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Contrasting Influences of Entrepreneurs on Destination Development

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‘Here, there, everywhere:

Entrepreneurs and tourism development

Introduction

There can be no denying that tourism as an industry has become increasingly dominant in strategic economic plans for countries and regions. There is almost no country now which is not a sender and receiver of significant numbers of visitors (Urry, 2003) and there is no doubt that tourism is emerging as a leading economic driver for the 21st century. The extent of the growth of tourism is particularly evident in the World Tourism Organisations statistics, which show that international tourist arrivals in 2007 numbered 900 million (WTO, 2008) compared to 592 million in 1996 (WTO, 1997) and 25.2 million in 1950. Within an Irish context, tourism has been one of Ireland’s greatest economic success stories. Its unprecedented growth, which began in the 1980s, has had an impact on many aspects of the economy and society, assuming a greatly enhanced profile in Irish affairs (Gorokhovskiy, 2003: 97). European Union funds and public and private sector investments since the late 1980s have helped to improve and develop infrastructure, accommodation and visitor attractions (Hurley et al., 1994), while liberalisation of the airline industry has dramatically improved access (Gillmor, 1994). Tourism is now a significant sector of the Irish economy, a major source of foreign earnings, and a powerful instrument of national and regional development (Travers, 2003). Despite its obvious importance, the academic literature on the development of tourist areas in Ireland is extremely weakly developed. In particular, little research has been undertaken to understand the role that local entrepreneurs have played in tourism development. As a result, a comprehensive understanding of the degree to which entrepreneurs influence tourism development in local places has not been addressed. In the current environment of continual increases in international competition and a downturn in the global economy the subject of how entrepreneurs can stimulate and influence tourism

development takes on a new level of importance. This paper highlights the key role that local entrepreneurs have played in Killarney, Co. Kerry, a developed tourism area in Ireland. Set in the context of globalisation, the paper explains the way in which local entrepreneurs have been critical to the initial and continued development of the industry. The paper also views the role of entrepreneurs within the context of tourism models of development, recognising that in general these models have underplayed the role of local entrepreneurs in tourism development. In particular, Butler's (1980) much cited Tourism Area Life Cycle only hints at the role of local entrepreneurs in the early stages of development (Shaw & Williams, 1998), yet there is evidence to suggest that local entrepreneurs in Killarney have actively influenced tourism development at all stages of development. Their influence is identified as long lasting and dynamic, in many cases spanning generations of involvement. The more intangible influence of entrepreneurs is also recognised in their ability to create a strong vision and culture for tourism that may have such a pervasive influence as to form part of the fabric of tourism development in an area.

Local tourism places in a global world

The globalisation of tourism has engendered concerns over its effects on destination areas (Chang, 1999). In particular, the impact that global tourism has on the heterogeneity and autonomy of local places is a widely contested and debated subject. The question of whether globalisation results in tourism development being determined by external factors over which places have no control or influence, or if local factors play a role in shaping tourism development is central to these debates. Globalisation is often associated with a transformation and erosion of the power of nations, regions and localities; as a result their development is determined by factors outside of their control. Many authors portray local people and places as passive, lacking any control over their own destiny viewing them as submissive recipients of global forces (Relph, 1976; Castells, 1993; Barnett & Cavanagh, 1995; Dunning & Hamdani, 1997). The main thrust of these arguments posits the loss of power and

