context of the aforementioned discussion on naïve images the term naïve suggests a gullibility with respect to how tourists imagine places or the people who live there, whereas a stereotypical image relates more as will be discussed to accepted iconic destination imagery.

3.1.3 Stereotypical Images of Place

Whittaker (2009: 125) argues that “photographic images of racial stereotypes” have endured through generations of change in racial politics and tourism. Specifically, stereotypical images have become the essence of being Indian, Japanese, Inuit, Welsh, Aboriginal or in the context of this research Irish. It is in this context that image stereotypes are discussed here. The romanticisation of places as destinations based on

stereotypical associations is not a new phenomenon; this is because stereotypes are easily accessed from memory (Pike, 2004). Kotler and Gertner (2002) suggest that:

“In most cases country images are in fact stereotypes, extreme simplifications of the reality that are not necessarily accurate. They might be dated, based on exceptions rather than patterns, on impression rather than on facts, but are none the less pervasive”

(Kotler and Gertner, 2002: 251)

Encouraging positive stereotypes and avoiding negative ones is consequently a key concern for destination marketers. To begin, Pike (2004) argues that stereotypes can occur where there is a pervasive uniform perception regarding a place and the people who inhabit it. In terms of their use, Reisinger (2009) argues that within tourism, stereotypes are used to describe tourists and locals. Specifically, stereotypes often form the core of how tourists and locals imagine and make sense of each other (Reisinger and Turner, 2012). Further support for this claim comes from Moufakkir (2008) who states that invariably, people hold stereotypes about other people. However, stereotypes evolve over time as individuals compartmentalise visual and textual imagery to which they are exposed. These stereotypes then act as a reference point through which they view the world (Papadopoulos and Heslop, 2002).

Previous research which looked at the stereotypical images tourists have of destinations indicated that first-hand experience of a destination results in a reduction in stereotyping (Mishler, 1965, Crompton, 1979; Fakeye and Crompton, 1991; Alhemound and Armstrong, 1996; Selby and Morgan, 1996; MacKay and Fesenmaier, 1997). However, more recent research by Prentice and Andersen (2003) suggests that whereas first timers (tourists on their first visit) were influenced by stereotypical impressions, stereotypical images were also found to remain even among repeat visitors. Repeat

visiting may lead to a more nuanced stereotypical image rather than to the displacement of stereotypes. Accordingly, Prentice and Andersen (2003) contend that while relationships may be built through visitation, they may be influenced by stereotypical attributes that are falsely thought to be true about a place or assigned from general and inappropriate, stereotypical associations with the place. In an Irish context, some of the stereotypical images people have about Ireland are passed down from generations of relatives that have gone before. This draws attention to another important source of sense-making for tourists, their ancestral connections with place.

3.1.4 Ancestry and Place

In terms of how tourists and potential tourists imagine, perceive or make sense of places as destinations, being a descendant of a place is yet another lens through which place images are viewed and identity is formed. Campelo and Aitken (2011) argue that “place identity takes shape when similar perceptions are shared across a community” (2011: 198). Communities extend beyond borders and include the diaspora of individual nations. People are proudly aware of their ancestry and this is particularly true for people born in one country but who can trace their ancestry back to another. Prentice and Andersen (2000) observed that for destinations that historically have an association with another jurisdiction through colonisation, language or immigration; generic experience and sense-making can also come second-hand via family or neighbourhood links (Prentice and Andersen, 2000: 495; Hankinson, 2004). Family contacts are a direct link with the destination and play a pivotal role in the construction of place. Rain (2003) states, that the concept of a national identity and how sources of national identity are imagined is particularly complex for a diaspora when the original connection with the place is a number of generations in the past. In this context, place

is constructed in terms of a 'home' identity that is elsewhere and not personally remembered. Tourists, therefore, form images of what their ancestral home might be like through generations of oral history that has been passed down from one family member to the next. A desire to become more familiar with and visit the setting of many of the stories associated with one's ancestral connections to place is the primary motivating factor for what Ioannides and Timothy (2010) call diaspora travel.

3.1.5 Summary

This thesis identifies how tourists consume and thereby make sense of the places they visit through practicing photography as part of 'being a tourist'. The process of sense-making begins long before the tourist arrives in the destination or takes any photographs. Thus far, this chapter has focused on how the sense-making process is influenced by perceptions about destinations that are formed and informed in the minds of tourists. Tourists form perceptions of places from a variety of influences such as those discussed in this chapter. Once formed, perceptions influence the tourists' decision to travel and upon arrival in the destination continue to play a role in how they interpret place meaning. Next, this chapter will focus on how tourists interpret and re-negotiate place meaning upon arrival in the destination through their embodied behaviours of being a tourist.

3.2 Experiencing Place - Re-negotiating Meaning

Buchmann, Moore and Fisher (2010) observe that much of the focus in tourism research has been directed at how best to characterise tourists' experiences of the places they visit and the people they encounter there. They argue that what at first may appear simple in terms of experiences tourists have of and in places, when put under closer

scrutiny, can become complex and hard to explain. This thesis explores these complexities in terms of tourists' photographic representations of place. In this regard thus far, we have discussed how images are formed and used to market destinations. We also have discussed the various ways in which tourists perceive these images and start to make sense of them and become enchanted by them. Once the tourist arrives in the destination, this information processing and sense-making continues, whereby, the tourists' 'knowledge' of the destination is re-created in their mind, as they engage with the unfamiliar (or the familiar in the case of a repeat visit) destination (Page, 2010). Accordingly, the literature suggests that visitors develop re-evaluated or modified images based on their experiences of the destination which they compare with their pre-trip imagined image (Shelby and Morgan, 1996). This implies a self-editing process on behalf of the tourist over which destinations have no control. More importantly, this self-editing behaviour by tourists indicates that they will adjust their perception of places if "what is experienced in consuming the tourism product does not correspond to their perceived destination image" (Govers et al., 2007: 17).

The manner in which tourists self-edit and re-imagine or make sense of destinations is relevant to this research because as Toyota (2006) observes, tourist images and experiences are not just shaped by the producers of destination images. Instead, images become a source of negotiation between the tourist and the destination, where tourists become active agents in the destination's construction and meaning (Toyota, 2006). Hence, places matter to people because of their associated meaning. Tourists' experiences of places are less about what they encounter there and more about what meanings they confer on what they encounter (Baerenholdt et al., 2007).

3.2.1 Tourists as Performers - Engaging with Place

A key idea in this chapter thus far is that tourists become enchanted with places based on perceptions they may have which have been influenced by a variety of sources. Arrival in the destination draws attention to another key stage in this process of enchantment and sense-making. One of the main ways in which people become enchanted by and make sense of places is through being a tourist. The act of performing 'being a tourist' is complex and multi-dimensional and it is predicated on experiences that are different to the norm. Haldrup and Larsen (2010) have argued that tourist performances are not separated from the places where they happen. Indeed, being a tourist may involve staying in tourist accommodation, being served meals by someone else, dressing differently to everyday attire, buying souvenirs as well as being in the company of other people or family and friends. Tourist places are accordingly produced spaces with tourists as co-producers, co-designers and co-exhibitors of tourism destinations, where tourists play a role in how they are constructed. Fittingly, Knudsen and Waade (2010) observe that tourists not only produce places through their actions and behaviours, but also authenticate them in how they relate to them in an "emotional/affective/sensuous" way (2010: 13).

Tourism as a performance or 'performativity' is a relatively new concept only appearing in academic research from 2010 onwards (Harwood and Manstrly, 2012). Adoption of this term by tourism academics indicates a paradigmatic shift in how people are contextualised in tourism. It indicates a shift away from the gaze to the body, from authenticity to performativity and from representations to everyday habits and practices (Knudsen and Waade, 2010). Larsen (2011) observes that the major sociological pioneering theorist of performance was Goffman. In his 1959 work Goffman presents a "dramaturgical" framework to describe everyday encounters and interactions between

people. For Goffman, “the self is a performed character, a public performer with carefully managed impressions” (Haldrup and Larsen, 2010: 23). Consequently, the day to day life experiences of people are conceptualised and staged as performative encounters for an audience (Larsen, 2005). Edensor (2000) draws attention to the performative nature of the tourist as a thespian, enacting their own tourism experiences where the destination is their metaphorical stage. This is an important concept in terms of this research because it suggests that tourists are in some way responsible for their own experiences of destinations. It is for this reason that Goffman’s dramaturgical approach is relevant to discussions about the visually interpretative performance of taking photographs while on holiday. Indeed, Haldrup and Larsen draw attention to what they call the particular “co-experiences or co-performances of tourists’ digital photography” (2010: 123). Drawing from Goffman’s theory of dramaturgy they conceptualise tourists taking photographs as a performance which resonates particularly well with the concepts of enchantment and performance discussed here. Many of these performances take place and what Edensor (2001) describes as the performance stage.

3.2.2 The Performance Stage

Various tourism activities are conducted or acted out upon particular ‘stages’ – on beaches, mountains, in cities, at heritage sites, museums and theme parks (Edensor, 2001). Urry and Larsen (2011) state that the performance turn as a concept draws attention to how tourists experience places as tourism destinations in multi-sensuous ways, often capturing these experiences in photographs. Tourism as a performance is socially and spatially managed to a greater or lesser extent in terms of where and when it takes place. The nature of the destination/place (stage) adds context to the experience together with the various objects (props) around which the experience is organised. Larsen (2005) conceptualises tourists as reflexive and strategic actors, moving between

different sets which make up a tourist destination. These sets are located in front stage and backstage regions as defined by Goffman (1959). Goffman's theory of front stage and backstage regions informed MacCannell's (1976) seminal work on the staging of authenticity in contemporary tourism. MacCannell's argument is that tourists seek out authentic or backstage realities, but invariably must settle for staged authenticity or a put-on-show in front stage settings. MacCannell (1973) posits a six stage framework (Figure 3.1) based on Goffman's (1959) front/back dichotomy, which proves useful in terms of exploring the front-stage/backstage experience in tourism. It draws attention to what motivates tourists to seek backstage access in their experiences of place. Accordingly, backstage is where tourists expect to encounter the real, authentic essence, or sense of place, while capturing photographic memories of the visit.

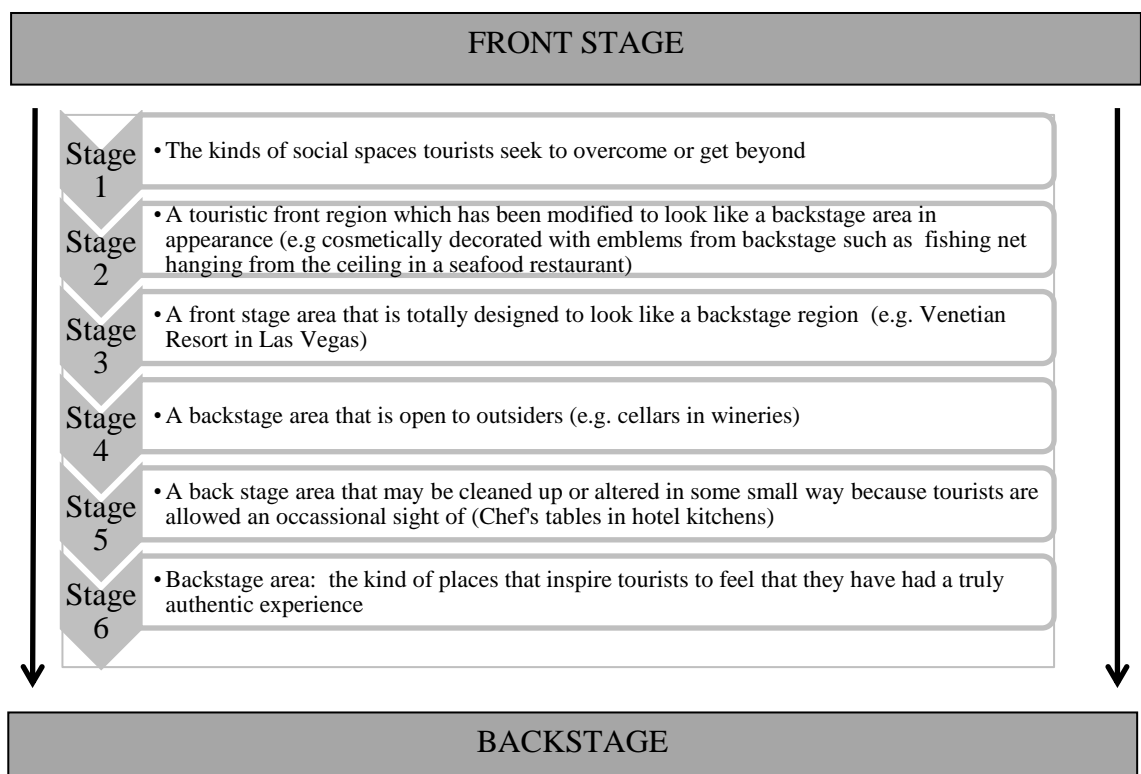


Figure 3.1 Framework for Exploring Goffman's (1959) Front/Back Dichotomy

Source: (Author, adapted from MacCannell, 1973: 598)

3.2.3 Forming a Sense of Place

Tourism is primarily centred on experiences that tourists have of places they visit which, as mentioned previously, take place in a variety of settings and contribute to the tourists' sense of place. Sense of place is defined in terms of the personal experiences of the individual in reaction to the place; such as feeling stimulated, excited, joyous (Steel, 1981). In terms of communicating a sense of place, Chapter Two identified that the purpose of destination branding is to make an emotional connection between the brand and potential tourists. Tourists, for their part, are looking for fulfilling experiences of places they visit, which allow them to take away, in the form of memories and photographs, an essence or a sense of place.

Cross (2001) argues that there is no one definition of sense of place. Instead, tourists bring to the destinations they visit, a whole set of cultural preconceptions as referenced earlier in this chapter. Tourists "reconstruct their image of the destination to fit these preconceptions" (Cross, 2001: 1). Brochures, travel programmes and guidebooks, as well as more modern social media such as, Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest are a "means of preparation, aid, documentation and vicarious participation" for tourists long before they arrive at the destination (Adler, 1989: 1371). In making sense of the places that they visit, tourists form emotional attachments with destination brands, which are the primary objective of emotional branding, as discussed in Chapter Two. Quinlan Cutler and Carmichael (2010) contend that these emotional attachments are highly related to the relationships tourists form with destinations through their holiday experiences. In this regard, Inglis (2008) indicates that attachment to the local, the particular, the different, is often an equal and opposite reaction to increased

globalisation and sameness. Inglis (2008) explains attachment with place further by posing the following questions:

“In an increasingly mobile, globalised world, to what extent do individuals still identify themselves with a place or a number of places? This could be the village, town, city or country in which they were brought up or where they live now. It could be a favourite holiday resort. Moreover, when we talk about identifying with a place is it the geographical location or the people or, again, a mixture of both. What is the nature of the identification with people in a place? Is it more imaginary than real”?

(Inglis, 2008: 1)

The questions posed by Inglis (2008) offer further insight into how tourists identify with the places they visit and make sense of them as well as the people who live in them. Accordingly, Chapter Two has already identified how tourism places are formed as destinations through branding. The argument for such an approach is that, in order for tourists to identify with a holiday resort as highlighted by Inglis (2008), the latter must first be formed, constructed, branded and ultimately marketed as one. Subsequently, it is through the social practice of holidaying that tourists search for meaning and make sense of the destination brand for themselves.

Understanding how tourists make sense of, or empathise with the destinations they visit is a much neglected area of research. Traditionally, research has focused on the tourist gaze (Urry, 1990). McCabe and Marson (2006) observed that tourists’ social constructions and experiences of place are more enduring than the passing view originally argued by Urry’s tourist gaze. Consequently, Urry and Larsen (2011: 193) argue, tourism literature does little to extend our understanding of the uniqueness of all personal travel experiences in which place is continually “reproduced and contested” as part of the tourists’ holiday behaviour. The use of the term personal in the context of tourists’ holiday experiences, by definition, draws attention to the individual, embodied, encounters of tourists with places. Accordingly, Picard (2012) claims that tourism is

one of those social conventions in which the relationship between the physical body and emotions experienced by a person become most apparent.

3.3 Embodied Encounters with Place

Being a tourist is essentially a bodily act that involves the whole self. Wearing and Wearing (2001) draw attention to a conceptualisation of self, relative to the lived experiences of the tourist. Sociological theory, with reference to the self, has moved in recent years to include embodiment and emotionality, as well as reflexivity and openness to development through new experiences, such as travel and tourism (Wearing and Wearing, 2001). Davidson and Milligan (2004: 524) point out that “our sense of self is continually (re)shaped by emotion”. Therefore, our attempts to make sense of spaces we live in, or visit, are somewhat circular in nature and relate to us as individuals.

Over the past two decades, there has been a growing acknowledgement in tourism research, that an understanding of the tourist experience necessitates recognising the role of the tourist’s body in these experiences (Small et al., 2012). In essence, it is a corporeal body, which hears, smells, tastes, feels and sees. Consequently, it is this body, as a tourist, that travels, moving through space from the home region to another geographical space and stays overnight at the destination (Small et al., 2012). Tourism is predicated on taking the body away from the familiar and immersing it in unfamiliar environments and cultures (Gibson, 2010). In this sense, Thrift’s (2008) contention that embodiment can be conceptualised as a form of on-going, expressive relationship between people and the world, still holds true. Supporting this view, Gibson (2010) observes that tourism encounters are instantaneous, embodied and geographical and all tourists experience them. Tourism, therefore, commoditises place for tourists (Gibson,

2010), a process which is mediated by tourist managers and other such agents (Edensor, 2001).

Crouch (2000) comments that as individuals, we experience and understand the world in which we live by means of a process of embodiment. Embodiment is defined as a “tangible or visible form of an idea, quality or feeling” (Oxford English Dictionary, 2010). Embodiment can be further explained in the context of tourism as a way of living in, conceptualising and understanding the world around us as a sensual human (tourist) relative to the encounters experienced on a daily basis. Indeed, tourism as an experience brings into play all five senses (sight, sound, touch, taste and smell). Agapito, Mendes and Valle (2013) argue that the human senses are of critical importance to the individual tourist’s experience. The human senses function as receptors which enable tourists to comprehend the world in which they live (Crouch, 2002). Hence, tourists become involved corporeally as they make sense of their encounters with the places they visit (Agapito et al. (2013).

Present-day literature, including Urry’s (2002) analysis, draws attention to the contribution of all the bodily senses in explicating the tourist experience. Current work in tourism research is becoming increasingly informed by the embodiment paradigm. The embodiment paradigm positions the body as central to empirical research of the tourists’ experiences. This is because as Crouch (2000: 68) states, the tourist engages with place and place becomes embodied in three ways:

(1) Firstly, the tourist engages with place multi-sensually.

(2) Secondly, the tourist is encircled by place and the experiences surrounding it on many levels.

(3) Thirdly, the tourist physically and emotionally interacts with place, and thereby alters its meaning for them.

In a sense, tourists make connections with place, physically and emotionally, and therefore, how they do this is of relevance to this research in terms of how American tourists connect with Ireland. This is because leisure and tourism places are imagined in the minds of tourists as the embodiment of social engagement and friendship which derives their meaning through the multitude of ways in which people and places are encountered (Crouch, 2000).

Having thus far argued that tourism is in essence an embodied multi-sensory experience, MacCannell (2002) furthers the debate. He describes a touristic-experiential view of embodiment in which increasingly tourists take ownership and responsibility for their own experience. Advancing this idea, Rakić and Chambers (2012) suggest that the concept of embodiment rejects a view of tourists as inanimate bodies. Instead, embodiment recognises tourists' active role in the consumption and creation of subjective meanings and experiences of the destinations they visit. Moreover, embodiment can be further conceptualised as an expressive ongoing dialogue between the tourist and the world around them that by-passes any attempt at a dualistic divide between the subject and object (Thrift, 1997). In other words, the embodiment paradigm brings together both the subject [tourist] and the object [the world around them] and acknowledges that tourism is about multi-sensory, embodied experiences such as the approach taken by this thesis. Consequently, Rakić and Chambers (2012) suggest that there is still a need for research which focuses attention on the idea that places are spaces which are constructed or created by tourists in terms of their own embodied experiences of place. One of the active ways in which tourists create or take ownership of the destinations that they visit is by taking photographs. Photographs are

connected to the tourist-photographer because he or she takes them. Taking a photograph on holiday is proportionately more personal than selecting a travel postcard with a similar (and likely superior) image, because the photographer (tourist), consciously or unconsciously, has taken it (Nguyen and Belk, 2007). It is in this spirit that photography is being examined in this thesis as a means towards understanding tourists' sense of place.

3.3.1 Photography: Reproducing or Producing Place?

Yeh (2009) points out that there is a burgeoning interest within the academic community in visual culture and photography. Much of this relatively new interest in photography is based on the possibilities that photographs afford in increasing an understanding of how people interact with, and make sense of, the world around them. Since its invention, the camera has become the most omnipresent method of capturing the lived experience of people around the globe. Early references to tourist photography presented the camera not as a tool of empowerment, but rather, as a device that came between the tourist and the subject, or as reproducers of stereotypical photographic representations (Stylianou-Lambert, 2012).

There are as many reasons to take photographs as there are people in the world. Photographs are as much an interpretation of the world as paintings and drawings are (Sontag, 2002). In the context of tourism it seems positively unnatural to travel for pleasure without taking a camera along. Photographs offer indisputable evidence that the trip was made, that the programme was carried out, that fun was had (Sontag, 2002). Photographs also help us to remember holidays, to record the growth of our children, to express ourselves, to record our view of the world around us, or to change other people's perceptions of the world (Badger, 2007). Stylianou-Lambert (2012) observes

that tourists with cameras are visualised in society in different ways. The more traditional image of the tourist laden down with camera equipment presents tourists as passive consumers of destinations, who capture with their camera, what they have seen in promotional material, such as guidebooks, postcards and websites. This aspect was discussed in Chapter Two. Similarly, the only function Sontag (2002) affords tourists with cameras is merely a voyeuristic one, based on an appearance of participation and not an actual immersion in the place.

Another view, however, in more recent studies, looks upon tourists as active performers. Tourists “playfully” re-create the space and the people they photograph through their unique experiences of destinations (Stylianou-Lambert, 2012: 1818). Stylianou-Lambert points out that, similar to an audience which must engage with the actors on a stage in order to negotiate the meaning of the play, tourists, through their photographic behaviour, process various messages they have been exposed to regarding destinations, and thereby reconstruct them into meaningful visual messages in the form of photographs (Stylianou-Lambert, 2012).

3.3.2 A Hermeneutic Circle

Thus far the discussion has been informed by the argument that tourists form certain perceptions about places based on imagery they are exposed to. These images enable the tourist to make sense of the place and may also lead to them becoming enchanted with the place. Upon arrival tourists engage with the destination by taking photographs. Hence, this chapter contextualises tourists as performers who play an active role in their own seduction and enchantment with place by taking photographs. Photography is thus a primary medium through which tourists relate to the places they

visit and make their own (Albers and James, 1988). They contend that photographs taken by tourists complete a hermeneutic circle (Figure 3.2) of representation. It starts with the photographs produced by destination marketing organisations (DMOs) to advertise or construct the destination. Hall (1997) observes that photographs used to market places then prompt a search for these sites by tourists as part of their holiday experience, and the circle ends with the tourist certifying and capturing the same iconic images in their own photographs (Albers and James, 1988: 136; Jenkins, 2003; Ponting, 2009). However, this hermeneutic view of tourist photographic behaviour is somewhat clinical, and does not account for how tourists engage with the places they visit except as voyeurs.

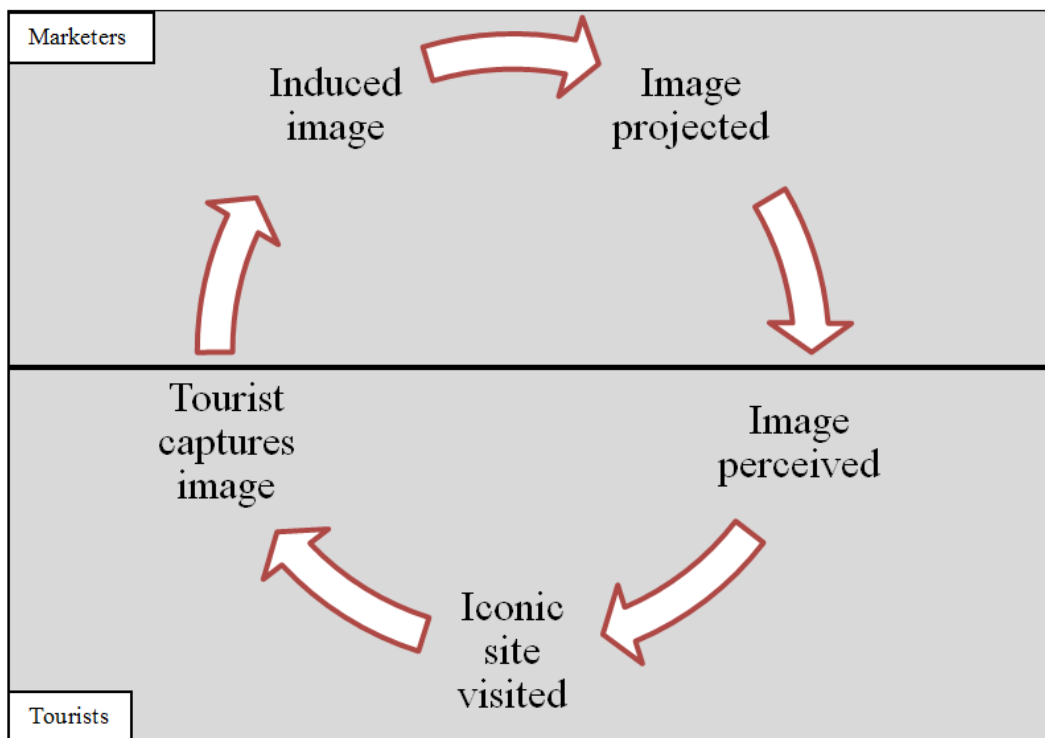


Figure 3.2 Hermeneutic Circle of Representation

Source: Author (Adapted from Hall, 1997: 3; Jenkins, 2003: 308)

Hall's (1997) assertion that tourists follow a hermeneutic circle of representation draws attention to the role image and photography play in how tourists encounter and thereby

make sense of destinations. It somewhat limits its focus to iconic induced images captured by tourists of the places they visit, and does not consider other types of images they may take. This view is also supported by Garrod (2009) who found that tourists do not strictly follow Hall's suggested circle of representation. In fact, in many cases, the relationship between what tourists capture on their own cameras does not mirror the images produced by destination marketers as part of the overall destination brand. Hall's (1997) circle of representation implies a pattern of behaviour that does not acknowledge the human element in tourism, in that what one tourist might consider iconic in terms of images used to promote the destination, another may not.

Iconic sites and the photographs tourists take of them are further defined by Edensor (1998: 112) as "duty" photographs. For example, a tourist might take a picture of the Eiffel Tower in Paris, because it is an iconic image that is associated with Paris all over the world, as opposed to it meaning something to them in terms of their own construction of Paris as a destination. Stylianou-Lambert (2012) posits another view of this behaviour of taking duty photographs by describing tourists as mindless consumers of images, as mere reproducers, with perhaps only the illusion of free will regarding what they photograph. However, such a view fails to acknowledge the myriad of other images that tourists capture with their cameras. These images appear to extend beyond the hermeneutic circle of representation, as argued by Garrod (2009).

3.3.3 Beyond the Hermeneutic Circle

The theories suggested by Hall (1997) and Albers and James (1988), although groundbreaking in their day, present a view of a passive tourist who enters onto a pre-formed stage, whereupon they live out an experience of destinations that is carefully

orchestrated by local people, and prompted by social and cultural rules. Once on stage they photograph specific icons from predetermined vantage points. However, this view of tourists and their photographic behaviour does not consider the performative role tourists play in constructing places, as discussed earlier. A more all-encompassing model through which to explore tourists' photographic representations of place is that put forward by Scarles (2009). In her study of British tourists at three stages of their experiences of Peru as a destination, she argues that in studying the role of photography in tourist encounters with places, it is essential to look upon tourism as a “series of active doings” through performed engagement (Scarles, 2009: 466). She points out that taking photographs allows tourists to confer “visibility” on their most sought after experiences of the destination that conform to their desired “imaginings” and “encounters” (Scarles, 2009: 480). In this regard Scarles offers a Framework of Visuality for Visual Practice (Figure 3.3) which she uses to advance academic understanding of the role of the visual in tourism in the form of photographs (2009: 476).

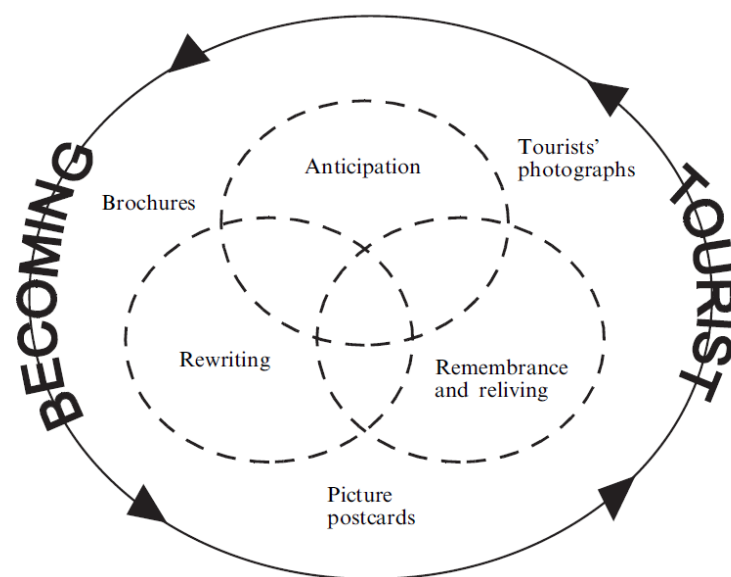


Figure 3.3 A Framework of “*Visuality for Visual Practice*”

Source: (Scarles, 2009: 477)

Scarles' framework represents key visual moments (related to various stages in the holiday life cycle) and the methods used to portray images (brochures, postcards) or the devices used to capture them (cameras). She focuses on three stages in the tourist's experience of the destination: the anticipation phase (pre-visitation), while in the destination (remembering and reliving), and finally upon returning home (the rewriting phase). In this regard, Hirsch (1997) refers to the ability of photographs to act as 'image texts' that communicate meaning about place, or as Scarles (2009) describes, to reignite memories. It is believed that these memories continually evolve whereby tourists construct and re-construct destinations as they re-encounter them through their own photographs upon returning home (Rose, 2003). This is a key area of interest for this thesis in terms of advancing our understanding of how tourists imagine and make sense of destinations, and bestow meaning upon destinations through their own photographic representations of place.

Scarles' (2009) work contributes to renegotiating the role of visuals and visual practice in the tourist experience, albeit with some slight limitations. These limitations are primarily concerned with the third and final stage in the British tourists' experience of Peru, and the fact that their post-visitation interviews took place after they had returned home to the UK. Rose (2003) observes that tourists' experiences of places visited are not constructed as memories to be transported intact back home. Instead, these memories are constantly reconstructed in the mind of the tourist upon their return home. This thesis argues therefore, that more can be learned in terms of how places connect emotionally with, and enchant, tourists by talking to them about their photographs before they leave to return home. Equally as will be reported in Chapter Six, using focus groups to discuss their photographs yields richer and more vivid data than one to

one interviews alone, because members of the group comment on, and interpret each other's photographs.

Thus far, this chapter has discussed how tourists interpret and make sense of the places they visit through their travel behaviour. Tourism is not simply about the pursuit of pleasure (Cohen, 1979), or capturing iconic imagery. For MacCannell (2002), tourism has moved on in social discourse to mean much more, becoming a search for authentic experiences that are in some way different from those of everyday life. However, Edensor (2001) takes issue with the notion of tourism being an escape from the everyday. Indeed, Haldrup and Larsen (2009) argue that one of the classical constraints of everyday life is routine and yet routine is also part of the tourists' baggage. Edensor (2001) therefore, posits that tourism should be understood by its "imbrication" in the everyday as opposed to the traditional separate field of enquiry (Edensor, 2001: 59). Haldrup and Larsen (2009) support this view. They argue that conventional tourism theories which define tourism in contrast to everyday life, fail to acknowledge that both worlds [the everyday world and the tourism world] have converged on many fronts. Tourism takes place in a "blended geography in which materiality and virtuality are continuously entangled" (Haldrup and Larsen, 2009: 121). This is largely due to advances in technology such as Wi-Fi and smart phones, meaning that in essence 'we' can never 'truly' escape. However, notwithstanding the contested notions of the everyday and tourism as just discussed, some tourists still perceive going on holidays at the very least, as a change of scene. Whereas everyday life may be full of exotic and spectacular scenes from far off places due to the increased amount of time spent in front of television or computer screens (Haldrup and Larsen, 2009; Edensor, 2001), these virtual encounters appear to be a poor substitute for 'real' and 'authentic' experiences

that being a tourist affords. Consequently, what is at play in this thesis is the tourists' perception of authenticity. The argument put forth is that through the embodied practice of photography, as discussed earlier, tourists construct their own authentic representations of the places they visit. Adopting self-editing techniques in terms of what they photograph or omit to photograph, they select elements of destinations that conform to their own imagined view of what is authentic. However, authenticity is hard to define, as it is neither a 'thing' the tourist can possess, nor a 'state of mind'. This adds to its complexity and makes it much harder to manage in terms of the marketing of destinations, and in academic circles it has become a contentious idea in terms of tourists' experiences of place.

3.4 Authenticity: a Contested Idea in Tourism

Mkono (2012) draws attention to the various contentious debates regarding the concept of authenticity and whether or not it is relevant to the modern tourist (Beer, 2008; Belhassen et al., 2008; Feifer, 1985; Kim and Jamal, 2007; Lau, 2010, Reisinger and Steiner, 2006; Wang, 1999). Buchmann et al. (2010: 230) point out that "ever since MacCannell (1973; 1976) popularised the notion of authenticity" as a positive motivation for travel, academics have argued over the usefulness of the term. Some, such as Cohen (1988), have had nothing positive to say about it, to the point of arguing for its limited use. However, Mkono (2012) argues that authenticity is still very important to some tourists. She points out that calls to dismiss the notion of authenticity, and thereby discourage future research on the phenomenon, are premature. A review of the historical literature on the concept of authenticity in tourism reveals two main schools of thought: object-related and subject-related authenticity (Wang, 1999; Reisinger and Steiner, 2006; Yu Wang, 2007; Cohen, 2008).

Since the 1960s pioneers in the field of authentic tourism experiences such as Boorstin (1964) and MacCannell (1973) have hypothesised that object centric authenticity can be studied by examining it according to certain standards. In tourism, objects such as paintings, works of art, artefacts, food and rituals are most often described as authentic or inauthentic depending on where they are made or by whom (local indigenous people) according to time honoured tradition (Reisinger and Steiner, 2006). However, although tourists might perceive their experience as authentic, the object of their experience may in fact be contrived, performed, reproduced or simulated. Conversely, researchers who adopt a constructivist paradigm argue that authenticity can be interpreted as a socially constructed exposition of the *realness* of observable things, as opposed to a veritable or objective occurrence capable of being proven empirically (Cohen, 1988).

Subject or existential authenticity is closely aligned with what Wang describes as a special state of being in which one is true to oneself, and acts as an antidote to the loss of “true self” (1999: 358). Hence, in the context of existential authenticity, tourists feel they are in touch both with a "real" world and with their "real" selves (Leigh, Peters and Shelton, 2006). Bearing this in mind Wang (1999) posits some interesting conclusions on the concept of existential authenticity. She argues that while constructivists and postmodernists fail to agree whether or how objects within the tourist’s gaze are experienced as real, what is more important is how the tourist perceives them. Ultimately, in certain tourism settings such as nature, landscape, beach, ocean cruising, adventure and visiting family and friends, what the tourist seeks is their own interpretation of the authentic that conforms to themselves and inter-subjective authenticity (Wang, 1999). This is a key concept in terms of this research and how tourists search for and capture authentic experiences by taking photographs while on

holiday. Whether or not what they encounter is truly authentic or not is irrelevant or less relevant.

Allowing for the aforementioned contested notions of authenticity, in terms of this research, it is important to agree a working definition of the term, and how it relates to tourists' sense of place. This thesis adopts Knudsen and Waade's (2010) definition of authenticity as something that tourists can *do*, *feel* and *experience*. Their definition implies that tourists are constantly assessing and reassessing their tourism experiences of places that they visit in terms of how authentic they are for them similar to Wang's (1999) argument. It is for that reason that Knudsen and Waade's (2010) definition informs this research. Thus, authenticity can be understood in terms of how well tourists' experiences of places and the people who live in them meet their own preconceived ideas, or sense of what the particular destination is about (Jansson, 2002).

In terms of what drives tourists to seek out authentic experiences, Pine and Gilmore (2007) observe that the demand for authentic experiences is a direct response to a technologically mediated, commercially and socially created reality in which people live. Hence, tourists crave an immediate, non-commercialised, raw, natural world in terms of their choice of holiday location. Knudsen and Waade (2010) describe this behaviour by tourists as a hunger for reality. In this regard, Davidson and Milligan (2004) state that places must be *felt* by tourists to make sense or to become *real*. This implies that destinations need to connect emotionally with tourists in a way that their daily lives fail to.

However, although tourists might perceive their experience as authentic, the object of their experience may in fact be contrived, performed, reproduced, simulated or manufactured, as defined by Quinn (1994). In a world of mass production and

reproduction, the idea of the original or the truly authentic loses its ‘privileged’ place, or any place at all (Buckmann et al., 2010). The problem with conceptualising authenticity in this manner is that, as Boorstin (1964) observes, tourist attractions are constructed sets or stages, as referred to earlier, on which the experience is performed. Nevertheless, tourists seldom warm to staged authentic presentations of foreign culture. Instead, they prefer their own “provincial expectations” of what they imagine the culture to represent. This is an important concept in terms of this research, for it implies that tourists will construct their own interpretation of authenticity regarding places they visit and the people they encounter there.

3.5 Meeting *Real* People - Encountering Exotic Others

Meeting local people or *others* forms an important part of the holiday experience for some tourists (Salazar, 2010). In fact he argues that “it is often the human contact, the close encounter with locals, which remains strongly etched in a tourist’s mind and keeps surfacing in post-trip anecdotes of a tour” (Salazar, 2010: 98). This implies that for these tourists, meeting local people contributes to the tourists’ sense of place. Earlier in this chapter, Inglis (2008) posed a number of questions regarding how people identify with place. One of his questions asked: “...when we talk about identifying with a place, is it the geographical location or the people or, again, a mixture of both...” (Inglis, 2008: 1). This thesis argues that it is a combination of the two, both the geographical location and the people who inhabit it, that inform tourists’ overall imagined identity of a destination.

3.5.1 Creating Identities: Otherness and Othering

Hollinshead (2000b) defines *othering* as the imaginary construction of different people by the tourist into “exotic others” (2000: 420). In essence, “othering” is therefore

closely aligned with identity construction as an outcome of the tourist experiences of place (Bosangit et al., 2012: 215). In forming and assigning identities to local people, some tourists, as identified by Salazar (2010), seek out encounters with local people which conform to their overall imagined sense of the destination. Maoz (2006) observes that how tourists imagine local people is not necessarily “ocular”, or limited only to the “spectacle”, as some claim, but relies more on mental perceptions or stereotypical images of people, as discussed earlier (2006: 222).

These mental perceptions are sometimes less connected with the socioeconomic reality of the place, and instead are more to do with propagating myths and fantasies about places and local people as *others* (Crick, 1989). Images of local people, as used in tourism promotional material, are one of the ways these myths and fantasies are perpetuated. In addition, these images draw attention to the differences between local people in terms of ethnicity, traditional dress and culture, forming part of the attraction for tourists to come and visit the destination. Abu-Lughod (1991) points out that *othering* helps people to compare these differences between tourists and others, and in doing so, to reaffirm their own identity in terms of their home culture (Galani-Moutafi, 2000). Above all, Bosangit et al. (2012) state that the behaviour by tourists of assigning meaning to *others* signifies for them that their travel experience has exposed them to something new and different from their life back home.

However, this is not always possible for all tourists to achieve. For example, Cohen (1979) points out that institutionalised tourists travelling as part of an organised tour have fewer opportunities for what he describes as direct, meaningful encounters with local people. This is because it is harder for them to move outside of the environmental bubble [the hotels and coaches] in which they spend a lot of their holiday and move into spaces where they might encounter locals. Tourists are intrigued by how life for local

people may differ from the tourists' life experience back home. MacCannell (1973) argues that invariably what tourists seek out is contact or backstage encounters with locals in their home places. This is due to a perceived intimacy and authenticity of experience associated with them on behalf of the tourist. In fact, MacCannell (1973) points out that tourist-scapes are sometimes arranged to create an impression that a back-region has been experienced even when this might not have been the case. For example, the farm visits organised by the two tour companies who participated in this research, as will be reported on in Chapter Six.

Considering the acknowledged desire on behalf of some tourists to meet and interact with local people, little is known about these exchanges in terms of tourists' authentic experiences of place (Kastenholz et al., 2013). Exchanges between tourists and locals are presented in the literature as mainly hierarchical, one-sided and repressive (Maoz, 2006). This implies that local people have little or no control over how they are presented in tourism. However, Scarles (2012) contests this view, contextualising locals as potent, willing agents, and co-performers in the construction of places for tourists. For example, Reisinger (1994) observes that tourist/local contact incorporates a myriad of behaviours and interactions that take place in a variety of settings (1994: 25). Such encounters between tourists and locals contribute to the tourists' own construction of places as authentic tourism destinations. Bosangit et al. (2012) observe that tourists construct *otherness* through the various ways in which they document their encounters with local people during their holiday experience, such as blogs or photographs. By taking photographs, tourists confer identity on the local people they encounter in tourist destinations. In everyday life, people use picture frames to present their idealised image of family, friends and intimacy. Equally tourists use photography to seek out their ideal or exotic 'other' in terms of how they capture local people when

on holiday (Belk and Yeh, 2011). James Jasinski refers to these photographs as the “rhetorics of othering” (2001: 412). Accordingly, this research focuses attention on the photographs tourists take of places they visit in order to better understand how they construct local people as part of their imagined view of place.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the way in which tourists perceive destination images. Perception plays a role in how tourists make sense of destination images, leading to positive or negative impressions of the destination. Tourists form perceptions about places by watching television programmes, reading books or surfing the internet, and thereby become active agents in their own seduction with places. In essence, tourists’ perceptions lead to an imagined view of place that may be further influenced by nostalgia and a search on behalf of the tourist for enchantment. Through visiting, this enchantment may continue as part of their sense-making process that began even before they decided to book their holiday. One of the ways in which tourists make sense of the places they visit is through taking photographs. In doing so they confer meaning on these chosen locations and the people who live in them. By choosing to photograph specific scenes and people, tourists become ‘editors’ in their own photographic productions of place. Exploring tourists’ photographs in partnership with the researcher, as in the case of this thesis, potentially captures richer data at the remembering and reliving phases of their experiences of place, as outlined by Scarles (2009). The findings associated with this data will be presented in Chapter Six, and later discussed in Chapter Seven. Chapter Four, which follows, is a contextual chapter that focuses on how Ireland’s destination image has been formed over time, and the sources of influence that have been instrumental in its formation. The way in which stereotypical images of Irish people and Irish identity have been produced and contested

over time will also be discussed. Drawing from the theories discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, it provides a context in which to discuss the findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

INDUCED AND ORGANIC IMAGES OF IRELAND

4.0 Introduction

Thus far, Chapter One introduced the overall focus of this thesis which is how tourists consume and make sense of places they visit by taking photographs. Chapter Two conceptualised the way in which tourist places are branded as destinations using images to make an emotional connection with tourists and potential tourists. Chapter Three then focused on how tourists come to understand these images in terms of their own tourist behaviour and what they seek from the destination. This chapter focuses attention on Ireland's destination image in terms of various organic and induced sources of influence on that image, and addresses research objective three.

- **Research objective three:** *To review sources of influence on Ireland's destination image since independence*

It adopts a historical approach starting in 1922, the year Ireland gained independence, and uses examples as vignettes to provide context where necessary. The rationale for picking 1922 as a starting point is that having gained independence from Great Britain, it was from this point forward that Ireland took control of its own destiny and how it was represented on the global stage. However, it is important to acknowledge at this juncture that many of the influences on Ireland's destination image hark back to a nineteenth century romantic tradition of celebrating Ireland's unspoiled nature and Gaelic traditions and customs which pre-date 1922. Hence, this chapter does not purport to provide a definitive account of the various sources of influence on Ireland's organic and induced image since time immemorial. Indeed, an entire thesis could be devoted to any one of the influences identified within this chapter. Instead, the chapter

provides a context for understanding how Ireland is imagined by Irish and non-Irish people, such as writers, poets, film makers, artists and musicians. It also captures some of the imagery produced by various stakeholders involved in the Irish tourism industry over time, and discusses the motifs and themes used by them to promote Ireland as a tourist destination. The chapter begins to explore Ireland's image with some brief reflections on 19th century romanticism and representations of Irishness before moving on to a broader discussion of organic and induced representations of Irishness.

4.1 Romanticism and 19th Century Representations of Ireland

Romanticism according to Vance (2002) is a British, or more so, a European phenomenon. In terms of what romanticism means in an Irish context, it is associated with a way of articulating and promoting feelings connected with landscape, antiquities and popular culture as well as nationality (Vance, 2002). 19th century Irish writing for example “interacts with all of these themes and the ways in which Ireland's landscape in particular was explored and represented in other countries and cultures” (Vance, 2002: 37). Ireland's rural nature and landscape is also reflected in 19th century paintings by Irish artists. For Bell (1995) landscape is a phenomenon of both the natural and cultural worlds. He speaks of a language of landscape which is inherently “painterly” as highlighted by Barrel (1972). This is an important point with regards to contextualising representations of Irishness in 19th century art. During this period, the language, or the “picturing of nature” is inseparably linked with tourism (Bell, 1995: 42-43).

Ireland's landscape became a defining characteristic of Irishness under British rule, as evidenced by the use of the term ‘the auld sod’ and the myriad of other references to

rural Irishness (Wright, 2014). 19th century paintings by artists such as Jack B. Yeats, Paul Henry and their contemporaries, are reminiscent of an unassuming, unpretentious way of life which over time has become associated with the west of Ireland (Bourke, 2003). While Yeats developed as the major artist of the early twentieth century, Henry emerged as Ireland's leading landscape painter (Bourke, 2003). She contends that it was largely Henry's vision of the west that led to a distinctive school of landscape painting, synonymous with the likes of Seán Keating and Maurice MacGonigal. Characterised as nationalistic in their outlook these artists along with others, such as Charles Lamb, James Humbert Craig and later Gerard Dillon, were apolitical (Bourke, 2003). All of these artists shared a common desire to use west-of-Ireland imagery to enunciate a new apparition of national mindfulness. This view of 'national art', with which Henry's work emphasising life in the west of Ireland became easily identified, presents a visual code of unspoiled landscape and people engaged in rural life. The origins of this visual code can be traced back to 19th century romanticism and cities like Antwerp and Paris where Irish artists completed their training.

To put 19th century romanticism and Irish tourism in context, Ireland as a place and how it is imagined is historically situated in the significant fact of its geography; a windswept island located on the periphery of Europe (State, 2009). Of equal importance is Ireland's close proximity to its nearest neighbour, the larger island of Great Britain. Ever since the middle ages the interactions and conflicts between the peoples and cultures of these two islands have shaped Ireland's story line (State, 2009). Ironically then, it was an Englishman that put Ireland on the metaphorical tourism map and prompted a newfound interest by the British government in Irish tourist promotion (Furlong, 2009). Furlong (2009) states, that despite widely held perceptions to the

contrary, tourism was not a phenomenon in nineteenth century Ireland. Yet, visitors had travelled and recorded their impressions of Ireland for many centuries, with guidebooks to Ireland appearing as far back as 1800. Young's *Tour of Ireland*, first published in 1780 was one of the first guidebooks for travellers who were able to cover large distances on horseback (Furlong, 2009). These early guidebooks spoke of Ireland's magnificent landscapes and beautiful scenery. Similarly, the travel writings from 19th century American tourists to Ireland focused on what Kincheloe (1999) describes as "Ireland's aesthetic landscape peopled with picturesque figures, effectively marginalising anything that did not suit their aesthetic frame of reference" (1999: 41). Bell (1999) argues that the source of this aesthetic frame of reference for German tourists reflects the visual codes and literary sensibilities already present in the popular culture. These visual codes have their roots in a northern romantic landscape painterly tradition that over time became translated in popular cultural through various media (Bell, 1999). A similar observation could be made about other source markets such as Great Britain and the USA. This chapter now moves on to explore albeit in broad terms, a selection of organic and induced representations of Ireland and Irishness in order to place Ireland's tourism destination image in context.

4.2 Ireland and Irishness – Post Independence

O'Neill (2000) observes that the predominant themes to emerge in terms of Irish cultural policy after independence reflected the de-Anglicisation philosophies of the Gaelic League. Tourism became an important conduit for promoting these philosophies, and it has played a pivotal role in defining Ireland on the world stage ever since (Zuelow, 2007: 160). Ireland's image as a tourist destination, and therefore its national identity, has evolved since independence, but only limited research has focused

attention on this image (see O'Connor, 1993; Quinn, 1994; O'Leary and Deegan, 2005; Murphy, 2005). Clancy (2008: 2) contends that although tourism "may appear to be an odd place" within which to contextualise such a highly politicised topic as national identity, it is through tourism that people and place are meticulously marketed at home and abroad (Clancy, 2008). The challenge for scholars, according to Clancy (2008), is to trace the manner in which national identity, or, in the context of this research, national image is continually reformulated and renegotiated by people.

Zuelow (2007) points out that "national identity is the product of an on-going dialogue", a dialogue that takes place between insiders, citizens, marketers and government agents, as well as tourists, foreign governments and outside agencies. Co-ordinating all of these different interpretations of how Ireland should be promoted as a tourist destination became problematic for the Irish government in the years after independence. Some of the problems the first Irish government grappled with included whether or not Ireland should be promoted as a modern or traditional country, and if outsiders should be welcomed or turned away (Zuelow, 2007). This tension between how Ireland should be promoted as a tourist destination, versus how it should be promoted to attract foreign direct investment, is reflected in the literature. Some of these tensions were compounded by a mismatch between how Ireland was promoted using induced images, as produced by tourism organisations, compared to more organic images, as depicted in non-tourism sources. This chapter now moves on to review a selection of organic imagery in the form of paintings, literature, drama and music to name but a few, that reflect how Ireland is imagined on the Global stage.

