

ALONG THE WAY: A MULTI-METHOD EXAMINATION OF TOURISM, IDENTITY, AND COMMUNITY VALUES ON IRELAND'S WILD ATLANTIC WAY

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DESIREE JOAN FARRELL
BS, MSc

Discipline of Geography
School of Geography and Archaeology
College of Arts, Social Sciences, and Celtic Studies
University of Galway

Co-supervisors:
Dr Liam Carr
Professor Frances Fahy

September 2022



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

Abstract

Background Marine and coastal tourism plays an indisputably crucial role in global tourism, yet there remains a dearth of academic attention afforded to coastal tourism trails in the Irish context. Cultural aspects of tourism in Ireland are significantly linked, indicating the importance for its sustainable growth in the future. There is a synergism that exists between concepts of culture, tourism, and sustainability. However, contentions also exist where there are stakeholder conflicts, management priorities are disjointed, or the globalisation of cultural tourism resources outcompete authentic representations of culture and heritage. This research is an investigation into place, identity, sustainability through the lens of tourism using Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way as a case study. Through the use of interdisciplinary methods, this thesis explores the attitudes of those who 'do' tourism on the Wild Atlantic Way, the values and empowerment of the communities that host them, and perspectives of the National Tourism Development Authority which markets the initiative.

Aim The primary aim of this thesis is to critically examine how the Wild Atlantic Way initiative impacts communities along its route. Six main objectives guide the research, including an in-depth review of current academic and policy literature related to marine and coastal tourism trails, cultural and heritage tourism in Ireland, and community-led tourism projects. Foundational to the themes of this research, the identification and analysis of relevant conceptual perspectives of place making and identity is presented through the lens of geography and tourism. The development of a novel methodological research design to holistically explore the tourism system of the Wild Atlantic Way is employed to explore tourist attitudes of the initiative and experiences, investigate community sense of place and identities, and assess industry perspectives of the route. Development of a co-created practical framework (TOUR) serves as a guide for collaborative engagement between communities and agency partners for future development of the Wild Atlantic Way initiative.

Methods This thesis employs an innovative multi-method approach to holistically examine stakeholder perspectives of the Wild Atlantic Way initiative on Ireland's west coast. Tourist perceptions are gathered at six locations along the route via face-to-face survey questionnaires (n=603), deployed by the RedC research organisation. An in-depth community level

examination of the tourism initiative's impacts is conducted in the village of Rathmullan, Co. Donegal through the use of semi-structured interviews, Q method analysis, and a participatory mapping workshop (n=18).

Additionally, representatives from the National Tourism Development Authority, Fáilte Ireland, contribute their perspectives of the Wild Atlantic Way initiative through semi-structured interviews.

Findings Empirical findings indicate that tourists on the Wild Atlantic Way are seeking 'authentic' Irish experiences, framed by the unique geography of Ireland's west coast. Results highlight the value of local knowledge and place-making in the development of cultural tourism initiatives. Concepts of place are shaped and reshaped to reflect authentic representations of communities, while also evolving as a place for tourism. Authentic representations of community identities, culture, sense of place, and place attachment are essential for sustained success of community-based tourism along the Wild Atlantic Way. Reciprocity between partnered stakeholders of the Wild Atlantic Way is needed to foster sustainable growth of community-led tourism opportunities.

Conclusion and Discussion Research presented in this thesis shows that the Wild Atlantic Way, as a top-down initiative in practice, significantly impacts communities both economically and socially. Derived from results of Phase I and II of this study, the co-created Collaborative TOUR Framework is introduced. Within the context of the Rathmullan community, the TOUR Framework is reflected on as a tool for identifying and targeting tourism-related issues within a community to assess opportunities for sustainable development solutions. The use of the TOUR Framework recentres the community and local knowledge in planning and decision-making related to tourism development in their region, promoting empowerment, authenticity, and equity. A series of recommendations for future research are offered, related to the use of the innovative multi-method research design in exploring community-led tourism systems and the use of the TOUR Framework in the development and planning of tourism trails in other locations.

Table of Contents

Abstract	i
Table of Contents	iii
Author's Declaration	vii
Funding.....	viii
Acknowledgements.....	ix
Dissemination of Research.....	x
List of Tables.....	xii
List of Figures.....	xiii
List of Appendices.....	xiv
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	2
1.1 Overview of Research Scope.....	2
1.2 Case Study: Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way.....	4
1.2.1 Exploring Blue Growth Strategies - MOSES Project.....	7
1.3 Research Rationale.....	7
1.3.1 Research Aim and Objectives.....	8
1.4 Study Strengths and Contributions to Knowledge.....	9
1.5 Thesis Structure.....	10
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	14
2.1 Introduction.....	14
2.2 Geographies of Tourism.....	15
2.3 Cultural and Heritage Tourism.....	16
2.3.1 Cultural Tourism.....	16
2.3.2 Heritage Tourism.....	21
2.4 Tourism Trails.....	23
2.4.1 History of Tourism Trails.....	23
2.4.2 Marine and Coastal Tourism Trails.....	26
2.5 Drivers of Tourism.....	31
2.5.1 Tourist Motivations.....	32
2.5.2 Host Communities.....	35
2.6 Embedded Community and Cultural Identity.....	36
2.6.1 Practices of Place Making.....	36

2.6.2 Place Attachment and Place Identity.....	37
2.6.3 Tourism and Concepts of Authenticity.....	38
2.7 Evolution of Tourism in Ireland.....	39
2.7.1 Early Development of Irish Tourism.....	39
2.7.2 Contemporary Development.....	40
2.7.3 Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way.....	42
2.8 Chapter Summary.....	47
Chapter 3: Methodological Approach.....	50
3.1 Introduction to Study Methods.....	50
3.2 Site Description - Rathmullan, Co. Donegal.....	51
3.3 Constructivist Grounded Theory.....	53
3.4 Multi-Method Approach.....	54
3.5 Phase I - Quantitative Methods.....	56
3.5.1 Tourist Motivations - Marine and Coastal Tourism and Leisure Survey.....	56
3.5.2 Survey Analysis - Multidimensional Scaling of Wild Atlantic Way activities.....	58
3.6 Phase II - Qualitative Methods Exploring Community Perspectives on the Wild Atlantic Way.....	60
3.6.1 Case Study - Working Within a Community.....	60
3.6.2 Semi-structured Interviews.....	63
3.6.3 Q Methodology.....	71
3.6.4 Participatory Mapping Workshop.....	77
3.7 Unprecedented Times: Impact and Reflections of COVID-19.....	82
3.8 Limitations.....	84
3.9 Positionality and Ethics.....	86
3.9.1 Positionality and the Research Process.....	87
3.9.2 Ethical Considerations.....	89
3.10 Co-Creation - Feedback from Participants.....	91
3.11 Chapter Summary.....	93
Chapter 4: Tourist Insights from Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way.....	95
4.1 Introduction.....	95
4.2 Context and Phase I Objectives.....	95
4.3 Findings.....	97
4.3.1 Wild Atlantic Way Tourist Motivations.....	100
4.3.2 Spatial Analysis.....	104
4.3.3 Tourist Attitudes of the Wild Atlantic Way Experience.....	108
4.4 Emerging Trends and Implications for the Wild Atlantic Way.....	109
4.5 Chapter Summary.....	111

Chapter 5: A Community-Level Examination of Tourism on the Wild Atlantic Way - Rathmullan, Co. Donegal.....	114
5.1 Introduction.....	114
5.2 Part I - Q Methodology and Community Factors.....	114
5.2.1 Q Analysis.....	114
5.2.2 Identified Community Factors.....	120
5.2.3 Looking Beyond the Factors - Community Consensus.....	129
5.2.4 Q Discussion.....	132
5.3 Part II - Participatory Mapping and Values.....	133
5.3.1 Values and Local Knowledge.....	133
5.3.2 Mapping Rathmullan Community Values.....	134
5.3.3 Participatory Mapping Discussion.....	138
5.4 Chapter Summary.....	140
Chapter 6: Community-Led Tourism Partnerships in Ireland - the Co-Created TOUR Framework.....	142
6.1 Introduction.....	142
6.2 Framework Development.....	142
6.2.1 Governance Structures in Tourism Planning and Development.....	142
6.2.2 Recentring the Community.....	143
6.2.3 Collaborative TOUR Framework.....	145
6.3 Reframing Barriers: Opportunities for the TOUR Framework in Rathmullan.....	150
6.3.1 Legislative.....	151
6.3.2 Social and Emotive.....	152
6.3.3 Economic.....	154
6.3.4 Infrastructure.....	155
6.4 Discussion.....	159
6.5 Chapter Summary.....	160
Chapter 7: Conclusion.....	163
7.1 Research Overview.....	163
7.1.1 Building a Multi-Method Approach.....	167
7.1.2 Wild Atlantic Way Tourism Trends.....	169
7.1.3 Community Case Study - How members of the Rathmullan community have taken ownership of their tourism product(s).....	170
7.1.4 Community-Generated Collaborative Framework - the TOUR guide to practical engagement with Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way.....	171

7.2 Research Contributions.....	173
7.2.1 Academic Contributions.....	173
7.2.2 Policy Contributions.....	174
7.2.3 Community Contributions.....	175
7.3 Reflections and Limitations.....	176
7.4 Future Research.....	178
7.5 Concluding Remarks.....	179
Bibliography	181
Appendices.....	226

Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis represents work that is entirely my own, acknowledging and citing work and ideas of others where necessary. This work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of an academic degree at this or any other university.

Name: Desiree Joan Farrell

Signed: _____

Dated: 30/09/2022

Funding

Funding for this research was awarded by the University of Galway's College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies Galway Doctoral Research Scholarship Scheme (2018-2021), the Higher Education Authority's Costed Extension Scheme (2022), and the University Write-Up Bursary (2022). Additional funding relating to research contributing to the EU Interreg project MOSES was received from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the EU Interreg Atlantic Area Programme 2014–2020 (EAPA_224/2016 MOSES).

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my co-advisors, Dr. Liam Carr and Professor Frances Fahy, for their continued guidance and support over the course of this research. Thank you both for your academic and professional mentorship and your tireless commitment and enthusiasm for this work; we three make a great team! This thesis would not have been possible without your guidance and friendship, for which I am forever grateful – go raibh míle maith agat.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to my Graduate Research Committee, Dr. Patrick Collins, Dr. Therese Conway, and Professor Stephen Hynes, for their advice and support through the progression of this research. I am extremely grateful to my examiners: Professor Ulf Strohmayer, Dr. Patrick Collins, and Professor Arielle Levine of San Diego State University for their time, consideration, and thoughtful feedback during the VIVA.

This research was made possible through funding by the Galway Doctoral Research Scholarship with additional funding received from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the EU Interreg Atlantic Area Programme 2014–2020 (EAPA_224/2016 MOSES) for elements contributing to the EU Interreg project MOSES. I would like to extend thanks to the collective MOSES research team for a rewarding research experience. I would also like to express my gratitude to the Rathmullan community for sharing their time and experience while collaboratively participating in this research.

To the staff and fellow PhD students in the Discipline of Geography – thank you for your advice, constructive feedback, and encouragement, with special thanks to Drs. Eugene Farrell, Kevin Lynch, Kathy Reilly, Valerie Ledwith, Professor Mary Cawley and Michelle Curran.

Special thanks to the Ryan-Sharkey family – thank you for being our family away from home.

To my family and friends – thank you for your love, support, and consistent encouragement during this journey!

Finally, to Amy – thank you for going on this adventure with me. Words cannot express my gratitude for your love and unwavering confidence throughout this process.

Dissemination of Research

Publications

Book chapter publication:

- **Farrell, D.** and Carr, L. M. (2022) 'Places of wander: the value of community attachment for coastal tourism', in Ilovan, O. -R. and Markuszewska, I., (eds.) *Preserving and Constructing Place Attachment in Europe*. Switzerland: Springer Nature.

Peer reviewed journal publication:

- Kelly, C., McAteer, B., Fahy, F., Carr, L., Norton, D., **Farrell, D.** Corless, R., Hynes, S., Kyriazi, Z., Marhadour, A., Kalaydjian, R. and Flannery, W. (2021) 'Blue growth: a transitions approach to developing sustainable pathways', *Journal of Ocean and Coastal Economics*, 8(2).

Policy Briefs and Reports:

- Fahy, F., **Farrell, D.**, Carr, L., Hynes, S., Coreless, R., and Norton, D. (2021) 'Pathway for Sustainable Development of Marine and Coastal Tourism Trails', *MOSES Policy Brief Series, No. 3*.
- Fahy, F., Carr, L., Norton, D., **Farrell, D.**, Corless, R., Hynes, S. (2020) *Blue Growth Pathway for Marine and Coastal Tourism Trail Development*, in Flannery, W. (ed.) Pathways Series. NUI Galway and Queen's University Belfast: MOSES Project.

Conference Presentations

- **Farrell, D.** (2021) 'Building a Sustainable Marine Tourism Trail Through Community Voices: Rathmullan, Co. Donegal'. *Donegal Marine Tourism Conference*, recorded presentation. 23 March 2021.
- **Farrell, D.** (2019) 'The Need for Community Voices in Marine Spatial Planning'. *7th EUGEO Congress in conjunction with the 51st Conference of Irish Geographers*, NUI Galway, Ireland. 15-18 May 2019.
- **Farrell, D.** (2018) 'On the Subject of Typology: How Coastal Communities' Subjectivities Reveal Intrinsic Value'. *The Conference of Irish Geographers*, Maynooth University, Ireland. 10-12 May 2018.

Symposium Presentations

- **Farrell, D.** (2020) 'Building a Sustainable Marine Tourism Trail Through Community Voices: Rathmullan, Co. Donegal'. *Sustainable Marine Tourism Trail Development – An Irish Perspective*, ZOOM Symposium. 17 November 2020.

- **Farrell, D.** (2019) 'How Community Structures Influence Touring Routes'. *10th Annual Marine Economics and Policy Research Symposium*, Marine Institute, Oranmore, Ireland. 28-29 November 2019.
- **Farrell, D.** (2019) 'On the Need for Community Voices'. *Galway Geography Symposium 2019*. NUI Galway, Ireland. 3 May 2019.

Poster Presentation

- **Farrell, D.** 'MOSES: Maritime, Ocean Sector and Ecosystem Sustainability: fostering blue growth in Atlantic industries'. Whitaker Institute Research Day, NUI Galway. 19 April 2018.

List of Tables

Chapter 2

Table 2.1: Munsters' generalised typology of cultural tourism resources.....	17
Table 2.2: Qualitative research development and methodological shifts in tourism studies.....	20
Table 2.3: Classification criteria of tourist trails.....	24
Table 2.4: Calls for future action and tourism route research.....	26

Chapter 3

Table 3.1: Qualitative methodological approaches.....	54
Table 3.2: Comparison of quantitative and qualitative research styles.....	55
Table 3.3: Tourism theme stakeholder interview questions.....	65
Table 3.4: Identity theme stakeholder interview questions.....	66
Table 3.5: Local ecological knowledge stakeholder interview questions.....	66
Table 3.6: Profile of participating stakeholders.....	68
Table 3.7: Q set statements, organised by theme.....	76
Table 3.8: Online Q-Methodology software packages compared.....	83

Chapter 4

Table 4.1: Demographics of 603 tourist survey respondents.....	98
Table 4.2: Factor loadings of respondents' country of origin by activities.....	99
Table 4.3: Highlights reported by tourists on the Wild Atlantic Way.....	100
Table 4.4: Goodness of fit and stress measures for MDS typology analysis.....	104

Chapter 5

Table 5.1: Unrotated factor matrix.....	115
Table 5.2: Cumulative communalities matrix.....	116
Table 5.3: Factor loadings, with defining sorts flagged by PQMethod.....	117
Table 5.4: Five-factor solution for comparison.....	118
Table 5.5: Z-scores and factor array Q Sort of each statement, by factor.....	119
Table 5.6: Demographics for Q participants (n=13), by factor.....	121
Table 5.7: Statements organised using cross-group mean Z-score variance..	130

Chapter 6

Table 6.1: Rathmullan and Wild Atlantic Way change drivers.....	144
--	-----

List of Figures

Chapter 1

- Figure 1.1:** The six designated regions of Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way route.....5
Figure 1.2: Brand pyramid developed for the Wild Atlantic Way.....6
Figure 1.3: Coherence between thesis chapters.....11

Chapter 2

- Figure 2.1:** The multi-level concept in transition studies.....30
Figure 2.2: Plog's psychographic model of tourist behaviour.....32
Figure 2.3: McKercher's cultural tourist typology.....34
Figure 2.4: Detailed map of the Wild Atlantic Way route.....43
Figure 2.5: Diagram of main policy approaches in sustainable tourism.....44

Chapter 3

- Figure 3.1:** Case study site location: Rathmullan village.....52
Figure 3.2: Diagram of theoretical framework and research process.....56
Figure 3.3: Six tourist survey locations along the Wild Atlantic Way.....58
Figure 3.4: Sample of thematic coding process for interview data.....70
Figure 3.5: Q Sort grid used to rank the 25 statements of the Q set.....75
Figure 3.6: Base map for the Rathmullan Participatory Mapping Workshop.....80

Chapter 4

- Figure 4.1:** Tourist motivations for traversing the Wild Atlantic Way.....102
Figure 4.2: Graphed results of MDS analysis of activity preferences.....105
Figure 4.3: Tourist reports of three indicators at six survey locations.....107
Figure 4.4: Ranked-value tourist attitudes of Wild Atlantic Way.....108

Chapter 5

- Figure 5.1:** Stakeholder produced map from participatory mapping workshop
in Rathmullan.....135
Figure 5.2: Composite map of Rathmullan community values.....136

Chapter 6

- Figure 6.1:** Community-generated Collaborative TOUR Framework.....146

List of Appendices

Appendix A: Marine and Coastal Tourism and Leisure Survey 2019 (MOSES Project tourist survey).....	226
Appendix B: Interview Schedules (Community & Fáilte Ireland).....	238
Appendix C: Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form.....	240
Appendix D: Interview Transcripts (Rathmullan and Fáilte Ireland Stakeholders).....	242
Appendix E: Q statements, listed.....	328
Appendix F: Research Ethics Committee Approval Letter.....	329
Appendix G: Rathmullan Stakeholder Highland Radio Interview Transcript.....	330
Appendix H: MOSES Project Tourist Survey Infographic.....	332
Appendix I: Individual Participant Maps from Rathmullan’s Participatory Mapping Workshop.....	334

Chapter 1

Introduction

1

Introduction

1.1 Overview of Research Scope

This research is an investigation into place, identity, and sustainability through the lens of tourism. The conceptualisation of tourism remains subject to contestation in the literature. Contributing to the conceptual ambiguity of tourism phenomena is the diversity of paradigmatic approaches to its study (Meethan, 2001). According to Hall *et al.* (2014), “tourism constitutes just one form of leisure oriented temporary mobility”. Social scientific examinations of tourism mobilities through a geographic lens date to the early 20th century (Hall and Page, 2014). Despite varying approaches of tourism research, the embeddedness of modern tourism practices and processes demonstrate the fundamental connection between geographical tenets of space and place (Hall *et al.*, 2014). Connecting people to the mobility practice results in an examination of the tourist encounter, exploring *how* tourists experience a destination while “doing tourism” (Crouch *et al.*, 2001). Meaning is assigned to tourism destinations and the tourism practice through the embodied encounter of places, cultures and sites, representing the role tourism plays in the construction of contemporary culture and society (*ibid.*). In fact, concepts of culture and tourism are so interlinked that it has been suggested that tourism *is* culture (Urry, 1990).

Cultural aspects of tourism relate to the shared knowledge, values, language (among other characteristics) that portray a group’s particular way of life. In essence, it is the distinctive structure of a community or social group that exemplifies a pragmatic knowledge rooted in shared beliefs, traditions, and customs. Cultural tourism, defined as travel or movement with the intent to experience new cultural attractions and activities, relies on the consumption of culture and heritage resources (Richards, 1996). Heritage resources, both tangible and intangible, carry meaning in the embedded memory of humanity as they are generationally inherited – connecting aspects of place and culture through time. In recent years, aspects of heritage have been recognised as important resources for tourism development, especially in rural areas (Timothy and Nyaupane, 2009; Boyd, 2017; Dela Santa and Tiatco, 2019). Of particular interest for this development trend is the management of heritage resources to maintain

cultural values for present and future generations (McKercher and du Cros, 2002). However, the exclusionary precedent for prioritising management of tangible heritage assets over intangible ones highlights the sometimes problematic feedback loop between cultural heritage and tourism.

Tourism trails exemplify a unique tourism resource – at once, tangible resources and encompassing intangible heritage assets and cultural experiences. While trails have aided in mobility practices throughout human history, the evolution of the tourism trail reflects a shift in travelling for trade and necessity to leisure and enjoyment. As socially constructed representations of historical and contemporary heritage, cultural tourism routes can be developed and managed as a means to achieve socio-cultural and economic regional goals (Moulin and Boniface, 2001; Rech, 2021). In management of tourism trails, concepts of place identity, place attachment, and authenticity are essential for success and rely on cooperative efforts of stakeholder networks.

Coined in the 1970s, the term ‘place making’ denotes “multi-faceted interventions for the planning, design and management of public places to improve the environment and quality of life of communities (Sofield *et al.*, 2017: p. 3). The place making concept has been co-opted in tourism planning and marketing as a means to intentionally shape the identity or image of a place (Lew, 2017). In terms of tourism development, the practice of top-down placemaking seeks to strengthen place attachment for tourists. In turn, this increases tourist motivations to revisit destinations (Hosany *et al.*, 2016; Stylos *et al.*, 2017). However, organic practices place-making (bottom-up) involve more authentic representations of community identity (Lew, 2017) and have been shown to enhance destination sustainability (Sofield *et al.*, 2017).

Contemporary use of the sustainability concept was defined in the 1987 Brundtland Report as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. Broadly, the term sustainability is used to indicate actions or projects aimed at conserving a particular resource (Niñerola *et al.*, 2019). However, contextually sustainability comprises four distinct pillars or foci: human, social, environmental, and economic. When applied to tourism, the socio-cultural, environmental and economic pillars emerge as priorities. Major changes in tourism demand have contributed to the shift toward sustainability as a factor for competitiveness of tourist destinations (Santos *et al.*, 2022), as evidenced by the eco-tourism phenomenon. Sustainable development of tourism resources and destinations requires participation

and involvement of local communities (Richards and Hall, 2002). This socially responsible, participatory model of tourism development and supply is referred to as community-based tourism, reflecting the symbiotic relationship between locals and the tourism product.

The key ideas introduced in this opening section illustrate the synergism that exists between concepts of culture, tourism, and sustainability. However, contentions also exist where stakeholder goals conflict, management priorities are disjointed, or the globalisation of tourism resources outcompetes authentic representations of culture and heritage. This thesis aims to critically investigate these conceptual themes within the Irish context, using an under-researched marine and coastal tourism trail as a case study. This case study is formally introduced in Section 1.2 of this chapter, situating the conceptual themes defined above. Section 1.3 presents the research rationale and scope of this study and delineates the overall aim and objectives of this work. Next, Section 1.4 describes identified strengths of the study design and outlines contributions to knowledge. Finally, the overall thesis structure is presented in Section 1.5, clarifying the coherence between chapters.

1.2 Case Study: Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way

In 2018, Ireland welcomed 11.18 million overseas visitors, marking a 5% increase from the previous year (Fáilte Ireland, 2019; Tourism Ireland, 2019). Revenue from the overseas visitor market exceeded €5 billion for the first time, contributing to the €9.4 billion total value of tourism expenditure to the economy that year (3% of GDP). The tourism industry in Ireland directly supports 225,500 people, accounting for over 10% of total employment (OECD, 2020). However, the rising trend in visitor numbers and the significance of tourism in the Irish economy is hard-fought, reflecting substantial government efforts in the last decade to create new tourism experiences.

In an effort to revitalise the Irish economy after devastating impacts of the 2008 recession, a new tourist destination and experience was developed by Fáilte Ireland (translated from Irish means “Welcome Ireland”), the national tourism board (Fáilte Ireland, 2014). Launched in 2014, the Wild Atlantic Way is the world’s longest marked marine and coastal tourism trail, following Ireland’s west coast for over 2,500km

(Figure 1.1). Devised as a tourism product of scale and singularity, the route is the amalgamation of extant roads and trails across six regions, with a new over-arching brand identity to set it apart (Fáilte Ireland, 2015). This brand identity, illustrated in Figure 1.2, represents an example of imposed, marketable placemaking practice. Through marketing campaigns targeting overseas tourist markets, the Wild Atlantic Way has become synonymous with images of a wild and rugged unspoilt Irish landscape.

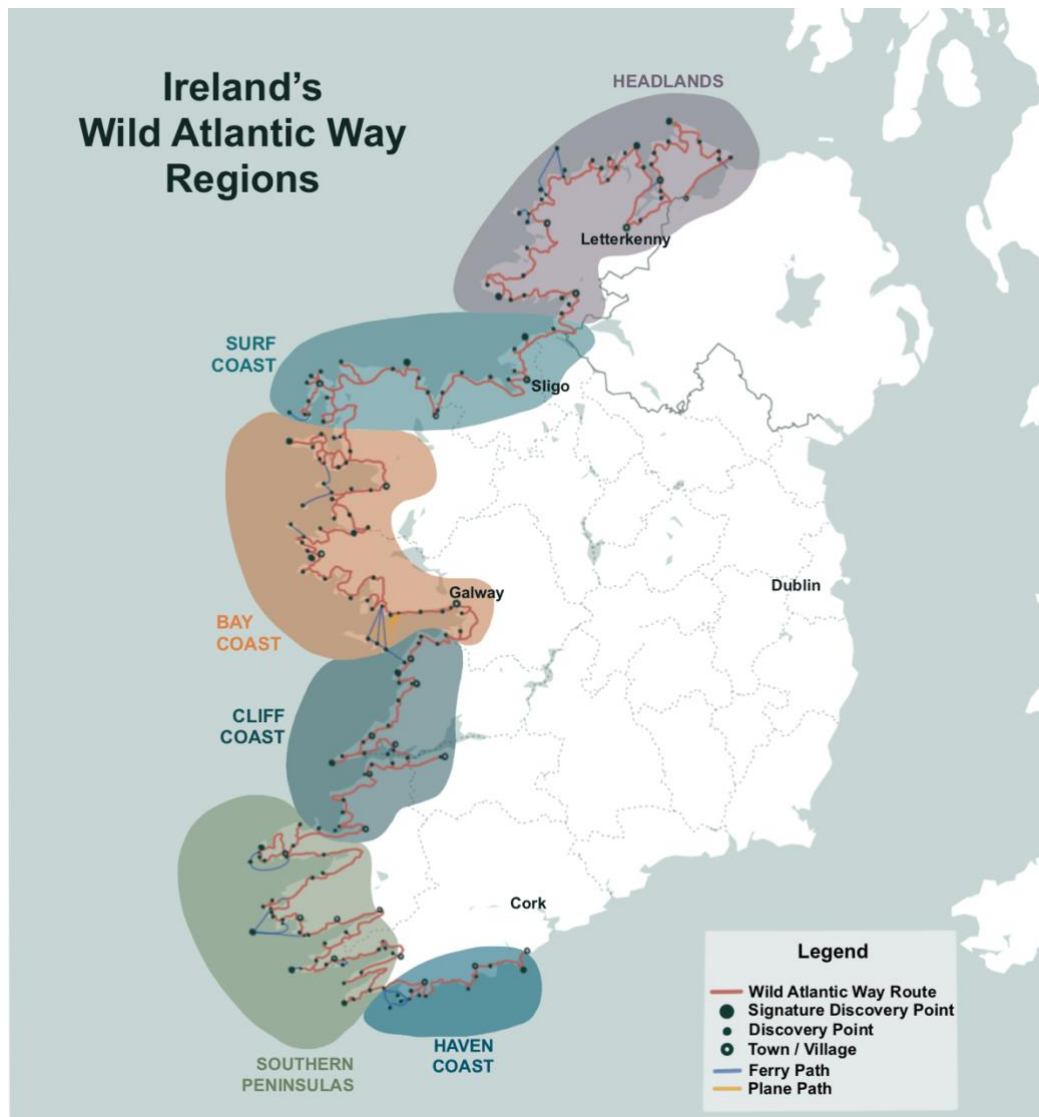


Figure 1.1 The six designated regions of Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way route (source: author's own, adapted from Fáilte Ireland).

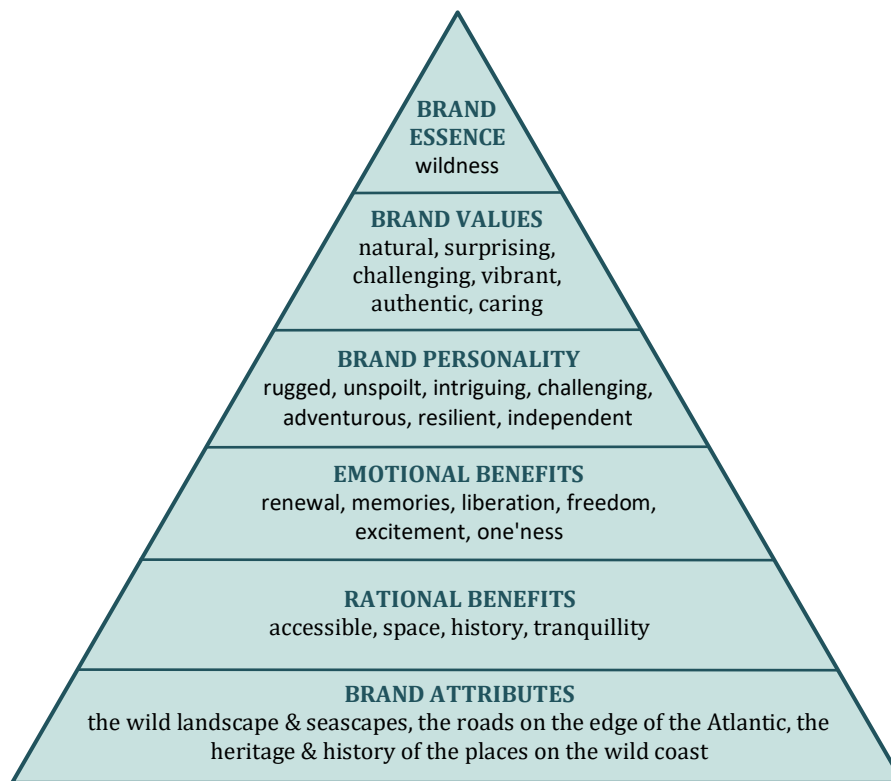


Figure 1.2 Brand pyramid developed for the Wild Atlantic Way (source: adapted from Fáilte Ireland's *Third Party Brand Usage Guidelines*).

Irish culture, heritage, and people are also built into the brand identity of the initiative as attributes, presenting a singular idea of what tourists ought to expect when travelling along the Wild Atlantic Way. This standardised identity, however, in some ways conflicts with overall goals of the initiative by divesting communities along the route of their unique identities and offerings. Despite being a top-down initiative in practice and implementation, sustained success and development of the Wild Atlantic Way relies on continued support and innovation of host communities, but communities were given little guidance on how to best embrace the new identity of the Wild Atlantic Way experience. Additionally, some communities incorporated on the route had minimal established tourism opportunities previously and found themselves competing with long-established tourism locations, putting them at an early disadvantage. Through community engagement methods this research seeks to use local expertise and knowledge to uncover challenges faced by communities along

the Wild Atlantic Way, and co-create solutions to advance the development of the initiative.

1.2.1 Exploring Blue Growth strategies – MOSES project

Europe's ocean economy has received increased policy attention in the last decade, evidenced by the publication of works aiming to foster sustainable development and growth of the EU's marine resources (*e.g.* the EU's Blue Growth Strategy, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, etc.). Current and potential anthropogenic impacts on marine and coastal environments in the Atlantic space requires research attention as a key indicator of ocean health and ecosystem goods and services.

MOSES is a European Union multinational research project which seeks to understand and quantify sustainable Blue Growth pathways for key marine sectors in the Atlantic Arc. Involving eight partners representing five member states of the Atlantic Area, the project comprises case studies related to ports and shipping, marine energy, commercial fishing, aquaculture, and marine and coastal tourism. Utilising a 'living lab' approach, these case studies aim to serve innovation in dynamic, real-life contexts focusing on working together with stakeholders to address complex challenges through co-creation¹. There exists an overlap of aims related to the MOSES Project and this thesis. As the researcher was a contributing member of the Irish (NUI Galway) team, aspects of the overarching research question addressed by this thesis were incorporated within the Irish case study examining coastal and marine tourism trails.

1.3 Research Rationale

The identification of knowledge gaps in a review of relevant literature (Chapter 2) demonstrates the foundational justification for undertaking this specific research. Tourism encompasses a complex intersection of disciplinary interest, ultimately suiting it to interdisciplinary academic examinations. The human geography element of tourism is inseparable from nearly any applied research scope; serving as a common thread for research related to the practice-process dialectic, examinations of economic, environmental or socio-cultural aspects of tourism, marketing, and management (López-Bonilla and López-Bonilla, 2021).

¹ More about the MOSES Project and published deliverables can be found at mosesproject.eu

In the Irish context, tourism plays a significant role in the economy. To the extent that current national tourism policy, *People, Place and Policy: Growing Tourism to 2025*, is aimed at sustainable growth through implemented action plans. The most recent action plan, published in December 2018, expressed focus on the following areas through 2021: policy and research, marketing Ireland as a visitor destination, enhancing the visitor experience, supporting local communities and coordinating the industry (Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, 2018; OECD, 2020). As this study was designed and started prior to the publication of the *Tourism Action Plan 2019-2021*, and includes assessments of all government-reported foci, it is validated as demonstrating a particularly timely and relevant examination using the Wild Atlantic Way as a case study.

Epistemologically, this study applies a stakeholder-focused, multi-method approach to interpret phenomenological elements of human experience and perspectives regarding an established tourism trail. The novel methodological approach utilised in this investigation is inductive and iterative, underpinned by constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006). Adopting components of social representations theory (Moscovici, 1972; Marková, 2008), emphasis is placed on exploring three perspectives of the same system, in an attempt to provide a holistic report of the social representation of cultural tourism resources on the Wild Atlantic Way.

1.3.1 *Research aim and objectives*

The work presented in the following chapters intends to address acknowledged gaps in the academic and policy literature related to experiential perspectives of marine and coastal tourism trails, especially in Ireland. The aim of this study is to critically examine the community-tourist system of the Wild Atlantic Way by considering the question, *how does the Wild Atlantic Way initiative impact communities along its route?* Six main objectives were developed to holistically address this research question:

- (1) critically review interdisciplinary academic and policy literature on marine and coastal tourism trails, cultural and heritage tourism in Ireland, and community-led tourism projects;
- (2) identify and analyse relevant conceptual perspectives of place making and identity;
- (3) develop a novel, multi-methodological approach that holistically explores the tourist-community system on the Wild Atlantic Way;
- (4) compile one of the largest, robust datasets related to tourist motivations and perceptions of the Wild Atlantic Way route;

- (5) investigate community perspectives, sense of place, and identities of a case study village to offer a nuanced understanding of empowerment and willingness to engage with the Wild Atlantic Way tourism initiative; and
- (6) develop a co-created practical framework as a guide for engagement between communities and agency partners to achieve common goals related to success of the Wild Atlantic Way.

The objectives outlined here guide the progression of this research and the presentation of results in this thesis. Through developing and implementing a multi-methodological approach informed by constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006) and social representations theory (Moscovici, 1972), the intention of this study is to investigate geographic lenses of space and place by considering concepts of cultural tourism trails, identity, and stakeholder engagement on the Wild Atlantic Way. The practice of place making (both top-down and bottom-up) inform the assessment of tourist motivations and authentic representations of villages along the coastal tourism trail.

1.4 Study Strengths and Contribution to Knowledge

In response to identified knowledge gaps in the literature, this study incorporates four key strengths that build on existing research of cultural and heritage tourism, marine and coastal tourism trails, and tourist-community perceptions. First, this study is designed to address the foundational concepts with a focus on the Irish context. At the start of this research project in 2018, the Wild Atlantic Way (as a trail that was marketed by tourism authorities) was entering its fourth year in existence. The initiative was shown to be an under-researched concept in the academic literature, representing an enterprising area of interest. Secondly, the exploration of tourism experiences and perceptions from three perspectives (tourists, host community stakeholders, and Fáilte Ireland, the National Tourism Development Authority) offers a robust and holistic depiction of the Wild Atlantic Way system that is yet to be done. Linking insights from tourists as they experience the Wild Atlantic Way to perceptions, values, and concerns of the communities that host them, allows for the development of opportunities related to agency goals that directly reflect the needs of stakeholders. The third key strength of this research is the iterative work conducted in an active community. It is argued in this thesis that utilising multiple methods of inquiry within the community allows for a deeper understanding of embedded aspects of community identity and values.

These understandings may not have been uncovered had a singular approach been adopted.

The fourth and arguably the most significant strength of the work presented in this thesis is the practical and theoretical contributions to knowledge within academic, policy and community contexts. The main contributions are discussed in detail throughout this thesis but are outlined briefly here:

- (1) This thesis reflects research completed utilising an innovative methodological design to explore interdisciplinary concepts of tourism and culture through a geographical lens. This multi-method approach can be further adapted or used in future research.
- (2) Results offer policy-relevant insights directly related to current EU and Irish tourism policy and action plan goals.
- (3) This thesis responds to the increased prioritisation of community stakeholder engagement in policy language for sustainable tourism by presenting the co-created TOUR collaborative framework. Use of the model is reflected on from the points of view of various network partners to consider what “good engagement” might look like from different roles.

1.5 Thesis Structure

This introductory chapter has provided a contextual foundation and general overview of the research topic for the reader. Key terms have been defined within the context of this thesis, and the theoretical background of the research approach was outlined. The research aim and objectives were described and justified through the identification of current knowledge gaps. Figure 1.3 illustrates the interrelationships between all chapters presented in this thesis, as outlined below.

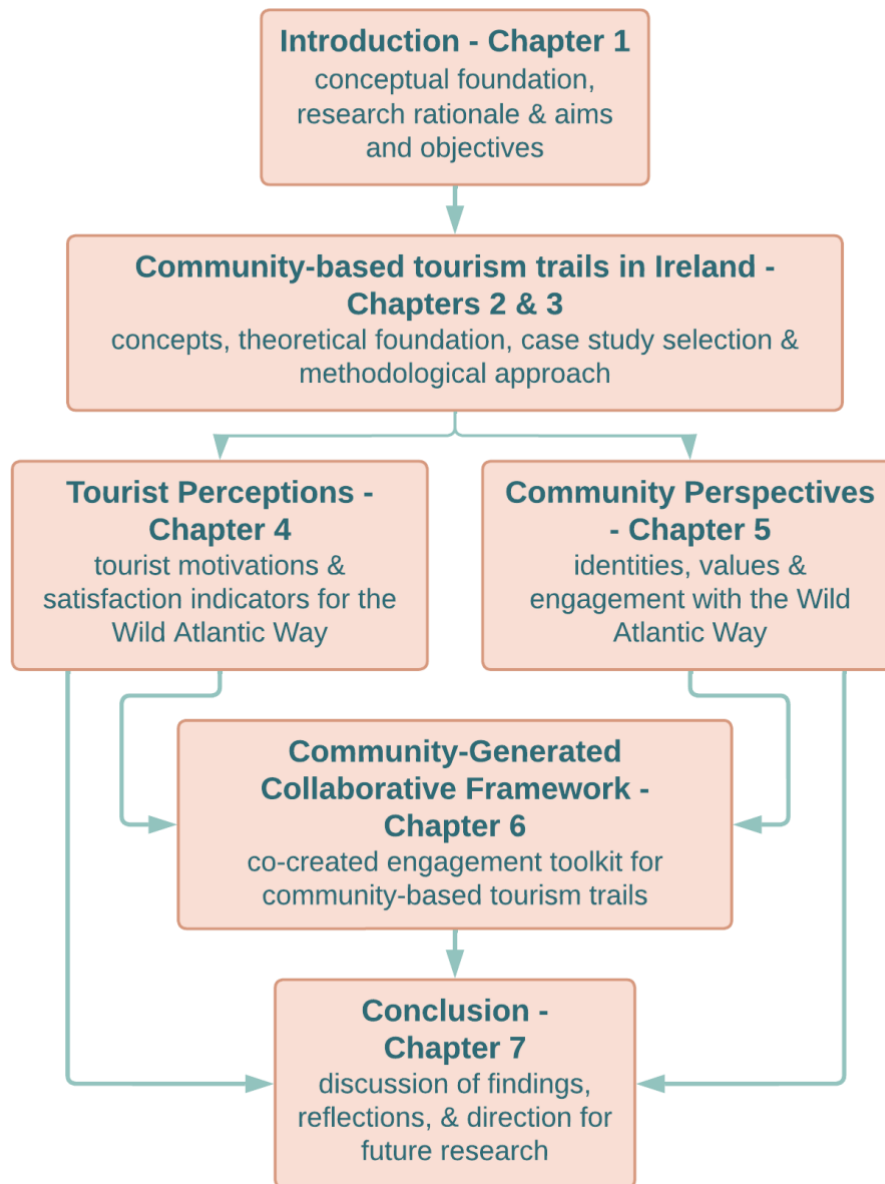


Figure 1.3 Coherence between thesis chapters.

Following this chapter, Chapter 2 expounds upon relevant literature in a systemic examination of foundational concepts that form the basis for this research. Chapter 3 outlines the novel multi-methodological approach employed in this investigation. Chapter 4 presents data and results from Phase I of research, which focuses on tourist perceptions of the Wild Atlantic Way initiative. Conversely, Chapter 5 outlines the data and findings from Phase II which investigates community perspectives, values, and identities as they relate to the tourism route. The culmination of research conducted in Phase I and Phase II is presented in Chapter 6 as a co-created

Chapter 1 – Introduction

toolset to be utilised by communities and decision-making stakeholders in future community-based tourism development. Finally, an overall discussion is provided in Chapter 7, offering study conclusions, reflections on limitations, contributions to existing knowledges, and directions of future research.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the contextual foundation for this thesis and the chapters that follow. Of primary focus in this literature review are themes related to geographies of tourism, which is introduced in Section 2.2. Following this, Section 2.3 introduces concepts of cultural and heritage tourism, exploring the contested nature of the terms in the literature, their inextricable link. Section 2.4 reviews literature on tourism trails, outlining mobilities and the pervasive use of trails in historical tourism development. The significance of marine and coastal tourism trails is presented, demonstrating the continued need for research in this area, especially as it relates to the exploration of drivers of tourism and sustainable futures.

Tourist motivations and host communities are subsections developed in Section 2.5 which elaborates on drivers of tourism and how they are academically examined. The review of literature on host communities leads into Section 2.6 which elaborates on concepts of community and cultural identity within the scope of tourism. This section offers a distinction in the practices of placemaking in tourism, a discussion concerning place attachment and identity, and a review of how these concepts are related to a community's authenticity. Finally, Section 2.7 provides an overview of the evolution of tourism in Ireland as a means of introducing the broad case study location. Narrowing the focus, and tying the themes outlined thus far together, Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way is presented. The tourism initiative is represented as an example of a coastal tourism trail and the Living Lab approach to its exploration within this thesis is described.

Given that there are many diverse geographical approaches to tourism, this chapter is not meant to provide a comprehensive review of each theme, but instead will focus on each concept as it relates to community-centred applications. The presentation of traditional methodological approaches utilised in investigating concepts outlined in this review serves to demonstrate an understanding of methods in the

discipline, and highlights gaps within the literature to be addressed the following chapters of this thesis.

2.2 Geographies of Tourism

Coles and Hall (2006, p. 290) describe tourism as “just one form of a number of inter-linked mobilities, and as such tourism cannot be inspected in ‘splendid isolation’”. This fundamental connection between space and place (i.e. where tourism occurs), and the mobility of tourists is integral to the examination of tourism itself. The many practices and mobilities that are utilised within tourism can contribute to the understanding of tourism as a practice, both geographically and socially. The study of tourism is marked by a steady, significant increase in diversification and specialisation, with roots established in the early 20th century (Meinecke, 1929; McMurray, 1930; Jones, 1933; Joerg, 1935; Gilbert, 1939; Pangburn, 1940). This evolution has been ushered on by the assertion that “tourism is not a discipline (Tribe, 1997), but rather a subject highly suitable for academic study by researchers from several disciplines” (Butler, 2015: p. 20).

With space, place, location and environment as the core tenets of geographical inquiry, geographers are well suited to evaluate tourism in an in-depth and holistic manner. Indeed, tourism is described as “above all else a geographical phenomenon in all its manifestations” (Timothy, 2018a: p. 167). Within the study of tourism, geographers have made significant contributions to the academy leading to the diversification of the sub-field of tourism geographies. Historical accounts of tourism development and tourism trails were chronicled by Towner (1985; 1996). Gibson (2008) systematically situated tourism in post-war geography, while reviewing contemporary interest areas. Lew has contributed to defining a “geography of tourism” (2001), reported on socio-cultural (2009a), economic (2009b), and physical environmental impacts of tourism (2009c), and explored concepts of place making (2017). Tourism development has been described by Butler (2015) as a process which has characterised human behaviour for centuries, with tourism research marked by various foci over time: factual case studies, shallow theoretical development, and paradoxes and fallacies. Through their work, Hall and Page (2011; 2014) have evaluated recreation and tourism as separate, yet integrated, aspects of the wider leisure phenomenon. Indeed, Timothy (2018a, p. 166) asserts that “geographers were among the very earliest academics to ponder, theorise and examine the socio-spatial manifestations of tourism.” Perhaps related to the

movement toward post-disciplinarity (Coles *et al.*, 2006), this influence is representative of the many paradigmatic approaches for the study of tourism and tourism management (Hall and Page, 2011).

Examining the tourism encounter, once the destination is reached, connects concepts of space and time, by attempting to understand how the tourist interacts with the environment. Crouch *et al.* (2001, p. 254) describe the encounter as tourists “doing tourism”. In this manner “being a tourist is to practice”, either exercising agency or subjectivity, often in search of authenticity (*ibid.*). Alternatively, Gibson (2008, p. 419) refers to the notion of the encounter as “the manner in which tourism creates a range of sites for intensified collisions and assemblages”. Through either lens, the way we encounter destinations, cultures, and places assigns meaning to them – they are encountered in an embodied way (Crouch *et al.*, 2001). Methodologically, acknowledging embodiment and relational practices requires an interactive approach that investigates and represents the role tourism plays in contemporary culture, society, and the construction of identities (*ibid.*).

2.3 Cultural and Heritage Tourism

2.3.1 Cultural tourism

The concept of cultural tourism is a contested one in the literature. It has been used widely with many attached meanings, due in part to it consisting of two terms which are equally difficult to define. The terms ‘culture’ and ‘tourism’, are consistently intertwined compounding their elusiveness. Urry (1990) states “tourism is culture”, while MacCannell (1993) suggests that “all tourism is a cultural experience”. Most definitions agree that cultural tourism is, in part, the consumption of culture by tourists (Richards, 1996). ‘Culture’, and similarly ‘cultural tourism’, tend to be examined in the literature as either *a process* (Cohen, 1979; Urry, 1990; Mousavi *et al.*, 2016) or *a product* (MacCannell, 1976; Boniface, 1995; Richards, 2001). The two assessments overlap, in that tourism is the means through which culture process is transformed to cultural products (Richards, 1993). Munsters (1996) offers a general typology of cultural tourism resources (i.e. products), differentiated into two categories, namely *attractions* and *events*, which frame the social elements of cultural tourism (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1 Munsters’ generalised typology of cultural tourism resources, based on two categories of cultural tourism resources (source: adapted from Richards, 1996: p. 110).

Attractions	Monuments	Religious buildings Public buildings Historic houses Castles and palaces Parks and gardens Defences Archaeological sites Industrial-archaeological buildings
	Museums	Folklore museums Art museums
	Routes	Cultural-historic routes Art routes
	Theme Parks	Cultural-historic parks Archaeological parks Architecture parks
Events	Cultural-historic events	Religious festivals Secular festivals Folk festivals
	Art events	Art exhibitions Art festivals
	Events and attractions	Open monument days

Cultural tourism, as a social phenomenon and area of academic study, emerged after World War II, during a time of increased leisure travel. In Europe, travel was used as a means to enhance cultural understanding and to rebuild post-war economies. International travel and the consumption of culture as a tourism product grew through the 1960s and 1970s and by the 1980s, ‘cultural tourism’ had garnered sufficient recognition to be considered a niche market (Richards, 2018). Interest and growth in cultural tourism in the 1980s and 1990s was propelled by what Hewison (1987) deemed the ‘heritage boom’. The World Tourism Organisation (WTO, 1985) adopted a wide definition of cultural tourism as “all movements of persons, ... because they satisfy the human need for diversity, tending to raise the cultural level of the individual and giving rise to new knowledge, experience and encounters”. But this definition did little

to differentiate cultural tourism from general tourism, rendering it inadequate for measuring or managing cultural tourism. In a 1988 study of cultural tourism in Europe, the Irish Tourist Board (now Fáilte Ireland) included tourist motivation as a crucial element of defining cultural tourism, stating it as “travel undertaken with the intention, wholly or partly, of increasing one’s appreciation of Europe’s cultural resources” (Irish Tourist Board, 1988). This new definition allowed for the distinction between types of cultural *tourists*, but still did not fully capture the concept of cultural tourism.

The 1990s saw a shift in cultural tourism which reflected its widespread use as a development tool and mass market phenomenon. This period of growth coincides with a fragmentation of the studied aspects of cultural tourism into additional niche markets (e.g. heritage tourism, gastronomic tourism, agri-tourism, dark tourism, etc.) (Richards, 2007; 2018). Richards (1996, p. 24) offered a new, conceptual definition of cultural tourism based on ways tourists consume culture: “the movement of persons to cultural attractions away from their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs”. This definition involved consumption of cultural artefacts of the past, as well as ‘ways of life’. In an attempt to address the changes reflected in emerging research, the 22nd Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation, reported an updated operational definition for cultural tourism:

“Cultural tourism is a type of tourism activity in which the visitor’s essential motivation is to learn, discover, experience and consume the tangible and intangible cultural attractions/products in a tourism destination” (UNWTO, 2017: p. 18).

Through its conceptual and technical evolution, cultural tourism and its contributions have been cemented in the tourism industry. The UNWTO (2001) asserts that “mankind’s inherent desire to see and learn about the cultural identity of different parts of the world” exists as a pillar of the tourism industry. When examined in scale, cultural heritage stimulates national pride via domestic tourism, and stimulates a respect and understanding of other cultures via international tourism (UNWTO, 2001). In the UNWTO *Report on Tourism and Culture Synergies* (2018), it was found that 89% of national tourism agencies included concepts of cultural tourism in their policies and development strategies, citing expected growth over the next five years. Additionally, the cultural tourism market was estimated to comprise over 39% of international trips.

Mirroring the general progression of cultural tourism in practice and inquiry, research methods have also developed over time. Determined by positivist or phenomenological research paradigms, approaches are either quantitative or qualitative (or, as is increasingly common, mixed), with methods that align with each approach (Melkert and Vos, 2010). Methodology adopted in early academic research of cultural tourism was positivist and quantitative, reflecting a shift in geographical inquiry away from 'subjective' research methods (Provenzano and Baggio, 2020). A prime example of quantitative empirical data collection related to cultural tourism is highlighted by the Association for Tourism and Leisure Education (ATLAS) Cultural Tourism Research Project, which has been ongoing since 1991 (Melkert and Vos, 2010; Richards, 1996; 2010). The project initially set out to develop a European perspective on cultural tourism, and has since collected data from regions all over the globe. Participant survey questionnaires are the primary method utilised in the ATLAS project, and for research seeking to better understand tourist demographics, motivations, and behaviour on holiday (Witt *et al.*, 2003; Richards, 2010). The questionnaire survey continues to be a crucial quantitative method for cultural tourism research today, along with: regression-based methods, factor analysis, structural equation modelling and clustering (Mazanec *et al.*, 2010), descriptive statistics (Nunkoo *et al.*, 2013), econometric models (Song *et al.*, 2009), and time-series analysis (Peng *et al.*, 2014) among others.

Qualitative research methods in cultural tourism studies are inductive and aim to obtain in-depth insight into social realities and perceptions based on a representative, or small, number of respondents (Melkert and Vos, 2010). Much of this work, stemming from the class-based nature of cultural tourism consumption, drew on the work of Bourdieu (1984) evaluating cultural capital and distinction. Methodological shifts in qualitative research development of tourism studies were presented by Denzin and Lincoln (2005), tracking changes from the early 1900s (see Table 2.2). Illustrative examples of qualitative methods utilised in cultural tourism research include case studies (Yin, 1994), grounded theory (Punch, 2005; Charmaz, 2006), ethnography (Fielding, 1996; Punch, 2005), and action research (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2000; Punch, 2005), among others (Melkert and Vos, 2010). Perhaps the most important development, post-2005, has been related to the need for more critical perspectives in methods (Ateljevic *et al.*, 2007). Chambers (2007), in a review of tourism research, characterises the four principles of critical theory as *interdisciplinary*,

reflective, dialectical, and critical. This interdisciplinary and reflexive shift has resulted in an increase of utilising a wider range of research tools.