identity at a local and national level resulting from globalisation. The central premise is that globalisation results in an increasing homogeneity between landscapes and societies (Featherstone, 1993) and an adverse effect on the local by the global (Chang, 1999). These arguments privilege the global, and reflect a failure to appreciate the ability of humans 'to initiate development, mediate and harness external tourism forces and capitalise on place-specific characteristics and resources to influence the shape of local tourism places' (Quinn, 2003:62). In particular, they fail to consider the key role of entrepreneurs in initiating and underpinning tourism development. More recently the literature has begun to address this omission by asserting that local places are not mere recipients of fortune or fate from above but rather are actively involved in their own transformation (Quinn, 2003; Chang, 1999, 1998; Cooke, 1989; Murphy, 1985). The contention is that local agents are not passive recipients of the impacts of global tourism but actively engage them in dynamic processes (Chang, 1998). The argument, it would appear, is not as simple as local versus global, as 'although there are clearly large-scale processes at work ... tourism is also about the local, the specific nature of places, people and culture'. The process of globalisation always takes place in some locality, while at the same time the local is (re)produced in discourses of globalisation (Salazar, 2005). These contemporary debates move away from the polar view of global vs. local and present a more nuanced alternative that uncovers a dynamic interplay between global and local processes. Milne & Ateljevic (2001: 174) contend that 'the complexity of the global-local nexus – and how its economic, cultural and environmental elements interact to create local development outcomes – is breathtaking'. An appropriate focus for the debate on the global local relationship therefore may be to identify the ways in which local places influence tourism development within a global order. In traditional literature on models of tourism development, however, the focus in terms of firms is on multinationals and the role they play in tourism development, while the role of local entrepreneurs and small firms is largely underplayed. More recent models such as Ritchie & Crouch's (2003) begin to identify the critical role that local entrepreneurs and small firms play in tourism development; however, the topic remains largely unexplored. It is within this context that this paper addresses the issue of entrepreneurs, and

the way in which they influence tourism development at a local level. It argues that local entrepreneurs play a pivotal role in tourism development through the provision of vital infrastructure, their ability to stimulate development and their approach to development. It recognises that the influence of entrepreneurs may not be confined to the creation of their own businesses but may impact on development of the broader tourism area. It views this influence as dynamic and pervasive with the ability to continue long after the involvement of the original entrepreneur.

Entrepreneurs and tourism development

Koh & Hatten, (2002: 21) explain that ‘a community’s quantity and quality of supply of entrepreneurs significantly determines the magnitude and form of its touristscape because the tourism entrepreneur is the persona causa of tourism development’. They claim that ‘it is only when tourism entrepreneurs are present, do a community’s climate, landforms, flora and fauna, historic vestiges, and ethno-cultural enclaves become tourism resources that may be transformed into tourist attractions’ (Koh & Hatten, 2002:27). Without the influence of entrepreneurs it is doubtful that a tourism industry would evolve, even in areas that are favourably endowed with resources (Koh and Hatten, 2002). Russell & Faulkner (1999, 2004) and McKercher (1999) clarify the integral part that entrepreneurs play in developing tourist destinations, recognising them as ‘rogues or chaos makers’ (McKercher, 1998:432). Despite this recognition that the ‘innovation, flair and vision of entrepreneurs ... shaped modern tourism’ (Russell, 2006: 105), little has been done to provide a comprehensive understanding of the way in which entrepreneurs influence tourism development. Models of tourism development, for example, in general pay only scant attention to entrepreneurs. Early models such as Christaller’s (1963) identify their role in developing infrastructure while other such as Miossec’s (1976) and Lundgren’s (1982) are largely concerned with the role of access and transport, geographic location and physical attributes. A much cited model by Butler (1980), the Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC), identifies the role of local entrepreneurs in developing tourist services, facilities and promotional

activities at the involvement and development stages of tourism development, but sees their role decreasing in later stages. According to Shaw & Williams (1998: 237), their role is only 'touched upon' and Butler does not elaborate on entrepreneurial activity, in fact they claim, much of Butler's discussion was 'vague and implicitly relied on unresearched ideas'. Other models such as Gormsen's (1981) and Keller's (1987) primarily stress the importance of local control and benefits for tourism communities. Two models that provide some insight into the way in which local entrepreneurs influence development are Lewis's (1998) and Ritchie & Crouch's (2003). Lewis identifies the role of local entrepreneurs as triggers of change, highlighting the dynamic power relations that can underpin tourism development. Ritchie & Crouch provide a more dynamic understanding of the part that small businesses and entrepreneurs play in creating competitive advantage explaining that '... the small tourism business in particular – is of fundamental importance to the development of tourism as an industry'. They acknowledge the role of entrepreneurs and small firms in the creation of advanced factors, such as skilled resources and a technological base, which they claim are necessary to achieve higher-order competitive advantages such as differentiated products and proprietary production technology. Small firms, they contend, contribute to destination development and competitiveness through their strategy, structure and rivalry, in particular, through inter-firm competition and co-operation. According to Ritchie and Crouch the competition generated between small firms in a destination 'creates an environment for excellence', while the interdependence between firms encourages inter-firm co-operation (Ritchie and Crouch, 2003: 141).