4.3 Organic Imagery of Ireland – Various Formation Agents

Henchion and McIntyre (2000) argue that a wide variety of material informs the tourists' destination image, and images used to promote Ireland consist of one or more of a variety of elements (Kneafsey, 1997). In particular, people, animals and landscapes feature regularly in images of Ireland (Cawley et al., 1997). Likewise, images that appear in film, or on television, as well as in newspaper articles and magazine stories, to name but a few, also contribute to Ireland's organic image (Burgess and Gold, 1985). Taken together, these various organic sources, as defined by Gunn (1972), portray themes that convey regional characteristics, and therefore portray an essence of the place to potential visitors (Henchion and McIntyre, 2000). Ireland as a destination, and how it is imagined by non-Irish people, as well as the Irish themselves, forms part of an impressive array of imagery that originates from organic sources. The influence of some of these media on how Ireland is imagined will now be discussed.

4.3.1 Organic Images of Ireland in Art

As far back as the 1920s and before, Irish artists have painted Ireland in a certain light largely influenced by 19th century romanticism as mentioned earlier. In the years after independence, the painterly language of landscape (Barrel, 1972), continued to influence Irish painters who were inspired to capture on canvas the prevailing rural character of the Irish identity (Brown, 2004). Gillespie and Kennedy (1994) state that renowned Irish painters, such as William Conor, Maurice MacGonigal, Sean O'Sullivan and Paul Henry, added to an official iconography of Irish life. These painters in particular painted scenes (Plate 4.1) of Irish country men and women, fishermen, farmers, turf stacks and cottages in secluded places against cloudy skies (Brown, 2004).



Plate 4.1 A Connemara Village by Paul Henry

This Image is Reproduced Courtesy of the National Gallery of Ireland

Their paintings therefore, informed how Irishness and Irish identity became imagined on the global stage. The role played by Irish artists in portraying on canvas visual representations of ‘real’ Ireland as interpreted by them is acknowledged in this thesis, as many of them are reproduced on canvas and purchased by tourists to bring back home. However, Ireland as described in books, contributes subtle, more nuanced images to the collage that makes up Ireland’s image. People around the world read these books, and as a result, form an imagined view of Ireland. Accordingly, Duffy (1997) states that writers, like artists, are witnesses to the world in which they live, as well as producers of

it. It is in this context that Irish literary influences are discussed in this thesis in terms of their contribution to Ireland's organic image abroad.

4.3.2 Ireland as Depicted in Literature

O'Neill (2000) points out that the Irish are depicted in the arts as intensely artistic and creative people whose contribution to the world of culture far exceeds what might be expected given the nation's population size. Specifically, Irish writers and poets possess innate insightful qualities which help to shed light on, and create understanding of, the diversity of places, and the various meanings that become associated with them (Duffy, 1997). Likewise, Dunne (1987) observes that past and present views of Ireland and Irishness held by non-Irish people have been informed by reading Irish literature, a view which is also held by Kiberd (2000). Without Yeats, for example, *Innisfree* would be a nameless place (Duffy, 1997: 66). Similarly, Dublin might never have entered the minds of many if it were not for *Ulysses*. The discourse of these famous Irish writers portrayed an image of Ireland based on what Steele (2001: 139) describes as their romanticisation of Ireland's colonial past, and the political aftermath of independence. Romanticising Ireland's image is a common thread that appears throughout Ireland's long history. We have already seen how this took place in books written about Ireland; however, it also occurs in plays written by Irish playwrights, as will be discussed next.

4.3.3 Ireland's Organic Image on Stage

Plays are powerful producers of organic imagery in that they act as vignettes in providing trenchant impressions about a character, period or setting. Irish plays staged on Broadway and in other US theatres have become sources of organic images of

Ireland as a destination “over a considerable span of time” (Harrington, 2009: xvi). Llewellyn-Jones (2002) points out that a central theme running through Irish drama presents Ireland in one of two ways. First, it paints an image of the Irish as a displaced people forced into exile through emigration. Secondly, it presents these same people upon returning home whereby they challenge the identities and lifestyles of those who chose to stay at home. Examples of plays that contain these themes include, Brian Friel’s *Dancing at Lughnasa* and *Philadelphia, Here I Come*.

Plays have also contributed to a stereotypical image of Ireland. The stage Irish man (which has become a modern stereotype) first appeared in plays from 1820 onwards, usually with the generic name of Pat, Paddy or Teague (Murphy, 2009). Wait (2003), for example, observes that Irish men were portrayed as “indolent” and “irresponsible”, and therefore ill-suited to bourgeois US life (2003: 99). More contemporary dramatic works about Ireland that try to challenge these traditional notions of the “*auld sod*” and the people who live there still face an uphill battle to change this nostalgic stereotypical image of Ireland (Berchild, 2009). Declan Hughes in his (2000) philippic “*Who the hell do we still think we are?*” asks why contemporary Irish drama ignores contemporary Ireland. He observes that going to the theatre feels like stepping into a time capsule where even plays that are supposedly set in the present are blurred by what he describes as “the compulsion to be Irish”. He argues that Irish plays present a nostalgic view of Ireland. Further support for Hughes’ argument comes from Berchild (2009) who states that a great deal of what we recognise as being the tenets of ‘Irish’ identity have in fact been written for and performed on stage, not just in Ireland but around the world, and also in Hollywood films, as will be discussed later in this chapter. It appears that Irish/US drama serves two functions for Irish Americans: to provide a

window to the land of their forefathers, and secondly to represent an organic image and vision of the site of their displacement (Berchild, 2009).

4.3.4 Religion, Music, Dance and Ireland

The previous two sections made reference to organic images of Ireland as depicted in literature and drama. Ireland is also associated with religion, music and dance. Ireland's association as a Catholic nation and its religious history is another lens through which Ireland is imagined organically by non-Irish people. A case in point is the many religious icons associated with Ireland, such as the Celtic High Cross (Plate 4.2), which is used in jewellery, postcards, ornaments, household items and musical instruments.



Plate 4.2 Celtic High Cross Ross Abbey

Source: (Tourism Ireland Image Library)

These have become popular souvenirs for tourists who visit Ireland. Many of these High Crosses are still present in various sites around Ireland, and are visited and photographed by tourists.

Music is another medium through which organic images of Ireland are formed. Enya, for example, holds the title of the most played musician in the world (Foster, 2007). Enya's ethereal vocals and haunting melodies conjure up organic images of spirituality that could be incorporated into a variety of settings or situations in need of "Irish authenticity" (Negra, 2006: 183). Music in general continues to form strong associations with Ireland, particularly in the USA. Iconic groups, such as the Clancy Brothers from the traditional world, are juxtaposed alongside contemporary artists such as U2 and Westlife. The rise of bands such as U2 to meteoric fame intersected a time in Ireland's history depicted by a new found confidence. This confidence was brought about by an improved economy in the 1990s. Apart from U2, one of the most instantly recognised musical performances in recent years is the phenomenon known as Riverdance (Plate 4.3). Created as the intermission act for the 1994 Eurovision song contest held in Dublin that same year, it has travelled the world as a source of organic imagery of Ireland, being performed in theatres from New York to Beijing. The two principal dancers, Jean Butler and Michael Flatley, were born in the US, from Irish ancestry.



Plate 4.3 Riverdance

Source: www.riverdance.com

In terms of how Ireland is constructed organically through music in the USA, O'Toole (2013) argues "there is a debased Irish-US notion of musical Irishness, hung between the sentimentality of Danny Boy on the one side and the ethnic rallying cry of "rebel" ballads on the other" (O'Toole, 2013). A case in point is the contemporary US punk band, the Dropkick Murphys, who have crossed over, combining traditional Irish motifs with punk. This new style of Irish music relied on what Foster (2007: 154) describes as an "exploitation of a post-modern notion of Celts". Consequently, Foster (2007) argues that Irish music is one of the main pull factors attracting tourists to Ireland. Ireland's musical legacy, in terms of constructing organic images of Ireland, represents an "interesting and non-combative commerce between the old and the new, the native and the foreign - a postmodern transcendence of the opposition of modern versus

traditional” (Ryder, 1988: 126). A similar comment could be made about how Ireland is represented in film, as will be discussed next.

4.3.5 Hollywood’s Interpretation of Ireland

Hollywood’s interpretation of Ireland is very much a romantic notion of Ireland, and in particular the West of Ireland, as represented in feature films such as *The Quiet Man* (Gibbons, 1996). In the context of Ireland, Hollywood films have traditionally been framed against a rural landscape. Iconic films such as those represented in Plate 4.4 reaffirm Ireland as a land of unspoiled beauty, rural in nature and populated by friendly, gregarious people. Indeed the manner in which the stereotypical “Irish Paddy” is represented in Hollywood movies such as *The Quiet Man* continues to popularise this myth. In terms of how Irish women are visually constructed, O’Connor (1984) offers a possible source for this stereotype. She draws attention to a genre of Hollywood films in which ‘Irish women’ are “positively and sympathetically portrayed based on the life experiences and desires of a central female character” (1984: 79). Films such as *Darby O’Gill and the Little People* and *Finian’s Rainbow* act as inducements for tourism whereby tourists come to see the locations where they were made. For more on film induced tourism see O’Connor et al., 2008.



Plate 4.4 Collage of Still Images from Hollywood Movies set in Ireland

Sources: <http://www.irishcentral.com/news/New--Quiet-Man-movie-trail-takes-visitors-on-a-tour-of-the-classic-Irish-film-140546463.html#ixzz2L4iu5phE>
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/johnnyghia1302/3833485460/sizes/m/in/photostream/>
<http://www.imdb.com/media/rm91271168/tt0062974>
<https://www.google.ie/search?q=Photographs+from+Darby+O'+Gill+and+the+Little+People&hl=en&tbo=u&tbn=isch&source=univ&sa=X&ei=0KsfUfFjLiEBLMgOAI&ved=0CGMQsAQ&biw=1280&bih=899#imgcl=LZBascJWBaSx0M%3A%3BIXBoQmhlml242M%3Bhttp%253A%252F%252Fwww.riverbank.ie%252Ffiles%252Fimages%252Fposter1.jpg%3Bhttp%253A%252F%252Fwww.riverbank.ie%252Fshows%252Fdarby-ogill-and-the-little-people%3B418%3B313>

Of all the films shot in Ireland, Renes (2007) observes that Ford's film, *The Quiet Man*, has had a profound influence on how Ireland is represented in films that followed, albeit much to the displeasure of urban Irish dwellers. However, whereas Ireland's largely metropolitan society cringes at this Hollywoodised version of Irishness, they equally recognise the economic pragmatism such movie representations of Ireland afford (Barton, 2000). Curley (2007) asserts that the contemporary US perception of a

romantic Ireland gives further credence to innumerable positive Irish stereotypes. She contends that these flattering representations of Ireland and Irishness stimulate a growing demand for all things Irish associated with the USA. Accordingly, Negra (2001) argues that as Ireland's stock rose globally, Irish-US ethnicity came to the fore in the form of a nostalgic point of reference for Irish Americans.

Further support for the romanticisation of Ireland in Hollywood movies comes from Gibbons (1987) who approaches Ireland's representation in film from the perspective of Erwin Panofski's work on the French 17th century painter, Nicolas Poussin. Panofski (1955) contends that representation centres on hard and soft primitivism. Hard primitivism conceptualises a primitive life as an almost sub-human existence, devoid of pleasure or comfort, whereas soft primitivism proffers an opposing concept which conceives life as a golden age of plenty, innocence and happiness. Gibbons (1987) contends that *The Quiet Man* is representative of soft primitivism due to the romantic prism through which it was filmed by John Ford, whereas *Man of Aran* typifies hard primitivism because of the austere landscape in which it is set. Gibbons argues that Ford's romanticised view of Ireland was influenced by what he describes as "the urge to embellish and beautify even the most disturbing and intolerable aspects of reality" (Gibbons, 1987: 197-198). John Ford's view of Ireland draws attention to the way in which Ireland is imagined in America, and how organic images of Ireland are constructed in US media, as will be discussed in the following section.

4.3.6 Selling Notions of Irishness in US Advertising and Television

Graham (2001) argues that the USA is viewed both as a consumer and producer of Irishness. This is an important concept in terms of this thesis which is looking at how Ireland is imagined as a tourism destination in the minds of US tourists. Plate 4.5 is a

good example of how Ireland has been traditionally imagined by Americans as far back as 1943, when this advertisement for Coca Cola appeared in *Life* magazine.



Plate 4.5 Advertisement for Coca-Cola in *Life* magazine circa 1943

This Image is Reproduced Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland

It shows US troops based in Ulster using stereotypical Irish Images such as a jaunting car, a thatched cottage and as Furlong (2009) describes a “winsome c aillin”. Here again we see Irish people being portrayed in a traditional way that reflects the prevailing imagined view of Ireland and Irish people. The relationship between Ireland and the US has always been close, not least of all because of the numbers of Irish people that have emigrated to the USA in search of work, as mentioned earlier. Gilroy (1993: xxii) posits the idea that “Ireland is really a US country located in the wrong continent”. In many contexts, Ireland has been viewed as being more oriented towards the USA than to Europe. Bord F aile, the precursor to Tourism Ireland, also alluded to this

orientation in a 10 minute video produced on their behalf in the 1980s, in which Ireland was described as “facing the Atlantic” rather than Europe (Clancy, 2009: 86). Baylis (2007) makes reference to Ireland and the stereotypical images Americans have of Ireland in her review of a book titled *The Irish Face in America*. The book presents as she describes, ‘numerous tropes of the Irish stereotype’ which are depicted in words such as ‘red hair’, ‘Aran jumpers’, ‘Irish Cáilins’, and the ‘Irish American Family’(Baylis, 2007: 123). Such stereotyping, she argues, has little to do with Ireland and more to do with the needs of white Americans for self-definition.

In a country where millions of the population can trace their ancestry back to Ireland, defining what it means to be Irish in America has many influences. Texts written about or set in Ireland, as already discussed earlier in this chapter, have been instrumental in propagating an image of the Irish as being a race possessing “an innate proclivity for self-expression” (Baylis 2007: 126). This, she argues, is exhibited through a love for dance, music, storytelling and sociability based on the clichés of tourist iconography. *The Irish Face in America* strives to offer a current impression of what it means to be an Irish American, by making a connection with its credentials in the past. Graham (2001) contends that being of Irish decent in the US is less concerned with authentic representations of Irishness. Instead it is used more as proof of identity, and becomes more about the need to associate with traditional Irish values. It is the endless search for these values that attracts so many US tourists to visit Ireland each year, regardless of whether they have Irish ancestry or not. In effect, they are searching for a Utopian world where traditional values still exist and time has stood still, and Ireland is perceived as being such a place. Capitalising, in tourism terms, on presenting Ireland as a country where such traditional values still exist, has been the mainstay of marketing

campaigns targeting the USA inspiring US tourists to go in search for authentic experiences of Irishness. Graham (2001) comments on the concept of authenticity and Irishness in terms of Ireland's organic image in the USA; he argues that it is maintained by a persistent yearning for an authentic Irish culture that is really a desire for validation. In a country where so many cultures are represented, and where only a few can claim to be 'true native Americans', the desire to be identified as belonging to an ethnic group is very strong.

Negra (2001) argues that Irishness, as depicted on US television, also draws attention to traditional Irish values. These traditional values are conceptualised in terms of the Irish family home as depicted on US television. "The prominence of the family home in Irish-themed sitcoms and dramas" on US television channels fits well with a growing cultural appetite in the USA for "the production of an instant past". Ireland is depicted in US popular media as a "living museum" representing the ethnic past from which many Americans imagine they come from, or would like to come from (Negra, 2001). Negra (2001: 231) also states that "Irishness as a mode of transformative identity" is reflected in US television advertising as an "accessory discourse to family values". She observes that Irishness and Irish culture have enjoyed primacy of place in a number of long-running television advertisement campaigns in the USA. Negra (2001) argues that the most notable among these is the Irish Spring Soap, represented in Plate 4.6 and Lucky Charms Cereal, represented in Plate 4.7.



Plate 4.6 Screen Shot from “Irish Spring” Television Advertisement Circa 1980s

Source: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?NR=1&v=ZrrQ0ujAjt4&feature=endscreen>



Plate 4.7 Screen Shot from “Lucky Charms Cereal” Television Advert

Source: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8N2haQjqTqE>

Ireland and Irishness, as depicted in both of these advertising campaigns, is indicative of Irish family values using actors or caricatures. For example, the Lucky Charms advertisement caricatures how Americans imagine Irish people to look. Equally, the red haired boy as used in a 1980s television advertisement for Irish Spring Soap is another case in point. Negra (2001) contends that campaigns such as those just mentioned, along with induced imagery produced by the Irish Tourist Board, have constructed Ireland as a bastion for “lost” US values (Negra, 2001: 231). However, she argues that a new focus in terms of how Ireland and Irishness is constructed in the USA has emerged in recent years. Traditionally, television and film dramas about Ireland or Irish families living in the USA were themed around Americans solving Irish political problems. However, over time Ireland has increasingly been used to solve the problem of identity for millions of Americans who can trace their ancestry back to Ireland (Negra, 2001). Irishness in contemporary US media advertising is more likely to be positioned within historically Irish strongholds such as Chicago, Boston and New York depicting proud Irish mothers, feisty daughters and devoted sons which appear from time to time across a variety of genres.

4.4 Induced Imagery of Ireland

Pike (2004) argues that images are formed on two levels, organically from non-tourism sources, and deliberately by marketers, otherwise known as induced images. The literature tells us that organic destination images develop as a result of people’s everyday interpretation of information. The sources of this information have been discussed in Chapter Two. Induced images however, differ from organic images in that they are deliberately formed to promote tourism and it is for this reason they will be discussed next. Image is important to the marketing efforts of destinations like Ireland

in creating an enticing reason for tourists to visit. Kozak and Baloglu (2011) observe that destinations consist of a diverse range of products, services and people, and include attractions, transport, facilities and tours. There are many players in terms of how these products are marketed, and all of them are producers of induced destination images (Pike, 2005). The influence of some of these various players, such as transport companies, tour operators and state tourist bodies on Ireland's induced destination image will now be discussed. In the process, origins of themes and motifs still used to promote Ireland as a tourism destination today will be traced.

4.4.1 Travel to Ireland by Sea: Early Induced Images of Ireland

Ireland is an island nation, and therefore it depends on transport companies to bring tourists to Ireland. Throughout Ireland's history, various transport companies have produced induced images of Ireland to promote their services. In the early years after independence, travel to Ireland was by surface transport. Plate 4.8 presents a sample of the type of induced imagery produced by one of the shipping companies, Anchor Lines, to promote Ireland. It is reproduced in this chapter to illustrate the early use of motifs such as Ireland's scenic beauty; a theme that reflects the painterly tradition of landscape artists discussed earlier.

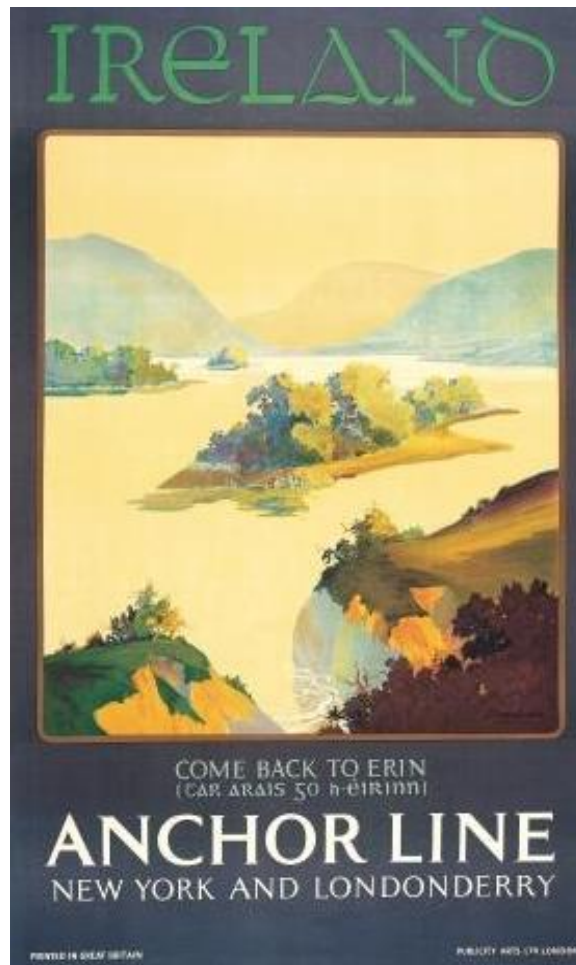


Plate 4.8 Anchor Line Poster Designed by Clive Venn Strangeman (Circa,1930)

This Image is Reproduced Courtesy of the National Museum of Ireland

4.4.2 Rail Companies as Producers of Induced Images of Ireland

The shipping companies only played a limited role in promoting Ireland, largely because they did not see Ireland as a tourist destination; instead they viewed it as a source of mass emigration. Other forms of transport providers like the railway companies were much more important. For example, one of the legacies remaining after British rule was a functioning railway system throughout Ireland. The rail companies which operated on these networks were some of the earliest producers of induced images of Ireland. One of these railway companies, the Great Southern Railways, did everything in its power to help bring tourism traffic to Ireland and

promote Ireland's image abroad (Keogh, 1925). The railway throughout the 1920s promoted Ireland as a tourism destination, using various media such as the magazine *Holiday Haunts*. The images produced by these rail companies depict Ireland as rural in nature as reflected in posters produced by Great Southern Railways such as the one in Plate 4.9.



Plate 4.9 Gap of Dunloe, Killarney, Co. Kerry, Great Southern Railways Poster Signed G.H. Bland

This Image is Reproduced Courtesy of the National Museum of Ireland

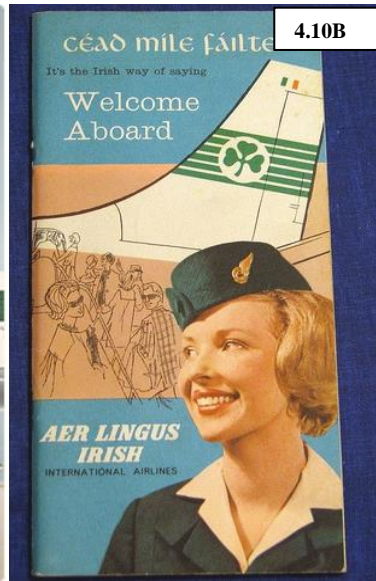
Reviewing images produced by the railway companies offers insights into Ireland's induced destination image. O'Connor (1993) comments on the way in which Ireland is traditionally portrayed in induced destination imagery. Ireland, she argues, is presented as a timeless place, where weary tourists can escape the trials and tribulations of their everyday lives. Images produced by various transport companies from the 1920s onwards to market their services to Ireland reflect O'Connor's (1993) view of Ireland.

4.4.3 Air Travel and Visual Representations of Ireland

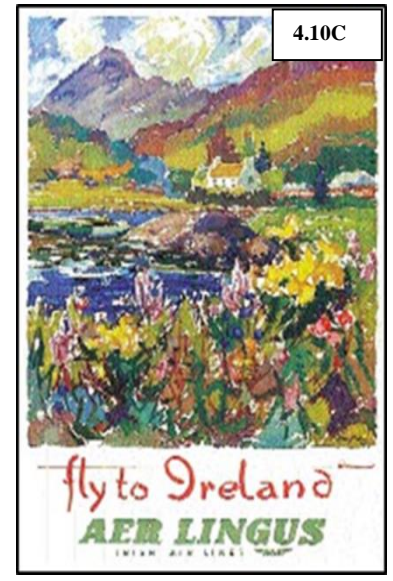
As Ireland matured as a nation, technology advanced around the world, and air travel evolved. Similar to the railway companies, air carriers produced induced images to market the various destinations they flew to. Despite a lack of financial resources, Ireland started its own airline, Aerlinte Eireann, in 1936. In the years that followed, it produced posters to promote its routes into Ireland (Plate 4.10C). King (2000) argues that Aerlinte Eireann, now Aer Lingus, played a pivotal role in promoting Ireland abroad. As a "flag carrier", Aer Lingus became the embodiment of national ambitions and Irish identity as much as an airline (Clark, 2007: 2). Wherever an Aer Lingus plane (Plate 4.10 A) touched down, it became a beacon of national pride (Barrett, 2006). The Shamrock, which is the airline's logo, quickly came to be understood as the national brand. Ireland's induced image or national brand was also represented in terms of the staff selected by Aer Lingus to work as cabin crew. Predominantly female, they were expected to emulate the very best of 'Irish womanhood' (Weldon, 2002). Smartly attired in the now standard 'green' uniform (Poster 4.10B), they were supposed to personify a strong national flavour, presenting a seamless experience of Irish hospitality, from booking office to final destination in Ireland.



(Tail Planes)



(Cabin Crew)



Fly to Ireland–Aer Lingus, Lithographic poster by Ormond Printworks, Dublin, 1954,

Plate 4.10 Various Aer Lingus Posters and Safety Cards

These Images Have Been Reproduced Courtesy of Aer Lingus

Aer Lingus’s cabin crew present a contemporary representation of Irish women in contrast to the more stereotypical imagery used by US carriers, such as TWA (see Plate 4.12A on page 99). Interestingly, Stevens et al. (2000) observe that until comparatively recently Ireland was a text written by men in which Ireland was perceived as feminine. They argue that Ireland’s feminine nature was enmeshed in English discourse on Ireland in which *Ireland* was visualised, as “a weak, ineffectual woman that needed to be controlled by a strong resolute man *Britain*” (2000: 408). Since independence, this image has changed whereby Ireland’s feminine nature is constructed in Irish myths, legends and folklore in opposition to the Anglo-Saxon construction of Ireland’s feminine nature above (Stevens et al., 2000).

Aer Lingus also played a role in keeping alive certain myths about Ireland that are of relevance to this research, such as a belief in the presence of leprechauns, as evidenced

by one of its advertisements (Plate 4.11). The tagline, “*Can you believe everything you read about us?*”, came from a 1965 marketing campaign playing on the mythical stories about Ireland as being a place where anything is possible (Plate 4.11).



Plate 4.11 Aer Lingus Advertisement that Appeared in Ireland of the Welcomes Circa 1965

This Image is Reproduced Courtesy of Aer Lingus

Other airlines, such as Trans World Airlines (TWA) and Pan American (Pan AM), also produced images of Ireland (Plate 4.12). The images they used capture how Ireland was promoted as a tourist destination for the US outbound travel market in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. Image 4.12A, for example, is a poster that was used to market Ireland in the USA in 1958 to potential TWA passengers.



Plate 4.12 Selection of Airline Posters Advertising Ireland

Plate 4.12A TWA Poster by San Greco, Courtesy of David Pollack Vintage Posters

4.12B Pan Am Poster by Edward McKnight Kauffer, Courtesy of Bernard Fickert
Island Art Cards

4.12C Aer Lingus Poster by Adolph Treidler, Courtesy of Aer Lingus

The images produced by the airlines that flew into Ireland from the USA, as the samples above show, focused on portraying Ireland as a country “rural in nature” (Scotney, 2006: 8). When compared with the induced images produced by the shipping and rail companies in the 1930s, the airline posters in Plate 4.12 suggest that little appears to have changed from 1922 up to the late 1960s in terms of the motifs and themes used to communicate this idea of Ireland.

4.4.4 The 1990s and Ireland’s Induced/Manufactured Image

Quinn’s (1994) and O’ Leary and Deegan’s (2005) research on brochures used by various ferry companies to bring tourists from Great Britain and mainland Europe brings the discussion on Ireland’s induced destination image up to the 1990s. Although

targeting a European market, yet again Ireland is depicted as having attractive scenery, an unspoiled environment, friendly people and a relaxed pace of life. Images of white washed cottages and open spaces serve to communicate a message to the potential tourist that Ireland still holds on to, as Quinn (1994: 64) describes, its “traditional fabric of society” which she describes as a “manufactured image of Ireland” (Quinn, 1994: 64).

4.4.5 Summary

Thus far, this section has drawn attention to the influence transport companies have had on Ireland’s induced destination image. The motifs and themes percolating through the various brochures and posters produced by these companies present Ireland in a traditional way. Images of Ireland’s rural landscapes, historic ruins and friendly Irish people were used by shipping, rail and air transport companies to communicate an impression of what Ireland might be like. King (2000) draws particular attention to the contribution made by Aer Lingus regarding producing induced images of Ireland at a time in Ireland’s history when there were very little financial resources available to do so. The US based airlines that operated into and out of Ireland throughout the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s followed suit, and interpreted Ireland in a similar, if somewhat more stereotypical way. Some tourists travelled to Ireland with these airlines as part of a tour. Similarly, tour operators also produced induced images of Ireland that they used in promotional material, as will be discussed next.

4.4.6 Tour Operators

As far back as 1895, tour companies such as Thomas Cook were bringing tourists to Ireland from the USA. These companies, similar to transport companies, were

important producers of induced images of Ireland. One of the first state run Irish tour companies was C oras Iompair  ireann (CIE). From the 1950s onwards this company had a monopoly in the US market, and produced many brochures and posters advertising Ireland as a tourism destination (Furlong, 2009). Plate 4.13, for example, depicts the type of imagery used by CIE to promote Ireland in the 1950s. It shows a tour bus filled with tourists who have just visited an old Irish castle. Castles are synonymous with Ireland, and in particular with how US tourists imagine Ireland. This explains why they are still used in contemporary marketing material targeting the US inbound market to Ireland.



Plate 4.13 CIE Tours Poster Circa 1950s

This Image is Reproduced Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland

CIE Tours is still a significant player in the Irish/US market, but it has been joined down through the years by others, such as Brendan Vacations and Collette Vacations. Plates 4.14 and 4.15 present collages of some of the contemporary images used by these companies to promote Ireland today on their respective websites. The themes and motifs that appear in induced images of Ireland produced by coach tour companies today, as can be seen from Plate 4.6, are not all that different from those depicted in the poster from the 1950s.



Plate 4.14 Selection of Photographs of Ireland from the Collette Vacations website

Source: http://www.collettevacations.com/description.cfm~Tour_Id~68&Shades-of-Ireland-Escorted-Tours



Plate 4.15 Selection of photographs of Ireland from the Brendan Vacations website

Source: <http://brendanvacations.com/vacation-styles/ireland/vacations/#/?country=0&when=&duration=&trvType=&price=>

For example, companies like Brendan Vacations and Colette Vacations use traditional views of rural Ireland, such as castles and Irish culture on their websites. These motifs are also depicted in imagery produced by state agencies such as Tourism Ireland. The next section will discuss the role of state tourist organisations as producers of induced images of Ireland.

4.4.7 State Agencies as Producers of Induced Imagery 1922 - 1995

A number of state agencies have been responsible for Ireland's induced tourism image since 1922. As agents of the state they have played a pivotal role in supporting, promoting and developing images that lay claim to notions of authentic Irishness for Irish as well as non-Irish people. Indeed, Clancy (2009) argues that nation branding through tourism can be further defined in an Irish context as an exercise in writing the nation, which is subsequently read by foreign tourists as well as the Irish at home. The first of these agencies was the Irish Tourism Association (ITA) which was formed in 1926. It held initial responsibility for how Ireland was promoted as a tourism destination. In marketing Ireland as a tourism destination agencies such as the ITA have taken great care in putting together a very specific notion of Ireland (Clancy, 2009). For example, the ITA produced a magazine called *Irish Travel*, which was one of the first sources of induced destination imagery of Ireland and it served a dual function. First, the magazine had a representative role, in that it created an idea of Ireland for those that could not travel there. It did this by means of articles in the magazine that were penned by Irish writers. This proved successful in that travel writing is an effective form of promotion. Travel writing as a source of induced imagery works because, as Cronin (2003: 181) points out, reading in a sense is "next to

being there”. The second function of the magazine was to encourage tourists to travel to Ireland by including photographs of scenic parts of Ireland.

The ITA was later joined by the Irish Tourist Board (ITB) in 1939 and Fógra Fáilte in 1952, which later became Bord Fáilte in 1955, and Fáilte Ireland today. These various agencies managed publicity for the whole country of Ireland at one time or another (Furlong, 2009). Zuelow (2007) contends that tourism promotion invariably is done at the national level by public agencies and is therefore essentially a conversation about the nation. Traditionally state tourism agencies held dual functions: a rhetorical function that endeavoured to attract potential tourists but equally a representative function that portrays the destination (Cronin, 2003). Edensor and Holloway (2008) observe that the promotion of Ireland as a tourism destination by state agencies has centred around five distinct themes: romantic nature, agricultural work, religious heritage, Celtic history and tradition, as well as literature and folklore. These themes appear in induced images (as will be seen later in this chapter) produced by Fáilte Ireland throughout the 1990s (Edensor and Holloway, 2008). These images were at odds with a modern, sophisticated and developing country such as Ireland had become during the economic boom of the Celtic Tiger. Instead they reflected what Furlong (2009: 163) refers to as a ‘lazy leprechaun’ idea of Ireland. However, images of the rural nature of Ireland similar to the ones used by the airlines as discussed earlier prevailed. For example, postcards such as the one produced by John Hinde below (Pate 4.16) were sent back home by countless tourists portraying an image of Ireland as “outside of the modern world” (Clancy, 2009: 83).



Plate 4.16 Well-known image by John Hinde

Image is Reproduced Courtesy of the John Hinde Collection

These themes had also been visually represented in a series of promotional films produced by Bord Fáilte, such as *Ireland Invites You*. The Irish countryside in these promotional films was conceptualised to create “empty time” where past, present and future are undifferentiated, and were used to market Ireland from the 1950s through to the 1980s (Clancy, 2009: 83).

4.4.8 Tourism Ireland and Three Ages of Branding Ireland: 1955-2009

Continuing with the theme of state tourism bodies and the role they play as cultural actors in (re)producing images of Ireland, the discussion now turns its focus to Tourism Ireland. As the current state tourism body tasked with promoting Ireland abroad, Tourism Ireland is in a unique position to comment on how Ireland has been promoted as a tourist destination. In a presentation titled *Country, destination and place - the three ages of branding*, delivered to ETC/UNWTO Seminar on Tourism Destination

Branding in June 2009, they comment on the branding of Ireland as a tourism destination from 1955 to 2009. As indicated by the title of the presentation, they categorise Ireland's tourism brand into three distinct ages.

They are as follows:

- 1955-1995 Explore Ireland the Country
- 1995-2007 Experience Ireland the Destination
- 2007-2009 Engage with Ireland the Place

(Tourism Ireland, 2009)

Clancy (2009) states that the branding of Ireland began with the assumption, that Ireland was already a global tourism destination brand that required management. The challenge therefore, was to establish how Ireland was imagined by potential tourists in order to tweak or capitalise on their understanding. Induced images used to brand Ireland between the years 1955 – 1995, as already discussed, focused on scenic beauty and friendly people as inducements for tourists to come and visit Ireland. The second age of branding Ireland (1995-2007) grew market interest in Ireland by focusing on “key winning imagery dimensions” (Tourism Ireland, 2009). Samples of the types of images considered to be winning images are presented in Plate 4.17.



Plate 4.17 Induced Images Used to Promote Ireland 1995-2007

Source: (Tourism Ireland, 2009)

Clancy (2009) states, that the main tourist attraction in Ireland is the Irish themselves. Bearing this in mind the third age of branding Ireland focused on experiencing Ireland through meeting Irish people. This message was communicated to the market through photographs like the ones in Plate 4.18, which were used to represent Irishness and Irish identity.



Plate 4.18 Induced Images Used to Promote Ireland 2007-2009

Source: (Tourism Ireland, 2009)

Bringing the discussion right up to the present day, marketing campaigns such as *Jump into Ireland* launched in 2012 by Tourism Ireland reflect Ireland’s sense of playfulness and natural beauty (Tourism Ireland). Scenes such as the one presented in plate 4.19 resonate with tourists for the reasons identified by Tourism Ireland in this excerpt from a 2011 press release:

“Research also shows that overseas consumers feel their daily lives lack a sense of wonder and joy and that, when it comes to choosing a holiday destination, they are looking for an authentic, stimulating experience that will leave them feeling replenished and uplifted. The island of Ireland is very well placed to deliver this type of holiday experience”.

(Tourism Ireland, 2011)



Plate 4.19 Screenshot of jump into Ireland video campaign

Source: www.discoverireland.com

Tourism Ireland continues to produce photographs to promote Ireland as a tourist destination where tourists can have authentic, stimulating experiences. These photographs of Ireland are used in various print, television and online media campaigns. Plates 4.20 and 4.21 present a selection of photographs that have been used to promote Ireland abroad as a tourism destination. They differ very little from the themes already discussed in this chapter.



Plate 4.20 Photographs from the Tourism Ireland image Library (1)

Source: www.tourismirelandimagelibrary.com



Plate 4.21 Photographs from the Tourism Ireland image Library (2)

Source: www.tourismirelandimagelibrary.com

4.4.9 Summary

In summing up Ireland's induced image the themes percolating through the various samples of induced imagery discussed so far depict Ireland as rural in nature, and a place where tourists can escape to. The way in which Irish people are depicted in induced imagery is of interest to this study for how the imagery represents Irishness and Irish identity for tourists. As induced images of Ireland, they vary little from the original script observed earlier by O'Connor (1993), in terms of how Ireland is marketed. Similarly, the photographs from the three ages of Ireland's destination brand, as defined by Tourism Ireland, as well as the more recent ones, align with these motifs.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has provided some brief reflections on Ireland's destination image in order to provide a context for the discussion of the findings in Chapter Seven. The visual imagery contained in this chapter draw attention to the way in which Irishness and Irish people are constructed and presented in both organic and induced imagery. It could be argued that little has changed in terms of how Ireland is imagined today, relative to Ireland's idealised image sketched in the painterly discourse and literary travel writing of 19th century romanticism (Bell, 1995). Some of this is because organic images in the form of a painting or a book are more pervasive and enduring, transcending many generations and therefore being encountered by a wider variety of people. However, this is not to negate the role played by agencies of the state in promoting Ireland as a tourism destination. Moreover, through the branding of Ireland and the accompanying marketing campaigns, agencies like Tourism Ireland and its predecessors continue to write Ireland's identity (Clancy, 2009). Keeping this in mind Negra (2001) encapsulates the role played by organic and induced images of Ireland in constructing

Ireland and Irishness best. She argues that the fascination for all things Irish does not show any signs of fading away. Ever since the 1990s, demand for recognisably Irish iconography, such as pop music, Irish pubs, Celtic design and Riverdance, as well as traditional music, theatre, memoirs, poetry, film and fiction, has grown exponentially (Negra, 2001). However, while some research has examined how Ireland is promoted as a tourism destination in brochure imagery targeted at the European market (Quinn, 1994; O’Leary and Deegan, 2005), and Murphy (2005) looked at the pre and post-visitation image of Ireland in Great Britain, there is a gap in the research regarding Ireland’s destination image in the USA. Furthermore, little is known about how US tourists construct and make sense of Ireland and Irish people by taking photographs. By investigating how tourists consume and thereby make sense of the places they visit through practicing photography as part of ‘being a tourist’, this thesis aims to address this gap in our understanding in an Irish context. It does this by looking at the photographs taken by US tourists of Ireland while on holiday in order to investigate how they imagine and make sense of Ireland as a place. The next chapter, Chapter Five, discusses the methodologies selected to address the research aim and objectives as outlined in Chapter One. It will be followed by a presentation of the findings from the empirical work in Chapter Six.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.0 Introduction

Ayikoru (2009) states that exploring some of the tensions in the production of knowledge with regards to ontological and epistemological issues can help “broaden the horizon within which knowledge is produced” (2009: 62). Bearing this in mind, this chapter discusses the various ontological and epistemological issues, which informed the choice of methods selected to address the research aim and objectives outlined in Chapter One. This chapter discusses constructivism relative to other paradigms in order to justify its application to this research. In essence, a constructivist paradigm is appropriate in situations where the knower [the author of this thesis] and the to-be-known [US tourists], come together and where knowledge is not so much “discovered” but rather “created” (Lincoln and Guba, 2013: 40).

The chapter begins by discussing the ontological and epistemological assumptions that underpin the research. It reviews the main research paradigms informing tourism research and positions the researcher as a constructivist. The remainder of the chapter addresses the various visual methodologies used and outlines how the research was operationalised. The chapter concludes by discussing various ethical issues associated with visual methods and how they were overcome in the context of this research.

5.1 Research Approach

Lincoln and Guba (2013) state, that there are many ways in which a research question can be answered. Traditionally, reality they argue has been looked upon as concrete and

tangible and something that can be explained by conducting research in a prescribed and resolute way (Lincoln and Guba, 2013). Continuing with this line of thought, it follows that research therefore, must be conducted objectively in order to uncover how things really are and really work. However, there are other approaches that can be taken which take cognisance of a relatively recent change in philosophical beliefs regarding the nature of reality. Put in simple terms, while acknowledging that reality does exist, this new philosophical view also accepts that reality cannot be determined with absolute certainty. In essence, how we understand and interpret the world around us differs depending on one's philosophical point of view.

Rakić (2012) states, that philosophical positions or ways of seeing the world are generally characterised by answering three important questions. First, from an ontological perspective what is the nature of knowledge? Secondly, epistemologically what is the nature of the relationship between the researcher and the phenomenon under investigation? Finally, methodologically how should the researcher uncover new knowledge? Bearing these important questions in mind this research is concerned with understanding tourists' consumption and construction of place. The theoretical background underpinning this research, and the methodologies chosen to address the research aim and objectives, is presented in Figure 5.1. The framework is informed by a number of key assumptions related to the research aim and objectives. Firstly, the research is situated within a phenomenographical constructivist paradigm whereby the researcher chooses to study how people experience a given phenomenon - in this case, Ireland (Marton, 1986; Marton and Booth, 1997). Secondly, the researcher adopts a relativist non-dualistic ontological perspective due to the inseparability of both the object (Ireland as a destination), and the subjects (US tourists) under investigation. Thirdly, given the ontological assumption of relativism, it follows that the relationship

between the knower [in this case the author of this thesis] and the phenomenon under investigation [US tourists' consumption and construction of Ireland] is what Lincoln and Guba (2013) refer to as highly person and context specific. Therefore, in the context of this research, reality is taken to exist but it is also believed that reality is dependent on the transactional subjectivism of the researcher and the participants within the particular context in which the research takes place.

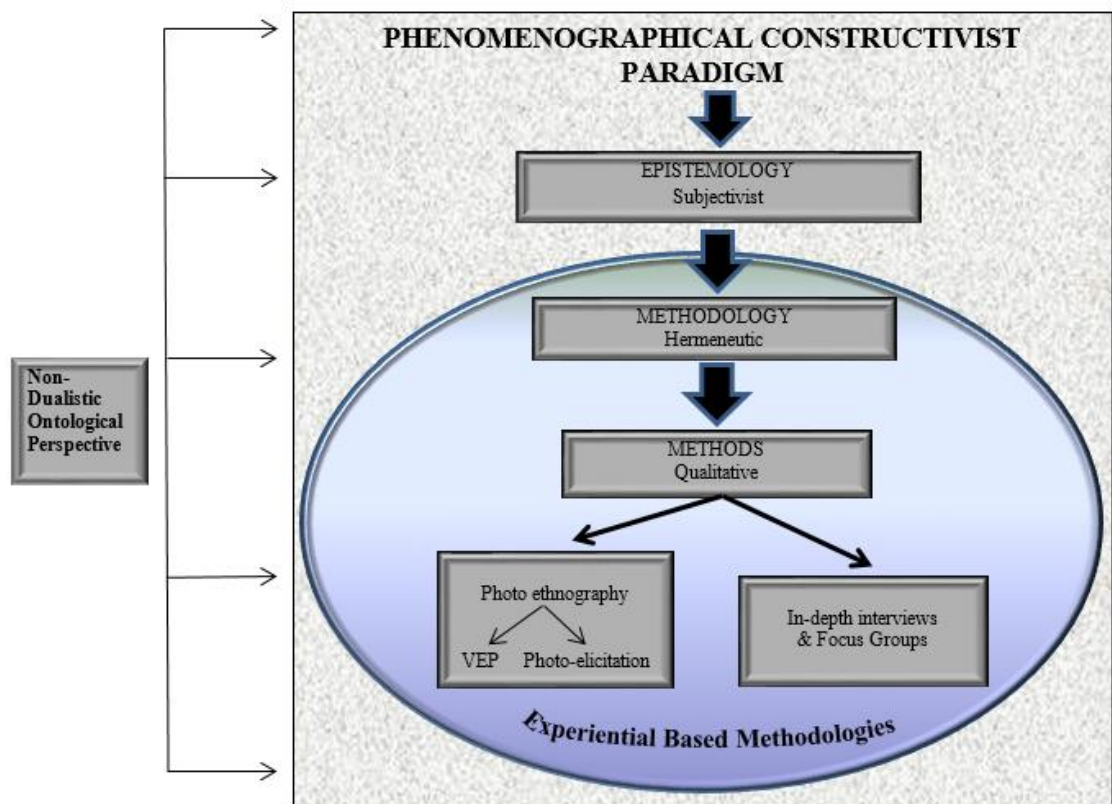


Figure 5.1 Theoretical Framework Underpinning the Research

Given the ontological assumptions of relativism and the epistemological presupposition of transactional subjectivism as mentioned previously, it follows that the methodology appropriate to constructivism must be one that can probe into “the minds and meaning-making activities of the knowers involved” (Lincoln and Guba, 2013: 40). They state that “hermeneutic/dialecticism” is the basic methodological underpinning constructivism (2013: 40). Hermeneutically-situated research is deemed appropriate

where “the researcher and the participant co-construct the data and where the participant engages in interpreting and assigning meaning to the data for the researcher...” (Pernecky and Jamal, 2010: 1069). Hermeneutic methodology lends itself to certain methods where the ontological focus of the inquiry is the nature of ‘being in the world’ (Pernecky and Jamal, 2010). Examples include in-depth interviews and focus groups, which are used in this research in conjunction with visual methodologies.

Visual methodologies which use photographs are a good source of data that allow researchers to better understand place meaning. Collier and Collier (1986: 5) argue that the “critical eye of the camera” generates accurate visual data often missed due to the poor observation skills of us “mortals”. The camera allows us to see without fatigue; the last picture taken is always just as detailed as the first, with the memory of film replacing the more traditional researcher’s notebook (Collier and Collier, 1986). Rakić (2012) argues that adopting visual research methods, similar to other research tools, is dependent on their fit within the research theme and framework. The use of visual methods in this research is justified because photographs evoke three things of interest to social scientists particularly well - information, emotion and reflection (Rose, 2007). The use of photographs in this research both supports and reflects what Rakić and Chambers (2012) argue is the growing recognition of the merits of visual methods within the study of tourism.

5.2 Research Philosophies

At the outset this thesis has been located within a phenomenographical constructivist paradigm. However, this was not an uninformed decision, it was based on a review of the main philosophical paradigms that are used within tourism research. Dawson

(2009) defines research philosophies as general principles which guide the researcher, and include limitations, perplexities and ethical choices. Creswell (1998) states that these principles or philosophical assumptions are used either explicitly or implicitly and speak to the researcher's understanding of knowledge, and the meanings people assign to it. Choosing a research philosophy for any research project, therefore, necessitates a discussion on such issues as ontology, epistemology and methodology (Veal, 2011).

Ontological issues address the nature of reality for the qualitative researcher. Reality is constructed by individuals involved in the research. In terms of understanding this reality, phenomenography looks at the ways in which people perceive and experience phenomena (Marton and Pang, 1999). It is consistently described in the literature as a research specialisation that aims to map "the qualitatively different ways in which people experience, conceptualise, perceive and understand various aspects of the world around them" (Marton, 1986: 31). Ostensibly, ontology relates to reality whilst epistemology connects the researcher to that reality (Veal, 2006).

Researchers "approach their studies within a certain paradigm" or "worldview" that is connected to the ontological and epistemological perspective of the researcher (Creswell, 1998: 74). A non-dualistic approach to research is based on the assumption "that there is an inseparable relationship between people and aspects of their world" (Yates, Partridge and Bruce, 2012: 99). It is further supported by Fuller's (1990) contention regarding the usefulness of non-dualistic concepts in elucidating deeper understanding of how human and natural features are interconnected with the overall experience of place. The non-dualistic, ontological perspective presented in this thesis

is positioned within a phenomenographical constructivist paradigm. Justification for this approach is discussed relative to other paradigms.

5.2.1 Positivism

The positivism paradigm argues that there is only one true reality (Veal, 2006) and appropriate ways of studying it (McNeill and Chapman, 2005; Davies, 2003; Decrop, 2000). Positivists believe that the same research methods can be used to study human behaviour as are used in chemistry and physics, a view supported by Clark et al., (1998). Positivists believe that the researcher should be objective and detached from the phenomenon under investigation (Blaxter et al., 2006). Veal (2006) contends that positivist methodologies adopt hypothetical-deductive models which are based on a deductive process to test a pre-established hypothesis. Davies (2003: 100) states that positivist methodologies are derived and expressed mathematically, leading to the “positivism of statistical methods and their related governing laws or general equilibrium”. Such an approach can be defined as a “commonsensical” approach to conducting research (Blaxter et al.2006: 60). Davies (2003) questions the appropriateness of positivist approaches in tourism research. He argues that tourism is more than just a collection of discrete and changeable perspectives about society at large; instead, it is an activity that is based on relationships.

5.2.2 Post-positivism

Post-positivism has been criticised for being too rigid and inflexible to be considered as a one size fits all approach to research. Post-positivism is based on the same set of beliefs as positivism, albeit with an acknowledgement that we can only know the world imperfectly based on probability, as opposed to certainty (Blaxter et al., 2006). Post-

positivist researchers do not claim to have discovered the truth, but instead, to have established probable facts which remain useful only until such time as new theories or laws proffer a more comprehensive explanation (Veal, 2006). In the context of this research, which is focusing on place and place-making, Ayikoru (2009) makes a strong argument for not adopting a positivist or post-positivist paradigm when the phenomenon under investigation relates to knowing in a human-social context, as opposed to a natural context. A similar view is held by Ryan (2000) who argues that research methodologies designed through a positivist lens contain limitations associated with their inability to define the nature of the individual tourist experience. Decrop (2000) argues that positivist and post-positivist paradigms focus on explaining why tourists behave in a certain way, as opposed to trying to understand the reasons behind their behaviour. He contends that interpretivist paradigms such as constructivism offer more useful ways of understanding and interpreting the world (Decrop, 2000).

