Tourism Literature Review In Northern Ireland

Introduction

This Literature Review will identify the background literature surrounding tourism in Northern Ireland and similar tourism literature which can be applied to Northern Ireland in order to gain a better understanding in relation to the aims and questions set out in section one. We will explore, in order, emerging-markets tourism, with a specific focus on film-induced tourism (as an example of non-traditional tourism); followed by destination image and perception; Dark Tourism; and walking and taxi tours (in London and Belfast). Lastly, we look at two approaches to Political Tourism (part of Dark Tourism) - the NITB approach and the Stormont (devolved parliament) approach.

Emerging-markets: Film induced tourism

Throughout the literature, there have been various relevant definitions of this type of tourism: Movie Induced Tourism, Media-Induced Tourism, Cinematic Tourism but perhaps most common and clearly stated is ‘Film Induced Tourism’ (Macionis, 2004). Busby and Klug (2001, p. 316) define Film Inducted Tourism as ‘tourist visits to a destination or attraction as a result of the destination [being] featured on the cinema screen, video or television’. Morgan and Pritchard (1998) describe putting a destination in a film as excellent product placement; while Iwashita (2003) argues that film, television, and literature can impact the travel preferences and destination choices of tourists as films reveal to them the attributes and features of a destination.

The scope for exposure that The Lord of the Rings offered to New Zealand is in many ways unique (O’Connor, Flanagan, & Gilbert, 2008). The Tourist Board of New Zealand (TNZ) viewed the first Lord of the Rings film as an effective promotional tool, and subsequently worked out what it would cost to access this aspect commercially. ‘Based on attendances and making a range of assumptions, they estimated the exposure was worth over $41m US’ (New Zealand Institute of Economic Research, 2002). They viewed tourism promotion as a key opportunity created by the film, increasing the profile and standing of New Zealand as a tourism destination (O’Connor, Flanagan, & Gilbert, 2008). Tooke and Baker (1996) present films as recurring events, with DVD/video launches, television airings, and repeats providing opportunities for regular viewing. This regular viewing strengthens the association between a film and its location (Tooke & Baker, 1996) - this is probably more relevant today than at the time of the article, given the popularity of Netflix and similar services.

This type of tourism can focus attention upon destinations that might otherwise find it difficult to attract tourists. France, for example, uses Chocolat to promote Burgundy and Charlotte Grey to promote the Aveyron and Lot Valley (Mintel, 2003, p. 8). One other benefit of Film Induced Tourism is that ‘viewing film locations can often be an all-year all-weather attraction, thus alleviating problems of seasonality’ (Beeton, 2001, cited in Hudson & Ritchie, 2006, p. 387). Significantly, Riley, Baker, and Van Doren (1998) found that, although the peak interest comes after the first release of a film, ‘a 54% increase in visitation was evident at least 5 years later in the 13 films studies and images are often retained for a long time’ (Riley, Baker, & Van Doren,

1998, cited in Hudson & Ritchie, 2006, p. 387). We could use these long-term effects to explain the success of destinations that have redeveloped locations to make the connections between them and a film more obvious, and which have boosted tourism, even when the film is not a fresh release (Grihault, 2003). An example of this process would be the Titanic Belfast. Northern Ireland has been the location of many films, and this fact could assist with the (re)branding of this destination through developing new images to attract overseas tourists (O'Connor, Flanagan, & Gilbert, 2008). The NITB is hardly a stranger to this approach, having marketed Northern Ireland as the setting for The Chronicles of Narnia by the renowned Christian author C.S. Lewis. Therefore, tourist boards should not ignore such opportunities.

Destination image

Gould and Skinner (2007) promote place branding as a way to communicate a positive image based on an agreed single national identity (which is often essentialized). They argue that the nation-branding strategy of Northern Ireland is not unlike the metaphorical Janus whose nature symbolizes change and transition, progression from past to future (Amujo, 2012, p. 90). Northern Ireland has tended to adopt a complex, double-edged branding strategy, promoting the 'Irishness' of the country to Ireland-friendly markets, on the one hand, whilst promoting 'ness' to-friendly markets on the other. To cite Amujo (2012, p. 91):

It is challenging to rebrand a nation in post-conflict or atrocity in the absence of an agreed single national identity, and so nation rebranding in post-political conflict, genocide, or atrocity should be constructively undertaken with a high sense of responsibility to counteract or reformulate the myths, prejudices, and stereotypes that result from negative discourse, narratives and ill-conceived judgments about the country.

Because of the Good Friday Agreement, the NITB hopes that more European tourists will choose to visit Northern Ireland

Dark Tourism

Several experts argue that religious pilgrimage was one of the earliest forms of tourism (Vellas & Be?cherel, 1999). Pilgrimages are often (but not always) associated with the death of individuals or groups, usually in circumstances that were violent and/or untimely. Visiting sites connected in some way to death (e.g. murder-sites, battlefields, cemeteries, churchyards, and the former homes of now dead celebrities such as John Lennon) has become a significant component of modern-day tourism in diverse settings (Lennon & Foley, 2000). One important example is Bon Scott's grave in Fremantle (the vocalist of AC/DC).

Northern Ireland has been associated with ongoing religious and political conflict since the late-1960s. Hargie, O'Donnell, and McMullan (2011, p. 899) state that '[d]uring the 30 years of conflict more than 3,700 people died, over 30,000 suffered a serious injury with the result that most people in Northern Ireland know someone who was killed or seriously injured in the troubles'. It is for this reason that Northern Ireland can be viewed as a Dark Tourism destination.