Table 2.2 Historical development of qualitative research and marked methodological shifts in tourism studies (source: adapted from Denzin and Lincoln, 2005)

Period	Methodological Shift
Traditional Period (early 1900s–WWII)	‘Objective accounts reflecting the positivist paradigm
Modernist Period (post-WWII–1970s)	Formalisation of qualitative methods, rigorous qualitative studies of important social processes
Blurred Genres (1970–1986)	Employment of a wide range of paradigms, methods and strategies
Crisis of Representation (mid-1980s)	Search for new models of truth, method and representation
Postmodern Period of Experimental Ethnographic Writing (1990–2004)	Making sense of crisis of representation through new compositions of ethnography, representations of the ‘Other’ and repressed voices
Post-Experimental Enquiry (1995–2000)	Experimentation with novel forms of expressing lived experience: incl. literary, poetic, autobiographical and multi-voiced
Methodologically Contested Period (2000–2004)	Tension, conflict, methodological retrenchment
The Future (2005–)	Methodological backlash associated with ‘Bush science’ and the evidence-based social movement

The use of mixed methods in tourism research has become increasingly common in the literature (Tosun, 2006; Li *et al.*, 2009; Mason *et al.*, 2010; Heimtun and Morgan, 2012; Tutenges, 2012; Khoo-Lattimore *et al.*, 2017; Pafi *et al.*, 2020; Zhang *et al.*, 2021). Creswell (2009) deemed the increase in mixed methods research as the ‘third methodological movement’. In response to the “paradigm wars” of the 1980s where it was deemed impossible to mix methods from incompatible paradigms (Gage, 1989), Greene and Caracelli (2003, p. 95) claim that “paradigms are indeed social constructions, historically and culturally embedded discourse practices, and therefore neither inviolate nor unchanging”. Mixed method

approaches tend to adapt the most suitable methodologies, regardless of quantitative or qualitative distinction, to address the questions posed in the research. In this regard, it is important that researchers using mixed methods exercise reflexivity, not unlike that called for in qualitative research (Charmaz, 2006; Walker *et al.*, 2013; Khoo-Lattimore *et al.*, 2017). As a primary example demonstrated in this thesis, quantitative survey data was used to assess tourist perspectives and motivations. This was paired with multiple qualitative methods to gain insight on host community values and perspectives: interviews, Q method, and participatory mapping. Individually, these methods are valid and would provide useful information in answering elements of the research question. However, when used together, these methods complement strengths and shortcomings of the others to illustrate a more holistic view of the larger picture (see Chapter 3 for more depth on chosen methods).

2.3.2 *Heritage tourism*

As a cornerstone of cultural tourism, heritage (especially built, tangible heritage) is similarly difficult to define (Richards, 2018). Timothy (2011) suggests that little distinction exists between cultural tourism and heritage tourism. Graham *et al.* (2016) describe heritage as comprising what we inherit from the past, use and value today, and hope to bequeath to future generations. Because of the inextricable link between culture and heritage, many scholars have asserted that heritage tourism is the most pervasive type of cultural tourism (Timothy, 2011). Among those scholars, the discipline of geography has long informed the study of heritage tourism, due in part to the inseparable nature of time and space (Lowenthal, 2015; Graham *et al.*, 2016; Timothy, 2018a).

Heritage as an ideological construct (Smith, 2006), has been scrutinised principally through questions of how it presents tangible (Garrod and Fyall, 2000; Nasser, 2003; Tweed and Sutherland, 2007) and intangible (Graham, 2002; Chhabra *et al.*, 2003; González, 2008; Dilsaver, 2009; Robertson, 2009) vestiges of the past (Kelly, 2005; Fonesca and Ramos, 2012; Dela Santa and Tiatco, 2019). Despite tangible and intangible heritage being fundamentally different, “both carry meaning and the embedded memory of humanity” (Bouchenaki, 2003: p. 4). In recent years, heritage tourism has experienced an increased focus in both research and policy, especially in rural and peripheral territories (Stuart *et al.*, 2005), and has been acknowledged as a resource that ought to be developed for tourism more generally (Smith, 2003; Timothy and Nyaupane, 2009; Boyd, 2017; Dela Santa and Tiatco, 2019). In turn, the resulting commodification

of heritage, the “heritagisation” of spaces, and new concerns centring on authenticity (McManus, 1997; Halewood and Hannam, 2001; Prideaux, 2003; Smith, 2003) have emerged as areas of study.

Through the early 2000s, there was a move from descriptive, empirical case studies toward research efforts to engage deeper with cultural heritage tourism, examining both the societal implications of heritage-based tourism and the many ways people experience visited sites (Timothy, 2018b), as well as heritage as a motivation for tourism site selection (Poria et al., 2006). Globalisation has contributed greatly to the shifting focus of cultural tourism from site-specific, fixed features like those on the European Grand Tour to a broader range of intangible heritage and cultural attractions (Richards, 2001; 2007; Du Cros, 2012; UNWTO, 2018).

Cultural heritage management is defined as the “systematic care taken to maintain the cultural values of cultural heritage assets for the enjoyment of present and future generations” (McKercher and du Cros, 2002: p. 43). The core principles of cultural heritage management are determined by international conventions and charters such as the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, and are translated into various national policies and legislation. Since the main consumption of heritage is through tourism practices, it is mutually beneficial for management strategies to include partnerships with stakeholders, management bodies and communities in order to conserve and promote the sustainable use of these heritage assets (McKercher and du Cros, 2002). Historically, heritage management in practice has privileged protection of tangible elements over intangible features (Cleere, 1989; Waterton, 2005; Waterton and Smith, 2008; Prangnell *et al.*, 2010), but this narrow outlook has been criticised in the literature as exclusionary (Godwin and Weiner, 2006; Smith, 2006; Prangnell *et al.*, 2010).

Critiques of heritage management practices tend to address one of two distinct approaches: ‘living heritage’ and ‘cultural landscape’. Living heritage emphasises the links between significant heritage places and the relevance to people’s actions in the present (Bradley, 2008; Sullivan, 2008). Representations of living heritage include language, dance, cultural and traditional practices, among others. Cultural landscape represents both the social and cultural context these living heritage practices occur in. Smith (2006, p. 29) recognises this concept of heritage as not solely tangible things, but socio-cultural lived experience – “a set of values and meanings”. The concept of living heritage is often characteristic of Indigenous approaches to cultural heritage management, and can be further generalised

as local-, or community- stakeholder approaches. Prangnell *et al.*, (2010) argue that a strong partnership with community stakeholders, prioritising their specific and holistic knowledge, can balance the power relations of heritage management strategy development and produce sustainable recommendations. To prioritise the community's values and ways of life (heritage), their shared pragmatic knowledge (culture) must be understood. Fundamentally, this requires an assessment of the community's values and beliefs, as proposed in the study outlined in this thesis.

2.4 Tourism Trails

2.4.1 *History of tourism trails*

Mobilities are affirmed to be an inherent aspect of human nature (Flognfeldt Jr., 2005; Ateljevic, 2014; Butler, 2015). Mobility practices, both past and present, have been aided by trails and routes which have proven to be vital to travel and tourism over the centuries (Timothy and Boyd, 2015). While tourism itself is extremely old and is well established in many societies, scale and participation are two aspects that have changed over time (Butler, 2015). The history of trails and routes has similarly paralleled this change from travelling for trade and necessity to travelling specific to tourist enjoyment.

Three periods of modern tourism development are recognised historically, each identifiable by their primary tourism archetype: 1600 – 1800 (the Grand Tour), 1800 – 1900 ('Package Tour'), and 1900 onwards (modern, mass tourism) (Sharpley, 2006). Prior to the Grand Tour era, early civilisations utilised travel routes predominantly as part of a trading system or as a means of religious pilgrimage (e.g. the Silk Road, the Incense Route, and the Amber Road) (Flognfeldt Jr., 2005; Sharpley, 2006). Traditionally, pilgrimage was a "journey resulting from religious causes" (Barber, 1993: p. 1), but today also includes secular journeys (Collins-Kreiner, 2010; Scriven, 2014). The Grand Tour Era of Europe, which established many contemporary tourist routes by determining a regular spatial pattern of destinations, is often credited as the basis for the perception of tourism as a predominantly-Western experience, making travel a status symbol for the wealthy (Towner, 1985, 1996; Ateljevic, 2014; Timothy and Boyd, 2015). Cultural shifts as well as technological advances in steam and rail travel resulted in a decline in the popularity of the Grand Tour, and saw the emergence of seaside resorts as well as packaged tours (Sharpley, 2006; Butler, 2015). The century-long popularisation of the packaged tour led to

the marked increase in both domestic and international tourism in the 20th century, resulting in the modern mass-tourism model (Sharpley, 2006; Ward-Perkins et al., 2020). The shift toward the mass tourism model is distinguished by the relative communal consumption of tourism-related transportation, accommodation, and experience (Page, 2019).

Butler (2015, p. 19) describes the history of tourism as being characterised by “inertia and dynamism”. While traditional patterns of travel and behaviours have remained consistent, technological advances and changes in tourist motivations and preferences have resulted in an increase in tourist destinations on a global scale. This expansion of tourist experiences has seen the establishment of tourism trails and routes as embodied, experiential spaces of consumption (MacLeod, 2017). As linear embodiments of geographical space, tourist trails can range in scale from localised walking trails to ‘mega trails’ (or ‘mega routes’) spanning thousands of kilometres (Timothy and Boyd, 2015). Despite the well-established legacy of trails and routes, a universal classification scheme has been difficult to render in the academic literature (Stasiak, 2006; Zawadka and Pietrzak-Zawadka, 2018) due to the differing characterisations of linear routes depending on, but not limited to, the following conditions: geographical location of trail, size and scale, and resource links (Timothy and Boyd, 2015). Table 2.3 highlights some of the primary classification characteristics and distinctions of tourism trails and routes.

Table 2.3 Classification criteria of tourist trails (source: adapted from Stasiak, 2006).

Classification Criterion	Types of Tourist Trails
Main Theme	Nature: landscape, natural curiosities, bird watching, etc. Culture: architecture, history, folklore, biographical, literary, etc.
Motivation (purpose of travel)	sightseeing; recreation; pilgrimage (religious or otherwise); sport; etc.
Means of Transportation	walking; cycling; driving; railway; sailing; etc.
Trail Rank	main; secondary; connecting; accessing
Trail Extent (course)	urban; local; regional; national; transnational; subcontinental; continental
Marking (continuity)	Continuous: sign-posted; not sign-posted Discontinuous: series of recommended sites/locales
Operation Period	seasonal; year-round; etc.

Timothy and Boyd (2015, p. 3-4) offer an important distinction between tourism ‘trails’ and ‘routes’; a trail is considered “a visible linear pathway of many varieties, which is evident on the ground and which may have at its roots an original and historical linear transport or travel function”. Alternatively, a route is defined as “generally more abstract and often based on a modern-day conceptualisation and designation of a circuit or course that links similar natural or cultural features together into a thematic linear corridor”. For this thesis the term route will be used, as the case study for this research is an amalgamation of many tourist trails and locations combined based on their shared natural and cultural features, into one mega-route.

As a form of tourism route, cultural heritage routes are described as being social constructions that represent the historical and contemporary heritage of a region, nation, landscape, or features, along with its communities and their customs and practices (Rech, 2021). The development of routes and networks can be utilised as means to achieve social goals (e.g. communication, cultural exchange, education) or economic goals (e.g. trade, tourism) (Moulin and Boniface, 2001). These routes, as developed cultural resources, can be branded as experiences and marketed, sold, and bought (McManus, 1997; Fullerton *et al.*, 2009). Ideal implementation of routes requires a balance between network participants, mirroring the *horizontality* of the tourism route itself – in other words, the network should consist of individuals or groups with a common objective and of approximately equal power. In many cases, the vertical network consists of large organisations, either transnational (e.g. UNESCO, the EU), national, or regional government bodies at the top, and local stakeholders, grassroots organisations, and communities at the bottom (Moulin and Boniface, 2001).

Research methods used for studying aspects of tourism trails and cultural heritage routes are diverse. Some of the most prominent methods include ethnographic approaches (Bogacz-Wojtanowska and Góral, 2017; Rech, 2021), case studies (Timothy and Boyd, 2015; Pandey and Rogerson, 2021; Kelly *et al.*, 2021), quantitative and economic methods (Briedenhann and Wickens, 2004; Duarte-Duarte *et al.*, 2021), and algorithmic modelling or mapping approaches (Flognfeldt Jr., 2005; Baker and Verstockt, 2017). As it relates to tourism routes and networks, Moulin and Boniface (2001, p. 248) called for eight points of future action for research to assess and identify (see Table 2.4). Of the eight recommendations for future research, this thesis aims to address, in some part, each point framed within the

context of Ireland’s Wild Atlantic Way. How these calls-to-action relate to the research undertaken in this thesis are elaborated on in Chapter 3.

Table 2.4 Calls for future action and research related to tourism routes and networks (source: Moulin and Boniface, 2001).

Research and identification of:
Tourists’ reactions to routes as tourism products.
Impact and outcome (beneficial, and any harmful) of routes and networks, and especially whether results are of heritage being conserved and socio-economic development being achieved.
Whether balance and fairness are being achieved among network participants.
Whether ‘weaker’ members of networks have adequate support and are permitted enough ‘voice’.
Whether ‘top-down’ initiatives for routes and networks filter down to work satisfactorily at ground level.
Whether commercial and competitive imperatives mean that private-sector representatives and tourism operators do not feel disposed to network.
Whether existing formulae and methods for establishing routes and networks need any alteration (for max. efficacy).
What key components/ core elements of success exist and whether a model of general applicability can be identified.

2.4.2 *Marine and coastal tourism trails*

With 80% of all global tourism taking place in coastal areas, it is indisputable that the oceans and coasts play a vital role in global tourism. 183 countries have coastlines, with 37% of the global population living in coastal areas (UNWTO, 2014). Marine and coastal tourism trails, therefore, have the ability to organise environments and create tourist spaces (Bender, 2015; MacLeod, 2016). These tourist spaces represent “the etching of modern social practices onto the landscape through tourism” (Crang, 2006: p. 49) as physically, culturally and symbolically constructed spaces.

Similar to the terrestrially-focused tourism trail model, sustainable marine and coastal trails are developed to provide individuals with an immersive and educational experience that benefits local communities without damaging local landscapes. Successful examples of marine and coastal tourism trails range in size (e.g. Rota Vicentina trail - 110km in Portugal; Wales Coast Path - 1400 km; Ireland’s Wild Atlantic Way - 2500

km) and provide valuable best practice lessons for bringing future initiatives to market (*ibid.*, p.6).

2.4.2.1 Threats and barriers

Marine and coastal tourism is particularly vulnerable to pressures due to the highly dynamic nature of marine and coastal environments (Hall, 2001). European coastal zones in particular are subject to frequent and intense storms, sediment flows, and strong currents, which result in changes to the coastal landscape (European Commission, 2000). Marine and Coastal tourism is heavily reliant on environmental quality (Arabadzhyan *et al.*, 2020) and often takes place in what are considered fragile environments (Nurse *et al.*, 2014). Particular to coastal and marine environments are issues resulting from climate change (e.g. sea-level rise, ocean acidification due, biodiversity and habitat loss).

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MEA, 2005) revealed how environmental degradation negatively impacts human well-being. This assessment, coordinated by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), determined that anthropogenic ecosystem change had occurred more rapidly in the 50 years leading up to the assessment than any comparable timeframe in human history, resulting in a substantial biodiversity loss. The MEA was critical in promoting the Ecosystem Services (ES) concept, as it provided the basis on which to describe the services that ecosystems provide to people. Further, the MEA led to the UK National Ecosystem Assessment (UKNEA, 2011), which effectively integrated ES thinking into international decision making and planning (Satz *et al.*, 2013).

Coastal tourism is recognised as the largest tourism sector with exposure to established risks of ecological degradation and climate change highlighting the need for more sustainable tourism options in coastal areas (Hall, 2008; Becken, 2013; Gómez-Martin *et al.*, 2014; Fahy *et al.*, 2020; Dumitrescu *et al.*, 2021; Pandey and Rogerson, 2021). Additionally, tourist demand for access to vulnerable environments is increasing (McCarthy, 2018; Schweinsberg *et al.*, 2021). A key element to developing and implementing marine and coastal trails involves the management strategies that they rely on, especially for trails of great distances that span multiple regions.

2.4.2.2 Sustainable solutions and management

In the ES paradigm, 'services' are informed by society because they represent human needs (Small *et al.*, 2017). These services are generated from functioning (i.e. healthy) ecosystems and indirectly or directly

contribute toward meeting human needs (*ibid.*). The ES model is broken into four categories: Provisioning, regulating, supporting, and cultural services (FAO, 2022). ‘Non-material’ goods and services are grouped under cultural services category by the MEA, intended to integrate immaterial, mental and experiential values of ES. But this categorisation leads to an unclear understanding in the literature of what ‘culture’ is in this context (Small *et al.*, 2017). Ultimately, culture and cultural services which include aspects of tourism, are underpinned by a series of “social, communicative, and productive processes which determine how an individual (or community) interact with their environment” (*ibid.*, p. 61). Within the context of the coastal space, proximity of residents to the coast has been found to influence their perceptions of cultural and provisioning services (Allen *et al.*, 2021). This connection, and subjective valuing of cultural services, points to the necessity of community-value assessment to best incorporate local ecological knowledge in developing sustainable, science-based solutions for planning and development.

In 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development’s Brundtland report (titled *Our Common Future*) defined the term *sustainability* as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. This definition continues to serve as the basis for concepts of sustainability and sustainable development. Applying the concept of sustainability to tourism includes “tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities” (UNEP and UNWTO, 2005). Taking all of these considerations into account inevitably results in conflicts of resource use and space, and requires management solutions that aim to achieve the goals of sustainability.

Marine resource management is a sub-field of geography that examines the socio-cultural and spatial dimensions of marine resources, management and policy (Levine *et al.*, 2015). Approaches to marine resource management include single resource management (e.g. catch limits, gear permits and regulations) as well as holistic marine spatial planning efforts (e.g. marine protected area establishment). These can be implemented through centralised agents, (top-down) or decentralised, community-level management. Recent research has shown that sustainable development and conservation of socio-ecological systems, like marine systems and aspects of tourism, requires interdisciplinary and cross-sector research efforts and collaboration (Hallegatte and Mach, 2016; Claudet *et al.*, 2020; Friedman *et al.* 2020). Integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) is

an iterative, dynamic management process that aims to promote sustainable coastal zone management (European Commission, 2000). As a holistic strategy, it includes information collection, strategy and planning, decision making, management and implementation, utilising informed participation with a full range of stakeholders. Ultimately, ICZM seeks to balance the social, cultural, economic and recreational needs of coastal environments. Marine and coastal tourism trails are a (often cultural) concept that are influenced by human values, perceptions, and economic livelihoods on a spatial scale and as such can be considered in the remit of marine resource management (*ibid.*).

Another approach concerned with fostering long-term, sustainable changes of societal systems is the sustainable transitions governance approach which seeks to identify change drivers, conceptualise how existing systems may respond to those changes, and facilitate sustainable pathways to long-term solutions (Kelly *et al.*, 2018; 2020; Rudolph *et al.*, 2020). Within the sustainable transitions approach there are three levels that frame how transitions can occur: niches, regimes, and landscapes, illustrated in Figure 2.1 (Van Der Brugge *et al.*, 2005; Kelly *et al.*, 2021). The three levels function on a scale from macro-level landscape pressures to micro-level niche practices, each of which put pressure on the regimes to change. In the multi-level perspective, regimes consist of the current arrangement of rules, institutions and practices that form the structure of a given policy area. Landscape pressures could include economic, political, cultural, or environmental pressures that are not controlled by the regime, but can influence regime change. In turn, niche practices place pressure on regimes to change in a bottom-up dynamic and can represent technological advancement, local-level initiatives, individuals.

Considering a coastal tourism trail as an example, the landscape-level environmental impacts of increased storms on the coast would put pressure on the tourism regime to address protection and maintenance strategies for the future of the trail. Niche practices, such as community-empowered conservation of local heritage sites can influence new tourism opportunities for the region while promoting preservation of cultural resources. The goal of sustainable transitions in any context is to develop pathways to overcome existing barriers and maximise opportunities (Kelly *et al.*, 2021).

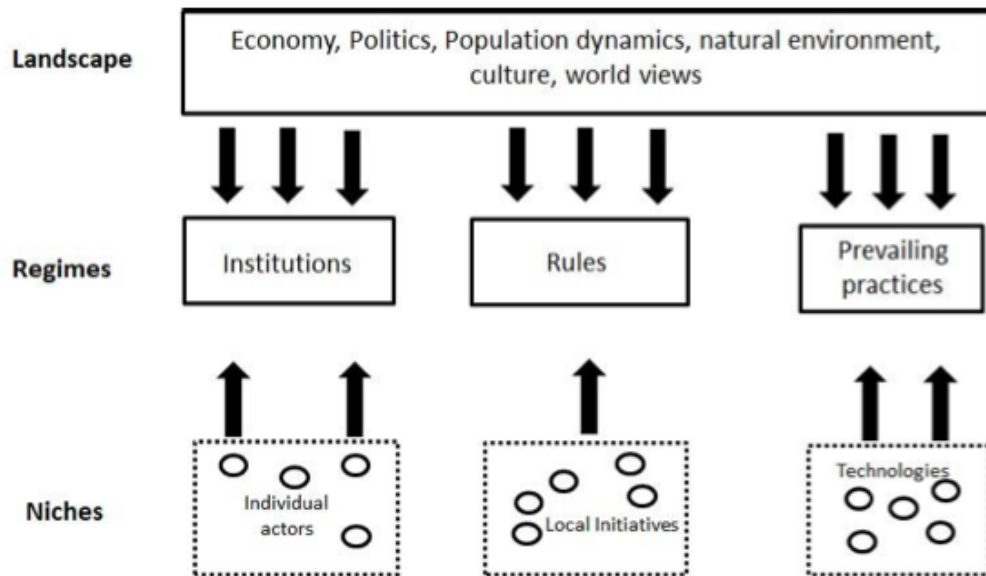


Figure 2.1 The multi-level concept in transition studies, with examples. (Source: adapted from Geels, 2002 as presented in Kelly *et al.*, 2021).

2.1.1.1 An EU-level assessment

At the EU level, coastal tourism is considered one of the seven established sectors of the EU Blue Economy². In fact, it is the largest sector across the Blue Economy in terms of gross value added (GVA) and employment. Of the total €650 billion turnover the EU Blue Economy experienced in 2018, coastal tourism accounted for almost €231 billion (European Commission, 2021c). The sector comprises three sub-sectors: Accommodation, Transport, and Other Expenditure (European Commission, 2021a). Marine and coastal tourism activities include water- and land-based activities, as well as services and industries involved at various stages (Fahy *et al.*, 2020).

The Atlantic Action Plan, launched prior to Brexit by the EU in 2013, focused on its five Atlantic States (Portugal, Spain, France, the United Kingdom, and Ireland) to advance the marine economy of the area by 2020 (European Commission, 2013). Due to the Atlantic Action Plan calling for the promotion of cultural and natural tourism products in coastal areas, there

² The Blue Economy (BE) concept is strongly linked to the UN's concept of sustainable development and refers to all the economic activity directly correlated with the oceans and coastal areas. BE aims to effectively manage water resources as significant natural resources and to preserve them for present and future generations (Kabil *et al.*, 2021). See also: European Commission COM/2021/240.

has naturally been an increased interest in the implementation of sustainable marine and coastal tourism trails (Fahy *et al.*, 2020).

Current EU policy aims to maintain Europe’s status as a prominent tourist destination while maximizing the contribution of marine and coastal tourism through the European Commission’s Blue Growth Strategy (European Commission, 2017). The Blue Growth Strategy seeks to foster “a smart, sustainable and inclusive Europe” by focusing growth on five sectors: biotechnology, renewable energy, aquaculture, mineral resources, and marine and coastal tourism (*ibid.*).

2.5 Drivers of Tourism

The globalisation of tourism is driven by five main elements: economic, technological, social, demographic, and political drivers (Dwyer, 2015). Perhaps the most prioritised are the economic drivers, where tourism is utilised as a tool for development and economic growth. These drivers put pressure on the tourism industries and markets, forcing change in either direction. This concept can be visualised using the aforementioned transitions approach; if we examine the drivers as landscape-level pressures that cannot be controlled by the regime (tourism), we can assess the micro-level innovations (niche pressures) that encourage bottom-up regime change. For example, social and demographic pressures like consumerism and population growth will put pressure on local tourism initiatives to adapt for more sustainable outcomes to avoid negative environmental and social effects. The niche pressures in a similar example might be the development or improvement of infrastructure that accommodates more visitors while preventing degradation of tourism initiatives.

Narrowing in on the actors in play – those who ‘do’ tourism, and those who host them – researchers have long sought insight into the mechanisms and drivers of tourism at a smaller scale. Research related to tourist motivations has a mixed legacy as it is generally subjected to *post priori* rationalisation and interpretation by those engaging in tourism practices, by businesses or markets seeking to advertise to tourists, and by those researching (Prentice, 2004). Additionally, despite an increased emphasis on community and stakeholder participation in tourism, understanding of host attitudes and motivations is fragmented (Dragouni and Fouseki, 2018).

2.5.1 Tourist motivations

Cohen (1972) was among the first to publish a proposed typology to conceptualise the term ‘tourist’. He classified tourists based on a scale of institutionalisation, where they exist in one of four categories: organised mass tourist, individual mass tourist, explorer, or drifter. Critiques of Cohen’s contribution to developing a working tourist typology are related to the over-generality of the categories (Wickens, 2002) and efforts have been made to refine since (Pearce, 1982; Redfoot, 1984; Wickens, 2002).

Plog (1974) developed the psychocentric-allocentric model which linked psychological and personality traits to tourist behaviour. Plog’s model was based on research seeking to better understand tourism destination decline. The model is illustrated on a bell curve, with *psychocentric* and *allocentric* representing extremes on a continuum (Fig. 2.2). In this model, psychocentric tourists were described as being less adventurous, with preference for familiar or popular destinations. Contrarily, allocentric tourists were characterised as being adventurous and risk-takers. Between these types were intermediate groups: mid-centric (with balanced combinations of both psychographic traits), near-psychocentric and near-allocentric (who tend to lean in either direction from the centre) (Cruz-Milán, 2017).

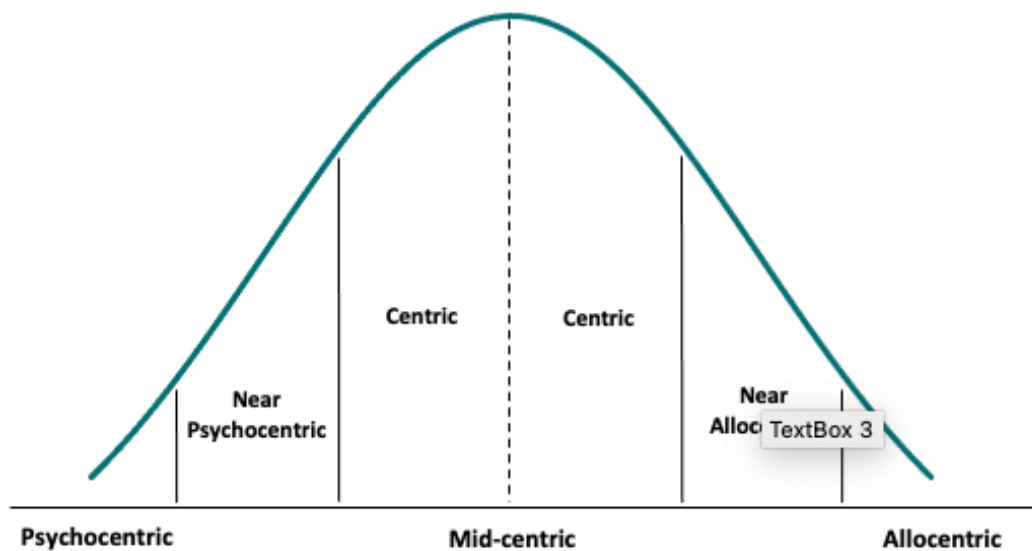


Figure 2.2 Plog’s psychographic model of tourist personality and behaviour.

While these early models were foundational in the development of tourist typologies, they were debated in the literature based on their applicability (they were either viewed as too general or too specific). Similarly, the subcategory of cultural tourism also sought a typology for tourists who specifically engaged in cultural tourism. From the tourist perspective, travelling and experiencing a different culture could be equated as a cultural tourism experience. Conversely, from an academic or marketing perspective, cultural tourism is more nuanced in that it is a discrete categorical product that can be differentiated by consumption of cultural heritage (Richards, 1996; Aluza *et al.*, 1998). In this way, cultural tourists represent their own type of tourist and can therefore be further categorised by different dimensions. Stebbins (1996) recognised at a conceptual level that tourists will engage with cultural tourism at different levels, depending on several factors such as their own interests, level of knowledge, travel partners, among others. This concept led to the differentiation of the cultural tourist as either *general* (i.e. hobby cultural tourist) or *specialised* (i.e. highly knowledgeable and focused on specific cultures or cultural experiences).

McKercher (2002) identified a five-part typology based on dimensions of centrality and depth of experience (Fig. 2.3). He posited that tourists were either a *purposeful cultural tourist*, a *sightseeing cultural tourist*, a *casual cultural tourist*, an *incidental cultural tourist*, or a *serendipitous cultural tourist*. This typology addressed two flawed assumptions of previous tourist typologies; that the cultural tourism market is homogenous, and that all cultural tourists share the same motivations for engaging in cultural tourism. McKercher refined previous models by acknowledging that centrality (i.e. the importance of cultural motives) varies significantly among tourists and can serve as the sole reason for travel, can serve no role in destination choice at all, or fall somewhere in the middle (McKercher and du Cros, 2003).

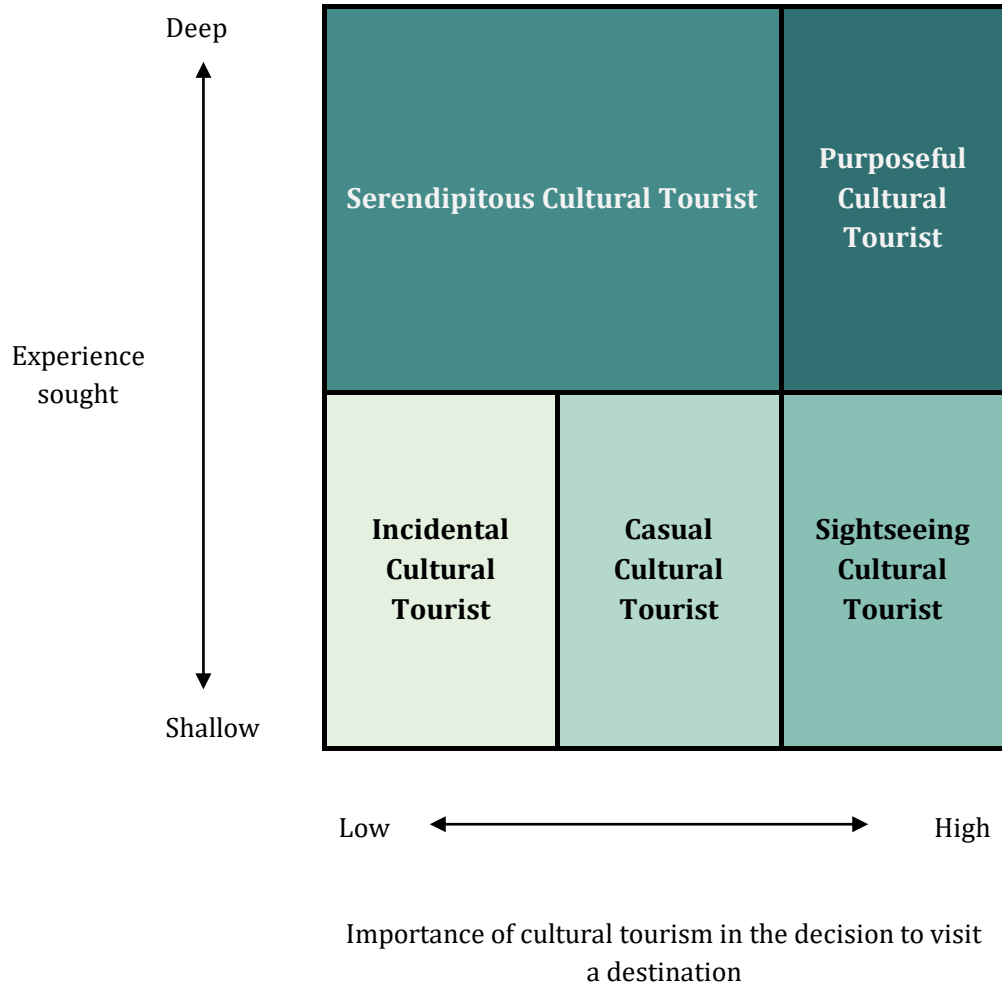


Figure 2.3 McKercher’s cultural tourist typology, based on dimensions of centrality and depth (source: adapted from McKercher, 2002).

Understanding tourist motivations is important for marketing, development and growth of tourism in general, but is especially important for planning, marketing and developing sustainable tourism products in environmentally vulnerable places. But tourists only comprise part of the tourist-host dynamic. While there is significant attention given to researching the tourist experience and motivations, the same cannot necessarily be said about host communities. It is crucial for the success of a tourism destination or product to also understand the communities that host them, highlighting a substantial gap in the literature.

2.5.2 *Host communities*

Dwyer (2015) suggests that, for sustainable growth in tourism, rather than prioritising tourist needs, host communities should be engaging in the development of a vision for the type of community they hope to live in, and what role (if any) tourism might have in that vision. This idea speaks to the increasing emphasis on stakeholder engagement in planning and tourism development, ideally resulting in higher legitimacy of tourism policies (Hall, 2007). Despite the consensus on its importance, few examples of best practice approaches for top-down community engagement exist (Ashley *et al.*, 2015; Dragouni and Fouseki, 2018).

Dragouni and Fouseki (2018) explored the role of cultural heritage values and community perceptions of tourism as drivers of willingness to participate and found that a community's willingness to engage with cultural tourism development is linked with high place attachment. Outcomes of community stakeholder engagement have been found to be highly dependent on processes of participation (Reed, 2008; Sterling *et al.*, 2017; Friedman *et al.*, 2020). Tosun (2000) states that "community participation refers to a form of voluntary action in which individuals confront opportunities and responsibilities of citizenship" (p. 615). As a tool for tourism development, it has the ability to adjust the balance of power among communities, policy makers, and local authorities, reasserting community views and values (Tosun, 2000; Hicks *et al.*, 2016). Tourism sectors, from regional to national, are embedded in and driven by communities. To date, research has pursued a wide range of effects resulting from how communities engage with tourism. This includes concepts of community support and engagement in both planning and implementation phases (Hanrahan *et al.*, 2017; O'Sullivan-Browne *et al.*, 2018), the use of economic models of supply and demand to assess tourism resources (Lubbe *et al.*, 2013; Timothy and Boyd, 2015), and tourist engagement with a destination as an embodiment of space (Boyd, 2017; MacLeod, 2017).

Local-level engagement is considered one of the most important factors for successful and sustainable tourism development, but it is not always practical or possible (Salazar, 2012). Barriers to community participation in tourism development have been identified to include: socio-cultural issues (Weaver, 2006; Nunkoo and Ramkissoon, 2011; Hanrahan *et al.*, 2017), perceived lack of knowledge or technical awareness (Zhang *et al.*, 2013), and perceived threats (either internal or external) (Rainero and Modarelli, 2020). In the literature, communities are often depicted as a homogenous socio-cultural unit, but in reality there are likely several groups

with differing ideas and perspectives related to various issues (Moric *et al.*, 2021).

Key metrics for determining both tourist motivations and typologies and host community engagement styles are attitudinal surveys. Data collected from these surveys are then subjected to factor analysis or ANOVA tests for statistical representation. The rationalisation and interpretation of the factor results are then generally completed by the researcher. Within this thesis, it is argued that an additional step is required in the analysis of these typologies – especially as it relates to local community values and knowledge systems – to validate interpretations with the community. This transparency corroborates findings, affirms understanding of issues as they were presented by the community, and legitimises results for the community and contributions to outside sources.

2.6 Embedded Community and Cultural Identity

‘Local knowledge’ can be described as insights into in situ social, cultural and religious practices, especially when considered together with other forms of social capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Adams and Sandarupa, 2018). These insights are “rooted in specific cultural contexts, anchored in local environments, and entail deep, often intuitive appreciation of local practices” (Adams and Sandarupa, 2018: 5). Local knowledge shares concepts with ‘traditional knowledge’ and ‘indigenous knowledge’ insofar as all are considered dynamic, “long-term, cumulative and contemporary” (Butler and Menzies, 2007: 18).

The cultural identity of a community can be built or strengthened by engagement with tourism routes (Timothy and Boyd, 2015). These identities are informed by heritage and local knowledge, passed through generations and are fundamental for the support and success of tourism within communities (Chouinard, 1997). This sense of identity can be of national scale – fluid and changing with differing contexts and situations (Park, 2010), or localised to regions or communities (Timothy and Boyd, 2015).

2.6.1 Practices of place making

The growth of local-scale tourism, as a valuable and viable element to economic and social diversification, has generated lasting change to the

communities within which it develops (Torres-Delgado and Saarinen, 2014). These development pathways are guided both by supply- and demand-side drivers (Richards, 2014a) that reflect a more deeply embedded conflict in the practice of ‘place making’. Lew (2017) describes the conceptual difference of *place-making* and *placemaking* as opposite ends of the ‘place making continuum’ principally as a question of authenticity. Place-making is an organic, bottom-up practice. Place is shaped and reshaped into a form that continues to authentically reflect the community while simultaneously developing into a place for tourism. Conversely, placemaking reflects a top-down, master planned effort to develop tourism. Being a top-down approach, destinations are consciously and unconsciously *rebranded* to appeal to a particular tourist demographic as a principal means of spurring development, even if this means that the community benefiting from tourism are experienced less authentically.

Lew (2017) frames the loss of place authenticity as a pragmatic, but not inevitable, outcome from the principally economic motivations of tourism which prioritise *placemaking* over *place-making*. At the most extreme, local identity of place may be completely detached from that of the tourist (Lai and Ooi, 2015), although most places will have some mixture of both, falling within the continuum rather than at the end. Ideally, placemaking and place-making must be aligned (or at least cooperative) for the success of routes and networks. Moulin and Boniface (2001) emphasise that two-way dialogue between the communities and the centralised actor may be non-existent or lacking in adequate understanding for the achievement of cultural tourism objectives. Lew (2017, p. 456) extends this consideration of place making to “both the tangible and the intangible, many of which are seen in the everyday practices of people who occupy these planned places”. These everyday practices lead to complementary aspects of the place making continuum and authenticity: *place attachment* and *place identity*.

2.6.2 *Place attachment and place identity*

Place attachment and place identity are best examined and interpreted phenomenologically, considering subjective representations and objective factors (Seamon, 2013). The concept of place attachment, and the means by which it is studied, represents an inevitable theoretical complexity due to its dynamic and subjective connections to “locales that are at once ecological, built, social, and symbolic environments” (Hummon, 1992, p. 253). As a bond between people and their environs forms, place attachment shapes how individuals identify with and experience the place. At the most

basic level, such bonds represent the well-trod concepts of the ‘familiar’, where place attachment is strong, versus the ‘unfamiliar’ or ‘distant’ (Seamon, 2000; Felder, 2021). As a more conceptual space, place attachment represents an oftentimes emotionally strengthened bond between people and their environs as *home*. How a community relates to, defines, and represents their home locale is informed by this attachment, which in turn is a reflection of the organic *place-making* process and leads to a subjectively perceived identity of place (Peng et al., 2020).

Proshansky et al. (1983) state that place identity *is attachment to a place* ascribed by an individual. Others have asserted that place attachment and place identity are separate constructs, with place attachment developing *prior to the formation of place identity* (Hernández et al., 2007; Peng et al., 2020). Place identity is derived from elements that distinguish it from others and is formed after being established in both spatial and social structures (Paasi, 1991, 2002). Place identity includes individuals’ subjective perceptions of geographic space (Peng et al., 2020), as well experiences, beliefs, and values invested in a specific setting (Jorgensen and Stedman, 2001; Hallak et al., 2012). In this way, Knapp (2006) claims that when attempting to understand a place, people’s consciousness of that place cannot be overlooked because the identity of a place exists as both material and within the mental sphere. Pollock (2012) argues that in order to preserve resident ‘sense of place’, hosts and visitors ought to identify and include elements that are strongly valued and/or desired, especially as it relates to tourism development.

2.6.3 *Tourism and concepts of authenticity*

As it relates to tourism, place identity impacts resident attitudes towards tourism and their willingness to participate (Nunkoo and Gursoy, 2012; Wang and Chen, 2015). How these attitudes are shaped is seen to be based upon whether place identity is being properly and respectfully represented through the lens of tourism. Uzzell (1995) likened these attitudes to expressions of pride of place, while Gu and Ryan (2008) posited that place membership improves self-esteem. These studies, and those conducted in a similar vein, present evidence that residents benefit from a tourism ‘product’ when it reflects their own sense of place identity.

Yet, such a pathway is not guaranteed. The practice of tourism, particularly as a *placemaking* enterprise that seeks to provide tourist experiences as a ‘product’ separated from the environs within which it is enjoyed, can lose the support of the community (Smith, 1994). A similar

outcome can arise when promises to the community are unfulfilled. Given the strength of attachment, those who promote tourism for a community, be they entrepreneur or government-led initiative, need to develop and keep the trust of a community central to their plans (Nunkoo *et al.*, 2012; Nunkoo and Gursoy, 2016). Such outcomes have been well documented by scholarship surrounding ‘sustainable tourism’ (McMinn, 1997; Tao and Wall, 2009; Zolfani *et al.*, 2015) and ‘cultural tourism’ (Bachleitner and Zins, 1999; MacLeod, 2006), both which would have a vested interest in positive portrayals of place identity that affirms place attachment for tourist and resident alike.

Product recognition consistency generates and maintains tourism demand (Sedmak and Kociper, 2017), yet at the risk of localities losing their unique identities. Homogenisation is promoted by international consumption patterns, resulting in efforts at the local or community level to maintain uniqueness (Reisinger, 2009).

2.7 Evolution of Tourism in Ireland

2.7.1 Early development of Irish tourism

The ‘first century’ of Irish tourism is credited as being 1750 to 1850 (Williams, 2010). Between 1750 and 1800, Ireland was among the first countries to be described by its scenic attractions and sites. Features such as the Lakes of Killarney, the Giant’s Causeway and Glens of Wicklow became representative examples of Ireland’s picturesque tourism landscape. By 1850, with the establishment of the national rail system in the early stages, Ireland had acquired the basic infrastructure to support tourism at a larger scale. Late stages of this development coincide with the Great Famine (1845-1849), which had lasting social and cultural effects. Tourism in pre-Famine Ireland was devoted to either the search for the picturesque (i.e. landscape or attraction centred), or the search for ‘Ireland’ (i.e. Irish society). These two motivations, once established, would remain pillars of Irish tourism through the decades.

More than 569 travel guidebooks were published between 1845 and 1923, indicating little lasting effect of the Famine on tourist interest in Ireland. In fact, Thomas Cook (the founder of mass tourism), led a successful tour of Ireland in 1846 – the most devastating year of the Famine (Thompson, 2012). In the decades that followed, an idealised vision of Ireland was found in the West where what was intended to be Britain’s

“tourist playground” transformed into the *Gaeltacht* (“home of the Gael” in English) during the Gaelic Revival (Williams, 2008). By the 1890s, this became the cultural heartland of Ireland. The West came to embody Ireland in general, representing the ideals of true Irishness (Nash, 1993). In this manner, the West of Ireland solidified its place in Irish tourism before the turn of the century.

The 1914 edition of the *Michelin Guide of the British Isles* exercised singular focus on promoting drives and destinations on the west coast of Ireland, laying a foundational groundwork for future route tourism development in Ireland (Fáilte Ireland, 2015). The Irish Tourist Association (ITA) was founded in 1925, after the Irish Free State was established in 1922 as a result of the War of Independence (1919 – 1921). The ITA worked through political and social changes in Ireland in an attempt to develop tourism further by improving Irish roadways, hotels and the rail system (Zuelow, 2009). Governmental transitions and World War II resulted in three decades of economic stagnation. Through the 1950s, Irish tourism under Irish control, was still in its infancy, but its potential as a means for significant economic influence was gaining acknowledgement.

2.7.2 Contemporary development

The late 1960s saw the start of the Northern Ireland conflict, also referred to as The Troubles. About 30 years of ethnonationalist conflict (late 1960s – 1998), which mainly took place in Northern Ireland had significant impacts for the Irish tourism industry, namely a decline in demand (Heneghan, 1976). The downturn in demand ultimately set Irish tourism back an estimated 12 years. Additionally, there was a change in the market demand structure. The Republic had become over-reliant on tourists from Britain and Northern Ireland, which represented 81.5% of foreign tourism earnings in 1960. This dropped to less than 48% in 1972. Access to transportation changed with the establishment of the car ferry, resulting in a new kind of mobile tourist. Tourism trends shifted to more individualistic tourists, effecting the geographical distribution of tourists and accommodation requirements. During this period, tourist product demands also shifted with a decrease demand for hotels, and an increased demand for activities offered.

In an attempt to adapt to these changes, the tourism authority introduced new product development, including horse-drawn caravanning, inland cruising, and farmhouse, self-catering holiday accommodation options to cater to a younger, individualistic tourist market (Heneghan,

1976). Bord Fáilte established an Industry Standard Department, setting marketable standards for inclusion in promotional materials. New consumer segments were identified, among which included the Irish-related (ideally less bothered by the ongoing conflict), the youth market, and conference and business incentive travel markets. Efforts to promote these markets were increased with new promotional methods designed to offset negative coverage of the unrest in Northern Ireland.

Despite the relative depressed economic conditions of the early 1980s, the tourism sector became an important area of employment creation and growth (Deane, 1987), with a potential to redistribute income and resources (Hannigan (1994). Improved tourism performance through 1995 was due to increased government efforts to improve transportation policies, air fare liberalisation, a favourable turn in external demand factors, and an increase in subsidised European investment (Hannigan, 1994; Kennedy, 1999). The result of direct foreign investment was a booming Irish economy, dubbed the 'Celtic Tiger', from the mid-1990s to the late 2000s. During the peak years of the Celtic Tiger, overseas tourism arrivals to the Republic of Ireland more than tripled (Clancy, 2011: p. 174). Tourism traffic and revenue concentrated mainly in Dublin and the South, however, with the West and Northwest regions especially hard hit. The disproportionate growth experienced during the Celtic Tiger led to a call for renewed regional focus in promotion (Clancy, 2011). In the 1990s, Ireland had become a pioneer in the practice of 'nation branding', a phenomenon referring to national identity formation and promotion (Clancy, 2009). Place- or region-specific imagery for tourism promotion reflected a recognition of the need for regional differentiation in tourism to address disproportionate growth trends. However, despite the development of new regional imagery, there was a reluctance to abandon established, traditional imagery of Ireland as an idyllic, 'pre-modern' society (Cawley *et al.*, 1999).

In 2008, following the burst of the real estate bubble and a collapse in consumer spending, Ireland entered a recession. This bust represented the worst economic crisis in Ireland since the establishment of the independent Irish Free State in 1922 (Clancy, 2011). In 2013, Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland organised a grassroots tourism initiative called The Gathering, in an attempt to mobilise the Irish diaspora and revitalise tourism (Mottiar, 2016). Inspired by An Tóstal, a series of cultural festivals and events across Ireland in 1953, The Gathering was described as the largest ever tourism initiative in Ireland (Fáilte Ireland, 2013b: p. 2, 8). Referred to as the 'People's Project', success of The Gathering was credited in part to cooperation with local authorities and communities. The

experienced success of the community activation model utilised in the 2013 programme would inform the foundation of Fáilte Ireland's next tourism initiative for Ireland, the Wild Atlantic Way.

2.7.3 *Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way*

Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way (Fig. 2.4) – launched in 2014 – is the world's longest marked coastal route, following the Atlantic coastline for 2500 km from Malin Head in County Donegal to Kinsale in the southwest of County Cork (Fáilte Ireland, 2014; Walsh, 2014). The established route is a unification of smaller roads and trails that have been traversed and explored for at least the last 150 years (Fáilte Ireland, 2015). The Wild Atlantic Way's branding seeks to highlight the wild, ruggedness of the west coast by reconnecting the culture, heritage, and history of places with the dramatic landscapes found there (Fáilte Ireland, 2013a).

Since its inception, the Wild Atlantic Way has contributed to an increase in overseas tourists to Ireland. Miriam Kennedy, head of the Wild Atlantic Way at Fáilte Ireland noted that “One million more international visitors came to the West Coast [of Ireland] in 2018 than in 2013, which shows the appeal of the Wild Atlantic Way to international markets” (Purcell, 2019; Fáilte Ireland, 2019). The long-established tourism sector in Ireland, particularly that which is now included under the model of the Wild Atlantic Way, has been demonstrated to be rooted in and supported by communities (McManus, 1997; Fáilte Ireland, 2013b, 2015; Hanrahan et al., 2017). Prior to the start of this thesis, research emphasis on the Wild Atlantic Way specifically has centred on aspects of community engagement and business enterprises (Hanrahan and Conaghan, 2014; Hanrahan et al., 2017; O'Sullivan-Browne et al., 2018), management and marketing (McLoughlin et al., 2018; McLoughlin et al., 2020), and food tourism (Broadway, 2017). Less established, however, is research exploring tourist perspectives of the Wild Atlantic Way route and how they choose to engage with the initiative alongside the communities that host them.

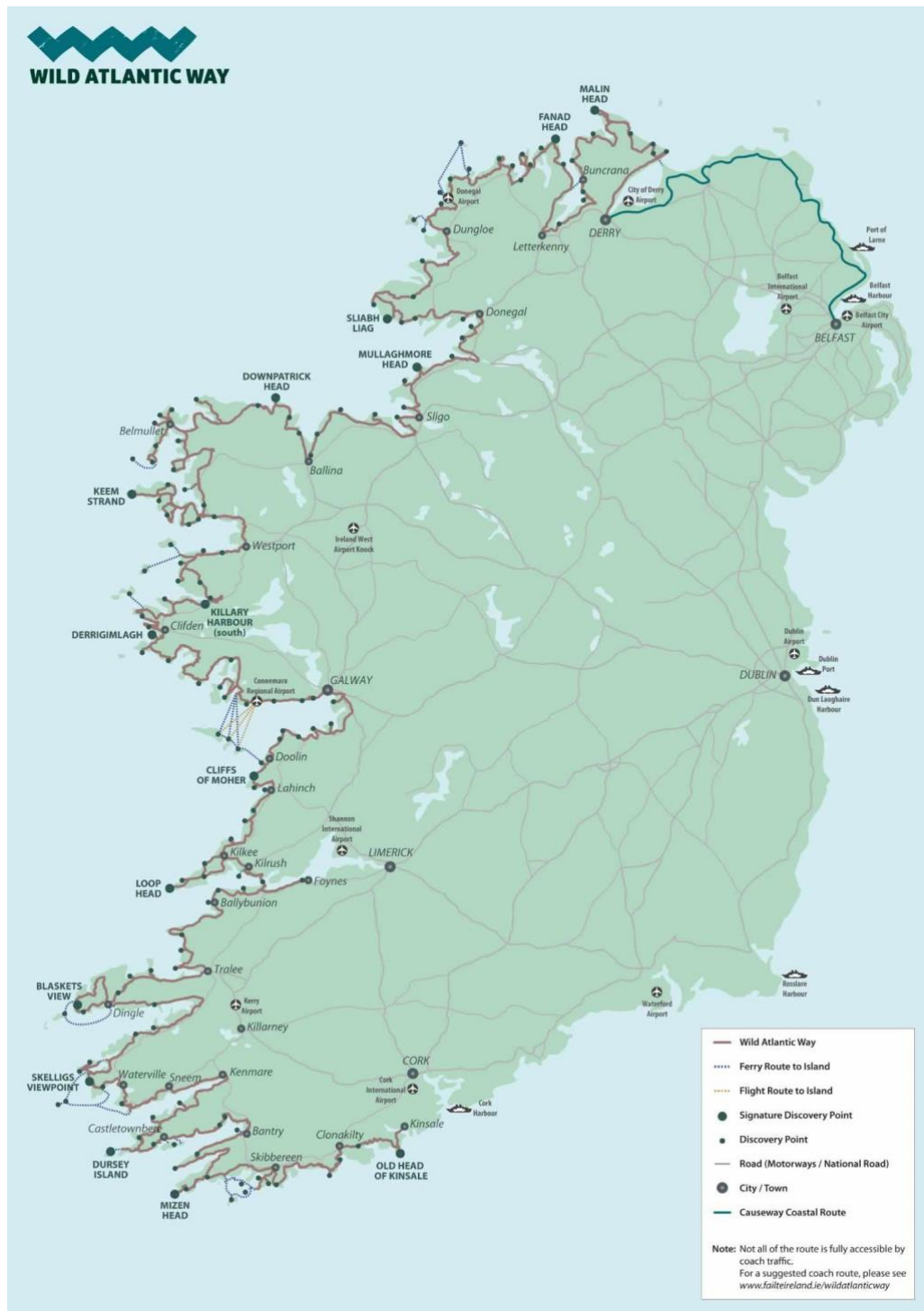


Figure 2.4 Detailed map of the Wild Atlantic Way route. (Source: Fáilte Ireland)

MacLeod (2011) argued that well-planned and well-developed trails have the ability to contribute to a responsible tourism product socially, economically, and environmentally. But in practice, tourism trail development can lead to conflicts with communities and stakeholder groups (Beeton, 2007; Kling *et al.*, 2019). Ultimately, the development of tourism

trail initiatives requires consideration of local, regional, and state interests, as well as the range of use and users in a multifunctional landscape (Kling *et al.*, 2019). These considerations, in some cases, directly influence the policy approach of implementation in tourism product development. The three main policy approaches in sustainable tourism development are top-down, bottom-up, and intermediate (Theerapappisit, 2012). In practice, top-down approaches consists of imposed planning from top-level policymakers or government (centralisation) while bottom-up approaches are grassroots management derived from communities (decentralisation). Intermediate approaches offer a middle ground, where reciprocity between local communities and policy makers exists (see Fig. 2.5).

