

The establishment of a policy-formulating body or a National Tourist Authority, which would be comprised of representatives from the Tourism Unit of the Regional Development Agencies, the Department of Tourism and Trade, other government departments, Bord Fáilte, the private sector here and foreign agents, would facilitate policy formulation by those with 'hands on' experience of the industry and a more co-ordinated approach, which would avoid the mismatching of the product and marketing efforts. The proposed tourist authority would assume responsibility for all policy and planning decisions and would be the focus for the integration of regional and local level proposals into the final development policies. The National Tourist Authority would provide a forum at national level where the specific needs of different regions, local areas and sectors within the industry would gain expression and from where a concrete policy for development would emerge.

The role of Bord Fáilte could be clearly redefined to enshrine the implementation of policy as its primary function and to strengthen its focus on marketing abroad by eliminating any routine tasks which could be performed at regional level.

In summary, the proposed structures would be based on a bottom-up approach to policy formulation and planning, which would integrate all levels and sectors of the industry. There would be a clear distinction between the roles of policy formulation and policy implementation, and the integration of tourism into the broader development agenda would be facilitated.

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Gender and Employment in Irish Tourism

PROINNSIAS BREATHNACH

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has been targeted by the Irish government as a sector offering good prospects not only of generating foreign exchange but, more importantly, of providing much needed job opportunities at a time of incessantly rising unemployment levels. Tourism has been identified in this respect both for its strong growth performance internationally and its labour-intensive nature.

The government's plans for tourism development were encapsulated in the *Operational Programme* for tourism for the period 1989-93, which was agreed with the Commission of the European Communities in December 1989 as part of the Community Support Framework under which Ireland receives EC structural funding (Ó Cinnéide and Walsh 1991). This programme provided for a total investment in the tourism sector of some IR£300 million over the period of the plan. The programme envisaged a doubling of incoming tourist numbers to 4.2 million, an increase in tourism revenues of IR£500 million (about 75%), and the creation of 25,000 additional tourism-related jobs (an increase of one third). These were very ambitious targets, given that global tourism has been growing at an average rate of only five per cent in recent years.

The first two years of the *Operational Programme* did produce vigorous growth in tourist numbers and revenue, and particularly in investment (Tansey Webster and Associates 1991; Dunne 1992). However, there was a slight decline in numbers in 1991, due principally to a slump in the North American market (attributed mainly to the impact of the Gulf War), although aggregate revenue continued to expand.

Overall, tourism (domestic and overseas) accounted for about 7% of both Gross National Product (GNP) and total employment in Ireland in 1990. However, in the period 1985-1990 tourism contributed some 37% of net employment growth in the economy. Tourism also makes a very important contribution to the Irish balance of payments, accounting for 7% of total

exports of goods and services in 1990 and, perhaps more importantly, over half the overall net current account surplus in that year (Tansey Webster and Associates 1991).

Irish tourism has an important regional dimension, in that tourists are attracted disproportionately to the more rural and remote western part of the country, where incomes are generally below the national average. Table 4 shows that the western regions, with below-average incomes, attract above-average levels of tourism revenue, with the result that tourism makes a much greater contribution to personal incomes in these regions than it does in other regions.

Table 4 *Regional distribution of income from tourism (1990)*

Region	Share of Tourism in %	Share of Population in %	Per Capita Income Index*	Tourism Revenue as % of Total Personal Income
East	29.8	40.9	112	3.7
Midlands	7.2	10.2	86	4.7
Southeast	9.6	10.9	90	5.6
Southwest	22.1	15.1	99	8.4
Midwest	9.7	8.8	95	6.6
West	12.8	8.3	87	10.1
Northwest	8.7	5.9	85	9.9

* Ireland = 100

Source: Tansey Webster and Associates (1991) and *Census of Population 1991*

Given the emphasis being placed by the Irish government on tourism as a means of income and employment expansion, and the resultant growing importance of the industry in the national economy, there has been a

surprising dearth of critical analysis of the implications of tourism development. Such issues as the nature of the employment provided by the tourism industry and the social, cultural and environmental impacts of tourism development have been largely ignored (but see Deegan and Dineen 1991).