In the broader tourism literature an indication of the pervasive influence of entrepreneurs is apparent. Authors such as Pearce (1995) suggest that entrepreneurship provides communities with the diversity and dynamism that assures continuous development and its influence may extend beyond individual development projects to stimulate others to undertake development. Britton (1991) clarifies how the building of just one hotel in an area can trigger further development because it provides a base from which further construction can proceed and signals a confidence in the location. The idea of

entrepreneurs influencing development beyond their own individual contribution may be fundamental to understanding the extent of their influence on tourism development, yet this has not been explored to any great extent within the tourism literature. More recently authors have begun to provide insight into the way in which tourism entrepreneurs achieve their entrepreneurial objectives. Johns and Mattson (2005: 606) for example, in their study of two destinations clearly identify how the entrepreneurial objectives of two businessmen were achieved through the use of formal and informal networks at the destination. Hall (2004) similarly acknowledges that innovation in New Zealand has occurred primarily because of champions and individual innovators who have been able to generate local interest and involvement. Hall moves away from focusing on the influence of the individual entrepreneur by drawing attention to the impact of networks and cluster relationships between firms which, he explains, are the primary 'drivers' of a region's economy. This idea of small firms as 'driver's' of development is also addressed by Tinsley & Lynch (2007: 162) who explain that 'much of the generic tourism literature suffers from a lack of understanding of small businesses' and address this omission by highlighting that community embedded business networks can demonstrate successful control over the destination's tourism development (Tinsley & Lynch, 2007: 175).

It is evident that the tourism literature is beginning to explore the influence of entrepreneurs on development and that entrepreneurship study is beginning to gather some momentum in recent years (Li, 2008). This paper adds to the literature by identifying the dynamic role of entrepreneurs within the context of Killarney an established tourism area in Ireland. It explains the way in which entrepreneurs have underpinned tourism development not only through the provision of infrastructure, services and marketing support but also through their ability to stimulate others to become involved in development. It identifies this influence as dynamic with an ability to continue long after the original entrepreneur has ceased to exist. It also shows how the vision of entrepreneurs can support a culture

for tourism resulting in the creation of an environment where the focus for development is on the area in general and not just individual businesses.

Methodology

This research is part of a larger project that examines the factors underpinning tourism development. Using a case study approach it examines entrepreneurial activity in Killarney, Co. Kerry, a developed tourism area in Ireland. The use of case study methodology allowed the research to capture the dynamics of tourism development in its context, providing a flexible framework that favoured the use of both quantitative and qualitative data. The case area was chosen using purposive sampling; Killarney was chosen on the basis of its classification in Ireland's National Tourism Authority's (Fáilte Ireland) Tourism Development Plan 1994-1999, as a major tourism centre. Killarney is the only rural town to achieve this classification all other major tourism centres are cities. In addition, there is a well established acknowledgement both nationally and internationally, among suppliers, consumers and tourism commentators more generally, that Killarney is a leading tourism destination and this was a key reason for choosing it.

The research is underpinned by a pragmatic approach that involves mixed-method research and involved the use of: archival research, surveys, interviews, observations and field notes. A detailed analysis of archived sources of information provided extensive background knowledge of the areas being studied this included: official and government statistics, historical documents, industry reports, administrative records and documents etc. A survey in the form of a questionnaire was administered to local tourism suppliers by the researcher. Eighty-one firms were surveyed, representing approximately one third of tourism firms in the area. Each survey took between 20 minutes and 1 hour to administer and while random sampling was used, care was taken to ensure that different sub-

sectors of the market was represented. The survey supported the research by guiding the researcher in determining potential subjects for interview as well as highlighting key themes. In addition thirteen in-depth interviews were undertaken in Killarney. The use of snowball sampling as an approach that supports the identification of information rich key informants was used to identify relevant individuals (Patton, 2002). The interviews were structured as 'guided conversations' in which the researcher could steer the respondents around specific topic areas and provided a high level of contextual understanding. Reflections and introspection were also important parts of the research and observations and field notes taken during the research period informed the research and formed an integral part in the interpretation of the findings. These multiple sources of information were used in a converging fashion enabling the researcher to obtain a better, more substantive picture of the influence of entrepreneurs on tourism development.

Killarney, Co. Kerry: an established tourism area in Ireland.