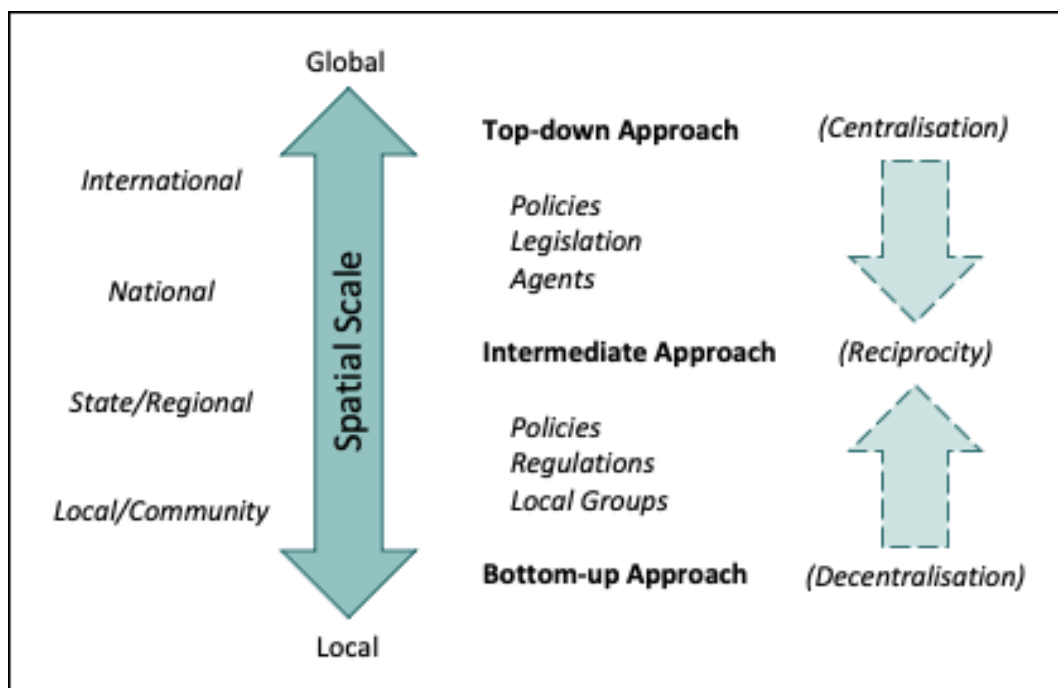


Figure 2.5 Illustrative diagram of three main policy approaches in sustainable tourism development (source: adapted from Theerapappisit, p. 269).

For tourism product development, it is likely that several phases of the project exist (e.g. strategy, planning, implementation and adaptation). Concepts and theory are applied in the development of strategies, which are realised in the planning phase. The early phases are perhaps the most crucial to include the local community perspectives for tourism development, where their local knowledge can be most effectively incorporated in planning. This two-way flow of information would reflect reciprocity between government level and community level stakeholders. If little community input is considered in these early stages, it becomes more difficult and costly to

incorporate it in retrospect prior to implementation. Often by the time of implementation, it can be too late for communities to contest or critique the project.

The policy and management approach of the Wild Atlantic Way is outlined in the *Wild Atlantic Way Operational Programme (2015-2019)* (Fáilte Ireland, 2015). The Authority describes the goal of the Operational Programme as seeking to “work with the Local Authorities and other relevant stakeholders to further improve the infrastructure and facilities” for tourist use on the route, suggesting an intermediate approach to planning and implementation (*ibid.*, p. 8). Despite claims made about collaborating with communities and local stakeholders, the document does little to offer evidence of this in practice. The identification of the route itself, completed 2012-2013, was a collaboration of four Regional Steering Groups which included representatives from Fáilte Ireland, Local Authorities, industry leaders, Údarás na Gaeltachta and the Western Development Commission – all at regional-level or higher. Fáilte Ireland recognised in their Operational Programme that “communities and the culture in these towns and villages are the heart of the Wild Atlantic Way proposition and are, therefore, central to the delivery of a Wild Atlantic Way experience for visitors”, but reciprocity between the towns and villages and agency seemingly lacked substance (*ibid.*, p. 10). Local Authorities are used by Fáilte Ireland as a proxy for local community perspectives, which undoubtedly did not represent the full range of views in individual villages and towns.

The brand strategy of the Wild Atlantic Way (introduced in Chapter 1), highlights the route as an unique experience – a magnet, designed to “captivate you with its wild landscape that continuously shapes its living history; and engage you with its vibrant & creative communities, whose stories and culture stimulate you, so you are freed up to relax, enjoy and leave feeling refreshed, renewed and uplifted” (*ibid.*, p. 19). Conceptually, Fáilte Ireland has framed the local communities that are located along Wild Atlantic Way as tourism products to be experienced and commodified, instead of collaborative agents. Furthermore, the Operational Programme lists the goals and outcomes of the initiative using the VICE model of sustainable tourism development, which considers four interrelated elements of tourism development: Visitor, Industry, Community and Environment (*ibid.*, p. 24). The goal associated with the community element of the model is stated as: “to ensure that the Wild Atlantic Way delivers benefits to local communities in the west of Ireland and contributes to a better place to live for everyone” (p. 25). In practice, the fewest (and least

exacting) outcomes are dedicated to achieving this goal. Community surveys and brand tracking are the key performance indicators (KPIs) of this modular element, but it is unclear at what phase of initiative development or implementation these are conducted, or how it is intended that communities are represented.

The Wild Atlantic Way initiative is presented by Fáilte Ireland as employing an Intermediate Approach to implementation and management, using language to invoke collaboration and community awareness, but in practice the Operational Programme delineates a top-down implementation approach. As will be discussed in further chapters, the onus of engagement and participation with the initiative, in order to ensure and maximise their own benefits, falls to the communities with little to no direct guidance on how best to do so. This discrepancy between articulated goals and plans has led to instances of environmental, social, and economic conflict at sites and villages along the Wild Atlantic Way route (Weir, 2015; O’Sullivan, 2016; Maguire, 2019; McLaughlin, 2019).

Contemporary concerns for tourism in Ireland have highlighted fears of the homogenisation of Ireland into one tourism experience (Kneafsey, 1998). Rapuano and Fernandez (2010) suggest that the Irish tourism industry serves as a social mediator in negotiated, constructed meanings of what it means to be *Irish* between tourists and locals. Top-down style placemaking has resulted in a tourist expectation of an Irish-American cultural experience, as opposed to a more authentic Irish cultural identity (*ibid.*). Indeed, MacLeod (2016, p. 426) notes that the role of the tourism trail in creating “mono-cultural, static landscapes of consumption” The Wild Atlantic Ways aims to change this, instead marketing the route – the entire west coast even – as being wild and rugged, all while taming the very wildness commodified and sold (Weir, 2015).

Assessing the perceptions of tourist experience on the Wild Atlantic Way route can offer insight on the overall success of marketing and product offerings at various locations. Understanding *how* tourists traverse, engage with, and consume the environmental, cultural, and social elements of the Wild Atlantic Way can support local communities in their attempts to extend their tourism season and lengthen tourist dwell time in their communities. Insights from host communities can lead to more sustainable, localised experiences harnessing their local knowledge and supporting their empowerment to engage the initiative in more meaningful ways.

2.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented a literature review of the most fundamental concepts related to this research. The literature review aimed to critically examine themes of cultural and heritage tourism (both generally and in Ireland), tourism trails (both historically and specific to marine and coastal tourism), drivers of tourism as they relate to tourist motivations and host community engagement, and concepts of embedded community identity. Within each theme, key research methods previously or contemporarily utilised were identified.

Literature in this review addresses conceptual, theoretical, and methodological aspects of exploring tourism within the geographical lens of space and place. Gaps in the existing literature and knowledge base related to the geographical exploration of tourism trails in Ireland were identified, and contributed to the development of the aim and objectives outlined in Chapter 1. Conceptually, the Wild Atlantic Way is an under-researched subject, primarily due to its relatively recent implementation. At the start of this research, the Wild Atlantic Way had been operational for less than four years, with very few research examinations having been published. This lack of existing research resulted in an exciting, new subject of inquiry with innumerable questions unexplored.

A common approach when researching aspects of tourism is to examine from one point of view (e.g. tourist motivations, host community perspectives, marketing, etc.). The unique circumstances resulting in the development of the Wild Atlantic Way, however, present a case study that epitomises both supply- and demand-side drivers of tourism. Given that the promoted structure of the Wild Atlantic Way is reliant on stakeholder and community engagement, community perspectives and local knowledge are themselves products of the initiative's model. The centring of community values and collaboration, therefore, is essential to an assessment of the route as an economic and developmental tool. Conversely, the Wild Atlantic Way was initially marketed overseas in an effort to revitalise international tourism in Ireland. As a new tourism product, tourists' perspectives are an invaluable resource, especially for assessment and improvements at the outset of the initiative. It was evident in the early stages of research design that a traditional, singular-perspective approach would not be sufficient for a holistic evaluation of the impacts of the Wild Atlantic Way.

Consequently, establishing a holistic research design required a theoretical and methodological foundation that supported the dual-

perspective assessment. Social representations theory, first expressed by Serge Moscovici (1972), is concerned with the way individuals or groups collectively make sense of social knowledge and practices (Marková, 2008). Social representations are understood to be a system of values, ideas and practices (Moscovici, 1972), which inform the process of collective meaning-making (Höijer, 2011). In tourism research, social representation theory has been adapted to explain tourism impacts (Monterrubio and Andriotis, 2014), tourist perspectives (Atzori *et al.*, 2018), resident attitudes (Wassler *et al.*, 2019), and rural tourism development (Li *et al.*, 2020), among other applications. Perhaps most salient aspect of social representation theory, making it well-suited for this research, is its suggestion of a “bi-directional transmission of knowledge”, recognising that lay knowledge is a valid knowledge system (Moloney *et al.*, 2014: 19).

Supported by foundational elements of social representation theory and constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006), this thesis explores the described tourist-community knowledge systems by employing a novel methodological framework. This framework, which combines quantitative and qualitative methods over two phases, is extensively outlined in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3

Methodological Approach

3

Methodological Approach

3.1 Introduction to Study Methods

This thesis employed an innovative multi-methodological approach to holistically examine community stakeholder and tourist perspectives of Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way, a national coastal tourism route (introduced in Chapters 1 and 2). Section 3.2 introduces the village of Rathmullan, providing a site description and situating it within the larger Wild Atlantic Way case study. Section 3.3 presents constructivist grounded theory as the theoretical underpinning of this research, highlighting its strengths in community-based, interpretive examinations. Following this, Section 3.4, addresses the multi-method approach utilised in the design of this study, providing differentiation from mixed-methods studies of a similar nature. The resulting methodological framework is introduced in this section, linking the four methods utilised over two phases of fieldwork and data collection: survey questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, Q-methodology (Q), and participatory mapping.

Drawing on phenomenological and case study research styles, each method is described in detail (Phase I in Section 3.5, and Phase II in Section 3.6), underpinned by the constructivist grounded theory foundation. Research questions are linked specifically to each methodological approach, providing insight and clarity in the relationship of each of the four methods to the overall research aims of this project. Impacts of COVID-19 are addressed in Section 3.7. Section 3.8 outlines and reflects on limitations of the chosen methods, demonstrating how these were mitigated or acknowledged in the research design. Positionality is discussed in Section 3.9, elaborating on identities and positions of the researcher and its influence on the research process. Ethical considerations are also addressed, with particular detail provided for considerations of informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, and participant wellbeing as they relate to this research. Participant feedback on the co-creation element of this research is presented in Section 3.10, with a chapter summary following in Section 3.11.

3.2 Site Description – Rathmullan, Co. Donegal

Rathmullan (Irish: *Ráth Maoláin*) is a rural, seaside village in County Donegal, Ireland (Fig. 3.1). Located on the Fanad Peninsula, along the coast of Lough Swilly, it has a population of 493 (CSO, 2016). Despite its modest number of permanent residents, Rathmullan serves as a popular summer tourist destination for a variety of recreational activities (Farrell and Carr, 2022). Additionally, it is a culturally important place in Irish history, having been the point of departure in 1607 by the Gaelic Order (most notably Clan Ó Néill and Clan Ó Domhnaill), who left seeking Spanish reinforcements for their ongoing battles with the English. This departure, which allowed England to further extend power in Ireland, is known as the Flight of the Earls.

In Rathmullan, a grassroots community group called ‘Rathmullan the Way Forward’ was previously organised and operational in working toward common goals at various levels within the community and region. Collaboration with this working group was crucial for the promotion and success of this research project (see reflections of community ownership in Chapter 7). Research aims and priorities were informed by the values and concerns of the community itself, employing a bottom-up, co-creation of research design, efforts, and knowledge (Watson, 2014). As part of a collaborative research approach, community stakeholders in Rathmullan contributed to data collection in several ways over a two-year period from 2018-2020. The co-created aim of research in Rathmullan was to assess and better understand the impacts of tourism and the Wild Atlantic Way initiative on aspects of the community, and develop solutions for sustainable future engagement.



Figure 3.1 Case study site location: Rathmullan village (C) along Lough Swilly, between the Inishowen and Fanad Peninsulas (B), in County Donegal, Ireland (A). Within the village: (1) Rathmullan Beach, (2) Rathmullan Pier, (3) The Battery (Rathmullan Fort), (4) Abbey ruins (Irish: *Mainistir Ráthmoaláin*), (5) St. Joseph's Catholic Church, (6) Community Centre, (7) Presbyterian Church, and (8) Rathmullan House (source: author's own).

3.3 Constructivist Grounded Theory

Empirically, this research was conducted based on constructivist grounded theory as proposed by Charmaz (2006), building on inductive grounded theory originally discovered by sociologists Glaser and Strauss (1967). Constructivist grounded theory is a method of research focusing on the generation of new theories through inductive analysis of data gathered from participants as opposed to pre-existing theories, adopting methods of grounded theory without adhering to earlier positivist assumptions (Charmaz, 1995; 2000). Charmaz (2006) builds a framework grounded in empirical reality by centralising reflexivity as an embedded practice from the onset of research. This researcher subscribes to the idea that there is not a static reality to discover in its entirety, but rather that knowledge construction is a process of representing our own realities (and those of others) that is partial, complex, positioned and situated within a geographical, social and historical context (Davis, 2020).

The knowledge co-created with research participants is interrelated to the space and place it is gathered. Situating knowledge is a practice of reflexivity (Rose, 1997). Compared to a more top-down approach, co-creation of knowledge – grounded by local expert knowledge and experience – is more likely to generate usable outcomes in policy and practice (Coggan *et al.*, 2021). Constructivists view conceptual categories as constructions of their interpretation *of* the data, not necessarily as stemming *from* the data, and thus their resulting theoretical analyses represent interpretations of a reality (Jørgensen, 2001). The collaborative element of this research lends itself to phenomenological lens through which aspects of the research question should be explored. Creswell (2013) defines phenomenological studies as describing the common meaning for several individuals or a group by examining lived experiences. The lived experience of communities on the Wild Atlantic Way outlined the scope of interpretative phenomenology investigated through a combination of interviews and structural descriptions.

Stake (2005) refers to case study research as the determination of what is to be studied, confined by time and space in a “bounded system”. Others present the case study itself as a comprehensive methodological approach (Merriam, 1998; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Yin, 2009). By either definition, the use of a case study in the foundational design of this research frames the inquiry on two levels. The first uses the Wild Atlantic Way as a case study of coastal and marine tourism trails, while the second refers to one community village on the route as a case study for assessing community

engagement with the tourism initiative. Whereas phenomenology attempts to underscore the common lived experience of a group, and a case study aims to describe the bounded system of which a reality of lived experience exists, the intent of constructivist grounded theory is to go beyond descriptive interpretation and to generate or discover a “unified theoretical explanation” (Corbin and Strauss, 2007: p. 107; Cresswell, 2013: p. 83). Table 3.1 illustrates the purpose and goal(s) of each of the conceptual foundations of this research and how they connect to inform the methodological framework developed for this thesis. While the Wild Atlantic Way route was introduced in Chapter 1 and contextualised in Chapter 2, the community is defined and described further in this chapter.

Table 3.1 Qualitative methodological approaches utilised in foundational research design.

Research method	Purpose of method	Goal of data analysis
<i>Constructivist grounded theory</i>	Explain a process, phenomenon, behaviour, etc. by developing inductive, abstract categories through iterative data analysis (Charmaz, 2014).	Develop a statement, model, or theory to explain a process, phenomenon, behaviour, etc.; Advance theory grounded in data.
<i>Interpretative phenomenological approach</i>	Explore participants' thoughts about an experienced phenomenon (Smith et al., 2009).	Assess participants' perspectives of their experience and interpret their views.
<i>Case study</i>	Understand the complexity of a specific or unique case - using multiple types of information or data (Stake, 1995; Cresswell, 2013).	Report a case description and case themes (Cresswell, 2013); can be done to explain a case, describe a unique case, or compare cases.

3.4 Multi-Method Approach

According to Greene (2015), ‘multi-method’ studies have paved the way in recent years by serving as a solution for complex social research questions. These are similar to ‘mixed method’ approaches, which emerged

in research as a third paradigm, offering an alternative to purely qualitative or quantitative research (Johnson *et al.*, 2007). While the two terms have been used interchangeably in the literature, a distinction exists that is essential to understand in order to avoid lack of clarity and negative repercussions of the “hodgepodge” usage and lack of precision (Anguera *et al.*, 2018). The term *mixed methods* usually designates a study where quantitative and qualitative methods have been combined in the same project (Johnson *et al.*, 2007). Conversely, *multi-method* research is described as when different approaches are utilised in “parallel or sequence, but are not integrated until inferences are being made” (Johnson *et al.*, 2007: p. 119). Combining qualitative and quantitative research methods is typically done in an attempt to emphasis the contribution value of the different approaches, as seen in Table 3.2 (Mik-Meyer, 2020).

Table 3.2 Comparison of quantitative and qualitative research styles (source: adapted from Neuman, 1997; Weaver and Lawton, 2002: p. 289).

Quantitative	Qualitative
Measure objective facts	Construct social reality and/or cultural meaning
Focus on variables	Focus on interactive processes and/or events
Reliability is key	Authenticity is key
Value-free	Values are present and explicit
Independent of context	Situationally constrained
Many cases or subjects	Generally, fewer cases or subjects
Statistical analysis methods	Thematic analysis
Researcher is detached from subject	Researcher is involved in subject

In this research, quantitative and qualitative research approaches were both employed in order to explore different aspects of the overarching research question. According to the distinctions made above, the methodological framework developed for this research employs a multi-method approach as the research styles are used in two separate phases. Integration of all four methods is done fully after both phases were complete and a holistic examination of all results could be developed (see Figure 3.2).

Phase I used a quantitative method approach, employing the use of a survey questionnaire. Phase II employed a multi-method approach, combining semi-structured interviews, Q, and participatory mapping in a

community setting. Each of these methods are described below, according to their application in each phase of the study.

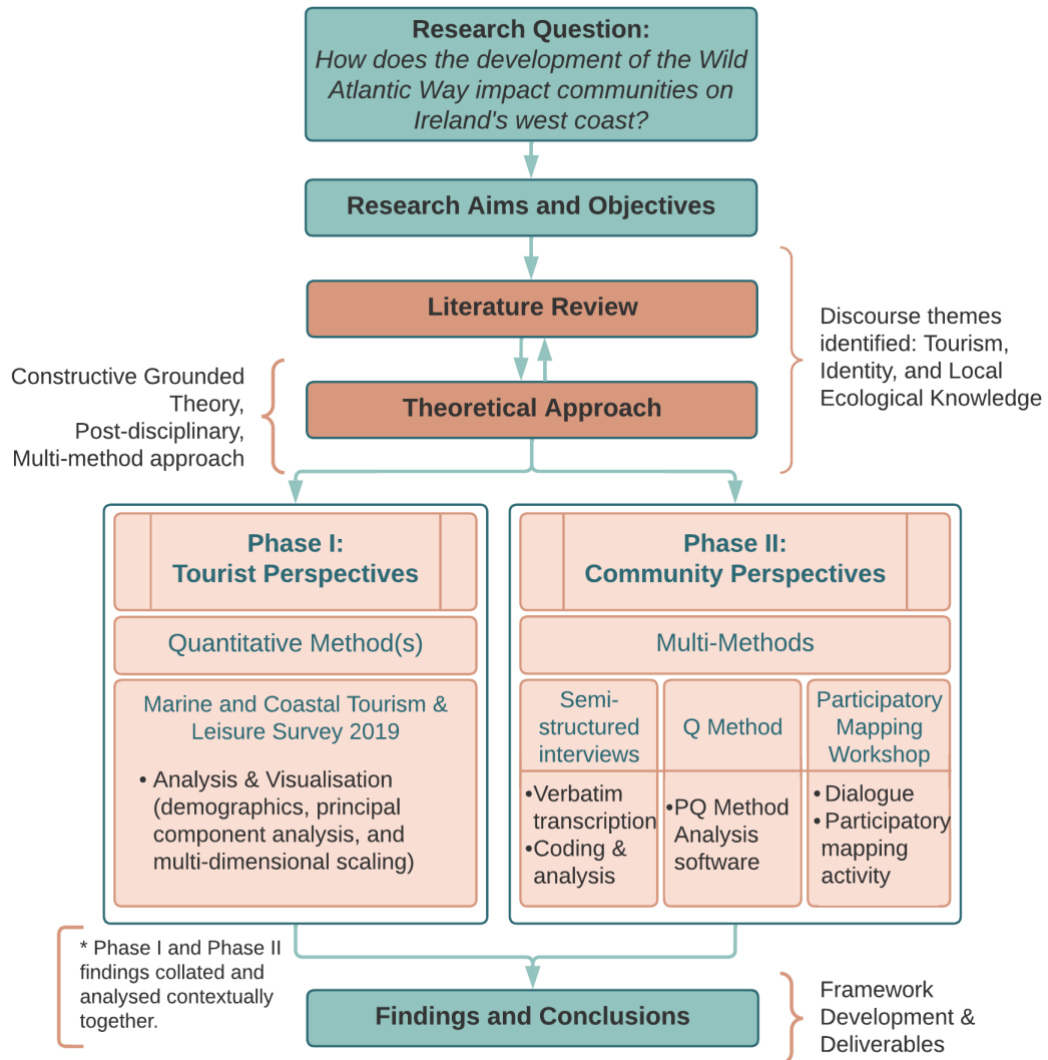


Figure 3.2 Illustrative representation of theoretical framework and research process.

3.5 Phase I – Quantitative Methods

3.5.1 Tourist motivations – Marine and Coastal Tourism and Leisure Survey

The NUI Galway³ team of the EU MOSES project developed an in-depth survey questionnaire to gain tourist insights and perceptions of the

³ As of 1 September 2022, the National University of Ireland Galway (NUI Galway) has changed its name to University of Galway.

Wild Atlantic Way route (Appendix A). Responses for the 33-question survey were a mix of predetermined multiple choice, fill-in, and Likert scale ranking. Along with demographics, means of transportation, and locales visited, respondents were asked to provide information related to perceived tourism pressures. Personal contributions to the survey development included the creation of a specific battery of questions related to tourist perceptions of local communities along the route and their overall experience of the Wild Atlantic Way based on its brand identity (introduced in Chapter 1). Survey deployment was completed by an unaffiliated survey company, RedC. Though there is overlap of research objectives for both projects, not all questions were analysed in the context of this thesis, but other survey outputs can be found through the MOSES website⁴.

Focused analysis of the survey results for this thesis included data related to trip activities, highlights, and the contributed questions which assessed tourists' overall experience of the route. Respondents were asked to select their level of agreement with the following six questions based on a Likert scale (strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, and strongly disagree):

- (1) The Wild Atlantic Way has met my expectations about what coastal Ireland should look like.
- (2) The Wild Atlantic Way has enriched me with a uniquely Irish experience.
- (3) Touring the Wild Atlantic Way gives me a sense of adventure.
- (4) I made a priority to meet and engage with local people along the Wild Atlantic Way.
- (5) The destinations I visited along the Wild Atlantic Way were overcrowded with tourists.
- (6) Overall, my experience on the Wild Atlantic Way was good value for money.

Activities and experiences were pre-selected to reflect the complete range of marine and coastal tourism activities available along the Wild Atlantic Way, and respondents were asked to indicate the activities either already experienced, or planned for their holiday (e.g. surfing, hiking, touring/sightseeing, fishing, sailing, etc.). A subset of questions asked respondents to fill-in their top three highlights planned for their holiday. During analysis, the three highlights provided by respondents were coded and grouped by theme to provide insight into specifically what attractions served as motivators for tourists.

⁴ For published deliverables of the MOSES project see http://mosesproject.eu/project_outputs/

Six locations (Figure 3.3) spanning the Wild Atlantic Way route were chosen to deploy the survey with tourists face-to-face. Between 15 – 31 July, 2019, Ireland’s peak tourism season, a total of 603 tourists were surveyed. Surveys took approximately 10 minutes each.

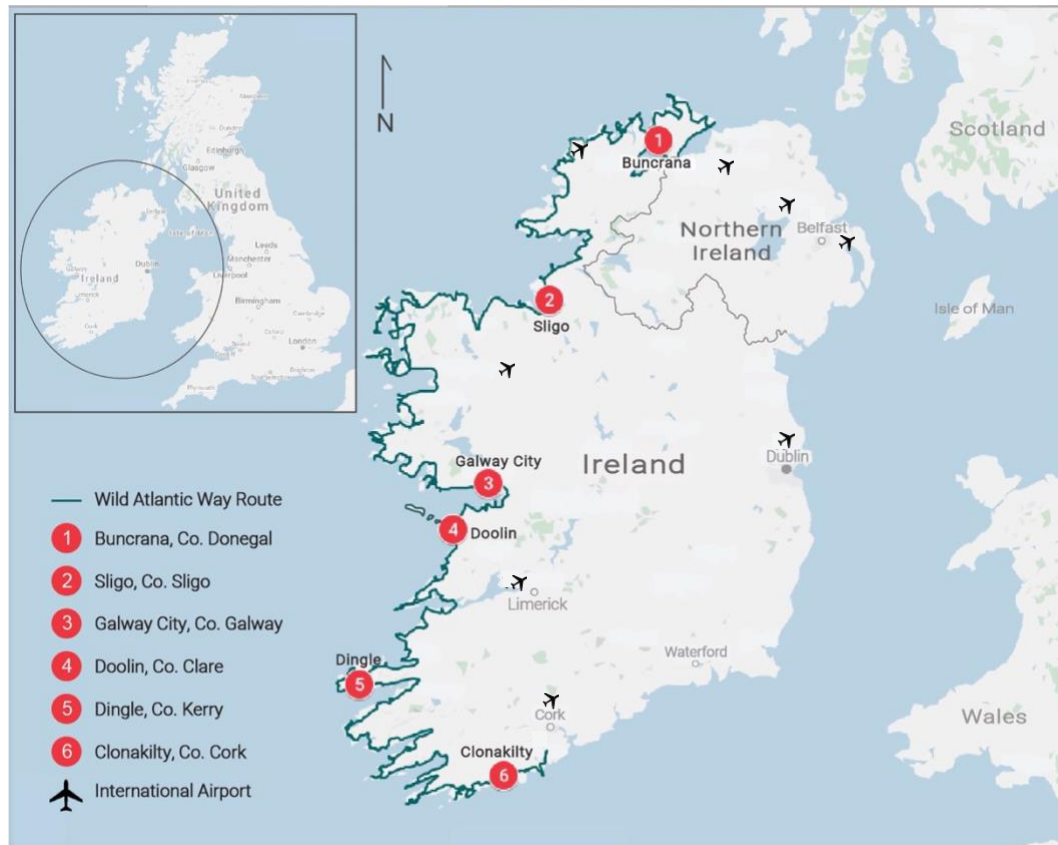


Figure 3.3 Six tourist survey locations along the Wild Atlantic Way (source: author’s own).

3.5.2 Survey analysis – Multidimensional scaling of Wild Atlantic Way activities

Multidimensional scaling (MDS) and smallest space analysis were conducted for the surveyed Wild Atlantic Way activities (PROXSCAL, SPSS) to visualise activities as proximities in a common space. MDS is a means to depict the relative positions or similarities of individual cases of a dataset (Mead, 1992). As described by Fenton and Pearce (1988, p. 240), the objective of MDS is to represent proximities among elements as distances in a space of minimal dimensionality where the distances approximate the proximities among the elements. Borg et al. (2013, p. 6) describe a popular approach for accomplishing this is to look for dimensions, or principal axes,

that make sense in terms of what is known or assumed about the individual cases represented by the points. In Chapter 4, tourist activities on the Wild Atlantic Way are presented in a two-dimensional visual solution, representing the level of similarity to the dimensions plotted. The dimensions are interpreted based on survey responses provided and subjective evaluation of the cases guided by the question '*What underlying feature represents the activities plotted on this axis?*'

Originating from psychometrics and marketing studies (Torgerson, 1952), MDS has been used in tourism studies examining destinations, positioning, and image (Marcussen, 2014). Goodrich (1978) published one of the first cases of using MDS in tourism research, demonstrating its use as a means of addressing methodological shortcomings for comparative analysis of different tourism perspectives. Gartner (1989) highlighted that the use of MDS in tourism research also enabled the subjective interpretation of results which could have significant marketing implications. Inclusion in this thesis' methodological framework is justified by its unique ability to go beyond traditional statistical analyses, and offer a visualisation of variables as they relate to each other *and* to emergent dimensions, deepening the understanding of tourist motivations.

Limitations of this method are often cited as the inability to make "sweeping generalisations" (Goodrich, 1978: p. 7), and interpretation subjectivity and/or bias (Gartner, 1989; Marcussen, 2014). Additionally, its use of single-point, cross-sectional surveys does little to reveal information related to temporal shifts in tourist perspectives (Goodrich, 1978). Within the scope of this research, limitations were minimised by acknowledging that the intention of using the MDS visualisation technique did not intend to make generalisations of the data related to tourism routes in other locations or over time, but rather confined its findings to the Wild Atlantic Way. This offers a glimpse into current perceptions that can inform policy and marketing responses in the near-term, addressing concerns that presently impact tourist motivations and intent to recommend or return. Moreover, as it is likely that tourist motivations are reliant to some degree on tourist country of origin, this factor was included in the comparative matrix used to create the resulting MDS plot, representing of the multiple variables analysed in the method.

3.6 Phase II – Qualitative Methods Exploring Community Perspectives on the Wild Atlantic Way

3.6.1 Case study – Working within a community

3.6.1.1 Defining community stakeholders

Working with a community to explore their perspectives and values requires defining the community and its stakeholders. In the literature, defining the concept of ‘community’ has been done based on various themes across disciplines, but generally implies a scale at which individuals recognise and interact with one another. Community has been defined in terms of territories, boundaries, and proximities (Poland and Maré, 2005; Amsden *et al.*, 2011; Capece and Costa, 2013), as a process (Joseph, 2002; Theodori, 2005), and a tangible entity (McClellan, 2011). It has been examined in relation to shared values and worldviews (Bettez, 2013), sense of belonging (Stone, 1992; Vogl, 2008), and as a socially constructed symbol (Gusfield, 1975; Cohen, 1985; MacQueen, 2002).

Academically, concepts of a community and its stakeholders are usually considered as a uniform entity, based on social identities (Hogg and Abrams, 1988; Stets and Burke, 2000; Harrington *et al.*, 2008; Schweinsberg *et al.*, 2021). Harrington *et al.* (2008) have described communities by the ‘ties that bind’, but note that they are diverse and complex – comprised of social, political and cultural differences (Jackson, 1989; Massey *et al.*, 1999). Despite connotations of commonality and collective norms and interests, Harvey (1996) asserts that communities often represent heterogeneous beliefs, values and interests which signify difference, contestation and sometimes conflict across space and time (Harrington *et al.*, 2008). Recognising that communities comprise individuals with their own identities, within the context of this research, community is defined as:

“a group of people who share a common culture, values, and/or interests based on social identity and/or territory, and who have some means of recognising and (inter)acting upon those commonalities” (Gregory *et al.*, 2009: p. 103).

3.6.1.2 Knowledge (co)production

The concept of community continues to be both practically and ideologically significant for people, reaffirming it as an important focus of social scientific research. Tumiel-Berhalter *et al.* (2005) state that community stakeholders should be inclusive and representative of the community in which the research is conducted. As it relates to sustainable

tourism planning, Higgins-Desbiolles (2020) asserts that host communities should have a more prominent voice in the process, which can be accomplished through collaborative research and engagement. This type of participation often results in community empowerment, promoting the inclusion and prioritization of local knowledge in planning.

Participatory and collaborative research approaches include stakeholders in the process of knowledge production, resulting in the grounding of their individual and collective experiences (Mercer *et al.*, 2008; Sullivan-Wiley *et al.*, 2019; Crook *et al.*, 2021). Knowledge co-creation, through collaborative research methods, requires active participation by all partners. This process promotes collective brainstorming of prioritisation of issues, solutions to problems, and tools for change, among other aims (Godinho *et al.*, 2021). Knowledge co-creation with communities involves the design of processes and methods that produce knowledge by, for, and with communities (Monnard *et al.*, 2021). O’Fallon and Dearry (2002) encourage that community-based participatory research ought to incorporate six guiding principles, such that the research:

- (1) Promotes active collaboration and participation at every stage of research;
- (2) Fosters co-learning;
- (3) Ensures projects are community-driven;
- (4) Disseminates results in useful terms;
- (5) Ensures research, solutions, and intervention strategies are culturally appropriate; and
- (6) Defines a community as a unit of identity.

Research design and fieldwork in Rathmullan is guided by these six principles. In practice, the first principle is satisfied by the inclusion of community stakeholders from the outset of the research. In fact, the basis of this research was initially inspired by conversations had with community leaders of the working group, representing the community-driven aspect of the third principle. Much of this researcher’s decisions in method selection have been in an effort to produce robust results that best respond to community concerns. Feedback was garnered frequently at community meeting presentations, where residents were encouraged to contribute their thoughts and suggestions at multiple stages.

This relates also to the second principle, where research fosters co-learning. Le Heron *et al.* (2011, p. 79) have highlighted that co-learning in geography represents “a radical departure from much existing practice”. They view that fieldwork in particular has the capacity to maximise co-

learning by revealing social construction of knowledge, shifting the understanding of expertise, and revealing underlying social relationships (ibid.). It has been shown that research which fosters co-learning with communities has the ability to resituate power structures “through ownership and shared decision-making” (Denzongpa *et al.*, 2020: p. 238) and cultivating reciprocal relationships among partners (Minkler *et al.*, 2012). By including the Rathmullan community in multiple stages of the research and incorporating a reflexive practice, co-learning is incorporated into this research process.

When community engagement and empowerment is deliberately incorporated into the research design, the result is a community-driven research process. The initial question formulated, serving as the aim of this thesis, is an academic translation of concerns expressed by the community. As such, the dissemination of findings – the results of working collaboratively with the community – are presented and disseminated in a way that furthers the community’s ownership and empowerment, via a toolset for continued community development.

Ultimately, the fifth and sixth principles are satisfied by the inclusion of questions that ask the community stakeholders to define ‘community’ and ‘culture’. By engaging this practice, the community is defined by its own members, representing their individual, cultural, and social identities. The practice of self-categorisation (Hogg and Abrams, 1988) informs the accentuation of perceived similarities and differences of social groups an individual belongs to (Stets and Burke, 2000). As the accentuation process occurs subconsciously for “all the attitudes, beliefs and values, affective reactions, behavioural norms, styles of speech” (ibid., p. 225) and other aspects correlated with intergroup categorisation, self-defined community groups can provide a more nuanced understanding of the community as a whole. Methods like Q (described in sub-section 3.6.3) provide a means to contextualise community intergroups as a subjective outsider.

While the community of Rathmullan exists as a major contributing group in the scope of this research, other key stakeholders include Local Authorities, tourism industry business owners and/or employees, as well as the planners and employees of Fáilte Ireland. Agency planners for Fáilte Ireland and the Wild Atlantic Way are organized by region, and therefore those whose demographic includes Donegal, or Rathmullan specifically, were especially encouraged to participate in the interview phase of the research.

3.6.2 *Semi-structured interviews*

3.6.2.1 *Introduction*

Semi-structured interviews (sometimes referred to as ‘informal’, ‘conversational’, or ‘soft’ interviews) are a means of eliciting informational data from individuals by asking predetermined questions (Longhurst, 2016). Though the questions (i.e. interview schedule) are predetermined, the interview is designed to unfold conversationally which allows the participants to explore and elaborate on topics they deem important. Leaving responses open allows individuals to respond in their own words, providing richer data for analysis. Semi-structured interviews can be conducted as a stand-alone method, or can be utilised in a multi-method approach as a means for triangulation as was done in this research (Valentine, 2005; Longhurst, 2016).

3.6.2.2 *Interview development*

Semi-structured interview was chosen as part of the multi-method approach due to its flexibility and versatility; the ability to take on feedback in the field and make adjustments (Adams, 2015). Interview questions were developed over three stages: ‘pre-interview’ round, literature review, and Q method development. The ‘pre-interview’ stage consisted of outreach and conversations with stakeholders to gather concerns, general topics and discourses. An extensive review of academic literature, governmental tourism guides, newspaper reports, and media coverage created the conceptual foundation of the interview schedule (Åstedt-Kurki & Heikkinen 1994; Kallio et al., 2016), which mirrored the thematic foundations of the Q concourse (further elaborated on in the sub-section 3.6.3). These three stages often overlapped, and a working list of discourses, sources, and notes was compiled over the course of interview development.

When considered within the confines of Rathmullan and the Wild Atlantic Way, each emergent theme spurred overarching questions that guided the focused breakdown of questions and ideas to create the interview schedule. Questions encouraged descriptive answers by beginning with words like *who, what, where, when, why and how* (Turner, 2010; Adams, 2015; Kallio et al., 2016). Questions in the final schedule consisted of two levels: primary questions, and secondary, or probing follow-up questions. To achieve the richest data possible, questions were clearly worded, using neutral, non-leading language where possible and formulated as participant-oriented (Bariball and While, 1994; Kallio et al., 2016), encouraging responses that expressed perceptions of the individual.

Chapter 3 – Methodological Approach

Participants were asked to engage with questions that had them explore their beliefs about their own cultural and community identities, concepts of tourism and policy, and how they relate to their experience of living along the Wild Atlantic Way route (Appendix B). The resulting questions for use in interviews with community stakeholders and Fáilte Ireland representatives are presented in Tables 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5, corresponding to the three discourse themes that connect this method of inquiry with the use of Q method: tourism, identity, and local (ecological) knowledge.

Table 3.3 Development of stakeholder and Fáilte Ireland interview questions from overarching thematic questions related to tourism. (Questions marked with an asterisk (*) denote those that directly relate to the scope of the MOSES project).

TOURISM	
1. What extent do communities feel involved in tourism development? 2. How is tourism perceived in communities (i.e. social representations)? 3. Do current policies support community agency when developing tourism? 4. What is the working relationship of the tourism industry, local authorities, and communities?	
STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	FÁILTE IRELAND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
Did/do you feel a sense of involvement in the development of the Wild Atlantic Way? How?	How is the tourism sector currently managed on the Atlantic coast of Ireland?
Did/do you feel a sense of involvement in the implementation of the Wild Atlantic Way?	To what extent is tourist dispersal a concern for the industry?
Did/do you feel a sense of involvement in the progression of the Wild Atlantic Way?	How might the collaboration with Local Authorities and industry bodies be strengthened to maximise tourism potential?
To the best of your knowledge, how many visits to your community were made by Fáilte Ireland?	What policies are needed for Ireland to pursue a sustainable blue growth strategy?*
What benefits do you notice to your community after the implementation of the Wild Atlantic Way?	Outline policy advice that countries need to take if tourism is to lead to sustainable Blue Growth.*
What barriers do you see/think that your community has in relation to the Wild Atlantic Way?	What pressures (economic, political, environmental, demographic) do you see related to the Wild Atlantic Way?*
	What are the innovations occurring in the sector that will lead to it being different in the future?*
	What do you view as the biggest success of the Wild Atlantic Way?

Table 3.4 Development of stakeholder and Fáilte Ireland interview questions from overarching thematic questions related to identity.

<p style="text-align: center;">IDENTITY</p> <p>1. Does scale (community size) play a significant role in community identity within the Wild Atlantic Way?</p> <p>2. Is there conflict between community’s character and industry placemaking practices?</p> <p>3. Do stakeholders feel their community remains unique and authentic?</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">FÁILTE IRELAND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS</p>
How would you describe culture and how you relate to it?	How would you describe the identity (cultural or community-level) that is presented by the Wild Atlantic Way initiative to tourists?
How would you describe your community?	How would you describe the unique identity of Donegal?
	How does the unique identity of Donegal align with the brand identity of the Wild Atlantic Way?

Table 3.5 Development of stakeholder and Fáilte Ireland interview questions from overarching thematic questions related to local knowledge.

<p style="text-align: center;">LOCAL (ECOLOGICAL) KNOWLEDGE</p> <p>1. Has cultural resource value increased as a result of the implementation of the Wild Atlantic Way?</p> <p>2. Is local knowledge recognised in tourism development of communities?</p> <p>3. What level of organisation exists within communities to pursue opportunities of the Wild Atlantic Way?</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">FÁILTE IRELAND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS</p>
Do you actively participate in your community?	Can you elaborate on the community consultation process?
	How would you describe the level of community and stakeholder engagement during the development of the Wild Atlantic Way? Do you feel this was satisfactory?

3.6.2.3 Sampling procedure

Following a formal presentation and introduction of the research project at a community-led meeting in 2018, contact information was provided and participants were advertised for. The qualifications for participation in this community perspectives exploration was simply the individual's status as a community member. This was intentionally presented as ambiguous, leaving it open to include permanent residents as well as individuals who only spend part of the year in Rathmullan, as well as other key stakeholders (who were sampled and invited to participate on an individualised-basis). It also allowed for individuals to identify themselves, as opposed to imposed identities and labels by the researcher. Participant profiles are presented in Table 3.6, indicating which research methods each contributed to.

Table 3.6 Profile of participating stakeholders. ‘R’ indicates Rathmullan community member, ‘TA’ indicates tourism agency stakeholder. Demographic information includes: gender, age, nationality and profession, where provided.

Code	Demographics	Pre-round Interview	Formal Interview	Q Method	Participatory Mapping
R_01	F Irish Retired				
R_02	F Irish Writer/Poet				
R_03	F Irish Business Owner, Coastcare				
R_04	M 53 Irish Business Owner				
R_05	F Irish Retired, Tidy Towns				
R_06	M Irish RtWF				
R_07	F Architect				
R_08	F Irish Regional Community Centre				
R_09	F Irish Retired				
R_10	F Irish Retired				
R_11	F Irish Water Sports Business				
R_12	F 50 Irish Coastcare				
R_13	M Irish RtWF				
R_14	F 53 Brazilian-Irish Business Owner				
R_15	F 53 Irish Business Owner				
R_16	F Irish Retired				
R_17	M 47 Irish Business Owner				
R_18	F Irish Retired, Historian/ Writer				
TA_19	F 47 Irish Fáilte Ireland				

3.6.2.4 Conducting interviews

Interviews were conducted at an agreed upon location on an individual basis – maintaining University safety protocols – including in participants’ homes, businesses, local cafes, over the phone, or via Zoom when necessary. Confidentiality and anonymity were discussed prior to beginning the interview and a consent form was signed by both the participant and the interviewer (Appendix C). With the permission of the participant, interviews were audio recorded allowing the material to be transcribed and revisited at different stages of the project. Notes were also

taken by the researcher, which were more observational in nature and included references to portions of the interview to be emphasised in analysis.

The interview began by engaging with topics in a broad sense, and narrowed down to specifics as the interview progressed. Participants were asked first to describe the terms ‘culture’ and ‘community’ in their own words. Using their own lived experiences, they were able to convey how they related to these terms. From there, stakeholders were asked to reflect on their level of participation in their community. Some chose to describe how their participation has changed over time in different life stages, while others discussed their current engagement. From these more abstract topics, the interview shifted to discuss the individual’s perceptions of various impacts of the development and implementation of the Wild Atlantic Way initiative and route. Finally, the participants were asked to evaluate benefits and barriers they perceived in their community related to the tourism trail.

3.6.2.5 Content analysis – Transcription and thematic coding

Recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim, allowing for the inclusion of colloquial terminology and dialect to remain. The interviews were between 14 and 30 minutes in duration. Following the interview, stakeholders completed the Q statement-sorting portion (described in subsection 3.6.3.2) which was also recorded to capture the participants’ thought process and any comments made while sorting. Audio obtained required transcription times between two and four hours. Verbatim transcription of interviews (Appendix D) was considered the first stage of analysis as it provided further familiarisation with the interview data, and allowed for coordination of observational notes.

Following the completion of transcription, the interview data was analysed using line-by-line and thematic analysis protocols. Coding and analysis was an iterative process, resulting in several passes of coding at varying levels of detail. The first pass, after transcription, was coding and categorising individual interviews. Codes, as defined by Goodrick *et al.* (2015: p. 564), included “descriptive words or phrases intended to describe a fragment of data”. Coding was accomplished following a line-by-line procedure, which allowed for the visualisation of ‘clusters’. Categories emerged from the exploration of clusters of similar codes. These categories reflect sub-themes of the data. Additionally, themes were defined as the

“outcome of categorising and reflection by the evaluator on salient patterns in the data” (ibid., p. 564).

Thematic analysis was utilised in order to reconnect the interview content to the concerns expressed by participants in the ‘pre-interview’ round. Some categorical codes included ‘sense of place’, ‘complex politics’, ‘historical account’, ‘local knowledge’, ‘sense of belonging’, and ‘identity’ among others (see Fig. 3.4). Where new thematic categories emerged from the interview data, this phase of coding and analysis captured them (e.g. ‘politics’ and ‘conflict’). Sub-themes were grouped into larger, broad themes that incorporated salient similarities among categories. These mirrored the three primary discourse themes of tourism, identity, and local (ecological) knowledge, but now included place-specific distinction nuanced by local lived experiences.

DF: One of the main critiques of the Wild Atlantic Way has been that it kind of *homogenises* the whole west coast. In that, the way that it's branded, especially to overseas visitors is that "anywhere you go along the Wild Atlantic Way, you can get cliffs, sheep, and Guinness" [laughs]

O3: Yeah... yeah.

DF: Would you say that that is an accurate, or valid critique? Or, what you were just describing seems that you would think the opposite...

O3: Yeah... because, you know, people would say "Oh, Donegal is very like Kerry", but it couldn't be further from the truth, really. The *scenery* is very similar, but your *cultural experiences* would be very different. Because we have - I know what they're trying to say - but the actual offerings are very different. Ok, traditional bars - even traditional bars are very different.

] sense of place
- culture
- tourism
- authenticity

DF: Yeah you can get so many different experiences in different pubs.

O3: Yeah! And that's probably something that could be exploited - I know] that's not a good word to use [laughs], by them a bit more.

] resource management
+ local knowledge

DF: Hmm?

O3: Because, you know they'd say: "Oh, I've been to, say Slieve League, so I wouldn't be bothered to go to Cliffs of Moher now", but they're not - they're similar, but they're different. And I know that the thing about Donegal, up here it's different. - identity

] local knowledge
- culture

Figure 3.4 Sample of thematic coding process for interview data.

In a second pass of coding, the semi-structured interviews were analysed using additional information gained from field site visits as well as findings from the analysis of the tourist survey. By obtaining insights from tourists and community members (i.e. both the demand and supply side of local tourism), a richness and depth of analysis was achieved. In this phase of analysis relationship-type themes emerged in more obvious detail, for example, through phrases related to “the short tourism season”, businesses

being under pressure to make their annual income before the ferry stops running, or not being able to accommodate locals in the same way as tourists outside of the prime tourism season.

The final phase of interview data analysis, included insights from individual experts in the tourism industry as well as the addition of information garnered from Q methodology and Participatory Mapping portions of the research framework (outlined in Sections 3.6.3 and 3.6.4 below). The culmination of the multi-method approach employed over the course of this research resulted in a representative conversation regarding the Wild Atlantic Way as a tourism initiative and its impacts at the community level.

3.6.3 Q Methodology

3.6.3.1 Introduction to Q

The methodological standard for seeking to understand attitudes on a given topic is through either qualitative methods such as focus groups or interviews, or quantitative methods like questionnaires (Addams, 2000). While both of these approaches have their strengths, each also have weaknesses making them unsuitable for universal applications of subjective perception studies. Qualitative methods, for example have been critiqued as lacking statistical rigour, while quantitative methods (though statistically rigorous) can fail to capture nuance and subjective complexity.

Q methodology (Q) attempts to ‘analyse subjectivity, in all its forms, in a structured and statistically interpretable form’ (Barry and Proops, 1999, p. 338-339). McKeown & Thomas (2013) describe this exploration of individuals’ perceptions on a given topic as being based on the vantage point of self-reference. Addams and Proops (2000), echoing Stephenson (1965) determine that Q is about classifying ‘attitudes’. According to Barry and Proops (1999, p. 339), “Q methodology attempts to elicit the variety of accounts or discourses about or around a particular discourse domain, theme, issue or topic”. As a methodological approach, Q focuses on examining human subjectivity through means grounded in principles of mathematics, and as such transcends the categorical divide of qualitative and quantitative research (McKeown & Thomas, 2013). Q combines several important characteristics that allow for the systematic examination of the range of perceptions held by a group. Outlined by Aitken (1988, p. 3), the important characteristics of Q are:

- (1) Q’s heuristic ability provides fundamental research,

- (2) Q possesses a theory-building ability that can provide a framework for further studies,
- (3) Analysis of the individual's perceptions gives a scientific approach to the study of subjectivity,
- (4) Q derives statements and structure from the culture, and
- (5) By using a structured Q-sort, the individuals' perceptions and views will transcend the researcher's theory.

Originally developed for use in psychology (Stephenson, 1935a; 1935b), Q has since been adapted as a mixed methods approach to assess subjectivity in a range of high-bias examinations centred on the human-environmental relationship at the community level (Ellis *et al.*, 2007; Frantzi *et al.*, 2009; Webler *et al.* 2009; Carr and Liu, 2016; Farrell *et al.*, 2017). It offers a detailed snapshot of diverse perspectives on a given topic and can be especially useful for revealing hidden diversity within a group that may otherwise appear homogeneous. Because Q avoids prioritisation of views on a given topic, it allows for 'marginal' perspectives to be explored equal to 'mainstream' views, thus expanding the characterisation of a topic or issue (White, n.d.).

3.6.3.2 Conducting Q

Q has been found to be used most frequently with participant sample sizes between 12 and 40 (Webler *et al.*, 2009; Cairns, 2012). Q method comprises five essential steps (Carr, 2019):

- (1) Building the 'Q concourse' which is the full range of perspectives and considerations on an issue;
- (2) Determining the final 'Q set' of statements representing a condensed, subsample of the Q concourse;
- (3) Organising each statement of the Q set in a quasi-normal distribution through a rank-order process referred to as a 'Q sort';
- (4) Running a principal components analysis (PCA) of the collective Q sorts to factor the participants into 'factor groups' of similar views; and
- (5) Conducting a subjectivity analysis of the factor groups by comparing participants' individual Q sorts within and between factor groups, and cross-referencing participant interviews to contextualise the resulting groups.