5.2.3 Constructivism

Rakić (2012) states that constructivism departs entirely from positivism and post-positivism because it is characterised by a totally dissimilar set of ontological and epistemological philosophies. Schwandt (1994) observes that constructivism, at least in the social sciences, is a recent philosophy. Constructivists challenge the “naïve realist view of the world to the extent of denying any form of interest in” positivist paradigms (Ayikoru, 2009: 71). But constructivism is really much more than that; it is a paradigm based on a relativist as opposed to realist ontology, and a subjectivist as opposed to an objectivist epistemology. Most relativists subscribe to a belief that there *is* an external world, but argue that we can only directly access *representations* of the world in our consciousness (Walters and Mehay, 2012). Relativists are guided by the

view that interpretation is subjective to the person doing the interpreting. For example, Walters and Mehay (2012) use colour to explain the relativists' view of the world. Taking the colour blue, they argue that 'blueness' is something constructed in our consciousness and is unique for all of us. Conversely, realists believe that blueness is experienced exactly the same by everyone.

Constructivists further define their ontological beliefs along parallels that view the world as a place derived from "multiple realities and ways of being" (Chambers, 2007: 109), as experienced by individuals that do not conform to the absolute truth paradigm purported by their positivist colleagues (Wang, 1999). In this regard, the constructivist paradigm is situated within an ontological perspective that departs entirely from positivism or post-positivism in the belief that social reality is plural and created in the minds of individuals. Constructivists are also of the view that knowledge is co-created through the interactions between the researcher and the researched (Rakić, 2012; Lincoln and Guba, 2013). Mills et al. (2006: 9) summarise the constructivist approach to research based on their review of Collins (1998) and Van Manen (1991) as:

1. The creation of a sense of exchange between participant and the researcher in the co-construction of meaning which is grounded in the participants' and the researchers' experiences.
2. The establishment of relationships with participants that explicate power imbalances and attempts to modify these imbalances.
3. Clarification of the position the author takes in the text, the relevance of narration and how the researcher gives voice to the participants' stories.

In conclusion, Schwandt (1994) argues that in a legitimately everyday sense, as individuals we are all constructivists, if we subscribe to the belief that the mind is central to the construction of knowledge. He further supports this argument by stating that knowledge is not “passive” or a simple imprinting of ideas in the mind, rather it is active in that the “mind does something with these impressions” (Schwandt, 1994: 125).

5.2.4 Summary

The main criticism of qualitative research is that researchers can never conclusively state that they have achieved a definitive answer, based on the people they have studied. The main critics of quantitative approaches argue that they use too narrow a lens to examine the behaviour of individuals, and in so doing, often miss the opportunity to really capture the essence of the phenomenon under investigation. However, all research requires a certain leap of faith and a critical acceptance of the potential fallibility of the research outcomes (Clark et al., 1998: 18). Figure 5.2 presents in table form, the various philosophical assumptions, outlined by Guba and Lincoln (2005), that were considered by the researcher associated with this thesis. This study adopts a constructivist paradigm informed by the ontological and epistemological perspectives of the researcher and the phenomenon under investigation.

Philosophical Assumptions with Implications for Practice		
<i>Item</i>	<i>Positivism/Post-positivism</i>	<i>Interpretivism/Constructivism</i>
Inquiry aim	Explanation, prediction and control	Understanding, reconstructing
Nature of knowledge	Verified hypothesis established as facts	Individual or collective reconstruction
Knowledge accumulation	Accretion – building blocks adding to edifice of knowledge, generalisations and cause and effect	More informed and sophisticated reconstructions, variations of experience
Rigor	Conventional benchmarks of rigor internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity	Trustworthiness and authenticity, including catalyst for action
Values	Excluded, influence denied	Included - formative
Ethics	Extrinsic process: tilt towards deception	Intrinsic process: tilt toward revelations, special problems
Voice	Disinterested scientist as informer of decision makers, policy makers and change agents	Passionate participant as facilitator of multi-voice reconstruction
Hegemony	In control of publication, funding, promotion and tenure	Seeking recognition and input, offering challenges to predecessor's paradigms, aligned with postcolonial aspirations

Figure 5.2 Philosophical Assumptions with Implications for Practice

Source: (Author, adapted from Guba and Lincoln, 2005: 194)

5.3 Positioning the Researcher as a Constructivist

Tribe (2009) argues that locating the researcher in tourism research is in itself a philosophical act. At its most rudimentary level, research requires the researcher to extract him or herself from the busy world of daily life, to, in effect, become liberated, allowing time for reflection about the meaning and purpose of life. Qualitative researchers invariably act as “bricoleurs” using different frameworks, akin to a “quilt maker”, to elucidate new meaning and understandings of the world (Ivanoff and Hultberg, 2006: 130; Denzin and Lincoln, 2011: 4). The manner in which a researcher approaches a research problem depends upon their own philosophical views. Veal (2011) states that substantively, published research in the areas of tourism and leisure has largely been prompted by the interests of researchers who identify with a particular research philosophy, as opposed to demands for the research from tourism and leisure

industries. The degree to which the philosophical views of the researcher impact on the research output depends on the intensity, extent and eventual result of the research process (Quinn, 2010).

A constructivist approach has been adopted by the researcher in addressing the research aim in this thesis for two reasons. Firstly, constructivism potentially offers deeper understanding of the perceptions, feelings and emotions associated with Ireland based on the various interpretations of US tourists in terms of how they construct Ireland as a place (Wang, 1999). Secondly, constructivism facilitates analysis of unquantifiable data related to people whom social researchers observe and talk to by studying their letters, photographs, newspaper accounts and diaries (Berg, 2004: 7). Bruner (1994: 407) states that “all proponents of constructivism share a common view that the meaning of the text is not inherent in the text but emerges from how people read or experience the text”. A constructivist approach to phenomenology, such as the one adopted in this research, strengthens the academic argument that places are constructions by their very nature (Seigfried, 1976, in Rakić and Chambers, 2012). Conceptualising places as constructs which are formed through an endless process of production and reproduction within the constructivist paradigm, as defined by Bruner (1994), presents a new understanding relating to place authenticity in tourism experiences (Wang, 1999). This research is guided by the belief, as highlighted by Lincoln and Guba (2013), that in human sciences, objects only exist in the minds of the people imagining them. Consequently, it can be argued that ontologically, places draw their validity and importance from people who grant them that status.

Pernecky (2012) offers some timely directions for constructivist based research in the context of tourism. He defines the first of these directions as theoretical perspectives of tourism. The second direction points to the construction of various experiences, performances and behaviours by tourists and hosts (Pernecky, 2012). He offers a mind map (Figure 5.3) that illustrates these possible constructivist directions and provides a visual scaffolding of some areas where further research may be conducted. This study adopts a constructivist approach to enquiring into the “meaningful construction of tourism places and spaces” (Pernecky, 2012: 1129), as highlighted by the red arrow in Figure 5.3.

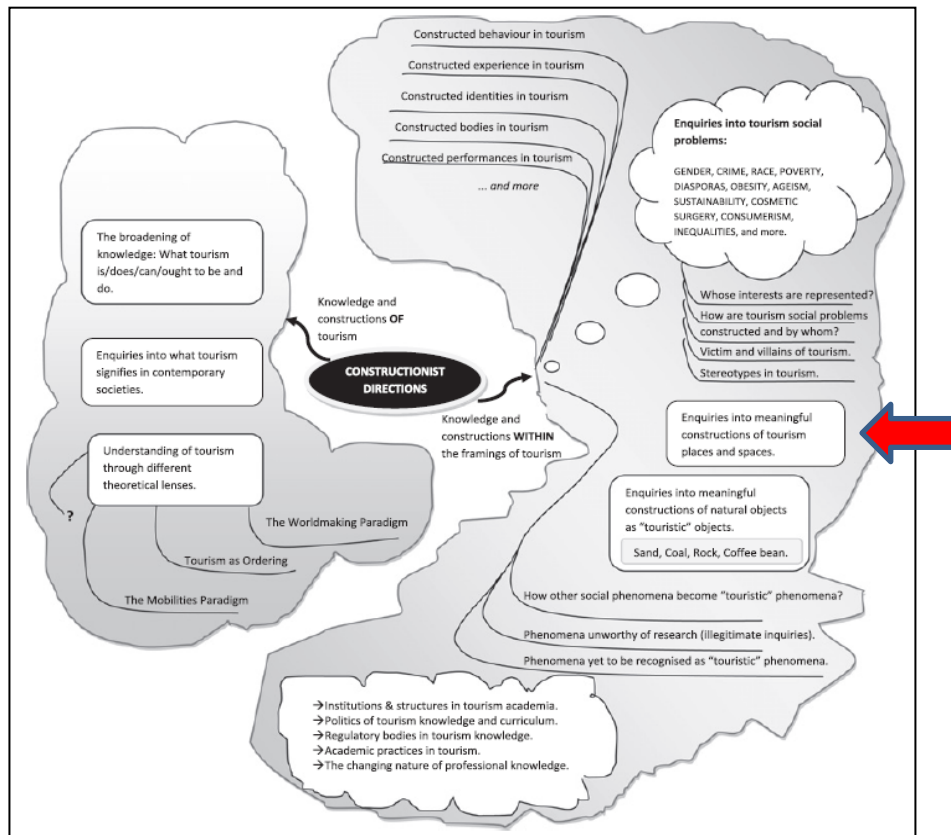


Figure 5.3 Constructionist Directions in the Study of Tourism

Source: (Pernecky, 2012: 1129)

5.4 The Reflexive Voice of the Researcher

Previously in this chapter the justifications for employing a constructivist paradigm to the research were discussed. The principle philosophical tenet of constructivism is that it brings together the knower and the to-be-known where they create rather than discover knowledge (Lincoln and Guba, 2013). Constructivism therefore by definition requires a certain degree of reflexivity on behalf of the knower. Reflexivity in the context of this research suggests that the researcher must be aware of the impact he/she may have on the process and outcomes of the research based on the principle that the knowledge cannot be separated from the knower (Steedman, 1991). Anderson (2008) discusses this further. She states that in conducting qualitative research it is virtually impossible for the researcher to remain ‘outside’ of the subject matter. The researcher’s presence however small will have some effect on the outcomes. It is for this reason keeping the aforementioned discussion in mind, that this chapter now focuses attention on the author of this thesis and his voice in the research.

This thesis is influenced by my life experiences and previous work (which brought me into contact with US tourists on a daily basis) as much as by my more recent academic career as a college lecturer. These experiences have shaped my research interests and choices, the knowledge and ethical considerations I bring to them, and have also contributed to my questioning of ideas such as objectivity, rationality, and what is or is not truth. Hence I am particularly uncomfortable with a ‘one size fits all’ approach to research that seeks to produce generalisations as opposed to probing individual thinking. This view has informed both my ontological perspective on the nature of knowledge and my epistemological relationship with those that hold it. These beliefs

shaped and infiltrated each stage in the research from design, through to execution and final reporting of the findings.

Beginning with the choice of the United States as a focus for the research, this decision was informed by a life time of personal encounters with US tourists as well as family connections and indeed a brief period living in the USA in the early 1990s. From these experiences grew a fascination with why US tourists in particular, spoke in such glowing terms about Ireland and even more so about Irish people. I needed to know more. Reading various tourism reports yielded a certain amount of information but were somewhat limited in locating the voice of the US tourist to Ireland. Whereas it is generally accepted that US tourists travel to Ireland in pursuit of culture, landscape and people, I wanted to know how US tourists made sense of Ireland as a place. Qualitative research was identified from the outset as being where answers to these questions might be found. A constructivist paradigm facilitated a sharing, or more importantly, a co-creation of knowledge by me and my US participants with regards to how they imagined and constructed Ireland as a place. However, whereas the co-creation of knowledge is very much a feature of this research the use of the first person in reporting it, as is sometimes used in constructivist research, remains silent in this case. This is because I wanted the participants to be the central voice emanating from the findings.

5.5 Secondary Research

Goeldner and Ritchie (2012) observe that researchers often fail to exhaust all possible secondary sources of information before embarking on primary data collection. Veal (2011) points out that if information is readily available that will answer the research aim, it would be a poor use of resources to collect new information. Secondary data can vary in nature from quantitative, statistical based sources to more qualitative,

documentary sources. Documentary sources may include artefacts and diaries, newspapers, magazines, photographs, advertising posters, video clips, films, as well as in more contemporary forms, such as blogs and social media in the form of Facebook (Jennings, 2010). Both published and unpublished secondary sources of information in the form of books, journal articles, video clips and photographs were used to form and address the research aim and related objectives in this research. Where these sources were found deficient, it indicated a gap in understanding and knowledge related to the topic under investigation. An initial review of the literature informed the research aim and related objectives outlined in Chapter One. In terms of research objective 3, archival research was conducted to explore how Ireland's destination image evolved over time. This will be discussed in the next section.

5.5.1 Archival Research of Photographs

Extensive archival research, as defined by Quinn (2006), was conducted by this researcher on publications contained in the archives of Trinity College Dublin. This archival research took the form of reviewing issues of *Irish Travel*, a magazine produced by the Irish Tourist Association (ITA), which in later years became *Ireland of the Welcomes* (Furlong, 2009). The purpose of this research was to trace how Ireland was constructed as a place, over time, as portrayed visually in State produced publications. Veal (2006) argues that the secondary analysis or re-analysis of such research data as contained in the two publications mentioned above is a potentially fruitful source of information. Yet, carrying out this type of archival research is a widely neglected activity (Veal, 2006). This thesis benefits from archival research by providing the researcher with a historical perspective regarding Ireland's image. Furlong's (2009) book titled *Irish tourism 1880-1980* also offers some historical

vignettes of how Ireland was constructed as a place from independence in 1922. As stated above, one of the purposes of conducting secondary research is to identify gaps in understanding, related to the specific topic under investigation. Once identified, primary methods need to be selected to address these gaps in the literature. In the context of this thesis, the philosophical position of the researcher and the nature of the enquiry under investigation, informed the choice of methods for the primary research.

5.6 Primary Research

Ryan (2000) argues that scientists have invented hundreds of ways to collect qualitative data. He classifies data collection into three fundamental categories; techniques for indirect observation, direct observation, and techniques for elicitation. These three categories are dependent on the nature and amount of contact between the people being studied and the researcher. He posits a fourth category, which he titles mixed methods, which is an amalgamation of the first three in various combinations. Figure 5.4 draws attention to these methods of data collection.

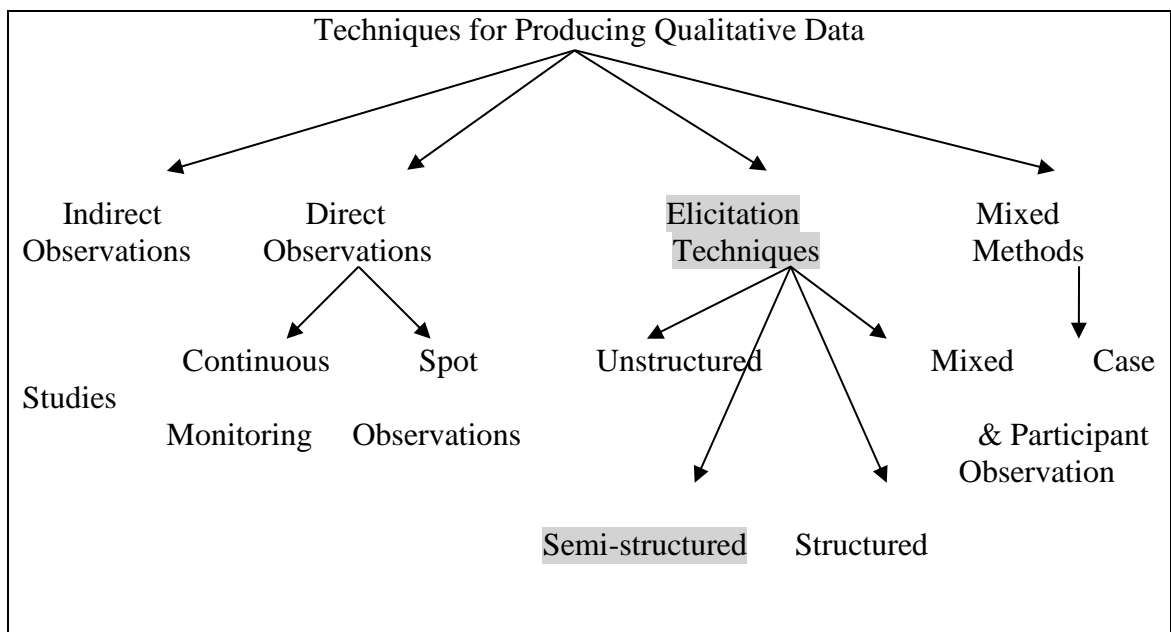


Figure 5.4 Taxonomy of Techniques in Qualitative Data

Source: (Ryan and Bernard, 2000: 769-80)

Constructing places as tourism destinations is essentially a visual discipline, requiring the producers of such images (destination management organisations), and the interpreters of them (the tourist) to hopefully arrive at a consensus regarding what message the image is supposed to convey. Therefore, photographs and the people who take them seem to be a good place to start looking at how places are constructed and consumed because “photographs allow tourists considerable power over the way they construct their intangible memories” of the places they visit (Markwell, 1997: 153). The tools selected in this research are highlighted in Figure 5.4, and were used in conjunction with visual methodologies.

5.7 Visual Methodologies

Emmison and Smith (2004) argue that contextualising the role of visual methodologies in social research is made difficult by the fact that researchers cannot agree on what the term visual should embrace. For the purpose of this study, the term ‘visual’ will be used in the context of photographs. Adopting visual methods of research is particularly suited to tourism because tourism is essentially an image-rich discipline (Burns and Lester, 2005: 49). Visual images, in the form of pictures in brochures and newspaper articles about holiday destinations, together with television advertisements, are used to produce places as tourism destinations, as discussed in Chapter Two. These images are then viewed by potential tourists on the consumer side (Chapter Three), who, in turn, produce their own images using cameras, phones, camcorders, as well as purchasing postcards to send to family and friends back home. These images are essential to what Burns and Lester (2005) describe as the process of “remembering and evocation that enriches the touristic experience and in some cases gives it purpose” (Burns and Lester, 2005: 49).

5.7.1 Volunteer Employed Photography (VEP)

Volunteer Employed Photography (VEP) is a visual technique which makes use of the visual dimension of a person's experience based on images taken by the person using their camera equipment or cameras provided by the researcher. Participants are either given specific instructions regarding what pictures to take, or left to their own devices. However, VEP is not a panacea for tourism researchers, and the technique has its critics. For example, Prosser (1998: 102) refers to the "power relationship" between the researcher and the participant. This power relationship can be explained as a desire on behalf of the research subject to please the researcher by taking photographs to satisfy the researcher rather than themselves. This view is rebutted by Loeffler (2004) who argues that ultimately it is the research participant who decides what photographs to take. Participants in photography based research take a leading role in the research process because they are in effect telling their own story (Markwell, 2000). Taylor et al. (1995) argue that using VEP as a methodology is a way of capturing without reshaping the natural environment. According to Prosser (1998), another reported criticism of photographic methods is the potential for subjectivity to enter the research process. Balomenou and Garrod (2010), however, argue that this should be seen as a positive rather than a negative. Photographs taken by individuals contain the bias of the taker of the photographs, and it is this bias that VEP seeks to investigate. Asking the taker of the image why they have taken the photograph, and to talk about what it contains brings about a deeper understanding of the feelings the tourist has about an area, place or object.

A final criticism of VEP is the associated time commitment on behalf of research participants, both in taking the images and then discussing them with the researcher.

This perceived negative was noted as far back as 1984 by Chenoweth (1984). Research participants may commit initially to the project but over time withdraw because of the amount of time required to complete the tasks assigned to them. This contributes to a lack of control over the data collection process cited by some adopters of photographic methods (Balomenou and Garrod, 2010).

5.7.2 Photo-elicitation

VEP has close affiliations with another technique called photo-elicitation. However, photo-elicitation uses photographs in different ways to VEP in that the photographs are selected by the researcher and are not produced by the tourist. In photo-elicitation the researcher presents the respondent with photographs of the participants' world, and uses them as prompts to discuss aspects of the participants' life experience that are of interest to the researcher (Jenkins, 1999). Balomenou and Garrod (2010) state that photo-elicitation is considered to be a most illuminating, and therefore useful methodology in the social sciences.

5.7.3 In-depth Interviews and Visual Methods

Using photographs in the interview process allows deeper insights and understanding to be garnered that might have been overlooked using other methods (Banks, 2001). Prebensen (2007) argues that explorative techniques via open-ended questions using images to inform the conversation are particularly suited to image research. The use of in-depth interviews sits comfortably within phenomenological/constructivist paradigms, which are axiologically value laden, and where the research purpose is intrinsic in nature (Jennings, 2005). Veal (2006) also argues that the suitability of this method is particularly appropriate where large amounts of data are to be collected from small

numbers of people. Combining in-depth interviews with the use of visual imagery is not a new departure in qualitative research. Collier and Collier (1986) argued that photographs provide useful tools with which to obtain knowledge, a view which is also supported by Pink (2007). Pink (2007) explores further the use of photographs in ethnographical research by posing a number of questions or problems:

- How do researchers and informants situate themselves and each other in relation to the photograph; in other words, are there differences in opinion on what the photograph can mean?
- How do informants communicate their views of what the image means to them to the researcher, and what kinds of narratives are used?

Overcoming this problem is not as simple as asking questions of informants about the images being viewed. Rather, the researcher must focus on how the informants use the content of the image to assign meaning that either conforms to, or contradicts, their perceptions of the destination pre-visit. On a deeper level, using photographs in research can help informants to explore what a destination says to them on a personal and more emotional level, by discussing why they took particular photographs while on holiday. Photographs allow researchers to produce more data, previously unavailable, through verbal interviewing alone, because the brain processes visual and spoken information differently (Harper, 2002). Images evoke deeper elements of human consciousness than simple words. For example, photo-elicitation interviews simply evoke a different type of information than the use of interview techniques on their own (Pink, 2007). However, in-depth interviews can only access individual responses; to get a more rounded narrative requires employing group work as in focus groups.

5.7.4 Focus Groups and Visual Methods

Cooper and Yarbrough (2010) identify that focus groups are among the methods used by qualitative researchers to elicit information from participants. Focus groups are described as a guided conversation in which the participants interact with each other and the researcher (Cooper and Yarbrough, 2010). However, in some instances, particularly where language may be a problem, using photographs in the context of a focus group can help break down barriers associated with language, and an inability to communicate. It could, therefore, be argued that such a technique (using photographs) could also add richness to data collected from focus groups, particularly when the photographs in question have been taken by the members of the group. Some researchers refer to this method as photo voice (Wang, 2003), while others refer to it as photo-ethnography. Utilising participants' photographs has been found to have the unexpected benefit of empowerment, allowing participant photographers to express themselves (Ornelas et al., 2009). It is this idea of empowering the participants that attracted the researcher to this methodology.

5.7.5 Photo-ethnography

When combined together, VEP and in-depth interviews or focus groups become photo-ethnography. Photo-ethnography uses photographs taken by the respondent (VEP) to prompt discussion with the respondent during the interview process. The purpose of photo-ethnography is to arrive at a deeper understanding of the feelings, emotions and attitudes of the research subject who is participating directly in the study. Photo-ethnography, therefore, requires the participant to interpret their photographs in the presence of the researcher. Support for using photographs in this manner comes from Balomenou and Garrod (2010). They state that due to the ubiquitous nature of

photography in tourism, it seems only reasonable for researchers to apply photographic techniques of this kind in tourism research (Balomenou and Garrod, 2010).

5.7.6 Justification for Using Visual Methods

MacKay and Couldwell (2004) argue that photographic images play a pivotal role in communicating the image of a destination to potential tourists. Photographs have been described as “miniature slices of reality” (Urry, 2002: 127), and therefore useful in terms of exploring how tourists make sense of places. The practice of tourists’ “image sharing” has emerged with advances in technology and social media (Tussyadiah, 2010: 156). The focus groups conducted in this research allowed the tourists to share their photographs of Ireland with the other group members. In talking about their photographs, they revealed their view of Ireland as a tourism destination. These narratives prove insightful in answering the research aim *“To investigate how tourists consume and thereby make sense of the places they visit through practicing photography as part of being a tourist”*.

5.8 Stages in the Research Process

Thus far this chapter has discussed the philosophical assumptions on which this research is based. It has reviewed the theory relating to visual methods in tourism research, and the various tools such as photographs that can be used to capture visual data. The remainder of this chapter will report how these methodologies were operationalised in order to collect the primary data. There were three key stages to the empirical work, as outlined in Figure 5.5.

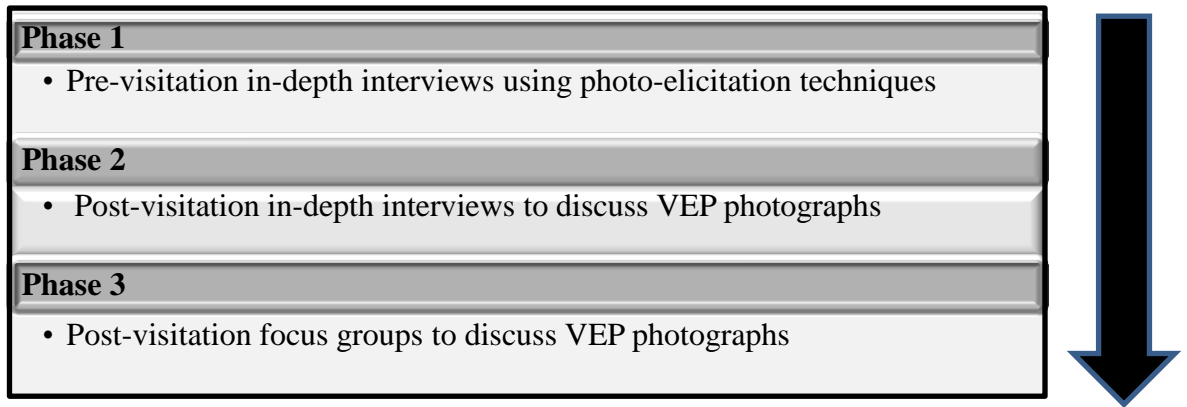


Figure 5.5 Stages in the Primary Research Process

5.8.1 Designing the Research Instruments

The methodological framework for Phase 1 of the research involved combining a number of different qualitative techniques (in-depth interviews and photo-elicitation), as already discussed, to examine pre-conceived ideas US tourists had regarding what Ireland might be like as a tourism destination pre-visitation. The justification for conducting pre-visit in-depth interviews in Phase 1 was to explore the perceptions of first time visitors to Ireland from the USA before they arrived in Ireland. It was not possible to access US tourists prior to arriving at the airport, due to security issues; therefore, an airport location was deemed to provide the best opportunities to meet US tourists. JFK was chosen as the airport as it is an international hub for the North US market into Ireland, and therefore offered an opportunity to gain access to US tourists from a variety of States. The next problem to overcome was how to approach and screen passengers for acceptance into the study. Permission was sought from Aer Lingus to survey passengers checking in for its flights to Ireland for seven nights in August 2009. Permission was granted, and Aer Lingus arranged security clearance (Appendix 2) for the researcher at JFK.

5.8.2 Testing the Research Instruments

Two pilot in-depth interviews were conducted in Shannon Airport with Irish tourists travelling to America for their first visit to New York, in order to test the research instrument for Phase 1, and develop efficient methods for recording the responses of the interviewees. The main reason for piloting the research instrument was to check if passengers would agree to talk to the researcher in the first instance, and to trial the photo-elicitation techniques using a selection of induced images of New York City. Another reason for piloting the research instrument was to check if background noise and announcements over the public address system in the terminal would affect the quality of the recording.

The mechanics of getting passengers to talk to the researcher were as follows:

- The researcher positioned himself in the area where the self-service check-in kiosks were located.
- As passengers approached the self-service check-in kiosks the researcher asked them if he could talk to them for a few minutes about his research.
- If passengers agreed to talk he got an opportunity to work through the screener (Appendix 1) and make a decision as to whether or not the passenger was a suitable candidate for interview.
- Once a passenger was identified as a potential participant, they were asked if they would be interested in taking part in the research. If they agreed, the researcher arranged to meet them after clearing security, and before they went to the boarding gate. This proved to be an effective strategy in that passengers were more relaxed and willing to talk once they had cleared security.

- During the in-depth interviews the researcher worked through the pre-visitation interview protocol (Appendix 4).
- Photo-elicitation techniques (Appendix 3) were used to explore how the participants interpreted images of New York in terms of their own perceptions of New York as a destination. This approach worked well, and was subsequently adopted into the main study.

Piloting the research instruments allayed any fears the researcher had regarding getting passengers to talk to him, as well as recording these conversations. Therefore, the decision was made to go ahead with the main study in JFK.

5.8.3 Sampling

Veal (2006) states that in most survey research, and in some observational studies, it is necessary to sample largely due to cost and time constraints. Purposive sampling recognises that there may be inherent variations in the population of interest. An attempt is made to control this by using subjective judgment to select a sample that the researcher believes to be ‘representative’ of the population. The success of this method is dependent on two assumptions (Greenfield, 2002: 189): Firstly, that the researcher can identify in advance the main characteristics that collectively capture all variations. Secondly, that the chosen sample will correctly reflect the distributions of these characteristics. Therefore, information from the Tourism Facts and Figures report produced by Tourism Ireland in 2008 was used to design an interview screener to select participants who would be broadly representative of the US visitor to Ireland (Appendix D). Every effort was made to include an equal distribution of age groups as well as gender.

During the selection process, participants were told about the work and given an opportunity to either enter the study or decline. Due consideration was given to the number of US tourists needed to be interviewed or participate in focus groups. Guthrie (2007) argues that the aim of quantitative research is to test a theory or hypothesis using a sample large enough to be considered representative. However, Patton (2002) states that in the context of qualitative research, “validity, meaningfulness and insights generated from qualitative inquiry have more to do with the information richness of the cases selected and the observations/analytical capabilities of the researcher than with sample size” (Patton, 2002: 245).

Qualitative inquiry is not predicated on producing generalised commentary on the phenomenon under investigation. Instead, Guthrie (2007) suggests that data collection and analysis progresses until recurring themes are identified. Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006) refer to this point as saturation point. They define it as the point in the data collection and analysis process when new information adds little or no changes to the codebook. Guest et al. (2006) conducted research on how many interviews were deemed enough in the context of qualitative inquiry. They discovered a range of opinions on the topic in academic literature. Suggestions ranged between 15 at the lower end, and 36 at the upper end for in-depth interviews. Creswell (1998) posits between 20 and 30 interviews for a phenomenological study was appropriate. The sample for this thesis was drawn from passengers from the United States of America making their first trip to Ireland. Following on from Patton’s (2002) comments regarding qualitative research, the participants associated with this research represent a “fair reflection” of the profile of tourists visiting Ireland from the United States of America (Garrod, 2009).

Case Number	Nights in Ireland	Age	Male/ Female	Occupation	State	Tour (T)/ Independent Traveller (IDT)
001	10	60+	Female	Retired	NY	(T)
002	10	60+	Male	Retired	NY	(T)
003	15	20+	Female	Student	NY	(IDT)
004	14	60+	Male	Retired	MI	(T)
005	14	60+	Female	Retired	MI	(T)
006	15	21	Male	Student	NY	(IDT)
007	15	21	Male	Student	NY	(IDT)
008	15	22	Male	Student	NY	(IDT)
009	10	50+	Female	Professional	NV	(IDT)
010	10	50+	Male	Professional	NV	(IDT)
011	10	20+	Male	Professional	WA	(IDT)
012	10	20+	Female	Professional	WA	(IDT)
013	12	40+	Female	Teacher	CT	(T)
014	12	60+	Female	Retired	CT	(T)
015	12	50+	Female	Professional	NY	(T)
016	12	50+	Female	N/A	NY	(T)
017	15	50+	Female	N/A	FL	(IDT)
018	15	20+	Female	N/A	FL	(IDT)
019	15	20+	Female	N/A	FL	(IDT)
020	06	20+	Male	Student	NY	(IDT)
021	06	20+	Male	Student	NY	(IDT)
023	16	40+	Female	Professional	FL	(IDT)
024	16	40+	Male	Professional	FL	(IDT)
025	10	30+	Female	Lawyer	NJ	(IDT)
026	10	40+	Male	N/A	CA	(IDT)

Table 5.1 Socio-demographic Data on In-depth Interview Participants

A range of age groups, as well as independent travellers versus guided tours was achieved, together with a representative distribution of male and female participants. Traditionally, US tourists arrive early for international flights, and therefore it was hoped to conduct five interviews per night. However, this did not prove possible for a variety of reasons, predominantly because the researcher worked alone. Table 5.2 presents the total number of participants, who took part in pre-visitation interviews (Phase 1) or post-visitation interviews or focus groups, (Phases 2 and 3).

Phase: Pre-visitation in-depth interviews using photo- elicitation JFK	Phase 2: Post-visitation in-depth interviews using VEP Ireland	Phase 3: Post-visitation focus groups using VEP
<i>n</i> = 26	<i>n</i> = 16*	Focus groups <i>n</i> = 48
<p><i>*Indicates participants were part of the 26 passengers interviewed pre-visitation in JFK and were re-interviewed post-visitation in Ireland before returning home to the USA</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Total post-visitation participants <i>n</i> = 64</p>		

Table 5.2 Total Number of Participants

5.8.4 Phase 1: Pre-visitation In-depth Interviews JFK

The researcher flew to JFK airport in August of 2009. A total of eight days were spent in the Aer Lingus check-in facility. Passengers were screened following the procedures refined during the pilot study in Ireland. However, it quickly became apparent that the majority of passengers flying from JFK to Ireland were arriving and departing from Dublin airport. This posed a logistical problem for Phase 2 of the research. It was the original intention of the researcher to select passengers who were departing from Ireland via Shannon airport due to the proximity of Shannon airport to the researcher's home, as well as the fact that the researcher had security clearance in Shannon airport. The problem was overcome by conducting the post-visitation interviews in the hotels in which the participants spent their last night in Ireland.

As each participant agreed to take part in the research, the researcher arranged to meet them at the departure gate at least one hour before departure. Each interview was assigned a code on the pre-visitation interview protocol (Appendix 4), and all important details such as the return flight date, flight number and participant's contact details, and their email address was noted. Each interview was recorded for transcription purposes.

The researcher started each interview by explaining the purpose of the research to the participant and seeking their willingness to participate. Upon agreement, the participant was asked to read and complete the consent form (Appendix 5). If they had any questions, they got an opportunity to ask them before signing it. An icebreaker question, “What do you know about Ireland”, was asked to put the participant at ease, and allow them to reflect on their chosen destination.

Following this, each participant was asked what influenced their image of Ireland as a holiday destination. The purpose of this question was to explore the various image formation agents that influenced their image of Ireland as a destination, as described in Chapters 2, 3 and 4. At this point, the researcher introduced a selection of photographs (Appendix 6) from Fáilte Ireland’s photograph library and asked the participant to describe what these photographs communicated to them about Ireland. Each participant was asked what part of Ireland they were going to visit, and why. At the end of each interview, the researcher re-confirmed the return date and flight details, and thanked the participant for their help with the research. In most cases where time allowed, the researcher answered any questions that the participants had regarding their trip to Ireland. These questions included practical issues such as where to find car hire desks at their arrival airport in Ireland, tips for negotiating the Irish roads and directions to their first night’s accommodation. This approach helped to build a rapport with the participant to encourage further participation in Phase 2.

5.8.5 Phase 2: Post-visitation In-depth Interviews

Phase 2 of the research explored the tourists’ interpretation of Ireland through post-visitation in-depth interviews. Contact was made with the participants using their

email addresses, which were recorded on the pre-visitation protocol (Appendix 4). The researcher emailed all 26 participants from Phase 1 upon returning to Ireland from JFK and asked them to indicate by return email the name and location of the hotel in which they would be spending their last night in Ireland. Sixteen participants from Phase 1 were re-interviewed prior to leaving Ireland to return home to the USA. Seven of the original 26 participants from Phase 1 could not be re-interviewed for Phase 2 due to logistical reasons, or in the case of two of them, because they had given the wrong return date to the researcher. Of the 16 that were re-interviewed, there was an equal distribution of independent travellers and participants who were part of an organised tour.

The main purpose of Phase 2 was to collect and discuss the tourists' photographs of their holiday experience in Ireland, and discuss them before they left to return home. A total of 48 valid photographs were collected in Phase 2 of the research from participating tourists. The post-visitation interviews were conducted predominantly at the hotel where the participants spent their last night in Ireland. During the post-visitation interview participants were asked to pick three of their photographs which they felt truly represented Ireland as they had experienced it. These photographs then informed the discussion that followed.

The procedure for conducting the post-visitation in-depth interviews was as follows. The researcher arrived in advance of the interview to survey the surroundings and locate a quiet place where the interview could be conducted. Refreshments were offered for each participant before the interview took place. As in Phase 1, each of the interviews

was recorded for transcription purposes. Similar to Phase 1, a post-visitation interview protocol (Appendix 7) was designed to ensure consistency.

Each of the post-visitation interviews started by asking participants to discuss their trip to Ireland under the following headings:

- Feelings as you landed in Shannon/Dublin. First impressions?
- Were you seated in a window seat on the plane, and if so, what did Ireland look like from the air as you came in to land?
- Where did you go?
- What photographs have you picked as being truly representative of Ireland?

At this point in the interview the discussion focused on the three photographs that the participants had selected. Using the analogy of a postcard, they were asked to pick three of their photographs that might function as ‘postcards’ to show to friends and family at home because they represented their *real* Ireland as they had experienced it. Participants were asked why they had selected each photograph. As part of the discussion of the photographs, participants were asked what were the highlights of their trip to Ireland and why. They were also asked which of the places visited in Ireland reflected most closely what they had expected Ireland to be like, and why, as well as the opposite. Once the interview was completed, the researcher thanked them for their participation.

5.8.6 Phase 3: Post-visitation Focus Groups

Building upon the data collected in Phase 2 of the research, three different coach tour operators who bring US tourists to Ireland were contacted and asked if they would allow access to their clients. The purpose of this was to conduct focus groups to

facilitate group discussion of participants' photographs. Two of them, Brendan Vacations and Collette Vacations, agreed to participate in the research. Both of these tour operators bring US clients on guided tours around Ireland.

The procedure for conducting the focus groups was as follows. Both tour operators hold orientation meetings on the first day of a tour. The researcher was given access to these orientation meetings so as to meet the tour group, inform them about the research, and ask for their participation. At the end of each orientation meeting, the researcher addressed the entire tour group to explain the purpose of the research. At this point, the researcher asked for volunteers from the group to take part in a focus group on their last night in Ireland to discuss their photographs of Ireland. If they agreed to take part in the focus group, they would be asked to pick three photographs from the total number taken in Ireland, that, in their opinion, 'truly' represented Ireland as they experienced it.

Similar to the post-visitation in-depth interviews, the focus groups were conducted in the hotel where the tour spent their last night in Ireland. Using focus groups to discuss the participants' photographs yielded richer data than the in-depth interviews because they facilitated group discussion of the photographs. Both of the tour directors (tour guides) proved invaluable to the researcher. They reminded their clients during each tour that the researcher would be looking for volunteers to take part in a focus group on their last night in Ireland. They also sat in on each focus group, and were able to identify places captured in photographs when the client was unable to remember. In effect, they became gatekeepers or champions of the research. The researcher facilitated the focus groups, arriving early at each venue to set up the room. Most of the focus groups took place in hotel syndicate rooms hired by the researcher.

Once the focus group participants arrived in the room, the researcher explained once more the rationale for selecting the photographs, and proceeded to upload each participant's selection of three photographs on to his laptop using a multi-card reader. While participants were waiting to have their photographs uploaded, they read the information note. The photographs formed the slideshow that was then used for discussion during the focus group. Participants were not given any instructions regarding the content of the photographs so as to avoid researcher bias. All the focus groups were recorded and fully transcribed shortly after each group while the discussion was still fresh in the mind of the researcher. The photographs and the voice data files were uploaded on to NIVIO 10, which will be discussed later.

5.9 Analytical Approach

Gibbs (2007) states that the term *analysis* suggests some form of transformation; it starts with the qualitative data, and the researcher moves through a process of analytical procedures, breaking down the data into clear and understandable themes. Straus and Corbin (1998) suggest that qualitative research begins with a "bit of analysis", and continues until the "final written work" is completed (1998: 114). Unlike quantitative research, where the analysis usually starts once all the data have been collected and loaded into a software package, the analysis of qualitative research evolves from the process of collecting the data (Gibbs, 2007). Analysis can commence as soon as the first interview has been completed through the process of transcription. Seidman (1998) states that in-depth interview based research is labour intensive due to the amount of time invested in capturing the interview and the subsequent transcription and analysis. Despite the labour intensive nature, Gibbs (2007) states that concurrent analysis and data collection is good practice.

As the data associated with this thesis are primarily in the form of photographs, it is important to note a common weakness of photo-based analysis. Ball and Smith (1992) argue that one major complaint regarding the use of photographic material in social sciences research is that the photographs are under analysed. Another criticism is that photographs used in qualitative research function more as illustrations supporting other data collection methods, as opposed to forming the primary data source. Further critics of photo-based methods draw attention to the inherently polysemic nature of photographic material which makes their analysis subjective (Banks, 2001; Knowles and Sweetman, 2004). Banks (2007) contends that in phenomenological studies, efforts are made to present the subjective experience from both the researcher's and the participants' perspectives. However, as researchers we have no way of knowing if what the participant is telling us is true (Seidman, 1998). Seidman also posits that even if what the participants share about their experiences is true, it prompts a further question as to whether or not it is true for others, and if another researcher was asking the questions would they arrive at the same meaning? These are some of the issues underpinning the concept of validity, reliability and generalisability that qualitative researchers confront. One way of overcoming this problem is to place the participants' comments in context, along with interviewing a number of participants, and connecting their experiences to further understanding (Seidman, 1998). Chambers (2012) proffers a process which she describes as a "tool kit" (Figure 5.6) that can be used by tourism researchers, regardless of their philosophical views, that may help to ensure legitimacy.

Identification of the general area of interest	Influenced by the philosophical and subjective ‘positionality’ of the visual tourism researcher
Preliminary review of the relevant literature	Necessary in order to determine the nature of extant research and determine whether there are any gaps that could potentially be explored
Definition of the research problem	Problem to be addressed should be narrowed down into one of more research questions
Immersion	Involves extensive engagement with methodological and theoretical issues to do with the visual within tourism research
Conceptualisation	Should involve an interpretation and understanding of the research question(s) in light of the theoretical and methodological insights gained
Data collection	Consideration of the various visual research methods available, their suitability and the skills of the researcher
Analysis of the data and re-conceptualisation	This stage involves analysis of the data collected. It might lead to further clarification of concepts and arguments
Reflections	Involves retrospective analysis of the research process, its limitations and possible areas for future study

Figure 5.6 “Legitimacy Tool Kit”

Source: (Chambers, 2012: 45)

5.9.1 Analysing Visual Data

There are four methods used by researchers to analyse visual data, according to Emmison and Smith (2004: 22):

1. The production and use of photographic still imagery for use in ethnographical oriented research to document social phenomenon and cultural processes. This method is primarily used by anthropologists and qualitative sociologists;
2. The analysis of existing commercially produced images, such as described earlier by Burns and Lester (2005);

3. The analysis of diagrams, sketches and figures in scientific research and communication, utilised by ethno-methodologists within the social sciences;
4. The use of video recordings of naturally occurring social interactions focusing on work based, technology based communication.

These four approaches do not enjoy an equal amount of attention in visual research. In the case of this study, methods 1 and 2 are used for the analysis of photographs taken by US tourists. Emmison and Smith (2004) point out that photography is a documentation tool for faithfully capturing what “really goes on” (2004: 23). In this regard, Burns and Lester (2005) argue that the use of visual evidence in tourism research now extends beyond the traditional content analysis approach to a more holistic methodology that examines visual imagery in place literature. This approach was first adopted by Markwell (1997) in his analysis of 2,680 photographs taken by tourists through the medium of post-tour interviews with tourists in East Malaysia. Markwell’s research investigated the types of photographs that were taken, and at what point during the trip. Similarly, photographs have been used to analyse tourist behaviour and motivations for travel by Johns and Clark (2001) in their study of boating tourism.

5.9.2 Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS)

Veal (2011) argues that traditionally qualitative data is analysed manually, using highlighters and sticky pads, and cutting and pasting extracts from transcribed interviews in order to give shape to the findings. This process is laborious, time consuming and requires space in which to safely disseminate the various pieces of analysis. Computer assisted qualitative data analysis software CAQDAS speeds up the more mechanical aspects of this process (Veal, 2011). Guthrie (2007) states, that the

first CAQDAS programs were developed in the 1980s. However, these early programs required the user to have a high level of computer programming competencies. Since those early days, subsequent CAQDAS software now allows the researcher to upload their entire project, including PDF files of their literature, and hyperlink between these various texts.

5.9.3 Justification for using CAQDAS in Qualitative Research

Bergin (2011) states there is a divergence of opinion regarding the advantages and disadvantages of using qualitative data analysis software (QDA) in qualitative research. Proponents of the software argue that it allows the researcher to store all their data in one single location. Others argue that it is a useful resource for team based research, which has large data, facilitating a consistent approach to coding and theory building (Weltzman, 2000). Disadvantages include the amount of time required to become comfortable with the software. Another disadvantage is that computer aided data analysis follows a more prescriptive approach to the analysis, which might appear to be at odds with the researcher's epistemological outlook. Using QDA software can also lead to reluctance on behalf of the researcher to change coding patterns once they are set up, trying in some cases to code data to themes that don't necessarily fit, but are already set up (Robson, 2002). Miles and Huberman (1994) argue that researchers who do not use a QDA package are in some way restricted in the level of analysis beyond basic themes that they can do using simple word processors. However, ultimately it is the researcher who does the analysis, and not the computer (Kelle, 2004; Bergin, 2011). In the context of this thesis, NVIVO 10 was selected to assist the researcher, for all the reasons above, in transcribing, storing and organising the data.

5.9.4 Justification for Selecting NVIVO 10

NVIVO 10 is a code based theory building program which affords the researcher certain flexibilities regarding interpreting the data (Guthrie, 2007). NVIVO 10 software is produced by QSR International, and supports data analysis in five essential ways: by allowing the researcher to manage and organise the data, audit their thought process as they work through the analysis, query the data, graphically present their findings using models and report directly from the data (Bergin, 2011). NVIVO 10 was selected for this thesis because of the functionality it offers to cope with a variety of data sources, such as transcription of interviews, as well as storage of visual material in the form of photographs. NVIVO 10 was also chosen by the researcher for pragmatic reasons; its licence is available from the Dublin Institute of Technology, and free training was offered to postgraduate students in NVIVO 10 through its postgraduate school. The following section will illustrate how NVIVO 10 assisted in managing the data and structuring the subsequent analysis.

5.9.5 Database Compilation

The in-depth interviews were professionally transcribed in 2009. However, the focus groups were transcribed by the researcher using NVIVO 10 in order to get closer to the data. Getting closer to the data aided the initial coding process. The transcripts, together with the word documents of the professionally transcribed in-depth interviews, were stored in NVIVO 10, along with the participant photographs. Once the data were safely stored within the NVIVO 10 software, a copy of the files was made and stored separately as a backup.

5.9.6 Data Analysis Strategy

The analytical strategy presented in Figure 5.7 involved seven cycles of analysis, starting off with broad open coding, and ending with draft chapters of the findings and analysis being produced.

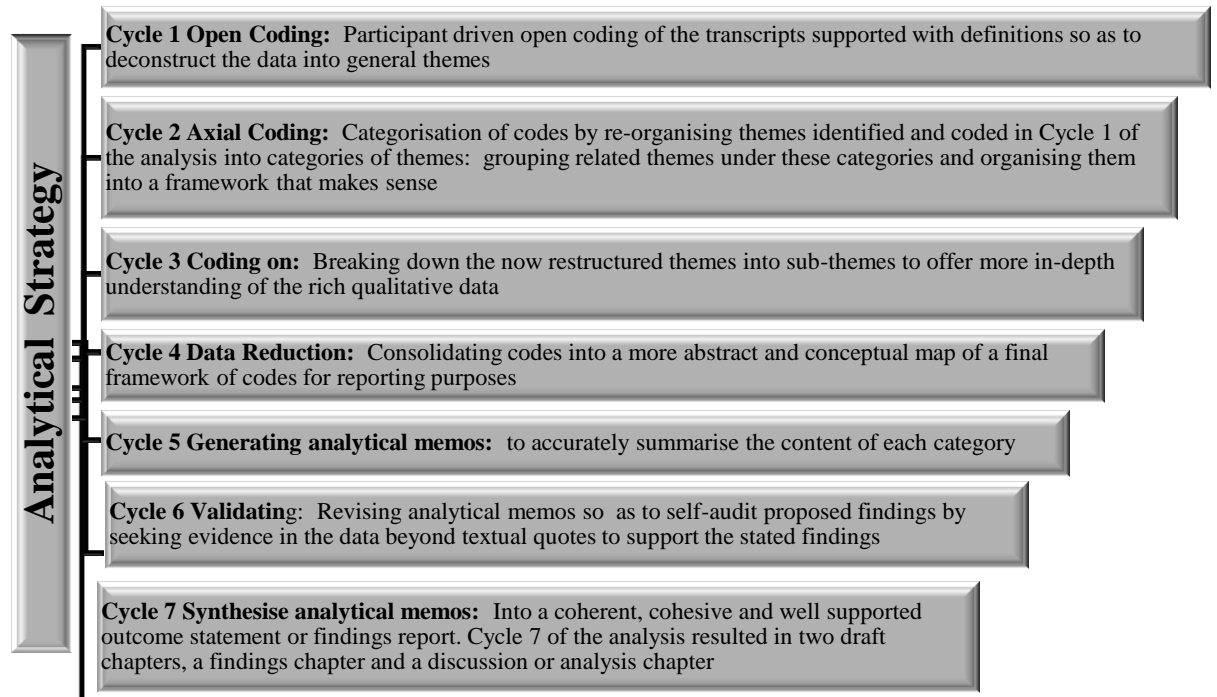


Figure 5.7 Analytical Strategy

5.9.7 Coding

NVIVO 10 offers three types of nodes which can be thought of as drawers in a filing cabinet in which data can be filed. These nodes are classified as free nodes, tree nodes and case nodes (for a more detailed explanation of these refer to Appendix 7). Free nodes are unrelated files, whereas tree nodes are used to file related themes in the data together, and case nodes function as files in which to store data specific to an individual or group. NVIVO 10 case nodes enabled the researcher to keep all the sources relating to an individual or focus group together. A case node was created per interview participant and focus group, and the transcriptions and photographs for each were then stored in the relative case nodes (Figure 5.8).