Killarney town is situated in the county of Kerry, in the South West of Ireland (figure 1.1). Although traditionally a market town, Killarney owes its growth primarily to the successful development of tourism. It is recognised both nationally and internationally as a significant tourism area and is the only town in Ireland that has achieved the classification of an 'established tourism centre' by Fáilte Ireland (The Irish Tourist Board). It is one of Ireland's premier tourist destinations and, while no official statistics exist, unofficial estimates suggest that up to 1.5 million people visit the town each year (RPS Cairns, 1999). Tourism is a major component of the local economy, providing both direct and indirect employment (ibid). Killarney is removed from centres of high population density, the nearest major city Cork is 86kms in distance, while Dublin, the capital of Ireland, is 345kms. It is the home of Ireland's first national park which covers an area of approximately 10,236 hectares of mountain, moorland, woodland, waterways, parks and gardens (Killarney national Park, 2008). The town of Killarney nestles at the foot of Ireland's highest mountain range; the MacGillycuddy Reeks. Behind the town are the three famous Lakes of Killarney; the Upper Lake, Muckross Lake (the

Middle Lake) and Lough Leane (the Lower Lake) which occupy a broad valley stretching south between the mountains. The area is most notable for these world-famous lakes, combined with its rugged beauty of valleys, mountains and an extraordinary wealth of trees and rare flowering plants (Flynn, 1993). The scenic splendours of the area are without doubt its principal tourist attraction (Larner, 2005) providing it with formidable advantages as a tourist centre (Barrington, 1976), however the natural landscape alone does not account for the industry that has developed. Tourism development can be largely attributed to the influence and efforts of local entrepreneurs. From as early as the 1700s, long before Ireland as a nation had recognised the importance of tourism, local individuals in Killarney had recognised the opportunity that the surrounding landscape afforded for attracting visitors to the area. Throughout its history, tourism development has been underpinned by the vision and commitment of entrepreneurs whose influence has extended beyond their individual development projects to stimulate others to become involved in the industry and in many cases their impact has lasted long after the original entrepreneurs has ceased to exist. An overview of some of these key entrepreneurs explains the way in which they influenced tourism development and the extent of this influence.



Figure 1.1 Killarney town located on the southwest coast of Ireland

Entrepreneurial influence on tourism development in Killarney

Thomas Browne, the Fourth Viscount of Kenmare, landlord of the Kenmare estate between 1747 and 1795, was a hugely influential character in the development of tourism in Killarney. Reflecting Koh & Hattens (2002) finding, Thomas was responsible for initiating development and his entrepreneurial ideas can be seen to have transformed Killarney into a tourism destination in the first instance. Through his actions in developing tourism infrastructure and services he facilitated visitors to the town and demonstrated the opportunity that existed for a tourism industry. Most significant was his encouragement of tenants involvement in the industry, ‘a most considerate and enlightened landlord at a period when Irish landlords and their agents were a byword for harshness’, he granted his tenants ‘a lease forever’ for a trivial rent, providing they would make improvements to their landholding (MacLysaght, 1970: 141). Barrington (1976) explains that Thomas influenced the establishment of inns, the provision of boating facilities and guides while also encouraging the local gentry to apply for a turnpike road to improve access to Killarney (O’Hare, 2005). Thomas was a progressive landlord (O’Hare, 2005) and through his vision and willingness to encourage others to become involved he stimulated the beginning of the industry and an entrepreneurial dynamism that exists right up to the present day. His vision for tourism and efforts to highlight the opportunities afforded by the natural beauty of the area helped initiate a sense of place and a self reliance that continues to form part of the fabric of Killarney’s tourism industry. During his time in Killarney he helped develop a keen awareness of the potential for tourism and a desire to encourage and cater for visitors developed in the town (Smith, 1756). His influence was of paramount importance and transcended the tangible elements of tourism development to include the beginnings of a culture of tourism, which remains an integral part of the industry today. As explained by one respondent ‘Thomas ... had a great vision for the town and encouraged tenants to develop their holdings and to provide services to tourists such as guided tours and boating trips, because of all of this, tourism is ingrained in Killarney people’ it is according to other respondents ‘a way of life’ and there is ‘oneness in the town’ with regard to

tourism. The story of Killarney tourism began with Thomas Browne, and has continued through the involvement and vision of other entrepreneurs through the years.