The *Q* *concourse* is composed of the full range of considerations relevant to the topic at hand (Farrell et al., 2017). These considerations are often presented as statements, and are generated from an in-depth review of various sources including: interviews, academic publications, grey literature, websites, and media. Statements are gathered until a ‘saturation point’ is reached, where the addition of new statements does not add any diversity to the existing set of statements. Once the concourse has reached saturation, the collection of statements are condensed and refined to best represent the themes and views gathered using neutral, non-biased language (Watts and Stenner, 2005; 2012). Three representative discourse themes (which will be further developed in Chapter 5) emerged from the review for concourse development and were used to guide the creation of the *Q* set: tourism, identity, and local (ecological) knowledge.

Barry and Proops (1999, p. 338) define ‘discourse’, as it relates to *Q* methodology, as a “way of seeing and talking about something”, akin to a worldview or perspective. These discourses are individual, subjective, and representative of the “way a particular individual, in particular circumstances and at a particular time, relates to, forms conceptions of, certain aspects of the world” (ibid., p. 338). This definition aligns with Foucault’s (1972) discourse theory that social realities are contingent and dependent on the context in which meaning is made and knowledge produced. Wylie (2015, p. 380) refers to a crucial component of Foucault’s discourse concept by describing individuals themselves as “effects of discourse”, not a unique-self enclosed by layers of meaning. Further, discursive practices – processes that form knowledge – create categories (i.e. products, views, identities, etc.) that are ‘socially constructed’ (ibid., p. 380), and represented (Moscovici, 1963). This phenomenon can be captured in *Q*, after individual *Q* sorting, by the emergence of commonality or shared discourses between individuals with shared experiences or personal attributes (Barry and Proops, 1999).

Once the concourse is refined, the resulting *Q* *set* must be robust enough to meet research objectives, while minimising the demands made of the participants (Carr & Liu, 2016). If the *Q* set remains too large, it can become unmanageable for participants, while a set too small can exclude key perspectives or values from the results. Eden *et al.* (2005) outlined several methods of conducting this process, tending to follow either a ‘structured’ or ‘unstructured’ approach. One structured approach selects statements using a matrix of typology either pre-determined by relevant theory or constructed for the study (Stephenson, 1965; Barry and Proops, 1999; Uittenbroek *et al.*, 2014). Another approach is to utilise a ready-made

Q set from a previous study to examine a different stakeholder group (Farrell *et al.*, 2017). Studies that follow an unstructured Q set development approach focus on selecting statements that seem most pertinent, or maintain a consideration of balance (e.g. Steelman and Maguire, 1999). While these two categories exist, it is not uncommon for approaches to fall somewhere in between (Eden *et al.*, 2005).

For this research, the Q set included a comprehensive 25 statements (Appendix E; Table 3.7) with sorting options based on a Likert scale of -4 (most disagree) to +4 (most agree) (Fig. 3.5). Statements were retained based on a structured selection approach that included the balanced representation of the discourses, with particular focus on including statements that epitomised issues expressed previously by the community. These statements were then ranked by each participant on the sorting grid to produce the individual's *Q sort*. The process of sorting the Q statements was tactile, allowing the participants to interact with the statement cards and sorting grid. Each statement was provided on a separate 4in. x 4in. card, which would be placed on the sorting grid according to the individual's level of agreement. Q sorting requires that only the allotted number of statements per agreement level can be included in each column. For example, using the grid provided, participants were required to choose one statement that represented the strongest agreement, and one that represented the strongest disagreement. As participants worked through and processed the statements, cards could be moved on the grid to adjust for stronger perceptions. The final result of this sorting activity is a visual representation of the individual's views on the topic.

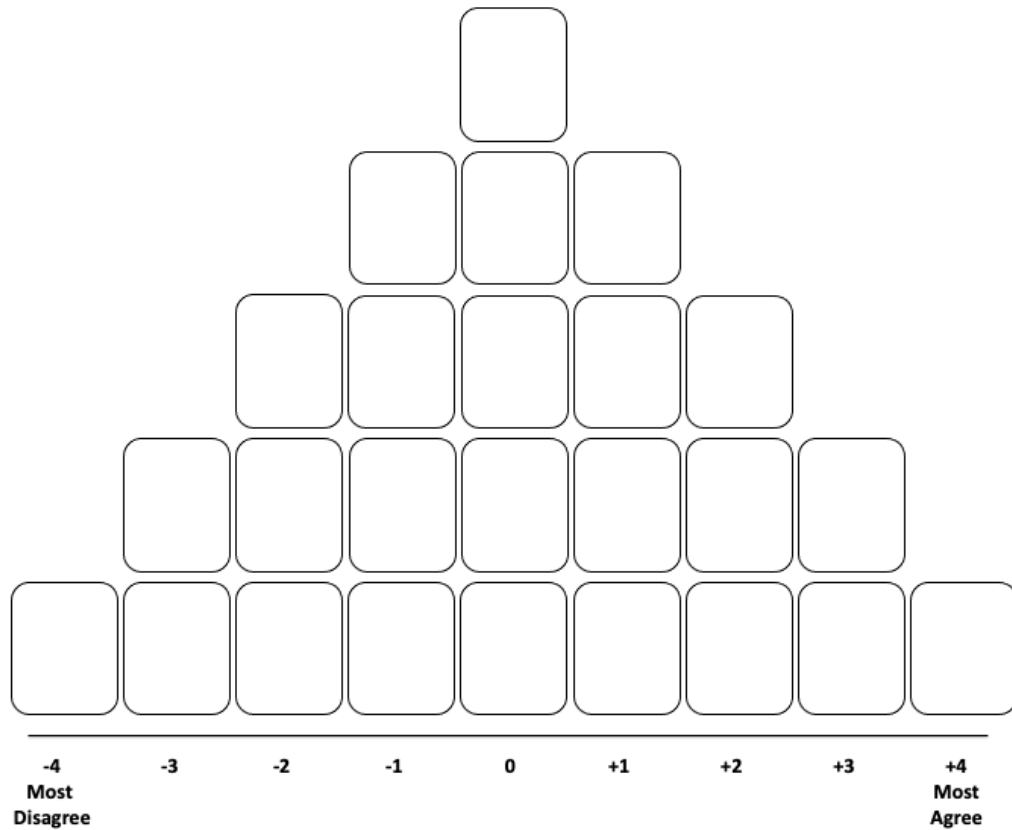


Figure 3.5 Q Sort grid used by participants to rank the 25 statements of the Q set.

The *P set* in Q describes the pool of participants, whose subjectivity is being examined. The community of Rathmullan was selected to participate in this research based on three main factors: (1) networks between NUI Galway researchers and active community members had previously been established, meaning there existed already a willingness to collaborate with academic researchers to accomplish common objectives, (2) members of the community are actively engaged with tourism and the Wild Atlantic Way, and have organised a formal working group Rathmullan: The Way Forward (RtWF), and (3) Rathmullan is connected directly to the village of Bunrana via seasonal ferry across Lough Swilly, providing a direct connection and comparison to tourist respondents from the *Marine and Coastal Tourism and Leisure Survey*. The RtWF group was invaluable for identifying key stakeholders and community gatekeepers, advertising the research opportunity, and sharing some of their community connections. In total, 18 community stakeholders participated in at least one method of engagement, along with 1 representative stakeholder from Fáilte Ireland. It is the subjectivities, values, and this grouping of these individuals that is assessed in this research.

Table 3.7 Q set statements, organised by theme.

THEME	Q SET STATEMENTS
TOURISM	The WAW operates separate from my community.
	The success of the WAW locally is owed to my community's engagement.
	My community prioritises satisfaction levels of visiting tourists.
	My community provides a unique 'non-touristy' experience for visitors.
	Tourism is not just a business.
	My community views all visiting tourists as the same.
	Policy makers do not fully engage with my community with regards to tourism opportunities.
	National policies can help address emerging issues along the WAW.
	Local authorities have met their legal obligations to consult with my community when developing tourism plans.
	The WAW has always existed. It has just been given a name and signs to help tourists find their way around.
	The growth in tourism due to the WAW can be felt in my community.
	The WAW has improved my quality of life economically.
	The WAW has improved my quality of life socially.
IDENTITY	The WAW initiative enhances the identity of my community.
	My community's cultural heritage is not solely defined by the WAW.
	Tourists share in our Irish heritage when they visit my community.
	My community's cultural values exist beyond marketed local tourism destinations.
	The values which define my community offer a unique identity unlike that of other destinations along the WAW.
	The WAW route itself connects my community to neighbouring communities in new ways.
	The WAW substitutes my community's existing character with one marketed to tourist expectations.
LOCAL (ECOLOGICAL) KNOWLEDGE	The WAW has improved local environmental conditions.
	My community has a unique local knowledge that should be used to pursue local tourism opportunities.
	My community is empowered to be involved in the development of the WAW.
	I feel empowered by the WAW to be involved in the experience of visiting tourists.
	The value of my community can only be fully understood through the process of living in it.

3.6.3.3 Analysis using PQMethod

Q sorts from each individual were entered into analysis software PQMethod (Schmolck, 2014, v2.35). PQMethod conducts a principal component analysis (PCA) of factors, with Varimax rotation to maximise the variance between factors (Brown et al., 1999; Shilin et al., 2003; Zabala and Pascual, 2016; Farrell et al., 2017; Zabala *et al.*, 2018). Eigenvalues were calculated and presented as an output by the software package, and factors with eigenvalues greater than one were maintained for further interpretation (Addams and Proops, 2000; Carr, 2019). Participants are grouped into factors based on the similarity of their individual Q sorts.

PQMethod reports calculated z-scores, which represent a prioritisation measure of each statement against the others within the Q set (Carr, 2019). Z-scores calculated are then tested across factor groups in PQMethod, identifying ‘distinguishing statements’ for each factor and ‘consensus statements’ shared among factors, which are statistically significant ($p \leq 0.05$). When ranked by these z-scores, statements are represented in a hierarchical arrangement for each factor group. The PQMethod software then scales the cross-group z-scores to their respective ‘factor score’ (f-score) equivalent, ranging from ‘+ 4’ to ‘- 4’, corresponding the Q sort grid utilised in the sorting activity (Carr, 2019).

Using the z- and f- scores, distinguishing and consensus statements, and additional statistical reports (e.g. standard error), a nuanced picture of each factor group begins to materialise. When paired with insights from the participant interviews, context provided from individuals as they sort their statements, and follow-up discussions, distinct characteristics of each factor emerge. The resulting factor groups, and their distinctive characteristics, are then used to describe the varying perspectives of the stakeholder group on the topic at hand. Outputs from the Q phase of research are presented in further detail in Chapter 5.

3.6.4 Participatory Mapping Workshop

Participatory mapping aims to illustrate the connections between environments and local communities by engaging in a map-making process based on cartography (Corbett *et al.*, 2009). Traditionally, map creation is often conducted by a small group of ‘experts’ for decision makers and those in power, representing a top-down, authoritarian paradigm (Cochrane *et al.*, 2014). The participatory mapping process, instead, assigns spatial attributes to characteristics that traditional mapping would not identify, by “mapping the unmapped”, thus provoking critical reflections (Saija *et al.*, 2017).

Participatory can indicate participation by a range of contributors at various stages of data collection, such as design, ownership, and the development of the particular mapping process (Cochrane *et al.*, 2014).

Stakeholder participation and community mapping can be done with instrumental goals in mind (i.e. as a tool for decision-making or planning), as a retrospective practice to gain insight into past experiences, or as a means for knowledge co-creation (Skarlatidou *et al.*, 2019). Community-based mapping is a collaborative process that occurs within a community, produced by its residents for its own benefit, which often features unique local knowledge and values (Cochrane *et al.*, 2014). It is grounded by the principle of co-production of knowledge and decision making. Co-production aims to bring multiple perspectives, values, knowledge and experiences together to inform actions that deliver results for stakeholders (i.e. services, policies, plans, and projects) (Saija *et al.*, 2017). According to Cochrane *et al.* (2014, p. 3), the inquiry-driven method of community and participatory mapping has six major purposes:

- (1) To articulate and communicate spatial knowledge to outsiders;
- (2) To record and archive local knowledge;
- (3) To enhance land-use planning and resource management decisions;
- (4) To advocate for change;
- (5) To increase capacity within communities; and
- (6) To address resource-related conflict.

While all six of these purposes are in some way connected to the use of participatory mapping in this research, four play a particularly significant role in guiding the methodological design: points 1, 2, 5, and 6. Mapping was utilised as an exercise in community empowerment, an assessment of values, and to depict and better understand the community's perspectives on engaging with tourism. The overall aim of conducting participatory mapping with the Rathmullan community was to articulate local expertise and knowledge to outsiders, combining the first two purposes listed by Cochrane *et al.* (2014).

As introduced in Chapter 2, the *Wild Atlantic Way Operational Programme (2015-2019)* frames communities as tourist experiences and commodities rather than collaborative partners, despite acknowledging the importance of stakeholder engagement (Fáilte Ireland, 2015). In response to this discrepancy, participatory mapping was included within the methodological framework of this research as a means to re-centre the community, thus increasing their capacity to self-advocate (purpose 5). Di

Gessa et al. (2008, p. 3) have found that “making the map is not the end of the empowerment process but the beginning — the community’s capacity to use the map for its own benefit must be enhanced”. This idea, coupled with the sixth purpose proposed by Cochrane *et al.* (2014) guided the decision to conduct participatory mapping in a discussion-based workshop format. Employed in this manner, it was intended that the workshop would result in an illustrated insight of local values and provide community leaders a means to prioritise potential conflicts of tourism in their region.

3.6.4.1 Putting Rathmullan community values on the map

The participatory mapping workshop was advertised to the Rathmullan community after presenting preliminary Q results at a community-led meeting. The workshop was described as a mapping activity where stakeholders could share their values and perspectives of tourism in their community and region, supporting the overall goals of the collaboration. In October 2019, the workshop was held in Rathmullan with the researcher serving as “process facilitator”, providing explanation of the mapping process, encouraging participation, and supporting discussion (Levine and Feinholz, 2015: p. 63). The workshop was organised as a round-table discussion, with participants each having their own materials, but engagement and discussion of the entire group was encouraged at various stages of the activity. The eight participants of the workshop were provided with a printed base-layer image map of Rathmullan and the surrounding region, centred on the Rathmullan village and Lough Swilly (Fig. 3.6). To avoid introducing bias to the mapping activity, the map was purposefully barren of an overabundance of identifying labels and details (i.e. established tourism locations, national parks, etc.), following the procedure of a ‘No-Name’ mapping method (Di Gessa et al., 2008; NOAA, n.d.).

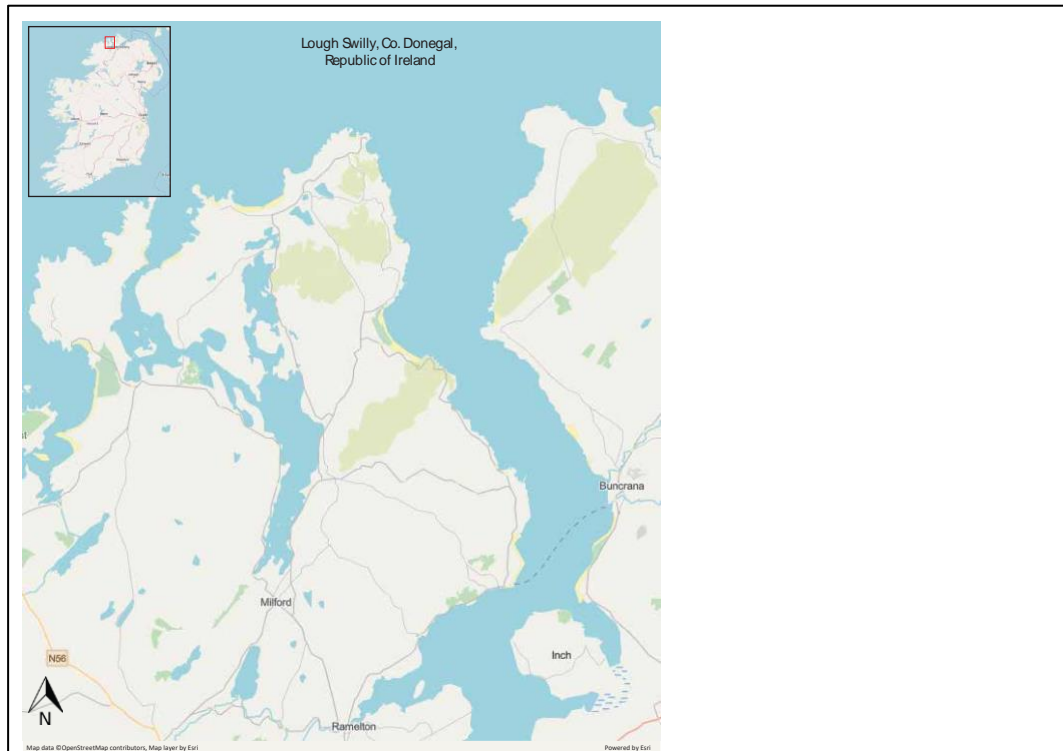


Figure 3.6 Base map for the Rathmullan Participatory Mapping Workshop, centred on Lough Swilly and including part of the Inishowen Peninsula, with space for participants to notate on the right (source: map layer by ESRI; modifications author’s own).

In order to explore perceptions and local knowledge, the participants were asked to mark on their maps, using the colour-coordinated highlighters provided based on the following three prompts:

- (1) Where in your community does the Wild Atlantic Way demonstrate significant value (cultural, ethical, recreational, etc.)?
- (2) Where do you consider to be the most significant area(s) for tourism in your community?
- (3) Where do you consider to be the most significant area(s) for the economy in your community?

Each prompt was discussed as a group, prior to marking, to collaboratively define terms and gather a sense of how the participants viewed terms essential to the mapping activity. Once the group felt comfortable with the prompts and associated terms, they were asked to mark areas on their maps where those features were most significant. In this workshop, the term ‘value’ was described as personal to themselves – they were asked to consider each prompt and how it specifically related to

them. Depending on the prompt, and the individual, demarcations on the maps included linear representations of paths and roads, circles and other symbols, and filled polygons to cover entire areas of the map. Stakeholders were encouraged to make notes and provide contextual details in their own words in the margins of their individual maps, adding local knowledge detail that would otherwise be lacking in traditional mapping methods (Levine and Feinholz, 2015). The anonymised individual maps from the workshop are presented and discussed in further detail in Chapter 5.

3.6.4.2 Content analysis – Consensus mapping

Mapping as a research method has been shown to emphasise ways in which a place can construct identities of self, relative to historical, geographical, and localities (Powell, 2010). As aesthetic devices, maps have the ability to depict lived experiences of space, time and place. Illustrative examples of sense of place in this manner comprise elements of individual and social identities, personal and generational history, and values among others. In the context of this research, the map-making process engaged in by community participants represents a reflexive practice in knowledge creation, from subjective individual mental spaces toward a more objective, collective expression.

Two theories informed the analysis and understanding of the participatory mapping activity in this research: Popper's Three World Theory (1978) and Moscovici's Social Representations Theory (1972). Popper posited that there are three worlds that exist: the physical world (world 1), the mental or psychological world (world 2), and the products of the human mind (world 3). Following this theory, objects are able to belong in both world 1 and world 3 at the same time. For example, the maps created by participants are both physical objects of world 1 and creations of the participants' minds ascribing them to world 3. However, world 3 products can only exert influence on world 1 if they are "...grasped and understood by a mind" (ibid., p. 164, original emphasis). Substantial similarities exist between Popper's theory and Moscovici's Social Representations Theory, namely the social nature of everyday knowledge (Holtz, 2016). Moscovici originally sought to understand "...how a (scientific) theory inflects a society's behaviour, way of thinking, and language; and is thus transformed, through its very circulation, into a social representation" (1963, p. 251). In this theory, objects of the mind become social representations only when communicated and subsequently perceived by others, forming a negotiated consensus (Wagner *et al.*, 1999; Holtz, 2016).

Applied to the participatory map-making process, these concepts offer a means of theoretically understanding how an individual's sense of place, place attachment, and values can be translated from subjective realities to a shared social representation nearing objectivity. In practice, the analysis of the workshop results also necessitated a reflexive approach in order to capture the most authentic complexity (Kühne, 2021). As a result, individual maps were uniformly colour-coded and then digitally scanned. The digitised versions were overlaid and geo-referenced. The opacity of individual layers was adjusted so that all maps could be visualised at once. Consensus polygons were drawn where the colour of each categorical question was the darkest. These areas of 'collective expression' (Cochrane *et al.*, 2014) were carried through onto a composite map which represented the generalised values of the stakeholders regarding tourism and the Wild Atlantic Way in their region. Results from the stakeholder participatory mapping exercise and findings are presented and discussed further in Chapter 5.

3.7 Unprecedented Times: Impact & Reflections of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic put an immediate halt to fieldwork planned for the remainder of 2020. At the time domestic and global travel restrictions and stay-at-home ordinances went into effect, fieldwork in Rathmullan was nearly complete and preliminary findings had been presented at a community-held meeting only days before. An additional visit was planned to allow the participation of a few more locals, and data collection was scheduled to be complete by April 2020. The extended lockdown period made a supplementary visit impossible, therefore three online Q software programmes were piloted to enable the completion of the Q data collection virtually (see Table 3.8 for software comparison). Q-sorTouch, an online Q programme by Dr. Alessio Pruneddu, was utilised as a contingency plan to reach additional stakeholders in Rathmullan who wished to participate. The same Q set was uploaded into the online Q platform and the ranking system was adapted to suit the digital model which was launched in May 2020 and advertised through community newsletters. Limitations of this method included a lighter engagement level, due in part to the unprecedented times which resulted in limited technological opportunities and/or capabilities as Rathmullan is a rural village with an ageing demographic, and the lack of in-person support

available (as opposed to being present during the hard copy Q sort). The online Q platform resulted in the addition of one individual's insights.

Table 3.8 Three online Q-Methodology software packages compared using four essential criteria.

	Q Software	Q Method Software	Q-sorTouch
Participant Friendly?	No: Pre-sort phase is cumbersome and requires background knowledge of Q process	Yes: allows for additional stimuli and instructions for participants; includes ability to add consent form and demographic surveys	Yes: ability to add tips and additional instruction for participants to guide them through sorts
Engaging?	No: requires zooming in/out to view full distribution; does not facilitate easy movement of statements in final sort	Yes: final sort is completed by filling statements into the distribution pyramid similar to in-person; can include videos/ images to instruct	No: requires zooming in/out to view full distribution; does not facilitate easy movement of statements in final sort
Includes Analysis?	No: single csv file download	Yes: 9 analysis reports and ability to download raw data	No: single csv file download
Multi-platform?	No - only available for completion on laptop or desktop	No: only available for completion on laptop or desktop	Yes: works on any device connected to the internet

A site visit to the Maharees, Co. Kerry was planned for April 2020 as the final phase of fieldwork for this research. Networking and collaborative research efforts were ongoing in the Maharees community and with the Maharees Conservation Association by colleagues in the Discipline of Geography and NUI Galway for several years, which meant that contacts had already been established and there was expressed interest from locals to participate in this research project. Despite garnered interest, the online Q platform was deemed unsuitable for this site as a formal visit and project introduction to the community had not yet been possible⁵.

⁵ After consulting with the Graduate Research Committee regarding alternative options in May 2020, it was decided that with the data collected from the tourists at six points along the Wild Atlantic Way, coupled with the in-depth community case study in Rathmullan, there was sufficient data to address the questions posed by this thesis with minor adjustments.

Not only has the COVID-19 virus isolated people, wreaked havoc on medical systems all over the world, and resulted in immeasurable loss of life, it has also devastated the travel and tourism industry (Yang et al., 2021). With travel restricted, to some degree, globally for over a year (and with some restrictions still in place two years later) countries faced an immediate and prolonged halt to tourism and its economic influence. As a researcher studying tourism, this was alarming on a more personal level posing questions such as: *How might tourism change (for worse or better)? How would these changes impact the study of tourism?* And in the final stages of PhD research, *what might my career look like now?* At the time of this writing, tourism in some countries is beginning to pick up, but before locations are inundated with pre-COVID tourist numbers, there exists an exciting opportunity to make moves toward employing creative solutions and implementing changes to conserve tourist sites, and better serve the communities that exist around them.

Adjustments made to the research design as a response to the COVID pandemic ultimately enriched the work of this thesis in two ways. First, the changes added a comparative element to the use of Q in this study. Piloting different software programmes and launching a virtual alternative for stakeholder participation, increased inclusion and offered a means to accommodate needs and diversify engagement in future research. Additionally, feedback from participants demonstrated that both in-person and online Q sorting was accessible and produced valuable results. Second, reducing the community case studies allowed for more time spent with one community, promoting a more in-depth exploration of community dynamics in Rathmullan.

3.8 Limitations

Identified challenges of employing a mixed- or multi-methods approach are often referred to as “dialectic pluralism” (Johnson, 2012: p. 751). Perhaps most important to this issue is the idea of justification. Not all methods are justified in every body of research, therefore validation of methods employed is crucial for transparency and replicability, as well as the interpretation of findings. Additionally, combining methods in one research project requires careful consideration of how each method fills in gaps left by others. In the case of this thesis, each method was utilised to address a specific, if not unique, aspect of the overarching research question.

The quantitative survey questionnaire sought to investigate tourist motivations and trends on the Wild Atlantic Way, informing the demand side of the route as a tourism product. Multiple qualitative methods were used to explore community values and priorities conceptually (interviews and Q method) and spatially (participatory mapping). Each method included for this research provided insight that was otherwise not developed by the other methods, justifying their combination in this methodological framework.

Q has been critiqued in the literature regarding concerns primarily of its objective nature (researcher bias) and reliability (Aitken, 1988; Cross, 2005; Eden *et al.*, 2005). While Q is uniquely suited to reveal stakeholder perspectives on a given topic and group like-minded participants, it does not claim to represent views of general populations (Aitken, 1988; Durning and Brown, 2007). Rather, the interpretative results of Q refer instead to communicated values that can be extrapolated back to the research topic. In this sense, Q's heuristic abilities are best evidenced when conducted with "small, highly informed and invested" stakeholder groups (Carr, 2019).

In line with many constructivist researchers, Kampen and Tamás (2014) argue that Q lacks internal validity and measurement, and promotes the exclusion of researcher subjectivity in the Q process. Barry and Proops (1999), however, argue that Q is a process driven by the participants. As statements are not assigned value by the researcher *a priori*, the participants ascribe meaning and value through the process of sorting. Methodological reflexivity, therefore, is a crucial element of conducting Q – as with any research method – to allow for transparency at all stages of the process.

The scope of the application of Q in this research was stated as reflecting the views and values of the community of Rathmullan, as a community on the route of the Wild Atlantic Way. The results of this research were crucial in the development of a community-generated framework for participation and engagement in the Wild Atlantic Way, which can be adopted by other communities and villages along the route by injecting their own concerns and priorities in a similar manner. When developing the Q set, the priorities of the community were constantly revisited to ensure that their concerns were comprehensively represented in the resulting Q set.

Participatory community mapping has been critiqued for a lack of generalisability due to its "bottom-up" process, and its difficulty in

integrating “top-down” approaches at a larger scale (Kappes *et al.*, 2012; Kienberger, 2014; Sullivan-Wiley *et al.*, 2019). Conversely, Sullivan-Wiley *et al.* (2019) argue that narrowing participatory mapping efforts to integrate with “top-down” maps may constrain the contributions of grounded, local knowledge. While the community stakeholder maps presented in this thesis do integrate with “top-down” generated maps for the purpose of clarifying and demonstrating the significance of local knowledge, integration was not an explicit goal of the process. Issues of scale as they relate to participatory mapping approaches have identified concerns for the method to provide sufficient context to inform specific policy changes (Sullivan-Wiley *et al.*, 2019). It is therefore crucial to understand in the analysis of community-based and participatory mapping methods that the maps produced are “abstractions of reality that reflect a particular time and context” (Sullivan-Wiley *et al.*, 2019: p. 55).

Engaging in a reflexive process should reduce the severity of bias and partisanship that exists as a result of researcher positionality (Rowe, 2014; Holmes, 2020). Over the course of this PhD research, a reflexive field journal was maintained to document notes from interviews, participant observations, and thoughts at various stages of the research development and process. These notes were used primarily during interview transcription and analysis to contextualise overarching ideas conveyed by community members with observations at the time.

3.9 Positionality and Ethics

Positionality relates to ontological and epistemological assumptions, as well as assumptions about human nature and agency (Holmes, 2020). In its most basic form, positionality describes the facets of the self, “in terms of race, nationality, age, gender, social and economic status, sexuality” (Madge, 1993; Rose, 1997). As a researcher, positionality is a reflection of adopted views within the context of a study (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013; Holmes, 2020). These positions can influence data (during collection), and thus the information presented as knowledge (through analysis and interpretation) (Madge, 1993). According to Warf (2010: 2258), “knowledge is the product of a specific position that reflects particular places and spaces”, therefore reflecting on positionality is the practice of grounding, or situating that knowledge. In geography, knowledge production is often positioned within a multidimensional geographical space, i.e. spatialised (Haraway, 1991; Rose, 1997). Likewise, knowledge presented within the scope of this thesis,

is contextual – geographically situated by the case study community and route. Positionality experiences as a researcher over the course of this thesis are most significantly described by three aspects: identity as an interdisciplinary researcher, as an international postgraduate student researcher, and within the insider-outsider dialectic.

3.9.1 Positionality and the research process

3.9.1.1 Interdisciplinary researcher

There exists in academia a generalised positive response to the concept of interdisciplinary research. However, for researchers who identify as interdisciplinary scholars by training, it can result in feelings of tension within their work (Lau and Pasquini, 2008). At the interpersonal level, that is working within an interdisciplinary team, collaborators must integrate varying research goals, methodologies, theories and philosophies, and types of knowledge, oftentimes working across disciplinary cultures to do so (Hampton and Parker, 2011; Freeth and Vilsmaier, 2019). At the intrapersonal level, the same struggle to negotiate individual place and identity within a given disciplinary lens can occur (Lau and Pasquini, 2008).

In the context of work conducted for this thesis, intrapersonal (re)negotiations occurred at various stages of the research. This researcher's academic background in conservation biology and environmental ethics, remains foundational, pervasive in newer identities as a geographer (environmental geographer, or human geographer). Specific to the research presented in this body of work, an interdisciplinary positionality has influenced associated meanings of concepts, research methods, and the overall approach to research. The research and fieldwork conducted over the course of this PhD degree has, for example, challenged my preconceived perceptions community, and what it means to be part of one. Some positionalities are conceptually shared between disciplines and influence each other, as highlighted below.

3.9.1.2 Postgraduate student researcher

Perhaps the most challenging aspect of positionality for early career researchers is the identity of postgraduate student researcher. Often, postgraduate researchers find themselves living in the liminal space between student and faculty classifications, occupying an ambiguous position in navigating institutional dynamics (Hubrig et al., 2017). As a postgraduate student researcher with an interdisciplinary background,

exercising autonomy to develop and coordinate a thesis project was an exciting and daunting task when simultaneously experiencing persistent imposter-syndrome. This may be heightened when conducting fieldwork. Identifying as a student to stakeholders was utilised as a technique to avoid connotations of expertise or advanced status (Herod, 1999; Holmes, 2020), but it rarely seemed to impede their willingness to participate or their candidness while contributing. Additionally, as the researcher, building and maintaining trust among the community was an ongoing process (Tumiel-Berhalter *et al.*, 2005). As a postgraduate member of an international EU Atlantic Area project, MOSES, some of the same duality was experienced. Ultimately, this intermediary positionality was considered a strength as it provided space for creativity, learning, agency, and possibility within the research process (Hubrig *et al.*, 2017).

3.9.1.3 *Insider-outsider dialectic*

The concept of the ‘space between’ identities previously described applies also to the position within the insider-outsider dialectic in a similar way. To describe the concepts of *insider* and *outsider* as a pure duality is overly simplistic (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009). While each identifier assumes benefits and impediments depending on the research context, the space between conducting research as an insider and being considered an outsider by the participants grants a comfortable balance. As an American international student in Ireland, this researcher is categorised as an outsider. This identity is felt most prominently when meeting potential participants face-to-face – when an American accent is the first impression they receive. However, having an Irish surname has provided allowance to occupy a space in between – offering a sense of comfortability to the participants and a sense of connection for the researcher.

At a deeper level, the insider-outsider dynamic is more entrenched when working with local communities in Ireland; even being lived out by the community members themselves. These distinctions in the Irish context have been linked to conflicting knowledge cultures, local discourse structures, and historical and political context (Moran, 2007). Specific to the research undertaken in Rathmullan, located in County Donegal, this concept seems especially true, with community members of over 40 years still not being considered full insiders in all social contexts. Herod (1999, p. 325) posits that if researcher and participant are considered as collaborators in the creation of knowledge through the research process, the dichotomy of insider and outsider becomes less crucial, given that the positionality of both parties changes over time depending on context and what characteristics are being stressed in any given encounter. Once introduced

and accepted by the community ‘gatekeepers’, research interest in collaborating was welcomed by community members. Without having previously established connections, it is acknowledged that it may have been more difficult to begin research within the Rathmullan community.

3.9.2 Ethical considerations

Ethical norms in research are recognised as important for promoting the aims of the research, promoting the values essential to collaborative work, and ensuring accountability to the public. Additionally, these norms contribute to the building of public support for research and promote other social values (e.g. health and safety, social responsibility) (Resnik, 2020). Ethical Approval for the project outlined in this thesis was granted by the National University of Ireland, Galway’s Research Ethics Committee (Appendix F). Following the research guidelines set out by the Committee, primary concerns related to this research were (1) participant informed consent, (2) confidentiality and anonymity, and (3) participant wellbeing.

3.9.2.1 Informed consent

Informed consent for tourists taking part in the Marine and Coastal Tourism and Leisure survey was captured at the outset with a description of the purpose of the study and questions related to the legality of their participation (i.e. over 18 years of age). Considering that the tourists engaging with the Wild Atlantic Way were not all domestic tourists, it was essential that the information conveyed to them was relevant, avoided unnecessary detail, and was written in a language and form that facilitated the best understanding (Hegleson, 2005). Individuals were able to opt-out at any stage of the survey, or choose not to respond to specific questions, and this was conveyed to them before they agreed to participate.

As it related to research undertaken within the community of Rathmullan, Co. Donegal, and with individuals employed in tourism authority positions, informed consent was satisfied by providing stakeholders with an information pack prior to participation. During outreach, potential participants were provided with a document detailing the research project, including an outline of what their participation would include. Once individuals expressed their interest in participating, they were asked to sign a written consent form which further detailed their rights as participants to confidentiality and anonymity as well as their ability to withdraw at any point with no penalty. One copy was maintained per NUI Galway Research Ethics protocols, and one copy was given to the participant to keep for their records.

3.9.2.2 Confidentiality and anonymity

Berg and Lune (2014) emphasise the importance of confidentiality and the anonymity of participants as central to an ethical social science research practice. Both confidentiality and anonymity are concerned with maintaining and protecting a participant's privacy and identity during data collection and reporting. Wiles et al. (2008: 417) describe the "notion of confidentiality as being underpinned by the principle of respect for autonomy", and is often equated with the idea that identifiable information collected will not be disclosed without express permission. Topics discussed over the course of this project can be perceived as private for the individuals such as age, profession, details about their business or livelihood, as well as their own views and values.

In compliance with standards set by the National University of Ireland, Galway's Data Protection Policy, and following protocols established by NUI Galway's Research Ethics Committee several practices were employed to maintain confidentiality and anonymity. Physical data, in the form of paperwork, participant consent forms including participant contact details, and any identifying materials will be held in a locked filing cabinet or other secured storage location for a duration of five years after completion of this research as stated by the National University of Ireland, Galway's Code of Good Practice in Research. Digital data (e.g. audio recorded interviews, verbatim transcripts, Q sorts and resulting data, and individualised maps) are stored, under password protection on a hard drive dedicated to this research. Access to information and data related to this research project is restricted to the principal researcher and supervisory team.

Anonymisation is a process utilised in research to avoid breaking confidentiality. Due to the face-to-face, personal nature of community fieldwork and interviews in this research, it is not correct to consider this study fully anonymous since there is no way to remove the researcher's ability to identify participants. However, anonymity through the use of pseudonyms and codes is considered the norm in qualitative social research (Corden & Sainsbury, 2006; Wiles et al., 2008), and is implemented in this study, especially as it relates to transcription, presentation of findings, and publishing. Anonymisation by means of pseudo-anonymisation was employed at the earliest possible phase, in interview transcription, by selecting pseudonyms that discourage deductive discovery by being sufficiently different that their actual name or other identifying information (Ipfohen, 2009).

3.9.2.3 Participant wellbeing

Risk for the participants was found to be negligible in this study, however, participant wellbeing was a crucial consideration in all phases of community engagement. Semi-structured interviews can sometimes engage with topics that are deemed sensitive to those interviewed. In anticipation of this possibility, it was made clear to participants that they could opt-out at any time and with no penalty. Additionally, alternative questions were developed to circumnavigate topics if necessary. While conducting the participatory mapping workshop, participants were briefed at the start and reassured that they were able, at any time, to pause or stop their participation in a formal capacity. One participant opted to informally participate as she believed that her age and “poor memory” would negatively impact results or the project. She was assured that there was no set standard for what their maps ought to look like, and that her contribution was valuable no matter what level of engagement she felt comfortable with. Ultimately, she decided to stay and contribute to the workshop as best as she could, resulting in a conversation that spanned an additional generation of community members. Findings at several stages were presented to the community at community-led meetings, keeping lines of communication between participants and the researcher open and aiding in the transparency of the research. Each participant received their transcript or interview recording, if requested.

3.10 Co-creation – Feedback from Participants

Feedback from participants relating to the fieldwork methods in the community-based Phase II of this research were quite positive. Invitation to attend and participate in the community-led meetings was a sign of trust offered by key stakeholders in the community which established a credible foundation among others. Individuals who participated in Q expressed that the sorting activity was fun and engaging, and in most cases was not as intimidating as they had originally thought. This critique is a common one in the literature due to Q’s unique, game-like engagement style.

The participatory mapping workshop received similar feedback, with community members expressing feelings of empowerment and a “re-sparked civic duty” (participant R_08). There was discussion among the group that they felt like they were back in school and wished their

assignments had been as much fun then. One participant described the process as demonstrating that they “know more than they thought about where they live and what makes it unique from other villages” (participant R_16). Due to the intimate familiarity of those in their workshop, the community members were very comfortable discussing their personal experiences and opinions with each other, but it is understood by the researcher that in other circumstances this may not have been the case.

At the conclusion of fieldwork, prior to the nationwide COVID-19 lockdown, preliminary results were presented at a community meeting in March 2020 (presented in Chapter Five). The community was thanked for being so warm and welcoming as well as for their willingness to engage in various ways. Perhaps the most poignant feedback of the overall research however, was when a few community members asked when the researcher would be back for a social visit. This acceptance, more than any other feedback, represented for the researcher a successful collaboration.

Since the March 2020 meeting in Rathmullan, the community has increasingly taken ownership of research outcomes, collaboration with regional and government network partners, and ongoing community-led plans for infrastructure and tourism development. For example, in a June 2020 interview with Donegal’s Highland Radio (transcript, Appendix G), John Gallagher, as a spokesperson for Rathmullan the Way Forward, demonstrated initiative to recruit additional participants for the online Q platform, stating:

“When we started the project obviously, you know we didn’t know what COVID was – it didn’t exist. But now the whole thing has changed and we’ve had to consider how we continue with the project while, obviously doing everything online. And it works perfectly well doing it online. In our communication – it’s very easy for people to connect to the researchers at the National University in Galway. And we should be able to finish the project as planned.”

The interview served not only as a recruitment tool, but also a means for the community to share preliminary findings with regional neighbours and demonstrate the capacity of collaboration to other rural locations on the Wild Atlantic Way. When asked if the impact of the Wild Atlantic Way on Rathmullan has been positive, John replied:

“It’s definitely had a positive impact. But, you know, don’t forget that Rathmullan existed long before the Wild Atlantic Way existed – and the same for all rural communities existed. So um,

the Wild Atlantic Way was a branding that was stood on top of existing locations, so it's very interesting to try to understand if the Wild Atlantic Way has had sort of a social impact, or economic impact, and how to measure those impacts. So, that's really why we're doing the collaboration – because it's quite a complex issue to try to figure out the social and economic impacts of the Wild Atlantic Way. Particularly on rural communities – it may be easy to understand the impact on somewhere like Fanad Head or Malin Head – but on places in-between, like Rathmullan, it will be quite interesting when we get more feedback on the results.”

Over the course of the collaborative research, the community showed an increase in ownership of goals, objectives and future use of co-generated findings. As of the completion of this researcher's work with Rathmullan, the community has been awarded funding for ongoing efforts of infrastructure rejuvenation and heritage conservation, representing a tangible example of research outcomes informing community planning, decision-making and development.

3.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter has illustrated a methodological approach that is at the forefront of the space-place nexus, providing an interdisciplinary toolset to holistically address the research aims articulated in Chapter 1. The combination of qualitative and quantitative methods outlined in this chapter, ensures the rigour and accuracy required to properly examine and present the tourists' Wild Atlantic Way experience, as well as a local communities' values and ability to engage with tourism as an economic development tool. As demonstrated in this chapter, the four main methodological approaches carried out for the purpose of this study were done professionally, confidentially, and with ethical considerations in mind.

Results of the Marine and Coastal Tourism and Leisure Survey in Phase I of research are detailed in Chapter 4. A central finding from the tourist perspectives survey is explained via multidimensional scaling analysis of tourist activity choice which examines Wild Atlantic Way activities based on two discovered dimensions. Chapter 5 elaborates on results from the community-based, multi-method approach of Phase II. Factor groups from the Q examination are outlined, supported and enriched by semi-structured interviews. Additionally, results of the community co-created values map are presented, highlighting opportunities for the community to continue to engage with the Wild Atlantic Way on their terms.

Chapter 4
Tourist Insights from Ireland's
Wild Atlantic Way

4

Tourist Insights from Ireland’s Wild Atlantic Way

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of Phase I of the methodological framework outlined in Chapter 3, examining tourist perspectives of the Wild Atlantic Way route. Section 4.2 provides a brief contextual review to situate the results in the overall research examination. The research objectives for Phase I are also outlined in this section, providing additional methodological and analytical information where necessary. Findings are presented in Section 4.3, organised into three subsections. Tourist motivations are assessed using reported trip highlights, which were thematically coded and compared to data from Fáilte Ireland concerning motivations of overseas holidaymakers to Ireland in the same year. Spatial data related to tourism infrastructure, crowding and tourist dispersion are analysed to better understand the current mobility trends of tourists on the Wild Atlantic Way. Additionally, Multidimensional Scaling is employed to visualise Wild Atlantic Way activities based on tourist-informed dimensions. Finally, tourist attitudes of their overall Wild Atlantic Way experience are analysed and represent a point of connection for tourists and the communities that host them. These findings are further interpreted in Section 4.4, building a critical discussion of emergent tourist use trends and perceptions of the Wild Atlantic Way. Implications for the Wild Atlantic Way are addressed, including discussion related to the future success of the tourism route. Finally, Section 4.5 provides a concluding chapter summary, and connects the findings from Phase I to questions that will be addressed in Phase II, with results presented in Chapter 5.

4.2 Context and Phase I Objectives

The Wild Atlantic Way was launched in 2014 as a tourism initiative developed to reignite the Irish tourism sector following a devastating economic recession. The branding of the Wild Atlantic Way markets

Ireland’s west coast as rugged wilderness, and aims to develop and sustain it as a competitive, high-quality tourist destination (Fáilte Ireland, 2013). Placemaking efforts of the industry have sought to connect images of an idyllic rural life, untamed landscapes, cultural heritage exploration, and adventure with the destinations on the route to attract international visitors to Ireland.

The success of the Wild Atlantic Way initiative is undeniable, contributing to an increase in overseas tourist numbers since its launch. In 2019, 9.7 million overseas tourists visited Ireland, representing a 16.9% increase from 2015 (Fáilte Ireland, 2021). Despite this continued growth, there remains a significant gap in research relating to tourist perspectives of the Wild Atlantic Way. The results presented in this chapter address this gap by contributing insights based on a robust dataset derived from a tourist perspectives survey of the Wild Atlantic Way and a two-dimensional analysis of activity preferences.

As outlined in Chapter 3, Phase I of research for this thesis includes quantitative methods and analyses to explore tourist perceptions, activities and their engagement on the Wild Atlantic Way. Objectives for this phase seek to:

- (1) Address current research gaps of tourist perspectives and their perceived impact on communities on the Wild Atlantic Way – supporting the well-established use of surveys developed to examine community perspectives of tourism,
- (2) Examine trends of tourist motivations and use of the Wild Atlantic Way route,
- (3) Assess tourist attitudes of the Wild Atlantic Way experience, and
- (4) Consider the possible use of the resulting data as satisfaction indicators for Wild Atlantic Way tourism, while developing potential pathways for sustainable Blue Growth in marine and coastal tourism trails.

It is important to note that tourist satisfaction surveys are not without limitations. In tourism studies, the practice of conducting interviews at the destination in focus, especially by a local or domestic person, can be more likely to return biased results (Smith, 2007; Dahlgren and Hansen, 2015). Response bias is perhaps the most pervasive limitation of tourist response surveys and questionnaires (Yüksel, 2017). However, in social science research, understanding response bias limitations helps contextualise results (Ioannidis, 2007; Yüksel, 2017). Of particular interest for this work is social desirability bias (SDB), often occurring due to a

participant’s inclination to respond in a way they deem socially desirable. Dahlgren and Hansen (2015, p. 324) note that there is “implicit motivation to be perceived as nice, and not offend or hurt the interviewers feelings, [which] drives us toward social desirability (SD)-biased responses”.

This seems especially important considering that responses provided for this study were obtained during a time of heightened excitement or engagement by the tourist (i.e. while they were actively participating in their tourism experience). Potential bias can be reduced by employing reduction techniques within the survey data collection phase. Some indirect reduction techniques have the ability to reduce SDB specifically. Techniques incorporated in this study, as noted by Larson (2019, p. 536), include environmental complexity (e.g. playing music in the background, or conducting the survey on the street) and using a mixed question structure (i.e. true/false, “item count”, etc.). While the six Likert-style questions in the survey are open to more potential SD bias, with such a large sample size, this researcher is confident that findings in this study can provide insight for tourist perceptions of the Wild Atlantic Way. Activity and destination data are especially informative for communities along the Wild Atlantic Way and planners to more effectively market themselves for unique inclusion.

4.3 Findings

A total of 603 tourists (56% male, 44% female), from 26 countries (Table 4.1), completed the survey, with a mean binned respondent age of 45-49. Of those surveyed, the majority were travelling with family (61%), while others travelled with friends, with a group of family and friends, or were travelling solo (24.2%, 7.5%, and 7.3%, respectively). Interestingly, despite one of the conditions of participation being that the respondent was touring on the Wild Atlantic Way, 10% of individuals stated they had not heard of the Wild Atlantic Way. Of those who indicated they had not heard of the initiative, the majority were from the United Kingdom (excluding Northern Ireland, 20%), followed by France (14%), and the United States (14%).

Table 4.1 Demographics of 603 tourist survey respondents, organised by geographical region.

Country of Residence	Male	Female	Total	Percent
EUROPEAN UNION				
Austria	1	4	5	0.83%
Belgium	3	0	3	0.50%
Croatia	1	0	1	0.17%
Czech Republic	0	1	1	0.17%
Denmark	0	3	3	0.50%
France	20	13	33	5.47%
Germany	21	20	41	6.80%
Italy	6	5	11	1.82%
Netherlands	5	8	13	2.16%
Poland	3	4	7	1.16%
Portugal	1	0	1	0.17%
Republic of Ireland	124	93	217	35.99%
Slovakia	0	2	2	0.33%
Spain	5	4	9	1.49%
Sweden	2	1	3	0.50%
EU TOTAL	192	158	350	58.04%
EUROPE (NON-EU)				
Northern Ireland	37	24	61	10.12%
Norway	1	0	1	0.17%
Switzerland	5	0	5	0.83%
United Kingdom	43	37	80	13.27%
EUROPE (NON-EU) TOTAL	86	61	147	24.38%
NORTH AMERICA				
Canada	8	7	15	2.49%
United States	37	32	69	11.44%
NORTH AMERICA TOTAL	45	39	84	13.93%
OCEANIA				
Australia	7	5	12	1.99%
New Zealand	2	3	5	0.83%
OCEANIA TOTAL	9	8	17	2.82%
OTHER				
China	3	0	3	0.50%
Colombia	1	0	1	0.17%
Israel	1	0	1	0.17%
OTHER TOTAL	5	0	5	0.83%
SUM TOTAL	337	266	603	100%

Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was conducted with VARIMAX rotation to reduce the dimensionality of the full dataset in order to statistically discern underlying correlations between the respondents’ country of residence and activities chosen to engage with on the Wild Atlantic Way route. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was sufficient, with a reported value of 0.71, greater than the standard recommended value of 0.6. The resulting PCA extracted five factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 (15.146, 2.002, 1.714, 1.507, and 1.022,

respectively), with these components accounting for 82.3% of variability. Only four extracted factors were retained for further assessment as there were no unique, significant loading variables in Factor 5. The factor scores for the four significant groups are shown in Table (4.2).

Table 4.2 Factor loadings of respondents’ country of residence by activities chosen on the Wild Atlantic Way. Significant loadings are indicated in bold.

FACTOR LOADINGS	F1	F2	F3	F4
Australia	0.901	-0.067	-0.070	0.137
Austria	0.667	-0.189	-0.378	0.117
Belgium	0.799	-0.198	-0.151	-0.112
Canada	0.948	-0.013	-0.193	0.007
China	0.483	0.693	0.312	-0.010
Colombia	0.469	0.137	0.593	-0.328
Croatia	0.551	-0.517	0.403	-0.019
Czech Republic	0.569	-0.249	0.631	0.038
Denmark	0.725	-0.485	-0.091	0.122
France	0.913	0.100	0.121	-0.092
Germany	0.925	0.023	-0.134	-0.042
Netherlands	0.915	0.037	0.021	-0.109
Israel	0.464	0.001	0.240	0.749
Italy	0.853	-0.006	-0.014	0.075
New Zealand	0.832	-0.272	0.136	0.189
Northern Ireland	0.934	0.136	0.106	0.011
Norway	0.524	0.095	-0.284	-0.609
Poland	0.761	0.243	-0.110	-0.137
Portugal	0.006	-0.613	0.156	-0.488
Rep. of Ireland	0.903	0.272	0.004	-0.179
Slovakia	0.721	-0.139	-0.346	0.066
Spain	0.833	-0.206	0.094	-0.069
Sweden	0.780	0.185	-0.053	0.048
Switzerland	0.743	-0.124	-0.342	0.139
The UK (excl. NI)	0.963	0.176	0.028	-0.073
USA	0.861	0.308	0.031	0.128
Cumulative %	58.254	65.956	72.548	78.343

Factor 1 was shown to be mainly descriptive in nature, with only Portugal, China, Colombia, and Israel loading less than 0.50. Factor 2 principally separates China from Portugal, with lesser contrast between Denmark and Croatia. Factor 3 represents a component that describes tourist choices from Colombia and the Czech Republic different from the

others. Factor 4 primarily separates Israel, and demonstrates a significant contrast between their activity choices to those of tourists from Norway. Portugal did not significantly load into any of the four factors, but did contribute significantly to the differentiation of Factors 2 and 4 (19% and 15%, respectively).

The initial marketing efforts of tourism authorities for the Wild Atlantic Way initiative focused on drawing tourists from North America, so the PCA provided some new awareness of how tourists from different countries might consider tourism activities on the Wild Atlantic Way. This specific case, however, did not include other socioeconomic or demographic indicators when factoring. In this regard, the PCA results serve primarily as an additional descriptive tier, and provided some nuanced insight when analysing the revealed dimensions of the multidimensional analysis presented later in this chapter (subsection 4.3.2).

4.3.1 Wild Atlantic Way tourist motivations

When planning Ireland as a 2019 holiday destination, overseas tourists reported beautiful scenery, the range of activities, history and culture, and natural attractions as their top four considerations (Fáilte Ireland, 2021). To cross-reference this information, in the Marine and Coastal Tourism and Leisure Survey, respondents were asked to fill-in the top three highlights of their Wild Atlantic Way excursion (either planned or already experienced). The data collected for these questions were cleaned and categorically coded to better ascertain underlying motivations specific to the tourists of the Wild Atlantic Way (Table 4.3).

Table 4.3 Highlights reported by tourists on the Wild Atlantic Way, coded for and categorised into one of seven underlying motivations.