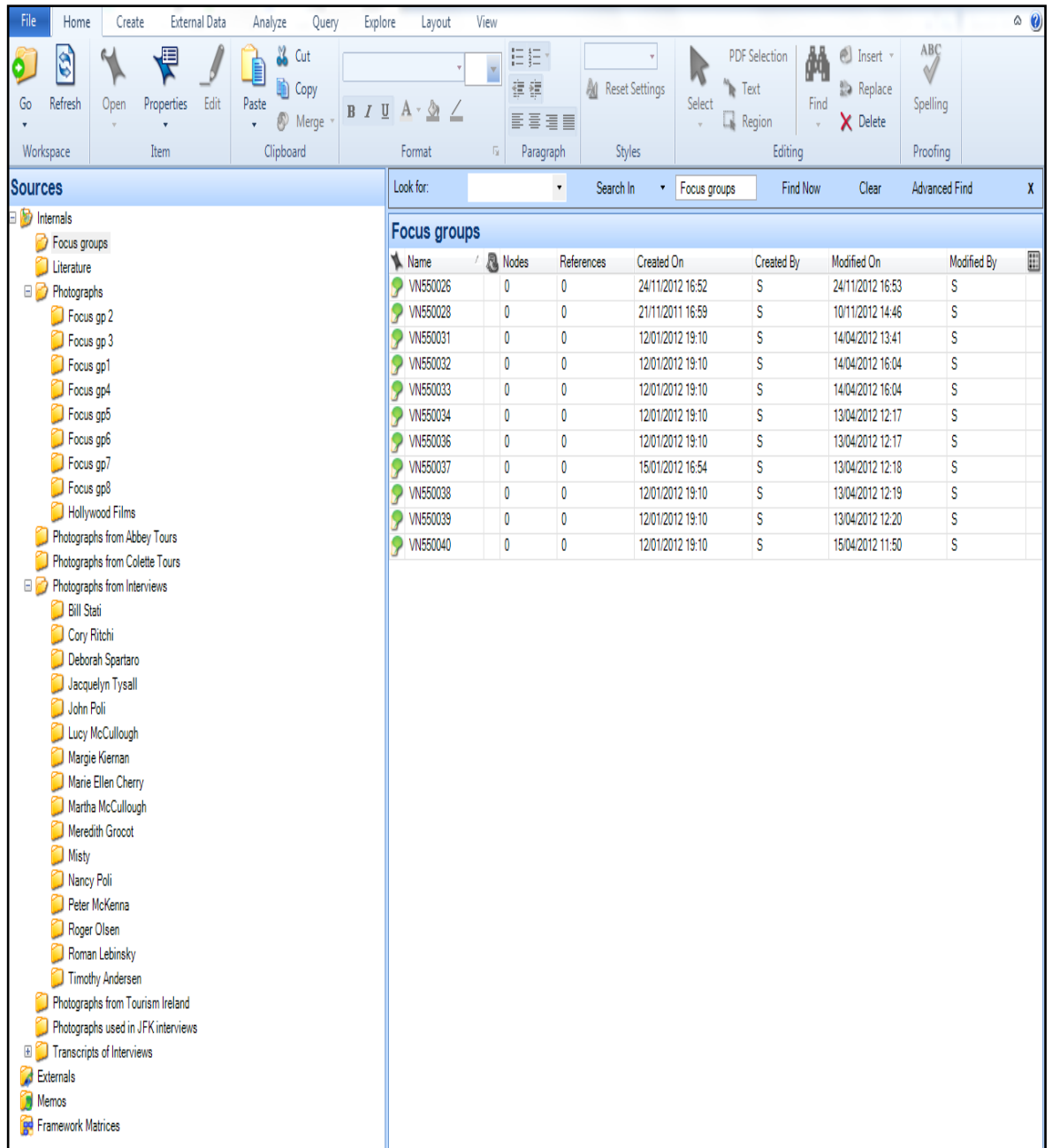


Figure 5.8 NVIVO 10 Case Nodes

5.9.8 Coding Framework

The in-depth interviews and focus groups were coded without any pre-existing coding structure, using in vivo coding as described by Glaser and Strauss (1967). In vivo coding assigns a name for the node by taking it from the words of the participants. Each transcript was read more than once in order to familiarise the researcher with the

main themes emerging from each transcript. All significant dialogue was coded to one of the nodes in Figure 5.9.

Name	Sources	References	Created On	Created By	Modified On	Modified By
Authentic	16	51	11/11/2012 16:19	S	09/02/2013 12:53	STR
Castles	15	37	10/11/2012 14:59	S	09/02/2013 12:35	STR
City	2	15	10/11/2012 16:53	S	01/02/2013 12:48	S
Colour	3	16	10/11/2012 16:12	S	01/02/2013 11:20	S
Consumption	6	12	10/11/2012 15:58	S	03/02/2013 17:37	STR
Cottages	4	16	10/11/2012 16:43	S	08/02/2013 10:32	STR
Decision to travel	4	8	25/11/2012 15:40	S	25/11/2012 16:11	S
Doors	4	18	10/11/2012 15:39	S	02/02/2013 17:45	S
Expectations	19	54	10/11/2012 17:06	S	09/02/2013 13:27	STR
Flowers	15	45	10/11/2012 15:38	S	09/02/2013 13:32	STR
Freedom	7	17	10/11/2012 17:00	S	09/02/2013 13:21	STR
Gardens	2	7	10/11/2012 15:35	S	09/02/2013 13:11	STR
Green	17	45	10/11/2012 15:52	S	09/02/2013 13:13	STR
Grey Sky	11	34	11/11/2012 16:04	S	09/02/2013 12:49	STR
Harp	2	5	10/11/2012 15:51	S	10/11/2012 17:05	S
History	19	54	10/11/2012 15:27	S	08/02/2013 12:34	STR
Hospitality	7	22	10/11/2012 16:24	S	03/02/2013 17:34	STR
Induced Influences	0	0	25/11/2012 15:59	S	25/11/2012 15:59	S
Irish Looking	2	8	10/11/2012 15:48	S	08/02/2013 10:14	STR
Irish Paintings	0	0	20/02/2013 14:16	STR	20/02/2013 14:16	STR
Ivy	5	14	10/11/2012 15:00	S	01/02/2013 13:33	S
Knowledge of Ireland Pre-visit	3	14	25/11/2012 15:43	S	25/11/2012 16:07	S
Organic Imagery	5	13	10/11/2012 15:49	S	09/02/2013 13:03	STR
Organic influences	14	14	25/11/2012 15:31	S	22/02/2013 19:33	STR
Paddy	2	16	10/11/2012 16:03	S	01/02/2013 10:39	S
People	13	28	10/11/2012 16:16	S	03/02/2013 15:36	STR
Pride	5	25	10/11/2012 16:07	S	03/02/2013 16:20	STR
Reverence	11	25	10/11/2012 16:21	S	09/02/2013 13:32	STR
Safety	4	15	10/11/2012 15:42	S	03/02/2013 17:23	STR
Sheep	6	23	11/11/2012 15:42	S	09/02/2013 12:13	STR
Signage	1	2	10/11/2012 15:47	S	10/11/2012 15:47	S
Similarities with home	3	5	11/11/2012 15:54	S	11/11/2012 17:19	S
Simplicity	8	26	10/11/2012 15:41	S	03/02/2013 16:06	STR
Stories	10	28	11/11/2012 15:34	S	08/02/2013 14:01	STR
Symbols	6	16	11/11/2012 15:36	S	03/02/2013 17:32	STR
Tidy & Neat	4	21	11/11/2012 15:44	S	09/02/2013 12:13	STR
Tolerance	3	14	10/11/2012 16:34	S	09/02/2013 13:23	STR
Tour Guide	5	14	10/11/2012 15:28	S	09/02/2013 13:22	STR

Figure 5.9 NVIVO 10 Free Nodes

Subsequent analysis resulted in the above free nodes being sub-divided into tree nodes (Figure 5.10) which have relationships to each other in a hierarchy. The author then looked at these various tree nodes to see how they clustered together, weeding out themes that did not fit. The process of reading and re-reading allowed different facets of the phenomenon to emerge. At this point, the process moved from examination to

analysis through a process of reflection allowing for “analytic distance” to take place between the researcher and the data (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 66). This analytic distance is necessary to enable the researcher to take note of what elements of the data are valid from those that are superfluous.

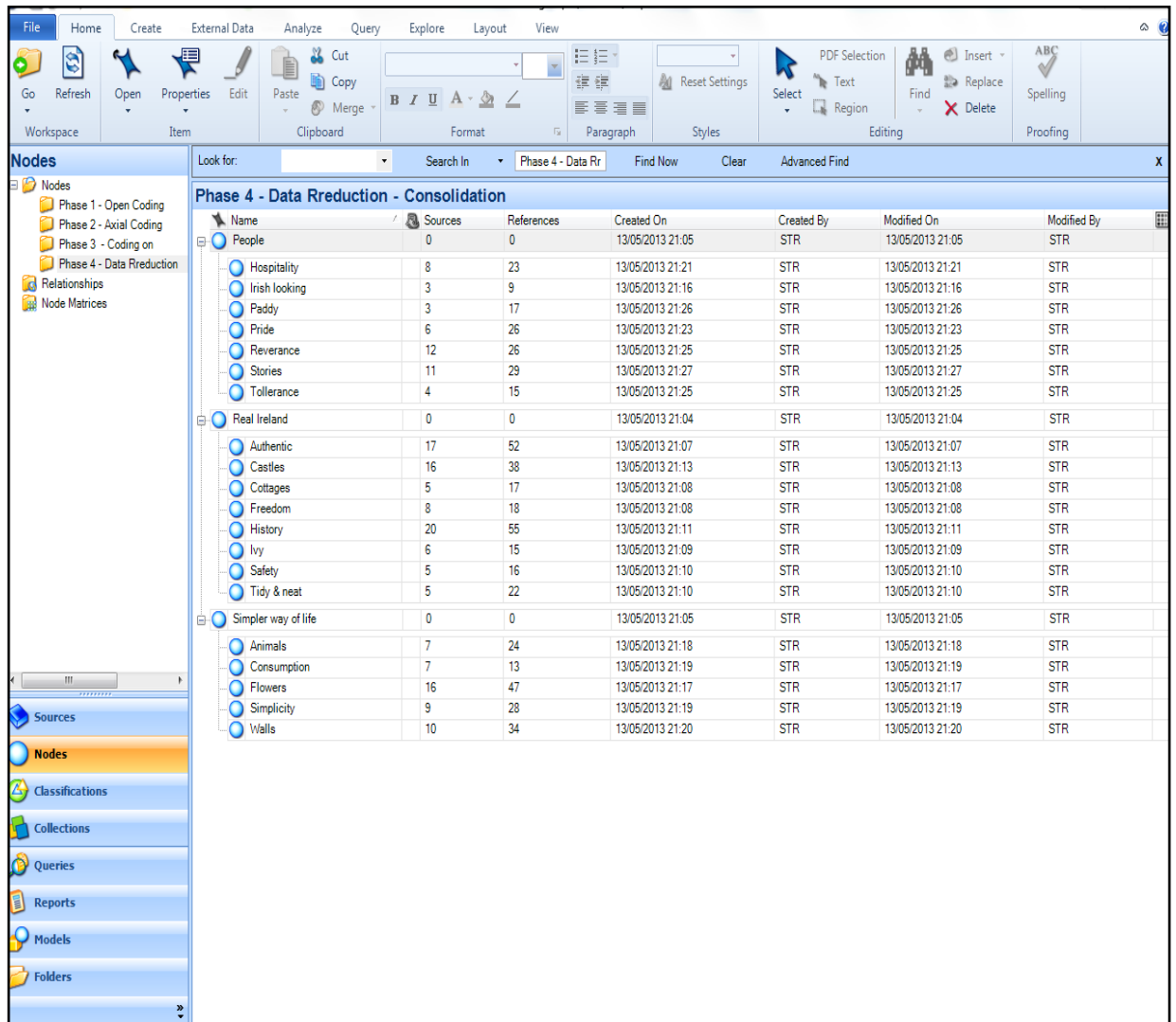


Figure 5.10 NVIVO 10 Tree Nodes

This process can best be described as disassembling the data and reassembling it to arrive at deeper understanding. Guthrie (2007) states that this allows the researcher to check and recheck the data and their interpretation, to ensure they are not searching for themes that do not fit or contradict emerging explanations. To be successful, this

approach also depends on the researcher keeping an open mind, harbouring no preconceived ideas, and becoming very familiar with the data (Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Veal, 2011).

5.10 Ethical Considerations

Before discussing some of the many ethical issues that may arise when conducting research involving human subjects, it is important to first acknowledge that ethical clearance was sought in advance of commencing the empirical work from the institution associated with this research, as recommended by Andersson Cederholm (2012). The study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Dublin Institute of Technology. Notwithstanding the Research Ethics Committee's approval Oliver (2010) observes that conducting research which involves human subjects can present certain ethical challenges such as getting informed consent as well as ensuring confidentiality and anonymity for the participants. Phemenographical research using visual methods such as the approach adopted here raises similar challenges for the researcher. Rakić and Chambers (2012) state that allowing for a multitude of different ways in which ethically sensitive visual research can be undertaken, it is nearly an impossible task to legislate for every eventuality that a researcher may encounter in the context of their own work. However, some cardinal rules for good practice in visual research can be followed.

Conducting research in an ethically appropriate manner using visual data is a primary concern for all researchers who elect to work closely with people. This poses moral dilemmas for the researcher in pursuit of insider knowledge about how people think and feel about the world around them (Dawson, 2009). In the context of this research,

which is using the photographs taken by tourists as the primary data source, Scarles (2012) states that where respondent-led photographs are used, it is essential to consider several ethically issues, in particular the issue of informed consent.

Polit and Hungler (1999), explain informed consent as a process whereby participants are given sufficient information regarding the research in a way that is accessible and easily understood. The purpose of providing such information is so that participants have the power of free choice, enabling them to consent to, or decline, participation in the research. Every effort was made by the researcher in the context of this thesis to explain the purpose and scope of the research to the participants prior to inviting them to take part. This information was imparted orally by the researcher at the first point of contact, such as JFK airport in New York in the case of the Phase 1 and 2 participants, or at the participants' hotel in the case of the Phase 3 participants. Participants were assured that their contributions to the research would be treated with the utmost confidentiality and they would remain anonymous. Consequently, participants are identified in the thesis as either 'male participant' or 'female participant' and in the case where it is known to the researcher the State in the USA where they reside. It was also explained to each participant that their photographs would appear in the written thesis and any subsequent publications arising thereafter. At the end of each briefing participants were asked if they had any questions relating to their involvement in the research. They were then asked to sign a consent form confirming their willingness to participate in the research. In terms of the photographs submitted by the participants it is important to state here that if a participant submitted a photograph containing an image of themselves they were asked whether or not they were happy for this photograph to appear in the final draft of the thesis or any subsequent publications.

Equally, in situations where people unknown to the participant or the researcher are photographed, as is the case in a number of the photographs associated with this research, it remains legal to photograph someone in a public space (Gross et al., 1988; Lester, 1995).

Finally, the issue of ensuring that the interpretation of the visual data is rigorously sound can fall foul if the researcher does not follow best practice procedures. In this instance, the approach suggested by Scarles (2012) is adopted:

- First, participant-led photographs introduced into interviews inevitably are context-specific, capturing in visual form practices and experiences in moments of time, both spatially and temporally
- Second, by asking participants to comment or reflect on their environment, the potential exists to arrive at a somewhat artificial remembrance of the participants' original experience
- Finally, the participant may try to second guess what they interpret the researcher might be looking for, or wants to hear, or in the context of this research, to present themselves in a positive light to the others in the focus group

(Scarles, 2012: 84)

All efforts were made by the researcher to reduce the possibility that the results generated by the visual methods employed in this research would be false, or in any way misleading. For example, participants arrived at the focus groups or interviews having already selected three photographs, which, in their opinion, represented Ireland as they experienced it. The purpose of this was to negate any possibility of

showmanship in the types of photographs selected, where participants might try to 'better' the visual motifs of their fellow participants. It also reduced the possibility of one participant influencing another's choice of photographs. In analysing the photographs, the researcher used "in vivo codes" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) whereby the name given to a theme or node in NVIVO 10 was taken from the words of the participants used to describe their own photographs, along with direct quotes from the transcribed recordings, where appropriate. Finally, the methodological approach to collecting and analysing the data was informed by Chambers' (2012) "tool kit" for ensuring legitimacy in visual methods research.

5.11 Conclusion

This chapter has presented a detailed account of the research philosophy, selected methodology and analytical strategy according to which the research was conducted. The research adopted a three phase approach to collecting the data based on purposive sampling. This research is firmly rooted in the constructivist school of thought adopting an ontological phenomenographical approach to address the research aim and objectives. A multi-method approach to gathering the data has been selected that is qualitative in nature to gain a deeper understanding of the feelings, emotions and narratives of the informants. Previous literature such as Prebensen (2007) suggests that a multi method approach that adopts a qualitative lens is the most appropriate method to address the research aim posed by this study. Combining VEP with in-depth interviews and focus groups to form photo-ethnography is deemed to be one of the major contributions of this study in that they have not been extensively used in this combined format in tourism studies heretofore. The research design associated with this study was carefully planned and tested to avoid bias or pitfalls for which past research on

destination image has been criticised. The basic conventions of social science research have been applied in constructing this methodology while also allowing the voice of the participant to guide the research process in keeping with the nature and complexity of the research topic, Ireland's destination image in America. Cutting edge technology in the form of NVIVO 10 has been used to facilitate a thorough interrogation of the data, and adds rigor to the analysis process. The following chapters, Chapters 6 and 7 will present the findings and analyse the results.

CHAPTER SIX

FINDINGS

6.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings arising from the analysis of the empirical data collected during the three phases of the primary work, as outlined:

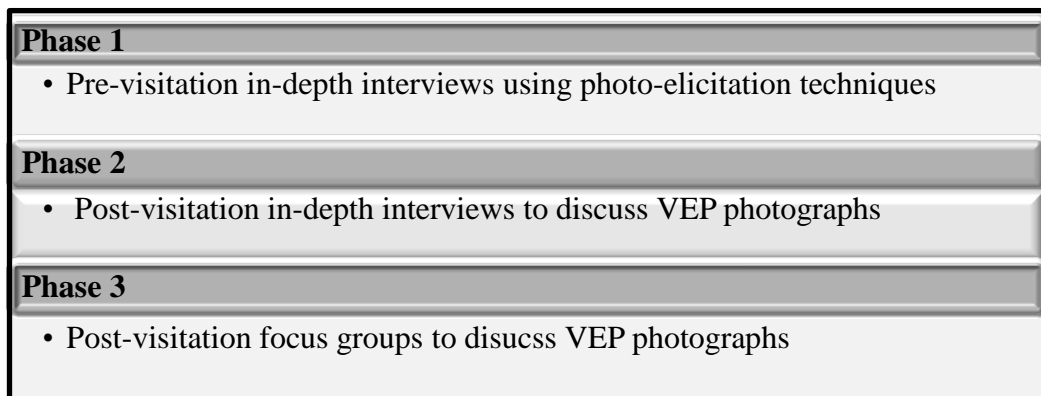


Figure 6.1 Stages in the Primary Research Process

A number of themes emerged from the analysis following each phase in the research process. These themes are given in vivo codes whereby the words used to label them are taken from the participants' narratives. The themes provide a structure within which to report the findings, and will be discussed as they relate to the different phases in the research process.

6.1 Pre-visitation Image of Ireland: Phase 1 of the Research

The main emphasis of this research was to investigate how US tourists consume and thereby make sense of Ireland through practicing photography as part of being a tourist. The first stage in the investigative process involved establishing how US tourists imagine Ireland prior to visiting and how they interpreted a selection of induced images used to market Ireland as a tourist destination. The process involved interviewing the

participants in the USA at the airport before they boarded a flight to Ireland. At the start of each interview, participants were asked what they thought Ireland was going to be like. Their answers to this question will be reported in the next section.

6.1.1 Pre-visitation Images of Ireland

Analysis of the answers to this question revealed seven different themes in terms of how the participants imagined Ireland as a destination prior to visiting. These themes are presented in Table 6.1.

Theme Title	Participants' Quotes
Ireland is green	<p><i>"...I know that it is very green"</i></p> <p><i>"...I know the rainfall is adequate to make it green"</i></p> <p><i>"...green island"</i></p> <p><i>"...very lush and green..."</i></p>
Ireland is rural	<p><i>"...rural country for the most part"</i></p> <p><i>"the biggest draw for me is the landscape"</i></p> <p><i>"I think that it's more about nature"</i></p> <p><i>"I was looking for a destination that would be am, more exotic than North America, a different culture and am a relaxing, rural destination"</i></p>
Ireland is beautiful	<p><i>"...I know that it's supposed to be beautiful"</i></p> <p><i>"...I know it's beautiful"</i></p> <p><i>"...it's just a beautiful country"</i></p> <p><i>"...I have siblings that travelled there and they say that it's beautiful"</i></p>
Irish people	<p><i>"...I've always thought of the Irish as a sort of a wild people, they've got a lot of you know Saxons, Vikings you know..."</i></p> <p><i>"...People very friendly..."</i></p> <p><i>"I expect it to be a lot more friendly than America you know"</i></p> <p><i>"their spirit I guess, interacting with them"</i></p>
Lots of history	<p><i>"...well there's a lot of history"</i></p> <p><i>"...ruins are magnificent"</i></p> <p><i>"...the whole Cromwell situation and all of the different battles and uprisings and things like that..."</i></p> <p><i>"...history dating back between them and England..."</i></p>
Symbols of Ireland	<p><i>"...I expect the beer to be outstanding"</i></p> <p><i>"...ah Guinness...Jameson whiskey..."</i></p> <p><i>"...I know they make Guinness"</i></p> <p><i>"Shamrocks"</i></p> <p><i>"Four leaf Clovers"</i></p> <p><i>"Leprechauns"</i></p> <p><i>"Fairies"</i></p>
Religion	<p><i>"...ancient Celts and their religion...Christian invasions...St. Patrick coming over and the influence of that..."</i></p> <p><i>"I know that it is a strong bastion for Catholicism, for you know all these centuries...I know the monks went out on little islands and built little stone huts"</i></p>

Table 6.1 Participants' Descriptors for Ireland Pre-visitation

6.1.1.1 Ireland is Green

All of the participants stated that they expected Ireland to be green. The colour green was represented in the landscape ‘...a lot of green hills and everything like that’. Ireland’s pastel shades of green were attributed to the damp climate and the amount of rainfall, as evidenced by the responses in Table 6.1. Ireland was described as a ‘green’ island and ‘very lush’. Participants made reference to the commonly held view by US tourists that there are forty shades of green in Ireland.

6.1.1.2 Ireland is Rural

Ireland’s rural landscape was a strong attraction for some of the participants, particularly for those from big cities in the USA. The wide open spaces of the Irish countryside offered an opportunity to escape “...yes, I come from an urban destination, lots of just a very crowded destination and ah lots of people, lots of ah horrible, horrible traffic” (Male participant, WA). Sean from Seattle stated that one of the reasons he picked Ireland was because for him it was more exotic than the USA, it had a different culture, and therefore he expected it to be more relaxing.

6.1.1.3 Ireland is Beautiful

Equally, all of the participants expected Ireland to be beautiful, ‘it is just a beautiful country’. Beauty was closely associated with the rural nature of Ireland which formed a strong attraction for the participants. This attraction was based on photographs they had seen of Ireland in a variety of media, such as films made in or about Ireland, books they may have read set in or about Ireland, subjects they had studied in school, stories from family and friends and a host of other sources. A female participant from Michigan stated that she had a coffee table book of photographs of Ireland that she used to look at from time to time. When asked about the types of images that were

contained in this book, she said there were photographs of the Irish landscapes and the rolling green hills.

6.1.1.4 Irish People

Participants talked about the Irish people and expressed an expectation that the Irish would be friendly. In the case of one couple who live in Michigan, they had an Irish neighbour whom they said was particularly friendly. All of the participants knew of Irish people living in the USA, and some of them stated they had Irish friends at work or outside of work. The Irish were perceived as hard working, respectful and gregarious. All of the participants were aware of the history of emigration between Ireland and the USA. Some were familiar with the Famine in general terms, and some of them were able to trace their ancestors back to that time in Irish history. For those who had Irish ancestry, their trip to Ireland was somewhat of a pilgrimage, or a returning home. Ancestral connections with Ireland were a strong source of imagery for these people, passed down through the generations in the form of stories. Stereotypical images of Irish people also played a role in how the participants from Phase 1 of the research imagined Ireland, in particular the stereotypical image of Irish drinking habits. Most of the participants had stories of celebrating St. Patrick's Day with Irish friends in the US, and the 'wearing of the green' and 'drowning the shamrock'. Not surprisingly, Guinness was associated with Ireland, as well as Irish whiskey. One of the men stated that he expected the Guinness to taste different in Ireland because he was going to its source. Three men in their early 20s started their trip to Ireland by having a pint of Guinness each at the airport before boarding. They were looking forward to tasting it in Ireland.

6.1.1.5 Lots of History

All of the Phase 1 participants connected with the historical significance of Ireland prior to visiting ‘...well there is a lot of history’. Some of them were looking forward to seeing castles and other ruins during their trip. Although somewhat vague about the details at times, most of the participants were aware of Ireland’s colonial past and years of British rule. Consequently, most of the participants perceived the Irish as a persecuted people. As a result, they also perceived Irish people as tolerant, particularly because so many castles and Protestant churches were still standing. One man said if the British had built castles in the USA, all of them would have been knocked down after independence.

6.1.1.6 Symbols of Ireland

Participants were asked in more general terms if they associated any particular symbols with Ireland. One of the first to come to mind was the Shamrock, or four leaf clover, as described by some of them. In fact, the Shamrock was perceived as the national symbol of Ireland instead of the Harp. The Shamrock was identified with St. Patrick and most of the participants had some understanding of why St. Patrick is associated with Ireland (“*he drove the snakes out of Ireland*”). Stories of fairies and myths also resonated with most of the participants in terms of their perceived image of Ireland, followed closely by leprechauns. All of them made reference to leprechauns having crocks of gold, and some talked about their reputation for being mischievous.

6.1.1.7 Religion

Participants also related to Ireland’s religious past ‘...*ancient Celts and their religion...*’, and the many Celtic symbols that are omnipresent throughout Irish culture and history. Religious associations with Ireland were mentioned by some of the participants from Phase 1 when asked what they knew about Ireland. For example, the

Book of Kells was mentioned by one participant as something she wanted to go and see. Another lady stated “*I just kinda always felt that they [the Irish] preserved our religion...*” meaning that the Irish in the USA held onto Irish Catholic values and beliefs. Ireland is seen as a bastion for the Catholic faith, largely due to the historic associations with various religious orders and ‘monks’ who were attracted to Ireland because of the peace and solitude it offered as a place for contemplation.

6.1.2 What influenced the Participants’ Pre-visit Image of Ireland?

Before discussing the various influences that contributed to the participants’ views of Ireland prior to visiting, it must be noted that very few of them, irrespective of whether they were independent travellers or part of an organised tour, had carried out any research about Ireland prior to their trip. This apparent lack of research transcended both independent and guided tourists alike. The limited knowledge that they did have was garnered from a variety of organic, as opposed to induced sources, in line with destination image literature as discussed in Chapter Two. Some had read Irish literature which proved to be a rich source of imagery about Ireland. For example, a few of them had read *Angela’s Ashes* and this book appeared to contribute to their expectations regarding the amount of rainfall in Ireland.

All of them had watched films shot in Ireland, in particular classic Hollywood films such as *The Quiet Man*. These films provided a visual context for what they imagined Ireland to be like. This is not to say they expected Ireland to look exactly like it does in *The Quiet Man*, but they liked the romantic idea of Ireland that it depicts. Whereas films such as *The Quiet Man* and *Darby O’Gill and the Little People* paint a somewhat romantic view of Ireland, as discussed in Chapter Four, one of the participants had also seen the somewhat darker film *The Magdalene Laundries*. She commented on the fact that she was aware of the history behind these institutions, that they were places girls

who became pregnant outside of marriage were sent to. In general, participants commented more about Hollywood films that painted a traditional romanticised image of Ireland, with whitewashed cottages and friendly people, as a source from which they formed their initial perceptions about Ireland. As evidenced by the pre-visitation images of Ireland just discussed, all of the participants in Phase 1 of the research held certain ideas about what Ireland might look like as a destination. To further explore their ideas and images of Ireland, the participants were asked to comment on a selection of induced images of Ireland. Using photographs in this way as part of an interview is described in the literature as free-elicitation. The selected images were taken from the Fáilte Ireland image library, and were produced to market Ireland as a tourism destination. The findings from this stage in the empirical research will be as discussed in the next section.

6.1.3 Free-elicitation Techniques

The free-elicitation photographs (Appendix 6) contained a variety of representations of Ireland, from traditional rural scenes to more urban and cityscape images of Ireland. The justification for this approach was to address research objective four:

- **Research Objective Four:** *To establish how images of Ireland are interpreted by US tourists in the context of their own cognitive construction of Ireland*

The photographs were presented in the order in which they appear in Appendix 6 during the Phase 1 in-depth interviews that took place in JFK airport. Participants were asked to comment on each photograph in terms of what they communicated to them about Ireland. If a participant felt a photograph was particularly Irish looking they were asked to elaborate further and explain why. Similarly, if they felt a photograph was not representative of how they imagined Ireland, they were asked to explain why.

Strong commonalities emerged in the participants' reactions to the photographs. These are captured in three themes, which have been labelled using in vivo codes, as defined earlier. The participants categorised the photographs into three themes which they described as: indicatively Irish, stereotypically Irish and it could be anywhere.

6.1.3.1 Free-elicitation Photographs: Theme One “Indicatively Irish”

The four images that are presented in Plate 6.1 were selected by all of the participants from the free elicitation tool as being indicatively Irish, or representative of Ireland as they imagined it pre-visitation. The free-elicitation photographs did not appear in this sequence, as can be seen from Appendix 6 and yet they stood out for the participants in terms of how they would expect Ireland to look. For example, thatched cottages, such as the one in photograph 6.1A, were instantly recognised and associated with Ireland by all of the participants in Phase 1 of the research. Participants formed emotional ties with the traditional Irish cottage, associating cottages as the typical home for generations of Irish people. The rolling green hills depicted in photographs 6.1B and 6.1C were also immediately identified as representing Ireland. Both of these photographs reflected how the participants imagined the Irish countryside to look. The patchwork effect of the fields in photograph 6.1B also connected on an emotional level with the participants as being indicative of Ireland.

The patchwork of fields was something that all of them had commented on when asked what they imagined Ireland to look like before being shown the photograph. They could imagine the various people who had worked the land and who might have lived in a cottage like the one in the photograph. The photograph of the shop 6.1D was identified as Irish looking, not just because of the Irish name over the door, but more so because of the bright colours of the paint work and the flowers. Brightly coloured shops fronts were also considered to be indicative of Ireland.



Plate 6.1 Indicative Images of Ireland

Source: Fáilte Ireland Image Library

Some expressed that they would like to visit a shop like that. The next set of photographs contains images that were immediately recognised as being Irish in appearance, or stereotypically Irish.

6.1.3.2 Free-elicitation Photographs: Theme Two “Stereotypically Irish”

The second set of images most identified as being representative of Ireland are contained in Plate 6.2. They were considered stereotypically Irish in appearance, largely because of the presence of people in the photographs. These people were considered Irish looking by all of the participants for a variety of reasons, as will be reported.



Plate 6.2 Stereotypically Irish Images

Source: Fáilte Ireland Image Library

The girl in photograph 6.2A was immediately perceived as stereotypically Irish, largely because she had red hair. Red hair was an associated characteristic of Irish people for the participants. The colour of the girls’ eyes also contributed to her perceived Irishness for the participants. Indeed, one of the participants felt that she had a ‘*sparkle*’ in her eye (Male participant, MI). Interestingly, the drink in the photograph was perceived as a glass of Guinness, when in actual fact, it is an Irish coffee. The bar scene contained in photograph 6.2B was described by the participants as Irish in appearance because of the people present. The bar’s perceived small space and the various items on the shelves in the background, all contributed to conveying a sense of

Irishness for the participants. The bar was described as an interesting place and one they would like to visit. The interaction between the old man in the corner and the young couple in the bar was of interest to the participants for what it conveyed - the possibility of interacting with local Irish people while on holiday. All of the participants expressed a desire to meet local people as part of their visit to Ireland. One participant was concerned if he would encounter any anti-American sentiments while in Ireland as he had done in other countries he had visited.

6.1.3.3 Free-elicitation Photographs: Theme Three “It could be anywhere”

The general consensus regarding the four photographs represented in Plate 6.3 is that they could be of any destination in any location. Three of the photographs are located in various parts of Dublin, the capital city of Ireland. The rural scene is located in Connemara in Co. Galway. Some of the comments relating to photograph 6.3A (O’Connell Bridge in Dublin) suggested that it looked like Chicago *“this one, it almost looks like Chicago (laughs) yeah it looks like the Chicago River”* (Female participant, FL). Another female participant, also from Florida, stated that she could not see anything that indicated Ireland in the photograph 6.3A *“I mean I don’t, I can’t see anything that I would really say Ireland”* (Female participant, FL). A female participant from Connecticut felt photograph 6.3D looked like parts of Wyoming. A female participant from New York City did not like the presence of a car in the photograph (6.3B). She stated that *“I see it as a nature shot and I don’t want machines in my nature shots”* (Female participant, NY).



Plate 6.3 “It could be anywhere” Images

Source: Fáilte Ireland Image Library

The modern looking buildings and streetscapes were cited as reasons why the participants did not identify them as Irish looking. The colourful shop front in image 6.1D was more in keeping with how they imagined an Irish street to look. This is not to say they did not expect Irish cities to look like the photographs in Plate 6.3, it just means that their imagined view of Ireland is more romantic and not orientated to modernity in how they interpret Ireland as a place.

6.1.4 Summary of the Findings from Phase 1 of the Research

All of the participants in Phase 1 of the research were asked what they knew about Ireland, and what they expected Ireland to be like as a destination prior to visiting. The themes that emerged offer insights into how these tourists imagined Ireland prior to visiting. These themes present Ireland in the minds of the participants as having a green landscape with rolling hills and friendly people.

In the context of how the participant's interpreted induced images of Ireland, the participants selected photographs from the free elicitation set that mirrored their own image of Ireland. However, they rejected photographs of Ireland that did not conform with their imagined view of Ireland. Collectively, each of the pre-visitation participants in Phase 1 were less attracted to the photographs of Dublin, and did not consider them to be Irish looking. The free elicitation photographs that aligned most with their pre-visitation image of Ireland contained images of rural Ireland without any visual evidence of modernity or people in the form of other tourists. The presence of a car in one photograph is a case in point, and was cited by one of the participants as in some way spoiling the rural scene. The next section will report the findings from Phase 2 of the research, which focuses on the photographs taken in Ireland by 16 of the participants who took part in the pre-visitation interviews.

6.2 Post-visitation: The Findings from Phase 2 of the Research

Phase 2 of the research relates to the post-visitation interviews conducted with 16 participants who were previously interviewed in Phase 1. The main purpose of the post-visitation in-depth interviews was to collect three photographs from each of the participants that truly represented Ireland as they had experienced it. These photographs were discussed in the presence of the participants during their post-visitation in-depth interviews and address Research Objective Five:

- **Research Objective Five:** *To compare the photographs taken by US tourists while on holiday in Ireland with their preconceived ideas about Ireland prior to visiting.*

Analysis of their photographs uncovered a number of themes relating to how they constructed Ireland as a real place relative to how they had imagined it pre-visitation.

Among the themes to be discussed are Ireland is greener; remote and undisturbed; naturally beautiful; historic castles; personable Irish people; and spiritual.

6.2.1 Ireland is Greener

All of the participants who were interviewed prior to visiting Ireland had stated that they expected Ireland to be very green. Upon visiting Ireland, they stated that it appeared to be even greener than they had expected as evidenced by Plate 6.4. It was as if the photographs they had seen of Ireland prior to visiting had not done justice to just how vibrantly green the landscape of Ireland is. Arriving in Ireland was described by one participant as the beginning of the “*enchantment*” (Female participant, New York). Ireland for her was an enchanting place to visit, and seeing the vibrant green colours upon arrival meant for her that she knew she was in Ireland. For others, their enchantment with Ireland began for them once they stepped on board their Aer Lingus plane in JFK. One of the participants described the green livery of the plane and the green coloured uniforms of the flight attendants, and how it all seemed “*cosier*” (Female participant, New York).



Plate 6.4 Ireland is Even Greener than Expected

Source: (Female participant, NV)

6.2.2 Ireland is Remote and Undisturbed

Another theme to emerge from the analysis of the participants' photographs from Phase 2 links back to their pre-visitation expectations that Ireland is rural in nature. Post-visitation, they described rural Ireland as remote and undisturbed. The use of the term *undisturbed* encompasses experiences they had of parts of Ireland that they felt were untouched, unspoiled and more natural. In this regard rural Ireland was perceived as being more real in that it was less populated and underdeveloped in comparison to Dublin. *"We were the only ones there for miles, no we didn't see anybody the whole time we were walking and then we ah, we took some pictures of cows, we're all city boys so that was impressive...that remoteness to me felt like Ireland"* (Male participant, NY). Ireland, as presented here in the findings, relates to how the participants interpreted their real Ireland by taking photographs that are personal to them. Real Ireland, for example, was conceptualised in terms of space and an absence of tourists. Places that were less populated with tourists were deemed more real, as stated in the following quote and visually represented in Plate 6.5.

"Annascaul Lake, this seems more of the 'real' Ireland to me simply because we were the only tourists there. I think this was the best taste of a real hiking experience that we got. A lot of other tourist sites did not appeal to me as much as they should have because they were packed with tourists".

(Male participant, NY)



Plate 6.5 “Annascaul Lake”

Source: (Male participant, NY)

Tourist sites that are populated with lots of people in the form of other tourists somehow spoil the frame of any potential photographs according to a male participant from New York. The presence of tourists for him suggests a less real place because tourists mean a more touristic construction of place. Some of the participants in Phase 1, when interviewed again in Phase 2, expressed their surprise at just how rural (Plate 6.6) some parts of Ireland were: “*No, I always had in my mind Ireland was going to be very rural with small towns and stuff. But I don’t think it really hit me how rural it was until we took those drives*” (Female participant, WA.) A male participant from New York had a similar account of visiting Ireland and comparing it to what he had anticipated Ireland to be like. He spoke of becoming “immersed” in rural Ireland after visiting the Aran Islands. His friend had this to say about the Aran Islands “*yeah, I mean honestly it was almost too like, pristine and unspoiled and too agrarian to feel real but I guess it must have been, there are 250 inhabitants there, year around*” (Male participant, NY). A male participant from California made reference to the “smells” of rural Ireland, in

particular the smell of turf burning in the open fires of the cottages located in Bunratty Folk Park; he said smells are “strangely powerful reminders of the past”.



Plate 6.6 Ireland is Remote and Undisturbed

Source: (Female participant, FL)

6.2.3 Ireland is Naturally Beautiful

After visiting Ireland, the participants reflected upon their pre-visitation ideas of Ireland as a beautiful country. By visiting Ireland, they got to experience Ireland’s “natural” beauty (Plate 6.7), as described by them and it surpassed all of their expectations. For example, a female participant from Florida had this to say about her visit to Ireland: “*I think the thing that just kept striking me was how beautiful everything was*”. This is a common reaction to visiting Ireland, expressed by all of the participants in Phase 2, and it transcended age groups, as evidenced by this quote from a male participant in his early twenties: “*we hiked up the mountain, when we got to the top it was like the most beautiful thing anyone has ever seen*”.



Plate 6.7 Bray Head

Source: (Male participant, NY)

He also had this to say about his photograph of Bray Head;

“However, nothing compared to actually being there. Sitting on top of this mountain, with the wind roaring around us, the ocean on our left and fields and flowers, rock and green all around us was an absolutely amazing feeling.”

(Male participant, NY)

6.2.4 Historic Castles

During their pre-visitation interviews the participants made reference to their perceptions of Ireland as a place full of history and historic ruins. Upon arrival they took photographs of castles and other ruins that reflected their pre-visit image of Ireland, photographs such as the one in Plate 6.8.



Plate 6.8 Trim Castle

Source: (Female participant, FL)

Castles were something a female participant from Florida had associated with Ireland before she visited on holiday, and once she arrived in Ireland she took several photographs of them. One of the reasons the participants took photographs of castles while in Ireland is because, as Lucy from Florida states, “*because obviously coming from America we don’t have castles*”. Another female participant from Florida, in particular, liked the fact that you could visit some of the castles in Ireland on your own instead of going with a tour group. She elected to get up early and visit these sites before they became heavily populated with other tourists. Castles were a visual representation of the ancient sense of Ireland for a female participant from New Jersey. Whereas a female participant from New York stated if she were designing a postcard of

Ireland she would put castles on it, "*I would put some castles*". For younger tourists from the USA, such as Nicole from Seattle, castles are "*cool*".

6.2.5 Personable Irish People

Meeting Irish people made the experience of being in Ireland real for the participants, as evidenced by the following quote from a male participant from Nevada, "*I think that was the whole experience*". He relished interacting with local Irish people. He came to Ireland with his partner from Las Vegas in search of her Irish roots. He was welcomed by her Irish relatives, and made to feel part of the family. He liked the fact that Irish people were naturally inquisitive and openly curious about him and his background: "*to initially deal with the locals and stuff like that, to interact with them, talk with them because they're curious about you, they want to know what Vegas is like*" (Male participant, NV). The participants generally felt more welcome in Ireland such as being greeted when entering a shop, "*people walk in the store and saying 'Hi, how are you?'*" (Female participant, CT). She felt Irish people were "*very easy to talk to*", and her experiences of talking to Irish people were different to experiences she had in other countries as a tourist.

Non-touristy bars were identified as a good place to find local people, albeit possibly resulting in a late night, "*ah that was another night that we ended up staying out and way too late... am a non-touristy bar*" (Female participant, FL). Hearing the Irish brogue in places such as pubs, restaurants and public places in general, added to the sense of being in Ireland for some of the participants. One lady stated she would not have enjoyed her trip to Ireland if she had not heard it, "*but I wouldn't like it if I didn't hear, is it a brogue?*" (Female participant, NY). She said when she is on holiday she likes hearing, for example, the Scottish accent when in Scotland, or the Romanian accent of a friend of hers back home, because these accents are different to her own.

Despite all the interesting narratives about Irish people, only one of the participants from Phase 2 of the research submitted a photograph with people in it as being representative of real Ireland. The photograph (Plate 6.9) shows two street musicians, and it was taken by a female participant from New York. She expected Ireland to be festive and lively, and this photograph represents that for her.



Plate 6.9 Street Musicians

Source: (Female participant, NY)

6.2.6 Spiritual

The final theme to emerge from the analysis of the photographs collected in Phase 2 of the research reflects the spiritual nature of Ireland expressed by some of the participants. It was expressed in terms of visiting places such as Glendalough or the Bee Hive huts on Skellig Michael in Dingle. Participants who visited these two monastic sites spoke of the sense of solitude that must have been ever present hundreds of years ago when they were inhabited by the monks. Equally, the Dolmen burial tomb in the Burren in Co. Clare evoked a similar reaction from a female participant from Florida. She

submitted the photograph in Plate 6.10 as being representative of real Ireland's spirituality.



Plate 6.10 Dolmen Burial Tomb

Source: (Female participant, FL)

A female participant from Connecticut stated how visiting Glendalough “*gives you goose bumps, thinking of the monks and their way of life*”. As a self-professed Catholic, visiting Glendalough allowed her to connect on a spiritual level with Ireland's religious past. Newgrange, the Stone Age passage tomb in the Boyne valley, had a similar effect on a male participant from Las Vegas, Nevada. For him it was also a spiritual experience, but more so from the point of view of the age of the structure and what it was constructed for: “*it's fascinating, just the age of it, considering the times and what they had to work with, to actually construct a structure like that*” (Male participant, NV).

6.2.7 Summary of Phase 2 Findings

The findings from Phase 2 of the research indicate that the participants took photographs of Ireland that reflected, to a large extent, their pre-visitation perceptions of Ireland. The six post-visitation themes of Ireland as greener; remote and undisturbed; naturally beautiful; historic castles; personable Irish people; and spiritual, as discussed, offer insights into how this cohort of participants constructed their idea of real Ireland by taking photographs as part of being a tourist. People do not feature in the photographs submitted by the participants in Phase 2 of the research, with the exception of the street musicians in Plate 6.9. Instead, their photographs contain images of rural Ireland which they depict as green, remote and undisturbed by people. The next section will report the findings associated with Phase 3 of the empirical work.

6.3 The Findings from Phase 3 of the Research

Phase 3 of the research relates to eight focus groups that were conducted with US tourists at the end of their holiday in Ireland before returning to the USA. A total of 48 US tourists participated in Phase 3 of the research. The purpose of the focus groups was to collect and discuss photographs taken by them while on holiday in Ireland in order to address the final research objective:

- **Research Objective Six:** *To investigate how the photographs taken by US tourists function as devices/tools by which their construction of Ireland can be explored.*

Analysis of the transcripts from the focus groups uncovered three main themes, and a number of sub-themes per theme, relating to the photographs the participants selected as being truly representative of Ireland. Similar to Phase 2, these themes have been labelled using descriptive words from the participants' narratives about the photographs,

and are presented in Figure 6.2. Among the themes to be discussed are *Ireland is real*, *real people* and *simple way of life*.

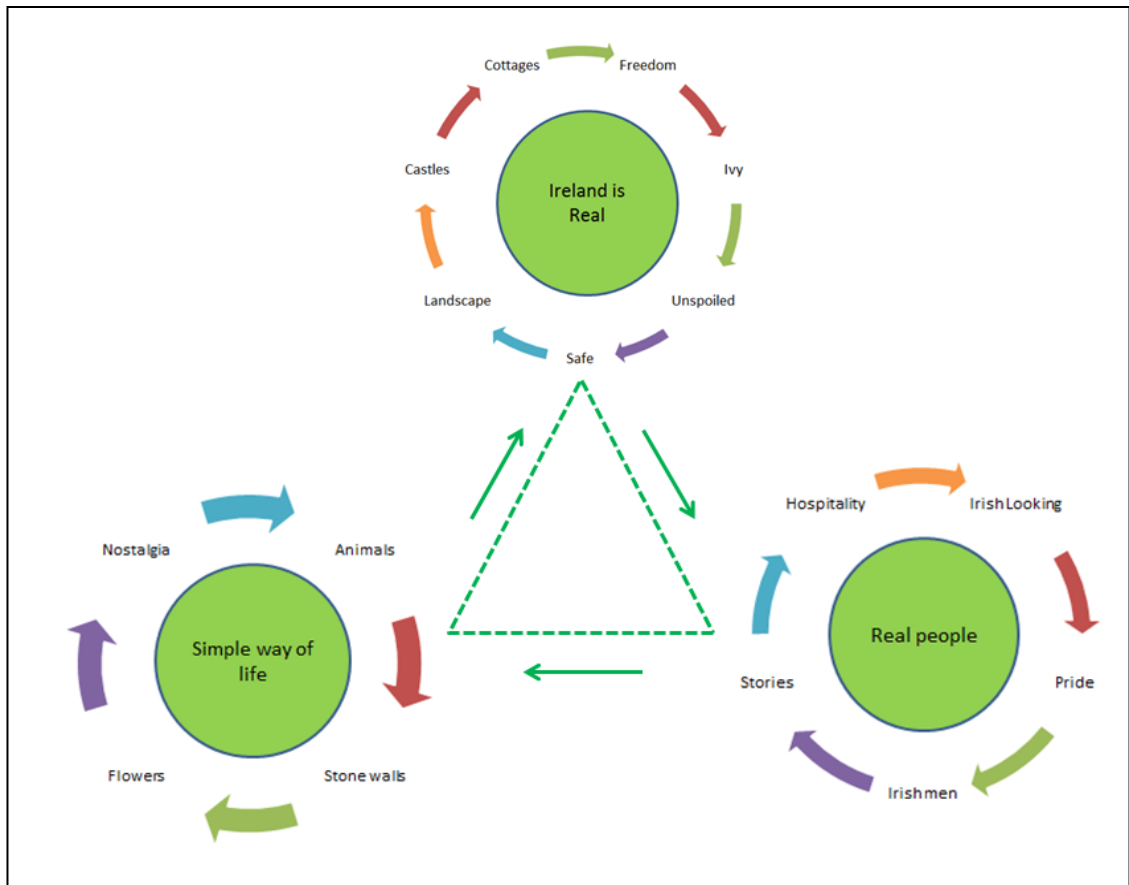



Figure 6.2 Focus Group’s Themes and Sub-themes: Phase 3 of the Research

The photographs taken by the participants from Phase 3 of the research suggest that real Ireland, as they constructed it, is associated with a specific number of counties. These counties are represented in green on a map of Ireland (Figure 6.3). This is not to say that the participants did not visit other counties, or indeed take photographs in those counties. Instead, the map reflects the counties from which the participants selected photographs taken by them that they felt represented real Ireland.



Figure 6.3 Map of Ireland Showing Phase 3 Photograph Locations by County

Source: Author

 = Counties in Ireland where the photographs were taken

6.3.1 Focus Group's Theme One: Ireland is Real

The participants submitted photographs that reflected their interpretation of real Ireland in terms of their imaginings of Ireland. The theme *real Ireland* generated a number of

associated sub-themes, as represented in Figure 6.4. These sub-themes will help structure the findings associated with the participants' interpretation of real Ireland. They orbit around the main theme, *Ireland is real*, and are all interconnected, with one leading to the other, and where all of them contribute something to the whole.