Maurice O'Donoghue, for example is another local entrepreneur that has had an extensive influence on tourism development through developing the family's core business of accommodation and entertainment. This has not only meant the success of the family business but has also provided critical infrastructure and attractions for Killarney town. While there is no question but that the work of Maurice was undertaken primarily for the benefit of the family businesses, there is no doubt but it also had an extensive influence on the area in general, as well as other businesses in the town. Maurice was acknowledged by 47% of survey respondents as having contributed most to tourism development in Killarney. The opening of the Glen Eagles hotel by Maurice in 1957 for example, was a vital move in signalling a renewed confidence in the area after a period of relative inactivity due to the war of Independence, the Civil war, the Second World War and the political environment in Ireland at the time. In addition, his continued development provided critical infrastructure and influenced the success of smaller operators in the area through the resulting increase in visitors as well as his policy of utilising the services of smaller businesses such as local tour operators and bicycle rental shops. This was by no means a charitable undertaking as it allowed his businesses to offer a seamless product to their customers; while also creating important business for smaller businesses, allowing them to flourish. This tendency for Maurice to stick to his core business (accommodation and entertainment) enabled other operators to successfully develop complimentary services which together provide a comprehensive tourism product.

Maurice's extensive influence on tourism development included his involvement in developing domestic tourism in Killarney. In the 1980s he teamed up with Iarnród Éireann (Irish Rail) and

developed an initiative that included an all-in package of rail trip, entertainment and accommodation in Killarney. This helped changed the perception in Killarney of the Irish domestic market and led the way for further development and ‘while his own hotel’ undoubtedly benefited, ‘the entire town ... enjoyed the spin-off from this activity’ (Cork Examiner, 1979). Maurice was also a very active member of the local community and his role in Killarney extended beyond his own business enterprises to include membership of, amongst other things, the board of Fáilte Ireland (the Irish tourist board). The degree to which this role impacted directly on Killarney tourism is difficult to quantify however, a position such as this would have helped keep Killarney to the forefront of Irish tourism and involved in policy making discussions. After his sudden death in 2001 tributes were paid to Maurice by the then Tourism Minister, Dr. James McDaid and Justice Minister John O’Donoghue. Dr. McDaid acknowledged that ‘he had been a dynamic figure in the growth and development of tourism in Killarney’ and Mr. John O’Donoghue referred to Maurice as the ‘King of Killarney’. Maurice’s influence continues through the work of his family, and in particular through his son Patrick who has completed many of Maurice’s plans. Patrick is currently the mayor of Killarney as well as a member of Killarney Urban District Council, the National Tourism Review group, and a director of Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland, and so follows in his father’s footsteps in terms of his involvement in the local community and tourism industry as well as the broader national tourism industry. The family continues to influence a great deal of tourism development in the town.

Tourism in Killarney has also been influenced by the long-term vision of a number of additional strong entrepreneurs many of whose involvement has been passed on over generations. In addition to the O’Donoghue family, families such as the Hilliards, the Treacy’s, the O’Donoghue/Ring’s, the Buckley’s and the Randles amongst others, have all played a significant role in tourism development in Killarney. Dr. Frank Hilliard, a local entrepreneur, was for example, instrumental in the development of Muckross House and gardens into a folk park and tourist attraction. Today Muckross House is one of Ireland’s premier tourist attractions and receives an average of 200,000 visitors