	Drive	Scenery	Culture	Site	Location	Atmosphere	Activity
H1	15	148	83	112	130	19	63
H2	7	95	113	117	126	21	52
H3	2	60	156	75	119	20	38
Total	24	303	352	304	375	60	153

Responses included in the *Drive* motivation included phrases like ‘coastal touring’, ‘motoring’, and ‘drive’. These were grouped to represent those tourists seeking to navigate the route themselves, either via car or other means of transportation. *Scenic* motivations included written responses such as ‘beach’, ‘landscape’, ‘sea’, or ‘viewpoint’. The *Culture* category incorporated highlights of ‘food’, ‘music’, ‘craic’, ‘history’, festivals and events, as well as ‘the friendly people’. Cultural highlights were often elaborated on more than other categories, for example one tourist responded with ‘traditional music in the pubs’, suggesting that cultural experiences can be layered and their impact multiplied for tourists. *Site* specific highlights included mention of ‘sightseeing’, or specifically named tourist points (e.g. Ned’s Point, Buncrana Castle). The *Location* code indicates a difference in scale from the previous category, incorporating the mention of specific villages or towns, islands, specific counties as singular highlights and regional responses (e.g. Connemara, Aran Islands, Burren, etc.). These responses represented more generalised geographic highlights, where additional tourist attractions or activities were likely incorporated into the motivation to visit that locale. Many tourists wrote ‘atmosphere’ as a highlight, warranting its own coded category. The *Atmosphere* motivation also included descriptive phrases like ‘fun’, ‘crowds’, ‘relaxation’, and ‘slow pace’. Lastly, specific activities planned for their trip were grouped into its own category, representing in many cases responses that mirrored their reported activities previously surveyed.

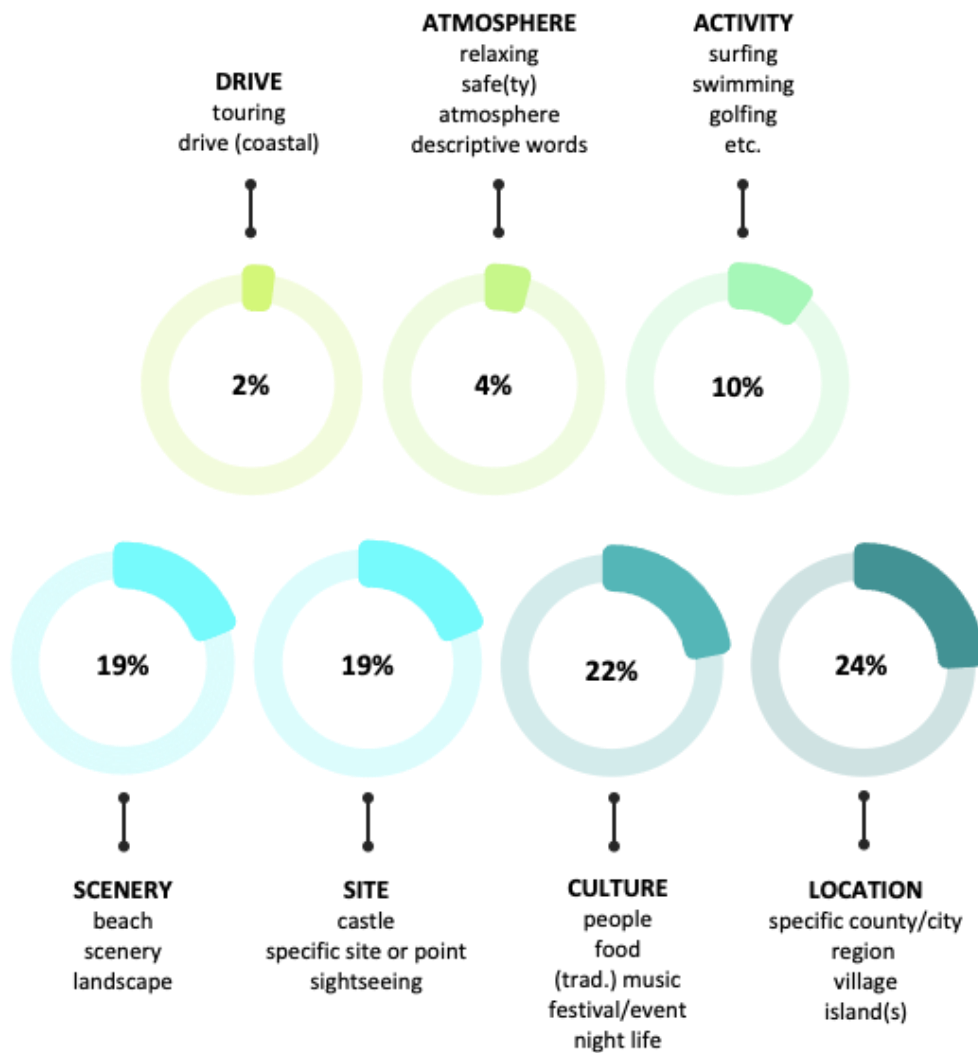


Figure 4.1 Tourist motivations for traversing the Wild Atlantic Way. Examples of tourists’ fill-in responses are included for each coded category, representing reported highlights.

As shown in Figure 4.1, the Wild Atlantic Way tourists surveyed reported more highlights of location than any other consideration. This could be due to the regional break down of the Wild Atlantic Way into six descriptive segments of the route by Fáilte Ireland (*i.e.* Northern Headlands, Surf Coast, Bay Coast, Cliff Coast, Southern Peninsulas, and Haven Coast). Additionally, this could be due to the scale of familiarity with Ireland and the west coast when planning a trip. For example, tourists from abroad would likely be familiar with the most recognisable counties or cities, but not necessarily know what specific sites are found in each, or be able to indicate smaller towns or villages nearby. Location responses may have also been

common due to signage on the route or the use of GPS navigation.

Culture was the second-most reported highlight, indicating that the Irish ‘way of life’, historical and contemporary cultural experiences and authentic events are a strong motivator for tourists engaging with the Wild Atlantic Way. Finally, specific sites and scenery were ranked third, perhaps indicating successful top-down placemaking and marketing of the route’s destinations. It was clear in their responses that tourists on the route associated certain landscapes and environments with the concept of the Wild Atlantic Way, and certain sites have become synonymous with pictographic representations of the initiative (e.g. Cliffs of Moher and castle ruins).

When compared to the top four reported motivations for all-island tourism in Ireland (beautiful scenery, the range of activities, history and culture, and natural attractions), results of this research indicate there is a difference in the motivations of tourists seeking adventure on the Wild Atlantic Way. However, it is also possible that the Wild Atlantic Way as a whole may be included within any of the broad categories reported by Fáilte Ireland (2021). Considering elements of the route’s brand identity (introduced in Chapter 1), phrases in several categories equate to reported Ireland tourism motivations. For example, brand attributes are stated as including “the wild landscape and seascapes” and “heritage and history of places on the wild coast”. Brand personality includes descriptors such as “unspoilt”, “rugged”, “challenging” and “adventurous”. Ultimately, the brand essence and values represent “wildness” and “natural, surprising” settings.

Nevertheless, the Wild Atlantic Way is considered as its own tourism destination within Ireland, warranting a direct comparison of motivations that can provide additional insight for tourism authorities and host communities. Tourists’ responses indicated a specific awareness of destinations along the route, perhaps owing to the successful international marketing tools (e.g. pamphlets, maps, and websites) designed to highlight Signature and general Discovery Points. Additionally, the culture of the Wild Atlantic Way is suggested by its tourists to be distinctive from Irish culture as a whole. While some aspects are pervasive (e.g. pubs, night life, people), there is a demonstrated understanding that living along Ireland’s west coast elicits a different ‘way of life’ and cultural productions of language, art, and music. The tourists’ desire to experience the Gaeltacht regions (where the Irish language is, or until very recently was, the primary spoken language in the community) and their “unbroken connection” with tradition and culture of their ancestors is particular evidence of this distinction (Údarás na

Gaeltachta, 2021). This cultural distinction may indicate a layered, immersive element of tourism on the Wild Atlantic Way not yet conceptually or spatially explored.

4.3.2 Spatial analysis

4.3.2.1 Multidimensional Scaling of Wild Atlantic Way activities

Multidimensional Scaling (MDS) using derived matrix data presents a further explanation of tourist motivations via activity preference based on two emergent dimensions. Reported stress values in SPSS for the component scaling are all less than the calculated optimal scaling factors (Stress-I, Stress-II, and S-Stress), indicating that the case is sufficient for analysis and partial order scaling (see Table 4.4). Tucker’s Coefficient of Congruence was returned as 0.9510, demonstrating good similarity of the analysed components (Lorenzo-Seva and ten Berge, 2006). Subsequently, as the fit of the MDS solution is considered good, the visual representation can be inspected to interpret these proximities in terms of their content.

Table 4.4 Goodness of fit and stress measures for MDS typology analysis. (Source: PROXSCAL, SPSS).

STRESS AND FIT MEASURES	
Normalized Raw Stress	0.08013
Stress-I	0.28307 ^a
Stress-II	0.61106 ^a
S-Stress	0.17647 ^b
Dispersion Accounted For (D.A.F.)	0.91987
Tucker's Coefficient of Congruence	0.9591
PROXSCAL minimizes Normalized Raw Stress.	
a. Optimal scaling factor = 1.087.	
b. Optimal scaling factor = .909.	

The depiction of the common space plot of Wild Atlantic Way activities (Fig. 4.2), reveals three activity clusters based on two discovered dimensions. Further examination of the raw data, with respect to the clusters uncovered, results in an evaluative typology of Wild Atlantic Way activities based on scales of geography (dimension 1) and ‘Irishness’ (dimension 2). The dimension of geography represents characteristics unique to the geographic landscape, culture and attributes of the Wild Atlantic Way, while the dimension of ‘Irishness’ captures more nuanced

characteristics of Irish ways of life and cultural identity. Cluster 1 includes activities that can be described as ‘Irish-specific’ tourism activities (e.g., visiting pubs, Irish heritage attractions, National Parks, etc.). Cluster 2 comprises activities that relate more closely to the geography and marketing of the Wild Atlantic Way (i.e., unique coastal environments). Cluster 3 encompasses a mass of activities that can be labelled as more general tourism activities (e.g., camping, spas, boating, etc.).

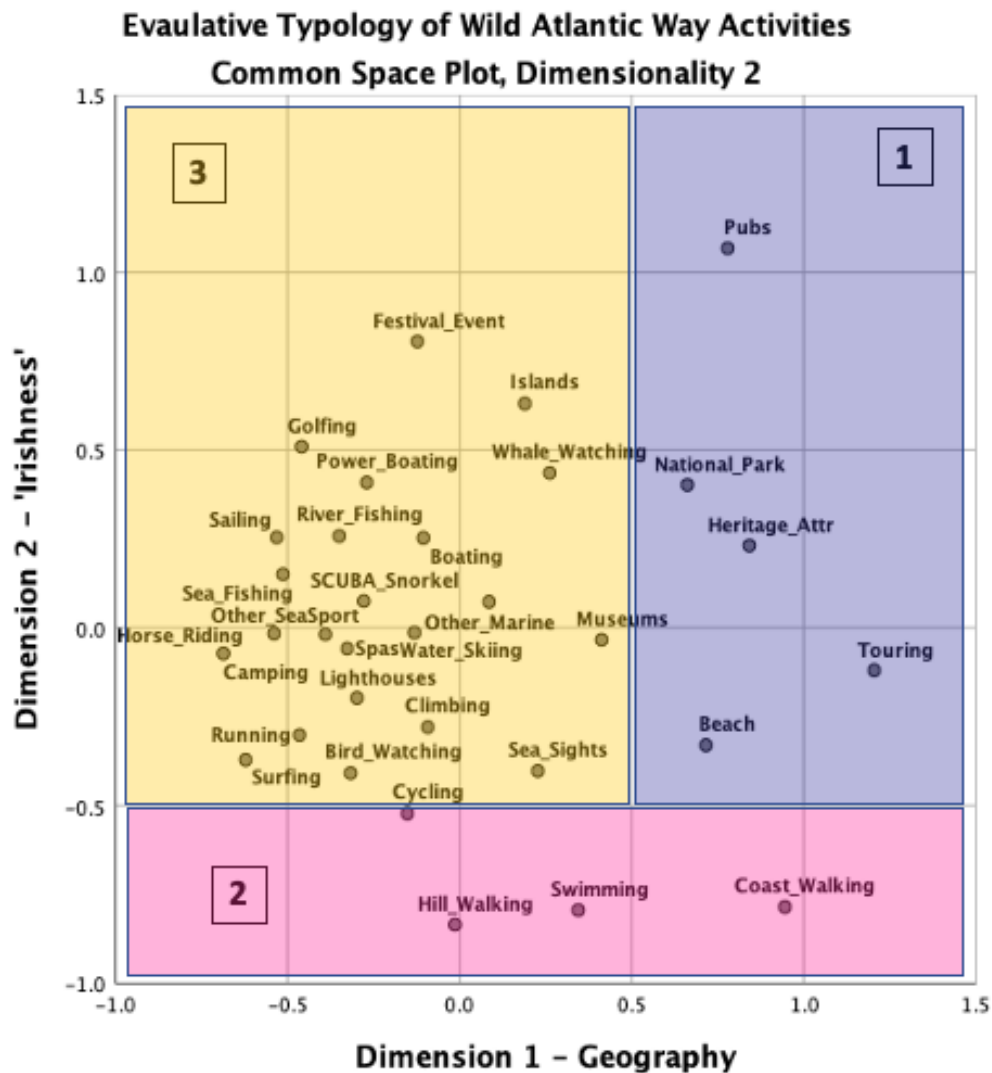


Figure 4.2 Graphed results of MDS analysis of activity preferences (PROXSCAL, SPSS). Three cluster groups emerged within the two-dimensional space, representing geography and ‘Irishness’ as descriptive aspects of tourist activities.

Three examples are illustrated here: first, golfing in Ireland may be a sought after experience for enthusiasts, but it is an activity that can be

practiced nearly anywhere and is not necessarily synonymous with the Wild Atlantic Way route. It is represented on the typology plot in Cluster 3 as having a slightly negative relationship with the dimension of geography (due to its availability in many locations worldwide) and a slightly positive relationship with the dimension of ‘Irishness’ (as golf is to some degree a participatory feature of all-island Irish national identity and the sport is more publicly accessible (Liston and Kitching, 2019)). Secondly, the activity of water-skiing does not inherently have connections to Irish heritage, nor does it require the unique geography of the Wild Atlantic Way in any way, resulting in its neutral placement (near 0,0) on the typology plot in Cluster 3. Third, ‘pubs’ appears on the typology plot in Cluster 1 near (0.75, 1.1), noticeably separate from other activity points on the plot. When contextualised with tourist fill-in data of the survey, it is shown that the activity of pub-going is often coupled with descriptive terms like “traditional pubs”, “pub culture”, “pub music session”, thus offering a possible explanation for the positive relationship with the dimension of ‘Irishness’. ‘Pubs’ also expresses a moderately positive relationship with the geography dimension, suggesting that pub-going along the Wild Atlantic Way route is a different experience than elsewhere in Ireland.

4.3.2.2 Disproportionate tourist distribution

Results of this survey show that tourism activity is concentrated along the southern portion of the Wild Atlantic Way, buoyed by destinations like the Cliffs of Moher (Co. Clare) and the Ring of Kerry (Co. Kerry) which have long been popular tourist draws. Though the emergence of the Wild Atlantic Way as a major tourism initiative has increased tourist numbers overall (Fáilte Ireland, 2021), there remain concerns about its asymmetrical growth. These tourist mobilities are directly reflective of economic benefits felt by the communities along the Wild Atlantic Way in terms of income generated through tourism and hospitality services (e.g. accommodation, food, entertainment, etc.). Tourist data related to issues of crowding, road congestion and transport infrastructure quality are presented in Figure 4.3, offering a visual example of tourist distribution along the route and correlated costs.

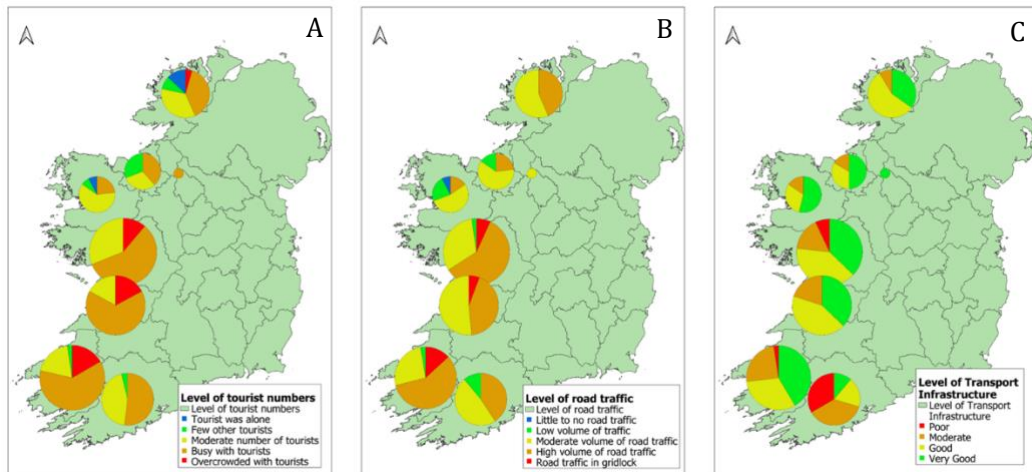


Figure 4.3 Tourist reported indications of crowding (A), road congestion (B), and transport infrastructure quality (C) at each of the six survey locations, with additional data provided from Westport, Co. Mayo. (Source: data from Marine and Coastal Tourism & Leisure Survey, 2019 and Fáilte Ireland; graphic: D. Norton, for MOSES Project).

As shown in Figure 4.3, tourist numbers (indicated by the size of the pie charts) are greater in the southern half of the route. Of the locations included in the survey, Galway, Doolin, and Dingle have the greatest number of tourists (image A). Additionally, they have the most reported cases of overcrowding at tourist sites. Not surprisingly, road traffic (image B) is also reported as more severe in these sections of the Wild Atlantic Way route, due to the additional number of vehicles (e.g. rented cars, tour buses, etc.). Interestingly, the area near Buncrana is reported to have significant road traffic despite the presence of fewer tourists and less reports of crowding. This is likely due to there being fewer motorways and larger national roads, resulting in vehicles traversing on smaller regional or local roads.

These findings, in part, also contribute to infrastructure data presented in image C, where transport infrastructure is reported as being generally better than that of the southern regions of the route. Aspects of seasonality may contribute to this trend, as the northern regions experience the delineation of the tourism season strongly, while the southern segment experiences it less severely. Also of note in image C, is a shift in the locations of highest negative indicators. Doolin is reported as ‘very good’ to ‘moderate’ infrastructure quality, despite the generally high levels of road traffic. Instead, Clonakilty in Co. Cork received the most reports of poor transport infrastructure. These findings present a series of indicators for

tourist satisfaction in these locations.

4.3.3 Tourist attitudes of the Wild Atlantic Way experience

Tourist attitudes of the Wild Atlantic Way experience itself were evaluated based on responses to six Likert-scale questions included in the survey. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the following statements:

- (1) The Wild Atlantic Way has met my expectations about what coastal Ireland should look like.
- (2) The Wild Atlantic Way has enriched me with a uniquely Irish experience.
- (3) Touring the Wild Atlantic Way gives me a sense of adventure.
- (4) I made a priority to meet and engage with local people along the Wild Atlantic Way.
- (5) The destinations I visited along the Wild Atlantic Way were overcrowded with tourists.
- (6) Overall, my experience on the Wild Atlantic Way was good value for money.

The responses received from tourists were positive (see Fig. 4.4), suggesting an overall high level of tourist satisfaction as it relates to their time spent on the Wild Atlantic Way. Participants indicated that the Wild Atlantic Way route had met their expectations of coastal Ireland (96% agreement), and they felt a sense of enrichment by the uniquely Irish experience (95%).

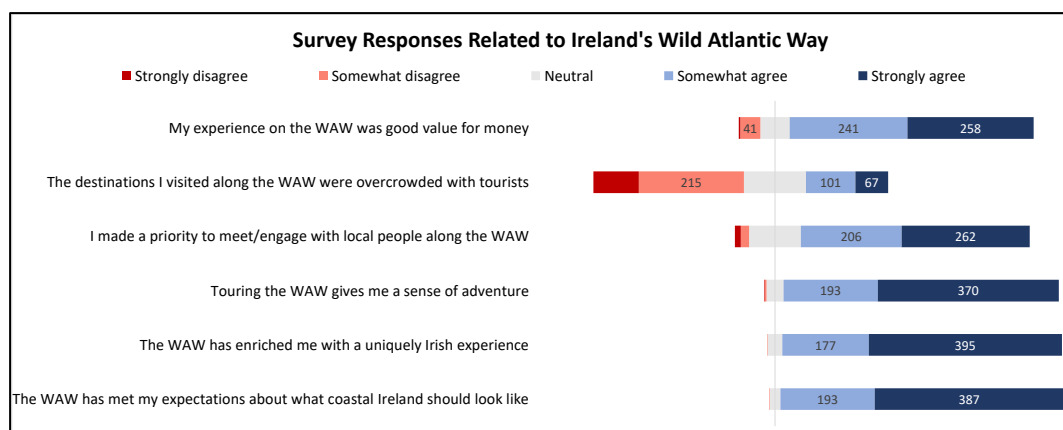


Figure 4.4 Ranked-value tourist responses related to attitudes of their Wild Atlantic Way experience.

An overwhelming majority of respondents (93%) agreed with the statement that touring the Wild Atlantic Way provided a sense of adventure, demonstrating successful development of the desired brand identity and top-down placemaking of the initiative (Fáilte Ireland, 2013a). Only 28% of tourists considered destinations to be overcrowded, despite the surveys being conducted in peak tourism season. When broken down by survey location, Dingle, Doolin, and Galway had tourists respond with higher agreement (43%, 42% and 38%, respectively). These findings demonstrate a distinction between crowding at individual locations (reported and presented in Figure 4.3), and crowding reported across multiple destinations of a full trip, suggesting that occupying ‘spaces in between’ larger city destinations offers a means to moderate tourist crowding.

Overall, 83% of the surveyed tourists consider the Wild Atlantic Way experience to be good value for money. The represented value-for-money trend aligns with similar survey responses from Tourism Ireland and Fáilte Ireland as reported in *The Irish Times* (Pope, 2019), where it was determined that Irish tourism offers a competitively-priced premium destination. An illustrated infographic of results from the overall Wild Atlantic Way tourist attitudes was developed as a means to disseminate results to communities and Fáilte Ireland representatives in an accessible way (Appendix H).

4.4 Emerging Trends and Implications for the Wild Atlantic Way

Over half of Ireland’s overseas visitors in 2013 cited heritage and culture as determining factors for destination choice (Fáilte Ireland, 2014). This was influenced in large part by The Gathering in 2013, a year-long series of community-led events which were aimed at attracting international tourists and bringing the Irish Diaspora home. International marketing and management of the initiative was organised by Fáilte Ireland, but the Year of the Gathering ultimately relied on the social entrepreneurial spirit of communities all across Ireland (Mottiar, 2016). The success of this heritage-focused initiative likely served as a catalyst for the development of the Wild Atlantic Way as an effort to maintain momentum for international and cultural tourism. Results from the survey data presented in this chapter support the importance of incorporating heritage and culture with tourism offerings along the Wild Atlantic Way, especially experiences that highlight unique Irish offerings and characteristics of coastal Ireland. Archetypical of these activities would be heritage attractions, museums, national parks,

Irish cultural events and festivals, and meaningful ways to engage with Ireland’s islands and coasts.

By packaging the experience of the Wild Atlantic Way as a linear route, connecting elements of Ireland’s built heritage and culture together in new ways, the tourism route offers tourists a convenient way to do more. Touring routes are recognised internationally as a powerful tool for economic development, and the success of Ireland’s Wild Atlantic Way route highlights the capacity for Ireland to remain competitive in the international tourism market, despite concerns expressed from the industry related to cost and value perceptions (Pope, 2019). However, the disproportionate distribution of tourist numbers along the route represents an economic and environmental concern. Survey data supports general mobility trends of tourists arriving in Dublin, traversing across the country to Galway, and then heading south to visit other areas.

While much focus of marketing for the Wild Atlantic Way is placed on advertising to overseas markets, this survey demonstrated that the domestic tourism market is equally eager to experience the route. Domestic tourists make up a large percentage of Wild Atlantic Way users, both on- and off-season. Understanding the balance between international and domestic tourists is crucial for the sustainability of any tourism product, but seems especially important in locations where there is a strongly delineated tourism season, such as Ireland. The domestic tourism market may be able to serve as a buoy for an otherwise quiet time in the tourism off-season, or help to alleviate the asymmetrical growth of tourism numbers along Ireland’s west coast (Kelly et al., 2021).

Of the tourists who contributed to the survey, 77% indicated that they made it a priority to engage with locals while touring the Wild Atlantic Way, demonstrating a specific interest of tourists on the route to immerse themselves in an ‘authentic’ Irish experience. Satisfaction of this tourist interest, however, requires a better understanding of what expectations exist for what an authentic experience might be. It is likely that ‘authentic’ representations and experiences hold entirely different meanings for locals and tourists, revealing a possible direction for future research on the Wild Atlantic Way. The tourism sector is an essential element of Ireland’s economy (Fáilte Ireland, 2015) and has been demonstrated to be rooted in and carried by communities (Mac Eochaidh, 1994; McManus, 1997; Zuelow, 2009). Insights from assessing tourist motivations and attitudes on the Wild Atlantic Way can aid in empowering communities to develop unique and ‘authentic’ offerings to draw visitors.

While examining tourist perspectives can illustrate the demands of tourism routes as a tool for regional tourism development, the local stakeholder perspective is needed to inform the supply side of the same resource system. Results of this chapter present a means of visualising quantitative tourism data in a way that, when further combined with qualitative methods (e.g. in-depth interviewing, participant observation) to capture the complex dynamic between local stakeholders and visiting tourists, can holistically illustrate the community-tourist dynamic of rural tourism on Ireland’s Wild Atlantic Way (Northcote and Macbeth, 2005).

4.5 Chapter Summary

The survey in Phase I of this research has produced one of the largest datasets of tourist perceptions specifically related to Ireland’s Wild Atlantic Way to date. Findings presented make a threefold contribution to the literature. First, data collected from this survey provide an important glimpse into one side of the supply-demand and management relationship of tourism route resources, namely the perceptions and sense-of-place experiences of tourists as they engage with a destination. Additionally, it offers a timely and robust assessment of Ireland’s Wild Atlantic Way since its 2014 launch, and prior to the COVID-19 pandemic which would immediately halt all tourism and devastate the sector which had fought hard to recover from the 2008 recession.

Second, by uncovering principal dimensions of desired activities and means of engagement, this chapter presents novel insights into how tourists are seeking to interact with and experience the Wild Atlantic Way. Visualisation of the MDS technique can aid in the understanding of tourist activity selection, and in the prioritisation of services and experiences offered. The extent to which tourist expectations ‘define’ or are ‘limited by’ the identified dimensions is an area of further research that could potentially benefit future tourism products on the Wild Atlantic Way. Through a more localised lens, these insights offer to communities actively engaging with the Wild Atlantic Way initiative suggestions to develop their own offerings in a specific and sustainable way.

Third, results of this chapter offer a means of visualising quantitative tourism data in a way that can holistically illustrate the community-tourist dynamic of rural tourism on Ireland’s Wild Atlantic Way when further

combined with community stakeholder views. Explored piecemeal, assessing tourist perspectives can illustrate the demands of tourism routes as a tool for regional tourism development, while the community stakeholder perspective principally informs the supply side of the same resource system. Dimensions identified from key tourist perspectives can be used to comparatively evaluate local stakeholder perspectives to capture gaps in the market for expanding a tourism product. Additionally, tourist feedback related to infrastructure quality, for example, can offer communities and their Local Authorities data to inform development priorities and decision-making.

As the Wild Atlantic Way initiative relies on community and stakeholder buy-in, networking, and management to be successful, results can aid stakeholders in their development of unique tourism offerings that align with their community identity. By setting themselves apart and promoting hidden gems, unique attractions, cultural experiences, and other similar draws, communities are able to exercise agency in their involvement with the Wild Atlantic Way initiative as a developmental and economic tool.

Chapter 5
A Community-level Examination
of Tourism on the Wild Atlantic
Way – Rathmullan, Co. Donegal

5

A Community-level Examination of Tourism on the Wild Atlantic Way – Rathmullan, Co. Donegal

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents results from the community-focused research based in Rathmullan, Co. Donegal, following the methods outlined in Chapter 3 for Phase II. The objective for collaborative research in the Rathmullan community was to build on insights garnered from the tourist perspective of the Wild Atlantic Way by examining how the community's values are reflected in the tourism experience(s) and how they relate to policy. This chapter is organised in two parts. Part I outlines and interprets results obtained from the examination of community stakeholder values using Q and semi-structured interviews (Section 5.2). Section 5.3 comprises Part II and presents the results of the participatory mapping workshop completed with community stakeholders. Each section provides its own discussion, summarising the main findings and implications stemming from each method. Section 5.4 provides a chapter summary, connecting the community insights, as the supply-side of the host-tourist dynamic, to implications presented in Chapter 4. Established connections will be further elaborated on in Chapter 6, where a novel, collaboratively generated framework will be presented as a tool to inform best practices of community engagement with the Wild Atlantic Way initiative.

5.2 Part I – Q Methodology and Community Factors

5.2.1 Q analysis

As reviewed in Chapter 3, Q employs a correlation and factor analysis procedure that is *by-person*, resulting in a relational analysis of each configuration (Q sort) against every other Q sort (Barry and Proops, 1999). This is accomplished through a reduction process comprising extraction and rotation (Zabala *et al.*, 2018). Each Q sort is the array of values implicitly assigned to each statement by the respondent (Zabala and Pascual, 2016).

Within the community of Rathmullan, this examination aims to analyse individual subjective views of impacts of the Wild Atlantic Way in a statistically interpretable manner, by classifying participants’ attitudes into groups of similar perspectives. Principal components factor analysis and subsequent rotation are performed within PQMethod (Schmolck, 2014, v2.35), the software package utilised for analysing Q datasets.

The unrotated factor matrix (Table 5.1) presents the correlation coefficient of each participant to each factor extracted. This initial step in Q analysis is done to primarily show the explained total variance of the cases being factored. As presented in Table 5.1, the percent explained variance of each factor adds to a total of 90%. This is due in part to PQMethod being restricted to presenting only up to eight factors, a known limitation of the software, implying the existence of at least three additional factors.

Table 5.1 Unrotated factor matrix.

Q sort	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6	Factor 7	Factor 8
Q01	0.581	0.227	-0.084	0.451	0.483	-0.255	0.207	-0.088
Q02	0.609	-0.433	0.323	-0.311	0.052	0.303	-0.017	0.303
Q03	0.447	0.728	-0.062	-0.047	-0.202	0.296	0.044	-0.101
Q04	0.341	0.125	0.753	0.016	-0.190	-0.395	-0.071	-0.056
Q05	0.731	0.045	0.244	-0.334	-0.036	0.110	0.175	-0.355
Q06	0.469	-0.638	0.036	0.284	-0.116	-0.046	-0.133	0.241
Q07	0.716	-0.052	0.010	0.126	-0.283	-0.285	-0.243	-0.074
Q08	0.525	-0.402	-0.192	0.569	0.117	0.224	-0.125	-0.187
Q09	0.718	0.158	-0.184	0.025	-0.133	-0.052	0.538	0.296
Q10	0.716	-0.127	-0.204	-0.389	0.284	0.188	-0.248	-0.091
Q11	0.179	0.659	-0.035	0.366	-0.391	0.274	-0.232	0.132
Q12	-0.088	0.486	0.548	0.198	0.534	0.198	-0.105	0.167
Q13	-0.368	-0.491	0.398	0.333	-0.202	0.369	0.295	-0.195
Eigenvalues	3.770	2.310	1.315	1.269	0.998	0.834	0.676	0.517
% Expl Var	29	18	10	10	8	6	5	4

In Q, factors with calculated eigenvalues greater than 1 (n=4) are extracted for further analysis. Yet, it is also important to consider the percent explained variance of each factor, and the combined total. A four-factor solution results in 67% total explained variance, while a five-factor solution makes a significant jump to 75% total explained variance. This, coupled with the calculated eigenvalue of 0.998 being close to 1, indicates

that Factor 5 warranted additional consideration and it was originally retained for extraction to be sure that nothing meaningful would be lost by excluding it. However, the preliminary results did not have any individual Q sorts loading significantly into that factor alone, and when contextually explored in greater detail, the views of those included were better grouped and explained in the factors they sorted most strongly.

Another criterion (Watts and Stenner, 2005; 2012) for determining a factor to be interpretable is to have at least one Q sort load significantly into that factor alone, otherwise referred to as ‘factor exemplars’. These exemplars represent factor-defining Q sorts, as they exhibit very similar configuration patterns of the idealised factor array (Watts and Stenner, 2012). The unrotated factor matrix then undergoes a Varimax rotation⁶, an orthogonal rotation technique which maximises the variance expressed among Q sorts. This rotation ideally enriches the interpretive potential of extracted factors (Brown *et al.*, 1999; Zabala *et al.*, 2018; Banasick, 2019). Mathematically, it redistributes variance among a smaller number of factors, thus generating resulting factors of equal statistical importance (Akhtar-Danesh, 2017).

Table 5.2 Cumulative communalities matrix.

Q-sort	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
Q01	0.3376	0.3889	0.3960	0.5992	0.8327
Q02	0.3712	0.5583	0.6628	0.7595	0.7622
Q03	0.1994	0.7287	0.7325	0.7347	0.7757
Q04	0.1163	0.1320	0.6987	0.6989	0.7348
Q05	0.5339	0.5359	0.5954	0.7068	0.7081
Q06	0.2200	0.6270	0.6283	0.7089	0.7223
Q07	0.5128	0.5155	0.5156	0.5316	0.6117
Q08	0.2754	0.4369	0.4736	0.7968	0.8104
Q09	0.5160	0.5409	0.5748	0.5754	0.5931
Q10	0.5127	0.5288	0.5703	0.7215	0.8019
Q11	0.0321	0.4669	0.4681	0.6017	0.7543
Q12	0.0077	0.2442	0.5443	0.5833	0.8679
Q13	0.1351	0.3759	0.5344	0.6452	0.6858
% Expl Var	29	47	57	67	75

⁶ Varimax rotation based on Fortran77 version in PQMethod (GNU GPL licence) by Peter Schmolck.

The cumulative communalities table (Table 5.2) presents the percentage of cumulative variance explained by each factor. In the case of this study, the four factors extracted from the dataset explain 67% of the variance among participants' Q sorts. The final step in the automated Q analysis is the presentation of factor loadings (Table 5.3). Each Q sort is grouped in their defining factor, according to their calculated factor loadings, which best reflects the overall perceptions that are most similar to their own, in a process known as 'flagging' (Addams and Proops, 2000). It is observed that Q13, representing the participant R_13, did not significantly load into any factor. In cases such as these, the researcher has the option to manually flag the Q sort into a factor or remove it as an outlier from the study – both options can potentially be problematic as either introduces researcher influence or bias. However, due to the small sample size, and the ability to contextualise these results with additional research methods (i.e. interview and participant engagement), it was determined that the Q13 sort best fit with the perceptions of Factor 3.

Table 5.3 Factor matrix, with **X** indicating defining sort flagged by PQMethod (Factor Loadings).

Q-sort	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	
Q01	0.0724	0.4738	0.1565	0.5873	X
Q02	0.8065	X	-0.2332	0.0922	
Q03	0.1627	0.815	X	0.2062	
Q04	0.3791	-0.02	0.7423	X	
Q05	0.7754	X	0.2448	0.1854	
Q06	0.3276	-0.3443	-0.0833	0.69	X
Q07	0.4552	0.2538	0.0656	0.5056	X
Q08	0.0864	-0.0345	-0.1269	0.8787	X
Q09	0.4237	0.4962	X	-0.0642	
Q10	0.7369	X	0.2517	-0.2911	
Q11	-0.2584	0.6496	X	0.3038	
Q12	-0.1745	0.1824	0.7071	X	
Q13	-0.2589	-0.6948	0.2585		
N=	3	3	3	4	
% Expln Var	20	19	11	17	

Further evidence that the four-factor solution is the best representation of the data is seen when data in Table 5.3 is compared to Table 5.4. If the five-factor solution (Table 5.4) had been utilised to retain more explained total variance (75%), it is shown that Factor 5 does not have

any individuals sort into it, indicating that it does not offer significant differentiation from the other factors. This also reaffirms that Q13 does not bear enough difference from other Q sorts to warrant its own unique factor.

Table 5.4 Five-factor solution for comparison

Q sort	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
Q01	0.0621	0.3768	0.2734	0.6702	X -0.0877
Q02	0.8318	X -0.2539	0.0665	0.1838	0.0380
Q03	0.2594	0.8668	X 0.0974	-0.1015	0.1109
Q04	0.3453	-0.0669	0.5101	X 0.0710	-0.6108
Q05	0.7974	X 0.2599	0.0474	0.0735	-0.1778
Q06	0.3167	-0.3432	-0.1084	0.6812	X 0.0561
Q07	0.4340	0.2751	-0.1031	0.5018	X -0.2481
Q08	0.1122	-0.0262	-0.1174	0.8526	X 0.1261
Q09	0.4482	0.5195	X -0.1964	0.3481	-0.0548
Q10	0.7456	X 0.0799	-0.1315	0.2170	0.2460
Q11	-0.1657	0.7692	X 0.1380	0.0614	0.0462
Q12	-0.1049	0.1359	0.9123	X -0.0897	0.1337
Q13	0.1587	-0.1452	0.2085	0.0732	0.2142
N=	3	3	2	4	0
% Ex Var	20	16	13	16	10

There are two key results that describe each factor: z-scores and normalised scores, or factor arrays. The z-scores are the weighted average of scores given to each statement from similar respondents (Zabala *et al.*, 2018). Z-scores provide additional information about how strongly each factor is engaged with a statement. Additionally, similar z-scores across factors indicate consensus around a statement, while z-scores that differ significantly indicate distinguishing statements between factors. Factor arrays represent the idealised Q sort for each factor as a hypothetical individual representing that factor would rank the statements, related back to the quasi-normal distribution of Likert scores (i.e., '-4' to '+4') (Zabala *et al.*, 2018; Carr, 2019). Representative z-scores and factor arrays are presented in Table 5.5. These results, paired with insights from consensus and distinguishing statements, are then subjected to interpretation and substantiated using qualitative data from participant interviews. The final analysis and interpretation of Q represents a gestalt configuration of the representative group's views.

Table 5.5 Z-scores and factor array Q Sort of each statement, by factor. Associated themes are indicated in brackets: tourism, T; identity, I; and local knowledge, LEK.

#	Statement	Factor 1		Factor 2		Factor 3		Factor 4	
		Z	F1	Z	F2	Z	F3	Z	F4
1	The WAW initiative enhances the identity of my community. [I]	-0.3	0	1.48	3	0.11	0	-0.04	0
2	My community has unique local knowledge that should be used to pursue local tourism opportunities. [LEK]	0.68	1	0.27	0	-0.86	-2	1.95	4
3	Policy makers do not fully engage with my community with regards to tourism opportunities. [T]	1.5	3	0.7	2	-1.54	-3	-0.15	0
4	National policies can help address emerging issues along the WAW. [T]	1.83	4	1.04	2	1.54	3	0.22	1
5	My community is empowered to be involved in the development of the WAW. [LEK]	-0.11	0	0.58	1	1.31	3	0.68	1
6	I feel empowered by the WAW to be involved in the experience of visiting tourists. [LEK]	-0.79	-2	0.12	0	0.61	1	-1.5	-4
7	The WAW operates separate from my community. [T]	-0.39	-1	-1.75	-3	-2.32	-4	-0.33	0
8	The success of the WAW locally is owed to my community's engagement. [T]	0.62	1	-0.34	-1	2.15	4	-1.33	-2
9	My community prioritises satisfaction levels of visiting tourists. [T]	-0.23	0	0.44	1	-0.06	0	-0.97	-2
10	My community provides a unique 'non-touristy' experience for visitors. [T]	-0.07	0	-1.26	-3	-0.96	-3	0.67	1
11	Tourism is not just a business. [T]	0.91	2	-0.34	-1	0.06	0	-0.95	-2
12	The WAW has improved my quality of life economically. [T]	-2.35	-4	1.14	2	-0.68	-1	-1.45	-3
13	The WAW has improved my quality of life socially. [T]	-1.37	-3	0.49	1	-0.22	0	-1.4	-3
14	The WAW has improved local environmental conditions. [LEK]	-0.36	-1	0.03	0	-0.72	-2	-0.34	-1
15	My community's cultural heritage is not solely defined by the WAW. [I]	-0.35	-1	0.09	0	0.46	1	0.85	2
16	Tourists share in our Irish heritage when they visit my community. [I]	0.5	1	-0.27	-1	1.02	2	-0.45	-1
17	My community's cultural values exist beyond marketed local tourism destinations. [I]	0.39	1	0.58	1	-0.34	-1	0.81	2
18	The values which define my community offer a unique identity unlike that of other destinations along the WAW. [I]	-0.52	-1	-0.43	-1	0.68	2	1.76	3

Chapter 5 – A Community-level Examination of Tourism on the Wild Atlantic Way – Rathmullan, Co. Donegal

19	The WAW route itself connects my community to neighbouring communities in new ways. [I]	-0.75	-2	-0.21	0	1.19	2	0.37	1
20	The value of my community can only be fully understood through living in it. [LEK]	0.95	2	-0.47	-2	0.27	1	0.7	2
21	The WAW has always existed. It has just been given a name and signs to help tourists find their way around. [T]	1.64	3	1.26	3	-0.31	-1	1.86	3
22	My community views all visiting tourists as the same. [T]	0.73	2	-1.23	-2	-0.35	-1	-0.17	0
23	Local authorities have met their legal obligations to consult my community when developing tourism plans. [T]	-0.94	-2	-1.17	-2	-0.89	-2	-0.45	-1
24	The growth in tourism due to the WAW can be felt in my community. [T]	0.16	0	1.57	4	0.13	1	0.03	0
25	The WAW substitutes my community's existing character with one marketed to tourist expectations. [I]	-1.37	-3	-2.33	-4	-0.29	0	-0.36	-1

5.2.2 Identified community factors

Each factor represents a distinct perspective of the Wild Atlantic Way and how it impacts their community. Chapter 3 introduced three discourses, or themed perspectives, that informed the concourse development for this Q examination: tourism practice, identity, and local (ecological) knowledge. These themes are represented in various statements of the Q set (Table 5.5) and their assigned ranking by each individual reflects participants' values associated with these themes, thus contributing to the interpretation of each of the extracted factor groups. The factor groups are named according to these shared views and are informed by the distinguishing statements identified in the PQMethod analyses: Policy Pragmatists, Regional Partners, Empowered Engagers, and Community Protectors. The following subsections will provide interpretations of the Q results, supported by participant interviews (Appendix D) to further illustrate the nuances of each factor and its characteristic perspectives.

The 13 Q participants (Table 5.6) in Rathmullan are actively involved in their community, i.e. 11 individuals (85%) are members of at least one community group or volunteer programme. Two individuals (15%) own their own business within the hospitality and tourism sector, and five individuals (38%) are employed in another sector. All participants reside, at least part of the year, within 10 minutes of the Rathmullan village centre.

Table 5.6 Demographics for Q participants (n=13), by factor.

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Total
Individuals	3	3	3	4	13
Individuals aged 50 or above	3	2	3	2	10
Employed in tourism sector	0	1	1	0	2
Employed in other sector	1	1	1	2	5
Business owner	0	1	1	0	2
Retired or not currently employed	2	1	1	2	6
Volunteer or member of a community group	2	2	3	4	11

5.2.2.1 Factor 1 – Policy Pragmatists

Factor 1 comprises three individuals, explaining 20% of the total study variance. This group, referred to as Policy Pragmatists, represents a pragmatic attitude of how committing to engagement with tourism policy can be a means of ensuring Rathmullan’s identity and unique heritage become increasingly central to its role as a Wild Atlantic Way destination. The Policy Pragmatists are distinguished by their beliefs that national policies can help to address emerging issues along the Wild Atlantic Way (statement 4: $Z = 1.83$, $F = +4$), despite their scepticism that policy makers fully engage(d) with the community regarding tourism (statement 3: $Z = 1.5$, $F = +3$). Additionally, this perspective recognises that the Rathmullan community has a unique character that they do not feel is overshadowed by one marketed to tourists (statement 25: $Z = -1.37$, $F = -3$). This group does not feel that the Wild Atlantic Way has improved their quality of life economically (statement 12: $Z = -2.35$, $F = -4$), perhaps owing in part to their belief that the route has always existed but is now signed for tourists (statement 21: $Z = 1.64$, $F = +3$).

Members of the Policy Pragmatists factor do not feel empowered by the Wild Atlantic Way initiative to be involved in the experience of visiting tourists (statement 6: $Z = -0.79$, $F = -2$), but they express an optimism for the initiative through their belief that tourism is a practice, not just a business (statement 11: $Z = 0.91$, $F = +2$). They do not consider success of the Wild Atlantic Way locally to be fully attributed to the engagement of the community (statement 8: $Z = 0.62$, $F = +1$). After all, “*community is made up of everybody in the area though of course everyone in the area doesn’t participate in the community*” (participant R_02). These shared perceptions

indicate an inclination to rely on centralised governance of the tourism initiative (i.e., through policies and management via Local Authorities and Fáilte Ireland).

Shared also in this factor is sentiment related to a dichotomy of insider-outsider views concerning sense of place, where it is believed that the community has an existing identity unsubstituted by top-down placemaking (statement 25: $Z = -1.37$, $F = -3$), but the full value of the community can only be experienced by belonging to it (statement 20: $Z = 0.95$, $F = +2$). Participant R_02 noted that *“the culture of communities can vary hugely within 40 miles”*, indicating that the expressed and experienced identities of separate villages and towns can differ quite drastically and can take years to fully integrate into. This individual identified themselves as a ‘blow-in’ (an Irish phrase indicating someone living in a community they were not born in; in Irish *duine as baile isteach*), stating:

“Oh I was a blow-in! Once a blow-in, always a blow-in in Gweedore. They’re very clannish. And it’s only recently, after 50 years, that we’ve been asked to participate in the new community. After 50 years – it has taken that long to be accepted”⁷ (participant R_02).

A strong agreement is indicated for the idea that the Wild Atlantic Way has always existed and has now only been given signs to help tourists find their way (statement 21: $Z = 1.64$, $F = +3$), pointing to a strong historical connection with tourism in the area. In the community workshop, participant R_10 spoke of fond memories of making the journey to the Atlantic Drive (a designated road on the Rosguill peninsula in Co. Donegal, approximately 35km from Rathmullan) as a child in the 1950s and 1960s. The Atlantic Drive Road was established in 1924 and is now marketed by the Irish Tourism Group as the *Grand Atlantic Drive* while also having been absorbed into the larger Wild Atlantic Way route (Irish Tourism Group, n.d.), demonstrating regional understanding of shifting tourist interests.

Members of this factor are keenly aware of the range of tourist types and motivations (statement 10: $Z = -0.01$, $F = 0$) and offer a critique of the community’s barriers. Historically, the geographic location of Donegal in the Northern region of the Republic of Ireland has served as a barrier to tourism. In their own words:

⁷ Participant R_02 moved from Glenties to Gweedore (both Co. Donegal) as a child with their family. In interview, they refer to family remaining in Gweedore (as they no longer reside there).

“Our barrier is that we’re in the Northwest. And that we’re in the North, but we’re not in the North politically – we’re in the South, politically. And we have been historically cut off. And, nobody bothered with us... tourists came as far as Sligo” (participant R_02).

Previously, tourists who did travel to Rathmullan, Letterkenny, and other parts of Donegal, were primarily from Northern Ireland – especially during ‘The Troubles’, a period of conflict between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland from the late 1960s to 1998 – contributing to the generational feeling of isolation. Factor 1 demonstrates an understanding of the need for communities to address changing needs of tourists over time. Perhaps this collective memory of tourism as it was, paired with the new promises from Fáilte Ireland of what tourism can be has contributed to the viewpoints of the Policy Pragmatists.

5.2.2.2 Factor 2 – Regional Partners

Factor 2 is made up of three individuals, accounting for 19% of the total study variance. This group is referred to as Regional Partners as they emphasise the potential for local as well as regional growth – in both business and culture – making them advocates of a partnered, inclusive approach to the growth of the tourism sector. Collectively, members of this factor group own, or have previously owned, tourism-related businesses which may inform their view about tourism growth and economic benefits (statement 12: $Z = 1.14$, $F = +2$). Regional Partners are further distinguished from other factor groups as they agree strongly with the idea that growth in tourism due to the Wild Atlantic Way can be felt in their community (statement 24: $Z = 1.57$, $F = +4$). They also are the only group to show strong, positive agreement with the idea that the Wild Atlantic Way initiative enhances the identity of their own community (statement 1: $Z = 1.48$, $F = +3$).

This group demonstrates a strong connection with sense of place, both at the community and regional level. Among those in this group, there is strong disagreement with the idea that top-down placemaking and resulting branding of the Wild Atlantic Way has replaced their local community character (statement 25: $Z = -2.33$, $F = -4$). Disagreement with the ideas that local authorities have met their obligations to consult with their community (statement 23: $Z = -1.17$, $F = -2$), and that the Wild Atlantic Way operates separately from their community (statement 7: $Z = -1.75$, $F = -$

3) highlight the geographic position of Rathmullan as a gateway village on the established route.

The concept of culture and cultural offerings are understood to be a significantly different experience in Donegal to other destinations on the route but are not yet fully captured as a visitor offering. As summed up by participant R_03:

“people will say that Donegal is very like Kerry, but it couldn’t be further from the truth, really. The scenery is very similar, but your cultural experiences will be very different... the actual offerings are very different... Yeah, so it has that negative connotation... but I think – I know that you can get sheep, you can get Guinness... cliffs, but it’s different. They all have different offerings, and all are good. Just different experiences are good.”

As such, Regional Partners do not view all visiting tourists the same, acknowledging the link between tourist motivations and the unique cultural offerings of different communities (statement 22: $Z = -1.23$, $F = -2$). Individuals in this factor recognise that ‘tourists’ too, means different things throughout the year, and amenities *“need to look after the visiting tourists, who might only be from Letterkenny”* (participant R_03).

Among Regional Partners there is a slight disagreement with the statement that the success of the Wild Atlantic Way locally is due to the community’s engagement (statement 8: $Z = -0.34$, $F = -1$), citing *“reciprocal agreements”* with regional businesses to recommend each other (participant R_11 comment). This concept may also contribute to their neutral perspective that the Wild Atlantic Way route connects their community with neighbouring communities in *new* ways (statement 19: $Z = -0.21$, $F = 0$), since the regional reciprocal agreements may be newly affirmed, but they strongly believe that the Wild Atlantic Way has always existed (statement 21: $Z = 1.26$, $F = +3$), indicating a sense that the region has always been connected. In practice, one group member commented:

“I would have always been a great advocate of not just focusing on what we have here, in Rathmullan. And I think that – you know, I would always be like, ‘How long are you here for; are you here for three days or four days’... whatever. You should go to diff – like Fanad Lighthouse, go to Slieve League, which is – go over to Inishowen – promote other places as well as, not just what you have because I think once we promote other places, people will realise, you know there’s a lot of things to do here, so it brings them back all the time” (participant R_03).

Perhaps owing to their business roles, Regional Partners argue to some degree that tourism *is* just a business (statement 11: $Z = -0.34$, $F = -1$). From a business perspective, there is a described lag time between the community noticing a growth in tourism and the local businesses being able to properly accommodate tourist needs, as a result of seasonal and economic local barriers. After all,

“if they come here today and there’s nowhere for them to eat, why would they come back? And then they’ll tell other people. And... a lot of people work weekends, so they come out on a Monday. So their days off are on a Monday and Tuesday. But why would they come here [to Rathmullan] if there’s nowhere to go, or there’s nothing to entertain them, or...?” (participant R_03).

Among the Regional Partners, it is believed that national policies can help to address emerging issues along the route (statement 4: $Z = 1.04$, $F = +2$), but that policy makers do not fully engage with the community (statement 3: $Z = 0.70$, $F = +2$). This group believes that the community, at present, does not offer a non-touristy experience for tourists (statement 10: $Z = -1.26$, $F = -3$), but advocates that the community could be capturing much more with *“full community buy-in”* (participant R_03). For example, community members have identified seasonality as a primary challenge for Rathmullan, and participant R_03 emphasises that the community needs to *“think outside that box!”* because *“people say ‘Ok, today’s the last day of September – OH! That’s the end of the year now.’ The ferry ended yesterday. And you have to think ‘No! we must, you know, keep going”*.