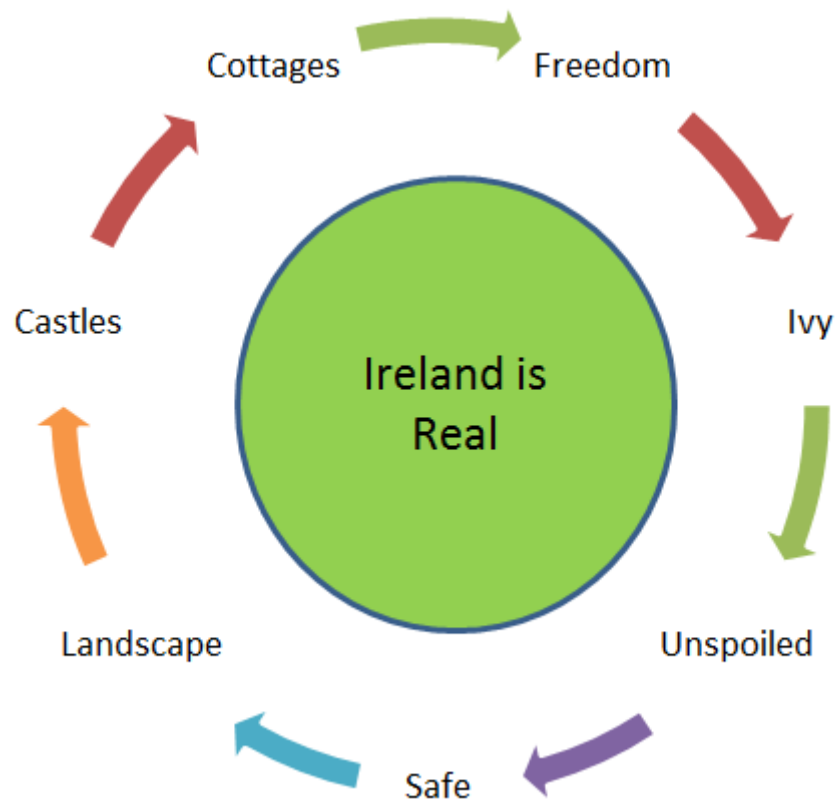


Figure 6.4 Focus Group's Theme One: Ireland is Real

Analysis of the participants' photographs indicates that what the participants express as being a real image of Ireland, in their opinion, relates to various experiences they had while on holiday. Images that supported the participants' view of Ireland appear repeatedly in the photographs they submitted to represent Ireland. Images of cottages, rural landscapes, castles and open spaces dominate the lens through which they presented their view of Ireland. Themes associated with real Ireland, as expressed by the participants include: cottages, freedom, ivy, unspoiled, safe, landscapes and castles.

Real experiences were of primary importance to the participants, and contribute most to engendering an emotional connection with Ireland as a destination.



Plate 6.11 “Real Ireland”

Source: (Male participant, MI)

The participants from Phase 3 of the research expressed similar views to those of the participants from Phase 2, in terms of constructing real Ireland as a place sparsely populated and rural in nature. When asked to pick photographs that truly reflected real Ireland as they experienced it, most of them picked photographs similar to Plate 6.11 above. The photograph presented in Plate 6.11 is typical of how the participants in Phase 3 of the research spoke about how they imagined Ireland. Similarly, certain images of Ireland were identified as typically Irish in appearance, such as the thatched cottage. Therefore, most of the participants had taken photographs of cottages as they travelled around Ireland. The thatched cottage enjoys a sentimental association with the US tourists who participated in this research, because they are considered to be

quintessential historical dwellings for generations of Irish people and therefore they are real.

Sub-theme 1 – Thatched Cottages as Representations of Real Ireland

The imagined view of Ireland expressed by all of the participants indicated a sentimental, emotional attachment with Ireland as a tourism place. They wanted to bridge the gap between modern day Ireland and ancient Ireland. In essence, they wanted to transcend time, and actively went in search of places that fitted their imagined view of what *real* Ireland might look like. Artefacts of Irish culture, such as cottages that remain standing, amazed the participants. Similar to the findings from Phase 1 and 2, participants in Phase 3 of the research also identified the thatched cottage as quintessentially Irish, “*Thatch houses cos that is what I think of when I think of Ireland*” (Female participant, TX), and many of them had taken photographs of them. Using photograph Plate 6.12 as a case example, the cottage in the photograph is located on an open farm in Co. Galway. Brendan Vacations use this farm as one of the stop off points for their guided *All of Ireland Tour*. The participants loved the fact that the cottage is located on a *real-life* functioning farm and that the current owners can trace their ancestry back over several generations of the same family. In this form, it typifies real Ireland for the participants who visited it.

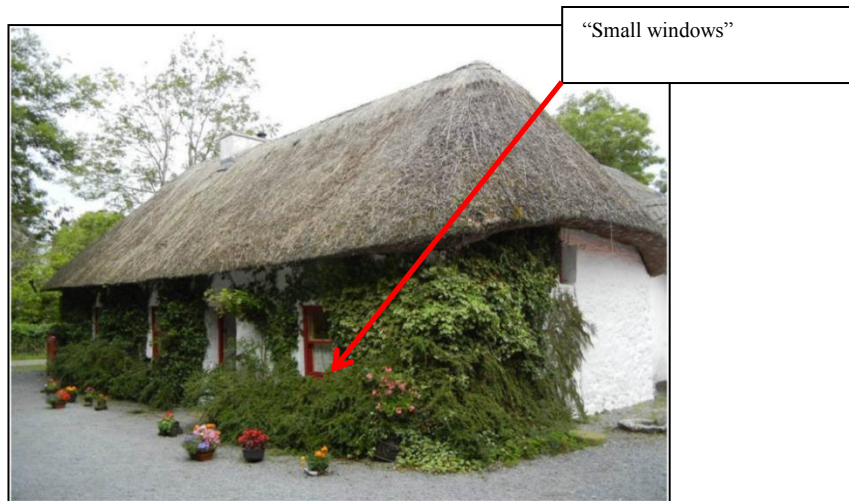


Plate 6.12 Cottage Rathbaun Farm Co. Galway

Source: (Male participant, NJ)

For example, one participant described it as “*very much a working house*” (Female participant, IL). The fact that it was still in use by the current generation of the people who had gone before only added to its authenticity in the minds of the participants. In terms of how the participants first became aware of the Irish cottage, they stated they had first seen them in films either about Ireland or which were set in Ireland, as indicated by a participant from Wisconsin, “*probably on TV from movies years ago*” (Male participant, WI). This is in line with the findings from Phase 1 and Two in terms of how participants became aware of cottages. A female participant from Texas said she had first seen cottages in “*older movies*” about Ireland. In the focus groups it emerged that nearly all of the participants, regardless of age, had seen the *The Quiet Man*, although some of them were not too sure of the correct title of the film. Stories in Irish history associated with the Irish cottage intrigued the participants. One anecdote relating to why cottages have such tiny windows really interested a male participant from North Dakota. He loved the fact it was connected to a tax that was imposed on the Irish for having windows under British rule. He states, “*You tax people on their windows so you have small windows. I mean that there is just so much to say about*

that one thing” (Male participant, ND). This little known fact about why Irish cottages have such small windows fascinated Bruce. It links them with Ireland’s history of British rule and makes them real. Participants also considered the thatched cottage real because generations of Irish people were reared in them, including the ancestors of participants who could trace family connections back to Ireland. By visiting a cottage such as the one located at Fintan’s farm, these participants were able to imagine what life might have been like for their ancestors.

Sub theme 2 – Real Ireland is Free to Explore

Freedom was another theme that emerged strongly in terms of the participants’ real image of Ireland. Real Ireland, for the participants, is an open community where tourists have the freedom to explore and discover their own Ireland. For example, a female participant from Massachusetts was amused by the horse (Plate 6.13) who she said walked right over to her. This is something that this participant stated she could not imagine happening back home. The openness of Ireland, in terms of tourists being able to engage with such encounters, really appealed to her. Back home she said any attempt at a similar experience might result in you being shot at by the owner, “*without getting shot yeah*” (Female participant, MA). Ireland afforded the woman in Plate 6.13 many similar opportunities, and the participants in her focus group all agreed with her construct of Ireland as an open country where tourists are free to enjoy all that Ireland has to offer, without fear of reprisal.



Plate 6.13 Kissing a Horse

Source: (Female participant, MA)

The Irish climate also allowed a female participant from Texas, (where the temperature can reach over 110° F in the summer months, with 100 per cent humidity), to enjoy cycling. Her photograph in Plate 6.14 captures this sense of freedom for her. The flowers represent the Irish climate for her, which is seen as more forgiving than Texas. The Irish weather enables flowers to grow, but it also allows tourists from less forgiving climates to enjoy a bicycle ride.



Plate 6.14 Bicycle

Source: (Female participant, TX)

In keeping with the theme of Ireland as a real and open place, many of the participants commented on the fact that most of the museums in Ireland are free to enter with no charge. They all appreciated this as tourists, and many of them visited them while in Dublin.

Sub theme 3 – Real Ireland is Covered in Ivy

Sometimes the older something is, the more real it is perceived to be. This is certainly the case in terms of how the participants perceived buildings that were covered in ivy (Plate 6.15). For example, a female participant from Illinois described the ivy covered buildings as having a vintage appearance, *“red ivy it's just looks vintage”*. Others commented on the many historical buildings they saw all over Ireland that were covered with ivy, *“every place we went there was ivy growing on things”*. Further probing in the focus groups revealed that the significance of ivy lay in its perceived connection to the age of the building, as explained by one participant, *“I think of the ancient history of the country and it took a long time to get all that...”*. Another participant imagined that there might be leprechauns hiding under the ivy. The USA is a relatively young

country in comparison to Ireland, and all of the participants were amazed by the many old buildings they saw, some of which were older than the USA.



Plate 6.15 Ivy Growing on Muckross House in Killarney, Co. Kerry

Source: (Female Participant, FG2)

Sub theme 4 – Real Ireland is Tidy

The participants described Ireland as a very tidy country: *"many of the buildings of Ireland...are just meticulous and have such detail to them especially for as old as they are, it is absolutely fascinating"* (Female Participant, FG5). The cleanliness of the country was linked to real Ireland because all of the participants imagined Ireland to be unspoiled, with none of the physical evidence of a modern society, in terms of littered streets. This expectation extended to the countryside also. The participants highlighted how well maintained the countryside was, *"yeah absolutely, there are no piles of trash or junk yards"* (Female participant, TX). None of the participants had any negative comments to make about the cleanliness of Ireland, *"You don't see any*

paper or trash along the road even if it was there we were up high we would have seen it” (Female coach tour participant, FG4).

Sub theme 5 – Real Ireland is Safe

All of the participants felt safe in Ireland. For example, they felt safe to go walking outside either very early in the morning, or late at night. Plate 6.16 depicts some milk cartons on a door step.

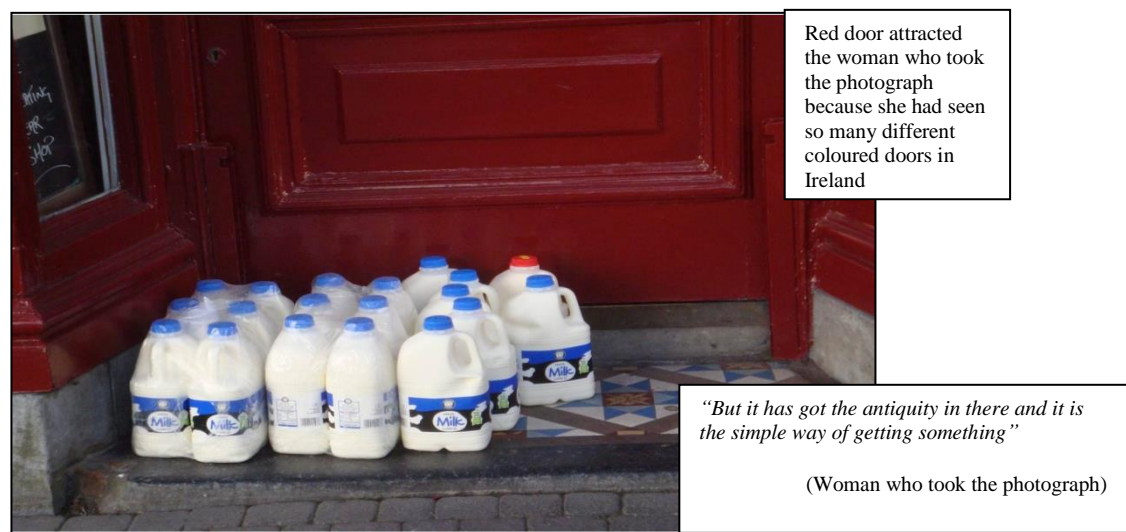


Plate 6.16 (Photograph 004, FG2)

Source (Female Participant, FG2)

The woman who took the photograph stated that it was taken in Kilkenny at 6.00am one morning, and that she certainly could not walk around her own neighbourhood back home at that hour. She was amazed that it was *“untouched”*, the milk was not *“stolen”* or *“tampered”* with, as she suggested might happen in the US (Female Participant, FG2). For her, the photograph reflects back to a different time in society, and a simpler way of doing things such as having milk delivered to the door, which links to how she imagines Ireland.

Sub theme 6 – Ireland’s Landscape

All of the participants expressed delight in learning about the affinity the Irish have with the land. The landscapes (Plate 6.17) and the various homes that they saw as they travelled around Ireland represent *real* Ireland for them, because real people live in them.

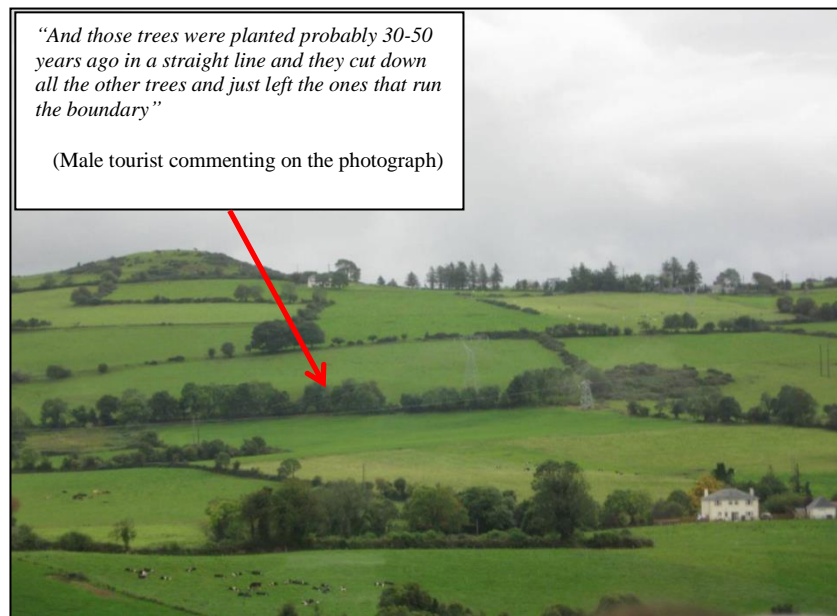


Plate 6.17 (Photograph 009, FG6)

Source: (Female Participant, FG6)

“you see the homestead on the bottom right and it was just dwarfed by these huge green fields and then you can just see how they squared them off and you could picture that well one son got this and another son got that and maybe the daughter and her husband got that part, and then you’ve got the major homestead”

(Female Participant who took the photograph)

The importance of seeing the homes of the Irish people in the more rural parts of Ireland cannot be over played in the context of representing Ireland in the minds of the participants. All of them took several photographs of the landscape as they toured Ireland. Working the land, shaping it and dividing it amongst the next generation were all themes identified with the Irish landscape in the minds of the participants. As each

generation passed they left their mark on the land, forming and reforming the patchwork of fields as they built walls by clearing the land of stones. They were subdivided from father to son and so on. Irish people also left their mark on the land by planting trees as stated by one male participant.

Ireland's landscapes, and in particular its dramatic coastline, evoke a sense of mystery which all of the participants described in the context of their personal images of Ireland. Visually, Ireland's mystical allure is represented in Plate 6.18. The dramatic nature of the photograph with the waves in the distance and the sea mist, conjures up images of mystery for the participants who saw it.

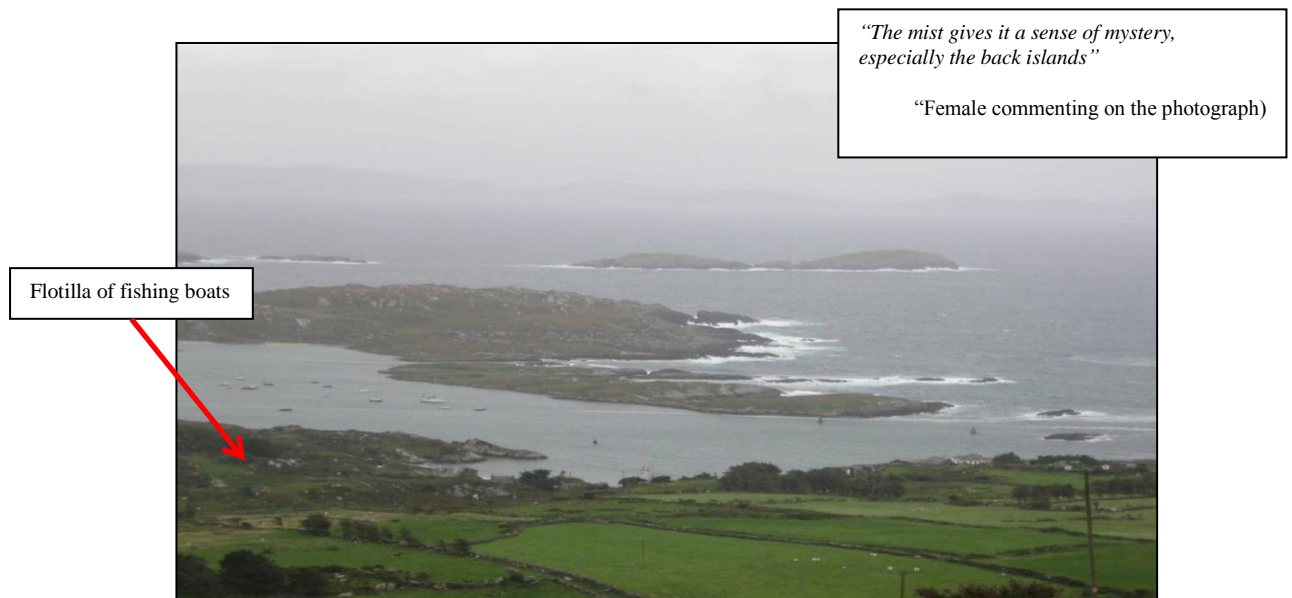


Plate 6.18 (Photograph, 011, FG6)

Source: (Female Participant, FG6)

The waves breaking on the rocks and the mist provide a dramatic backdrop to the photograph, "...cos you see the waves coming in on the rocks...typically mysterious". Interestingly, once again the weather is seen as contributing to the overall effect of the photograph, "I think this picture would not have been as impactful if it were sunny". Yet again the patchwork effect of the landscape in the foreground is commented on by

the woman who took the photograph, *“you still see the green patchwork in the foreground”*. A sub-theme associated with this photograph also resonates with the earlier theme of feeling safe. One woman drew the group’s attention to the boats sitting in the inlet, and how they were *“protected”* from the waves, *“And then you see the flotilla of fishing boats and they’re on the inlet they are not where the waves are so they are protected”*. Ireland is seen as a nurturing destination.

Sub theme 7 – Castles

The focus group participants, similar to those in Phase 1 and Two of the research, held strong associations with castles and real Ireland: *“when I think of Ireland I think of castles”* (Female participant, GA). Analysis of the photographs of castles submitted by the focus group participants suggests that one of the main motivations for taking photographs of castles is because they are so old. This concept is best illustrated by the following quote from one of the participants from FG2, *“I am in awe of castles built centuries ago and still standing, functional and safe. I chose a picture of someone taking a picture of a castle because to me it represents all of us touring your beautiful island touching our roots”* (Female participant, ND). A male participant from Wisconsin was intrigued with how they were built, *“the pyramids... I guess I can understand that a little bit better because you can drag that but how did they haul this up there and build it no mortar and it never comes down, that is what impresses me...”* (Male participant, WI). He also liked the fact that some of the castles he saw were open to the public, such as Blarney Castle in Co. Cork. He was able to walk through some of the tunnels in Blarney Castle, and, in a sense, re-imagine how it might have felt like to walk through them back when it was built.

A female participant from Michigan was surprised to see that Kylemore Abbey in Co. Galway was so well preserved. She was bemused as to why one would build such an opulent structure in a remote location, *“it threw me even if you have that much money why would you live that extravagantly”* (Female participant, MI). Some of the participants had difficulty reconciling the apparent luxury that Kylemore offered its occupants at a time in Irish history when the populace was suffering widespread deprivation and Famine. However, most of the participants had positive associations with castles, some of which connected with their childhood and reading about castles in school. The following extract relating to Plate 6.19 encapsulates the overwhelming emotion that castles appeared to stir up in the participants:

“Ok this is one that I did. So kinda like what she was saying how it's a mix of the mountains and the scenery as well and I was just standing there looking at this and thinking someone hundreds of years ago or however long ago, I can't remember exact dates at this point, was walking around or going around on their horse and said I am going to build a castle here you know. It's like what's going through their mind and how could they come to these remote locations and think I am going to be a castle there and a church there and a mausoleum there and just to be back then to just kinda of escape and even being there today. It's almost like being back in that time because you could be just walking the trails and not feel like you are in 2011. It's a good mix of... I think one of the reasons people come here is the history and the other reason scenery and it's a good mix of both of them. So that is why I picked that”

(Male participant, NH)



Plate 6.19 Kylemore Abbey, Co. Galway

Source: (Male participant, NH)

6.4.2 Summary of Findings from Theme One: Ireland is Real

The focus group participants construct real Ireland as a country rural in nature but firmly rooted in the West of Ireland as evidenced by where the photographs were taken in Figure 6.2 for the focus group participants. The West of Ireland is perceived as being sparsely populated in the minds of the participants. Similarly, the most real parts of Ireland for the participants are where there are very few tourists. Real Ireland, in the opinion of the participants who took part in this research, is dotted with cottages and some of them are still inhabited. It is an open country where one can truly connect with the place without fear of retribution from the locals. Real Ireland as imagined by the participants is a safe country whose landscapes and buildings date back for centuries, as evidenced by the many stately homes covered in ivy. Ireland's landscape is unspoiled and free from litter associated with modern life. Ireland's landscape, in the form of the patchwork effect of the fields, signifies Ireland's tradition of farming and working the land which is passed on from generation to generation. For the participants, Real Ireland is *real* and not something contrived for the tourist. The next theme reports the findings associated with the Irish people, and the importance placed on the associations the participants had with what they interpret as being Irish.

6.4.3 Focus Group's Theme Two: Real People

The focus group participants held certain preconceived ideas about Irish people (Figure 6.5). These included the idea that the Irish were a warm, friendly and hospitable people. They loved the stories that were told by the various people they encountered on their travels such as Paddy from Limerick, Fintan from Rathbaun farm in Galway, and Jack the walking tour guide from Waterford. In the minds of the participants, these three men encapsulate what it means to be an Irish man. Participants thought that all

three men were hospitable, exhibited pride in being Irish, and were great storytellers. All these traits are reflected in the various sub-themes that emerged during the analysis of how the participants talked about and represented Irish people in their photographs.



Figure 6.5 Focus Group’s Theme Two: Real People

Sub theme 1 - Hospitality

The photograph presented in Plate 6.20 embodies Irish hospitality for the focus group participants. A female participant from Colorado loved her time cruising on the River Shannon. They were served tea, sandwiches and scones as part of the trip. This scene (Plate 6.20) embodies traditional Irish hospitality as she had imagined it to be. The photograph, when it appeared on the screen in the focus groups, was greeted with bursts of laughter. There were some whisperings as to what the orange pieces in the sandwiches were and Kathleen told the others in the group that they were grated cheese.



Plate 6.20 Irish Hospitality

Source: (Female participant, CO)

A woman from California was one of the first participants from this research to draw a distinction between the two words, tourism and hospitality, in explaining what Ireland really means to her. She felt that Ireland is not just about tourism, it is more than that.

It is about welcoming tourists into Irish homes, as her comments describe:

“Hospitality is as if you are welcoming someone into your home and that's...to be hospitable when you have people in your home they are honoured they are guests and tourism is just a bunch of people that I feel sorry for sometimes...we're there in droves with our cameras (click, click, click) that's tourism...we get some information and that's wonderful but the hospitality is, is...did you feel warm in that place?”

(Female participant, CA)



Plate 6.21 Oliver St. John Gogarty's Bar in Temple Bar, Dublin

Source: (Female participant, MI)

This concept of hospitality is carried forward in the dialogue that centred round the photograph in Plate 6.21. The woman who took the above photograph spoke at length about it, as did her husband. She started off by saying they were walking through Temple Bar in Dublin, and the music coming from the bar drew them in. She described how they “*became part of the scene*” in the bar. Both felt their shared experiences exhibited all that they had heard about Ireland, and the friendliness of the Irish was real. The woman’s husband said that they went into the bar not knowing a single person, but that “*they came out with 5 friends*”.

“You really can go into a pub and you really can make a ton of friends right then and that's what that (Plate 6.21) is. Like when you have framed your question, when you say what three pictures are you going to use to tell people at home? This is one we will talk for 15 minutes about”.

(Male participant, MI)

The experience of the married couple from Michigan as described above in their own words reflects what US tourists appreciate most about visiting Ireland, an opportunity to meet and connect with Irish people. They got to engage with local people and the locals made them feel welcome. Ireland’s association as a welcoming country is particularly appreciated in the USA, as evidenced by the pre-visitation images of the

participants in Phase 1 of the research. John and Helen got to enjoy this Irish welcome first hand, and it really added to their sense of the Irish as a people, and formed an emotional bond for them with Ireland.

Sub theme 2 - Irish Looking

Phase 1 of the research identified that one of the stereotypical images US tourists have of Irish people is that they have red hair. This image of the Irish red haired girl or boy resonated with one of the participants in the focus groups. She was so excited to have captured the boy in the following photograph, Plate 6.22.



Plate 6.22 Red Haired Young Man

Source: (Female Participant, FG2)

The woman who took the photograph grew up with an impression of Irish people looking like the boy in the photograph, *“I thought that they had red curly hair and the freckles and fair skin and my impression is his name ought to be Kevin too (lots of laughter)”*. Her impression of what an Irish person should look like was informed

from a television commercial that she had seen back in the United States for Irish Spring soap. All of the participants in her focus group (FG2) agreed that he looked typically Irish. For the lady who took the photograph, her emotional connection with Ireland started when she was a child by seeing a television advertisement for soap. Years later, she gets to take a photograph that for her represents what the boy might look like today, and she gives him a name Kevin. By naming the boy she is personalising her experience and making an emotional connection through the photograph with the person in it. She never got to talk to him, but she created an idea of him from just one photograph and a lifetime of imagination sparked by an advertisement for soap.

Sub theme 3 - Pride

The Irish were perceived as a proud people by the participants. Pride was spoken of in terms of taking care of the land, being respectful and tolerant of others. A female participant from Texas was impressed by the various monuments she had seen around Ireland, *“Well I think you have done a really good job with some of the monuments, symbolic monuments you know”* (Female participant, TX). A female participant from California spoke about the Irish having to make a lot of concessions down through the ages. Despite all the persecution endured by the Irish, she said that the Irish people include everybody. No one gets left out, *“they honour each other and the people that come in, and that is incredible”* (Female participant, CA). The photograph in Plate 6.23 encapsulates a visual representation of Irish pride for Jordan from Illinois. It represents the hard work associated with working the land and the industrious resourcefulness of the Irish. Nothing goes to waste, not even a wheelbarrow. The Irish people are firmly rooted in the landscape of Ireland for the focus group participants. It is this connection between the people and the land that US tourists appreciate about

visiting Ireland, particularly if they are of Irish descent. In visiting Ireland, they too forge an emotional connection with the land of their forefathers if they are of Irish descent, and even if they are not. Pride was also spoken of in terms of how Irish people keep their homes and gardens. One woman commented on the black tarmac she saw in a lot of houses and how in some of them it went right up to the door. The participants also commented on the many hanging baskets they saw decorating people's homes.



Plate 6.23 Wheelbarrow Rathbaun Farm, Co. Galway

Source: (Female participant, IL)

Sub theme 4 – Irish Men

All of the participants in Phase 3 of the research had certain ideas about Irish men. Most of the focus group participants got to meet three Irish men, in particular Paddy, Fintan and Jack, during their visit to Ireland. This is because the tour company had arranged it. Paddy owns a farm in Co. Limerick, and clients of Collette Vacations get to visit it as part of their tour of Ireland. Of the eight focus groups conducted in Phase 3 of the research, participants from five of them visited Paddy's farm. Therefore, Paddy features in some form or other across all of the five focus groups.

Fintan runs a similar operation in Co. Galway to which Brendan Vacation clients are brought, and Jack runs his own walking tour business in Waterford, and will be discussed later also. These three men embody the stereotypical Irish man for all of the participants. Firstly, Paddy has a typical Irish name for an Irish man, ‘Paddy’. He is photographed standing outside the front door of this house in Limerick in Plate 6.24.



Plate 6.24 Paddy

Source: (Male participant, ND)

For the male participant who took the photograph of Paddy above, it represents so much of what he had seen of Ireland and of what Ireland is. Paddy’s posture in the photograph was described by one lady as inviting “*as if he was going to spin a yarn*”, (Female Participant commenting on the photograph, FG2). Another participant felt he (Paddy) was saying “*come in and I will tell you a story*”. Paddy shared the history of his family home with the participants. All of the focus group participants who got the opportunity to visit Paddy’s farm were amazed that he was living in a house where so many generations of this family before him had lived. They felt privileged to be invited into a real Irish home where the lady of the house offered them tea and

homemade scones. Afterwards, Paddy brought them into the parlour (living room) and told them stories about Ireland and his family and recited poetry. He enraptured them with his tales of times gone by. Hearing Paddy's first-hand accounts of life in Ireland became a living history lesson for the participants. Paddy is a great story teller and storytelling is synonymous with Irish culture, as will be presented in the next section.

Sub theme 5 – Storytelling

The following photograph (Plate 6.25) depicts Paddy sitting in the parlour of his cottage reciting a poem to his enraptured audience. A male participant from Colorado describes the facial expressions of the group as “*rapt*” as they listen to Paddy. Paddy's eyes are closed “*he has his eyes closed there, he is holding it for a second and that's part of it too, the technique of Irish story telling*” (Male participant, CO). Paddy is a living example of the tradition of Irish storytelling, and all of the participants considered him to be very good at it. He held their attention for hours, as evidenced by the photograph and they were all under his spell. Paddy is the focal point of the photograph as he recites a poem and all eyes are fixed upon him. The body language of the man standing up wearing a baseball cap tells its own story. He has his head bowed as if in contemplative reverence listening to the poem. His posture shows he is moved by the poem.



Plate 6.25 Storytelling

Source: (Male participant, CO)

One woman from the focus groups commenting on Plate 6.25 stated that when she thinks of Ireland she *“really thinks of people and spirit and friendliness”*. Poignant was another term used to describe the experience of being in the room at that moment listening to Paddy.



Plate 6.26 Jack

Source: (Female participant, ND)

Some of the participants who travelled around Ireland with Brendan Vacations also got the opportunity to take a walking tour of Waterford with Jack, as featured in Plate 6.26. The researcher had the opportunity to accompany one of the groups on this walking tour of Waterford, during which Jack delivered a living and breathing history of Waterford city. The tour began with Jack giving the participants a brief introduction to the history of the city in the lobby of their hotel before embarking on the walking tour. In the course of setting the scene, as it were, Jack assigned roles to members of the group. In particular, he selected one woman and one man from the group to represent Aoife, daughter of the King of Leinster, and the Norman leader, Strongbow, whose marriage to each other brought the Normans and Irish together. Once the tour started, the entire group trailed Jack around Waterford city, stopping off at key locations such as Reginald's Tower (Plate 6.27). At each location, Jack would gather the group around to continue the story.



Plate 6.27 Reginald's Tower Waterford City

Source: (www.jackswalkingtours.com)

All of the participants became enthralled in the story, largely due to Jack's delivery. His energetic accounts of "rakes, rogues, reprobates and revolutionaries" as he describes them himself, entertained the group for well over an hour. All of the participants on the tour thoroughly enjoyed their time with Jack. Jack possesses an innate ability to communicate in a fashion associated with the Irish tradition of storytelling. His one hour tour affords tourists an opportunity to become immersed in Irish history, while spending time in the company of Jack. He is one of only a few Irish tour guides in Ireland who holds the Fáilte Ireland tourist guide badge, and he has won several awards for his tour guiding. Many of the participants in this study stated that their time with Jack was one of the highlights of their trip to Ireland. This was because they got to spend time in the company of an Irish man who reflected their imagined view of what an Irish man should be like.

The third and final photograph, Plate 6.28, is used to represent the tradition of storytelling and stories. It features what looks like a tree with rags of material tied to it. It is, in fact, a fairy tree. For the female participant from Illinois who took the photograph, she was really intrigued by the story behind this tree, and the concept of fairies in Irish mythology. The following excerpt contains her story behind the photograph and why she took it.



Plate 6.28 Fairy Tree

Source: (Female participant, IL)

“And he told me the story about on the Aran islands they believe in folklore very much and that the fairy trees and everything is a big part of it, but he also mentioned to me that they believed so much in it that there was a superstition that the fairies would take your son if you had them over there. So they would dress them up until age 4 in girls’ clothing and he was telling me about that it wasn't until after that point that they were called a changeling, that they would change into a boy because they were old enough that they wouldn't be taken away by the fairies. So when I saw this tree and Liz [Tour Director] said it was a fairy tree and people tie things to it and then you can make a wish and the fairies will grant it. I thought it was interesting, because the night before I had heard so much about the fairies”

(Female participant, IL)

6.4.4 Summary of the Findings from Theme Two: Real People

Three of the main pull factors for tourists visiting Ireland continue to be culture, landscape and people. The VEP photographs offer detailed insights into what exactly the participants appreciated about their various experiences and encounters with Irish people. Meeting everyday Irish people in their natural environment heightens the imagining for all of the participants in this research. The sense of hospitality and genuine warmth they encountered was one of the highlights of their trip to Ireland. It confirmed their pre-existing ideas about Ireland in terms of its reputation for hospitality and friendliness. Listening to stories from real-life characters like Paddy, Jack and Fintan allowed each participant to step inside, albeit briefly, the everyday lives of ordinary Irish people. It facilitated the transference of first-hand accounts of what life in Ireland was and is like, through poetry and stories told by the Irish people the participants encountered. The main appeal for the participants of storytelling was the fact it allowed them to bring back to the United States a lot more than just souvenirs. The memories of their collective encounters with Irish people become an enduring, life enriching legacy of their visit to Ireland that they will share with friends and family back home as they discuss their photographs of Paddy, Fintan or Jack. The next section will report the findings on the third and final theme associated with the VEP photographs collected in Phase 2 of the research.

6.4.5 Focus Group's Theme Three: Simple Way of Life

All of the participants expressed a desire to experience a simpler way of life as a motivation for visiting Ireland. One of the main reasons behind this motivation was a desire to step outside of the mediatised, commercially constructed daily experiences of their lives back home in the USA. Most of the participants lived in urban settings; by

visiting Ireland they could live a life that was simpler, albeit briefly, than their lives back home. This section of the findings presents visual evidence in the form of photographs of how the participants constructed Ireland as a destination in terms of the theme a *simple way of life*, as illustrated in Figure 6.6. A number of interrelated sub-themes emerged that represent how the participants imagined and captured on their cameras the differences between Ireland as a tourism destination, and their own personal life back in the United States. These sub-themes include the association between animals and Ireland, stone walls as a connection with history, and flowers as a representation of the beauty and simple elegance of Ireland. Combined, these sub-themes inform the final theme and all of the sub-themes, as the figure shows, are interconnected.

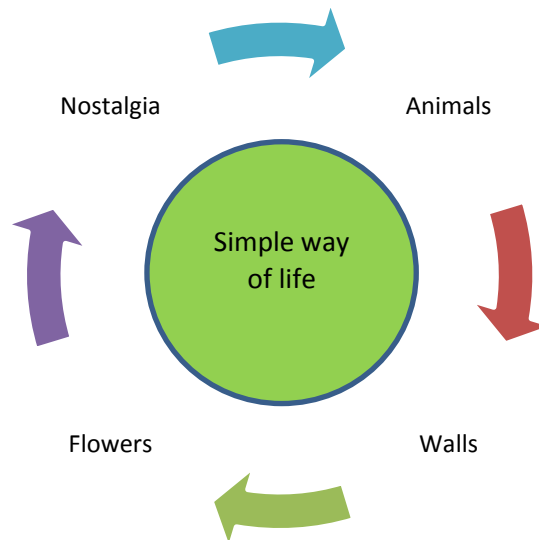


Figure 6.6 Focus Group’s Theme Three: Simple Way of Life

Sub theme 1 - Animals

Animals had strong associations with Ireland in the minds of the participants, as evidenced by the photographs in Plate 6.29. Photographs of sheep were described as “*classic Ireland*” by a female participant from Illinois. They are everywhere, as a male participant from New Jersey states, “*you can’t get away from them*”. All of the participants were familiar with postcard images of sheep. Photograph 6.29A was taken by a female participant from Illinois as a representation of Ireland for her.



Plate 6.29 Participant Photographs of Animals

Sources: (6.29A Female participant, IL; 6.29B Female participant, MI; 6.29C FG, 1; 6.29D Male participant, NJ)

Photograph 6.29C features Fintan’s sheep dog Ted, from Rathbaun farm in Co. Galway. A female participant from Illinois commented in her focus group on Fintan’s dog, saying that she had heard that sheep dogs are a one person dog and that they are loyal. She went on to describe Ted’s behaviour while Fintan was talking to her group as

follows *“it showed them kinda like I guess specifically for the dog he (Fintan) really cared for him and that they had a connection”* (Female participant, IL). In a rural sheep farm she understood the importance of having a loyal working dog like Ted and she appreciated the way Ted was considered part of the family.

The final photograph presented in Plate 6.29 relates to rural images of Ireland (photograph 6.29D) and the beauty of seeing a horse with her foal. The female participant from Connecticut who took it describes the scene in the photograph as *“it was just a beautiful place and they just sat there minding their own business and doing their own thing...it was beautiful”*. The simple pleasure of watching rural Irish life unfold was something all of the participants commented on in the context of the interaction between Irish people and their animals. For those who travelled around Ireland by coach, they enjoyed looking over the walls and hedgerows lining the roads at various scenes of Irish rural life. Stone walls, in particular, were an endless source of amazement and fascination for all of the participants, as described in the next section.

Sub theme 2 - Walls

The stone walls that are used to section off the land in Ireland proved to be of interest to all of the participants for what they said about Irish life. In some cases, this was because they looked different to the landscape back in the United States *“that wall just amazed me cos we come from North Dakota and we don't have anything like that”* (Female participant, ND). A female participant from California had this to say about the photograph in Plate 6.30 *“it is what we have seen going around the country, and that's like also in the States... The Quiet Man (Laughs)”* (Female participant, CA).



Plate 6.30 Stone walls

Source: (Male participant, WI)

Walls held a special significance for a male participant from Wisconsin. He was impressed by the fact that the landscape in rural Ireland has not been altered or modernised in any way like back home in the USA: *“I was impressed by how Ireland has left the wooded hedgerows and that they haven't removed them like we have done in the United States, that's what I liked”* (Male participant, WI). A male participant from North Dakota made a connection between the need for the walls to divide the land, and the people who built them *“I said before everybody that has passed by that has been on that land has picked up a rock and moved it so that they can either raise sheep or cattle or plant a crop or whatever they are doing”* (Male participant, ND). As he looked at every stone wall he imagined the people who built it, one stone at a time.

The stone walls of the Famine houses in Ireland that Barbara from North Dakota saw connected with her on an emotional level because of their associated historical significance, *“stones...and the idea that they were called the Famine houses also made it even better”* (Female participant, ND). The Famine was spoken about by all

participants in the most reverent tones, especially in the context of their experiences of visiting the Famine village as presented in Plate 6.31.



Plate 6.31 Famine Village Co. Mayo

Source: (Female, FG 2)

The photograph of the Famine village really moved a male participant from North Dakota. He was unclear about the dates or the length of time that the Famine lasted for, but he was aware of the event in the context of Irish history. Some of the participants could trace their Irish ancestry back to the Famine, and consequently they had a deep sense of empathy for the plight of the Irish and the hardships they endured after their visit to the Famine village. The walls of the ruined cottages were significant for the focus group participants because they once sheltered Irish families. Walls were used to frame the next photograph, Plate 6.32, creating the effect of looking back in time, becoming part of the scene. Getting a sense of what life used to be like in Ireland was a key outcome of the participants' experience of Ireland. Those who travelled around Ireland as part of a tour with Brendan Vacations or Colette Vacations had the added benefit of a tour guide to tell them the background to the various places they visited. John (Colette Vacations) and Liz (Brendan Vacations) brought Irish history to life for their clients, and they were a mine of information about Irish life and culture.



Plate 6.32 Galway Bay

Source: (Female, FG 2)

Sub theme 3 - Flowers

Flowers were a somewhat unexpected theme to emerge from the research in terms of the participants' construction of Ireland. Flowers represented the simple elegance of Ireland: *"I just love flowers it is just so simple and pretty, it is like Ireland there is not like overpowering as in like the States"* (Female participant, CT). Flowers for a female participant from Georgia signify that in Ireland everything is green, or the colour it is supposed to be. Flowers are connected with a simpler way of life for what they offer - colour, beauty and a connection with the land, as evidenced in the photograph in Plate 6.33 on the next page.



“They (the boots) draw together the beauty of the country and the hard work”

(Female participant, MA)

Plate 6.33 Old Work Boots

Source: (Female participant, MA)

A female participant from Massachusetts liked the uniqueness and simplicity of this photograph because she had never seen anything like it before *“that something as beautiful has come from grimy old nasty work boots that were probably one time covered in manure”* (Female participant, MA). So much of what the participants appreciated about Ireland, *real* Ireland, as they constructed it in their photographs, is represented in this one photograph. It encompasses all of the attributes associated with Ireland for the participants based on their imaginings while on holiday. The connection with the land, simple elegance, hard work and the fact nothing gets wasted. The word simplicity was used a lot to describe their imagining of Ireland. It is the main characteristic unique to their appreciation of Ireland that separates it apart from other destinations they have travelled to. A simpler way of life includes the various references to animals, walls and the flowers which the participants photographed to represent their view of Ireland. The culmination of these sub-themes centres round the concept of simplicity, and will be presented in the next and final section of the findings.

Sub theme 4 – Nostalgia

Opportunities to experience a simpler way of life were a major attractor for the participants to travel to Ireland on holiday. The participants re-lived the past by capturing scenes in photographs that depicted life as it might once have been, albeit through the lens of their digital camera. Photographs such as the one presented in Plate 6.34 reproduce the concept of stepping back in time to when life was less complicated.

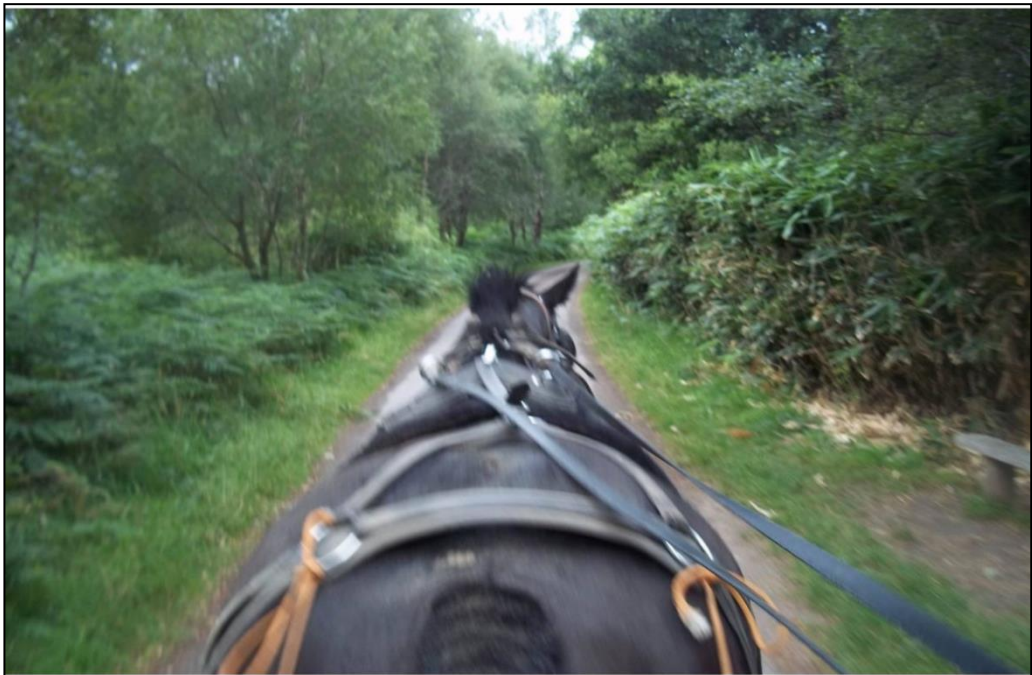


Plate 6.34 Thinking of Ireland

Source: (Female participant, IL)

The female participant from Illinois who took the above photograph relished the opportunity to take a horse and cart ride along a quiet country road while in Ireland. There is nothing in the photograph to signify modernity, just a quiet, tree lined, leafy lane. She was able to imagine what it might have been like to live in Ireland back in the “*olden days*” while sitting beside the driver listening to the rhythmic sounds of the

horse's hooves. This one photograph says so much about how the participants imagined Ireland to be. It represents for them their view of Ireland and what they all came to see.

Participants liked the fact that some of the locations they visited conveyed an image of time standing still that not much has changed from when the castle or stately home was first built. Some of the participants who were clients of Colette Tours stayed at an old stately home in east Cavan called Cabra Castle. One woman talking about the photograph (Plate 6.35) expressed it in terms of the “*olden days*”. Looking through the arch in the photograph conjured up an image of looking back in time.



Plate 6.35 Cabra Castle Hotel Co. Cavan

Source: (Female Participant, FG6)

“I think that this is in the olden days I can see people dancing and sitting out have tea at the little tables and just it's a vision of in the past, a picture into the past. I can just see them sitting around having their tea and crumpet or scones and am enjoying the beautiful scenery”

(Female Participant who took the photograph, FG6)

The narrative surrounding Plate 6.35 gives an insight into the way in which tourists interpret various scenes that they encounter during their holiday.

6.4.6 Summary of the Findings from Theme Three: Simple Way of Life

The language used to describe the various imaginings that participants had while in Ireland invariably centres round how they became enchanted by Ireland. Phrases such as “...it spoke to me” were used to describe photographs that they had taken which represented an aspect of Ireland or conveyed an image that supported their enchanted idea of Ireland. Simplicity, as a concept in terms of this research, is juxtaposed between an obviously modern society and nation, and the imagined construct of Ireland that the participants searched for and captured on their digital cameras. The visual brand architecture that resonates most with the participants in this research fundamentally makes a connection between them and rural Ireland, and in particular, the West of Ireland, as highlighted in Figure 6.2.

6.5 Conclusion

The purpose of the three-phased approach to this research has been to gain a better understanding of the broad, multi-layered influences that inform the cognitive imaginings of Ireland for the participants in this research. The participants’ photographs of Ireland and the associated narratives from Phases Two and Three of the research offered opportunities to explore the minutia of each image. The themes that have emerged succeed in telling the story of their imagining of Ireland. Their photographs provide insights into how they connected with Ireland on an emotional level.

The participants associated with this research imagine Ireland as a beautiful country which is rural, untouched and unspoiled. Ireland is depicted in the photographs as a pre-modern country that is sparsely populated, and not crowded with tourists. Some of

the participants were even prepared to get up earlier to visit places before other tourists arrived because the presence of other tourists somehow spoiled the view.

Despite a noticeable lack of people in the photographs submitted by the participants in Phase 2 of the research, analysis of the post-visitation in-depth interviews and the focus groups shows that meeting real Irish people was a highlight for all the participants. Irish men were a feature in some of the photographs selected as being truly representative of Ireland by the focus group participants. Irish men such as Paddy, Fintan and Jack are depicted in the focus group participants' photographs as friendly, mischievous and great storytellers. Visiting the homes of Paddy and Fintan struck an emotional chord with these participants, and allowed them to learn about Irish life from the first-hand accounts of real Irish people. They became enraptured by Paddy and Fintan's stories, and briefly became part of the scene that is life on an Irish farm.

The findings reported in this chapter might not have been captured without the use of photography in one form or another. Photographs used in the free-elicitation techniques in Phase 1 facilitated exploring how US tourists' interpret a selection of images used to market Ireland as a destination. The photographs submitted by the tourists in Phase 2 allowed for comparisons to be made between their pre-visitation and post-visitation images of Ireland. Finally, tourists' photographs of Ireland discussed in the focus groups facilitated investigating how tourists make sense of places by giving them an opportunity to talk about them. Chapter Seven will discuss the contribution of the findings by relating them back to the literature.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

7.0 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the findings from the interviews and focus groups conducted with US tourists at various stages of their holiday experiences of Ireland. The application of visual methodologies in the form of photographs allowed the researcher to enter into the world of the participants and experience Ireland through their eyes. Analysis of the photography-informed empirical data has produced a phenomenology of the US tourists' experiences of Ireland. The way that tourists make sense of places they visit by taking photographs, therefore, is a defining characteristic of this research and one of its main contributions to knowledge. The findings suggest that the practice of taking photographs for the participants of this research extends beyond recording memories of the holiday. Instead, analysis of their photographs draws attention to what tourists' perceive as real and authentic representations of place.

Accordingly, this chapter challenges the view that tourists simply travel and take photographs of what they have already consumed in image form, as argued by Hall (1997) and Larsen (2004). Similarly, the photographic patterns of behaviour exhibited by the participants of this study extend beyond Garrod's (2009) observation that tourists' photographs do not always follow expected patterns of behaviour. Instead, this study submits that by taking photographs while on holiday, tourists are in effect making sense of places they visit and re-enforcing emotional connections they made with the destination prior to visiting. Furthermore, this chapter argues that in making sense of places by taking photographs, tourists become active agents in their own enchantment with place.