This essay seeks to fill some of this gap by critically examining the structure of employment in the Irish tourism industry, drawing on detailed surveys carried out by the Council for Education, Recruitment and Training (CERT), the state agency responsible for the training of personnel for the industry. This examination highlights the numerical importance of women workers in the industry, which contrasts with the generally low participation rate, by OECD standards, of Irish women in the labour force (Callender 1990). The high profile of women workers in tourism employment is linked to the low levels of skill and the high levels of seasonal and part-time work in the industry. Given that tourism, therefore, is characterised by a large proportion of poor quality employment, questions must be raised concerning the wisdom of devoting substantial levels of public resources to tourism development in Ireland.

EMPLOYMENT STRUCTURE IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

Because of its highly heterogeneous nature and the fact that it overlaps with many other economic activities, employment in the tourism sector is not easily quantifiable. However, in the case of Ireland, detailed surveys carried out by CERT provide an excellent database for analysing the structure of employment in the industry (CERT 1987; 1988; 1991).

In 1987, an estimated 57,000 people were engaged directly in providing tourism services; however, because many of these were employed part-time, or were simultaneously providing services to non-tourists (retailing, catering, etc.), this figure converts to 38,500 full-time equivalents (CERT 1987). This figure accords well with other estimates of employment in the industry (Tansey Webster and Associates 1991). When one includes indirect employment (supplying goods and services to the industry) and further employment induced by the multiplier effects of tourist expenditure, total tourism-related employment for that year rises to 63,000, representing about six per cent of total employment and 10% of service employment.

Table 5 *Employment structure of the Irish tourism industry, 1987⁽¹⁾*

Sub-Sector	As % of Total Employment	Women as % of Sub-Sector
Accommodation	49	70
Catering	11	38
Transport	16	⁽²⁾ 18
Tour Operators	6	76
Administration ⁽³⁾	5	⁽⁴⁾ 44
Leisure/Recreation	6	50
Retailing	⁽⁵⁾ 8	⁽⁶⁾ 40
TOTAL	100	54

Notes:

- (1) Unless otherwise stated, all data derived from CERT (1987).
 (2) Based on national gender division for transport sector.
 (3) Refers to public servants involved in tourism administration.
 (4) Based on overall gender division in civil service.
 (5) Refers to full-time equivalents.
 (6) Based on national gender division in retailing.

Table 5 provides a breakdown of tourism employment by sub-sector and gender. While the CERT surveys offer much detail on the gender division of labour in most areas of tourism employment, it is not complete. It has therefore been necessary to estimate the gender division for some sub-sectors from other sources. The proportions given in the table therefore should be regarded as roughly approximate rather than precise.

In 1987, as Table 5 shows, women accounted for some 54% of all those employed in Irish tourism. This is significantly in excess of the proportion of total services employment accounted for by women (44%), and almost twice the female proportion of the overall workforce (31%). If one excludes the male-intensive transport sub-sector (mainly involved in bringing tourists into the country), women account for 60% of tourism employment. For accommodation, which accounts for one half of tourism employment, the proportion rises to 70%.

WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT IN THE HOTEL SECTOR

It is clear, therefore, that tourism is an atypical sector in the Irish economy, in that it is characterised by a predominantly female workforce. In order to explain this, a closer examination will be carried out of the accommodation sub-sector, in which women workers are particularly prominent. This examination is based on a detailed survey carried out by CERT (1988) of employment in hotels and guesthouses (hereafter simply the "hotel sector"), which account for the great bulk of employment in the sub-sector. The hotel sector is particularly oriented to the tourism industry, with 80% of employment being tourism-related (CERT 1987).

Table 6 provides a breakdown of employment in the hotel sector into employment categories, and gives the female proportion of employment in each category. Just over one half of all employment is full-time permanent, with a further one eighth being permanent but part-time. The remaining one third of jobs are seasonal (both full-time and part-time) or casual.