5.2.2.3 Factor 3 – Empowered Engagers

Factor 3 includes three individuals and accounts for 11% of the explained variance. Factor 3 is referred to as Empowered Engagers, owing to their strong agreement that local success of the Wild Atlantic Way can be attributed to their community’s engagement (statement 8: $Z = 2.15$, $F = +4$), and feelings of empowerment to engage with the initiative (statement 5: $Z = 1.31$, $F = +3$). This group points to sluggish, bureaucratic processes that have impeded progress in their own community and region. According to one member,

“you know, [the approval process] worked 50 years ago, but now you have to streamline it. That there puts you off trying to do things, because you expect – I mean if you want to do anything

real, you're still paying and doing paperwork, and it sits on a desk" (participant R_04).

This sentiment likely contributes to the overall position that local authorities have not met their obligations to consult with the community (statement 23: $Z = -0.89$, $F = -2$), and policy makers have not engaged sufficiently with the community regarding tourism opportunities (statement 3: $Z = -1.54$, $F = -3$).

Despite this critique of policy makers and the process of change, the Empowered Engagers maintain that national policies themselves have the potential to address barriers that emerge in communities along the Wild Atlantic Way (statement 4: $Z = 1.54$, $F = +3$). Paraphrased from participant R_12, it is suggested that national policies can direct funding towards projects to support the growth of tourism on the Wild Atlantic Way. In turn, this would support sustainability goals by providing local employment, prolonging the tourist season, and enhancing the tourist experience. This participant goes on to say:

"there's different possibilities for things to do that wouldn't sort of been – I wouldn't have seen them as being open or available prior to the Wild Atlantic Way. It would've meant driving down to Letterkenny... and driving all the way up around. So it sort of opened up new – the ferry and that as well – and that's supported by Fáilte Ireland, that's allowed that to happen. But the marketing as well, that's been done of the area has kinda highlighted the different activities that are available to tourists" (participant R_12).

This promotion of tourist experiences in communities along the Wild Atlantic Way route is seen as a way to connect villages in the region in new ways (statement 19: $+2$). For example:

"I think there's more integration of communities right around Lough Swilly because we can kind of work together now. They say well, you know if there are tours in Bunrana now, instead of then maybe just heading into Letterkenny and out, they can come over now to Rathmullan, explore over around here. And likewise, from Rathmullan they can explore Inishowen, you know? It has changed, kind of the way you look at what potential there is to do in the area" (participant R_12).

This new connectivity widens the unique identity of the community, allowing for tourists to share in their Irish heritage (statement 16: $Z = 1.03$, $F = +2$). However, there are conflicting perceptions of the community's

identity amongst the Empowered Engagers; believing the community does not offer a unique ‘non-touristy’ experience for tourists (statement 10: $Z = -0.96$, $F = -3$), yet acknowledging that the values which define their community offer a unique identity from other destinations on the Wild Atlantic Way (statement 18: $Z = 0.68$, $F = +2$). Further, this factor dismisses the idea that their community has a unique local knowledge that should be used to pursue local tourism opportunities (statement 2: $Z = -0.86$, $F = -2$), perhaps demonstrating the internal contention regarding *how* to pursue local tourism opportunities most effectively. Successfully translating their community identity into a fully formed tourism experience promoting a shared sense of place will likely further empower this group. Speaking of the Wild Atlantic Way initiative as an example, one individual shared:

“I mean, all they did was put a few signs up and market it. And it’s amazing, and it’s been repeated now the world over. It’s like, you use what you have, you don’t even have to build anything, you just have to tell people, and then provide what they need to come here. But don’t overdo it like, you know what I mean? But here [Rathmullan], to me, is still totally left out” (participant R_04).

Members of this group strongly disagree with the idea that the Wild Atlantic Way operates separately from their community (statement 7: $Z = -2.32$, $F = -4$), further supporting their overall perspective that engagement with the initiative by the community will lead to success. Their feeling of empowerment and persistent willingness to engage with the Wild Atlantic Way initiative, despite an acute awareness of existing limitations and unreliable support from authorities is perhaps best summed up by a response from participant R_04: *“you have to empower yourselves... otherwise small towns cannot control their own destiny”*.

5.2.2.4 Factor 4 – Community Protectors

Factor 4 comprises four participants, explaining 17% of the total study variance. As a group, they are distinguished by their belief that their community has a unique set of values and identity that sets them apart from other destinations (statement 18: $Z = 1.76$, $F = +3$), and that unique local knowledge of their community should be utilised to pursue local opportunities (statement 2: $Z = 1.95$, $F = +4$). Additionally, community cultural value exists beyond the marketed local tourism destinations (statement 17: $Z = 0.81$, $F = +2$), and the community’s cultural heritage is not solely defined by the Wild Atlantic Way (statement 15: $Z = 0.85$, $F = +2$). This

heightened sense of community identity and embeddedness shared by its members, makes Factor 4 Community Protectors.

Community Protectors understand that opportunity exists to expand non-touristy experiences or sites (statement 10: $Z = 0.67$, $F = +1$) that encourage tourists to share in their Irish heritage (statement 16: $Z = -0.45$, $F = -1$). Acknowledging that historical influences over time have shaped the community, but recognising a merging of regional identities, members of this group do not fully believe that branding of the Wild Atlantic Way substitutes their community identity (statement 25: -1). For example, participant R_01 shares:

“Rathmullan has lots of influences, you know, neighbouring towns would have Irish schools, would have Irish culture things. Rathmullan didn’t have that! I think we were much more influenced by the British who were here, and the ships who were here during The War. And the Herring boats who came during the maybe the 1940s – 1930s or 1940s – I’m not quite sure of the year. But you know, there was all that influence – there was lots of British influence here. For example: we did Irish, of course at school, but it wasn’t an Irish school – it wasn’t what we would call a Gaeltacht.”

Community Protectors tend to consider tourism as a business (statement 11: $Z = -0.95$, $F = -2$) but does not agree with the statement that the community prioritises the satisfaction levels of tourists (statement 9: $Z = -0.97$, $F = -2$). Participant R_01 elaborates by stating:

“we don’t have the ferry for long enough. It finishes today, for example. And it won’t be back until next year. Infrastructure is a barrier. Internet is a barrier. They’re really much more needed here. Because people could live here and work in London, or work in Dublin.”

Changes made to accommodate tourist needs, would also benefit the local community, enriching the opportunities for further engagement and identity preservation. Members discussed mass emigration of the community’s youth at several times over the years, emphasising the connection and energy that the young generation provides to the community. Participant R_01 reflected on one of those times:

“There would have been a while probably, I would have seen Rathmullan go down, and felt the frustration of that – of things closing, and emigration, and stuff like that. That would have been a frustrating time. I suppose, the 80s were a very hard time here. And probably been the first big recession that I remembered. And

then, my children were born in the early 70s – it would have been around there – that was a dip. And then later, there was emigration here when there was part of the Marine Harvest Fish Farm in Fanad was here, and then they moved out of Rathmullan. I mean, part of what I would remember of that time, there was a bus pulled down at the seafront, and 16 young people emigrated that one day! You know, and that for such a small area... was huge. That was part of [the] energy, that was part of – just the village's life blood really.

Recognising that success of the Wild Atlantic Way locally is a joint effort of communities in the region, this group does not fully believe local success of the route is owed to their community's engagement (statement 8: $Z = -1.33$, $F = -2$). Community Protectors do not feel empowered individually to be involved with the experience of visiting tourists (statement 6: $Z = -1.5$, $F = -4$), but do agree that their *community* is empowered to engage with the Wild Atlantic Way initiative to some degree (statement 5: $Z = 0.68$, $F = +1$). In a way, members of the Community Protectors group feel like bystanders, supportive of what the Wild Atlantic Way can offer Rathmullan (statement 18: $Z = 1.76$, $F = +3$; statement 21: $Z = 1.86$, $F = +3$), yet powerless in shaping what that might be (statement 9: $Z = -0.97$, $F = -2$; statement 11: $Z = -0.95$, $F = -2$; statement 12: $Z = -1.45$, $F = -3$; statement 13: $Z = -1.40$, $F = -3$). Their views of the Wild Atlantic Way reflect a practice of placemaking that is dissonant to their lived experience and perspective within their own community (statement 15: $Z = 0.85$, $F = +2$; statement 16: $Z = -0.45$, $F = -2$; statement 20: $Z = 0.70$, $F = +2$), prompting their felt need to preserve elements of their community's identity.

5.2.3 *Looking beyond the factors – Community consensus*

Factor groups are defined by distinguishing statements, yet to more fully contextualise the various positions held within a community like Rathmullan, it is as important to understand where agreement exists. Areas of agreement can build consensus within a community around various issues or concerns (Carr, 2019). Consensus statements represent the least statistical variance and are deemed insignificant (i.e., $p > 0.05$) for distinguishing any factor from another but can be utilised in parsing the baseline characteristics of each of the factors and understanding where the community converges (Table 5.7). In this study, less than positive views were shared concerning a sense of insufficient community consultation by authorities (statement 23: Z-score var. = 0.068) and a degradation on the

local environment due to the Wild Atlantic Way (statement 14: Z-score var. = 0.07).

Table 5.7 Statements organised by consensus to disagreement, using cross-group mean Z-score variance.

#	Statement	F1	F2	F3	F4	Z score variance
23	Local authorities have met their legal obligations to consult with my community when developing tourism.	-2	-2	-2	-1	0.068
14	The WAW has improved local environmental conditions.	-1	0	-2	-1	0.07
17	My community's cultural values exist beyond marketed local tourism destinations.	1	1	-1	2	0.184
15	My community's cultural heritage is not solely defined by the WAW.	-1	0	1	2	0.197
5	My community is empowered to be involved in the development of the WAW.	0	1	3	1	0.252
9	My community prioritises satisfaction levels of visiting tourists.	0	1	0	-2	0.258
20	The value of my community can only be fully understood through the process of living in it.	2	-2	1	2	0.287
16	Tourists share in our Irish heritage when they visit my community.	1	-1	2	-1	0.353
4	National policies can help address emerging issues along the WAW.	4	2	3	1	0.376
24	The growth in tourism due to the WAW can be felt in my community.	0	4	1	0	0.402
11	Tourism is not just a business.	2	-1	0	-2	0.456
1	The WAW initiative enhances the identity of my community.	0	3	0	0	0.475
22	My community views all visiting tourists as the same.	2	-2	-1	0	0.483
19	The WAW route itself connects my community to neighbouring communities in new ways.	-2	0	2	1	0.516
10	My community provides a unique 'non-touristy' experience for visitors.	0	-3	-3	1	0.577
13	The WAW has improved my quality of life socially.	-3	1	0	-3	0.64
6	I feel empowered by the WAW to be involved in the experience of visiting tourists.	-2	0	1	-4	0.661
25	The WAW substitutes my community's existing character with one marketed to tourist expectations.	-3	-4	0	-1	0.701
21	The WAW has always existed. It has just been given a name and signs to help tourists find their way around.	3	3	-1	3	0.719
7	The WAW operates separate from my community.	-1	-3	-4	0	0.746
18	The values which define my community offer a unique identity unlike that of other destinations on the WAW.	-1	-1	2	3	0.86
2	My community has unique local knowledge that should be used to pursue local tourism opportunities.	1	0	-2	4	1.007
3	Policy makers do not fully engage with my community with regards to tourism opportunities.	3	2	-3	0	1.264
8	The success of the WAW locally is owed to my community's engagement.	1	-1	4	-2	1.649
12	The WAW has improved my quality of life economically.	-4	2	-1	-3	1.649

In addition to consensus statements returned via statistical representation, in-depth interpretation of factor characteristics paired with contextual information from the semi-structured interviews helps bring to light positions that are shared among many of the participants. Feelings of being overlooked, cut-off, or separated from Ireland tourism in a general sense were shared by participants. Participant R_04 spoke about frustrations concerning the inconsistency of tourist numbers and the unbalanced tourism season: *“I mean we should be trying to prioritise how can we become a point on that map. And what this place needs here are numbers, consistent numbers... But here, to me, is still totally left out.”*

Participant R_02 pointed to a history of rural villages in Donegal being perceived as isolated from Ireland and how that has translated into the barriers mentioned previously: *“In the past, we didn’t have 4- and 5-star hotels, so the American tour companies were not adding us to an itinerary for Americans.”* Participant R_01 confirms, stating *“we’ve still a long way to go. We still don’t have a Bed n Breakfast in Rathmullan anymore. Some people are doing Airbnb’s, but it’s different.”* Another community member mentioned the barrier of accommodation:

“Rathmullan itself, it doesn’t have a high occupancy – beds – you know numbers. There are holiday homes available for people to stay in... a very small number of BnBs... so maybe a barrier for Rathmullan is actually that it probably needs more affordable accommodation. And maybe even a properly serviced camper-van site or something like that. There was a hotel – you’re probably aware – the Pier Hotel. It was a centre landmark in Rathmullan, but that hasn’t been redeveloped. So, you know, there is just a gap there I think, when it comes to accommodation in Rathmullan” (participant R_12).

Amongst the participants, there was substantial agreement with the statement that the Wild Atlantic Way has always existed, but now it has been designated and marketed for tourists (statement 21: Z-score var. = 0.72). Several participants mentioned the need for Rathmullan village to be promoted more, to support local businesses and encourage more opportunity for the community. There is a desire for promotion by tourism bodies to match and support the community’s engagement with the initiative, as supported by interview participant R_14:

“That’s one thing always comes up in meetings, is the fact that it hasn’t been marketed properly. Because we need to get an expert here, a person who actually knows what they’re talking about. Because we’re all very busy and trying to survive. But at the end

of the day, you need to get the person who knows what is needed to be done. So, I think this is a huge problem here. But you need something to market, right... a brand if you like, you know?"

Where consensus among stakeholders was neutral, statements can provide an impetus for conversations and decision-making within the community. These statements can be imagined as action points, or barriers to community-perceived successful tourism engagement. Specifically, neutral consensus statements in this assessment included: statement 5 (Z-score var. = 0.25), statement 15 (Z-score var. = 0.20), statement 24 (Z-score var. = 0.40), and statement 1 (Z-score var. = 0.48).

While presenting preliminary findings of this research, community leaders were supported in gauging community positions on what their response to findings could look like by posing questions like: *what can be done to navigate barriers uncovered?*

5.2.4 Q Discussion

The identified factors from the Rathmullan community stakeholders can each be described based on their perspectives relating to the three thematic discourses: tourism practice, identity, and local (ecological) knowledge. This categorical arrangement of community perspectives can be used as an indicator of community priorities while exploring opportunities for further engagement with tourism and the Wild Atlantic Way in Rathmullan.

Additionally, as described previously in this chapter, the Q sort of participant R_13 (Q_13) represented an outlier in the data. When the individual Q sort was assessed against the factor arrays of each factor, it was found that this individual shares significant views of each group. While mathematically these results do not determine a fully statistically-interpretable finding, in reality this individual may play a much more important role than they are aware. In a unique position, this participant is able to relate to many community members, and can therefore serve as a community mediator or leader.

The Q method exercise identified areas of consensus, which can serve as starting points for discussing and prioritising barriers to tourism and tourism impacts within the community. Moscardo (2005; 2008a) cited conflict as one of the five key themes of negative tourism impacts. Situations where there is minimal community engagement with tourism development

are more likely to experience these negative tourism outcomes (Moscardo, 2008b; Stoeckl, 2008). At the community level, Stoeckl (2008) has demonstrated that conflict is most likely to occur when community stakeholders' goals do not align, or when there exists a marked disparity of costs and benefits. With this in mind, particular attention was given to interpreting the consensus amongst the Rathmullan community with the intention of highlighting a strong foundation from which the community could continue forward with their tourism goals.

5.3 Part II – Participatory Mapping and Values

Participatory mapping as a method elicits a spatial depiction of a set of values, either individualised or collective (van Riper et al., 2020). Research employing participatory mapping has sought to gain a deeper understanding of social values and sense of place knowledge in a quantified, spatially explicit manner (Gobster et al., 2003; Larson et al., 2013; van Riper et al., 2020). This practice has been shown to improve public engagement in policy and development of environmental initiatives (Sieber, 2005; Brown and Fagerholm, 2015). In the context of this research, the participatory mapping exercise with community stakeholders aimed to produce a spatially anchored prioritisation of local knowledge and values of ecosystem services in Rathmullan. As introduced in Chapter 3, this aim is addressed by incorporating four of Cochrane *et al.*'s (2014) defined purposes of participatory mapping into the design and delivery of the participatory mapping workshop in Rathmullan, whereby:

- (1) community spatial knowledge is articulated and communicated to outsiders;
- (2) local knowledge is recorded and archived via the creation of individualised maps, and a composite map representing areas of consensus among participants;
- (3) the practice of mapping and forum discussion increases capacity within the community; and
- (4) the community is empowered to advocate for change and address resource-related conflicts.

5.3.1 Values and local knowledge

Local knowledge has been shown to moderate human-environmental relationships, where individuals with low knowledge of an area tend to ascribe value only on specific sites or visited locations while individuals

with high knowledge are more likely to assign value to a broader area (van Riper et al., 2020; Allen *et al.*, 2021). This critical distinction is what guides the pursuit of local involvement in planning and implementation of tourism initiatives. Where stakeholder engagement is lacking, or is merely tokenistic, tourism initiatives and opportunities are less likely to succeed.

Specific to the Irish context, Healy et al. (2012, p. 451) maintain that the exclusion of locals in top-down tourism policy making and development often also “reduces the legitimacy of decisions and diminishes the chances of successful implementation”. In this line of understanding, Matiku et al. (2020, p. 8230) highlight that “as consumers the local communities are the most legitimate and well-informed of their priorities” therefore “the motivation for sustainability of tourism development in rural areas rests upon the assurance of the rural community economic, environmental and social cultural benefits from tourism”. Assurance for local communities can be achieved by employing research methods like participatory mapping to assess and consider their values and priorities in planning and implementation. In the following subsections, the resulting maps of the participatory mapping workshop are presented and provide an illustrative example of values within the Rathmullan community which can be utilised to guide conversations related to planning, funding allocation, and future opportunities for the community.

5.3.2 *Mapping Rathmullan community values*

The participatory mapping workshop investigated community perceptions in Rathmullan related to tourism development as a result of the Wild Atlantic Way initiative. Participants were asked to mark on their individual maps according to the following three prompts:

- (1) Where in your community does the Wild Atlantic Way demonstrate significant value?
- (2) Where do you consider to be the most significant area(s) for tourism in your community?
- (3) Where do you consider to be the most significant area(s) for the economy in your community?

Prior to each step, participants considered in a round table discussion what the terms associated with each prompt meant, to establish agreement and ensure that mapped results represented the same type of spatial data. For example, as the “process facilitator” the researcher explained that the first prompt was asking for general values, both tangible and intangible, including cultural, ethical, and recreational values. This was

opportunities, affording Rathmullan the potential to provide services to tourists resulting in economic income for the community.

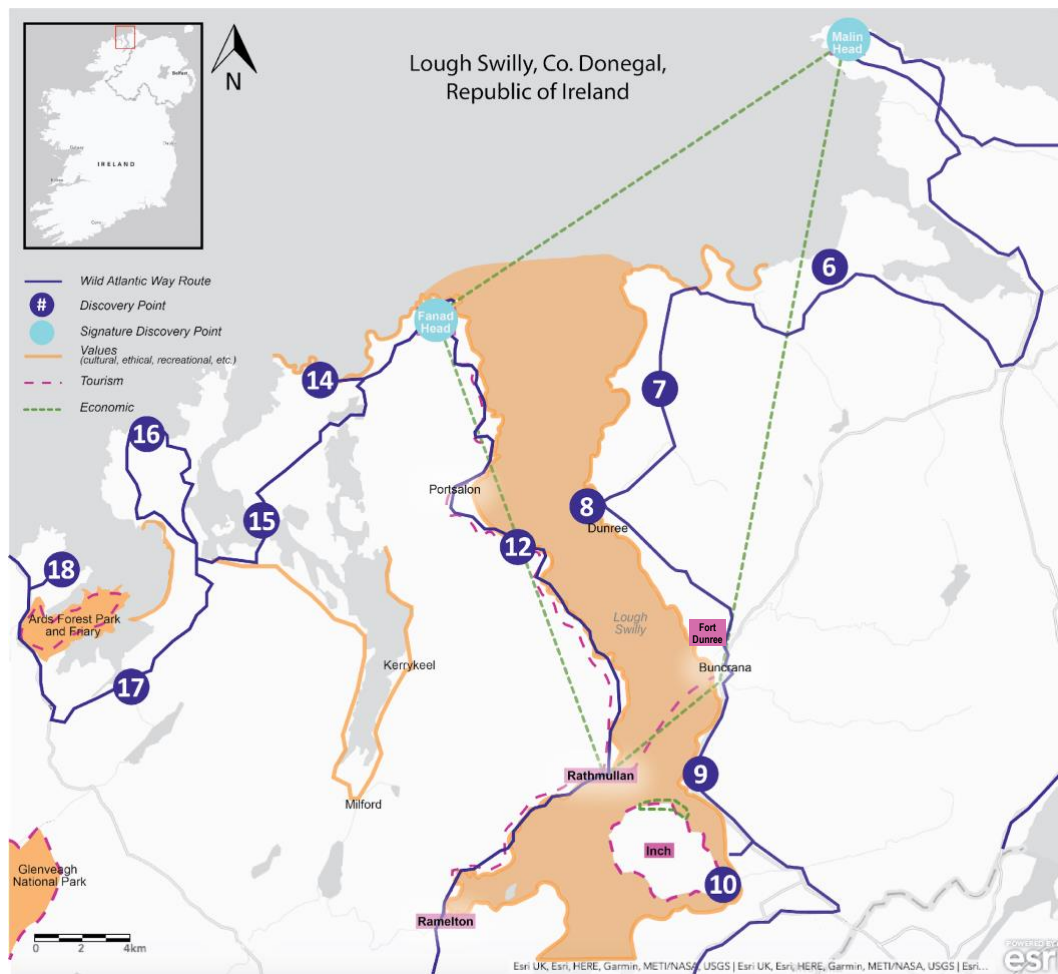


Figure 5.2 Composite map of Rathmullan community values. Orange represents general values (both tangible and intangible), pink in all instances indicates areas of value to tourism, and green indicates specific economic values. The official Wild Atlantic Way route, featuring Discovery and Signature Discovery Points is included for comparison (sourced from Fáilte Ireland). (Base map: ESRI UK).

The pink areas on the community composite map indicate areas that the workshop participants highlight as having value for tourism. They noted the road from Ramelton to Fanad Head, through their own village, as an important valuable resource. Additionally, participants marked Inch Island in Lough Swilly as having a significant tourism value. The village hosts several regional events throughout the year incorporating the island (e.g. the Inch Mile Swim each summer and Regatta Day during the Rathmullan Community Festival). This strong association with geographic features in

their area highlights the potential for inviting tourists to interact with their community and heritage in an authentic way, serving as an example of sustainable tourism development.

An increased understanding of where tourists are coming from or travelling to, and what services or amenities they may need along their way, can guide the community when prioritising development projects. Some examples discussed by the group in the workshop included a café with nearby parking access near the pier which would easily capture tourists utilising the ferry or passing through the village. Another example was a lookout and educational attraction near the Battery that would enable tourists to stretch their legs and immerse themselves in Rathmullan's heritage and history with Lough Swilly. As a gateway village to other advertised sites on the Wild Atlantic Way route, Rathmullan is uniquely situated in the geography of Lough Swilly and the surrounding region to meaningfully engage with tourists beyond the typical peak tourist season.

Secondly, the ferry route and Fort Dunree near Bunrana are depicted in the composite map, highlighting the connection between the villages via the ferry crossing. The ferry, despite running only seasonally, plays a significant role in the tourism season and events. The connection between the Fanad and Inishowen peninsulas is crucial for expanding visitor mobility options for the area and serves as a fundamental element of Rathmullan's tourism opportunities. Community stakeholders have expressed interest in extending the ferry operation season to increase mobility of both tourists and locals. For this to be feasible however, stakeholders, including the ferry operator in this case, require assurance that the benefits (social and economic) will outweigh the costs. As an amenity that serves both locals and tourists, the community-proposed option of extending the ferry operation period with a reduced schedule would likely provide the region an additional method of promoting domestic tourism in the off-season.

Thirdly, information presented in the composite map supports findings from the Q and interview portion of the study related to locals' values existing outside of the community. It can be seen on their map that intangible values (i.e. cultural, recreational, educational) as well as economic values spread well beyond the village itself and span the region of both peninsulas. Perhaps most visually striking is the polygon of significant economic areas, whereby Rathmullan is situated as a crucial point in tourism-driven economic opportunity centred on Lough Swilly. Engagement opportunities with communities in Bunrana and near the two Signature

Discovery Points are likely ways that Rathmullan can cultivate regional partnerships in new ways.

When the community values map is combined with the official Wild Atlantic Way route and the designated Discovery Points (Figure 5.2), it can be seen that the locals' values coincide closely with natural and established tourism draws. This correlation demonstrates an alignment to some degree of grassroots community place-making (bottom-up) and centralised placemaking (as introduced in Chapter 2). Cheng et al. (2019) have shown that community engagement in community affairs (i.e. active community civic groups) positively affect locals' understanding of sustainable development and environmentally responsible behaviour. It can be argued that the participatory mapping exercise in Rathmullan has shown similarly that local knowledge and community participation positively influences motivations and opportunities for further engagement, spurring empowered discussions related to tourism and related topics.

5.3.3 Participatory mapping discussion

Place identity, as revealed through this case study, is strengthened by the community-created map representing values of participants within Rathmullan. As a significant complementary aspect of the Rathmullan case study, the community values map brings forward intangible cultural, recreational, and historical values that align with the practice of place-making. With an energetic core group in Rathmullan advancing community-supported tourism opportunities, the village has created a marketable identity that remains true to their own sense of *home*. As Figure 5.2 shows, local values align closely (i.e., *place-making*) within the route of the Wild Atlantic Way (i.e., *placemaking*) and its Discovery Points around Lough Swilly. In doing so, Rathmullan becomes a *place-making* destination in its own right while also serving as a *placemaking* gateway to the Inishowen Peninsula, Lough Swilly, and the Fanad Peninsula. As a result, the Rathmullan community is actively demonstrating the impact of incorporating community knowledge and expertise in innovative tourism development opportunities.

Notably, workshop participants indicated the road around Mulroy Bay, northwest of Rathmullan, as incorporating significant cultural and recreational value. When discussed in the group, this area was described as being connected to many childhood memories of the participants, but also was associated more contemporarily with a regional success story spurring from the Wild Atlantic Way initiative. As visible in Figure 5.2, the official

Wild Atlantic Way route does not follow Mulroy Bay, but instead was designed to direct tourists over the €20 million euro Harry Blaney Bridge (Donegal Daily, 2014), bypassing 22 miles of communities and businesses along the bay. Organised by Paddy Logue, the Mulroy Drive Tourist and Development Group's 19 locals spearheaded a petition for Fáilte Ireland to include the Mulroy Drive as an advertised detour of the Wild Atlantic Way route. In 2015, the offshoot of the Wild Atlantic Way launched, with Paddy Logue being quoted as saying:

“Even though we did not get added to the Wild Atlantic Way, this is the next best thing. Fáilte Ireland have been brilliant since we first raised this last year and business and community leaders have pulled together and it's now all systems go” (Donegal News, 2015).

Rathmullan sits in an important place along Lough Swilly for tourism. In several interrelated ways (i.e., the pink 'tourism' and green 'economic' connections illustrated in Figure 5.2), the success of the Wild Atlantic Way will depend upon the success of Rathmullan, and vice versa. The Rathmullan community is best positioned to help identify emerging concerns that may harm tourism, be they infrastructural, environmental, economic, or even perceptual. Fáilte Ireland, leveraging its position as a national-level body, can serve as an 'honest broker' (Hawkins and Mann, 2007), facilitating lines of communication with Rathmullan and coordinating appropriate responses to the community's concerns in support of its *placemaking* commitments toward ensuring the success of the Wild Atlantic Way. These mutual responsibilities are necessary for developing a strong and positive sense of place that can be successfully incorporated into tourism, without diluting identity or weakening a sense of attachment.

The results illustrated in this chapter show that place attachment and identity can be utilised to better balance the tensions between *place-making* and *placemaking*. The Rathmullan case study provides an example of how embedded the concepts of place attachment, place identities and place-making are in communities, and how tapping into those linkages can sustain a community's tourism opportunities through collaborative engagement. In practice, this might look like moving away from the homogenisation of tourism locales toward the hybridisation of consumer and community space (Reisinger, 2009; Everett, 2012). While the specific values and perceptions of the Rathmullan community cannot be used to make generalised statements about other locations, this research approach can be used to characterise tourism destinations elsewhere and hopefully encourage the inclusion of local values and knowledge in tourism planning and place

making. Employed anywhere, this practice seeks to find ‘uniqueness’ and authentic representations in the ‘sameness’ of advertised tourism. Additionally, with the tourism industry being heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, communities have an opportunity to overhaul their approach to tourism engagement and better align their recovery and future development in more sustainable ways.

5.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented results from collaborative research completed in Rathmullan, Co. Donegal. The community-centred methods were successful in garnering local knowledge relating to the regional environment, culture, values, and tourism. Stakeholder values were assessed for how they reflect in tourism experiences (i.e. what tourism products or offerings are highlighted and advertised) and how they relate to policy, both at the local and national level. The following chapter will take these results a step further and outline how insights presented in both this chapter and Chapter 4 were utilised in the development of a collaborative, community-generated framework for prioritising Blue Growth and sustainable tourism products at varying levels of community-led partnerships.

Chapter 6
Community-led Tourism
Partnerships in Ireland: the Co-
created TOUR Framework

6

Community-led Tourism Partnerships in Ireland: the Co-created TOUR Framework

6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses identified and perceived barriers to the Wild Atlantic Way initiative and how these can be reframed to promote a more sustainable pathway for future development. First, the culmination of this research is presented in Section 6.2 as the informed development of a community-generated collaborative framework (TOUR) for marine and coastal tourism in Ireland. Rathmullan as a case study village demonstrates the larger effect communities can have on the Wild Atlantic Way initiative through community-led development. Secondly, significant barriers are outlined in Section 6.3. In some instances, these barriers are informed and contextualised by feedback and data from an interview with a Fáilte Ireland representative. This agency perspective offers a third viewpoint of the Wild Atlantic Way initiative, rounding out the holistic representation of the system. Section 6.4 presents a discussion of findings as they relate to the ability of Rathmullan and the TOUR framework to impact decision-making and policy, if given the opportunity. Finally, a chapter summary is provided in Section 6.5.

6.2 Framework Development

6.2.1 *Governance structures in tourism planning and development*

While the term ‘governance’ refers to the general process by which groups make decisions, and comprehensively covers the ways decision-making power is structured in a group (Graham *et al.*, 2003; Moscardo, 2011), within the context of tourism, governance is “seen as encompassing the processes and institutions responsible for decision making about tourism” (Moscardo, 2011: p. 67). These can include government and tourism industry organisations, chambers of commerce, development bureaus, enterprises of the private sector, and resident groups (Hall, 2005).

With economic and social benefits, sustainable tourism is suggested to be more than simply tourism practices that do not harm the physical environment and diminish resources (Tosun, 1998). It is also tourism with benefits to destination communities, increasing quality of life standards, ideally through community-based development and participatory decision-making (Tosun, 1998; 2000; Gunn, 2002; Hall, 2005). *When* community stakeholder participation takes place is equally as important as the methods employed and outcomes. Government-sponsored stakeholder engagement can be flawed by seeking community input in the final stages of planning, rather than during early stages of decision-making (Jankowski, 2009; Levine and Feinholz, 2015). Effective governance, incorporating a co-management of resources, is recognised as essential for promoting sustainable development and tourism management (United Nations, 2014; Islam *et al.*, 2018).

Much of the responsibility of tourism development and planning in Ireland rests with local government (Healy *et al.*, 2012; Nunkoo, 2015; McLoughlin and Hanrahan, 2019). While Local Authorities are mandated to represent their community constituents (Ruhanen, 2013), efforts made toward collaboration in tourism planning have been critiqued as tokenistic (Healy *et al.*, 2012). In fact, McLoughlin and Hanrahan (2019) determined that, despite incorporating stakeholder consultation elements in the creation of their County Development Plans, no Local Authority was implementing the Ireland-specific EPA/DIT ACHIEV Model for Sustainable Tourism Planning⁸ for sustainable tourism indicators. This is especially unfortunate since the Local Authorities in Ireland are the direct link for communities to neighbouring regions (horizontally) and State agencies higher up their stakeholder network (vertically).

6.2.2 *Recentring the community*

It has been argued that widespread ownership and creation of knowledge is required for the improvement of tourist destination governance (Moscardo, 2011). More than consultation, collective impact “represents a fundamentally different, more disciplined, and higher performing approach to achieving large-scale social impact” (Hanleybrown *et al.*, 2012: p. 2). What has been demonstrated as a need for communities on the Wild Atlantic Way is a means by which residents can collectively investigate and sustain efforts to address shared concerns through

⁸ See Flanagan *et al.* (2007)

http://www.epa.ie/downloads/pubs/research/econ/ERTDI%20Report%2080_Web1.pdf

empowerment and mobilisation (Christens and Speer, 2015; Christens and Inzeo, 2015). As an exercise in this practice, eight key change pressures on marine and coastal tourism trail development were identified for the Fanad Peninsula region (Table 6.1), informed by Wild Atlantic Way tourist perceptions, the in-depth Rathmullan community research, and input from Fáilte Ireland (elaborated on in Section 6.3).

Table 6.1 Drivers of change in Rathmullan and other Wild Atlantic Way communities (both landscape and niche pressures). (Source: author’s own, also presented in Fahy *et al.*, 2020).

Change Pressures
Environmental degradation (erosion, litter, pollution, etc.)
Overburdened, or lack of infrastructure
Politics of participation
Alienation of locals
Lengthening of tourism season (or issues of seasonality)
Reduction of day-trip tour operations
Tourist management (i.e., regulations of tourist numbers)
Commodification of culture and traditions

It was determined that the alienation of locals served as a change pressure that had significant knock-on effects of other pressures identified. Indeed, by re-centring the community and regional locals in positions of power and governance, it was posited that the transfer of local knowledge would generate innovative and sustainable solutions to address pressures. But with little evidence of how best to accomplish this in the Irish context, frustrations have risen in the Rathmullan village, and communities like it. To address the interconnected elements of socio-economic tourism development, tangible approaches would likely require a combination of collaborative models like community-led collective impact (Kania and Kramer, 2011; Christens and Inzeo, 2015) and marine resource co-management (Quimby and Levine, 2018).

Building on work related to transition management as a means for governance transitions and socio-ecological sustainable regimes (Smith and Sterling, 2008), and the links of sustainability transitions to the discipline of geography (Markard *et al.*, 2012) agency and power can be redistributed in socio-ecological systems. Mathias *et al.* (2020) assert that tipping point dynamics (not unlike change pressures as presented in this thesis) are fundamental drivers of sustainable transitions, but potential transition

pathways are often overlooked. As evidenced in Rathmullan, the complex and evolving interdependent feedback dynamics of change pressures result in non-linear processes which require embedded local knowledge and co-management to sustainably address. Sustainable transitions, such as those promoting Blue Growth for resources like marine and coastal tourism trails, require a non-fragmented management approach that incorporates the inclusion of local knowledge and innovation (Kelly *et al.*, 2021), which Irish policy has yet to tangibly adopt.

6.2.3 Collaborative TOUR Framework

Drawing on literature promoting interorganisational collaboration in tourism planning (Jamal and Getz, 1995; Bramwell and Sharman, 1999; Christens and Inzeo, 2015; Errichiello and Marasco, 2017), and as a result of community collaboration to identify pressures, a framework for addressing recognised barriers and developing sustainable pathways for tourism in communities along the Wild Atlantic Way was co-created (Figure 6.1). The community-generated Collaborative TOUR Framework, as a novel approach for interorganisational collaboration in Irish tourism, proposes a set of development guidelines that support sustainable pathways for marine and coastal tourism development in a tangible way. Since community engagement is emphasised as a fundamental step in the tourism development process (Hall, 2005; Goodwin and Santilli, 2009; Hanrahan *et al.*, 2017), this framework aims to empower local stakeholders and community groups to be involved in development early *and* often. The TOUR Framework represents a tool for identifying and targeting needs within communities, guiding the organisation of partner stakeholders and the unification of opportunities to realise sustainable solutions.

Collaborative TOUR Framework

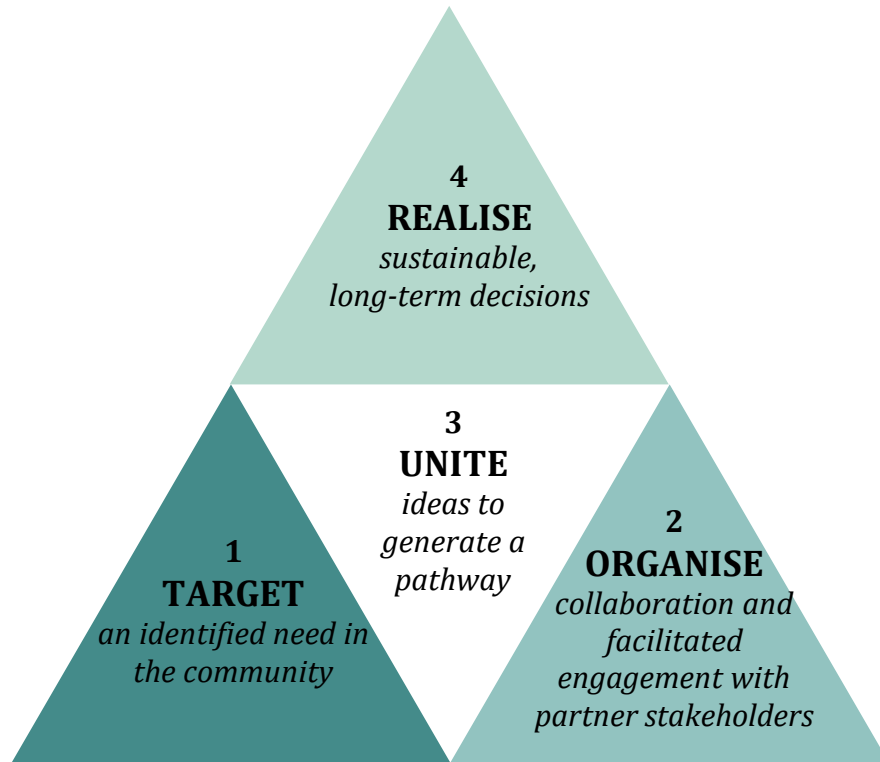


Figure 6.1 Community-generated Collaborative TOUR Framework, establishing local knowledge and collaborative engagement as foundational to the realisation of long-term sustainable decisions in tourism planning in communities.

As its name suggests, the Collaborative TOUR Framework is driven by the community to ensure that local voices and knowledge are captured in all stages, but perhaps most importantly in the planning stage of tourism product development. Guided by inclusive principles of co-management (United Nations, 2014; Islam *et al.*, 2018; Quimby and Levine, 2018), 'good engagement', from all stakeholder perspectives, ought to support power-sharing, improved participation, and enhance equity amongst partners. Equity, in the context of the development of the TOUR framework, reflects aspects of power and participation. Due to its place-derived embeddedness, and connotations of pre-existing socio-cultural values, equity in co-management practices ought to be pursued through co-learning and the prioritisation of local knowledge (McDermott *et al.*, 2013; Zafra-Calvo *et al.*, 2017; Quimby and Levine, 2018).

Local community knowledge and values translate into preferences that lead more directly to the development of pathways and opportunities with community buy-in and support (Fahy, *et al.*, 2020). Adopting the four-phase Collaborative TOUR Framework approach for sustainable regimes can guide communities like Rathmullan and their partnered tourism agencies like Fáilte Ireland with innovation development. The four phases of this framework are outlined in the following subsections.

6.2.3.1 Target

The first phase of the Collaborative TOUR Framework is initiated when stakeholders target needs within their community or region. Targeting first involves the identification of a need or issue that requires attention. The targeted need then becomes the focus of collaborative efforts with other stakeholder partners. As an example using the change pressures identified with the Rathmullan community (refer to Table 6.1), consider the concern of seasonality. The peak tourist season in Ireland is relatively short, typically from June to September. Being in the north of Donegal – additionally impacted by distance and more intense weather – Rathmullan’s peak season can be even shorter.

Amenities in Rathmullan (e.g. cafes, pubs, the ferry to Bunclara, etc.) are often constrained by the tourist season, with undue economic pressure to reach annual goals in mere months. In some cases, businesses are unable to remain open year-round, or have to significantly reduce their hours, leaving the permanent residents with fewer amenities during the off-season. The ferry, for example, has become synonymous with the tourism season, with one resident reflecting: *“Ok, today’s the last day of September – ‘OH! That’s the end of the year now’. The ferry ended yesterday. And you have to think ‘No! we must, you know, keep going’”* (participant R_03).

Tourists travelling outside the peak season are notably less likely to stop in Rathmullan, as the same local business owner explains: *“I think definitely we should have – there should be somewhere to eat on a Monday night... But why would they come here [Rathmullan] if there’s nowhere to go, or there’s nothing to entertain them, or...?”* (participant R_03).

Local stakeholders are better suited to identify and target these types of challenges sooner, having community knowledge of business and tourism trends, and familiarity of place to recognise shifts and opportunities *before* they become overwhelming. Additionally, communities are able to prioritise

concerns relative to their own consensus values and relate these to other stakeholder partners, who may have different skills, tools, or means to assist the community in addressing their identified needs.

6.2.3.2 Organise

Once a need is targeted, community stakeholders are able to organise relevant stakeholder partners whose interest in collaboration could be due to a mutual goal or a separate perceived benefit as a result. Organised as a collective team, the partner stakeholders engage in facilitated collaboration, research and co-learning.

For example, Local Authorities – whose remit includes services like economic and community development, planning, amenity services, and environment (among others) – have a responsibility to liaise within communities with engaged stakeholders. As such, they are expected to represent the community's targeted needs and support stakeholder efforts. Local Authorities have a mutual interest in extending the tourist season. An increase in the community's revenue would likely result in the re-prioritisation of other development and regeneration in the community, some of which may foster additional tourism opportunities. In the very least, Local Authorities stand to benefit from community-led development in fulfilling their legal requirements of consultation. As a result of meaningfully partnering with community stakeholders, Local Authorities are also more informed of current issues and impacts in their jurisdictions, and therefore better positioned to represent their constituents.

Additional key partner stakeholders can be neighbouring communities, researchers, and other regional and State offices, for example. In the context of this study, facilitated collaboration between the Rathmullan community, researchers at NUI Galway, and regional groups enabled the assessment of impacts that the Wild Atlantic Way has on Rathmullan. This partnership, through the facilitated renegotiation of power, supported community organisation, participation, and ownership of research. Good engagement in this phase, by the various partners, ought to incorporate iterative communication and collaboration – recentring the community as an empowered agent while spotlighting its values through the integration of local knowledge.

6.2.3.3 *Unite*

An organised community is able to draw on their full set of embedded stakeholder knowledge to co-generate transition pathways in a sustainable and locally beneficial manner. In practice, uniting in collaboration with Donegal County Council, the Tomar Trust, and other partners has resulted in Rathmullan the Way Forward securing 2020 LEADER funding for restoration of a significant historical heritage site, The Battery. Built in 1810, the Napoleonic Battery was one of six defensive structures established by the British in support of the United Irishmen's rebellion. Over the years, the Battery had succumbed to disuse and the weather, but the Rathmullan community saw an opportunity to target tourism needs while preserving a heritage site.

The formal regeneration and development plans were finalised after a Feasibility Study conducted in 2019, and decided on by the local community. Regeneration of the site will serve as a community hub, education centre, sports centre and a major tourist attraction, providing an innovative source of tourism revenue and a mixed-use community amenity. The success of a community-led project of this capacity serves as a source of inspiration and promotes similar efforts in other locations across Ireland to generate innovative ways to target their needs.

6.2.3.4 *Realise*

As the final phase of the Collaborative TOUR Framework, united stakeholder partners of the community-led process realise sustainable, long-term decisions achieved through the redistribution of power, increased participation and the promotion of equity. Realised decisions of the TOUR Framework represent pathway solutions that minimise negative costs while maximising tourism opportunities for locals. Successful outcomes reflect joint efforts of a collaborative empowerment approach, motivated by "building sustainable capacity in the community" (Christens and Inzeo, 2015).

The regeneration of The Battery in Rathmullan is an example of sustainable tourism development as it is designed to provide benefits directly to the community, and was generated through community-based development and participatory decision-making (Tosun, 1998). The Rathmullan community has thus increased its sustainable capacity, by exhibiting knowledge transfer (both between stakeholder partners *and* within the community) and continued ownership of research outcomes

beyond the scope of this thesis, strengthening their social capital (Moscardo, 2008a).

The Collaborative TOUR Framework functions as an iterative process, as needed by the community, over the lifetime of tourism products to accommodate changing needs and impacts in real-time. As a tool for communities, the use of the TOUR Framework increases and supports empowerment in networks by rebalancing politics of participation and placing the values of host communities on equal footing to other stakeholders. In practice, this framework supports links of place attachment and community identity to inform sustainable place-making practices on the Wild Atlantic Way. Significant to the contribution of this original framework, as an approach to community collaboration in tourism product development, it can be re-scaled to address concerns from community to national level.

6.3 Reframing Barriers: Opportunities for the TOUR Framework in Rathmullan

One concern of tourism in Ireland, even prior to the establishment of the Wild Atlantic Way, has been the fear of the homogenisation of Ireland into one tourism experience (Kneafsey, 1998). Part of the success of the Wild Atlantic Way has been its top-down *placemaking* ability to promote a consistent tourism product that is broadly appealing to a wide range of tourists. Product recognition generates and maintains tourism demand (Sedmak and Kociper, 2017), sometimes at the risk of localities losing their unique identities. Communities like Rathmullan have legitimate concerns that the Wild Atlantic Way promotes interchangeability, a critique known as *sameness* (Richards, 2014b; Lew, 2017) that dilutes the organic *place-making* potential of the community, their cultural foundation, and the tourism offerings they can generate from these roots.

Homogenisation is promoted by international consumption patterns, resulting in efforts at the local or community level to maintain uniqueness (Reisinger, 2009). The more tourists take to the Wild Atlantic Way expecting to view its rugged cliffs, photograph wandering sheep, and settle into a 'traditional' Irish pub for a pint of Guinness (Carr, 2016), the more a community like Rathmullan will feel pressure to prioritise that experience over something more locally authentic (Rapuano and Fernandez, 2010). In turn, such a progression may lead to growing dissatisfaction within the

community, weakening their sense of place attachment. Or, to put it more simply, members becoming alienated from their way of life, or no longer able to see their *home* (McLeod, 2004). Wherever a community may be along the place making continuum, when it comes to developing and sustaining its tourism, a sense of attachment and identity is essential. As shown in Chapter 5, there is a community desire for promotion by tourism agencies to match and support their engagement with the Wild Atlantic Way initiative, but barriers remain that often serve as negative feedback loops in the collaboration and engagement of key actors.

The Collaborative TOUR Framework supports communities in overcoming barriers to collaboration with stakeholder partners by balancing politics of participation through the empowerment of communities and the recentring of embedded local knowledge. The following subsections highlight four significant identified barriers for communities on the Wild Atlantic Way, contextualised by a representative from Fáilte Ireland. Reframing these barriers through the use of the Collaborative TOUR Framework would redistribute power amongst national tourism agencies and host communities by promoting equity and agency in decision-making and tourism development.

6.3.1 Legislative

Healy *et al.* (2012) stated that “tourism development and planning in Ireland since the early 1990s has been characterised by high-profile and protracted conflicts which have left a lasting legacy of mistrust”. This mistrust, based in part on varying values amongst stakeholders, can render collaboration problematic. Although legislation for sustainable planning in Ireland refers to public consultation, little to no evidence suggests a legal requirement for full community participation (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2002; Hanrahan, 2009; Sheppard and Beck, 2020). Stakeholders can express their concerns and views through the process of public consultation but are allowed little input in decision-making (Healy *et al.*, 2012).

When asked what advice they would give to other locations seeking to develop a marine and coastal product like the Wild Atlantic Way, the respondent replied “*Start from the ground, up! Community involvement is key for the success of any project. And take them with you every step of the way.*” Despite the increased emphasis on community stakeholder participation, traditional top-down decision-making and management structures are still prominent and often conflict with this ideal (Phillips,

2002; Jankowski, 2009; Healy *et al.*, 2012; Levine and Feinholz, 2015). Additionally, the de-prioritisation of local knowledge can add to the misconceptions about responsibility, ownership, and participation. From the early phases of the Wild Atlantic Way rollout, there has been confusion concerning who is ultimately responsible for the initiative's development (Maguire, 2015).

Conflicting with community views expressed in Chapter 5, the representative from Fáilte Ireland contends that the efforts to engage community stakeholders in the development and implementation phases of the Wild Atlantic Way showed progress from previous tourism development, while acknowledging the challenges that come with this shift:

“Public consultation is really – it’s not that you don’t want to do it – it’s an extremely difficult part of a planning process. Because you’re taking everyone’s opinions onboard with you and developing a lot richer plan. And if people have bought into it, from the ground up, it will be a success” (participant TA_19).

As this quote highlights, the benefit of engaging the public in a meaningful way is a more informed, and potentially successful plan due to community input and support. In other words, collaborating with communities early in planning enables deliberate targeting of current needs, resulting in development that realises long-term solutions to shared goals. Utilising the TOUR Framework in this manner streamlines tourism development by avoiding short-term solutions implemented without community involvement, often resulting in change pressure consequences in host communities.

6.3.2 *Social and emotive*

Social barriers in the context of this research mostly refer to demographic, cultural, and emotional concepts (Smith, 2006; Reisinger, 2009; Kearns and Collins, 2012; Dragouni and Fouseki, 2018; Dela Santa and Tiatco, 2019). Emotional geographies of rural spaces have examined some of the ways government and the tourism industry have commodified rural life and environs by appealing to common senses of seeking the romantic, spiritual, mysterious or idyllic (Davidson and Milligan, 2004). Emotional connections to space go beyond our understanding of place attachment and perhaps can best be contextualised by a sense of place insofar as a place must be emotionally *felt* to make sense (Davidson and Milligan, 2004). Connections like these can inform identities, both collectively (as of a community) and individually. Many Rathmullan community stakeholders in

this research shared about emotional bonds with their village (historically and contemporarily) and the people who have resided there over time, through nostalgic memories and an identified culture that is complex and layered.

Community meetings that took place prior to the Q investigation revealed that the community was experiencing barriers of *themselves*. In many cases these were barriers of volunteerism and time, but also included generational and demographic-based barriers. Community members elaborated on the shifting age structure of the Rathmullan community, citing the emigration of the younger generations (known as the *demonstration effect*) as the most noticeable change. Reisinger (2009, p. 78) substantiates this phenomenon, stating “[the] demonstration effect encourages young people to leave their families and homeland, especially rural areas, and move to urban areas or even overseas in search of the better ‘demonstrated’ lifestyle”.

Commonly, individuals return to Rathmullan as a retirement plan, after university and undertaking work elsewhere – a return to home. But the time away can lead to disruption of social networks and influence changes in emotional links with their home environs (Kearns and Collins, 2012). The representative of Fáilte Ireland (participant TA_19) acknowledged this phenomenon and expressed concern for consistent opportunities by explaining that “*Rathmullan has huge potential, but it just – there’s two or three really great people driving all of that community piece at the moment, and you just wish there was a lot of a younger generation coming in behind them.*”

The marketed identity of the Wild Atlantic Way is centred around its wild and rugged landscapes, but in reality, is immersed in the social and emotional connection of tourists to communities and their culture. Arguably, the cultural experiences afforded to tourists traversing the Wild Atlantic Way are more memorable and significant than the big attractions, as conveyed by Fáilte Ireland’s representative participant:

“...it’s along the route that’s where you’ll experience the true Ireland; in the smaller communities you’ll get to embrace the Gaeltacht, you’ll get to embrace the Irish music, you’ll get to embrace the seafood... And it’s about bringing that cultural experience to life for the visitor (you know we would have on of the largest Gaeltachts along the Wild Atlantic Way). But it’s getting the opportunity to immerse the visitor in those smaller towns and communities and villages, so that they’re getting to

see the little hidden gems along the route, which are the experiences that people go home and talk about. And it's not necessarily the Cliffs of Moher – It's someone showing them how to make brown bread, or showing them how to make an Irish coffee, or they've been out fishing on a boat" (participant TA_19).