This chapter now concentrates on interpreting these findings in terms of addressing the overall aim of this thesis which is to investigate how tourists consume and thereby make sense of places they visit through practicing photography. The findings will be discussed in the wider context of the literature and theories presented in Chapters Two, Three, Four and Five. Bennett's (2001) enchantment theory, as discussed in Chapter Three, is revisited later in this chapter, as an analytic frame and a means of understanding how tourists become enchanted with, and make sense of, places by taking photographs. Such an approach helps to identify where this study links to, or builds upon, existing research, and thus its contribution to knowledge will be highlighted. Among the contributions this thesis makes, is it offers a reorganisation of Scarles' (2009) Framework of Visuality for Visual Practice. This reorganisation unpacks tourists' sense-making at three different stages in their experience of place. To begin, it argues that tourists become active agents in their own seduction and enchantment with place by watching films, television and reading books prior to visiting. Upon visiting, the sense-making and enchantment continues whereby tourists take photographs. Finally, they legitimise their imagined idea of place through a process of self-editing, selecting photographs from their own photographic set that truly reflect the place as they experienced it.

7.1. Destination Branding - Making Sense of Places

Tourists come to know about, and make sense of places in a myriad of ways, as discussed in Chapter Two. Accordingly, one of the objectives of this study (**Research Objective One**) is to examine destination image literature in order to understand the role image plays in making sense of places for tourists. There appears to be general agreement regarding how images are formed (Beeton, 2005; O'Connor et al., 2008; Smith et al., 2010; Quinn, 1998; Jenkins, 2000; Lew, 1991; Cooper and Hall, 2008;

Pritchard and Morgan, 2003). However, there is less understanding regarding the role images play in the tourists' sense-making process in terms of destination branding (Hankinson, 2004). A more recent exception is the work carried out by Morgan et al. (2011). They discovered that images used to brand destinations allow tourists to form personal relationships with places. This thesis builds upon their work by focusing attention on destination images, as emotional brands that are used to create a "personal dialogue" between tourists and the destination (Gobé, 2010). In this regard, a common theme throughout this research, and the extant literature on destination image, is the idea that tourists react positively to images that reflect their imagined view of place (Hunt, 1975; Goodrich, 1978a; Pearce, 1982; Woodside and Lysonski, 1989; Ross, 1993), while recognising that images used in a diverse range of media contribute significantly to the way in which destinations are constructed and brought to life (Larsen, 2006a). This study argues that there is a clear overlap between the notion of bringing places to life in destination imagery, and making sense of the destination for the tourist. The way in which tourists make sense of places by looking at destination images used to market them is a very subjective process, which is beyond the control of destination marketers. Ultimately, it is the tourists who arrive at their own interpretation of the image.

Bearing this in mind, Chapter Two clearly testifies to the importance of both induced and organic imagery, as defined by Gunn (1972), and autonomous imagery, as defined by Gartner (1993), in relation to how destinations are made sense of for and by tourists. Equally, Chapter Two identifies which sources of influence are perceived to be the most credible by tourists (Gartner, 1993), as well as the role destination marketers play in giving the destination images a focus (Stabler, 1988). This thesis pushes our understanding of these complex activities further by approaching the problem through

the camera lens of the tourist. The findings of this research suggest a number of new insights in terms of how tourists make sense of destination images.

Firstly, organic sources of influence on destination image, such as film and television in particular, proved to be more potent than induced sources regarding how the participants of this research imagined or made sense of Ireland as a place. This finding, as will be argued further in this chapter and in Chapter Eight, has some implications for how destinations are constructed and marketed. Secondly, despite the acknowledged fact that as consumers we are bombarded by thousands of images on a daily basis (as highlighted in Chapter Two), the findings suggest that tourists appear to edit out images that do not conform to their own idea of the world. In fact, it could be argued, based on the findings of this research, that tourists adopted a somewhat ‘blinkerred’ approach to viewing the world around them. Finally, following on from Stabler’s (1988) hypothesis regarding the role of destination marketers in making sense of places for tourists, this study submits that much can be learned from looking at how tourists reconstruct their own imagined view of place by taking photographs while on holiday. For example, tourists’ photographs can prove insightful for destination marketers: identifying images that truly reflect the destination, as the tourist imagines it.

Therefore, this chapter explores the concept of *images* and *sense-making* in a number of ways. Firstly, this chapter seeks to unpack how places are constructed and made sense of for tourists through images used to market them. Secondly, this chapter discusses how tourists contest and re-interpret places by looking at these images, as well as by taking their own photographs while on holiday. These concepts will be further explored in this chapter in the context of the remaining research objectives. A recurring theme throughout this chapter is the way in which the participants contest and re-interpret Ireland as a place by taking photographs, and thereby play a role in their

own enchantment with Ireland. Induced and organic imagery have already been identified in Chapters Two and Three, as sources from which tourists become enchanted with places. The next section undertakes to contextualise Ireland's destination image arising from the secondary data presented in Chapter Four, in order to foreground the analysis of the VEP photographs that follows.

7.2 Ireland's Identity and National Image in Context

A challenge for scholars, according to Clancy (2008), is to trace the way in which national identity, or national image in the context of tourism, is continually reformulated and contested by people. The discussion to follow in this section addresses this challenge in an Irish context, based on the secondary research presented in Chapter Four. A number of researchers have grappled with this complex issue in terms of Ireland's national image (O'Connor, 1993; Quinn, 1991 and 1994; O'Leary and Deegan, 2005; Murphy, 2005). However, none have looked at Ireland's national image in the USA. This study addresses this gap in our understanding of how Ireland is imagined, reformulated and contested as a place by US tourists. In doing so, it also attends to **Research Objective Three**.

To begin, this section explores the broader issue of what Zuelow (2007) refers to in Chapter Four, as the on-going dialogue that informs Ireland's national identity, a dialogue that has its origins in 19th century romanticism. Zuelow contends that this dialogue takes place between various interest groups, such as the citizens of the country, marketers, government agents, as well as tourists, foreign governments and outside agencies. Attention is drawn in this thesis to the important interpretative function, which a number of these groups have played in constructing Ireland's national image over time drawing in large part from a pre-existing 19th century romantic idea of

Ireland. Bearing this in mind, Chapter Four identified images produced by transport companies, tour operators and state tourism bodies, which juxtapose how Ireland is portrayed in art, music and film. Collectively, they have become “markers” (O’Connor, 1993: 70), or symbols of Irish identity. These markers of Irish identity form part of the allure or enchantment that the US tourists who took part in this study ascribe to Ireland. Whereas there is general agreement regarding what can be considered symbols of Irish identity (such as images of rural landscapes), more can be learned by exploring how such imagery came about. The next section, therefore, discusses the development of markers of Irish identity and Irish people, based on the secondary research presented in Chapter Four, in order to further unpack their meaning. By unpacking the meaning behind various markers of Irish identity, this thesis seeks to articulate how Ireland has become an emotional destination brand, and a source of enchantment for tourists.

7.2.1 A Sense of Ireland: Markers of Irish Identity

Tasci et al. (2007) define markers of national identity as a nation’s name, flag, food, dress and music, which form the nation’s brand architecture. Ireland has traditionally been marketed as an enchanting place, rural in nature, and somewhat empty of people (Scotney, 2006). The origins of this notion of Irishness is reflected in the works of painters such as Paul Henry. The variety and richness of the images reviewed in Chapter Four attest to the enchanting appeal of Ireland, but they also suggest that Ireland’s identity is complex, difficult to define and has different meanings for different people. This thesis seeks to address this complexity by drawing attention to various organic and induced images that have come to represent Ireland’s destination image over time, in order to further elucidate their meaning.

7.2.1.1 Mythical Ireland - Emotional Ireland

To begin, a common perception of Ireland's image is that it is steeped in myths and myth-making, a romantic ideal propagated in literature, poetry and what Barrel (1972) refers to as the painterly language of landscape. This thesis draws attention to how this mythical image of Ireland is reflected in tourism imagery. For example, O'Neill (2000) in Chapter Four submits that Ireland's mythical allure has been used in tourism imagery as a political tool for the purpose of distinction. King (2000), also in Chapter Four, observes that images produced by companies like Aer Lingus have played a pivotal role in visually representing this mythical image on the global stage. Images of 'shamrocks and shillelaghs', as well as 'paddywhackery' and leprechauns (O'Connor, 1993), have percolated through the global imagination relating to how Ireland is perceived as a place. Similarly, images of castles, jaunting cars and ivy covered buildings are indicative of how Ireland has been constructed as a pre-modern society (Quinn, 1991). All of these motifs are reproduced in the various photographs submitted by the participants of this research as being indicative of Ireland as they imagined it. Images of Ireland's 'painterly' landscapes have become part of Ireland's allure, as a place where one can experience a simpler way of life, and where time appears to stand still. This idea of Ireland as a place where time stands still is particularly relevant to this thesis in terms of how the participants imagine Ireland as a place.

Indeed, this study submits that over time Ireland's perception as a 'timeless place' has become an emotional brand, as defined by Gobé (2010) in Chapter Two. Analysis of the various organic and induced images reviewed in Chapter Four traces how Ireland's destination image as an emotional brand has emerged over time. The images contained in Chapter Four suggest that Ireland's destination image has over time become "saturated with emotions", as defined by Urry (2007). This theme is carried through in

the images used to promote Ireland, which appear in the more contemporary examples presented in Plate 7.1. Likewise, as will be noted later in this chapter, the photographs submitted by the participants as being truly representative of Ireland reflect their emotional connection with Ireland as a place.

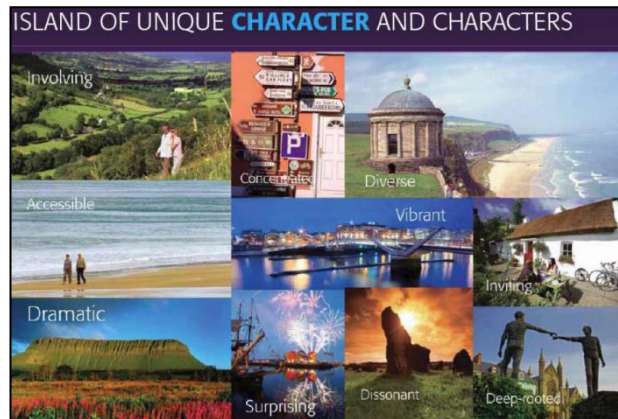


Plate 7.1 Ireland the Place

Source: Tourism Ireland (2009)

This thesis maintains that images such as those presented in Plate 7.1 are replete with sentiment and act as visual reference points for the emotional branding of Ireland. Similarly, anchor words such as “*involving*”, “*accessible*” and “*dramatic*” used by Tourism Ireland in Plate 7.1 form part of what this study describes as an ‘emotionally charged narrative’. This narrative accompanies stereotypical images produced by Tourism Ireland, which enable tourists to make sense of Ireland and Irish people. The importance of stereotypical imagery in the tourists’ sense-making process has already been identified in Chapter Three. However, little is known about how the various sources of stereotypical imagery, of Irish people in particular, have come about.

Chapter Four offered some possible sources for such stereotypical imagery in the form of the various Irish artists and writers who collectively have helped to construct Ireland as a place. Over time, stereotypical images of Irish people have become part of the

global imagination, and the participants' photographs suggest that they are still relevant today. It therefore could be argued that images of Irish people function as sense-makers for tourists, and help them to make sense of Ireland.

7.2.2 Sense-Makers: Stereotypes of Irish People

In Chapter Three, we learned that one of the ways tourists come to know about, imagine or make sense of a place is through stereotypical images they encounter in their everyday lives. Reisinger (2009), in Chapter Three, tells us that stereotypes are used to describe tourists and locals. Keeping this in mind, O' Connor (1993) argues that one of the most striking features of tourist imagery used to promote Ireland is the way in which Irish people are represented. She highlights that Irish people are regarded as an essential "ingredient" in the marketing strategy used to differentiate Ireland from other destinations (1993: 72). It is for this reason that the ways in which Irish people are constructed in various Irish and non-Irish images is being discussed in this chapter.

Specifically, Irish people are perceived as hospitable, friendly and welcoming. This image of the Irish people has been used in a variety of tourism imagery designed to attract tourists. Quinn's (1991) analysis of Bord Fáilte brochures corroborates this approach to representing Irishness and Irish people. However, little is known regarding how these stereotypical images of Irish people came about. Consequently, this study focuses attention on the way in which Irish women and Irish men are imagined and represented in induced and organic imagery.

7.2.2.1 Irish Women

We learned in Chapter Four that, until comparatively recently, Ireland was a text written by men, but depicted as female in nature (Stevens et al., 2000). This section tentatively

explores how Irish women are depicted in tourism imagery, and how their meaning is visually constructed in order to foreground how the participants of this research visually construct Irishness and Irish people in their own photographs. In Chapter Four, O'Connor (1984) offered a possible source for stereotypical images of Irish women. She observed that Hollywood films proved to be a fertile source for such stereotypes. The stereotypical image of the red haired Irish *cailín*, for example, is one of the ways in which Irish women are imagined by tourists. The typical Irish *cailín* has been visually reconstructed in Hollywood films such as *The Quiet Man* through Maureen O'Hara's character Mary Kate Danaher (Plate 7.2). The self-confessed fiery temper of Mary Kate Danaher has also become an associated beguiling characteristic of red haired Irish women.

"I have a fearful temper. You might as well know about it now instead of findin' out about it later. We Danahers are a fightin' people"

(Maureen O'Hara as Mary Kate Danaher, *The Quiet Man*, 1952)



Plate 7.2 Maureen O'Hara as 'Mary Kate Danaher' in The Quiet Man

Source: (<http://milliesmoviestowatch.blogspot.ie/2011/03/quiet-man.html>)

In relation to how women are portrayed in induced destination imagery, this study contends that by the 1960s, images of Aer Lingus cabin crew presented a more

sophisticated contemporary image of Irish women. Predominantly female, Weldon (2002) tells us they were expected to personify a strong national flavour and emulate ‘Irish womanhood’ and Irish hospitality, as the following excerpt from a 1965 Aer Lingus advertisement shows.

“Step on board the Shamrock Jet in New York or Boston and you’re in Ireland. Or maybe it’s just the Irish hospitality and the charming Irish hostesses make it seem that way”

(Ireland of the Welcomes, Circa 1965)

What is important about both of the examples used here, is how they function as stereotypical images that help tourists to imagine and make sense of Irish women and Ireland. The nurturing caring persona of the Aer Lingus cabin crew, as described above, jars somewhat with the fiery, volatile temperament of Mary Kate Danaher, as played by Maureen O’Hara. Mary Kate Danaher’s character in *The Quiet Man* functions as a stereotype for Irish women for US tourists, because so many people in the USA have seen the movie. Consequently, the film enjoys an iconic status in the USA. Likewise, *The Quiet Man* proves to be a rich source of stereotypical imagery of Ireland for the US participants in this study, whereby scenes from the film are easily accessed from memory (Pike, 2004). Moreover, Kotler and Gertner (2002) argue in Chapter Three that even though such stereotypes might be dated, based on exceptions rather than patterns, or on impression rather than facts, they are no less pervasive. This certainly appears to be the case for the participants associated with this study who acknowledged that they liked the ‘idea’ of Ireland depicted in *The Quiet Man*.

7.2.2.2 Irish Men

In moving the focus to how Irish men are constructed in various types of imagery, this thesis suggests that men are represented differently in most of the imagery

associated with Ireland, both induced and organic. Unlike Irish women that are expected to emulate ‘Irish womanhood’, Irish men are allowed to be “rakes, rouges, reprobates and revolutionaries”, as described by Jack, the Tour Guide in Chapter Six. Jack’s descriptions reflect the global notion of the stereotypical Irish male, an image that is predominantly an artistic interpretation, historically rooted in Irish art and Irish drama, as discussed in Chapter Four. Therefore, this thesis corroborates the view of Harrington (2009), who observes that Irish plays, as staged in US theatres, have informed organic images of Ireland for generations. Similarly, it also lends further support to Brown’s (2004) hypothesis, which tell us that the way men are represented in Irish art stems from the fact that Irish artists were inspired to reflect the predominant rural character of Irish Identity. Hence, photographs such as 7.3A are indicative of how Irish men are depicted in imagery associated with Ireland.

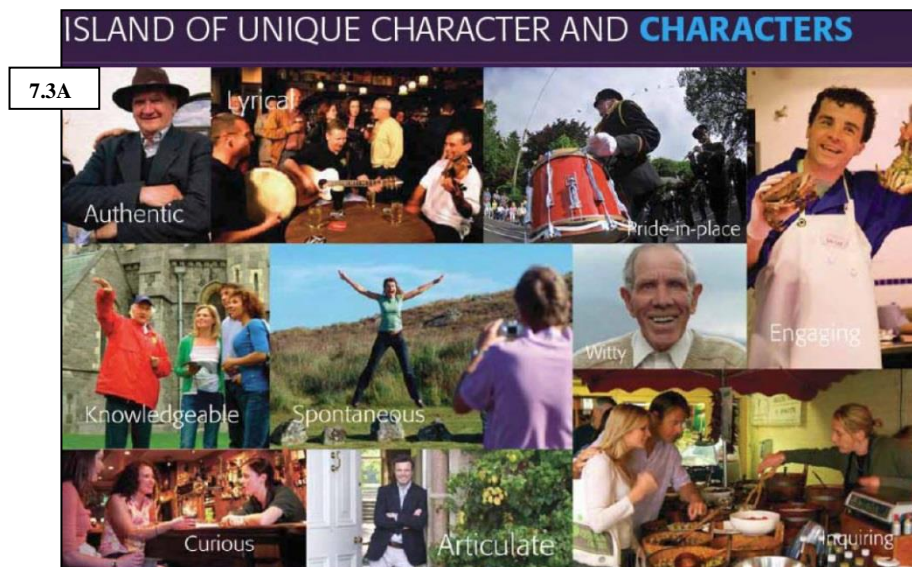


Plate 7.3 Irish People

Source: Tourism Ireland (2009)

This study submits that the way in which Irish men, in particular, are depicted in Irish art informed stereotypical images of Irish men that have become part of the global consciousness. This characterisation of the typical Irish man is later brought

to life in Hollywood films such as *The Quiet Man* and *The Field*, to pick just two. Moreover, this thesis contends that stereotypical images of Irish men have come full circle; being used by Irish State Tourism Organisations such as Tourism Ireland to represent Irishness and Irish identity. For example, the image contained in Plate 7.3A could be a screen shot from a Hollywood film. In reality, it has been produced by the Irish tourism body, Tourism Ireland. More importantly, it has been labelled by Tourism Ireland as ‘authentic’. By labelling this man as ‘authentic’, Tourism Ireland are in effect interpreting, constructing and representing authenticity for tourists and potential tourists. Plate 7.3A is considered an ‘authentic’ representation of an Irish man because he presents certain characteristics, which over time have become stereotypically Irish. For example, his posture [arms folded] suggests that he is possibly settling down to tell a story, and storytelling is synonymous with Ireland. He also has a ‘roguish’ grin on his face. As history shows us, this idea of the roguish Irish male is a familiar character, brought to life in literature, art, and in the films mentioned earlier.

7.2.3 Summing up Ireland’s Induced and Organic Image

Thus far, this chapter has analysed and discussed how Ireland’s destination image has been constructed over time. In doing so, it offers a fresh interpretation of the various sources of Ireland’s national identity. The themes and motifs used to promote Irish tourism today have changed little from those adopted by the first Irish government, to differentiate Ireland from its colonial past. The contributions of the various artists, and writers they employed to promote Ireland abroad produced a rich tapestry of imagery.

This thesis, therefore, lends further support to the commonly held belief that Ireland’s destination image is firmly rooted in the perceived emptiness of rural Ireland. Images

used to market Ireland from 1922 to the present also draw attention to its natural beauty and present it as a place of enchantment. To this end, Tourism Ireland and its predecessors have traditionally made use of Ireland's perceived image as an enchanting place of mystery and legend in various marketing campaigns. This is evidenced in the three ages of branding, as defined by Tourism Ireland (2009), and discussed in Chapter Four. The taglines "explore Ireland the country", "experience Ireland the destination" and "engage with Ireland the place" all draw attention to the enchanting characteristics of Ireland as a place to visit. The imagery which accompanied these taglines between 1955 and 2009 focused on Ireland's scenic beauty and friendly people, and are not all that different to how Ireland had been portrayed in the 1920s and 1930s. Indeed, Edensor and Holloway (2008) point out that, traditionally, the promotion of Ireland as a tourism destination has orbited around five distinct themes: romantic nature, agricultural work, religious heritage, Celtic history and tradition, as well as literature and folklore.

The findings from this thesis, as will become evident later in this chapter, indicate that these themes still hold emotional currency for the US participants who took part in the research. The photographs they submitted depict visual representations of Ireland that they believe to be captivating or enchanting for them. Collectively, the photographs reflect the themes identified by Edensor and Holloway (2008). More importantly, the participants' photographs do not contain any evidence of modernity, with only fleeting references to urban Ireland. In this regard, the photographs submitted by the participants of this research pick up where Tourism Ireland's three ages of branding finished in 2009. The study participants' photographs are a visual acknowledgement of why tourists come to Ireland, as identified by Tourism Ireland (2011).

They come because:

“...they feel their daily lives lack a sense of “wonder” and awe. Upon arrival they seek out authentic and stimulating experiences that will leave them feeling “replenished” and enriched”

(Tourism Ireland, 2011)

Moving forward, this chapter begins to discuss the primary research, initially by focussing on how the participants from Phase 1 of the research imagined Ireland and made sense of Ireland as a place, prior to visiting. Indeed, one of the contributions Phase 1 of this study makes is that it advances our understanding of how destination images are re-interpreted and made sense of by the tourists at whom they are targeted. In doing so, it also draws attention to their perceived emotional collateral and authenticity or *realness*, as described by the study participants. It will become evident how images of Ireland enable tourists to make sense of Ireland prior to visiting. This is necessary work in terms of addressing the overall aim of this thesis.

7.3 Tourists Making Sense of Place: Imagining Ireland

The underlying aim of this thesis is to investigate how tourists consume and make sense of places they visit by taking photographs. Imagining what places might be like to visit is a fundamental stage in the tourist’s sense-making process. One of the ways they do this is by comparing images used to promote the destination [induced images] with their own preconceived ideas about the place. This process is described in the literature as imaginative elaboration (Belk et al., 2003). In Chapter Three, Tasci and Gartner (2007) identified that there can be a ‘mismatch’ between how destination images are projected, and how they are perceived by the tourist. Previous research has focussed on positive

or negative perceptions of places that tourists may have, or indeed that the place may project (Reisinger and Turner, 2012; Kozak and Baloglu, 2011). Other related accounts suggest that in imagining places tourists are interpreting destination images or brands in terms of their emotional meaning (Hosany and Gilbert, 2010). The way in which tourists form emotional attachments with destination brands by looking at destination images is critically informative for destination marketers. This thesis offers new insights into the emotional branding of places by exploring how tourists make sense of places firstly by looking at images produced to market them. It does this by using photo-elicitation techniques in Phase 1 of the research to explore a selection of induced imagery of Ireland. In doing so, this thesis addresses the assertion by Moufakkir (2008) that more attention must be paid to how destination images are perceived or interpreted by tourists.

In explicating the mechanisms of how tourists perceive destination images, the findings of this study address **Research Objective Two**. The findings indicate that images of Ireland appear to offer tourists opportunities to personalise their relationships with Ireland as a place (Morgan et al., 2011). Analysis of the data arising from the free-elicitation techniques used in Phase 1 of this research reveals the personal relationships which the participants formed with Ireland. Looking at images of Ireland enabled the tourists to identify with Ireland, and to express their sense of enchantment and longing for Ireland as a place. The ways in which the participants described Ireland prior to visiting, as highlighted in Table 6.1, also reflect their enchantment with Ireland. The idea of places as sources of enchantment and longing for tourists has already been discussed in Chapter Three. Indeed, it will be suggested that the participants became seduced with Ireland as a place through a variety of media.

7.3.1 Enchantment and Meaning: Becoming Seduced by Place

In Chapter Three it was argued that consumers allow themselves to be seduced into buying certain products and services by television watching, magazine reading and internet surfing (Belk et al., 2003). It could be argued that destination marketers adopt a similar strategy to how they promote destinations. They use images to construct destinations as emotional brands that will enchant and entice tourists to visit. Bennett's (2001) theory of enchantment, discussed in Chapter three, offers potential new insights into how tourists make sense of places as they seek disruption from their daily lives. In seeking disruption from their daily lives, they appear to yearn for a simpler way of life, a theme which is ever present in the emotional branding of Ireland. Consequently, Bennett's (2001) theory of enchantment is also relevant to the emotional branding of places, which results in consumers becoming seduced by, and emotionally attached to, destination brands. Yet the notion of destinations as emotional brands is still the source of continued debate (Morgan et al., 2011).

The findings of this study lend further support to conceptualising destinations as emotional brands that enchant and captivate the imaginations of potential tourists. Tourists appear to be searching for real and authentic experiences. Authentic experiences help them to resolve their longing for a culturally remembered past, a past sometimes that may have occurred before they were born, as discussed in Chapter Three (Caton and Santos, 2007). Analysis of the free-elicitation data from this investigation lends further credence to this sense of longing in which destination images act as emotional triggers. Many of the participants' references to particular mediated imagery of Ireland, such as "*exotic*", show how their imagined view of Ireland is not an autonomous creation. Instead, it is organically inspired, for instance by the media, as well as a need on their part for an almost spiritual encounter with the destination. The

findings of this thesis suggest that organic images of Ireland seduced the participants by constructing a romantic notion of Ireland. Moreover, the findings also indicate that the participants wanted to be seduced, and played an active role in their own seduction by watching films like *The Quiet Man*, reading Irish literature or listening to stories about Ireland from their ancestors. This process of ‘seduction’ resulted in the participants becoming emotionally involved with their own imagined idea of Ireland, which they went in search of, and documented by taking photographs.

7.3.2 Imaginative Elaboration and Sense-Making

The process of booking a holiday may include looking at destination images and imagining in one’s head what it might be like to visit, through what Belk et al. define as “imaginative elaboration” (2003: 341). By imagining what a destination might be like, tourists can sometimes also become enchanted by them. This is because, as Tymieniecka (2000) tells us in Chapter Three, enchantment requires us to engage with our imaginations as opposed to our reality.

The findings from Phase 1 of the research suggest three possible outcomes from the participants’ imaginative elaboration of a selection of induced destination images of Ireland prior to visiting. These three outcomes could be relevant for other destinations and for different tourists. Induced imagery will either (1) reflect how the tourist imagines the place to look (2) confirm stereotypes of local people for the tourist, or (3) be rejected by tourists because the induced image conflicts with how they perceive the destination to look. For the purpose of discussion, these three outcomes are labelled as *indicative*, *stereotypical looking* and *placeless*.

7.3.2.1 Indicative Destination Imagery

Photographs produced to market places are sometimes described by tourists as ‘indicative’ because they reflect their imagined view of the destination. This category of induced destination image appears to help tourists to legitimise their ideas about place. This may happen in situations where the photographs used to brand the destination conform to the tourists’ preconceived ideas about the place. In order to be effective, the photographs used must contain images or motifs that in some way offer the tourist the potential to resolve their sense of longing for disruption from their everyday lives (Bennett, 2001; Inglis, 2008). For example, the images of the rolling green hills, as represented in Plate 6.1 in Chapter Six, offer tourists from the USA the opportunity to escape from the hustle and bustle of urban life back home. This finding lends further support to Joyce (2007) who observes that personal relationships between tourists and destinations are based on expectations, and how these expectations are formed. This study offers some insights into the types of images that contribute to how tourists form perceptions or expectations about what places might be like to visit.

7.3.2.2 Stereotypical Looking

Secondly, photographs which contain images of local people that reflect the stereotypical images of what the tourist imagines the host to look like may also contribute to the emotional collateral of the destination brand. The findings from this study tell us that tourists sometimes imagine local people in a particular way, such as the red haired girl in image 6.2A. She was described as stereotypically Irish by all of the participants because she has red hair. This finding reflects Pike’s (2004) argument that stereotypes occur where there is a pervasive uniform perception regarding a place and the people who live there. Hollywood films, together with television advertising,

have already been identified by this thesis as sources from which the participants imagined that Irish people have red hair, as evidenced by Plate 7.2.

Likewise, this study lends further credence to Chakraborty and Chakravarti's (2008) hypothesis, as discussed in Chapter Three, that naïve images of places can be perpetuated by various tourist stakeholders who construct places for what they describe as gullible tourists. For example, the commonly held belief that Irish people have red hair could be classified as a destination naïve image (Snepenger et al., 1990). Previous research by Shelby and Morgan (1996) indicates that destination naïve images dominate the perceptions of tourists who have not visited the destination before. This view is further corroborated by this research. However, unlike previous research that suggests that visitation leads to a reduction in stereotyping, this research suggests some tourists seek out and take pictures of their idealised imagined view of local people (see photographs 7.4C and 7.4B).



Plate 7.4 Stereotypically Irish Looking

Sources: (7.1A, Fáilte Ireland Image Library; 7.1B, Screenshot from “Irish Spring Soap” US Television Advertisement, circa 1980; 7.1C Red Haired Young Man, Female Participant, FG2; 7.1D, Screenshot of Maureen O’Hara in *The Quiet Man*)

7.3.2.3 Placeless

The third possible outcome arising from the free-elicitation findings is that photographs used to brand destinations may be rejected or ignored by potential tourists, and be interpreted as placeless. This may happen if the image conflicts with how the tourist perceives or imagines the destination to look. For example, the reaction of the female participant from New York to the rural shot (Plate 6.3D) of Ireland that contained the car is a case in point. The juxtaposition Plate 6.3D presents between modern Ireland [the car] and romantic Ireland [the landscape] did not reflect the participant's imagined idea of Ireland, and, therefore, she rejected the presence of the car in the scenic shot. This finding further corroborates Anderson's (1991) contention that destinations are imagined places in which, it is argued by this thesis, tourists play an important interpretative role in how they are imagined or made sense of.

7.3.3 Being Seduced by Place in Summary

In the more thoroughly investigated area of destination image formation the findings from Phase 1 of this study both support and amend prior destination image research. The findings, for example, lend further support for Belk et al.'s (2003) assertion that tourists play an active role in their own enchantment with a destination. Moreover, the findings suggest that tourists actively seek out images that align with how they imagine the destination to look, and reject images that fall short of their expectations. In seeking out a more romantic view of Ireland, the participants of this study further legitimise the view that destination marketers profit from, selling nostalgic images of place, as argued by Vesey and Dimanche (2003). More importantly, the findings from Phase 1 of this study further our understanding of destination-naïve tourists (Snepenger et al., 1990), which heretofore has been a much neglected area of the literature. The

images (Plate 6.1) described as indicative images of Ireland by the Phase 1 study participants could be further defined as destination naïve images, which represent “moments of transporting charm”, as defined by Moore (1997) in Chapter Three. This is because they reflect a more nostalgic or romantic image of Ireland, and play down the context of reality. The participants for their part appear blissfully aware that images of cottages and rolling green hills are not entirely accurate representations of modern Ireland. However, they are not gullible tourists, as defined by Chakraborty and Chakravarti (2008). Instead, they play a part in their own enchantment by reading books or by watching television programmes or films made in or about the destination. This study, therefore, argues that in order for destination-naïve imagery (images that portray a more nostalgic idea of place) to achieve the desired outcome of seducing tourists to visit, the tourists at whom they are targeted must be willing participants in their own seduction.

7.4 Embodied Encounters in Ireland - The Enchantment Continues

In seeking to understand how images help tourists make sense of places, this thesis argues that embodied experience of arriving in the destination and taking one’s own photographs is fundamentally different to looking at images produced by someone else. This is because arriving in the destination exposes the tourist to a spectrum of embodied multi-sensory experiences. In this regard the findings further support Page (2010) who notes that visitation allows the tourists’ knowledge of the destination to be re-created in their mind, as they begin to experience it. In the context of this research the findings of this thesis suggest that the embodied experience of visitation is more about confirming knowledge that already exists such as one participant’s perception that Guinness might taste different in Ireland because it is made there. Tourists confirm their knowledge about places by taking photographs. Hence, this thesis lends further credence to the

argument put forth by Nguyen and Belk (2007). Nguyen and Belk (2007) state that taking photographs while on holiday is proportionately more personal, than selecting a postcard with a similar and likely more superior image. This may be because taking a photograph is an embodied act which requires the tourist to engage with the subject matter of the composition in a way that simply buying a postcard does not. In other words by taking photographs, tourists renegotiate the destination's meaning for them, and thereby become, as Toyota (2006) describes, "active agents" in their own reconstruction of place. By becoming active agents in their own reconstruction of Ireland the participants engaged with the sights, sounds, tastes, smells and tactile nature of Ireland. Consequently, this thesis lends further support to the view that the human senses are crucial to the individual experience tourists have at various stages of their consumption of place (Agapito et al. (2013). The thesis also draws further attention to the multi-sensory embodied nature of tourism as argued by Small et al. (2012).

Previous research by Baerenholdt et al. (2007), as discussed in Chapter Three, indicates that tourists' 'bodily' experiences of place are less about what they encounter there, and more about what meanings they confer on what they encounter. Bearing this in mind Thrift's (2008) contention that embodiment can be conceptualised as a form of on-going, expressive relationships between people and the world is also reflected in the photographs taken by the participants. The participants' photographs and their surrounding narratives advance the view that as individuals, we experience and understand the world in which we live by means of a process of embodiment (Crouch, 2000).

The findings from Phase 2 and 3 of this study offer a window into the embodied world of the participants, and how they confer meaning on Ireland as a place by taking photographs. In other words by taking photographs the participants engaged with

Ireland in a multi-sensorial way (Crouch, 2000). It is for this reason that this thesis focuses on the photographs taken by tourists while on holiday to further elucidate how they make sense of places they visit. The overriding impression emerging from analysis of the photographs taken by the participants while in Ireland is that they went in search of their own imagined view of Ireland, and took photographs to prove that it still exists. In some cases their imagined view of Ireland related to a particular sensory experience (sound, taste or smell) that they looked forward to, such as for example listening to an Irish brogue, tasting a Guinness or smelling peat burning in an open fire. In essence, they reconstructed their own photographic tapestry of Ireland based on various embodied encounters that they had, reflecting MacCannell's (2002) touristic-experiential view of embodiment in which increasingly tourists take ownership and responsibility for their own experience. What is of interest for the researcher is how the embodied act of visitation impacts upon or not, as the case may be, the tourists' 'imagined-naïve' images of place, which will be discussed next.

7.4.1 Naïve versus Re-evaluated Images of Place

A common consensus amongst destination marketers is that there is a difference between the naïve images tourists have of places, and their re-evaluated images after visitation (Shelby and Morgan, 1996). In Chapter Two, Gunn (1972: 120) argued that these re-evaluated images become "modified induced images", which somehow inform or influence what the tourist photographs while on holiday. Keeping this in mind, one of the objectives of this thesis (**Research Objective Five**) seeks to compare the photographs taken by US tourists when in Ireland, with their preconceived ideas about Ireland prior to visiting. The findings of this thesis suggest that, in actual fact, tourists' photographic behaviour is complex and more nuanced than previously thought. Whereas the participants of this research appeared to have photographed iconic images

of Ireland similar to those used to market Ireland, in line with Hall's (1997) definition, they did not always pick these images as being truly representative of Ireland. We know this because the author was able to see the photographs taken by the participants while uploading their selected photograph for the focus groups. Instead, more often they offered photographs of less iconic sights that were more abstruse, and harder to identify in terms of their location. Specifically, their photographic behaviour did not conform to Hall's (1997) hermeneutic circle of representation, as discussed in Chapter Three.

One of the attractions of these less iconic sites for the participants appears to be the noticeable absence of other tourists, or indeed evidence of modernity. The primary motivation for taking such photographs appears to be that these locations are more in keeping with the participants' pre-visitation imagined view of Ireland, as discussed in Chapter Six. The findings suggest that their post-visitation view of Ireland did not change or become modified as a result of visiting. Instead, taking photographs allowed them to reaffirm their pre-visitation imagined view of Ireland. This finding challenges Gunn's (1972) hypothesis that visitation leads to a modified induced destination image. Alternatively, the participants of this research went in search of images that conformed to their pre-visitation imagined view of Ireland. When they came across scenes that reflected their imagined view of Ireland, they took photographs of them. This finding suggests that the participants from Phases 2 and Phase 3 made sense of Ireland by performing in their own enchantment with Ireland though taking photographs while on holiday.

7.4.2 Tourists as Performers in their Own Enchantment with Place

Edensor (2000) conceptualises tourists as performers, as discussed in Chapter Three. He argues that tourists enact their own tourism experiences where the destination is their metaphorical stage. More recent research by Knudsen and Waade (2010) further conceptualises tourists as co-producers, co-designers and co-exhibitors of tourism destinations, thereby playing a role in the destination's production. Moreover, by conceptualising tourists as performers, their performances become inextricably connected with the places in which they occur (Haldrup and Larsen, 2010). Keeping this in mind, this investigation of how tourists make sense of places by taking photographs both supports and advances the argument of Urry and Larsen (2011) regarding what they call the performance turn. The performance turn as a concept draws attention to how tourists experience places in multi-sensuous ways, often documenting their experiences by taking photographs. It is for this reason that **Research Objective Six** of this thesis focuses attention on how the photographs taken by tourists function as devices/tools by which their construction of places can be explored.

While acknowledging the aforementioned authors' contributions to conceptualising tourism as a performance, the dynamics of how tourists make sense of places they visit by taking photographs identified in this thesis suggest tourists play an equal and active role in their own enchantment with place. Analysis of the volunteer employed photographs submitted by the participants in Phases 2 and 3 of the research visually reflect their enchantment with Ireland. The themes arising from the analysis of their photographs suggest that the participants' enchantment with Ireland can be conceptualised as enchanting places, enchanting people and an enchanting way of life. These themes will now be discussed in terms of furthering our understanding of how

tourists make sense of places, and document their enchantment with them by taking photographs.

7.5 Enchanting Places

Much of the participants' enchantment with Ireland as a place relates to Ireland's enchanting history and the castles the participants visited. An equally powerful source of enchantment was the many cottages which they encountered in various states of disrepair. More contemporary spaces, such as the lobby of a city hotel also possessed the power to enchant. In this particular case, this was due to the presence of oversized furniture, which allowed the participant who sat on it to return, albeit momentarily, to a childlike state, as defined by Bennett (2001). The rural nature of Ireland and the freedom that Ireland's more temperate climate afforded the participants also became sources of enchantment.

7.5.1 Ireland's Enchanting History

Castles are not unique to Ireland, but they have a strong association with Ireland, as evidenced by the various images in Chapter Four which contain castles. Castles, therefore, were a source of enchantment for most of the participants because, first and foremost, they are not part of the participants' life experiences back home in the US. Secondly, castles offer a tangible connection to the history and mystery of Ireland in the context of the tourists' sense-making process, as evidenced by the quote which accompanies Plate 7.5.



Plate 7.5 Participants Climbing to the Top of Blarney Castle

Source: (Female Participant, FG4)

“That's mine... it represents the history of Ireland I have really enjoyed learning about all the different histories all the different places, that's the Blarney Castle. I think it represents an active lifestyle because you are actively getting to see these things and touch them instead of looking at them from a distance”

(Female who took the photograph, FG4)

Photographs such as the one in Plate 7.5 also reflect a desire on behalf of the participants for difference: to encounter a sense of wonder and awe from their holiday experiences and to “become involved” with the destination. By becoming involved with Blarney Castle for example, the participants were momentarily suspended in time. This finding lends further credence to one of the main tenets of Bennett’s (2001) theory of enchantment - the desire for displacement.

7.5.2 Artefacts of Irish Culture and Enchantment

Cottages appear to hold a similar allure for the participants. Defined as artefacts of Irish culture by Quinn (1994), cottages represent strong emotional collateral with most of the participants of this research. The classic postcard image of the whitewashed thatched cottage enjoys a romantic fascination on the global stage as a symbol of Ireland. It could be said therefore, that images of cottages trigger nostalgic

remembrances, as defined by Davis (1973), of Ireland, as a place. Caton and Santos' (2007) theory that tourists yearn for a culturally remembered past, as discussed in Chapter Three, also offers some useful insights to help explain this behaviour. Additionally, in Chapter Three of this thesis it was argued that images play a role in prompting feelings of longing, acting as mental maps through which tourists navigate back in time. The findings from this research bring to the fore new understanding regarding nostalgia and the role it plays in how tourists make sense of places they visit.

For example, it might be said in a preliminary sense that the findings presented here lend further support to Vesey and Dimanche's (2003) observation that nostalgia blurs or removes the context of historic reality. However, taking photographs while on holiday appears to bridge the gap between nostalgia and reality for the participants of this research. For example, taking photographs such as Plate 6.31 during their visit to the famine village enabled the participants to reconcile their nostalgic view of the typical Irish cottage with the harsh realities of life in Ireland at the time of the famine.

7.5.3 Enchanting Spaces

Returning to Bennett's (2001) theory of enchantment, a useful context for considering places as sources of enchantment is her observation that in seeking enchantment, people are, in effect, looking to be thrust back into a state of 'childlike' excitement. Plate 7.6 makes a very compelling visual argument to further support this view. Peggy [the lady in the chair] experienced the 'childlike excitement' of getting to sit in an oversized chair in one of the hotels she stayed in while in Ireland. In seeking excitement, Steel's (1981) hypothesis, as discussed in Chapter Three, submits that tourists are in effect looking to forge personal relationships with places they visit, and come away with a

sense of place. Plate 7.6 is an example of how tourists personalise their relationship with places they visit.



Plate 7.6 Giant's Chair

Source: (Female participant, MI)

The participant who took the photograph above described in her focus group how she wanted to sit in the chair “*so bad*”, but how every time she arrived back to the hotel there was someone else sitting in it. Eventually though, she managed to sit in it herself. For the brief moment she was sitting in it, in line with Bennett’s (2001) earlier observations, she was ‘suspended in time’. She was no longer a woman but instead reverted back to a childlike persona. Sitting in the chair gave her an opportunity to revert back to a ‘childlike’ state because she described the chair as a “giant’s” chair. By describing the chair as a giant’s chair, the participant in effect enacted in her own enchantment. Her photograph allows her to make sense of her experience of sitting in a ‘giant’s’ chair in Ireland for friends and family back home. Therefore, Ireland for her was a destination with many [enchanted] spaces in which she was free to experiment with different roles and identities.

7.5.4 Ireland's Enchanting Countryside and Freedom

Similarly, the Irish countryside and the Irish climate produced enchanting spaces in which the participants were free to experience opposing or different experiences to those back home in the USA. For example, one participant's use of the term *freedom* related to her sense of ease to walk over to a horse in a field while in Ireland, something she could not do at home. She got her friend to take a photograph (Plate 6.13) of her doing so, to prove it really happened. Back home in the USA, she said a similar act might get you shot by the owner of the horse. Freedom was also expressed and represented in relation to the climate in Ireland and what it afforded Denise to do while on holiday. For one of the participants from Texas it was the freedom to ride a bike while in Ireland. The climate of her home State of Texas denied her such simple pleasures due to the extreme heat in summer.

In conceptualising a sense of freedom, participants made a distinction between how they behaved back home in the USA, and the new found freedom which holidaying in Ireland offered them. Despite the absence of the term 'enchantment' from the female participant's description of her encounter with the horse, it seems reasonable to assume that the experience was an enchanting one for her. A similar assumption could be made about the female participant's experience of riding a bike while in Ireland. These assumptions can be justified, because both experiences seem to resonate with Inglis' (2008) assertion that people are looking for opposing or different experiences to their lives back home while on holiday. Moreover, in the context of the overall aim of this thesis, the participants' photographs help us to understand how they re-write and make sense of Ireland as a place for them.

The photographs that the participants submitted of castles, cottages, oversized chairs and “kissing a horse”, in many ways bracket their imagined view of Ireland as a place. The next section will deal with how the participants represent and make sense of Irish people by taking photographs of enchanting Irish people.

7.6 Enchanting People

A common thread throughout this thesis is the way in which tourists make sense of places, and play a role in their own enchantment by taking photographs. Keeping this in mind, Inglis (2008) poses the question: in making sense of places, does the conversation refer to the geographical location, the people who live there, or both? The findings from this thesis suggest the latter. Moreover, this thesis argues that in making sense of local people some tourists become enchanted by them. Salazar (2010) offers a useful context for considering how local people impact upon tourists’ enchantment with place. In Chapter Three, Salazar submits that meeting local people forms an integral part of some tourists’ holiday experience. This is especially the case for some tourists in that it is often the human contact and close encounter with locals that remains etched in the tourist’s mind, long after they have returned home (Salazar, 2010). At a certain level of abstraction, seeking out personal contact with locals certainly appears to have been the case for most of the participants in this research. However, what is more compelling is the way in which the participants assign meaning to local people by taking photographs of their encounters with them.

7.6.1 Enchantment: Tourists, Local People and Meaning

Bosangit et al. (2012) draw attention to the behaviour by tourists of assigning meaning to locals. They argue that assigning meaning to locals signifies for them that their travel experience has exposed them to something new and different. This thesis lends

further credence to this argument. The findings capture the way in which the participants assign meaning to locals by taking photographs of them.

The phenomenon whereby tourists assign meaning to other people is conceptualised in the literature as *othering*. In Chapter Three we learned that *othering* involves the imaginary reconstruction of different people by tourists into “exotic others” (Hollinshead, 2000b: 420). The manner in which tourists reconstruct local people, and transform them into exotic others is complex, and not always based on how they look (Maoz, 2006). This thesis goes some way towards explaining this complexity from a number of points of view. To begin, the findings suggest that tourists assign meaning to local people based on stereotypes they may have encountered prior to visiting. In this regard, Chapter Four explores stereotypes in terms of how Irish people are represented in both induced and organic imagery. The findings from Phase 1 of the research reflect how these stereotypes are interpreted by the participants prior to visiting. To further explain how tourists makes sense of locals through a process of othering, Salazar (2010) argues that tourists will seek out local people that conform to their overall imagined stereotypical image of what local indigenous people look like. Once they encounter them, they take photographs of them, as if to prove they really exist. The next section will discuss how the participants assign meaning to Irish women by taking, or, in more cases, not taking photographs of them.

7.6.1.1 Assigning Meaning to Irish Women

The clearest examples of the importance tourists place on meeting local people while on holiday can be found in the various photographs that the participants took of people while in Ireland. The most interesting finding to emerge from the analysis of these photographs, as they appear in Chapter Six, suggests that men feature more, in terms of

how the participants made sense of Irish people, than women. This statement is substantiated by a noticeable absence of women from most of the photographs that the participants submitted as being representative of Ireland. The few exceptions that exist portray women in a different light to men. A most obvious way, for example, is the photograph presented in Plate 7.7 in which the woman appears to be set apart from the three men in the photograph and almost disconnected from them emotionally. The three men seem to be lost in the music and oblivious to her presence.



Plate 7.7 The Irish House Party

Source: (Female participant, MI)

Furthermore, unlike “Kevin” [the red haired boy] or the “cheese man” as presented in Chapter Six, when women appear in photographs (Plate, 7.8) they are not given an identity, they are not given a name. This is an important point, as we know from the literature that the naming of others by tourists signifies that they have had a meaningful experience.

Finally, in the more extreme example below (Plate, 7.8), the woman is denied most of the features that identify her as a woman, such as her face. The only identifiable characteristic to show that the person in the photograph is a woman is her hands. She is described by the female participant who took the photographs as “mysterious”, and the photograph is described as “so dramatic” by a male participant from Colorado. Part of

the allure of the photograph for the participant who took it is that *“It makes you want to know, oh where would this have been, why should she have been wearing the cape”* (Female participant, NY).



Plate 7.8 Woman Playing the Harp

Source: (Female participant, NY)

7.6.1.2 Assigning Meaning to Irish Men

In contrast to the way in which women are represented by the participants, men are treated differently. Three men in particular featured in the photographs taken by the participants, Fintan, Paddy and Jack. However, there also was Kevin, the red haired boy, and ‘the cheese man’. All of these men are named by the participants, either by using their known name, or by assigning them one such as “Kevin” or “my cheese man”. Meeting Fintan, Paddy and Jack appears to represent an integral part of the participants’ enchantment with Ireland as a place. This proved particularly so regarding the visit to Paddy’s farm. What is even more interesting here of course is the way the participants’ photographs of Irish men contrast with the photographs of Irish women, in terms of how they function as tools to construct and assign meaning.

For example, the photographs of Fintan, Paddy and Jack, as they appear in Chapter Six, reflect a closer, more personal connection between them and the participants. To begin, all of the men are named: Fintan, Paddy or Jack in the narratives that surround the photographs. The participants were able to visit the homes of Fintan and Paddy, which they were not able to do in the context of the women they submitted photographs of. Finally, the participants got to spend time listening to stories told by Fintan, Paddy and Jack that painted Ireland in an enchanting light, which appealed to the participants' sense of Ireland as a place.

In essence, the experience of meeting and spending time with Fintan, Paddy and Jack serves to bracket Ireland as a place for the participants. Photographs proved essential to the “remembering and evocation” that enriched the tourists' experience of Ireland as a place (Burns and Lester, 2005). The participants' photographs serve as “miniature slices of reality”, as described by Urry (2002: 127), which draw attention to how encounters with local people contributed to their own enchantment with Ireland. These three men, in particular, appear to resonate with the participants because they all look very similar to how Irish men are constructed/represented/visualised in organic and some induced images of Ireland. Reflect back to image 7.2A in Plate 7.2 of this chapter, and immediately you will see certain similarities between the man in the photograph, which Tourism Ireland labels as authentic, and photographs of Paddy, for example, taken by the participants.