Table 6 *Structure of employment in the hotel sector*

Employment Category	As % of all Employment	Women as % of Category
Full-time Permanent	52.1	59.2
Part-time Permanent	12.5	79.4
Full-time Seasonal	13.6	73.5
Part-time Seasonal	2.4	88.2
Casual	19.4	n.a.
TOTAL	100.0	66.0*

* Excluding casual

Source: Computed from data in CERT (1988)

Excluding casual workers (for whom no gender breakdown is available) women comprise two thirds of all employment in hotels—over twice the overall female participation rate in paid employment in the country. However, the female proportion is lower for full-time permanent jobs (59%) and higher for all the other categories: part-time permanent (79%); full-time seasonal (74%); and part-time seasonal (88%). This employment structure is very similar to that noted by Bagguley (1990) for the British hotel and catering sector.

The domination of part-time and temporary employment by women is a common feature of advanced western economies. The fact that these employment categories constitute such a large proportion of total employment in the hotel sector—almost a half compared to just 16% in the national workforce—therefore goes a long way to explaining the disproportionate representation of women workers in the sector. However, the fact remains that women are also disproportionately represented among full-time permanent workers in the sector.

The second key explanatory factor in accounting for the high level of female employment in the hotel sector is the low level of skill required of the sector's workforce: less than one third of all workers may be regarded as skilled in the sense of having received at least some formal training. Even among full-time permanent workers, only a minority (44%) have any formal training. Skill levels are particularly low (only one seventh of all workers having had formal training) among part-time, seasonal and casual workers, the great majority of whom are women.

In all work categories, men are more likely to be skilled than women. And the higher the skill level of an occupational category, the more likely it is that it is full-time, permanent and male. Of managerial positions (8% of all employment in the hotel sector), 90% are full-time permanent and three quarters are formally trained, but only 40% are held by women. By contrast, less than half (44%) of unskilled 'accommodation assistants', i.e., chamber maids (9% of all jobs), are full-time permanent, and all of them are women. Similarly, over 90% of waiters/waitresses (21% of all hotel employment) are women, and less than 30% of jobs in this category are full-time permanent.

GENDER SEGMENTATION IN THE HOTEL SECTOR

There is considerable variation in female representation as between the different 'departments' of the hotel sector. Women are particularly

prominent in the Accommodation (99% of all workers) and Restaurant and Banquet (86%) departments, but are a minority in Management (40%) and the Bar and Nightclub (48%) departments. The remaining departments, Kitchen (61%) and Reception and General (57%), occupy intermediate positions.

Within departments, there is also a high level of gender segmentation by occupation. Of Kitchen staff, the vast majority of head chefs (skilled) and porters (unskilled) are men, while almost all kitchen assistants and wash-ups (both unskilled) are women. While staff in the Restaurant and Banquet departments are predominantly female, the job category of 'head waiters/waitresses' is mainly made up of men. Within the Reception and General department, those working as receptionists or accounts clerks are almost entirely women, while porters, 'doorpersons' and maintenance workers are almost all male. In Management, of 161 managing directors and general managers, only one is a woman.

However, there are some occupational categories where segmentation is not so apparent. Almost one half of the categories of chef (other than head chefs) and barperson consist of women (although in the latter case, women are much less likely to be full-time permanent employees). And, while there are virtually no female managing directors or general managers, of those with the simple grade of 'manager', 44% are women, with the proportion rising to 49% for assistant/duty managers and exactly one half for trainee managers. This could mean improving opportunities for women to progress to top management positions in future years. Alternatively, it could mean that women gradually get squeezed out as they move up the managerial ladder. Hicks's (1990) findings appear to support the latter interpretation.

FLEXIBILITY IN HOTEL EMPLOYMENT

Much attention has been devoted in recent times to the growing trend towards increasing flexibility of the workforce (especially in the manufacturing sector) in advanced economies (Atkinson 1985; Schoenberger 1988). This includes both numerical flexibility, whereby workers are taken on and let go on a ready basis by employers, and functional flexibility, whereby individual workers carry out a range of different tasks in a particular workplace.

In contrast to manufacturing, however, labour flexibility is a long-established feature of the hotel sector. In Britain, while functional

seasonal, with over 80% of seasonal workers being female, compared with one half of those who are full-time permanent.