This commentary demonstrates the Irish tourism industry's recognition of the importance of social and emotive experiences, but as findings in Chapter 5 have shown, there is an opportunity for Rathmullan and communities like it to better represent themselves authentically to tourists. As community power is reaffirmed through the utilisation of the TOUR Framework, organised stakeholder partners are able to unite and generate sustainable development opportunities that promote unique and authentic representations of their way of life. Communities experiencing barriers of themselves, can develop feelings of disconnection and disenfranchisement. However, reconnecting with elements that make their community unique can "reignite a sense of civic duty" (participant R_08), and result in innovative solutions for seizing opportunities.

6.3.3 *Economic*

Tourism trends of the Wild Atlantic Way have shown a disproportionate number of tourists spending time in the southern half of the route, leading to economic barriers faced by those in the northern half (Foxye, 2017). Not only are communities in the northern regions facing seasonality concerns that limit their economic potential, but they are additionally faced with loss of profits. This discrepancy is also a concern for Fáilte Ireland, as they would also have a vested interest in near-equal growth along the route, in order to mediate environmental pressures on overburdened landscapes and attractions. Broken down more specifically,

"...the Wild Atlantic Way has two separate regions as such, because 70% of the traffic would have come into Dublin, across to Galway and headed south. So, we would have a disparity in terms of visitor numbers north of Galway. So, the long-term game plan now is to grow those numbers more evenly along the route" (participant TA_19).

Economic concerns in small villages like Rathmullan stem from issues of seasonality, where inconsistent tourist numbers throughout the year result in times of economic difficulty for businesses and the community as a whole. One community member emphasised the need for small towns and villages to empower themselves where they can, to get out of the cycle

of dependency on the State to be able to instil changes and opportunities wanted by their community. They described the challenge of the cyclical bureaucratic process of applying for grants, fundraising and “*always begging*” for things to benefit the community, stating “*people get tired of being tapped all the time, ‘Can you support this, can you support that’*” (participant R_04). The co-development of the TOUR Framework demonstrates a reclaiming of power by the community, providing a tool to guide their initiative in targeting and organising partner stakeholders to achieve economic goals for the community – ultimately promoting a regime shift where the community is better positioned economically to target subsequent needs of their socio-ecological system and tourism.

6.3.4 Infrastructure

Tourism infrastructure refers to facilities and services in a particular locality designed to meet the needs of locals and visitors (Goeldner and Ritchie, 2009; Nguyen, 2021). It is described as the basis of tourism development, has been identified as a key indicator of a destination’s competitiveness, and can promote sustainable tourism development through the regeneration and preservation of existing destination resources (Jovanović and Ilić, 2016). The importance of tourism infrastructure development has been theoretically established by numerous authors (Tribe, 2004; Naudé and Saayman, 2005; Seetanah *et al.*, 2011), demonstrating a positive relationship between infrastructure and a destination’s potential attractiveness, as well as locals’ quality of life (Mamirkulova *et al.*, 2020).

In the literature, tourism infrastructure is often described as comprising four component elements, or categories: physical, cultural, service, and governance infrastructure (Raina, 2005; Jovanović and Ilić, 2016). Under this classification scheme, physical infrastructure includes accommodation, restaurants and food services, transportation, communication, water and electricity infrastructure. Cultural infrastructure includes historical and significant sites and festivals, as well as culturally specific food, music, dress, language, and dance. Service infrastructure typically consists of travel- and tourist-related agencies, car rental and banking facilities, among others. Governance infrastructure comprises customs and immigration agencies at international entry points, police and law-related entities, and government buildings. Smith (1994) asserts that the tourism infrastructure, or lack thereof, in a tourist destination and its vicinity can serve as significant barriers affecting the experience and satisfaction of tourists. Tourism infrastructure has an important role in the

tourist's overall impression regarding a specific destination after visiting. For this reason, tourism development plans often include assessments and planned improvements for infrastructure as a means to improve economic and tourism potential of a destination.

Tourism infrastructure on the Wild Atlantic Way has been an area of focused development since the launch of the initiative, with the provision of signage and enhancement of the selected discovery points (Fáilte Ireland, 2016). In *Tourism Development and Innovation: a Development Strategy for Investment 2016-2022*, Fáilte Ireland emphasised a new investment approach which placed the “customer as the centre of all tourism development” (Fáilte Ireland, 2016: p. 3). As this relates to the Wild Atlantic Way, and in line with this goal, Fáilte Ireland identified three themes to guide future development of the touring route which include: adventure, culture, and landscape/seascape focused tourism. In practice, these investment efforts ought to be spread along the entire route and consist of support of projects aimed at enhancing the visitor experience, increasing access to the landscape and outdoor activities through ancillary facilities, and engaging with heritage. One example, is described by the Fáilte Ireland representative:

“People want access to the water – there’s a perception that when you come to the Wild Atlantic Way, that you’re going to get out onto the Atlantic and onto the water. We’re working with Local Authorities around a programme of looking at shared facilities along the coast so that they will be able to use the shared facilities in that area [with multiple existing water-based activities]. We have an internationally renowned product; we just need the internationally renowned facilities” (participant TA_19).

Barriers of infrastructure in Rathmullan mainly include a lack of accommodation for tourists in the village, facilities and activities to engage visitors near the centre of town instead of being forced to drive further afield, and telecommunication reliability for maximised opportunities and networks. This concept is recognised by Fáilte Ireland, according to its representative:

“... you will have towns and villages that are performing better than other towns and villages. And that can be just down to, you know: a stronger community, they’ve a stronger infrastructure base, they have a good accommodation base to start off with, and they’re on the coast” (participant TA_19).

Lack of accommodation, despite any number of natural landscape draws, can serve as a devastating obstacle for tourism development in a given location (Jovanović and Ilić, 2016). Rathmullan's Pier Hotel, built in 1894, closed permanently in 2002 – having a devastating impact on Rathmullan's tourism opportunities, even prior to the Wild Atlantic Way. The hotel played a significant role for the community during its over 100-year history, offering accommodation for travellers through the hub of the Fanad Peninsula in the early 20th century and supporting the booming herring stocks of the 1920s (The Irish Times, 2002). Several stakeholders lamented the closure of Rathmullan's Pier Hotel and the impact it had on the community and its tourism. One participant acknowledged the barrier by saying:

“...with Rathmullan itself, it doesn't have a high occupancy – beds – you know, numbers. There are holiday homes available for people to stay in... a very small number of BnBs... so maybe a barrier for Rathmullan is actually that it probably needs more affordable accommodation. And maybe even a properly serviced camper-van site or something like that. For people who are touring around to be able to come and stay at. There was a hotel – you're probably aware – the Pier Hotel. It was a centre landmark in Rathmullan, but that hasn't been redeveloped. So, you know, there is just a gap there I think, when it comes to accommodation in Rathmullan” (participant R_12).

But *type* of accommodation is also important. Despite generating an additional source of income for hosts, 45% of Irish citizens surveyed (N=1018) stated that the increase in AirBnb and similar short-term rentals results in increased nuisance by tourists (European Commission, 2021b; McCarthaigh, 2021)). In the Irish context, AirBnb and short-term rentals have been shown to have significantly contributed to the current housing crisis (Lima, 2018), resulted in concerns of communities and local authorities for safety and trust (Walsh *et al.*, 2020), and lack of regulation and taxation (Ward and Linehan, 2017). In Rathmullan, accommodation offerings are a mix of Airbnbs, mid- to long-term holiday homes and cottage rentals, and the luxury 4-star Rathmullan House, representing limited options for travellers interested in staying in the village. In addition to accommodation, stakeholders have expressed concern related to other public infrastructure barriers in Rathmullan including water quality in Lough Swilly and road quality (participants R_06; R_07; and R_13).

Infrastructural barriers are some of the most readily identified by the Rathmullan community (and others along the Wild Atlantic Way), as well as

visiting tourists, implying in many cases that they are long-existing barriers. In practice, use of the Collaborative TOUR Framework to address infrastructural needs would likely be prioritised by all stakeholder partners,. This highlights the collaborative and organisational strength of the framework to unite priorities and ideas from stakeholders to generate innovative long-term solutions for shared barriers.

Independently, Fáilte Ireland’s plans to address infrastructural barriers along the Wild Atlantic Way include the creation of Visitor Experience Development Plans, centred on unique selling points in distinct geographic regions on the route. The long-term aim of these plans is to entice visitors to stay in specific geographic regions along the route for a longer period (i.e., increase tourist dwell time). As explained by the representative of Fáilte Ireland, the creation of Visitor Experience Development Plans would work to preserve the Wild Atlantic Way’s brand identity and promote return visits:

“We’re also looking at what the long-term game is gonna be for the Wild Atlantic Way. So how do we actually protect and harness the Wild Atlantic Way going forward, because the last thing you want to do is actually spoil what is the uniqueness of the Wild Atlantic Way. Because we’re saying wild, rugged landscapes – And like, the last thing we want to do is end up with a mass jungle of concrete on the Wild Atlantic Way, spoiling the actual views that people are coming to see. And for us, it’s not about people actually, you know, doing the full 2,500 km... So that people aren’t just coming in and doing the full route, and you know, ‘I want to get from end to end!’ But saying, ‘no, come immerse yourself in a section of the Wild Atlantic Way’, and make it a lifetime of holidays” (participant TA_19).

Additionally, the development of regional experiences within the Wild Atlantic Way initiative is an attempt to address and balance disproportionate tourist numbers along the route. There is expressed acknowledgment of the infrastructural barriers that places on the route, and the plan for Fáilte Ireland to alleviate that in the future:

“...the Wild Atlantic Way has two separate regions as such, because 70% of the traffic would have come into Dublin, across to Galway and headed south on the Wild Atlantic Way. So we would have a disparity in terms of visitor numbers north of Galway. So the long-term game plan now is to grow those numbers more evenly along the route” (participant TA_19).

The establishment of distinct regions could result in the formation of community networks and collaboration that may not exist otherwise, thus augmenting potential influence of the TOUR Framework by promoting the organisation of new partner stakeholders. This would require the active inclusion of communities at the early stages of planning for Visitor Experience Development Plans, moving away from tokenistic consultation. Rathmullan stands to benefit from revitalising regional networks in new ways, along with prioritising tourism infrastructure development in the village – not unlike plans in motion for The Battery – which would incorporate the development of ‘hidden gems’ in the village and new opportunities for tourism.

6.4 Discussion

In order to support sustainable coastal tourism, collaboration at the community level is essential. However, guidance for local stakeholder engagement and community-based tourism development in Ireland is still quite vague and is often centred more on businesses than communities, especially as it relates to the Wild Atlantic Way (Fáilte Ireland, 2015; Fáilte Ireland, n.d.). An increased motivation exists in host communities of tourist destinations to be involved in the development and management of tourism initiatives as they not only drive the tourism product itself, but also live with any consequences of tourism activities in the area. As Ireland moves to prioritise sustainable Blue Growth development, the co-generated Collaborative TOUR Framework works to overcome established barriers and maximise opportunities in marine and coastal tourism trail development (Fahy *et al.*, 2020).

Co-generation and application of the TOUR Framework in Rathmullan has demonstrated the potential of empowered, community-driven research efforts. Equitable tourism development considers concepts of power and politics of participation, restructuring partner networks to promote co-learning and the prioritisation of local knowledge. Knowledge transfer is a crucial element of increased sustainable capacity, ensuring the continuation of collaborative relationships in partner networks. Perhaps most relevant for the Rathmullan community, is the knowledge transfer between generations. As an ageing village, it will become increasingly important for the current community leaders to engage the next generation in community planning and decision-making for future sustainable tourism development.

While the strategies and pathways presented as part of the TOUR Framework in the Rathmullan case have the capability to improve long-term community involvement and outcomes, it is not meant to serve as a standardised recommendation for all destinations. The process of engaging with the framework and utilising it as a tool to improve economic and/or socio-cultural benefits of tourism at the community level is the main objective. Additionally, collaborative partnerships have an increased political legitimacy when communities are afforded the greater influence or consultation power (Benveniste, 1989; Healy *et al.*, 2012; Islam *et al.*, 2018), thus increasing their likelihood of implementation success. The framework should be tailored to address the specific needs and concerns of a community or region and requires community motivation and volition to be operational and successful. As a result, this process may vary for different communities, suggesting that best practice may simply mean what works best for a given community.

The research undertaken for this thesis, and the development of the Collaborative TOUR Framework demonstrate an applied impact on policy and the approaches to Irish tourism development. By recentring the communities along the Wild Atlantic Way, sustainable pathways for Blue Growth in marine and coastal tourism can be established in line with the European Commission Blue Growth Strategy. The framework offers a practicable process that can be transferred to other EU regions to promote unified progress in achieving EU goals for a sustainable future in marine and coastal tourism trails.

6.5 Chapter Summary

Chapter 6 has presented the Collaborative TOUR Framework, embodying the combined analysis of Chapters 4 and 5. Informed by Wild Atlantic Way tourist perceptions, community-held values, and industry perspectives, this framework represents a practical tool for sustained collaboration between key stakeholders for the development of marine and coastal tourism products. This novel approach to marine and coastal tourism in Ireland contributes to identified gaps in the literature and responds to recognised weaknesses of current engagement practices.

Balancing politics of participation by recentring communities where their local knowledge can be best utilised will promote community

sustainable capacity and the development of unique tourism opportunities that highlight various community and cultural identities along the Wild Atlantic Way. By presenting emergent landscape and niche pressures of the Wild Atlantic Way tourism trail, research findings contribute to the beginnings of informed development in Rathmullan. When employed early and often, the tiers of the TOUR Framework supports meaningful and continuous cooperative efforts toward sustainable tourism solutions in communities along the Wild Atlantic Way.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

7

Conclusion

7.1 Research Overview

Due in part to its strong connotations of space and place, tourism is described as a geographical phenomenon (Timothy, 2018a). As reviewed in this thesis, examinations of tourism geographies have contributed to the greater academic understanding of where the phenomenon occurs, and how individuals encounter new places. Results of this research support the notion that embodied encounters and relational practices represent, in part, the role tourism can play in society, contemporary culture, and identity construction. Despite its contested definition in the literature, cultural tourism tends to describe the intertwined nature of ‘culture’ and ‘tourism’, indicating that all tourism is, to some degree, a cultural experience (MacCannell, 1993). Through in-depth community engagement research methods, this thesis has provided an example of cultural processes being transformed to cultural products, or resources, through commodification and use of a tourism trail. Conceptually, cultural tourism has evolved to incorporate new academic findings and includes not only artefacts, but ways of life (Richards, 1996). Cultural tourism serves as a strong motivator for tourists, supported by results presented in Chapter 4 of this thesis, and is a significant part of tourism related policy and development strategies internationally (UNWTO, 2018). Heritage, as a cornerstone of cultural tourism, represents both tangible and intangible vestiges of the past and is considered to be the most prevalent type of cultural tourism (Timothy, 2011). This thesis asserts that authentic representations of heritage (both tangible and intangible) can be mutually beneficial to tourism and community place attachment and identity.

Throughout our history, humans have travelled along routes designed for various purposes (e.g. trade, pilgrimage, migration, leisure etc.). However, as part of Munster’s (1996) generalised typology of cultural tourism resources, routes are categorised as an attraction, aligning them with monuments (e.g. gardens, built heritage sites, religious buildings), museums and theme parks. This categorisation reflects a shift in route and

trail use from a necessity for trade and survival to a travel undertaken for pleasure. As social constructions of regional heritage (Rech, 2021), tourism trails can be used to achieve socio-economic goals and develop cultural resources (McManus, 1997; Moulin and Boniface, 2001), evidenced by the establishment of Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way in 2014. As a specific subtype of tourism trails, those located in marine and coastal environments are especially prone to environmental pressures and threats related to climate change (Hall, 2008; Becken, 2013; Fahy *et al.*, 2020). Due to their vulnerable nature, management of coastal tourism trails is of major concern. The ecosystem services (ES) model, integrated coastal zone management (ICZM), and transitions governance approach are all frameworks of resource management that have been adapted for marine and coastal resources, however a universal management approach for tourism trails has not been established in policy. Policy at the EU level aims to preserve Europe's status as a prominent tourist destination while fostering sustainable development to maximise opportunities for marine and coastal tourism. As demonstrated in this thesis, this requires a recentring of local knowledge in planning and developing innovative sustainable solutions for tourism opportunities.

Understanding drivers of tourism – for those who 'do' tourism, and those who host it – is crucial for the proper management and long-term development of successful tourism resources. Tourist motivations can be assessed by generating typologies of tourists to a specific location or site, following the early work of Cohen (1972) and Plog (1974). While there is significant academic attention given to examining the tourist experience, less attention has been focused on host communities, especially in Ireland. It has been suggested that rather than prioritising tourist needs, host communities should instead focus on developing their vision of the community they hope to live in (Dwyer, 2015). Implementing this type of stakeholder engagement, as supported by findings in Chapters 5 and 6, provides a unique opportunity to rebalance power relations in tourism development, centring local knowledge and values.

This research has revealed how concepts of local and traditional knowledge, sense of place, culture and social capital contribute to unique, embedded community identities. In tourism development, these identities reflect in place making practices, place attachment, and authenticity. Collectively, these elements of culture and community identity are representative of sought after experiences in tourism, where tourists are actively seeking an authentic, rich experience with locals and traditional values. In Ireland, tourism has historically been developed with cultural ideals in mind, promoting idyllic, provincial, and immersive experiences for

international tourists. This thesis provides an in-depth overview of the Wild Atlantic Way, a coastal tourism trail that was established as a contemporary example of an initiative designed to highlight wild and rugged landscapes and spotlight unique cultural experiences in villages along Ireland's west coast.

However, throughout this thesis it has been proffered that the long-term success of the Wild Atlantic Way requires a specific understanding of how tourists travel, engage with, and consume the social, cultural, and environmental aspects of the route. As illustrated throughout Chapter 6, this awareness in turn, can support communities in their attempt to overcome barriers of opportunity unique to them, and promote meaningful collaboration with partner agencies. There exists an absence of holistic examinations of the Wild Atlantic Way tourism system, especially as it relates to its classification as a coastal tourism trail. While research attention has been given to tourist motivations and typologies for general Irish tourism, little focus has centred on assessing deeper motivations for touring the Wild Atlantic Way and considerations of activities engaged in. Additionally, there are few studies critically assessing the implementation and management strategies of the Wild Atlantic Way, particularly from multiple perspectives. To date, there has yet to be research focused on host communities, evaluating community empowerment, engagement with, and impacts of the Wild Atlantic Way initiative.

Throughout this research project many of the gaps in the academic and policy literature (identified in Chapter 2) related to marine and coastal tourism trails were addressed. At the national level, this research assists in filling the dearth of research conducted on management of the Wild Atlantic Way initiative, its impacts on communities, community value mapping, and sustainable transitions of Blue Growth and governance. The primary aim of this work was to critically examine how the Wild Atlantic Way initiative impacts communities along its route. Six main objectives were developed to holistically address this research question, and have been met as a result of the completion of this research:

- (1) a critical review of current interdisciplinary academic and policy literature on marine and coastal tourism trails, cultural and heritage tourism in Ireland, and community-led tourism projects was conducted;
- (2) identified and analysed relevant conceptual perspectives of place making and identity;

- (3) developed a novel, multi-methodological approach used to holistically explore the tourist-community system on the Wild Atlantic Way;
- (4) compiled one of the largest, robust datasets related to tourist motivations and perceptions of the Wild Atlantic Way route;
- (5) investigated community perspectives, sense of place, and identities of a case study village to offer a nuanced understanding of empowerment and willingness to engage with the Wild Atlantic Way tourism initiative; and
- (6) developed a co-created practical framework (TOUR) as a guide for engagement between communities and agency partners to achieve common goals related to success of the Wild Atlantic Way.

Chapter 1 served as an introduction of the thesis content, outlining foundational aspects of the research, defining key terms, and presenting the research rationale and contribution. This first and second objectives were addressed in Chapter 2, which further contextualised this research through the exploration of relevant literature, highlighting knowledge gaps to be addressed by this thesis. Themes assessed included cultural and heritage tourism, tourism trails, drivers of tourism, tourist motivations, and community identity and engagement. The literature review utilised a scalar approach to critically examine interrelated conceptual, theoretical, and methodological aspects of tourism studies through the geographical lenses of space and place. Chapter 3 addressed the third objective of this research, as it presented a novel methodological framework, combining quantitative and qualitative methods to build a robust multi-method approach. Chosen methods were justified and outlined within the two-phase research design.

Chapters 4 and 5 presented and discussed results from each phase of research. Related to the fourth objective of the research, tourist motivations and perceptions were presented in Chapter 4, analysed through the collection of survey data and multi-dimensional scaling. Chapter 5 provided an in-depth assessment of community engagement, perspectives, and values achieved through interviews, Q method sorting, and participatory mapping satisfying the fifth objective. The final objective, building on the main findings of Chapters 4 and 5, was addressed in Chapter 6 which presented a co-created, Collaborative TOUR Framework designed to provide a practical guide for communities and partnered agencies. The Collaborative TOUR Framework aims to achieve established goals related to sustainable tourism development on the Wild Atlantic Way.

Chapter 7 opened with a research overview reframing some of the more significant conceptual and theoretical components of the research while highlighting knowledge gaps in the literature. Additionally, Section 7.1 describes the aim and objectives of this work, and details how each of these objectives were addressed and achieved. Section 7.2 categorically outlines academic, policy, and community research contributions of this work which, when combined, reflect the overall contribution of this research to existing knowledge. Section 7.3 contains final researcher reflections, related to impacts of COVID-19, limitations of the study, and the application of hindsight to provide possible ways this work might have been improved. A discussion of future research is presented in Section 7.4, indicating possible directions this research could be built upon by other researchers in related fields. Chapter 7 closes with concluding remarks presented in Section 7.5.

Ultimately, this research was successful in seeking to provide new insights, underpinned by geographical concepts of place, space and scale, to help inform local-level engagement practices and the future development of the Wild Atlantic Way tourism route. Key findings related to the six research objectives are reiterated and reflected on below.

7.1.1 Building a multi-method approach

This thesis has been successful in addressing its first objective, by conducting an in-depth review of academic literature and policy related to the foundational concepts of this research project: marine and coastal tourism trails, cultural and heritage tourism in Ireland, and community-led tourism projects. The second objective, building on this literature review, was successfully completed through the identification and analysis of conceptual perspectives of place making and place attachment as they relate to tourism products. Integration of completed research from the first two objectives led to the assessment of appropriate methods to examine each element of the research question.

As presented in Chapter 3, this thesis has been successful in addressing its third objective, related to the development of a multi-method design informed by relevant literature. The resulting methodological approach established for use in this research sought to co-generate knowledge of the Wild Atlantic Way with several stakeholder groups, embracing a postdisciplinary approach promoting an axial awareness of the underlying concepts (Hollinshead, 2012). Informed by constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006; 2014), this thesis contributes to an

explanation of the tourism system (phenomenon) of the Wild Atlantic Way, with particular attention focused on community-level impacts. To accomplish this, an interpretative phenomenological approach was adapted to explore the perspectives of the stakeholders' experience. The case study element of the research design needed to reflect the shift toward promoting a deeper understanding of societal realities and the ways in which people experience the Wild Atlantic Way as a tourist destination – going beyond an empirically descriptive study (Timothy, 2018b). This was achieved by iterative phases of research conducted in the field, spending time with community members in different capacities, allowing for a more profound understanding of localised sense of place.

A multi-method approach was required to sufficiently develop the assessment of each stakeholder group. Tourist motivations and choices were explored in Phase I. The sample of tourists at six locations on the route, provided insights related to route and site quality, crowding, activity preference, and motivation addressing questions of how tourists seek to engage with the tourism trail. Phase II focused on community perspectives and utilised three supplementary methods. Interviews were included to solicit specific information related to community identity and how each participant views and values their community. Despite choosing to use semi-structured interviews, participants still exhibited some hesitancy to elaborate fully or open their response too far from the initial question. In an attempt to mitigate this, Q method was employed to gather ranked data representing the unique views of each participant. These views, once analysed and grouped into factors of like-minded individuals, were substantiated and further explained by the interview responses. As a means to visualise the value-based data collected in Q and the experiential responses of the interviews, a participatory mapping workshop was conducted with members of the community. Not only did the participatory mapping exercise result in a composite map representative of community members' values and priorities, it also provided the community with an innovative way to engage in planning and development conversations amongst themselves, and provided an additional collaborative layer to the methodological framework.

As the third stakeholder group involved in this study, a representative from Fáilte Ireland contributed their perspective through interviews which were similar in design to those for the community. The inclusion of this agency stakeholder group was crucial for demonstrating the lag time that exists within networks in the tourism system for the Wild Atlantic Way initiative. This finding would not have been fully understood

by including interviews from only one of the groups. To the best of this researcher's knowledge, this thesis formulated and utilised a novel methodological approach, specifically designed to holistically interpret the Wild Atlantic Way tourism system.

7.1.2 *Wild Atlantic Way tourism trends*

Chapter 4 presented survey results for the assessment of Wild Atlantic Way tourist motivations and perceptions, reflecting the fourth objective of this research. The 603 participants of the tourist survey comprise one of the largest – if not the largest – datasets of tourist perceptions of the Wild Atlantic Way route. Phase I objectives of this research sought to address identified knowledge gaps related to tourist perspectives and their perceived impacts on the Wild Atlantic Way, examine tourist motivation trends, assess tourist attitudes of the route experience, and reflect on the use of the resulting data as satisfaction indicators for potential sustainable development of the route. The survey allowed for the assessment of tourist activity choice, providing new insights related to *how* tourists choose to engage with Wild Atlantic Way resources and destinations.

Motivations of tourists travelling on the Wild Atlantic Way were found to be described by seven categories: Drive, Scenery, Culture, Site, Location, Atmosphere, and Activity. These descriptive categories represented underlying planning rationale utilised by visitors. Among these, location and culture were the highest cited motivations for tourists on the Wild Atlantic Way, incorporating west coast counties, regions, and islands, as well as cultural aspects traditionally associated with Ireland. Activities, when broken down individually and plotted utilising multidimensional scaling analysis, were explained by two emergent dimensions of 'Irishness' and 'geography', providing insights on how tourists are making choices on the Wild Atlantic Way.

By gaining a deeper understanding of what tourists are looking for during their experience on Ireland's west coast, communities are better suited to highlight their unique identities and offerings to stand apart from other destinations, with less risk. Additionally, issues of asymmetrical tourist distribution and growth of the route can be comprehensively addressed when informed of current trends and perceptions. Findings in Chapter 4 contributed to the understanding of pressures related to environmental degradation, state of tourism infrastructure, tourist management, and commodification of culture and traditions.

7.1.3 Community case study – How members of the Rathmullan community have taken ownership of their tourism product(s)

As argued in this thesis, in order to prioritise a community's values and heritage through tourism, their shared culture and local knowledge must be understood. This required an in-depth assessment of the community's values and beliefs. Through the use of Q, semi-structured interviews, and participatory mapping, Chapter 5 engaged with concepts of community identity, empowerment, values, and perspectives to elucidate a nuanced understanding of the Rathmullan community, successfully addressing the fifth objective of this study.

Following analysis of the Q sort data, the Rathmullan community was factored into four groups of categorically like-minded individuals. Each factor represented a distinct perspective of the Wild Atlantic Way and how it impacts the community. Policy Pragmatists were the first factor group, distinguished by their belief that national policies can help to address emerging issues related to the Wild Atlantic Way, and their minimalised sense of personal empowerment to engage with the initiative. Factor 2 was described as Regional Partners, focused on emphasising regional growth both culturally and within the tourism sector. This factor considers tourism more as a business, and seeks to strengthen reciprocal agreements with other communities in the region to promote each other and grow together. Empowered Engagers, represented by Factor 3, believe that the Wild Atlantic Way does not operate separately from their community, and express specific concerns about sluggish bureaucratic processes. While the group demonstrates some contention about how best to pursue local tourism opportunities, it is likely that the successful translation of the community's identity to a unique tourism experience will further empower this group to engage with the initiative. Finally, Factor 4 was determined to be the Community Protectors, concerned primarily with preserving the community's local knowledge and unique cultural identity. The branded identity of the Wild Atlantic Way feels dissonant to the embedded community identity these individuals have, prompting an increased need to protect and promote authentic opportunities for development and growth.

Areas of consensus amongst community stakeholders were deemed significant for demonstrating a strong foundation from which to move forward with common community goals. As a visual technique for eliciting these common values, participatory mapping was conducted in a workshop and discussion forum setting. Participatory mapping was utilised to spatially quantify social values and sense of place knowledge (Gobster *et al.*, 2003;

Larson *et al.*, 2013; van Riper *et al.*, 2020). In the case of this thesis, participatory mapping with community members successfully produced a spatially anchored, visual prioritisation of local knowledge and ecosystem service values in Rathmullan and the surrounding region.

Aspects of community-based research in Rathmullan addressed concerns related to the two primary identified barriers: politics of participation and alienation of locals. Previous exclusion of locals in top-down tourism planning in Ireland has been shown to reduce the legitimacy of decisions and decrease likelihood of success after implementation (Healy *et al.*, 2012). Conversely, organic place-making practices driven by communities have been shown to enhance destination sustainability (Sofield *et al.*, 2017). By facilitating the engagement of stakeholders in Rathmullan, this research has provided a means for the community to assess their current relationship with the Wild Atlantic Way tourism initiative and reassess their priorities in continued development both locally and regionally. Ideally, persistent engagement in this grounded way will aid in the assurance of continued economic, environmental and socio-cultural benefits from tourism for the Rathmullan community.

7.1.4 Community-generated Collaborative Framework – The TOUR guide to practical engagement with Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way

As the culminating finding of this research, the development of the community-generated collaborative TOUR framework represents the successful achievement of the sixth objective. Through meaningful engagement with motivated and self-organised community members, it was found that Rathmullan has genuine concerns regarding the placemaking success of the Wild Atlantic Way which promotes interchangeability, or *sameness*. This, in turn, can dilute the organic place-making potential of the community, limiting their efforts to generate tourism offerings rooted in their unique community-cultural identity. The economic reliance on tourism success in Rathmullan supports collaborative partnerships to realise socio-economic and cultural goals. As with other host communities, there is an increased motivation to participate in management and development decisions due to reliance on the community to drive the tourism product itself, and the fact that they must live with any localised consequences of tourism practices. Developing social and cultural resources through the use of local knowledge and regional awareness (Chase and Levine, 2016), both provides unique opportunities for tourists and preserves a community's heritage.

Community and stakeholder engagement has been communicated by Fáilte Ireland and Local Authorities as an essential component of the success of the Wild Atlantic Way initiative, but as this research has revealed, it has yet to be realised to its full capacity in practice. Informed by collaborative efforts with local stakeholders and agency representatives, the TOUR framework was designed to address the sustainable development of the Wild Atlantic Way tourism product based on eight identified change pressures (*e.g.* alienation of locals, commodification of culture and traditions, overburdened/lack of infrastructure, etc.). These pressures aided the development of the TOUR framework by serving as initial priority considerations to process through as a means to develop sustainable pathways for marine and coastal tourism trails.

The TOUR framework consists of four phases that can be utilised in all stages of new project development under the umbrella of the Wild Atlantic Way. Stakeholders are encouraged to **target (T)** needs (either within the community or of the initiative), by identifying areas of concern or specific improvements that could be made to address barriers and opportunities. Next, key actors **organise (O)** to facilitate necessary engagement of the network through research, collaboration and/or development. Stakeholder partners **unite (U)** ideas and efforts through processes of participation to generate a sustainable pathway for addressing the targeted need. Collaborative partners **realise (R)** collective decisions as an outcome of the framework process, to minimise negative costs to local stakeholders and maximise opportunities (both for the community and the initiative).

From the community perspective, the TOUR Framework places their local knowledge and expertise in a priority position, rebalancing politics of participation by empowering them to ensure their voice is heard and to take ownership of developments within their community that also serve a larger entity. Regional- and national-scale network partners can utilise the framework to guide practical and meaningful engagement, supporting the local knowledge of communities in different regions to infuse authentic and unique representations of themselves for tourists, supporting the long-term success of a varied and culturally significant tourism experience.

7.2 Research Contributions

Through the development and utilisation of a novel methodological approach to an interdisciplinary research question, findings and discussions resulting from this research make significant contributions to knowledge. Categorically, these impacts are represented by practical and theoretical academic, policy, and community contributions.

7.2.1 *Academic contributions*

Traditionally, academic contributions of a doctoral thesis receive perhaps the most focus. Much effort goes into the formation of research questions, tangible aims and objectives, and the anticipated state of the art contribution to academia. This thesis represents the culmination of an iterative processing of broad academic themes that exist at intersections of several disciplines. As such, dominant research approaches in any singular discipline did not satisfy the overarching research question, as it required a nuanced understanding of multiple perspectives. The creation of an original methodological research design presents a new, interdisciplinary approach for exploring community-led tourism systems. The established multi-method approach can be further adapted and utilised for future investigations by graduate students and researchers in various disciplines. The collection of data characterising three perspectives of Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way offers an empirical contribution to the, as yet, under-researched initiative.

Additionally, results and related discussions contribute to the theoretical and academic development of research related to marine and coastal tourism trails, concepts of place making, and community identity of tourism projects, especially in the Irish context. Findings stemming from the community-based collaborative research provide a critical analysis of the place making continuum in practice, contributing to theoretical discussions of related concepts in the literature. The development of the TOUR framework as a means to promote meaningful and continued stakeholder engagement with Wild Atlantic Way tourism has the potential to be scaled and adapted for use in other tourism destinations. In locations where it is unclear what good engagement ought to look like, or where a shift from centralised to decentralised tourism management practices is wanted, communities can utilise this framework to initiate collaborative engagement efforts with other stakeholder partners.

7.2.2 Policy contributions

As shown in Chapter 2, EU policy supports the development of sustainable pathways for Blue Growth in marine and coastal tourism economies. Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way epitomises efforts to support the resurgence of Irish tourism after being severely impacted by the 2008 recession. Following the success of The Gathering in 2013, Fáilte Ireland set up the Wild Atlantic Way to reflect the community activation model of the 'People's Project' (Fáilte Ireland, 2013b). However, The Gathering was a series of events that lasted one year, and the ultimate success of the same model being applied to a long-term tourism project is unknown.

When considered within the context of tourism trails, the Wild Atlantic Way requires sustained cooperation between local, regional and state interests (Kling *et al.*, 2019), which influences policy and management approaches both directly and indirectly. According to Fáilte Ireland's Operational Programme for the initiative, it is suggested that implementation and continued advancement of the route relies on an intermediate management approach (Fáilte Ireland, 2015). In practice, however, decision making is accomplished at regional-level or higher, with actualised delivery of the tourism experience reliant on community buy-in. Moreover, the onus of engagement and participation to maximise benefits is on the communities along the route, but with little to no guidance on how to do so. As a result of this discrepancy, instances of environmental, social, and economic conflicts have occurred at sites and villages along the route.

As objectives of this research, an increased understanding of both tourist and community perspectives of the Wild Atlantic Way initiative and its impacts were prioritised. Feedback and perception data from tourists has the potential to contribute to future development strategy and inform multi-level policy related to routes as tourism products in Ireland. At the community level, findings from tourist surveys have already been used to inspire new innovations for infrastructural and development plans in Rathmullan and neighbouring villages. The publication of this research is particularly timely as subsequent tourism initiatives have been created by Fáilte Ireland to promote other regions of Ireland in much the same way, highlighting the significance of the research topic for the sustained future of Irish tourism, contingent now on placemaking practices and imposed branded identities. Serving as an assessment of the model's efficacy as a top-down initiative in practice, examination at the local-level has emphasised the community's stated desire for an improved collaborative process.

As a result of spotlighting community priorities in managing their own tourism offerings, the co-generated TOUR framework has the ability to inform what ‘good engagement’ looks like from different partner perspectives. This, in turn, can provide guidance for and inform policy related to Wild Atlantic Way tourism through constructive collaboration between stakeholder networks. Taken a step further, the framework offers a new systematic method for forming network partnerships and sustainable route development. Research and outcomes like those presented in this thesis contribute to goals of Ireland’s national tourism policy (*People, Place and Policy: Growing Tourism to 2025*) aimed at sustainable growth through implemented action plans. This work directly addressed aspects of the main foci laid out in the most recent action plan: policy and research, marketing Ireland as a visitor destination, enhancing the visitor experience, supporting local communities and coordinating the industry (Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, 2018).

7.2.3 Community contributions

Barriers to community-led Wild Atlantic Way development were also identified through this research, representing a generalised contribution to policy and a localised contribution to community efforts. Categorically, barriers in Rathmullan (both realised and perceived) were found to be primarily legislative, social and emotive, infrastructural, and economic. While these were informed by fieldwork in Rathmullan, it was confirmed by interviews with Fáilte Ireland representatives that other communities on the Wild Atlantic Way share common concerns, supporting the applicability of the TOUR engagement framework to other locations on the route.

Co-created knowledge with the Rathmullan community identified current outcomes of the Wild Atlantic Way route by assessing community-held values and priorities, working toward a collective vision of what the community aspires for its future. Through the continuation of the active community group and the monitoring of successes and barriers, Rathmullan has the potential to realise significant changes for their environmental, heritage, and socio-economic resources.

Since the launch of the Wild Atlantic Way route, members of the Rathmullan community have been very vocal in expressing their interest in the inclusion of Rathmullan within the larger Wild Atlantic Way initiative. Collaborative research efforts and a community-centred approach, however, has further empowered the Rathmullan community to not only absorb the brand identity of the route for inclusion, but to share their unique heritage

and community identity with tourists as a distinctive experience. The contribution of this study to the community is further evidenced by their sustained ownership of continued research and dissemination of findings. In response to COVID-19 travel restrictions, fieldwork methods were digitally adapted for project completion. Community representatives advertised the project through regional newsletters and took to the airwaves via Highland Radio to garner more interest in participation from stakeholders in the Fanad peninsula region (as discussed in Chapter 3; Appendix G). Actions such as these, demonstrate the value of co-created research by indicating efforts will likely continue beyond the scope of this thesis.

7.3 Reflections and Limitations

Critical reflections on the methodological limitations associated with each phase of this research are presented in Chapter 3. However, the researcher also encountered some additional practical challenges when undertaking this study and these are discussed here. Perhaps the most impactful limitation of this research process was the COVID-19 pandemic. Response to the pandemic necessitated swift adjustments during the completion of fieldwork, and ultimately changes to the overall research design. Modifications made in response to the unprecedented conditions of COVID and the resulting lockdown were piloted where possible and approved by the graduate research committee. The reduction of community case studies from two to one, could be considered a study limitation if the examination relied solely on the comparison of case study data. However, due to the inclusion of multi-methods and additional perspectives, the adjustment benefitted the study by allowing for a more robust exploration of a single community's values. This in turn provided a deeper understanding of culturally embedded identities and how these influence community dynamics and structure.

There is a caveat that exists when employing Q to examine perspectives of a participant group, namely that the identified viewpoints are constrained to the time and circumstances they were obtained. As a method, Q does not claim to identify perspectives that are consistent in an individual over time, as that would assign *a priori* an assumption that an individual can only hold one set of views on any given topic (Watts and Stenner, 2005). The community of Rathmullan largely participated in this research before the COVID-19 pandemic (and its resulting impacts) was a reality, therefore it would be injudicious to assume that their views remain

unchanged in some way. With this in mind, however, the iterative use of the collaborative TOUR framework can serve the community as a litmus test for current perspectives and priorities. The adaptation to offer Q digitally was a response to COVID and the need to complete fieldwork already planned. By piloting several online Q platforms, it was ensured that the best user experience could be provided for community stakeholders still interested in contributing their time and perspectives to the project.

Applicable limitations of tourist satisfaction surveys relate primarily to the concept of response bias (Yüksel, 2017). However, it is noted that understanding response bias, especially in social science research, can aid in the conceptualisation of results (Ioannidis, 2007; Yüksel, 2017). Despite the increased risk of social desirability bias due to the survey being conducted at a time of heightened excitement and tourist engagement, indirect reduction techniques were incorporated to mitigate this risk. Such techniques included environmental complexity, and a varied question structure, along with the distribution of the survey being done by a third party, separate from the research being conducted (Larson, 2019). The length of the survey and question structure was also identified as a potential limitation, as evidenced by missing or incomplete responses from some potential participants. This indicated the possible presence of participant fatigue. As the survey design was a collaborative effort and was intended for shared use in the larger MOSES project, this was outside of this researcher's control. Upon reflection of this, if the survey were to be used in future research, it would be suggested that either the number of questions be reduced or fewer question styles be included.

Participant fatigue can also present as a concern during iterative or repetitive methods of participation in social science investigations. Unfamiliar methods were initially off-putting to some participants, while others expressed curiosity in the approach and an eagerness to engage. This variance highlights the experiential and individualised nature of stakeholder research that can sometimes get lost in the academic pursuit. Recognising and adapting to the needs of the community and stakeholders requires an intentional reflexivity that can only be learned through doing research, and is honed with experience.

Reflective of the nature of research, every project inevitably presents challenges that result in deviations from original plans. Despite these challenges, the research presented in this thesis was completed in line with awarded ethical approval in a timely manner.

7.4 Future Research

Among its many contributions, this thesis responds to an aspect of the challenge set by Timothy and Boyd (2015) for additional academic examination devoted to linear tourism routes and resources. However, further research is necessary to provide additional perspectives and support deeper understandings of the Wild Atlantic Way's impact on Ireland's west coast communities. Of particular interest may be the potential extended effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on communities along the Wild Atlantic Way. Following a multi-methodological approach, not unlike the one presented here, future research can focus on examining to what extent local communities shape the tourism route as it continues to develop over time. Continued explorations of community place-making (and top-down placemaking) along the Wild Atlantic Way has the potential to meaningfully rebalance dynamics between network partners – promoting authentic, unique identities and experiences over generalised, constructed identities.

Repeating the Q examination within the Rathmullan community, taking into account and adjusting for findings presented in this thesis, could be of practical benefit for the community as well as empirically for researchers. Comparing the Q assessments, and thus the current values and perspectives of community members, has the power to propel their objectives forward and help to guide their use of the TOUR framework for community-based projects. Additionally, conducting the Q investigation and participatory mapping in several communities along the route, at different life-stages of tourism development, would add a significant layer of analysis. By assessing long-established tourism communities, like Doolin in County Clare, insights related to core elements of success may be identified and benefit communities seeking new engagement opportunities with or without established networks.

The discovery of emergent principal dimensions for activity choice and methods of tourist engagement with the Wild Atlantic Way initiative, can be examined further as a comparative analysis either spatially or temporally. Future research could explore the extent to which tourist expectations define or are limited by identified dimensions from Chapter 4, or by emergent dimensions specific to tourism trails or destinations elsewhere. Studies furthering visualisation techniques of tourism data may be of particular interest in examinations of community-based projects that exist at large scale, comprising communities with differing preferred methods and levels of engagement.

7.5 Concluding Remarks

Marine and coastal environments play an indisputably crucial role in global tourism, yet coastal tourism trails – especially in the Irish context – have been identified as lacking sufficient academic attention. This established gap served as the impetus for the holistic, three-perspective examination of Ireland’s Wild Atlantic Way. Building on relevant literature and previous studies, this thesis has made significant empirical and theoretical contributions to academic, policy, and community discourses.

First, this thesis has demonstrated the value of a multi-method approach for addressing questions in coastal tourism through the examination of tourist motivations and empowered community engagement. The two-phase approach allowed for an interdisciplinary exploration of multiple perspectives. The innovative inclusion of multiple methods strengthened the overall research design, adding rigour and breadth where required. Second, results have highlighted the value of local knowledge and place-making in the development of cultural tourism initiatives. Concepts of place are shaped and reshaped continuously to reflect authentic representations of communities, while simultaneously evolving as a place for tourism. Authentic representations of community identities, culture, sense of place, and place attachment are essential for sustained success of community-based tourism. Finally, the co-generated TOUR framework demonstrates the value of community collaboration in the development of new tourism products by spotlighting community empowerment and engagement. Meaningful engagement, when done early and often, promotes community ownership and innovation. Tourism needs at the local-level, and scalar sustainable transitions required to address those needs, are best identified by the communities that propel the tourism product and live with consequences (positive or negative) of the tourism practice.

This research aimed to critically assess how the Wild Atlantic Way impacts local communities. The answer to this, of course, is complex. However, the research presented in this thesis has shown that the Wild Atlantic Way, as a top-down initiative in practice, significantly impacts communities both economically and socially. Nonetheless, communities have the ability to infuse their own identities on the route, to enhance the tourist experience. Through the use of the collaborative TOUR framework, empowered engagement, and the inclusion of local knowledge, communities are able to strengthen the Wild Atlantic Way initiative by shaping its future development to include more authentic representations of themselves.

Bibliography

Bibliography

- Adams, K. M. and Sandarupa, D. (2018) 'A room with a view: Local knowledge and tourism entrepreneurship in and unlikely Indonesian locale', *Asian Journal of Tourism Research*, 3(1), pp. 1-26. DOI: 10.12982/AJTR.2018.0001.
- Adams, W. C. (2015) 'Conducting Semi-Structured Interviews', in Newcomer, K. E., Hatry, H. P. and Wholey, J. S., (eds.) *Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation*, 4th edn., pp. 492-505. Hoboken, NJ: Jossey-Bass.
- Addams, H. (2000) 'Q Methodology', in Addams, H. and Proops, J. L. R., (eds.) *Social Discourse and Environmental Policy: an Application of Q Methodology*, pp. 14-40. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.
- Addams, H. and Proops, J. L. R. (2000) *Social Discourse and Environmental Policy: an Application of Q Methodology*. Cheltenham (UK): Edward Elgar.
- Aitken, J. E. (1988) 'Stephenson's Q methodology: A unique tool for research and instruction', paper presented at the *Annual Meeting of the Canadian Communication Association*. Windsor, Ontario, Canada.
- Akhtar-Danesh, N. (2017) 'A comparison between major factor extraction and factor rotation techniques in Q-methodology', *Open Journal of Applied Sciences*, 7, pp. 147-156. DOI: 10.4236/ojapps.2017.74013.
- Allen, M. E., Fleming, C. S., Gonyo, S. B., Towle, E. K. Dillard, M. K., Levine, A., Gorstein, M., Loerzel, J., Regan, S. D., Zito, B. M., Edwards, P. E. T. (2021) 'Resident Perceptions of Ecosystem Services Provided by U.S. Coral Reefs: Highlights from the First Cycle of the National Coral Reef Monitoring Program's Socioeconomic Survey', *Water*, 13, p. 2081. DOI: 10.3390/w13152081.
- Aluza, A., O'Leary, J. T. and Morrison, A. M. (1998) 'Cultural and heritage tourism: Identifying niches for international travelers', *Journal of Tourism Studies*, 9(2), pp. 2-13.
- Amsden, B. L., Stedman, R. C., and Kruger, L. E. (2011) 'The creation and maintenance of sense of place in a tourism-dependent community', *Leisure Science*, 33, pp. 32-51.

- Anguera, M. T., Blanco-Villaseñor, A., Losada, J. L., Sánchez-Algarra, P. and Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2018) 'Revisiting the difference between mixed methods and multimethods: Is it all in the name?', *Quality & Quantity*. DOI: 10.1007/s11135-018-0700-2.
- Arabadzhyan, A., Figini, P., García, C., González, M. M., Lam-González, Y. E., and León, C. J. (2020) 'Climate change, coastal tourism, and impact chains – a literature review', *Issues in Tourism*, 24(16), pp. 2233-2268. DOI: 10.1080/13683500.2020.1825351.
- Ashley, K. S., Osmani, M., Emmitt, S., Mallinson, M., and Mallinson, H. (2015) 'Assessing stakeholders' perspectives towards the conservation of the built heritage of Suakin, Sudan', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 21(7), pp. 674–697.
- Åstedt-Kurki, P. and Heikkinen, R. L. (1994) 'Two approaches to the study of experiences of health and old age: the thematic interview and the narrative method', *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 20, pp. 418-421. DOI: 10.1111/j.1365-2648.1994.tb02375.x
- Ateljevic, I. (2014) 'Mapping a history and development of tourism studies field', *Tourism*, 62(1), pp. 75-101.
- Ateljevic, I., Pritchard, A. and Morgan, N. (eds.) (2007) *The Critical Turn in Tourism Studies: Innovative Research Methodologies*. London: Elsevier.
- Atzori, R., Fyall, A. Tasci, A. D. A., and Fjelstul, J. (2018) 'The role of social representations in shaping tourist responses to potential climate change impacts: An analysis of Florida's coastal destinations', *Journal of Travel Research*, 58(8), pp. 1373-1388. DOI: 10.1177/0047287518802089.
- Bachleitner, R. and Zins, A. H. (1999) 'Cultural tourism in rural communities: the residents' perspective', *Journal of Business Research*, 44, pp. 199-209.
- Baker, K. and Verstockt, S. (2017) 'Cultural heritage routing: a recreational navigation-based approach in exploring cultural heritage', *Journal on Computing and Cultural Heritage*, 10(4), pp. 1-20. DOI: 10.1145/3040200.

- Banasick, S. (2019) Ken-Q Analysis (Version 1.0.6) [software] available <https://shawnbanasick.github.io/ken-q-analysis/> doi:10.5281/zenodo.1300201.
- Bariball, K. L., and While, A. (1994) 'Collecting data using a semi-structured interview: a discussion paper', *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 19(2), pp. 328-335. DOI: 10.1111/j.1365-2648.1994.tb01088.x
- Barry, J. and Proops, J. (1999) 'Seeking sustainability discourses with Q methodology', *Ecological Economics*, 28, pp. 337-345.
- Becken, S. (2013) 'A review of tourism and climate change as an evolving knowledge domain', *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 6, pp. 53-62. DOI: 10.1016/j.tmp.2012.11.006.
- Beeton, S. (2007) 'Sustainable tourism in practice: Trails and tourism. Critical management issues of multi-use trails', *Tourism and Hospitality Planning & Development*, 3(1), pp. 47-64.
- Bender, J. (2015) 'Conceptual development of the trail methodology for the preservation of intangible maritime heritage: A case for the Adriatic coast and islands', *Journal of Marine and Island Cultures*, 4(2), pp. 55-64.
- Benveniste, G. (1989) *Mastering the Politics of Planning: Crafting Credible Plans and Policies that Make a Difference*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Berg, B. L. and Lune, H. (2014) *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*. Pearson Education Limited.
- Bogacz-Wojtanowska, E. and Góral, A. (2018) 'Networks or structures? Organising cultural routes around heritage values: case studies from Poland', *Humanistic Management Journal*, 3, pp. 253-277.
- Boniface, P. (1995) *Managing Quality Cultural Tourism*. London: Routledge.
- Bouchenaki, M. (2003) 'The interdependency of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage', *ICOMOS 14th General Assembly and Scientific Symposium: Place – Memory – Meaning: Preserving Intangible Values*

in Monuments and Sites, 27-31 October 2003. Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe.

- Bourdieu, P. (1984) *Distinction: a Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. London: Routledge.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986) 'The forms of capital', in Richardson, J (ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, pp. 241-258. New York: Greenwood.
- Boyd, S. W. (2017) 'Editorial: heritage trails and tourism', *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 12(5), pp. 417-422.
- Bradley, J. (2008) 'When a stone tool is a dingo: country and relatedness in Australian Aboriginal notions of landscape', in David, B. and Thomas, J. (eds.) *Handbook of Landscape Archaeology*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
- Bramwell, B. and Sharman, A. (1999) 'Collaboration in local tourism policymaking', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 26(2), pp. 392-415. DOI: 10.1016/S0160-7383(98)00105-4.
- Briedenhann, J. and Wickens, E. (2004) 'Tourism routes as a tool for the economic development of rural areas: Vibrant hope or impossible dream?', *Tourism Management*, 25, pp. 71-79.
- Broadway, M. J. (2017) "'Putting Place on a Plate" along the West Cork Food Trail', *Tourism Geographies*, 19(3), pp. 467-482.
- Brundtland, G.H. (1987) *Our Common Future: Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development*. Geneva. UN-Document A/42/427.
- Butler, C. F. and Menzies, C. R. (2007) 'Traditional ecological knowledge and indigenous tourism'. In: Butler, R. and Hinch, T. (eds.), *Tourism and Indigenous Peoples: Issues and Implications*, pp. 15-27. Amsterdam: Elsevier. DOI: 10.1016/B978-0-7506-6446-2.50007-7.
- Butler, R. (2015) 'The evolution of tourism and tourism research', *Tourism Recreation Research*, 40(1), pp. 16-27.