Given this, images that reflect a more traditional representation of Irish men, as opposed to Irish women, appear to be more pervasive in terms of how the participants made sense of Ireland, despite a rather compelling argument made in Chapter Four regarding stereotypical images of Irish women, and the sources of those stereotypes. Stereotypical images of Irish women do not feature in the photographs submitted by the

participants as being truly representative of Ireland as they experienced it. It seems hard to believe that none of the participants encountered red haired women while on holiday in Ireland, yet none of them appear to have photographs of one. It is reasonable then to assume that women are characterised in a more supportive role in how the participants make sense of Ireland, such as keeping a home, maintaining the many beautiful flowers photographed by the participants at both Fintan and Paddy's farms, and protecting the children from the fairies, as described in Chapter Six. These women are faceless, much like the lady in the blue cloak. Their husbands, on the other hand, take centre stage in the photographs taken by the participants. They are keepers of stories which provide the participants with a link to the past, a past that enchants and delights them to hear about. These findings contribute significantly to current literature regarding identity construction, and how tourists make sense of places by meeting and photographing local people.

7.6.2 Enchantment and Intimacy: Getting Backstage

MacCannell (1973) observed that tourists are intrigued by how local people live. This thesis argues that much of this intrigue appears to be fuelled by perceived differences between the tourists' way of life in comparison to the way local people live. It is this apparent need to satisfy their curiosity about how local people live that invariably leads tourists to seek out encounters with locals in their own home. MacCannell (1973) defines the settings for these encounters as backstage regions. Backstage regions can be the private homes in which local people live. This thesis offers a fresh perspective in this important area of tourism research. The perceived intimacy such encounters afford the tourist appears to be the primary motivation for gaining backstage access in tourism settings (MacCannell, 1973). The findings of this thesis certainly lend further credence to this hypothesis.

The organised farm visits to Fintan’s farm in Galway, and Paddy’s farm in Limerick, as discussed in Chapter Six, are two cases in point. Whereas in the strictest sense of the word, neither of these farms can be considered backstage regions because tours are allowed to visit them, this is not an important issue. What is important is that, in terms of their sense-making, the participants consider them backstage regions because Fintan and Paddy still live in them. Building on MacCannell’s definition of backstage regions, this finding has important implications for destination marketing and what tourists perceive as authentic encounters with place. These implications will be discussed further in the concluding chapter to this thesis. In this regard, it could be argued that the farm visits allowed the participants to experience a different way of life to their own lives back home in the USA. A more enchanting way of life, where it appeared time stood still, albeit for the brief few hours of the visit. This finding draws attention to the third and final theme regarding the way in which the participants made sense of Ireland by taking photographs, and thereby became enchanted with Ireland as a place.

7.7 Enchanting Way of Life

We learned in Chapter One of this thesis that “all tourism destinations are, if nothing else, places where people are encouraged to craft their own ideal temporary realities, often with few similarities to their daily lives” (Delfin, 2009: 141). More recent research by Stylianou-Lambert (2012) suggests that in crafting their ideal temporary realities, tourists reconstruct places into meaningful visual messages by taking photographs. In order to better understand these meaningful visual messages, this thesis focuses attention on the photographs taken by US tourists while on holiday in Ireland. It uses their own narratives surrounding why they selected them as truly representative of Ireland in order to unpack their meaning. Terdiman (1993) observes

that, in taking a photograph of a moment in time, tourists are liberating the moment and therefore making it real for them. The photographs contained in this thesis present Real Ireland, as interpreted by the participants. Real Ireland for the participants is an enchanting place, where enchanting local people live, and where one can still experience an enchanting, simpler way of life. In taking photographs of stone walls, animals, flowers and rural scenes, the participants got to experience a raw, natural world not always available to them back home in the USA. This is the first sub-theme to emerge from the analysis of the participants' photographs relative to how they made sense of Ireland's perceived enchanting way of life. Other sub-themes include antiquity and enchantment, as well as stories of enchantment.

7.7.1 Enchantment: The Search for a Raw, Natural World

A characteristic that came through most clearly in the photographs taken by the participants was the desire or longing to live, albeit briefly, a simpler way of life. Visiting the West of Ireland in particular, as the map presented in Figure 6.3 indicates, enabled them to visualise what life used to be like. The West of Ireland is described by a female participant from Connecticut as "*simple and pretty and not overpowering like the States*". We can see from the various accounts throughout Chapter Six similar commentary on how the participants make sense of Ireland. Their photographs present Ireland in a very traditional light, as rural in nature, and with a focus on people, albeit predominately on traditional representations of Irish men. This finding moves outside Fagan's (2002) assertion that Irish identity and Irish culture are always in a state of flux. Instead, the opposite appears to be the case for the cohort of US tourists represented in this thesis. Their photographs suggest a deep longing for a "wistful and nostalgic" Ireland, as described by Patterson (2011), which is underscored by a desire to escape the tedium, blandness and sameness of their lives back home in the USA. Hence, they long

for an enchanting way of life no longer accessible to them at home. It is for this reason that tourists appear to sometimes crave a raw, natural world in terms of their choice of holiday destination. Knudsen and Waade (2010) describe this apparent yearning on behalf of tourists for a raw, natural world as a hunger for reality. The participants' photographs presented in this thesis provide a phenomenology of what they perceive as real experiences of Ireland.

7.7.2 Antiquity and Enchantment

Photographs of buildings covered in foliage, such as Plate 7.9, appear to be yet another source of wonder and enchantment for some of the participants. This is because the foliage growing on the building is a naturally occurring phenomenon, and it is therefore perceived as being real and not staged. Moreover, the foliage became a source of enchantment for one participant in that she 'imagined' that there might be leprechauns hiding within it. Her comment resulted in outbursts of playful laughter within her focus group. This finding reflects Stylianou-Lambert's (2012) observation that tourists playfully re-create the space and the people they photograph through their unique experiences of destinations. In trying to reason why so many buildings in Ireland are covered in ivy, for example, participants tended to rationalise it in terms of how old a building might be. Muckross House (Plate, 7.9), for example, is completely overgrown with what the participants described as "red ivy" [*Virginia creeper*]. They felt the "red ivy" gave the house a vintage appearance. The term vintage when applied to an object can mean many things, such as out-of-date, antique or old-fashioned. It can also mean classic, traditional or pure.



Plate 7.9 Muckross House, Killarney

Source: (Male participant, DE)

In a most rudimentary sense, some may argue that Tom’s photograph of Muckross House (Plate 7.9) is simply just that, a photograph of a stately home. However, this thesis argues that photographs offers more than mere representation; instead, they perform a more all-encompassing function. Photography functions as a tool, which the participants in this research use to renegotiate their relationship with Muckross House and Ireland as a place. The “red ivy” legitimises the perceived authenticity of the house for the male participant who photographed it, because the “ivy” gives the house a vintage appearance. Therefore, for this participant, Muckross House is not a contrived or staged (MacCannell, 1973) place for the purpose of attracting tourists. One of the overarching contributions this thesis makes is that the photographs which tourists take while on holiday further legitimise Davidson and Milligan’s (2004) observation that places must be *felt* by tourists in order to make sense of them, or to become *real*.

7.7.3 Stories of Enchantment

Continuing with the theme of an enchanting way of life, the photograph (Plate 6.16) of the red door with the plastic containers of milk, presented in Chapter Six is of interest.

The composition of the photograph tells us nothing about how the photograph functions as a tool to make sense of Ireland, as a place. The presence of the modern milk containers is equally perplexing in terms of their connection with a more enchanting way of life. In fact, without the background narrative of the woman who took it describing what it means to her in terms of how she makes sense of Ireland, the photograph's underlying meaning may have been lost to the researcher. Sontag (2002) makes reference to the interpretative qualities of photographs. This thesis, unlike previous research, focuses attention on how tourists interpret their own photographs in order to address the overall research aim. The story behind the photograph in most cases is therefore of more interest than its composition. The photograph of the red door and the milk containers was taken in Kilkenny at 6.00am one morning as the woman who took it walked through the city. She used the photograph in her focus group to represent the sense of security and personal safety that she experienced while in Ireland. She openly admitted during the focus group that she did not feel the same sense of security at home in the USA. One of the more intriguing features of the composition of that particular photograph for the participant was the fact that the milk had not been "stolen" or "tampered with". She could not envisage a similar scene back home. Therefore, for her, as stated in Chapter Six, the composition of the photograph hails back to a different time when life was less complicated. It is clear here that the perceived enchantment of the photograph stems from how it arouses within the participant a sense of longing for a distant past, a past that she perceives still exists in Ireland.

This last point draws attention to an important caveat to the theory of enchantment, in that it leads to feelings of attachment, surprise and wonder and a sense of being suspended in time (Bennett, 2001). It is clear that much of Ireland's perceived allure

derives from how Ireland is promoted in various sources of imagery, as discussed in Chapter Four. In this regard, O'Connor's (1993) argument that the Ireland that is presented as a timeless place where tourists can escape the stress of everyday life still appears to hold currency with the participants of this research. The timeless appeal of Ireland is visually captured in the photographs which the participants submitted as being truly representative of Ireland as they experienced it. For example, the photograph presented in Plate 7.10 captures how the female participant from New York who took it imagined Ireland to look and reflects how she makes sense of Ireland.



Plate 7.10 Ireland as I imagined it to be

Source: (Female participant, NY)

“I have been fascinated most all in the places we have been, by not only the stone walls but the hedgerows and just the cordoning off and patterning off of the land and a of course with those clouds and bit of sun, plus the vibrant colours of green. That's why I took that picture and I haven't seen my grandparent's farm yet but I would imagine that it would look something like that”

(Female participant, NY)

Photographs such as Plate 7.10, and the stories that surround them, suggest that by taking photographs, the participants became immersed in Ireland as a place. They moved beyond the physical act of taking the photograph, and became “rapt” in Ireland,

to borrow a phrase from a male participant from Colorado. Indeed, it could be argued, based on the findings from this thesis, that taking photographs of places that they are enchanted by, enables tourists to momentarily shut themselves off from the rest of the world. This notion of getting away, or being distracted, is certainly a theme percolating through various marketing campaigns aimed at seducing tourists to visit Ireland. Similarly, postcards produced by John Hinde, as well as films such as *The Quiet Man* depict Ireland, as argued by Clancy (2009: 83), as “outside of the modern world”. In a recent, timely interview, the playwright John McCabe described Ireland as “Ireland of the three Johns”: John Forde [director of *The Quiet Man*], John Wayne [cast as Sean Thornton in *The Quiet Man*] and John Hinde [photographer and producer of many postcards of Ireland] (McCabe, 2014). In terms of how the participants make sense of Ireland’s landscapes, the photographs taken by them in many ways bracket their imagined view of Ireland as a place.

7.8 Destination Image: Seduction, Sense-Making and Enchantment

Thus far, the focus of this chapter has been to look at how tourists make sense of places. They do this in a number of ways at various stages of their holiday experience. To begin, reading about the destination or viewing films or television programmes made in or about the destination appears to play a central role in how tourists start to make sense of places. To a lesser extent, photographic images produced by destination marketing organisations also contribute to the sense-making process. All of these sources of organic and induced imagery, as discussed in Chapter Two, act as ‘seducers’, enticing the tourist to come and discover the place for themselves. Indeed, this chapter argues that tourists play a role in their own seduction with place by doing all of the aforementioned activities. Upon arrival in the destination, the sense-making continues,

whereby tourists seek out and take photographs of scenes that legitimise their imagined idea of place. Taking photographs casts the tourist in the role of director in their own photographic production of place, in which they make the ultimate choice as to what to photograph or not. The way in which tourists make sense of places, and act as performers in their own production of place by taking photographs, is a complex process. This thesis seeks to unpack the complexity of how tourists make sense of places by taking photographs. Moreover, the narratives accompanying their photographs lend further support to the argument that, by taking photographs, tourists not only make sense of places they visit, but also become active agents in their own enchantment with place. Their photographic patterns of behaviour also draw further attention to Robinson and Picard's (2009) concept of self-editing, whereby, in the case of this research, the participants appeared to ignore scenes and reject photographs of scenes which did not reflect their imagined view of Ireland. Underlying this behaviour is a desire to capture photographs of Ireland that validate their imagined view of Ireland. Therefore, it appears that visiting Ireland did not lead to the participants of this research forming a modified, induced image of Ireland, as argued by Gunn (1972). Likewise, spending time in Ireland did not change or alter their imagined view of Ireland, as Echtner and Ritchie's (1991) research would suggest. Instead, arriving in Ireland enabled the participants to continue their enchantment with Ireland by documenting Ireland's enchanting landscapes, enchanting people and enchanting way of life in photographs in order to prove that they exist. In this sense the entire process of enchantment can be described as a cycle, which starts before the tourist books their holiday, and ends with them seeking out proof that their enchanted idea of place truly exists. The use of the term cycle to describe the entire process of enchantment is deliberate in the context of this thesis as opposed to Hall's circle of representation.

This is because the term cycle denotes a sequence of events that may not always follow a strictly prescriptive and circular pattern of behaviour as argued by Hall (1997). Therefore, the term cycle denotes a more accurate reflection of the tourists' seduction and enchantment with place as evidenced by this thesis. Once they find their own enchanted idea of place, they take photographs of it to prove its existence. This cycle of enchantment will be further conceptualised in relation to Hall's (1997) Hermeneutic Circle of Representation and Scarles' (2009) Framework of Visuality for Visual Practice, as discussed in Chapter Three. The next section of this chapter will, therefore, explicate how this thesis builds upon the various aforementioned models. In doing so, it will show how this research contributes new knowledge in terms of how tourists make sense of places by taking photographs.

7.9 Cycles of Enchantment and Meaning

The foregoing sections of this chapter have presented an argument that tourists make sense of places by taking photographs, and that by doing so, they also play an active role in their own enchantment with place. The entire process, through which tourists make sense of places and become enchanted by them, emerges from this research as a cycle (Figure 7.1). Previous research by Hall (1997) and Scarles (2009) refers to circles or stages of representation, as discussed in Chapter Three. However, for the purpose of this research, the term 'cycle' will be used.

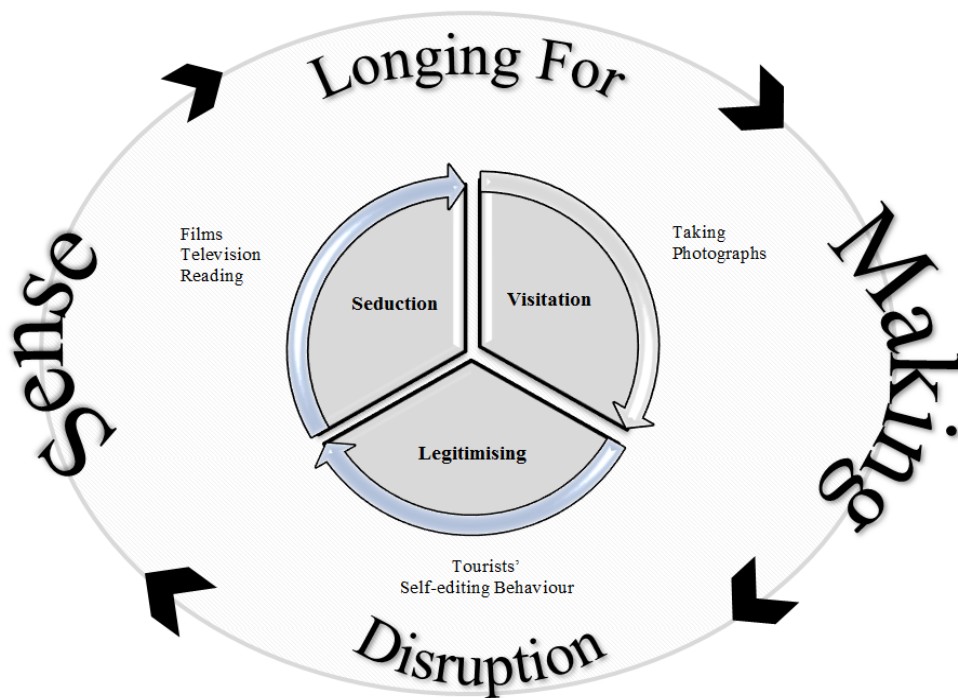


Figure 7.1 Cycles of Enchantment and Meaning

Source: (Author, after Scarles, 2009: 477)

While recognising the work done by Hall (1997) in terms of his hermeneutic circle of representation, and in particular Scarles' (2009) Framework of Visuality for Visual Practice, Figure 7.1 offers a reorganisation of Scarles' (2009) key moments of the tourists' experience. The reorganisation visually represented in Figure 7.1 introduces the concepts of seduction and enchantment regarding how tourists make sense of places by taking photographs. The key point of departure this thesis makes from Scarles' (2009) work relates to her belief that taking photographs is a "getting-to-know-you process" on behalf of tourists, whereas it is the contention of this research that, in taking photographs, tourists are confirming what they already know or believe about the destination. This thesis, therefore, suggests that seduction, visitation and legitimising form stages in the cycle of enchantment and meaning. In Chapter Three, Bennett's (2001) enchantment theory was discussed, which states that in seeking enchantment,

people are looking to be disrupted from their daily lives. Figure 7.1, therefore, offers a framework within which enchantment can be further contextualised in terms of the desire on behalf of tourists to experience a culturally remembered past, as argued by Caton and Santos (2007). The following sections will further conceptualise seduction, visitation and legitimising as part of a cycle of enchantment and meaning by referring to the literature, and where appropriate the findings presented in Chapter Six.

7.9.1 Seduction

The first sequence of the cycle presented in Figure 7.1 is seen as involving the tourist in “self-seductive imagination”, and the “cultivation” of ideas (Belk et al., 2003: 340). The moments of self-seduction identified by the findings draws attention to mediated ways of seeing Ireland which the participants were exposed to by watching films and reading books about Ireland. Of equal interest is the way in which Ireland is constructed in American contemporary media, such as the Lucky Charms and Irish Spring Soap television commercials, discussed in Chapter Six. The idea of Ireland depicted in these two television commercials enabled the participants who made reference to them to cultivate and keep alive their imagined view of Ireland. These activities informed certain ideas or images that the participants had about Ireland prior to visiting. The fact that these ideas appear not to change upon visitation, but instead lead to more intense emotional connections with place, is one of the main contributions this thesis makes to knowledge. More importantly, the findings of this research build upon previous notions of circles of representation and sense-making (Gunn, 1972; Hall, 1997). This thesis argues that sense-making and enchantment can be conceptualised as a cycle, that, similar to Scarles’ (2009) framework, begins long before the tourists decided to visit. Tourists are exposed to a variety of place imagery which seduces them and makes them want to visit. By viewing these images, tourists become active agents

in their own seduction and enchantment with place. They form an imagined view or idea of what the place might be like. In forming this imagined view, tourists start a sense-making process, whereby some attributes or qualities of the destination appeal to them more than others. Following Davidson and Milligan (2004), this thesis supports the view that places must be felt or inspire an emotional reaction by tourists in order for them to make sense of them. Upon visiting a destination, tourists take photographs that confirm and legitimise their imagined view of place, and personalise their relationship with place.

7.9.2 Visitation

The second stage in Figure 7.1 draws attention to the practice of taking photographs as part of being a tourist. Scarles (2009) argues that tourist photography is not merely a “hunter-gatherer” activity. Nor is it an activity of voyeuristic participation, as proposed by Sontag (2002). Instead, tourists’ photography is conceptualised as a performance in which tourists process various messages they have been exposed to regarding the destination, as discussed in Chapter One. Once taken, photographs become indisputable evidence of daily life (Sontag, 2002). Photographs are also a means through which tourists continue the sense-making process that began long before they arrived in the destination, as argued by this thesis.

Scarles (2009: 480) argues that upon arrival, tourists are “bound to anticipatory imaginings”, based on images of key icons that they may have seen prior to visiting. These anticipatory imaginings are formed during the seduction stage of the tourists’ sense-making process, as proposed by Figure 7.1. Many tourists take photographs of these icons, a practice Edensor (1998) describes as duty photographs. Yet duty photographs tell us little about how the tourist makes sense of place relative to how they

imagined it. Indeed, in the context of how the participants made sense of Ireland as a place, very few of these ‘duty’ photographs were submitted as being truly representative of Ireland. Therefore, this thesis suggests that in some cases, more can be learned about how tourists make sense of places by focussing on what they ignore, elect not to photograph, or reject in the form of induced photographs of place.

Taking photographs, or not, as the case may be, casts the tourists in the role of director in their own production of place, as discussed earlier in this chapter. Scarles (2009: 481) describes tourists taking photographs as a “getting-to-know-you process”, in which they become the authors of their own interpretation of place. The findings of this thesis posit a somewhat different view, and suggest that tourists taking photographs is more of a ‘confirming-what-I-believe’ process, as mentioned earlier. In other words, tourists arrive with an idea of the place already formed in their imaginations, and go in search of photographic evidence that it exists. Taking photographs, therefore, allows the tourist to unpack their imagined view of place, and reassemble it in the form of a collage of photographs taken while on holiday. In the process, they appear to ignore physical evidence that ‘spoils’ their imagined view of place. This behaviour, whereby tourists appear to ignore elements of the destination that are at odds with their imagined view of place, extends beyond the view offered by Page (2010) that upon arrival, tourists’ knowledge of the destination is recreated in their mind as they engage with the unfamiliar. Instead, tourists appear to focus attention on stereotypical images that conform to how they imagine the place to look.

Scarles’ (2009: 471) contention that “visual practice emerges as a series of negotiations and compromises, as tourists merge ideological imaginings with the unfolded realities of place” appears not to be the case for the participants of this research. The participants’ photographs suggest that they are not willing to compromise how they

make sense of Ireland as a place. They appear to only offer photographs that truly represent their own imagined view of Ireland which they have taken and selected. Visitation does not appear to lead to a re-evaluated idea of place, as argued by Shelby and Morgan (1996). Instead, it allows the tourist to seek out elements of the destination that conform to their pre-visitation, imagined view of place, and confer meaning on them by taking photographs (Baerenholdt et al., 2007). Photographs and photography, therefore, become ways in which tourists produce places, but also authenticate them in how they relate to them in an “emotional, affective, sensuous way” (Knudsen and Waade, 2010: 13). The third and final stage in Figure 7.1 draws attention to the way in which tourists authenticate or legitimise their own experiences of place by taking photographs.

7.9.3 Legitimising

The findings from this research suggest that tourists further legitimise their idea of place by editing their own photographs. Robinson and Picard (2009) draw attention to this self-editing behaviour. They state that taking a photograph involves a certain amount of editing regarding what to put in the frame or not. When taking photographs, tourists select to include certain objects or people in the frame, while others are excluded. This behaviour also extends to selecting photographs taken while on holiday that reflect and legitimise their imagined view of place, while ignoring or passing over other photographs taken by them that do not. At this point in the tourists’ sense-making process, they emerge as the “primary producers of memories and reflexive performance” (Scarles, 2009: 481). Figure 7.1 offers further explanation for this behaviour in which tourists’ photographs become a means through which they reify their idea of place (Robinson and Picard, 2009). Photographs become meaningful visual messages that allow the tourist to legitimise their idea of place (Stylianou-

Lambert, 2012). Moreover, taking photographs while on holiday provides a means through which tourists personalise and reaffirm their emotional attachments with place (Quinlan Cutler and Carmichael, 2010). The findings of this research suggest that the closer the tourists' photographed images resemble their imagined view of place, the stronger the emotional attachment between the tourist and their photograph appears to be. Therefore, it could be argued that photographs taken by tourists as part of their sense-making differ from other sources of imagery. Specifically, they differ in that taking one's own photographs is a considerably more personal act than simply looking at another's (Nguyen and Belk, 2007).

7.10 Photographs and Sense-Making: New Insights and Observations

Place literature tells us that a sense of place is personal to each tourist (Cross, 2001). A similar concept has been identified in consumer behaviour called "self-enchancement" (Belk et al., 2003: 347). This thesis draws on Belk et al.'s theories of consumer desire and self-enchancement, and argues that they are relevant to tourism. Desire and self-enchancement are relevant to tourists because, as discussed earlier in Chapter Three, tourists' imagined view of place is informed by the various preconceptions each tourist holds about the destination. Hence, one of the main arguments throughout this chapter is that tourists serve as active agents in their own enchancement with places they visit through the embodied act of taking photographs. By taking photographs they form personal relationships with places which reflect and endorse their imagined view of the destination. Support for this argument is also elicited from the work of Quinlan Cutler and Carmichael (2010). They argue that emotional attachments with place, and the associated relationships tourists form with the destination through their holiday experiences are interconnected. Consequently, this thesis lends further support to the argument that, in seeking disruption from their daily lives (Bennett, 2001), people are

correspondingly seeking an equal and opposing reaction to globalisation and sameness (Inglis, 2008). In essence, tourists are searching for uniqueness in terms of their travel experiences.

Keeping this in mind, Urry and Larsen (2011) argue that tourism literature does little to explicate the desire for uniqueness, which some tourists appear to crave from their personal travel. This thesis goes some way towards advancing our understanding of how tourists perceive and document uniqueness in the form of photographs which they take while on holiday. The photographs submitted by the participants of this research serve as a window into the world of the tourist, and what they consider to be unique about Ireland. More importantly, the findings arising from the analysis of their photographs advances our understanding of how tourists reproduce and contest places and perform in their own enchantment. The photographs submitted by the participants serve as documentary evidence of what they consider enchanting about Ireland. The participants appear to be ‘mesmerised’ by the beauty and charm of Ireland. Photographs taken by them, for example, of castles and cottages, and ivy covered buildings become sources or places of enchantment. Once captured in a photograph, these images function as devices that further legitimise their imagined view of Ireland. Conversely, by not taking photographs, the participants elected to ignore or pass over symbols or scenes of modernity that conflicted with their nostalgic view of Ireland. In effect, they became directors and editors in their own photographic production of Ireland as a place.

7.11 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to provide a phenomenological response to how tourists make sense of places. The primary motivation behind the research was rooted in the realisation that contemporary tourism is intrinsically constructed culturally,

socially and materially through images and performances of photography (Larsen, 2006). The photography-informed empirical data collected at different stages of the tourists' experience of place serve to unpack tourists' place meaning and sense-making. The narratives surrounding the photographs are contextualised by reference to the relevant literature, discussed in Chapters Two, Three and Four. In order to foreground how the participants made sense of Ireland, this chapter presented a re-reading and re-writing of Ireland's destination image, based on the secondary data presented in Chapter Four.

The first phase of the primary research was exploratory in nature. It used free-elicitation techniques in the form of induced photographs of Ireland, and in-depth interviews to infiltrate the way a sample of US tourists imagine Ireland as a place. This phase in the research provided a rich understanding of the main themes that underscore how Ireland is constructed as an emotional brand through induced imagery used to market Ireland. It also served to further elucidate the notion that tourists become active agents in their own seduction with place by looking at photographs. However, this work did not satisfactorily resolve the overarching aim of this thesis and therefore, two more phases of field work were undertaken.

Phases Two and Three of the research, while again exploring how tourists make sense of places, did so within the potentially richer context of the photographs tourists take while on holiday. The photographs presented in Chapter Six, and analysed and discussed here, facilitate access into the world of the tourist, and serve to further explicate how they make sense of Ireland. Although grouped together into themes for the purpose of analysis, each photograph provides rare and intimate access to how the participants made sense of Ireland, and became active agents in their own enchantment. In this regard, the participants' photographs become "vehicles through which the

performance and space of tourism are activated and place is created” (Scarles, 2009: 485).

It is often suggested that, in its most rudimentary form, tourism is all about having pleasurable experiences while away from home (Larsen, 2004). However, the phenomenology of the participants’ experience of Ireland presented here suggests that tourism, as an experience, is also fuelled by a desire on behalf of the participants for disruption from their daily lives (Bennett, 2001). Not to be confused with the need to escape, disruption relates to a yearning on behalf of tourists for simplicity. MacCannell (1976) refers to this as the nostalgic yearnings on behalf of some tourists for the imagined ‘simplicity’ and tranquillity of a pre-modern way of life. By travelling to Ireland on holiday, and seeking out their imagined view of Ireland, the participants became temporarily dislocated from their lives back home.

Upon encountering their idealised view of Ireland, they took photographs to prove it exists. The participants’ photographs, therefore, become enduring relics that further legitimise ‘their Ireland’ as an enchanting place, where enchanting people live, and where one can still experience an enchanting way of life. Moreover, this thesis argues that when photographs are inscribed with specific meanings, they become devices or tools through which place meaning or sense of place can be explored. Figure 7.1 draws attention to a complex triangulation of encounters between producers, tourists, locals and places, in which images and imagery play a key role in the tourists’ sense-making process. In conclusion, to say that tourists simply take photographs of what they have already consumed in image form is to consign tourists taking photographs to a mere consumption activity. Consigning tourist photography to a mere consumption activity overlooks the fact that when tourists engage with photography, they, in effect, become directors and editors in their own production of place.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.0 Introduction

The aim of this thesis was to investigate how tourists consume, and thereby make sense of places they visit through practicing photography as part of being a tourist. In addressing this aim, the research was guided by the following research objectives:

- **Research Objective One:** To examine destination image literature in order to understand the role image plays in the branding of places as tourist destinations.
- **Research Objective Two:** To understand how tourists form certain perceptions about places prior to visiting, and how they make sense of them by being tourists upon visitation.
- **Research Objective Three:** To review sources of influence on Ireland's destination image since independence.
- **Research Objective Four:** To establish how images of Ireland are interpreted by US tourists in the context of their own cognitive construction of Ireland.
- **Research Objective Five:** To compare the photographs taken by US tourists while on holiday in Ireland with their preconceived ideas about Ireland prior to visiting.
- **Research Objective Six:** To investigate how the photographs taken by US tourists function as devices/tools by which their construction of Ireland can be explored.

This chapter considers the ways in which these objectives have been achieved, and reinforces the importance of this study, and its findings in terms of the empirical contributions, epistemological considerations, future research and policy implications, and recommendations it makes.

8.1 Contributions to Literature

The main empirical contributions are chapter specific in line with the research objectives. By addressing **Research Objective One**, this research furthers our understanding of the role image plays in the emotional branding of places. Images, it is argued, form a key part of a destination's brand architecture as they communicate the destination's brand values. Images also act as portals through which tourists and potential tourists engage vicariously with the destination's brand values. In doing so, this thesis suggests, they also become active agents in their own enchantment with place, as evidenced by the empirical findings. Ireland's brand values engender rich emotional meanings, and have become a source of conversation for US tourists who wish to visit Ireland. Accordingly, Ireland's destination brand has soul (Copeland, 2011), and connects with US tourists because it is "saturated with emotions" (Urry, 2007). In this context, Ireland can be described as an emotional brand (Gobé, 2010). Destinations benefit from having a clear understanding of how the images they use in marketing are interpreted by tourists and potential tourists. The methodologies used in this research provide a context for investigating how tourists perceive destination images.

Through the process of interpreting Ireland's brand values, US tourists start to imagine or form perceptions about what the destination might be like (**Research Objective Two**). The US tourists in this study interpreted information about Ireland from a

variety of sources (organic and induced) that shaped Ireland's destination image for them. Organic images proved to be a more fertile source of imagery through which the participants became 'seduced' by Ireland. In some cases, they formed naïve images of Ireland based on films they had seen or stories they had read about Ireland. Indeed, some of them formed stereotypical images of Ireland, and what Irish people might be like by watching films about Ireland. The empirical findings show that these stereotypical images remain with some tourists upon visitation, and do not reduce in intensity as previously thought (Mishler, 1965; Crompton, 1979; Fakeye and Crompton, 1991; Alhemound and Armstrong, 1996; Selby and Morgan, 1996; MacKay and Fesenmaier, 1997). Similarly, for some tourists they do not become more nuanced (Prentice and Andersen, 2003). In fact, it appears that some tourists seek out opportunities to capture photographic images that conform to their pre-visitation stereotypical images of hosts. The VEP data compiled here attests to this in abundance.

In addressing **Research Objective Three** this thesis reviewed various organic and induced sources of influence on Ireland's destination image. Ireland's romanticised image has evolved over time, as highlighted by the secondary research. Historically this view of Ireland was influenced by a 19th century romantic tradition of celebrating Ireland's unspoilt natural beauty. Once Ireland achieved independence from Great Britain this view of Ireland continued to be sponsored by the Irish government in its desire to promote Irish values. The findings show that these values have become reinforced in contemporary organic imagery, used in the USA to sell products as varied, as, for example, Coke and cereal. Over time, organic images produced in films, television and advertising have become markers of Irish identity in the USA that reflect Ireland's destination values. These values are also echoed in photographs which have been used to market Ireland throughout the three ages of branding as identified by

Tourism Ireland. The secondary research indicates that Ireland's destination values are embedded within an emotionally charged tapestry of 19th century romanticism, which continued to be validated by Irish writers, poets, playwrights and artists. Over time, these images have become a source of enchantment for tourists who encounter them, as well as a way in which they come to know and imagine Irish people.

In seeking answers to **Research Objective Four**, this research sheds new light on the types of induced images US tourists perceive as being truly representative or indicative of Ireland, as opposed to induced images of Ireland that they describe as "it could be anywhere" or 'placeless'. Consequently, the findings from Research Objective Four assist in identifying types of images that resonate on an emotional level with potential US tourists because they are more closely aligned with their pre-conceived ideas about Ireland. For example, the findings uncovered that Hollywood films such as *The Quiet Man* are a key source which US tourists draw from to imagine a romanticised view of Ireland.

In the context of the previous research on Ireland already mentioned, none of the research to date has focussed in particular on the photographs US tourists take of Ireland while on holiday, such as the approach taken by this study (**Research Objectives Five and Six**). Focusing attention on the photographs tourists take while on holiday has uncovered new insights and behaviours in terms of how tourists personalise and form bonds with the places they visit and the local people who live there (Morgan et al., 2011). Analysis of their photographs strengthens Pritchard and Morgan's (2000) description of tourists' self-fulfilling prophecy regarding seeking out and capturing images that conform to their imagined view of places they visit. In this case, the research asserts that tourists taking photographs is about confirming what they already know or believe about the destination. In this regard, the photographic patterns

of behaviour identified in this research extend outside of Hall's (1997) hermeneutic circle of representation in which induced destination imagery produced by destination marketers plays a more influential role in how tourists make sense of places. Instead, Ireland, as represented in the participants' photographs, is presented as an enchanting place, populated by enchanting people, and where one can still experience an enchanting way of life. Remote rural places along the West of Ireland, along with somewhat stereotypical images of Irish men, become the iconic photographs taken to reflect the participants' Ireland.

The empirical findings suggest that meeting Irish people while on holiday forms a key attraction for US tourists in a way that echoes Salazar's (2010) findings about tourists more generally. The findings further contribute to the work done by Reisinger (1994) in terms of where these interactions between tourists and their local hosts are likely to take place. In the context of Ireland, tourists associated with this research encountered enchanting Irish people in spaces such as pubs, guest houses and in their own homes. This advances Kawasaki's (2011) assertion that enchantment occurs in all manner of places, such as villages and stores. Such encounters afforded the tourists a feeling of becoming part of the scene or becoming part of Ireland. It was during such encounters that their experiences of Ireland moved beyond the realms of organised tourism to what they perceived as a more enchanting or authentic involvement with Ireland as a place.

A key component of the participants' involvement with Ireland centres round tourist/local engagement and the theory of *othering* as defined by Abu-Lughod (1991). This research furthers our understanding of othering by defining it as a process through which tourists reaffirm that their experiences are genuine for them, and based on real people. This research offers unique insights into the photographs tourists take to record their encounters with other people during the holiday experience, as argued by Bosangit

et al. (2012). In the context of this research, the narrations surrounding each of their photographs conform to what Jasinski (2001: 412) describes as the “rhetoric of othering”. Analysis of their photographs adds to our understanding of tourists’ rhetoric, as evidenced by the findings.

The empirical work also uncovered certain unique tourist behaviours, such as assigning names to locals where their true name was not known to them. Naming locals is closely aligned with identity construction (Bosangit, et al.2000) and indicates that the tourists who participate in this behaviour have made a deeper emotional connection with place and the people who live there. Irish people, in the context of Ireland’s destination image, form part of what Echtner and Ritchie (1991: 7) refer to as the “truly unique aura” of the destination. Tourists capture and make sense of a destination’s unique aura by taking photographs while on holiday. This research contributes to our understanding of identity construction in how tourists make sense of Irish men and Irish women.

Bearing this in mind, this research further supports the view that taking photographs is a conscious and deliberate act, whereby the tourist decides what to take and who to place in the frame. Underpinning these ideas is the earlier work carried out by Crouch (2000). He argues that tourists engage with place, and place therefore becomes embodied multi-sensually. The tourist is encircled by place, which prompts physical and emotional connections between them and the place, thereby altering its meaning for them. This research contends that forming emotional connections with places depends heavily on the tourist taking responsibility for their own experience, building on the earlier work done by MacCannell (2002). In other words, tourists become active agents in their own seduction and enchantment with place.

The empirical work draws the reader's attention to what the participants considered to be real or not in terms of their photographs of Ireland. Real is another word for authentic, and authenticity reflects what the participants perceived as enchanting about Ireland. This research argues that authenticity can be further understood by exploring tourists' preconceived ideas, or sense of what the particular destination is about (Jansson, 2002). Consequently, this thesis also argues that tourists take responsibility for interpreting what is authentic for them, or not, as the case may be. The empirical findings support this argument by drawing attention to the self-editing behaviour of the participants regarding what they selected as being truly representative of Ireland from the collection of photographs they took.

Photography has been used in a variety of ways in this thesis to further elucidate how tourists make sense of and become enchanted with places. Keeping this in mind, the reorganisation of Scarles' (2009) Framework of Visuality for Visual Practice presented in this thesis offers new insights into the tourists' sense-making process. Indeed, the way in which tourists become active agents in their own seduction and enchantment with place is a defining contribution this thesis makes to knowledge, and pushes beyond the boundaries of Hall's (1997) hermeneutic circle of representation and Scarles' (2009) Framework of Visuality for Visual Practice. The findings offer an alternative to Scarles' (2009) view that tourists' photographic behaviour can be conceptualised as a series of negotiations and compromises. The cycle of enchantment and meaning proposed by this research suggests that tourists are not willing to compromise regarding what they photograph. Rather, they seek out and photograph their idealised view or place in order to prove it really exists. The next section will discuss the various epistemological considerations arising from this thesis.

8.2 Epistemological Considerations

Crotty (1998) argues that objectively the world exists but it derives its meaning subjectively through people. It is within these parameters that this thesis is investigating how tourists make sense of places by taking photographs. The crux of the argument put forth by this research is that places exist, but they derive their meaning through people, or tourists, in the context of this research. The overarching goal is to use the photographs taken by tourists while on holiday to unpack place meaning and sense-making, and produce a phenomenology of the US participants' experience of Ireland. Chapter Five outlined the theoretical background underpinning the constructivist informed methodologies chosen to address the research aim. In this regard, constructivism adds a valuable dimension to tourism by allowing for new constructions of place to emerge (Pernecky, 2012; Rakić and Chambers, 2012). This investigation into how tourists make sense of places supports the contention by Pernecky (2012) that tourism is constructivism in action. It also lends further support to the argument put forth by Lincoln and Guba (2013) that, in human sciences, objects [places] only exist in the minds of the people [tourists] imagining them.

By adopting a non-dualistic approach to the research, this thesis also supports the view that tourism as an experience cannot be separated from the place in which it takes place. This is because, as argued by Yates et al. (2012), there is an inseparable relationship between people and aspects of their world. This thesis deepens our appreciation for the way in which photographs and photography are fundamental to making sense of the world of the tourist. It does so by anchoring visual methods within a phenomenographical constructivist paradigm, allowing the researcher to infiltrate the tourists' experience of place (Scarles, 2009). The non-dualistic approach to the research also acknowledges that photographs evoke three things of interest to social

scientists particularly well: information, emotion and reflection (Rose, 2007). Bearing this in mind, the participants' photographs present a phenomenology of their experiences of Ireland that serves to further elucidate how they make sense of Ireland. This chapter, therefore, further justifies the contention by Schwandt (1994) that, in a legitimately, everyday sense, we are all constructivists if we subscribe to the belief that the mind is central to the construction of knowledge. Moreover, this thesis lends further credence to the belief that through a constructivist approach to research we can make sense of why "worldly objects, places and people become touristic" (Pernecky, 2012: 1132).

A further epistemological contribution of this research addresses the suitability of visual methods to tourism research, due to the fact that tourism is essentially an image rich discipline, as argued by Burns and Lester (2005). Cameras and the taking of photographs is a ubiquitous phenomenon in tourism. Here, Scarles' (2009) framework is reorganised to include seduction, visitation and legitimising as key stages in a cycle of enchantment and meaning. The model also builds on Scarles' (2009) framework by discussing tourists' photographs of place while the memories associated with them are still intact prior to returning home (Rose, 2003). Focus groups, in particular, facilitate group discussion of the VEP photographs, a heretofore underutilised methodology in tourism research. Previous approaches to VEP as a methodology, at best, were based on one to one interviews between a researcher and the tourist, or the less satisfactory procedure whereby the photographs were interpreted by a researcher alone. Equally, allowing the tourist to tell their own story (Markwell, 2000) about what they photographed and why, addresses concerns posited by Prosser (1998) regarding researcher bias. This research supports the view that, fundamentally, it is the tourist who makes the decision as to what to capture with their camera, and not the researcher

(Loffler, 2004). Rather than in some way controlling or influencing the participants' photographic contributions, the focus groups empowered the participants, and allowed them to express themselves (Ornelas et al., 2009).

Finally, undertaking this research has contributed to the extant literature on place and place-making by providing an opportunity to examine the emotional connections tourists make with place. The phenomenographical approach which informed this study, and visual methods used to collect the empirical data, have resulted in a collection of rich photography-informed narratives. The photographs taken by tourists act as gateways through which the researcher gained access inside the mind of the tourist (Decrop, 2000). The role of the researcher acting as bricoleur, stitching together the tourists' narratives, enabled him to become conversant with how tourists connect emotionally with the world around them, as reflected by Thrift (2008). The research proffers new knowledge regarding how places deliver on the expectations of the tourist based on their own preconceived ideas about place, as outlined by Jansson (2002), or what Wang (1999) defines as "their own interpretation" of authenticity. Percolating throughout this thesis is a search for a better understanding of the ways tourists make sense of place, and is one of the main epistemological contributions of the work.

8.3 Policy Implications

Research that contributes to a better understanding of the nature of tourist encounters with place has benefits and implications for policy makers and practitioners alike. This study has used empirical findings to show how tourists imagine and make sense of places by taking photographs. Thus, there are a number of direct (strategic) and indirect (operational) policy contributions arising from the findings of this research for those charged with marketing places as tourist destinations. These will be discussed in

a hierarchical fashion offering first some policy suggestions for tourism organisations, followed by some suggestions for insuring their implementation within tourist destination place branding and marketing strategies.

Tourism organisations are tasked with constructing and managing a destination's brand image. This research has used empirical findings to show that US tourists still prefer to imagine Ireland as a pre-modern nation. The US participants recorded experiences with their cameras that they had while in Ireland that aligned with their imagined view of what Ireland might be like. Consequently, this research suggests that regardless of how a country is promoted, tourists will seek out and capture photographs that reflect their own imagined view of the destination. In the context of Ireland, which is the focus of this study, the West of Ireland appears to be where the participants encountered their imagined view of Ireland most. This finding is timely in the context of the recent initiative by the Irish Government in the form of the Wild Atlantic Way. This is because the proposed route transects many of the counties within which the participants' photographs were taken. The thesis lends further support to the argument that the West of Ireland is more aligned to how US tourists imagine Ireland. This is largely due to how Ireland's destination image has been constructed in organic sources such as film, plays and literature over time. This part of Ireland is also where high levels of unemployment occur. The West of Ireland is therefore ideally suited to cottage enterprises that tourism thrives upon. An enterprise like the open farms visited by the participants of this research is a case in point. The West of Ireland is rural in nature and dotted with small holdings, such as Paddy's and Fintan's farms. The concept behind the Wild Atlantic Way is to provide tourism offerings along the route to entice tourists to visit the regions. Therefore, tourism enterprises that facilitate US tourists and locals coming together would be a strong attractor for US tourists to visit.

As discussed in this thesis, visual imagery is ubiquitously used to brand destinations and inspire emotions around them. The methodology used in this research whereby tourists' photographs of destinations informed the empirical work could be adopted on a wider scale by state bodies such as Tourism Ireland in an Irish context, or other state bodies at an international level. Social media platforms such as Flickr, Facebook, Pinterest and Vimeo are potential sources of information for tourism organisations regarding what tourists photograph while on holiday. Indeed, the literature tells us that the internet already contributes to how people become enchanted with places (Kawasaki, 2011). Examining the online photographs posted by US tourists may help identify unique destination qualities that resonate with US tourists. This information can be used in more effective marketing campaigns that capitalise on the emotional qualities of the place.

One of the principle challenges for island destinations is access. The findings (Figure 6.3) have identified that the West of Ireland is what US tourists consider to be *Real* Ireland. At the time of writing this thesis, new services from major hubs in the United States have commenced services into Shannon International Airport, albeit on a seasonal basis. Whereas these new routes address some of the issues mentioned above, it still leaves the major operational challenge of trying to extend the season once these services cease to operate in the off season months. A recent positive announcement by Aer Lingus to revert back to providing an all year round, seven days a week direct service between Shannon airport and New York's JFK and Boston's Logan airports commencing in winter 2014, will go some way towards addressing the problem of seasonality. Recently announced quarterly figures by Tourism Ireland show a 14 percent increase in US visitors to Ireland on the same period last year (Tourism Ireland, 2014). These figures indicate continued growth in outbound travel to Ireland from the

USA. The findings arising from the empirical work in this thesis have uncovered some interesting themes for possible marketing image content targeted at attracting American tourists to use these new year round services to the West of Ireland.

At an operational level, this research offers some insights into how tourists encounter and engage with host communities in tourist destination places. At the time this research started, a period of unimagined economic prosperity was drawing to a close in Ireland. There were many benefits to this prosperity in terms of improved infrastructure. However, from a tourism point of view, the fallout from increased employment opportunities in Ireland led to a distinct lack of Irish staff in most of the tourism enterprises around the country. This research has uncovered a desire on behalf of US tourists to engage with Irish people. In particular, it has refocused attention on the atypical Irish man in the form of Paddy. Talking to American tourists in Phase 1 of this research in 2009, it appeared to be a challenge for them to meet or encounter Irish staff at all in the hotels that they stayed in. Whereas it is never going to be possible to reproduce Paddy or more importantly to have men like him come and work in hotels or guest houses, initiatives such as the farm visits organised by Collette Vacations and Brendan Vacations could be built upon to encourage such encounters to take place. In the meantime, as this research reaches its conclusion, more and more Irish people are returning to hospitality as a career choice, as other opportunities contract or disappear altogether. However, tourism still has a somewhat negative image as a career, largely due to the anti-social hours associated with it. Industry partners need to continue to change this mind set by focusing on the dynamic career opportunities tourism provides.

8.4 Limitations of the Research

This thesis presents a rich phenomenography of tourists' construction and consumption of place as represented in the photographs they take while on holiday. The intentional choice of Ireland and the United States of America as the focus of the research is a limitation in itself. A different source market, that is less connected culturally and historically with Ireland, might further this research by determining if the findings reported here transcend other jurisdictions.

In the context of the methods used in this research, time and financial resources were a further limitation, in that it reduced the number of potential participants that the researcher could talk to. A larger scaled research project that was adequately funded would facilitate interviewing tourists at a variety of locations within the United States, similar to Presbensen (2007) whose research focused on pre-visitation destination images of Norway by surveying tourists in Nice, France.

The essence of phenomenography based research is heavily dependent on talking to people and getting them to talk to you. Whereas using in-depth interviews and focus groups to collect the data somewhat limited the size of the sample, the depth of discussion achieved using these methods generated rich data that other forms of data collection may have missed. Therefore, the methodology chosen whereby in-depth interviews and focus groups were used to discuss the photographs submitted by the participants provided the right context and space in which to do so. However, future research could use social media to share the VEP photographs in advance of the focus groups taking place. This would allow more time for discussion of the photographs in the focus groups.

The final limitation encountered in the research relates to the question of access to the target group, US tourists. As most of the participants flew into and out of Dublin airport, this made it harder to meet with them to conduct the post-visitation interviews and focus groups prior to their returning home. However, considering these limitations, the overarching research aim and associated objectives have been achieved in the context of this research.

8.5 Future Research

This thesis undertook a theoretical investigation of place and place-making by focusing on tourists' sense of place as depicted in the photographs they take while on holiday. While it did so in the context of US tourists visiting Ireland, its findings suggest significant applications for the study of tourist photography elsewhere. For example, this research was based on a tiny destination called Ireland. If applied to a larger destination, the methods and approach adopted by this thesis may unearth deeper understanding of the ways in which enchantment forms part of a destination's brand image. Equally, there is scope for future research into the dynamics and impact photography plays in how different cultures make sense of places. Future ethnographic research might explore this.

In an ever increasing era of mobility and engagement with the world through the application of technology, future research might address how improved camera phones and social media functions as a virtual place in which people construct and make sense of their world and define their own identity.

In an Irish context there are a number of potential areas for future research. Firstly, whereas this research uncovered certain unique behaviours regarding how the participants made sense of Irish men and Irish women, it did not differentiate between

male and female participants' construction of place. All of these gender related issues warrant further study in their own right.

Secondly, there was no attempt made to classify responses from participants based on age, race or other demographic bases. Future research could focus on the different constructs of place for different segments that would be invaluable for marketers as they position a destination brand to a targeted segment. The study could also be applied to other destinations and different source markets.

Thirdly, although the sample associated with this research contained a number of independent travellers as well as organised tours, they were not in sufficient numbers to be considered a homogenous group in their own right. Future research could incorporate a wider sample and increased sample size to track if having one's own transport opens up possibilities for more frequent and less formalised tourist/local contact, as compared to tourists as part of an organised tour.

Finally, tourism literature is beginning to reflect an increased respect for using visual methods in tourism research publications (Rakić and Chambers, 2012). However, visual methods are still in their infancy. This is not to discredit the wealth of research produced by our quantitative colleagues. Therefore, future research can adapt photo-ethnography in the form of focus groups and photographs as used in this research to any number of scenarios where the experiences of the participants are under investigation.

8.6 Concluding Remarks and Reflexive Epilogue

The final chapter of this thesis discussed the main contributions to literature, epistemological considerations and implications for policy. It also discussed the limitations of the research and identified areas for future enquiry. As a piece of

research the rationale for the approach adopted to place and place-making in this thesis is based on Markwell's (1997) conceptualisation of the stereotypical image of a tourist, weighed down by cameras, lenses, tripods and other photographic equipment. As an image it is indicative of the symbiotic relationship between tourists, their travel experiences and photographs. He argues that to be a tourist in essence also means to be a photographer.