Irish language courses provide almost entirely seasonal employment, most of which provides supplementary income for teachers and those providing accommodation (both largely female). Language centres (mainly involved in teaching English to continental Europeans) provide a sizeable amount of full-time permanent employment (about two fifths of the total), although the majority of jobs are seasonal. Teachers are the main occupational group involved, and these, in turn, are mainly women.

Craft production is something of an exception to the general pattern of women primarily being involved in either seasonal or unskilled (or both) forms of employment in this sector. The great bulk (70%) of employment in this activity is full-time permanent, a high proportion is skilled (almost one third are craft workers), yet women predominate (70% of all workers).

Overall, however, it is clear that the general pattern of employment in the miscellaneous tourism sector replicates that of the hotel sector, with women disproportionately represented in the sector's workforce by comparison with other sectors outside tourism, and that this is particularly the case with part-time and seasonal work, which itself is much more common throughout the tourism industry than it is in the economy generally.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing analysis shows that (tourism is a highly seasonal and unstable economic sector) in which part-time and unskilled employment are common features. Around one half of employment in the industry consists of seasonal and/or part-time jobs, while only a minority of workers have received any formal training. The low proportions of full-time, permanent and skilled jobs in the industry are strongly linked to the high proportions of the workforce consisting of women: some 60% of tourism jobs (excluding transport) are taken by women—twice the proportion for the total national workforce.

Irish tourism is also characterised by high levels of gender-segmentation by occupation, and high levels of numerical and functional specialisation. Flexible workers are, again, mainly female. While flexibility presents many advantages to employers, it also has attractions to many women workers, especially those with family responsibilities. Finally, tourism employment is disproportionately concentrated in the Western regions of Ireland. While

this significantly enhances employment opportunities for women in these regions, it also exacerbates regional income inequalities, due to the low-pay status of much of this employment.

These findings suggest that serious questions should be raised concerning the high levels of resources currently being invested in tourism development by both the Irish government and the European Community. The relatively high proportion of poor quality employment which typifies tourism ensures that the industry holds out little hope of helping Ireland close the income gap with the EC heartland. A strong emphasis on tourism growth therefore serves to confirm Ireland's peripheral status within the Community, relying on the spending in Ireland of wealth generated in highly productive, advanced economic activities in the core regions of Europe and other parts of the developed world.

The current surge of investment in tourism is, at least in part, stimulated by the need to create jobs, of whatever quality, as a short-term response to the mounting national unemployment problem. This reflects, once again, the tendency of successive Irish governments to allow short-term considerations to crowd out the formulation of long-term perspectives (Kennedy *et al.* 1988). As both the Telesis and Culliton Reports have argued, Ireland can only create a high-wage and high-employment economy through the development of a successful, indigenously-based manufacturing sector. It can be argued that the Irish workforce would ultimately be better served if the considerable public resources currently being directed into tourism were instead diverted to the pursuit of the latter objective.

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Images of Ireland in Europe: A Tourism Perspective

BERNADETTE QUINN

INTRODUCTION

This essay examines the image of Ireland and the Irish in Europe from the perspective of the tourist industry. Drawing on the findings of a content analysis study of tourist brochures designed to promote Ireland as a tourist destination, it attempts to define the imagery created and projected by tourism promoters. The essay begins by briefly discussing the growing significance of tourism for the global and Irish economies. Attention then focuses on the concept of imagery and its significance in the promotion of holidays. The main body of the essay explores the image of Ireland and the Irish as identified through an analysis of brochures produced by a range of tourism concerns promoting Ireland as a tourist destination in continental Europe. Finally, an attempt is made to place the discussion in a broader perspective and to consider the implications for the general image of Ireland among Europeans.

TOURISM TRENDS

Travel for pleasure accounts for between two thirds and three quarters of all world travel by volume. The main international tourist flows are concentrated in Europe and intra-European arrivals account for almost half of total international travel (Withyman 1987). At a global level, the tourist industry has in recent years experienced a downturn in fortunes as widespread recession and the Gulf crisis have had serious ramifications for international travel. Long haul travel has been seriously affected as the trend has been to take more frequent, shorter holidays and to do so closer to home.

The tourist industry, which is predicted to become the world's leading industry by the turn of the century, is an economic activity of growing