annually (O'Hare, 2005). Many of these entrepreneurs have become serial entrepreneurs with deep roots in the community and their continued development has instilled a confidence in the local industry and influenced the involvement of others. Their vision for tourism, passed on, in many instances, over generations has created a dynamic environment that stimulates and enhances tourism development. As one respondent remarked; 'there is a very strong tradition of tourism in Killarney ... passed through generations - it's in the blood'. This tendency for entrepreneurs to pass on their businesses over generations can be seen across a range of businesses; jaunting car drivers, known locally as Jarvey's, spoke of grandfathers, fathers and uncles starting the business and passing it on to family members over generations while tour companies and hotel owners spoke of tracing their businesses back to the 1800s. This tendency to pass businesses on over generations has resulted in a familiarity among tourism operators and has influenced their willingness to co-operate with each other for mutual benefit. What is particularly apparent is a tendency for these entrepreneurs to take a collective, long-term vision to tourism development this is reflected in one respondents comment that 'with family owned businesses the long-term view is looked at rather than the short-term economic rewards'. Their actions are, according to one respondent, underpinned by a 'common history and belief in tourism', and they have provided critical infrastructure and marketing support that has developed their own businesses and supported the success of Killarney tourism. Their tendency to develop through sticking to their core business of, for example accommodation, provides an opportunity for other's to involve themselves in the provision of complimentary add-on services and products and ensures the success of individuals businesses and of Killarney tourism. Tourism is characterised in the area by the existence of many small businesses each providing essential components of the overall tourism product, this has created an interdependence between the businesses and as a result tourism firms have been able to survive and the local area able to thrive. The interdependence between firms, as suggested by Ritchie & Crouch (2003) encourages inter-firm co-operation which is evident in for example the forming of marketing alliances, sectoral associations and management structures. Local entrepreneurs in Killarney exert a strong influence on tourism

through a history of involvement in local marketing and business organisations such as: Killarney Development Company, Killarney Chamber and Commerce, Killarney of the Welcomes, Killarney Tourism, Killarney Incentive and Conference Group. In addition, their active involvement in regional and national lobbying groups such as the IHF (Irish Hotel Federation) ensures that local businesses and the commercial interests of Killarney are represented in dealings with local government and state agencies. This also provides an opportunity for members to network with each other as well as with members of other similar organisations at a regional and national level.

Discussion

Butler's (1980) contention that local control on tourism decreases overtime is not evident in Killarney and his suggestion that local entrepreneurs may influence local tourism development only in the early stages of development is similarly unfounded. In fact, by capitalising on 'placed-specific characteristics' local entrepreneurs have influenced 'the shape of local tourism' (Quinn, 2003: 62) in Killarney right up to the present day and this extensive influence is seen to exist through all stages of development (figure 1.2).

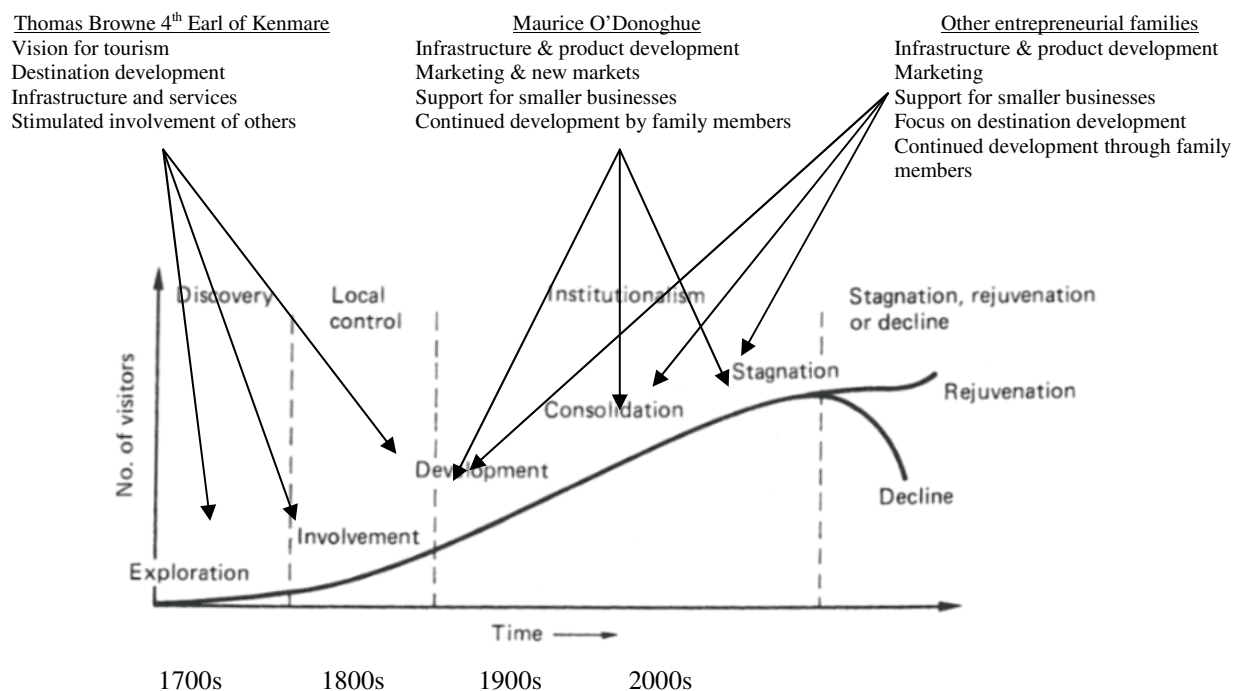


Figure 1.2: An adaptation of Butler's (1980) TALC: the influence of local entrepreneurs on tourism development.