Tourism, as an experience, is rich in imagery, as argued by Burns and Lester (2005). Places are constructed through images that are either engineered by those tasked with promoting tourist destinations, or evolve organically from a variety of sources outside the control of destination marketers. This research has drawn attention to the usefulness of such images in contributing to and informing tourist pre-conceived notions of tourist destination places. Indeed, the findings suggest that films play a pivotal role, as reflected in O'Connor et al. (2010) in constructing Ireland's organic image for US tourists. This is because images from organic sources provide a more credible representation of place (Gartner, 1993), as opposed to induced image formation agents which Quinn (1994) describes as manufactured images.

This thesis has achieved its aim *to investigate how tourists consume and thereby make sense of the places they visit through practicing photography as part of 'being a tourist'*, as outlined in Chapter One, by applying visual methods. It offers opportunities to conceptualise place and place-making through the camera lens of the tourists who visit tourist destination places on holiday. Such an approach has yielded rich data that allows access into the mind of the tourist, thus contributing to our understanding of their emotional connections with place. The photographs from the empirical work in this thesis move beyond the traditional practice of using selected quotations cited within the work to support identified themes. Visual references in the

form of photographs further elucidate the emotional attachments tourists form with tourist destination brands, and prove useful tools to discuss tourists' experiences of place.

At this juncture, as an epilogue to the research it seems appropriate to offer some personal reflections. At the outset it is important to state that without my interest in US tourists this research would never have been completed. The source of my interest in the research topic has already been discussed in Chapter Five. Suffice it to say, the USA as a place and American culture first became implanted in my sub-consciousness from listening to stories about the USA from my mother, who lived in New York for a number of years in the 1950s. A diet of US popular culture growing up in the form of film and television programmes served to sustain my interest in the US until I finally made my first visit to the 'United States of America' at the age of nineteen. In the intervening years I have made countless trips to the USA including as stated previously, a brief 'sojourn' living and working in the country in the early 1990s. All of these experiences shaped my interest in why US tourists visit Ireland and how they make sense of Ireland as a place. In terms of carrying out the research presented in this thesis, my aforementioned close connection with the USA enabled me to connect with my US participants and quickly build a rapport with them. This made the process of discussing their photographs of Ireland a much more relaxed and shared experience for me and for them.

The overall approach taken to the research was influenced by my own ontological perspective regarding the nature of reality; that there is one reality but several different ways of interpreting it. Hence, in the context of this thesis I believe that there is only

one Ireland but how tourists interpret Ireland as a place is personal to them as individuals. Studying how US tourists interpret and make sense of Ireland as is the focus of this thesis has produced a rich phenomenology of their individual tourist experiences of Ireland. As stated in Chapter Four, Ireland's destination image in the USA and how US tourists make sense of Ireland as a place has not been the focus of previous research. The primacy of this research lies in its contribution to the academic community and policy makers due to the transferability of its key findings, and the cycle of enchantment and meaning (Figure 7.1) it proposes. However, the true value of the cycle of enchantment and meaning proposed in this thesis will only come into view through its assimilation into the academic community, and by being applied to other jurisdictions.

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APPENDIX 1

SCREENER FOR IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS JFK AIRPORT

Impressions and expectations of Ireland as a destination

Qualitative Research Objectives

- Explore why the respondent picked Ireland as a destination
- Discuss what images (impressions) the respondent has of Ireland as a destination
- What informs these images?
- Using projective techniques (images from Fáilte Ireland library), explore what these images conjure up about Ireland in the mind of the respondent
- Briefly discuss the respondent's itinerary while in Ireland (what do they plan to see, where do they plan to go and why)

Screening Criteria

- Age - must be over 18
- Must be making their first trip to Ireland
- Must be flying home to the United States from Shannon Airport
- Balance between males and females
- Balance between tour groups and independent travellers
- Must be willing to be interviewed at JFK, and again at Shannon International Airport
- Must be willing to share their own holiday photographs and discuss them during post-visitation interview at Shannon
- Must **not be** visiting family in Ireland

APPENDIX TWO

Security Clearance ID Badge JFK International Airport



APPENDIX 3

PILOT STUDY PHOTO-ELICITATION PHOTOGRAPHS





3. What do the following images say to you about Ireland?

4. Where are you planning to visit while in Ireland?

5. What influenced you in choosing these particular parts of Ireland?

Bring interview to a close.

(Thank you for participating in this interview, your name will not appear in the research and all the information will be kept strictly confidential)

Offer help to the respondent regarding the following;

- Arrival at Shannon and car hire pick-up
- Go over map and discuss their itinerary - helpful tips, etc.

APPENDIX 5



ETHICS CONSENT FORM

Researcher's Name: SEAN T. RUANE	Title: Mr.																
Faculty/School/Department: COLLEGE OF ARTS AND TOURISM/ HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT AND TOURISM/TOURISM																	
Title of Study: How is Ireland Imagined in the Minds of American Tourists?																	
To be completed by the: INTERVIEWEE subject/patient/volunteer/informant/interviewee/parent/guardian (delete as necessary)																	
<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%;">3.1 Have you been fully informed/read the information sheet about this study?</td> <td style="width: 30%; text-align: right;">YES/NO</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3.2 Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study?</td> <td style="text-align: right;">YES/NO</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3.3. Have you received satisfactory answers to all your questions?</td> <td style="text-align: right;">YES/NO</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3.4 Have you received enough information about this study and any associated health and Safety implications if applicable?</td> <td style="text-align: right;">YES/NO</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3.5 Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from this study?</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at any time • without giving a reason for withdrawing • without affecting your future relationship with the Institute </td> <td style="text-align: right; vertical-align: bottom;">YES/NO</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3.6 Do you agree to take part in this study, the results of which are likely to be published?</td> <td style="text-align: right;">YES/NO</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3.7 Have you been informed that this consent form shall be kept in the confidence of the researcher?</td> <td style="text-align: right;">YES/NO</td> </tr> </table>		3.1 Have you been fully informed/read the information sheet about this study?	YES/NO	3.2 Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study?	YES/NO	3.3. Have you received satisfactory answers to all your questions?	YES/NO	3.4 Have you received enough information about this study and any associated health and Safety implications if applicable?	YES/NO	3.5 Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from this study?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at any time • without giving a reason for withdrawing • without affecting your future relationship with the Institute 	YES/NO	3.6 Do you agree to take part in this study, the results of which are likely to be published?	YES/NO	3.7 Have you been informed that this consent form shall be kept in the confidence of the researcher?	YES/NO
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Signed _____	Date _____																
Name in Block Letters _____																	
Signature of Researcher _____	Date _____																

Please note:

- For persons under 18 years of age the consent of the parents or guardians must be obtained or an explanation given to the Research Ethics Committee and the assent of the child/young person should be obtained to the degree possible dependent on the age of the child/young person. **Please complete the Consent Form (section 4) for Research Involving 'Less Powerful' Subjects or Those under 18 Yrs.**
- In some studies, witnessed consent may be appropriate.
- The researcher concerned must sign the consent form after having explained the project to the subject, and after having answered his/her questions about the project

APPENDIX 6

PHOTO-ELICITATION PHOTOGRAPHS PRE-VISITATION IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW



Kerry - Self Catering Cottage - Wine Strand, Ballyferriter



Galway – Spiddal - Cloch Na Scith



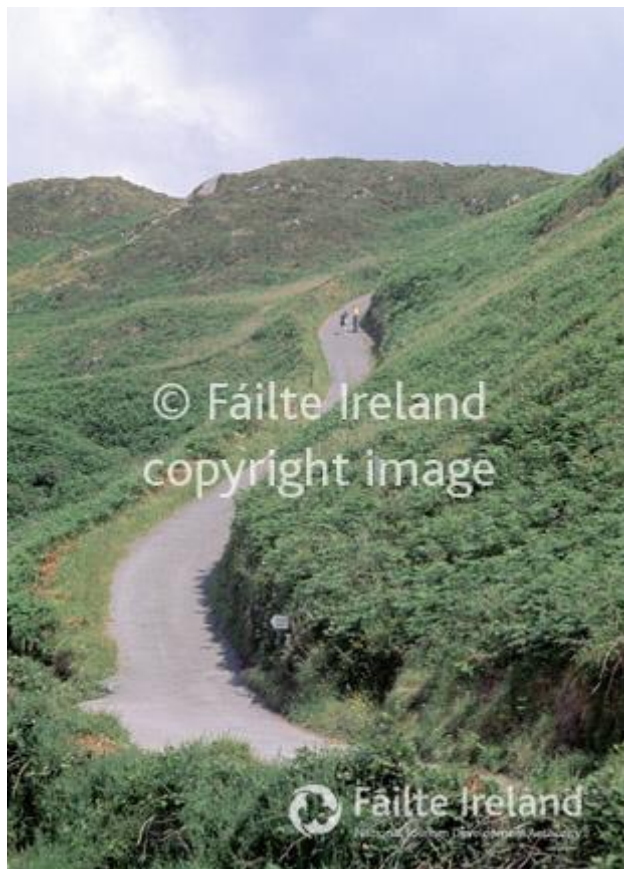
Carlow - Mount Leinster



Clare - Poulnabrone Dolmen – Burren - Sunset



Cavan - Bawnboy Shopfront



Cork - Cape Clear Island - General View



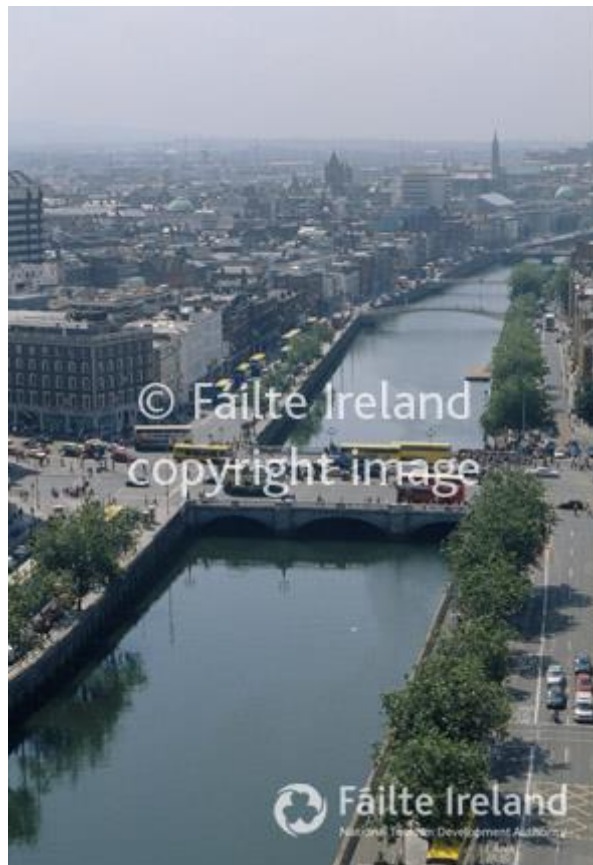
Cork - Tourist Office, Skibbereen



Dublin - Grafton Street



Dublin - O'Connell Bridge



Aerial View of the River Liffey in Dublin



Galway - The Twelve Bens - Connemara



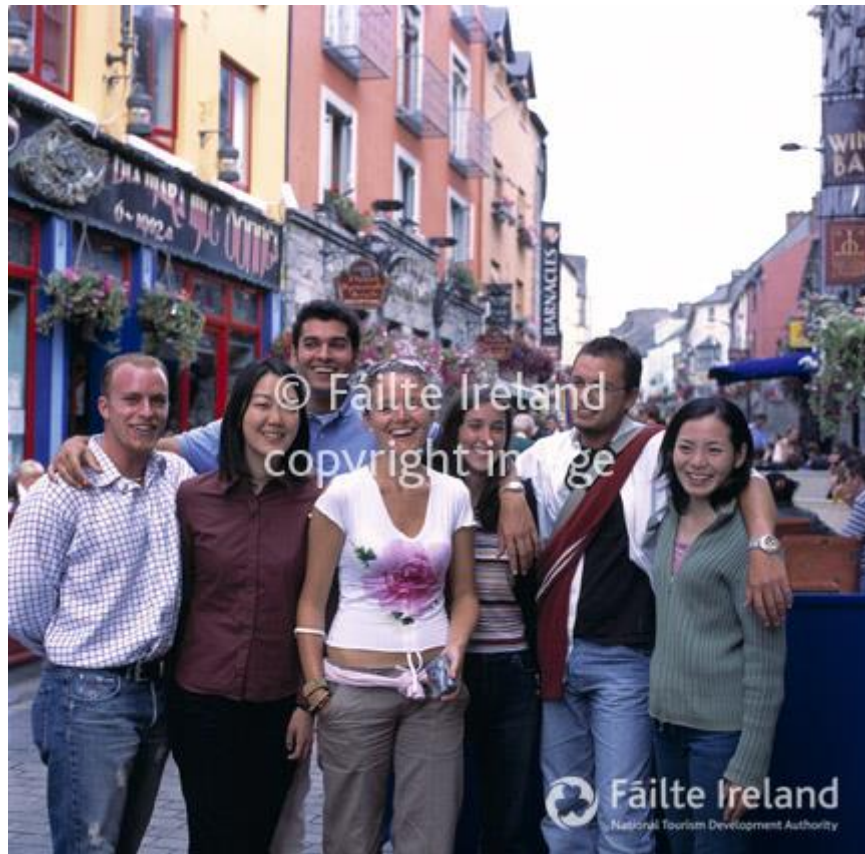
Monaghan - The High Cross in Clones



Arthur's Bar - Amiens St - Service



Donegal - The Wee Bar interior - Malin Head



Galway – Students - Galway City

APPENDIX 7

POST-VISITATION IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

(SNN AND DUB AIRPORTS)

Experienced images of Ireland as a destination and how they compare with expectations?

Time of interview: _____

Date: _____/_____/2009

Place: _____

Interviewer: Sean T. Ruane

Interviewee: _____

Return date: _____

Return flight no: _____

Give business card for email address: _____

Email address: _____

Questions:

1. How was your trip to Ireland?
 - a. Feelings as you landed in Shannon?
 - b. What was your first impression?
 - c. Were you seated in a window seat on the plane and if so what did Ireland look like from the air as you came in to land?

2. Where did you go?
 - a. Places visited?

3. Can we look at some of your photographs?
 - a. Why did you take these pictures?
 - b. If you were to pick one that sums up Ireland for you as an image, which one would that be?
 - c. How did your experience of Ireland compare with pictures you may have seen of Ireland before you travelled to Ireland?

4. What was the highlight of your visit to Ireland?
 - a. Of all the places you visited in Ireland, which place looked and felt most like what you expected Ireland to be like and why?
 - b. Which place felt the least like what you expected Ireland to be like and why?

5. Was Ireland as you expected it to be, or was it different, and if so in what way was it different?

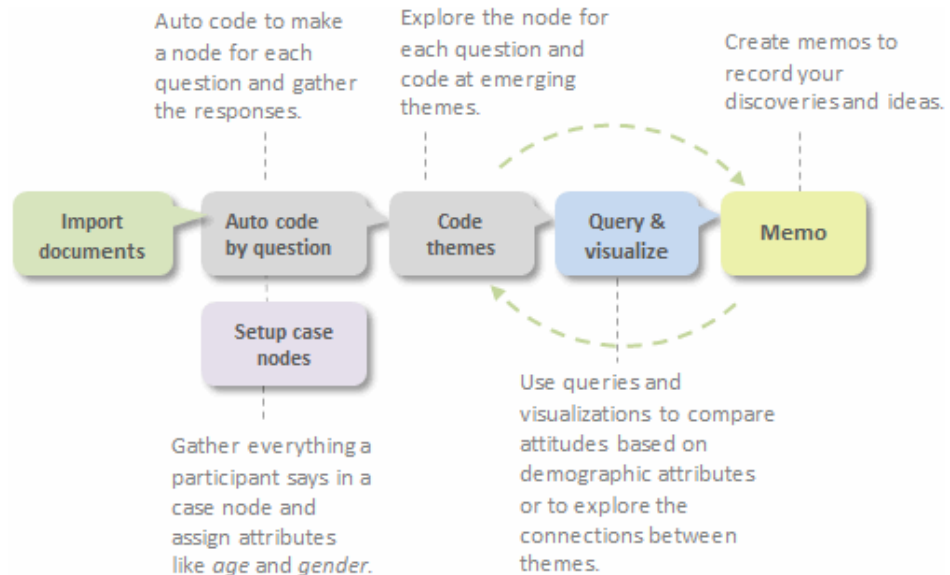
Bring interview to a close.

(Thank you for participating in this interview, your name will not appear in the research and all the information will be kept strictly confidential)

APPENDIX 8

THE NVIVO PROCESS

Source: NVIVO [online] available from http://help-nv10.qsrinternational.com/desktop/concepts/Understand_the_key_concepts.htm



Sources:

In NVIVO, sources include the materials you want to analyse, and your ideas about them. Here are some examples of the sources you might work with in your project.

Coding and nodes:

You code your sources to gather material about a topic and store it in a container called a node.

Node classifications (to manage demographic attributes for case coding)

In the course of your research, you may want to make comparisons based on:

- The demographic attributes of your participants (for example, you may want to compare attitudes based on *gender* or *age*).

- The attributes of places, organisations or other entities (for example, you could compare how issues are handled in *large* and *small* schools).

To make these kinds of comparisons, you need to set up node classifications. For example, to gather demographic information about interview participants

The image shows a three-step process for classifying nodes in a software application:

- Node Classifications:** A tree view showing a 'Person' node under a 'Name' category. Below it are other categories: 'Age Group', 'Gender', and 'Community'.
- Places and People:** A list of nodes: Barbara, Charles, Dorothy, Helen, and Ken. A dropdown menu is open over the list, showing 'Person' as the selected classification.
- Person Table:** A table displaying the demographic data for the classified nodes.

	B: Age Group	C: Gender	F: Community
1: Barbara	40 - 49	female	Straits
2: Charles	50 - 59	male	Harkers Island
3: Dorothy	70 - 79	female	Marshallberg
4: Helen	30 - 39	female	Williston
5: Ken	30 - 39	male	Cedar Island

Classify the nodes as 'person'

APPENDIX 9

SAMPLE FOCUS GROUP TRANSCRIPT

	Timespan	Content	Speaker
1		We can give you our email too should you have questions.	Female
2		We already did you dork.	Female
3		You should have them on the...	S
4		Oh that's right...wow.	Female
5		She is just filling out paperwork and not even reading it.	Male
6		No...never read the fine print.	Female
7		So are you recording now.	Female
8		We are recording now ok this is your photograph I think? What I want you to do is tell me why you picked that photograph as being truly representative of Ireland as you experienced it.	S
9		Well Liz kept pointing out thatched cottages I thought this one was in really good shape and especially on the inside which you can't see, we had tea and scones in there and it was very much still a working house which compared to everything we saw city wise you know you don't see this. Plus my sister and I we have a farm back home so I kinda felt akin to this kinda of scenery. So it is very much the Irish reflection of what we have back home.	Female
10		Ok something I meant, what we should have started off with is we will just go around the room everybody tell me what did you think Ireland was going to be like before you got here. I am assuming that none of ye have been here before have ye? So you are planning your trip to Ireland what did ye think the country was going to be like before you got here in any order?	S
11		Rainy...friendly which everybody has been friendly and accommodating and wholesome I suppose because from what I have heard everyone is very much family orientated and into their	Female

culture so I guess it was kinda of what I expected, plus beautiful. You know the landscapes are just amazing here.

- 12 Well yes many movies but am books, movies, College, friends who had been over here so I guess a bunch of different things. Female
- 13 And you mentioned a unique word that hasn't been used so far this summer, 'wholesome' as a way of describing Ireland, can you tell me a bit more about what you mean by that. S
- 14 Am well I guess from everything that I understood people here aside from being friendly seems like in the United States everyone is getting a divorce or you know, the kids are separated from their families and from what I have seen around here little kids are very much with the parents and they are with them doing things you know out in the towns or you know at a market or a playhouse you know not a playhouse a playground and it seems like it's just a very different family structure here. I think that there is more emphasis on valuing time with people that you care about and that that's more important than I guess independence which I think is valued very much in the United States, finding who you are as opposed to finding who you are with people that matter to you. So I think that that is something that is valued here. Female
- 15 Anybody else about what ye expected Ireland to be like before ye got here. S
- 16 I thought about all the folklore. I always remember here stories when I was a little kid about leprechauns, who sounds totally cheesy, but I got a book when I was in...how old was I maybe like 5th grade and it was on a lot of like Irish folklore stories and I thought it was really cool so from that age I just kinda thought it was neat how you guys had those stories over here cos in American culture you know we have stories but nothing as cool as a leprechaun that has a pot of gold I mean. Jordan and I when we were little kids we actually chased after a rainbow thinking that was real that we could do it, and they asked us where we were going and we told them we were going to find a pot of gold, so I mean I believed it when I read it, you know I thought that Female 2

that might be true so am I guess I just thought that that was really cool. That is what I expected before I got here.

- 17 Well I always wanted to come to Ireland because my grandparents were born here and my Dad made the trip with his brothers back in the 70s and I had seen some of the photographs at that time and I didn't really know if I would ever make it you know we decided that it was on my bucket list (laughs) and that that is what we had better do and am I did expect the beauty but until you actually see it first-hand. I mean the first photo that I took was as the plane was coming in, I probably should have picked that as one am because my face pressed to the window of the plane shooting pictures out at just...we came over the West coast of course and just that patchwork (everyone ah em) just to me was amazing and am I like the small towns you know that there are larger cities nothing as large as NY city, not that that's where I am from but I live nearby there am but I love going through all the little towns and I love the colourful buildings and that is kinda of what I had anticipated, and for me the scenery and as you mentioned the friendliness of the people. A lot of my friends have been to Ireland before they had told me you know it was amazing. I have not heard of one person that has ever come to this country that has come home and said gee I wouldn't ever go there again...I didn't really have a good time. Every person just said they had the most wonderful time. Female 3
- 18 We should have invited ourselves over for tea and crumpets. Female 2
- 19 Fantastic, and yourself what did you think Ireland was going to be like. S
- 20 I did think it was going to be very very green but I am even surprised more at the lushness of it and the flowers and everything and I think that again I grew up with lots of family stories and am I wanted to come back and bring my brother and I here. female 4
- 21 Was your Mom originally from Ireland? S
- 22 Her grandparents and I think we have aunts and cousins that comes over quite a bit just to kinda Female 4

trace that family history and all of that.

- 23 Yourself, what did you think Ireland was going to be like? S
- 24 Pretty much like everyone else as said I talked to someone who came here 20 years ago and he biked for 5 weeks through all of Ireland so I was expecting the rolling green hills am I was surprised I didn't see it until we got left of Cork really, Dublin is probably my least favourite place so far cos it just reminds me of downtown Boston cos we have a lot of that culture but am much to her point you really can't explain how something looks until you see it and these pictures don't even come close to doing it justice to how great something looks and then when you are standing there looking at the feeling you get is just beyond words so I guess it meets all my expectations in that it surpasses them you can't really explain. Male 1
- 25 Growing up in India I used to hear about the Emerald Isles and how beautiful and green and lush it was and later on as I read more about Ireland and the mystical aspects of it am that drew me to this country and everything that I have seen is everything I imagined and more ah to me the greenery the lushness, the water am is very peaceful and calm and beautiful, the people are lovely very friendly what I had heard about them and that has been proven to be true am the simple life am the cottages the tea houses the families make a business out of taking care of the tourists, feeding them and am the simplicity of that life appeals to me and am of course the flowers, I love the flowers, the gardens the greenery, everything. It's been a wonderful experience. Female 5
- 26 Ok we will revert back to the photographs so we will go to the next one and see what pops up. S
- 27 What part? S
- 28 I don't know, they were Scotch/Irish I am not exactly sure and our great grandma never got to telling us before she passed away so I am not exactly sure but I do know we are about 25 per cent Irish. So we did hear stories of it, it wasn't as many as we probably could have had everyone had everyone been living. Female 1 and 2

- 29 Loved the Leprechaun story by the way, that's one of my favourites. Chasing after the rainbow. S
- 30 Yeah we were we had buckets and everything. Female 1 and 2
- 31 I'd like to add something else. Female 5
- 32 Sure. S
- 33 Am for me the history of this country has always been very fascinating? From I guess the druids were here too and the Celtics and then the Vikings and then the arrival of Christianity the whole thing has been and yet the people and the county have maintained the old culture and traditions and yet become modern as well and the blend of the two I think is fascinating as well. Female 5
- 34 Ok good we have a lovely wheelbarrow up there that doesn't look half as nice up there as it does down here. I don't know what it is about the projector but they seem to alter the colours. S
- 35 I chose this because Ireland is such a work I guess it is an emphasised country where hard work pays I guess so I thought the wheelbarrow has probably been with this country for a long time especially with farming but the flowers also symbolises something...it pays off you know and I thought putting them together kinda show cased that, you that they can work together. Female 1
- 36 As we are going through the photographs and even if it's not your photograph and you see something that you would like to comment on please do, jump in and make the comment. S
- 37 Well specifically in regards to Fintan's farm it seems like he has a very nice set up there and he said that he is very much small business and organic and he is very much staying with how it was before, he doesn't want to go commercial or anything like that so I thought that shows that it is special and you know it should be treated with respect. Female 1
- 38 I have a similar picture probably right next to this of a boot it's like nothing goes to waste don't dump the boot I will make a pot out of it. Male 1 (Jim)
- 39 Yes! That's Fintan and Ted and Ted isn't even trained and he is a very new dog and he was Female 1

running around and he knew exactly what to do with all of the sheep and everything, but more so I guess that everyone was saying that these dogs are one person dogs and you could tell while he was giving us his speech he kept fiddling with was it the stick or the walking stick that he had, and the dog knew exactly what he was going to be doing and he would move with him and kinda protect him from us cos we are intimidating as you know a huge group comes in and it is just him in the centre and the dog kinda wanted to protect him and I feel like when you are out in the middle of essentially a rural area you kinda of need that and I thought with the dog providing that and then Fintan being such a strong character I guess for his family and then also for his business it was kinda I don't know just a really good photo cos it showed them kinda like I guess specifically for the dog he really cared for him and that they had a connection.

- 40 The bottom is crème de menthe, the middle is baileys and the top is brandy. Female 1
- 41 So it is kinda interesting that none of it really...but it does represent your guy's country in the sense of the flag and the drinking. Female 2
- 42 Haven't had a hangover the entire time we have been here including this night so I don't know what it is with the alcohol here whether it is cleaner or just more high quality (lots of laughing in the group) but that night specifically we did drink quite a bit. Female 1
- 43 So ye are saying ye haven't had a hang... S
- 44 Had not. Female 1 and 2
- 45 I thought ye were saying ye have had a hangover since ye got here. S
- 46 No, no have not had one and that night specifically we took that shot and then we took another mini Guinness. Female 1
- 47 And we also had the poteen. Female 2
- 48 And then we also had beer and wine and then we Female 1

	went out afterwards and had two Guinness's and a hot whiskey.	
49	So I mean we should have probably not felt great the next day.	Female 2
50	But we felt great!	Female 1
51	It's probably cos of the Irish flag shot to relate it back to your research.	Female 2
52	So I don't know if you call it magic.	Female 1
53	We'll call it the miracle shot!	Female 2
54	Well if I had consumed all those things in one evening I would certainly have a hangover the following day.	S
55	Liz kept asking us if we felt fine and we were wonderful.	Female 2
56	I have had one of those and they look better than they taste.	S
57	I thought they looked pretty good.	Female 1
58	I thought they tasted good.	Female 2
59	I have had way worse.	Female 1
60	The brandy does burn but I like it and I have a sore throat right now think because of the weather, so I thought it felt good (lots of group laughter).	Female 2
61	Oh yeah.	Female 2
62	I have to hear the story behind this I have never even seen such a thing.	S
63	Well here is the reason why I really like this cos the night after when we took this photo a man that I met in a hotel and he was really intelligent Jordan actually spoke to him the next morning and she understood what I meant, he was an older gentleman, maybe in his 70s and he spoke very well.	Female 2
64	Great orator.	Female 1
65	Right and he just had a really great accent and he was very well put together, he probably was	female 2

wealthy I would assume, but he told me the story from when he was a little kid and it was about the Aran Islands cos I mentioned that we weren't going to go because of the weather and everything. And he told me the story about on the Aran islands they believe in folklore very much and that the fairy trees and everything is a big part of it, but he also mentioned to me that they believed so much in it that there was a superstition that the fairies would take your son if you had them over there so they would dress them up until age 4 in girls' clothing and he was telling me about that it wasn't until after that point that they were called a changeling, that they would change into a boy because they were old enough that they wouldn't be taken away by the fairies so when I saw this tree and Liz said it was a fairy tree and people tie things to it and then you can make a wish and the fairies will grant it I thought it was interesting, cos the night before I had heard so much about the fairies.

- | | | |
|----|---|----------|
| 66 | It's called a fairy rag tree. | Liz TD |
| 67 | So I thought that was interesting cos the night before I had heard so much about fairies. That man though that is a perfect example of her and I were completely separate the entire night but we started together and I ended up with a couple that was local from it was right by the Connemara coast so right in Connemara, and she ended up with people outside of Dublin but we were having very separate conversations they bought her a drink and the couple bought me a drink, it's just that everyone in this country. | Female 2 |
| 68 | If you show interest and if you are nice then everybody is very welcoming. | Female 1 |
| 69 | They want to talk to you and find out about you and you want to talk to them and find out it's a change of information I don't know how to explain it. | Female 2 |
| 70 | A meeting of the minds? | S |
| 71 | Yes, yes very much so and it's just valued in this country. | Female 2 |
| 72 | I might even go deeper than that, everybody has got the inner child that is curious about things | Female 1 |

- when you meet someone from some place you have never been before you always want to learn more so as long as they are friendly then why not.
- 73 I do think it is more in this country though, you wouldn't see this with everyone. Female 2
- 74 Not in Chicago, really! (laughs) Male 1
- 75 No you would see a lot of other things. Female 1
- 76 No unless they had other things in mind. Female 2
- 77 An ulterior motive. S
- 78 Right. Female 1
- 79 Ok, we had two pictures of Kylemore so I don't know who this belongs to. S
- 80 This one's mine am... I just thought this was really cool cos it shows this two really fascinating things in one photo, not only the view and you know you have like the mountains in the background but then it also shows you know right next to the mountain and below it is this huge monstrosity it's in the middle of nowhere like where did this come from how did they build it. It was just really neat to see it right next to that because there is no evidence of industry in the area at all beside that. And I just thought it was really neat and the lake or the pond was very pretty next to it. I don't know any little girl that hasn't wanted to live in a castle; I thought that was one that I would like to live in. Female 1
- 81 I remember talking to her when we were walking around, and you can see the high wall there, and I couldn't believe that they had put something, am when you think about this when structures date back so far cos you have to think about all the time and all the people that were involved in this, and it's not only dragging the rocks over to build this creation, it's actually forming, carving them, I mean the amount of time and sweat and everything that just went into this place it is just remarkable to think that it was capable of being created back then. Female 2
- 82 This is mine this was the am horse drawn carriage Muckross so this is when we took the nice little pony ride through the national park that was there Male 1

expecting from Ireland and I am so happy I did it cos it showed me what traditional Ireland was like and what my great grandparents probably did.

- 89 They (the band) have been together since 1997 too so it's kinda like going back and saying that nothing's really like short here, everything is kinda put together and valued you know. Female 1
- 90 It's almost like they have other jobs, they are teachers. Male 1
- 91 That one is a mathematician, that one is a music teacher and that one is a carpenter, and I picked it right when I walked in. Female 1
- 92 And it goes to show you that they don't do this for money they do it for the love of the music and love of culture, and if they can make a few bucks they are happy, but that's not, it's not their motivation I don't think, I think in the US you see lots of people playing music in the hopes of getting big and it doesn't seem like people care about that as much. Male 1
- 93 Ok this is one that I did am so kinda like what she was saying how it's a mix of the mountains and the scenery as well and I was just standing there looking at this and thinking someone hundreds of years ago or however long ago can't remember exact dates at this point was walking around or going around on their horse and said I am going to build a castle here you know and it's like what's going through their mind and how could they come to these remote locations and think I am going to be a castle there and a church there and a mausoleum there and just be back then to just kinda of escape and even being there today it's almost like being back in that time because you could be just walking the trails and not feel like you are in 2011 and it's a good mix of I think one of the reasons people come here is the history and the other reason scenery and it's a good mix of both of them. So that is why I picked that. Male 1
- 94 I would like to add the romance of it all that a man would build that for his wife I thought was just amazing. Female 5
- 95 Oh yeah. Female 1

96	And then when I read about how they had figured out the watering the running water and the electricity at that time I thought that was fascinating as well along with everything else.	Female 5
97	The ingenuity of it all.	S
98	Beautiful.	Female 5
99	That one is mine and I have been fascinated most all the places we have been by not only the stone walls but hedgerows and just the cordoning off and patterning off of the land and a of course with those clouds and bit of sun, plus the vibrant colours of green that's why I took that picture and I haven't seen my grandparents farm yet but I would imagine that it would look something like that.	Female 3
100	Ok very good.	S
101	I love the sea and the coast and again the greenery along with.	Female 3
102	That's Dingle Bay.	Liz TD
103	Along with the flowers.	Female 3
104	The purple heather here in front.	S
105	Yes I am fascinated with the heather and when we are on own for the week I will be stopping along the way cos it just looks like somebody planned the planting of it and I love the way it mingles in with the rocks and am everywhere we have gone that has just been beautiful and so I took that photo because of the coast line and the green mountains the only thing that I would have liked to have gotten in that picture would be sheep and I would be a happy person (everyone laughs).	Female 3
106	It is the potatoes (laughs).	Female 1
107	And then I saw this it's amazing how you could have green and then purple.	Male 1 Dingle Bay photo comments
108	It wouldn't be real if we were here when it was sunny, that's not how your weather is.	Female 1
109	I wasn't thinking that it would be very sunny.	Female 2
110	We didn't come here to tan.	Female 1

- 111 Oh you would never tan! (laughter) Ok the cliffs. S
- 112 Yeah again the green moss against the stone and the waves frothing against the bottom of the cliffs along with that fog when we were heading up towards the cliffs we really didn't think we would see anything cos they were pretty sucked in with fog and drizzle and what not and we knew St Anthony would come through for us (laughter) but it was fascinating as the girls said we were watching columns of fog just straight up and am I actually have a couple of pictures that when the fog had totally lifted but I liked this one cos it shows the mist as it's clearing and am the green versus the grey. Female 3
- 113 That's a fantastic photograph. Liz TD
- 114 There is a campaign running at the moment in Ireland to have them voted for the 8th wonder of the world. S
- 115 Yip I saw that, you can vote on the web site. Female 2
- 116 You should do it. Female 1
- 117 Ok that's the ones that we have so far I think what I'll do for the photographs you have is we will look at them on your little computer as I don't think we have Wi-Fi for me to download them and then I will upload yours which is the card. S
- 118 I hope I can find them again. Female 6
- 119 Or you can just go to your sent email and just click them up. That would be the easiest way. Female 1 and 2
- 120 Ok thank you girls (silence as she looks for the photographs) This one is the one out of our hotel room the picture right in Galway Bay. Well it was again. Female 6
- 121 It was just beautiful and at night we could have our windows open and we could hear the sea and the breeze coming it and it was just gorgeous and this was to face time and this is what I held out window for my kids at home to see already so. Female 6
- 122 So they were actually watching this online? In real time. S
- 123 Yes they could actually see it. Female 6

124	One thing I liked about that area is in the US especially where I'm from the East coast every inch of ocean or every inch of coast line is a beach and touristy right developed but when I went up there you could sit on the rocks and just listen to nothing but the water, and at night I just went out there in the evening and when the sun was setting I think the second day that we were there and you could look at the lights across the bay so it was absolutely beautiful and serene in comparison to what I am used to in the States.	Jim (comments on Galway bay pic)
125	I want to go back to the other mail ok there we go...	Female 6
126	Yes it is, I am just trying to get used to it, I am not very computer literate so.	Female 6
127	The only reason we were was cos of College.	Female 1
128	I am just a recent adopter of the iPhone to much of the amusement of some of my students they think he has finally moved into the 21st century.	S
129	I'm sure all of the students have smart phones?	Female 1
130	Yes and they are wizzes on them, ok there we go, oh wow.	S
131	That's the sandwiches, oh my God, (lots of laughter in the group) Oh my God we took down those sandwiches like it was our job.	Female 1
132	We were on a boat Sean.	Liz TD
133	This was on the Shannon?	S
134	It was the scones and the simple elegance of the sandwiches and you know and I do a lot of catering and parties and at times at home too and I just thought what a nice arrangement.	Female 6
135	Beautiful.	Female 1
136	And it is very Irish as an Irish person it looks very Irish (lots of laughter in the group).	S
137	It's all about the food (laughs).	Female 6
138	It's a very different kind of sandwich.	Female 3
139	You see we were the ones who were talking about	Female 1

- the shredded cheese it's always shredded I think.
- 140 A big tradition a sandwich in Ireland more so than S
what you would have in the States. Cos like that it
is used for every funeral, birth, marriage the local
community would come together and make tons
of sandwiches and send them over.
- 141 They do that in Iowa, it is a big tradition they do a Female 2
make sandwiches and salad, potato salad, egg
salad.
- 142 Just for a thank you, like they won't make you Female 1
pay it's just that the community wants to help.
- 143 We do donuts (laughter). Jim
- 144 Having people waked at home is also very S
important in rural Ireland. If they die they are
actually kept at home for a few day.
- 145 What was that weird thing they made oh (laughs) Female 1
those little crackers, they looked nice and then
you ha.
- 146 I almost picked the same photo. Jim
- 147 It was like crackers with Cheese with spam. Female 2
- 148 Oh my God oh that's neat. Female 1
- 149 I almost picked the same photo, so many come Jim
for the Irish heritage.
- 150 A fantastic photo. Liz TD
- 151 I had a picture of the flag and I almost had the Jim
same exact one I think so many people come here
because of the heritage.
- 152 He used to be red headed (laughter). Female 1
- 153 He definitely has that Irish look about him. Female 3
- 154 And is there actually a really strong connection S
actually seeing the flag flowing and when you are
here in the country cos I'm sure you have seen
Irish flags all over the States.
- 155 Exactly, yes. Everyone
- 156 But you are here you are in situ, great. S

157	We fly them in the St. Patrick's Day parade in NY city.	Female 3
158	Yeah in Chicago the river is green, we used to have something called the South Side Irish parade, cos a lot of people who came over from Ireland live on the South side.	Female 1
159	It's a very rowdy bunch and the other parade got cancelled.	Female 2
160	No but it wasn't even the people who hold the parade or the people who have always celebrated it, people who come to the parade because they hear how good it is and everybody has a great day yeah everybody else ruined it which sucked at least we got to go once but it was really neat	Female
161	That's your last one	Liz TD
162	That's your last one, ok we will shut your disc down and we have just three more to do cos I know you are under pressure for time	S
163	Liz do you know that I have always told everyone that I have been friends with ever since I started drinking that I would marry an Irish man	Female 1
164	Yeah she has,	Female 2
165	Very important that I said when I started drinking, that is the first time I said was when I was 19 and I was and I had just met Kelly and Claire and we weren't best friends we had just met and I said one day guys I am going to marry and Irish man	Female 1
166	You've got 4 days left	Female 3
167	Ever since then any time that we go out the conversation gets brought up and it's very funny	Female 1
168	But do you know what that can happen, when I was in College I went away to summer school in Spain and one of my real good friends, she was going she left Spain for a week to go to Germany to go visit her relatives and she met a young man there he came over to Spain one weekend and spent the weekend with us and he came back in December back tom Iowa and he married her and they had only spent like 4 days together	Female 6
169	I want to say that I have got 3 people that I know	Female 1

	that that has happened to	
170	I was amazed	Female 6
171	One from France, one from Scotland and also one from England	Female 1
172	Very romantic men here us Irish men,	S
173	We have been asked to go out several times like I said very friendly men in this country	Female 1
174	Now have you numbers or	S
175	Even the bus drivers	Female 3
176	Yes	Female 1
177	My numbers are a little different from what I have seen, 37	Female 7
178	This one here, I will just blow it up there so you can see it that one, ok we'll take that one	S
179	That is a really good photo of a Celtic cross	Female 1
180	And I have a 329 but I don't know what that corresponds to if you can scroll down...I think it is the cottage with the people...but cottage with a lot of colour to it...no...	Female 7
181	We had lunch there	Liz TD
182	The river Shannon was at the start of the week	S
183	No middle	Liz TD
184	Patrick is so friendly, he's just	Female 1
185	Oh that is the stained glass window, that was going to be my other one that I had	Female 7
186	I forgot about the Jameson factory but I got some really great shots there too	Female 2
187	Keep going	Female 7
188	Well you see now I am kinda getting sad cos I am realising that we're	Female 1
189	Going home again	Female 6
190	That just means you will have to come back	S

191	I am really bad I start crying when I am like at the airport and stuff	Female 1
192	Would ye drive girls?	Liz TD
193	Would I drive, yeah we would. We would bring our girlfriends	Female 1
194	I would just call Sean up, we already made a promise to ourselves that we are coming back within two years	Female 2
195	Thank you let's find your pictures ok we will do the house first,	S
196	Oh that's fab now	Liz TD
197	That's the one that I really like, that's great	Female 1
198	I was amazed at the blue sky	Female 7
199	It is not as blue up there as it is	S
200	Am that was one of the first sites that we went to archaeological historical sites and again that represents the whole history of this country and the cross in particular they took the Celtic symbols and the Christian symbols and put it together and how well they blended with the culture here with the people so that there was no animosity at least in my mind and it was very cool and pleasant just the kind of weather I like in Ireland great spot for me. This first of all we had a fabulous lunch on a cool wintery day, it was winter for you but it felt like winter it was a family run business where they just fed all of us, the two busloads of people delicious food very representative of the country, the way they treated us was again representative of the people and the colours of this hut reminded me of all the colours that I see in this country besides the greenery. The vibrant colours of the houses and doorways probably look really good because of the greenery around and I like colour just like flowers and that whole scene is very representative of that.	Female 7
201	Ok good	S
202	This is just a blend of the sky, the clouds the water and the greenery	Female 7
203	And the reeds	Female 3

204	And the clouds almost look like they are coming from the grass	Female 1
205	I got a lot of shots on this cruise to be out on the water and enjoy we just had that time when the sun was out and it was beautiful	Female 7
206	For the entire cruise	Female 1
207	It was tranquil it was peaceful, that's Ireland to me	Female 7
208	Ok thank you so much. Well that is the end of our little odyssey so all you will have waiting for you is a little Irish coffee down in the bar, which I will organise for you know. So you just have to have one more drink	S
209	Oh you didn't have to organise that,	Female 1
210	Yeah he did he told us he would (laughs) Everyone laughs	Jim
211	I thought this was great	Female 1
212	No, no, no, it has been perfect it has been fantastic and I really, really do appreciate you giving up all of your time out of your whole week in Ireland to give me an hour and a half of it is quite precious I know but I am really appreciative of it and I have just one more group to do and that will be 8 groups of people like you that I will have met over the summer	S
213	Will you stay in contact, cos we would actually like to see if you	Female 1
214	Yeah what your research your findings will be	Female 2
215	Absolutely, it will be two years before I have all this finished but I have all the groups I have all your email addresses the plan will be that I will write a book of this research so when that is published I will send you all a copy	S
216	Great	Everyone
217	Because nobody has looked at Ireland like this before, but nobody has ever looked at the photographs	S
218	It is so interesting that you are doing it because I	Female 1

have never heard about something like that before

219 Cos what was interesting yesterday about them saying that it was the grey sky really highlighting the colours here, most of the pictures that are professionally taken to sell Ireland however they manage it I don't know but they always have the clear blue sky there isn't a cloud in the place and S

220 Photoshop Female 1

221 Absolutely S

222 Less than 50 per cent cloud cover Jim

223 Yes, Female 1

224 Absolutely, so it is quite interesting perception versus reality people actually like the weather within boundaries of what they experience when they come here S

225 So is this your thesis for your masters? Female 5

226 No for a PhD, yeah so I started this 5 years ago so my first foray was in 2009 when I went to JFK and I spent 8 nights interviewing American's that were flying out that night S

227 Oh my God JFK Female 2

228 Coming to the country and then I got back here before they flew back so I got to talk to them twice S

229 Wow Female 1

230 So you had the perceived versus the reality once they had been here S

231 That's pretty cool , Yeah that's great Female 1 and 2

232 I don't think you could pay me enough to spend 8 nights in JFK (laughs) Jim

233 JFK oh my God Female 2

234 What I didn't like was going in and out of security 4 or 5 times a night. S

235 Oh yeah that's a pain in the butt Female 1

236 Ok if ye head down to the bar, what's your S

schedule, ye have dinner now, Half six

237 IT doesn't matter Liz TD

238 Ok what I can do is I can wait and have them
send them into ye after dinner or ye can have
them now S

239 Now Female 1

240 If he just sends them into the dinner table why
don't we do that Female 3

241 Have ye all filled in this one as well that has
your... S

242 Very interesting that we are doing this on Sept 11 Female 7

243 Yeah Female 1

244 Yeah God I didn't think of that Liz TD

245 We have had out phone on all day just in case
something happened Female 1

246 In airplane mode, cos Chicago heightened their
security Female 2

247 Yeah DC, New York Jim

248 You will never forget where you were at Female 6

249 True absolutely I have very vivid memories of
that. So I will see you down stairs. S

250 Sean do you want something to eat with us Liz TD

251 Not at all, a friend of my came up with me so we
are just going to head straight back down, it took
us 5 hours to get up here S

252 Good God Liz TD

253 So we are literally just going to get in the car and
drive back down cos I have to be in class
sounding somewhat reasonable and intelligent
and 11 o clock S

254 Well I wish you a safe journey, and keep me up
dated on how it is going Liz TD

255 Oh absolutely, I will get those photographs on a
disc to you S

256		When I sign something I like to have a copy of what I signed so if you can make a copy	Female 5
257		If you just take that to reception with you and ask them to make a copy you can give me you can take the copy and I will need the original so just ask them at reception if they could make a photocopy and I will meet you down stairs	S
258		Can I give you a hand with anything	Liz TD
259		Not at all you are grand, off you go down with them and I will meet you in a few minutes	S
260		You don't have your contact information	Female 3
261		Oh that's what I meant to give you, my email and phone number, and the email for the College, the college that I teach in a small little College we only have 250 students we specialise in hotel management we don't do anything other than that and like I said the manager that was here today graduated from that College so they get around. What age were you when you went from India to the States?	S
262		1977 so I have been there a long time	Female 5
263	0: 00.0 - 1: 31.3	All of USA weeks from now when you are gone back home and I am trying to figure out what exactly has gone on	S
264	1: 31.2 - 3: 56.4	Now that was a wonderful overview of what you expected Ireland to be likes, what informed you to have the perception before you got here? Had you read something or seen a movie	S
265	3: 56.4 - 5: 17.3	So we are going right back to 5th grade as the starting point of when you wanted to come to Ireland. Ok anyone else	S
266	5: 17.3 - 5: 53.4	And considering that you have a link, ancestry to Ireland, would you have grown up listening to stories from your father that he would have heard from his father about Ireland that might have encouraged you to come or created that image of Ireland?	S
267	5: 53.4 - 10: 39.9	Just a little bit cos to be honest with you I really did not know my maternal grandmother as well as am my grandmother on the other side of my	Female 3

family and so while I had titbits of and bits and pieces of you know some of their history I knew the counties that they were from I didn't really know the actual towns. I since made connections with second cousins that I am going to meet once our tour is over and actually meet them and am we have driven through actually some of the towns are close by some of the towns, and that a really nice feeling that sort of completes the circle I suppose, wondering where my grandparents came from and now actually setting foot and I know that my grandparents were brought up in a thatched cottage which still stands and that will be the highlight of my vacation when I get to see that and take a picture that's in am Drumcree

- | | | | |
|-----|------------------------|--|----------|
| 268 | 10: 39.8 -
12: 36.9 | We might mention that our great, great grandparents came from Ireland | Female 1 |
| 269 | 12: 36.9 -
14: 40.8 | What you meant was that hard work pays off , like the wheelbarrow shows the rustic hard work and the flowers show the beauty | Female 2 |
| 270 | 14: 40.7 -
22: 20.4 | Hey em yeah! well this one was at Kate Kearney's Jordan and I had tried what is it called poteen several shots, we had tried that and the bar tender told us that he could make us something that would actually taste good and he made these, and they were so neat looking I mean he actually took time I should of got a photo of it. He like really made sure that they were separated he didn't want it to be...it was like art work but am I mean drinking is obviously a big part of the culture everybody enjoys it. But it doesn't seem like people enjoy...it is not a sloppy part of the culture it's like an honoured part of the culture and you guys take pride in like fine whiskey and so I thought that was really neat although none of that is whiskey I don't think or Baileys, is Bailey's whiskey? | Female 2 |
| 271 | 22: 20.3 -
25: 42.2 | When I was there (Kylemore) it made me wonder how did the people of yore come across these windy, windswept lakes that were so choppy and rough and then land there and build that castle in the midst of it all. It was amazing to think back in time how did they accomplish it with such rough weather and am | Female 5 |
| 272 | 24: 44.2 -
28: 03.7 | Ok we have another one of Kylemore | S |

273	28: 03.7 - 29: 10.3	One thing I will say about this photo which I didn't know like when I was landing I saw a whole bunch of green but I also saw some brown and rust colours and now what I think it was, was the heather I think it comes out as a brownish right and I was wondering what the heck is that they can't just have all these fields of dirt, you know I was expecting the green but then I saw that rustish colour	Male 1 Dingle Bay photo comments
274	29: 10.3 - 32: 05.8	A comment actually from a group like yourselves in Dublin on Friday last and they were saying because they have been here the same time as ye so they haven't had very good weather and one woman was saying that the colours were more vibrant against the sky than if you had the sunlight	S
275	32: 05.8 - 33: 29.5	That was really pretty you could just walk down there it	Female 1 (Galway Bay photo comments)
276	33: 29.4 - 36: 18.0	Is that a new iPad?	Female 1
277	36: 07.5 - 51: 14.5	What was that weird thing they made, it was those little crackers with oh God, it was horrible. They looked nice and then you had it and you were like huh!	Female 1
278	36: 18.0 - 36: 32.3	Oh that's neat	Female 1