The power of local entrepreneurs has helped to shape Killarney tourism and the industry is characterised by an entrepreneurial pervasiveness that has played a pivotal role in tourism development. Far from lacking any control over their own destiny (Relph, 1976; Castells, 1993; Barnet & Cavanagh, 1995; Dunning & Hamdani, 1997), entrepreneurs have acted as triggers of change and development and have encouraged and facilitated the involvement and success of others in the industry. Their influence is not static but has continued to influence development long after the individual entrepreneur has ceased to exist. In the case of Thomas Browne, his legacy has been the initiation of the industry and a culture for tourism, and each entrepreneur has helped to sustain this culture over the years, what may have started in Killarney as one person's vision has become the collective vision of many. While the work that Maurice O'Donoghue accomplished and his broader connections in both the local and national business community impacted on the development, not just of his own businesses, but also on the development of Killarney tourism as a whole. Local entrepreneurs can be seen to have acted as 'champions' and 'individual innovators' (Hall, 2004), providing critical infrastructure and marketing for the area but more importantly, supporting an environment where complementary businesses can flourish. Their approach to development has involved a collective, long term vision that has helped to shape a dynamic environment where tourism thrives, and their involvement in key business groups at a local and national level has ensured that Killarney's voice is at the forefront of Irish tourism. In Killarney, the influence of local entrepreneurs goes beyond provision of infrastructure and marketing, their approach to development has stimulated the actions of others, their strong lobbying, and the deliberate dependence of the larger businesses on smaller businesses for aspects of the tourism product allows Killarney tourism to thrive.

Conclusions

This research has made a number of significant contributions to the existing body of knowledge. It has identified the way in which local entrepreneurs can influence tourism development, therefore

negating any claim that local areas are submissive to global forces, unable to influence their own development. The research has shown that rather being passive and submissive recipients of global forces (Relph, 1976; Castells, 1993; Barnet & Cavanagh, 1995; Dunning & Hamdani, 1997) local places are actively involved in tourism development, and are informed and shaped by many factors, not least of which is the influence of local entrepreneurs. This study is an important addition to the research on the role of entrepreneurs in tourism development and reflects Hall (2004) and Tinsley & Lynch's (2007) claim that entrepreneurs are drivers of development. Their ability to provide infrastructure and services as well as marketing support has underpinned development and supported the growth of tourism. This influence can be seen to transform the areas into tourism destinations in the first instance (Koh & Hatten, 2002) and has, as suggested Pearce (1992) extended to stimulate the involvement of others in tourism development. Their influence is long lasting and dynamic, in many cases spanning generations of involvement. Some entrepreneurs leave behind a legacy of development that is passed on for family members to continue. Others leave less tangible evidence of their influence, in these cases factors such as a strong vision and culture for tourism may influence tourism development for many, many years even after the entrepreneur has ceased to exist, and may have such a pervasive influence as to form part of the fabric of tourism development in the area. The research identifies how entrepreneurs who share a vision for tourism may influence development reflects Ritchie & Crouch's (2003) claim that through a willingness for co-operation and the creation of interdependencies between businesses, these entrepreneurs may impact on the success of the area in general. What is clear therefore is that entrepreneurs play a pivotal role in tourism, and while the influence of the individual entrepreneur can be extensive and long lasting, a shared culture for tourism amongst entrepreneurs can result in a more pervasive influence on tourism development leading to the success of the area. This paper has provided a broad perspective on the influence of local entrepreneurs identifying their role as fundamental to tourism development, however this area requires further investigation if a comprehensive understanding of entrepreneurial influence is to be

achieved. In particular, research into the patterns of entrepreneurial activity and how these might differ between tourism places would add further insight to the literature on entrepreneurs.

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