- CAAS (2015) *2015 Environmental Surveying and Monitoring Programme of the Wild Atlantic Way*. Dublin, Ireland: CAAS Ltd.
- Cairns, R. C. (2012) 'Understanding science in conservation: A Q method approach on the Galápagos Islands', *Conservation and Society*, 10(3), pp. 217-231.
- Capece, G., and Costa, R. (2013) 'The new neighbourhood in the internet era: Network communities serving local communities', *Behaviour & Information Technology*, 32(5), pp. 438-448.
- Carr, L. M. (2016) "Preserving identity along the Wild Atlantic Way," SEMRU Working Paper Series, Whitaker Institute of Innovation and Societal Change, Policy Brief No. 8.
- Carr, L. M. (2019) 'Seeking stakeholder consensus within Ireland's conflicted salmon aquaculture space,' *Marine Policy*, 99, pp. 201-212.
- Carr, L. M. and Liu, D. Y. (2016) 'Measuring stakeholder perspectives on environmental and community stability in a tourism-dependent economy', *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 18(6), pp. 620-632. DOI: 10.1002/jtr.2084.
- Cawley, M. E., Gaffey, S. M. and Gillmor, D. A. (1999) 'Regional imagery and Irish tourism promotion', *Belgeo- Revue Belge de Géographie*, 123(3), pp. 231-240.
- Chambers, D. (2007) 'Interrogating the 'critical' in critical approaches to tourism research', in Ateljevic, I., Pritchard, A. and Morgan, N. (eds.) *The Critical Turn in Tourism Studies: Innovative Research Methodologies*, pp. 105-119. London: Elsevier.
- Charmaz, K. (1995) 'Grounded theory', in Smith, J. A., Harre, R., Van Langenhove, L., (eds.) *Rethinking Methods in Psychology*. London: Sage.
- Charmaz, K. (2000) 'Grounded theory: constructivist and objectivist methods', in Denzin, N. K., Lincoln, Y. S., (eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2nd edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Charmaz, K. (2006) *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis*. London: Sage.
- Charmaz, K. (2014) *Constructing Grounded Theory*, 2nd edn. London: Sage.
- Chase, S. K. and Levine, A. (2016) 'A framework for evaluating and designing citizen science programs for natural resources monitoring', *Conservation Biology*, 30(3), pp. 456-466.
- Cheng, T. -M., Wu, H. C., Wang, J. T. -M., and Wu, M. -R. (2019) 'Community participation as a mediating factor on residents' attitudes towards sustainable tourism development and their personal environmentally responsible behaviour', *Current Issues in Tourism*, 22(14), pp. 1764-1782. DOI: 10.1080/13683500.2017.1405383.
- Chhabra, D., Healy, R., and Sills, E. (2003) 'Staged authenticity and heritage tourism', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 30(3), pp. 702-719.
- Chouinard, V. (1997) 'Structure agency: Contested concepts in human geography', *The Canadian Geographer*, 41(4), pp. 363-377.
- Christens, B. D. and Inzeo, P. T. (2015) 'Widening the view: Situating collective impact among frameworks for community-led change', *Community Development*, 46(4), pp. 420-435. DOI: 10.1080/15575330.2015.1061680.
- Christens, B. D. and Speer, P. W. (2015) 'Community organising: Practice, research and policy implications', *Social Issues and Policy Review*, 9, pp.193-222. DOI: 10.1111/sipr.12014.
- Clancy, M. (2009) *Brand New Ireland? Tourism, Development and National Identity in the Irish Republic*. London: Routledge.
- Clancy, M. (2011) 'Boom, bust and the changing geography of Irish tourism', *Irish Geography*, 44(2-3), pp. 173-190.
- Claudet, J., Bopp, L., Cheung, W. W. L., Devillers, R., Escobar-Briones, E., Haugan, P., Heymans, J. J., Masson-Delmotte, V., Matz-Lück, N., Miloslavich, P. and Mullineaux, L. (2020) 'A roadmap for using the UN decade of ocean science for sustainable development in support of science, policy, and action', *One Earth*, 2, pp. 34-42.

- Cleere, H. (1989) 'The rationale of archaeological heritage management', in Cleere, H. (ed.) *Archaeological heritage management in the modern world*. London: Unwin Hyman.
- Cochrane, L., Corbett, J. and Keller, C. P. (2014) 'Impact of community-based and participatory mapping', *Institute for Studies and Innovation in Community-University Engagement*. University of Victoria. DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.1.4522.5360.
- Coggan, A., Carwardine, J., Fielke, S. and Whitten, S. (2021) 'Co-creating knowledge in environmental policy development: An analysis of knowledge co-creation in the review of the significant residual impact guidelines for environmental offsets in Queensland, Australia', *Environmental Challenges*, 4, 100138. DOI: 10.1016/j.envc.2021.100138.
- Cohen, A. P. (1985) *The Symbolic Structure of Community*. London: Routledge.
- Cohen, E. (1972) 'Towards a sociology of international tourism', *Social Research*, 39, pp. 164-182.
- Cohen, E. (1979) 'A phenomenology of tourist experiences', *Sociology*, 13, pp. 179-202.
- Coles, T. and Hall, M. (2006) 'Editorial: the geography of tourism is dead. Long live geographies of tourism and mobility', *Current Issues in Tourism*, 9(4-5), pp. 289-292.
- Collins-Kreiner, N. (2010) 'The geography of pilgrimage and tourism: Transformations and implications for applied geography', *Applied Geography*, 30, pp. 153-164.
- Corbett, J., Devos, S., Di Gessa, S., Fara, K., Firmian, I., Liversage, H., Mangiafico, M., Mauro, A., Mwanundu, S., Mutandi, R., Omar, R., Rambaldi, G., Samii, R., and Sarr, L. (2009) *Good practices in participatory mapping*. International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), available https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714170/39144386/PM_web.pdf/7c1eda66-8205-4c31-8912-3c25d6f90055.

- Corden, A. and Sainsbury, R. (2006). *Using verbatim quotations in reporting qualitative social research: Researcher's views*. SPRU, University of York, available <http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/spru/pubs/pdf/verbquotresearch.pdf> [accessed October 12, 2021].
- Crang, M. (2006) 'Circulation and emplacement: The hollowed-out performance of tourism', in Minca, C. and Oakes, T. (eds.), *Travels in Paradox: Remapping Tourism*, pp. 47-64. Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Creswell J. W. (2013) 'Five qualitative approaches to inquiry', in Creswell J. W., ed. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*, 3rd edn., pp. 53-84. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Crook, S. E. S., Levine, A. and Lopez-Carr, D. (2021) 'Perceptions and application of the ecosystem services approach among Pacific Northwest National Forest managers', *Sustainability*, 13(3), 1259. DOI: 10.3390/su13031259.
- Cross, R. M. (2005) 'Exploring attitudes: the case for Q methodology', *Health Education Research*, 20(2), pp. 206-213.
- Crouch, D., Aronsson, L. and Wahlström, L. (2001) 'Tourist encounters', *Tourist Studies*, 1(3), pp. 253-270.
- Crushell, P., Foss, P. and Kirwan, B. (2015) *Wild Atlantic Way: Ecological study of visitor movement areas 2015*. Kerry: Wetland Surveys Ireland Ltd.
- Cruz-Milán, O. (2017) 'Plog's Model of Typologies of Tourists', in Lowry, L. L. (ed.), *The SAGE International Encyclopedia of Travel and Tourism*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- CSO (2016) *Census 2016 Profile 2 – Population Distribution and Movements*. Cork, Ireland: Central Statistics Office.
- Davis, D. (2020) 'Presenting research reflexivity in your PhD thesis', *Nurse Researcher* 28(2). DOI: 10.7748/nr.2020.e1644.

- Deane, B. (1987) 'Tourism in Ireland: An employment growth area', *Administration*, 35(3), pp. 337-349.
- Dela Santa, E. and Tiatco, S. A. (2019) 'Tourism, heritage and cultural performance: Developing a modality of heritage tourism', *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 31, pp. 301-309.
- Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (eds.) (2005) *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 3rd edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Denzongpa, K., Nichols, T. and Morrison, S. D. (2020) 'Situating positionality and power in CBPR conducted with a refugee community: Benefits of a co-learning reflective model', *Reflective Practice*, 21(2), pp. 237-250. DOI: 10.1080/14623943.2020.1733955.
- Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (2002) *National Spatial Strategy for Ireland 2002-2020: People, Places and Potential*. Dublin: The Stationary Office. Available <https://npl.ie/wp-content/uploads/Completea-1.pdf> [accessed 19 Aug 2022].
- Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (2018) *Tourism Action Plan 2019-2021*. Dublin: Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport.
- Di Gessa, S., Poole, P. and Bending, T. (2008) 'Participatory mapping as a tool for empowerment: Experiences and lessons learned from the ILC network'. *Rome: ILC/IFAD*, 45.
- Dilsaver, L. (2009) 'Cultural landscapes: Balancing nature and heritage in preservation practice', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 35(4), pp. 787-789.
- Donegal Daily (2014) 'Victory! Mulroy Drive to be added to Wild Atlantic Way', *Donegal Daily*, 13 June 2014, available <https://www.donegaldaily.com/2014/06/13/victory-mulroy-drive-to-be-added-to-wild-atlantic-way/> [accessed 03 Sep 2022].
- Donegal News (2015) 'Mulroy Drive to be mapped as Wild Atlantic Way detour', *Donegal News*, 07 May 2015, available <https://donegalnews.com/2015/05/mulroy-drive-accepted-wild-atlantic-way-detour/> [accessed 03 Sep 2022].

- Dragouni, M. and Fouseki, K. (2018) 'Drivers of community participation in heritage tourism planning: an empirical investigation', *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 13(3), pp. 237-256. DOI: 10.1080/1743873X.2017.1310214.
- Du Cros, H. (2012) *Tourism and Intangible Cultural Heritage*. Madrid: UNWTO.
- Duarte-Duarte, J. B., Talero-Sarmiento, L. H., and Rodríguez-Padilla, D. C. (2021) 'Methodological proposal for the identification of tourist routes in a particular region through clustering techniques', *Heliyon*, 7(4). DOI: 10.1016/j.heliyon.2021.e06655.
- Dumitrescu, G. C., Poladian, S. M., and Aluculesei, A. C. (2021) 'Repositioning of Romanian seaside tourism as an effect of climate change', *Information*, 12, p. 108. DOI: 10.3390/info12030108.
- Durning, D. W. and Brown, S. R. (2007) 'Q methodology and decision making', in Göktug, Morçöl (ed.) *Handbook of Decision Making*, pp. 537-563. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press (Taylor and Francis).
- Dwyer, L. (2015) 'Globalization of tourism: Drivers and outcomes', *Tourism Recreation Research*, 40(3), pp. 326-339. DOI: 10.1080/02508281.2015.1075723.
- Dwyer, S. C., and J. L. Buckle (2009) 'The space between: On being an insider-outsider in qualitative research', *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 8(1): 54-63. DOI: 10.1177/160940690900800105.
- Eden, S., Donaldson, A. and Walker, G. (2005) 'Structuring subjectivities? Using Q methodology in human geography', *Area*, 37(4), pp. 413-422.
- Errichiello, L. and Marasco, A. (2017) 'Tourism Innovation-Oriented Public-Private Partnerships for Smart Destination Development', in Scott, N., De Martino, M. and Van Niekerk, M. (eds.) *Knowledge Transfer to and within Tourism (Bridging Tourism Theory and Practice, vol. 8)*, pp. 147-166. Bingley: Emerald Publishing Limited.
- European Commission (2000) *Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on Integrated Coastal Zone*

Management: A Strategy for Europe (COM(2000) 547). Brussels.
Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2000>

European Commission (2013) *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, and the Committee of the Regions: Action Plan for a Maritime Strategy in the Atlantic Area Delivering Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth*. Publications Office of the European Union. Luxembourg. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1395674057421&uri=CELEX:52013DC0279>

European Commission (2017) *Report on the Blue Growth Strategy towards more sustainable growth and jobs in the Blue Economy*. Brussels.
Available at:
https://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/sites/maritimeaffairs/files/swd-2017-128_en.pdf

European Commission (2021a) *A New Approach for a Sustainable Blue Economy in the EU: Transforming the EU's Blue Economy for a Sustainable Future*. Publications Office of the European Union. Brussels. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2021:240:FIN>.

European Commission (2021b) *Short-term rentals in the EU, 2279/FL495*, Brussels: European Union, available: europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2279 [accessed 21 Aug 2022].

European Commission (2021c) *The EU Blue Economy Report, 2021*. Publications Office of the European Union. Luxembourg. Available at: https://blueindicators.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2021_06_BlueEcoBlue_Report-2021.pdf

Everett, S. (2012) 'Production places or consumption spaces? The place-making agency of food tourism in Ireland and Scotland', *Tourism Geographies*, 14(4), pp. 535-554.

Fahy, F., Carr, L., Norton, D., Farrell, D., Corless, R. and Hynes, S. (2020) *Blue Growth Pathway for Marine and Coastal Tourism Trail Development*. MOSES Project. Available at:

http://mosesproject.eu/ban/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/ONIA_Tourism_v1.pdf

Fáilte Ireland (2013a) *3rd Party Brand Usage Guidelines*. Available at: https://www.failteireland.ie/FailteIreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/2_Develop_Your_Business/Key%20Projects/WAW_ID-Guidelines_3rd-partyNov13.pdf [accessed 14 July 2020].

Fáilte Ireland (2013b) *The Gathering Ireland 2013: Final Report*. Available at: https://www.failteireland.ie/FailteIreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/eZine/TheGathering_FinalReport_JimMiley_December2013.pdf [accessed 7 April 2022].

Fáilte Ireland (2014) *Minister Ring Officially Launches Wild Atlantic Way*. Available at: <https://www.failteireland.ie/Footer/Media-Centre/Minister-Ring-officially-launches-Wild-Atlantic-Wa.aspx> [accessed 26 March 2020].

Fáilte Ireland (2015) *Wild Atlantic Way Operational Programme 2015-2019*. Available: https://www.failteireland.ie/FailteIreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/2_Develop_Your_Business/Key%20Projects/Wild-Atlantic-Way-Operational-Programme_1.pdf [accessed 25 March 2020].

Fáilte Ireland (2016) *Tourism Development and Innovation: A Strategy for Investment 2016-2022*. Available at: https://www.failteireland.ie/FailteIreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/2_Develop_Your_Business/6_Funding/FI-Tourism-Investment-Strategy-Final-07-06-16_1.pdf

Fáilte Ireland (2019) *Key Tourism Facts 2018*. Available at: https://www.failteireland.ie/FailteIreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/3_Research_Insights/4_Visitor_Insights/KeyTourismFacts_2018.pdf?ext=.pdf [accessed 26 March 2020].

Fáilte Ireland (2021) *Key Tourism Facts 2019*. Available at: https://www.failteireland.ie/FailteIreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/3_Research_Insights/4_Visitor_Insights/KeyTourismFacts_2019.pdf?ext=.pdf [accessed 7 May 2021].

- Fáilte Ireland (n.d.) *Tourism in the Community: A Business Toolkit for Community Tourism Projects*. available <https://failtecdn.azureedge.net/failteireland/Community-Tourism-Toolkit.pdf>
- Farrell, D. and Carr, L. M. (2022) 'Places of wander: the value of community attachment for coastal tourism', in Ilovan, O. -R. and Markuszewska, I., (eds.) *Preserving and Constructing Place Attachment in Europe*. Switzerland: Springer Nature.
- Fielding, N. (1996) 'Qualitative interviewing', in Gilbert, N. (ed.) *Researching Social Life*. London: Sage Publications.
- Flanagan, S., Griffin, K, O'Halloran, E. Phelan, J., Roe, P., Burke, E. and Tottle, A. (2007) *Sustainable Tourism Development: toward the mitigation of tourism destination impacts*, Prepared for the Environmental Protection Agency by Dublin Institute of Technology. Wexford, Ireland: Environmental Protection Agency.
- Flognfeldt Jr., T. (2005) 'The tourist route system – models of travelling patterns', *Belgeo*, 1-2, pp. 35-58.
- Fonesca, F. P. and Ramos, R. A. R. (2012) 'Heritage tourism in peripheral areas: Development strategies and constraints', *Tourism Geographies*, 14(3), pp. 467-493.
- Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) (2022) 'Ecosystem Services & Biodiversity (ESB)', available <https://www.fao.org/ecosystem-services-biodiversity/background/en/>.
- Foucault, M. (1972) *The Archaeology of Knowledge; and, The Discourse on Language*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Foxe, K. (2017) 'Extraordinary success of Wild Atlantic Way see "bottle necks" develop around Cliffs of Moher and the Dingle Peninsula', *A Beginner's Guide to FOI*, available: <https://www.kenfoxe.com/2017/11/extraordinary-success-of-wild-atlantic-way-sees-bottle-necks-develop-around-cliffs-of-moher-and-the-dingle-peninsula/> [accessed 19 Mar 2020].
- Freeth, R. and Vilsmaier, U. (2019) 'Researching collaborative interdisciplinary teams: Practices and principles for navigating

researcher positionality', *Science & Technology Studies*, 33(3), pp. 57-72. DOI: 10.23987/sts.73060.

Friedman, W. R., Halpern, B. S., McLeod, E., Beck, M. W., Duarte, C. M., Kappel, C. V., Levine, A., Sluka, R. D., Adler, S., O'Hara, C. C., Sterling, E. J., Tapia-Lewin, S., Losada, I. J., McClanahan, T. R., Pendleton, L., Spring, M., Toomey, J. P., Weiss, K. R., Possingham, H. P. and Montambault, J. R. (2020) 'Research priorities for achieving healthy marine ecosystems and human communities in a changing climate', *Frontiers in Marine Science*, 7(5). DOI: 10.3389/fmars.2020.00005.

Gage, N. L. (1989) 'The paradigm wars and their aftermath: a "historical" sketch of research on teaching since 1989', *Educational Researcher*, 18(7), pp. 4-10.

Garrod, B. and Fyall, A. (2000) 'Management heritage tourism', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 27, pp. 682-708.

Gartner, W. C. (1989) 'Tourism image: Attribute measurement of State tourism products using multidimensional scaling techniques', *Journal of Travel Research*, 28(2), pp. 16-20. DOI: 10.1177/004728758902800205.

Gibson, C. (2008) 'Locating geographies of tourism', *Progress in Human Geography*, 32(3), pp. 407-422.

Gilbert, E. W. (1939) 'The growth of inland and seaside resorts health resorts in England', *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, 55, pp. 16-35.

Glaser, B., and Strauss, A. (1967) 'Grounded theory: The discovery of grounded theory', *Sociology the Journal of the British Sociological Association*, 12(1), pp. 27-49.

Gobster, P. H., Palmer, J. F., and Crystal, J. H. (2003) 'Ervin H. Zube (1931-2002): The significance and impact of his contributions to environment-behaviour studies', *Environment and Behavior*, 35(2), pp. 165-186. DOI: 10.1177/0013916502250131.

Godinho, M. A., Borda, A., Kariotis, T., Molnar, A., Kostkova, P. and Liaw, S. -T. (2021) 'Knowledge co-creation in participatory policy and practice:

Building community through data-driven direct democracy', *Big Data & Society*, 8(1). DOI: 10.1177/20539517211019430.

Goeldner, C. R. and Ritchie, J. R. B. (2009) *Tourism: Principles, Practices, Philosophies*, 11th edn. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons.

Gómez-Martín, M. B., Armesto-López, X. A., Cors-Iglesias, M., and Muñoz-Negrete, J. (2014). 'Adaptation strategies to climate change in the tourist sector: The case of coastal tourism in Spain', *Turizam*, 62 (3), pp. 293-308.

González, M. (2008) 'Intangible heritage tourism and identity', *Tourism Management*, 29, pp. 807-810.

Goodrich, J. (1978) 'A new approach to image analysis through multidimensional scaling', *Journal of Travel Research*, 16(3), pp. 3-7. DOI: 10.1177/004728757801600302.

Goodwin, H. and Santilli, R. (2009) 'Community-based tourism: A success?' in *ICRT Occasional Paper 2009*, No. OP11, pp. 37. Leeds, UK: International Centre for Responsible Tourism, Leeds Metropolitan University.

Graham, B. (2002) 'Heritage as knowledge: Capital or culture?', *Urban Studies*, 39(5-6), pp. 1003-1017.

Graham, B., Ashworth, G. J., and Tunbridge, J. E. (2016) *A Geography of Heritage: Power, Culture and Economy*. Abingdon and New York: Routledge.

Graham, J., Amos, B. and Plumptre, T. (2003) *Principles for Good Governance in the 21st Century*. Policy Brief No. 15. Ottawa: Institute of Governance.

Greene, J. C. (2015) 'Preserving distinctions within the multimethod and mixed methods research merger', in Hesse-Biber, S. N., Johnson, R. B. (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Multimethod and Mixed Methods Research Inquiry*, pp. 606-615. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Greene, J. C. and Caracelli, V. J. (2003) 'Making paradigmatic sense of mixed methods practice', in Tashakkori, A. and Teddlie, C. (eds.) *Handbook*

of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioral Research, pp. 91-110.
Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Gregory, D., Johnston, R. J., Pratt, G., Watts, M. and Whatmore, S., (eds.)
(2009) *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, 4th edn., pp. 103-104.
Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Gu, H. and Ryan, C. (2008) 'Place attachment, identity and community
impacts of tourism – the case of a Beijing Hutong', *Tourism
Management*, 29, pp. 637-647.

Gunn, C. A. (2002) *Tourism Planning: Policies, Processes and Relationships*.
London: Prentice-Hall.

Gusfield, J. R. (1975) *Community: A Critical Response*. New York: Harper and
Row.

Halewood, C. and Hannam, K. (2001) 'Viking heritage tourism: Authenticity
and commodification', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 28(3), pp. 565-
580.

Hall, C. M. (2001) 'Trends in ocean and coastal tourism: the end of the last
frontier?', *Ocean & Coastal Management*, 44(9-10), pp. 601-618.

Hall, C. M. (2005) *Tourism: Rethinking the Social Science of Mobility*. Harlow,
UK: Pearson.

Hall, C. M. (2007) *Tourism planning: Policies, processes and relationships*, 2nd
ed. Harlow: Prentice Hall.

Hall, C. M. (2008) 'Tourism and climate change: Knowledge gaps and issues',
Tourism Recreation Research, 33 (3), pp. 339-350. DOI:
10.1080/02508281.2008.11081557.

Hall, C. M. and Page, S. J. (2011) 'From the geography of tourism to
geographies of tourism', in Wilson, J., (ed.) *The Routledge Handbook
of Tourism Geographies*, Taylor & Francis Group, pp. 9-25.

Hall, C. M. and Page, S. J. (2014) *The Geography of Tourism and Recreation:
Environment, Place, and Space*, Fourth Edition. Oxon: Routledge.

- Hall, C. M., Williams, A. M. and Lew, A. A. (2014) 'Tourism: Conceptualisations, disciplinarity, institutions and issues', in Lew, A. A., Hall, C. M. and Williams, A. M., (eds.) *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Tourism*. Chichester: Wiley.
- Hallegatte, S. and Mach, K. J. (2016) 'Make climate-change assessments more relevant', *Nature News*, 534, pp. 613-615. DOI: 10.1038/534613a.
- Hampton, S. E. and Parker, J. N. (2011) 'Collaboration and productivity in scientific synthesis', *BioScience*, 61(11), pp. 900-910. DOI: 10.1525/bio.2011.61.11.9.
- Hanleybrown, F., Kania, J. and Kramer, M. (2012) 'Channeling change: Making collective impact work', *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, 9, pp. 1-8.
- Hannigan, K. (1994) 'A regional analysis of tourism growth in Ireland', *Regional Studies*, 28(2), pp. 208-214.
- Hanrahan, J. (2009) *Host Community Participation and Sustainable Tourism in Ireland: The Local Authority Perspective*. Galway and Sligo: Greenhouse Press.
- Hanrahan, J. and Conaghan, Á. (2014) 'Profiling tourism entrepreneurs and their enterprises along the Wild Atlantic Way', *Irish Business Journal*, 9(1), pp. 29-41.
- Hanrahan, J., Maguire, K., and Boyd, S. (2017) 'Community engagement in drive tourism in Ireland: case study of the Wild Atlantic Way', *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 12(5), pp. 509-525. DOI: 10.1080/1743873X.2016.1242594.
- Haraway, D. J. (1991) *Simians, cyborgs and women: the reinvention of nature*. London: Free Association Books.
- Harrington, C., Curtis, A., and Black, R. (2008) 'Locating communities in natural resource management', *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning*, 10(2), pp. 199-215.

- Hawkins, D. E. and Mann, S. (2007) 'The World Bank's role in tourism development', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 34(2), pp. 348-363.
- Healy, N., Rau, H. and McDonagh, J. (2012) 'Collaborative tourism planning in Ireland: Tokenistic consultation and the policies of participations', *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning*, 14(4), pp. 450-471. DOI: 10.1080/1523908X.2012.742221.
- Heimtun, B. and Morgan, N. (2012) 'Proposing paradigm peace: Mixed methods in feminist tourism research', *Tourist Studies*, 12(3), pp. 287-304. DOI: 10.1177/1468797612461088.
- Heneghan, P. (1976) 'The tourist industry in Ireland - 1960 to 1975', *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, 65(259), pp. 225-234.
- Hewison, R. (1987) *The Heritage Industry: Britain in a Climate of Decline*. London: Methuen.
- Hicks, C. C., Levine, A., Agrawal, A., Basurto, X., Breslow, S. J., Carothers, C., Charnley, S., Coulthard, S., Dolsak, N., Donatuto, J., Garcia-Quijano, C., Mascia, M. B., Norman, K., Poe, M. R., Saterfield, T., St. Martin, K., and Levin, P. S. (2016) 'Engage key social concepts for sustainability', *Science*, 352(6281), pp. 38-40.
- Higgins-Desbiolles, F. (2020). 'Socialising tourism for social and ecological justice after COVID-19', *Tourism Geographies*, 22(3), pp. 610-623.
- Hogg, M. A. and Abrams, D. (1988) *Social Identifications: A Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations and Group Processes*. London: Routledge.
- Höijer, B. (2011) 'Social representations theory: A new theory for media research', *Nordicom Review*, 32(2), pp. 3-16.
- Hollinshead, K. (2012) 'The under-conceptualisations of tourism studies: The case for postdisciplinary knowing', in Ateljevic, I., Morgan, N. and Pritchard, A., (eds.) *The Critical Turn in Tourism Studies: Creating an Academy of Hope*, pp. 55-72. London: Routledge.
- Holmes, A. G. D. (2020) 'Researcher positionality - A consideration of its influence and place in qualitative research - A new researcher guide',

Shanlax International Journal of Education, 8(4), pp. 1-10. DOI: 10.34293/education.v8i4.3232.

- Holtz, P. (2016) 'How Popper's 'Three Worlds Theory' resembles Moscovici's 'Social Representations Theory' but why Moscovici's Social Psychology of Science still differs from Popper's critical approach', *Papers on Social Representations*, 25(1), pp. 13.1-13.24.
- Hosany, S., Prayag, G., van der Veen, R. Huang, S. and Deesilatham, S. (2016) 'Mediating effects of place attachment and satisfaction on the relationship between tourists emotions and intention to recommend', *Journal of Travel Research*, 56(8), pp. 1079-1093. DOI: 10.1177/0047287516678088.
- Hubrig, A., McWain, K., Meade, M., and Shah, R. W. (2017) 'Positionality and possibility: Reframing tactics and strategies for graduate student community engagement', *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 24(1). DOI: 10.3998/mjcsloa.3239521.0024.108.
- Irish Tourism Group (n.d.) *Grand Atlantic Drive*, available <https://www.irishtourism.com/grand-atlantic-drive> [accessed 03 December 2021].
- Irish Tourist Board (1988) *Inventory of Cultural Tourism Resources in the Member States*. Brussels: European Commission.
- Islam, M. W., Ruhanen, L. and Ritchie, B. W. (2018) 'Tourism governance in protected areas: investigating the application of adaptive co-management approach', *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 26(11), pp. 1890-1908. DOI: 10.1080/09669582.2018.1526291.
- Jackson, P. (1989) *Maps of Meaning: An Introduction to Cultural Geography*. London: Unwin Hyman.
- Jamal, T. B. and Getz, D. (1995) 'Collaboration theory and community tourism planning', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 22(1), pp. 186-204. DOI: 10.1016/0160-7383(94)00067-3.
- Jankowski, P. (2009) 'Towards participatory geographic information systems for community-based environmental decision making', *Journal of Environmental Management*, 90(6), pp. 1966-1971.

- Joerg, W. L. G. (1935) 'Geography and national land planning', *Geographical Review*, 25, pp. 177-208.
- Johnson, R. B. (2012) 'Dialectical pluralism and mixed research', *American Behavioral Scientist*, 56(6), 751-754. DOI: 10.1177/0002764212442494.
- Johnson, R. B., Onwuegbuzie, A. J., and Turner, L. A. (2007) 'Toward a definition of mixed methods research', *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1(2), pp. 112-133. DOI: 10.1177/1558689806298224.
- Jones, S. B. (1933) 'Mining and tourist towns in the Canadian Rockies', *Economic Geography*, 9, pp. 368-378.
- Jørgensen, U. (2001) 'Grounded theory: Methodology and theory construction', *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, 1, pp. 6396-6399.
- Joseph, M. (2002) *Against the Romance of Community*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Jovanović, S. and Ilić, I. (2016) 'Infrastructure as important determinant of tourism development in the countries of southeast Europe', *Ecoforum*, 5(1), pp. 288-294.
- Kabil, M., Priatmoko, S., Magda, R. and David, L. D. (2021) 'Blue Economy and coastal tourism: a comprehensive visualisation bibliometric analysis', *Sustainability*, 13, 3650. DOI: 10.3390/su13073650.
- Kallio, H., Pietilä, A. M., Johnson, M. and Kangasniemi, M. (2016) 'Systematic methodological review: developing a framework for a qualitative semi-structured interview guide', *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 72(12), pp. 2954-2965.
- Kampen, J. K. and Tamás, P. (2014) 'Overly ambitious: contributions and current status of Q methodology', *Quality & Quantity*, 48, pp. 3109-3126.

- Kania, J. and Kramer, M. (2011) 'Collective impact', *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, 2011, pp. 36-41.
- Kappes, M. S., Kieler, M., von Elverfeldt, K., and Glade, T. (2012) 'Challenges of analyzing multi-hazard risk: a review', *Natural Hazards*, 64(2), pp. 1925-1958. DOI: 10.1007/s11069-012-0294-2.
- Kelly, C. (2005) 'Heritage tourism politics in Ireland', in Smith, M. and Robinson, M. (eds.), *Cultural Tourism in a Changing World: Politics, Participation and (Re)presentation*, pp. 36-55. Clevedon: Channel View Publications.
- Kelly, C., Ellis, G., and Flannery, W. (2018) 'Conceptualising change in marine governance: Learning from Transition Management', *Marine Policy*, 95, pp. 24-35.
- Kelly, C., McAteer, B., Fahy, F., Carr, L., Norton, D., Farrell, D. Corless, R., Hynes, S., Kyriazi, Z., Marhadour, A., Kalaydjian, R. and Flannery, W. (2021) 'Blue growth: a transitions approach to developing sustainable pathways', *Journal of Ocean and Coastal Economics*, 8(2).
- Kemmis, S. and McTaggart, R. (2000) 'Participatory action research', in Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2nd edn. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.
- Kennedy, E. (1999) 'Seasonality in Irish Tourism, 1973-1995', *Tourism Economics*, 5(1), pp. 25-47.
- Khoo-Lattimore, C., Mura, P. and Yung, R. (2017) 'The time has come: a systematic literature review of mixed methods research in tourism', *Current Issues in Tourism*. DOI: 10.1080/13683500.2017.146900.
- Kienberger, S. (2014) 'Participatory mapping of flood hazard risk in Munamicua, District of Búzi, Mozambique', *Journal of Maps*, 10(2). DOI: 10.1080/17445647.2014.89126.
- Kling, K. G., Dahlberg, A. and Wall-Reinius, S. (2019) 'Negotiating improved multifunctional landscape use: Trails and facilitators for collaboration among stakeholders', *Sustainability*, 11, 3511. DOI: 10.3390/su11133511.

- Kneafsey, M. (1998) 'Tourism and place identity: A case-study in rural Ireland', *Irish Geography*, 31(2), pp. 111-123.
- Kühne, O. (2021) 'Potentials of the Three Spaces Theory for understandings of cartography, virtual realities, and augmented spaces', *Journal of Cartography and Geographic Information*, 71, pp. 297-305. DOI: 10.1007/s42489-021-00089-w.
- Larson, R. B. (2019) 'Controlling social desirability bias', *International Journal of Market Research*, 61(5). DOI: 10.1177/1470785318805305.
- Larson, S., De Freitas, D. M., and Hicks, C. C. (2013) 'Sense of place as a determinant of people's attitudes towards the environment: Implications for natural resources management and planning in the Great Barrier Reef, Australia', *Journal of Environmental Management*, 117, pp. 226-234.
- Lau, L. and Pasquini, M. (2008) "'Jack of all trade"? The negotiation of interdisciplinarity within geography', *Geoforum*, 39(2), pp. 552-560. DOI: 10.1016/j.geoforum.2006.08.013.
- Le Heron, R., Baker, R. and Mcewen, L. (2011) 'Co-learning: Re-linking research and teaching in geography', *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 30(1), pp. 77-87. DOI: 10.1080/03098260500499659.
- Levine, A. S. and Feinholz, C. L. (2015) 'Participatory GIS to inform coral reef ecosystem management: Mapping human coastal and ocean uses in Hawaii', *Applied Geography*, 59, pp. 60-69. DOI: 10.1016/j.apgeog.2014.12.004.
- Levine, A. S., Richmond, L. and Lopez-Carr, D. (2015) 'Marine resource management: Culture, livelihoods, and governance', *Applied Geography*, 59, pp. 56-59.
- Lew, A. A. (2001) 'Defining a geography of tourism', *Tourism Geographies*, 3(1), pp. 105-114.
- Lew, A. A. (2009a) 'Tourism and its socio-cultural impacts', in *Understanding and Managing Tourism Impacts*, pp. 163-207. Routledge.

- Lew, A. A. (2009b) 'Tourism and its economic impacts', in *Understanding and Managing Tourism Impacts*, pp. 108-162. Routledge.
- Lew, A. A. (2009c) 'Tourism and its physical environmental impacts', in *Understanding and Managing Tourism Impacts*, pp. 208-250. Routledge.
- Lew, A. A. (2017) 'Tourism planning and place making: place-making or placemaking?', *Tourism Geographies*, 19(3), pp. 448-466.
- Li, B., Mi, Z., and Zhang, Z. (2020) 'Willingness of the new generation of farmers to participate in rural tourism: The role of perceived impacts of sense of place', *Sustainability*, 12(3), p. 766. DOI: 10.3390/su12030766.
- Li, X., Pan, B., and Zhang, L. (2009) 'The effect of online information search on image development: Insights from a mixed-methods study', *Journal of Travel Research*, 48(1). DOI: 10.1177/0047287508328659.
- Lima, V. (2018) 'Towards an understanding of the regional impact of AirBnb in Ireland', *Regional Studies, Regional Science*, 6(1), pp. 78-91. DOI: 10.1080/21681376.2018.1562366.
- Longhurst, R. (2016) 'Semi-structured interviews and focus groups', in Clifford, N., Cope, M., Gillespie, T. and French, S. (eds.) *Key Methods in Geography*, 3rd edn. London: Sage.
- López-Bonilla, J. M. and López-Bonilla, L. M. (2021) 'Leading disciplines in tourism and hospitality research: a bibliometric analysis in Spain', *Current Issues in Tourism*, 24(13), pp. 1880-1896. DOI: 10.1080/13683500.2020.1760221.
- Lubbe, B. A., Douglas, A., Fairer-Wessels, F., Kruger, E., Geldenhuys, E., and Francis, C. (2013) 'Matching tourism supply and demand: an analysis of how tourism products meet the needs of emerging domestic market segments in selected regions in South Africa', *2013 Travel and Tourism Research Association International Conference*, University of Massachusetts Amherst.

- MacCannell, D. (1976) *The Tourist: a New Theory of the Leisure Class*. London: Macmillan.
- MacCannell, D. (1993) *Empty Meeting Grounds: the Tourist Papers*. London: Routledge.
- MacLeod, D. (2006) 'Cultural tourism: aspects of authenticity and commodification', *Cultural Tourism in a Changing World: Politics, Participation and (Re)presentation*, pp. 177-190. New York: Channel View.
- MacLeod, N. (2011) 'Self-guided trails – A route to more responsible tourism?', *Tourism Recreation Research*, 41, pp. 134-144.
- MacLeod, N. (2016) 'The role of trails in the creation of tourist space', *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 12(5), pp. 423-430. DOI: 10.1080/1743873X.2016.1242590.
- MacLeod, N. (2017) 'The role of trails in the creation of tourist space', *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 12(5), pp.423-430.
- MacQueen, K. (2002) 'What is community? An evidence-based definition for participatory public health', *American Journal of Public Health*, 91, pp. 1229-1238.
- Madge, C. (1993) 'Boundary disputes: comments on Sidaway', *Area*, 25, pp. 294-299.
- Maguire, K. (2015) 'Collaborative sustainable development in drive tourism on the Wild Atlantic Way: a community perspective'. Tourism and Hospitality Research in Ireland Conference, January 2015. Letterkenny Institute of Technology.
- Maguire, S. (2019) 'Councillor encourages people to go out and deface English signs'. *Donegal Daily*. 15 August 2019.
- Mamirkulova, G., Mi, J., Abbas, J., Mahmood, S., Mubeen, R. and Ziapour, A. (2020) 'New Silk Road Infrastructure Opportunities in Developing Tourism Environment for Residents Better Quality of Life', *Global Ecology and Conservation*, 20, e01194.

- Marcussen, C. (2014) 'Multidimensional scaling in tourism literature', *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 12, pp. 31-20. DOI: 10.1016/j.tmp.2014.07.003.
- Markard, J., Raven, R. and Truffer, B. (2012) 'Sustainability transitions: An emerging field of research and its prospects', *Research Policy*, 41, pp. 955-967. DOI: 10.1016/j.respol.2012.02.013.
- Mason, P., Augustyn, M. and Seakhoa-King, A. (2010) 'Exploratory study in tourism: Designing an initial, qualitative phase of sequenced, mixed methods research', *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 12(5), pp. 432-448. DOI: 10.1002/jtr.763.
- Massey, D., Allen, J. and Sarre, P. (1999) *Human Geography Today*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Mathias, J. -D., Anderies, J. M., Baggio, J., Hobdod, J., Huet, S., Janssen, M. A., Milkoreit, M. and Schoon, M. (2020) 'Exploring non-linear transition pathways in social-ecological systems', *Scientific Reports*, 10(4136). DOI: 10.1038/s41598-020-59713-w.
- Matiku, S., Zuwarimwe, J. and Tshipala, N. (2020) 'Community-driven tourism projects' economic contribution to community livelihoods: A case of Makuleke Contractual Park Community Project', *Sustainability*, 12(19), p. 8230. DOI: 10.3990/su/12198230.
- Mazanec, J. A., Ring, A., Stangl, B. and Teichmann, K. (2010) 'Usage patterns of advanced analytical methods in tourism research 1988-2008: a six journal survey', *Information Technology & Tourism*, 12(1), pp. 17-46.
- McCarthaigh, S. (2021) 'Two-thirds of people say short-term rentals have negative impact on housing market', *Irish Examiner*, 25 October 2021, available: <https://www.irishexaminer.com/news/arid-40729128.html> [accessed 21 Aug 2022].
- McCarthy, A. (2018) 'Last chance travel' the growing trend for 2018. Available at <https://www.lonelyplanet.com/news/2018/03/08/last-chance-tourism-trend/>.

- McClellan, E. D. (2011) 'Narrative as vernacular rhetoric: Understanding community among transients, tourists and locals', *Storytelling, Self, Society*, 7, pp. 188-210.
- McDermott, M., Mahanty, S. and Schreckenber, K. (2013) 'Examining equity: A multidimensional framework for assessing equity in payments for ecosystem services', *Environmental Science Policy*, 33, pp. 416-427.
- McKeown, B. and Thomas, D. (2013) *Q Methodology*, 2nd edn. Newbury Park: Sage.
- McKercher, B. (2002) 'Towards a classification of cultural tourists', *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 4, pp. 29-38.
- McKercher, B. and du Cros, H. (2002) *Cultural Tourism: The Partnership Between Tourism and Cultural Heritage Management*. London: Routledge.
- McKercher, B. and du Cros, H. (2003) 'Testing a cultural tourism typology', *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 5, pp. 45-58.
- McLaughlin, R. (2019) 'Hedges on Wild Atlantic Way getting too wild'. *Donegal Daily*. 15 May 2019.
- McLeod, D. (2004) *Tourism, Globalization and Cultural Change: An Island Community Perspective*. New York: Channel View.
- McLoughlin, E., Hanrahan, J., and Duddy, A. (2020) 'Application of the European tourism indicator system (ETIS) for sustainable destination management: Lessons from County Clare, Ireland', *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality*, 14(2), pp. 273-294.
- McLoughlin, E., Hanrahan, J., Duddy, A., and Duffy, S. (2018) 'European tourism indicator system for sustainable destination management in County Donegal, Ireland', *European Journal of Tourism Research*, 20, pp. 78-91.
- McLoughlin, E. and Hanrahan, J. (2019) 'Local authority sustainable planning for tourism: lessons from Ireland', *Tourism Review*, 74(3), pp. 327-348. DOI: 10.1108/TR-12-2017-0198.

- McManus, R. (1997) 'Heritage and tourism in Ireland – an unholy alliance?', *Irish Geography*, 30(2), pp. 90-98.
- McMinn, S. (1997) 'The challenge of sustainable tourism', *Environmentalist*, 17, pp. 135-141.
- McMurray, K. C. (1930) 'The Use of Land for Recreation', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 20, pp. 7-20.
- Mead, A (1992) 'Review of the development of multidimensional scaling methods', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, Series D (The Statistician)*, 41(1), pp. 27–39.
- Meinecke, E. P. (1929) *The Effect of Excessive Tourist Travel on California Redwood Parks*. Sacramento, CA: California State Printing Office.
- Melkert, M. and Vos, K. (2010) 'A comparison of quantitative and qualitative approaches: Complementarities and trade-offs', in Richards, G. and Munsters, W. (eds.), *Cultural Tourism Research Methods*. Oxfordshire, UK: CABI.
- Mercer, J., Kelman, I., Lloyd, K., and Suchet-Pearson, S. (2008) 'Reflections on use of participatory research for disaster risk reduction', *Area*, 40(2), pp. 172-183.
- Merriam, S. (1988) *Case study research in education: A qualitative approach*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Mik-Meyer, N. (2020) 'Multimethod qualitative research', in Silverman, D., ed. *Qualitative Research*, pp. 357-374. London: Sage.
- Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MEA) (2005) *Ecosystems and Human Well-being: Synthesis*. Washington DC: Island Press.
- Minkler, M., Garcia, A. Rubin, V., and Wallerstein, N. (2012) *Community-Based Participatory Research: A Strategy for Building Healthy Communities and Promoting Health Through Policy Change*. Oakland: PolicyLink.
- Moloney, G., Leviston, Z., Lynam, T., Price, J., Stone-Jovicich, S., and Blair, D. (2014) 'Using social representations theory to make sense of climate

change: what scientists and nonscientists in Australia think', *Ecology and Society* 19(3), p. 19. DOI: 10.5751/ES-06592-190319.

- Monnard, K., Benjamins, M. R., Hirschtick, J. L., Castro, M. and Roesch, P. T. (2021) 'Co-creation of knowledge: a community-based approach to multilevel dissemination of health information', *Health Promotion Practice*, 22(2), pp. 215-223. DOI: 10.1177/1524839919865228.
- Monterribio, J. C. and Andriotis, K. (2014) 'Social representations and community attitudes towards spring breakers', *Tourism Geographies*, 16(2), pp. 288-302. DOI: 10.1080/14616688.2014.889208.
- Moran, L. (2007) 'Negotiating boundaries or drawing the line? Transcending 'Insider/Outsider' distinctions in Connemara', *Irish Journal of Sociology* 16(2), pp. 136-159.
- Moric, I., Pekovic, S., Vukčević, J., Perović, Đ., Grisbeck, M. (2021) 'Cultural Tourism and Community Engagement: Insight from Montenegro', *Business Systems Research*, 12(1), pp. 164-178.
- Moscardo, G. (2005) 'Peripheral tourism development: challenges, issues and success factors', *Tourism Recreation Research*, 30, pp. 27-43.
- Moscardo, G. (2008a) 'Building Community Capacity for Tourism Development: Conclusions', pp. 172-183, in Moscardo, G. ed., *Building Community Capacity for Tourism Development*. Oxfordshire: CAB International.
- Moscardo, G. (2008b) 'Community Capacity Building: An Emerging Challenge for Tourism Development', in Moscardo, G. (ed.) *Building Community Capacity for Tourism Development*. Oxfordshire, UK: CABI.
- Moscardo, G. (2011) 'The role of knowledge in good governance and tourism', in Laws, E., Richins, H., Agrusa, J. and Scott, N., (eds.) *Tourist Destination Governance: Practice, Theory and Issues*, pp. 67-80. Oxfordshire: CAB International.
- Moscovici, S. (1963) 'Attitudes and opinions', *Annual Review of Psychology*, 14, pp. 231-260.

- Moscovici, S. (1972) 'Theory and Society in Social Psychology', in Israel, J. and Tajfel, H. (eds.), *The Context of Social Psychology: A Critical Assessment*, pp. 17-68. London: Academic Press.
- Mottiar, Z. (2016) 'Exploring the motivations of tourism social entrepreneurs: The role of a national tourism policy as a motivator for social entrepreneurial activity in Ireland', *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 28(6).
- Moulin, C. and Boniface, P. (2001) 'Routeing heritage for tourism: making heritage cultural tourism networks for socio-economic development', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 7(3), pp. 237-248.
- Mousavi, S. S., Doratli, N., Mousavi, S. N., and Moradiahari, F. (2016) 'Defining Cultural Tourism', *International Conference on Civil, Architecture and Sustainable Development (CASD-2016)*. London, UK, 1-2 December. DOI: 10.15242/IICBE.DIR1216411.
- Nash, C. (1993) 'Embodying the Nation: The West of Ireland Landscape and Irish Identity', in O'Connor, B. and Cronin, M. (eds.) *Tourism in Ireland: A Critical Analysis*. Cork: Cork University Press.
- Nasser, N. (2003) 'Planning for Urban Heritage Places: Reconciling Conservation, Tourism, and Sustainable Development', *Journal of Planning Literature*, 17, pp. 467-479.
- Naudé, W. A., and Saayman, A. (2005) 'Determinants of tourist arrivals in Africa: A panel data regression analysis', *Tourism Economics*, 11, pp. 365-391.
- Neuman, W. L. (1997) *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, 3rd edn. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Nguyen, Q. H. (2021) 'Impact of investment tourism infrastructure development on attracting international visitors: a nonlinear panel ARDL approach using Vietnam's data', *Economies*, 9(3), 131. DOI: 10.3390/economies9030131.
- Niñerola, A. Sánchez-Rebull, M. -V., and Hernández-Lara, H. -B. (2019) 'Tourism research on sustainability: a bibliometric analysis', *Sustainability*, 11(5), 1377. DOI: 10.3390/Su11051377.

- NOAA (n.d.) *Guidebook to Participatory Mapping of Ocean Uses*. Charleston, SC, USA: NOAA Office for Coastal Management. available <https://coast.noaa.gov/data/digitalcoast/pdf/participatory-mapping-ocean-uses.pdf>
- Nunkoo, R. (2015) 'Tourism development and trust in local government', *Tourism Management*, 46, pp. 623-634.
- Nunkoo, R. and Gursoy, D. (2012) 'Residents' support for tourism: An identity perspective', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 39(1), pp. 243-268.
- Nunkoo, R. and Gursoy, D. (2016) 'Rethinking the role of power and trust in tourism planning', *Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management*, 25(4), pp. 512-522.
- Nunkoo, R. and Ramkissoon, H. (2011) 'Developing a community support model for tourism', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 38(3), pp. 964-988. DOI: 10.1016/j.annals.2011.01.017.
- Nunkoo, R., Ramkissoon, H. and Gursoy, D. (2012) 'Public trust in tourism institutions', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 39(3), pp. 1538-1564.
- Nunkoo, R., Smith, S. L. and Ramkissoon, H. (2013) 'Residents' attitudes to tourism: a longitudinal study of 140 articles from 1984 to 2010', *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 21(1), pp. 5-25.
- Nurse, L. A., McLean, R. F., Agard, J., Briguglio, L. P., Duvat-Magnan, V., Pelesikoti, N., Tompkins, E., and Webb, A. (2014) 'Small Islands', in *Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. Part B: Regional Aspects. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, pp. 1613-1654. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- O'Fallon, L. R., and Dearry, A. (2002) 'Community-based participatory research as a tool to advance environmental health sciences', *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 110 (Supplement 2), pp. 155-159.
- O'Sullivan-Browne, K., Price, S., and Tobin, F. (2018) 'Wild Atlantic Way tourism clusters: A framework for best practice', *14th Annual Tourism and Hospitality Research in Ireland (THRIC): The evolving*

smart tourism landscape – organisational priorities and possibilities.
Waterford Institute of Technology Ireland, 18-19 June. Ireland:
Institute of Technology, Tralee.

- O’Sullivan, M. (2016) ‘Wild Atlantic Way discovery signs “a blight on landscape”’. *Irish Examiner*. 14 April 2016.
- OECD (2020) “Ireland”, in *OECD Tourism Trends and Policies 2020*, pp. 196-200. Paris: OECD Publishing.
- Pafi, M., Flannery, W., and Murtagh, B. (2020) ‘Coastal tourism, market segmentation and contested landscapes’, *Marine Policy*, 121, p. 104189. DOI: 10.1016/j.marpol.202.104189.
- Page, S. J. (2019) *Tourism Management*, 6th edn. Oxon: Routledge.
- Pandy, W. R. and Rogerson, C. M. (2021) ‘Coastal tourism and climate change: Risk perceptions of tourism stakeholders in South Africa’s Garden Route’, *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites*, 37(3), pp. 730-739. DOI: 10.30892/gtg.37301-703.
- Pangburn, W. W. (1940) ‘Play and recreation’, *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 212(1), pp. 121–129. DOI: 10.1177/000271624021200118.
- Park, H. y. (2010) ‘Heritage tourism: Emotional journeys into nationhood’, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 37(1), pp. 116-135.
- Pearce, P. (1982) *The Social Psychology of Tourist Behaviour*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Peng, B., Song, H. and Crouch, G. I. (2014) ‘A meta-analysis of international tourism demand forecasting and implications for practice’, *Tourism Management*, 45, pp. 181-193.
- Plog, S. C. (1974) ‘Why destination areas rise and fall in popularity’, *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 14(4), pp. 55-58.
- Poland, M. and Maré, D. C. (2005) ‘Defining geographic communities’, *Motu Working Paper*, No. 05-09. DOI: 10.2139/ssrn.911070.

- Pollock, A. (2012) 'Conscious travel: Signposts towards a new model for tourism'. *Second UNWTO Ethics and Tourism Congress*, 12 September, Quito. Available at: <http://conscioustourism.files.wordpress.com/2011/02/conscious-travel-signposts-towards-a-new-model.pdf>.
- Popper, K. R. (1978). *Three Worlds*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Poria, Y., Reichel, A. and Biran, A. (2006) 'Heritage Site Perceptions and Motivations to Visit', *Journal of Travel Research*, 44(3), pp. 318–326.
- Powell, K. (2010) 'Making sense of place: Mapping as a multisensory research method', *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16, pp. 539-555. DOI: 10.1177/1077800410372600.
- Prangnell, J., Ross, A., and Coghill, B. (2010) 'Power relations and community involvement in landscape-based cultural heritage management practice: an Australian case study', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 16(1-2), pp. 140-155.
- Prentice, R. (2004) 'Tourism Motivations and Typologies', in Lew, A. A., Hall, C. M. and Williams, A. M. (eds.) *A Companion to Tourism*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Prideaux, B. (2003) 'Commodifying Heritage: Loss of Authenticity and Meaning or an Appropriate Response to Difficult Circumstances?', *International Journal of Tourism Sciences*, 3(1), pp. 1-15.
- Provenzano, D. and Baggio, R. (2020) 'Quantitative methods in tourism and hospitality: a perspective article', *Tourism Review*, 75(1), pp. 24-28. DOI: 10.1108/TR-07-2019-0281.
- Punch, K. F. (2005) *Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*. London: Sage.
- Purcell, C. (2019) 'Taming the Wild Atlantic Way', *Open Skies*, issue December 2019. The Emirates Group. Available at <https://www.emirates.com/gr/English/open-skies/3873808/taming-the-wild-atlantic-way>.

- Quimby, B. and Levine, A. (2018) 'Participation, power, and equity: Examining three key social dimensions of fisheries comanagement', *Sustainability*, 10(9), p. 3324. DOI: 10.3390/su10093324.
- Raina, A., (2005) *Ecology, Wildlife and Tourism Development: Principles, Practices and Strategies*. Delhi: Sarup & Sons.
- Rech, G. (2021) *Heritage, Conflicts, Tourism and the Role of Researchers: An Ethnographic Approach*. 8th Ethnography and Qualitative Research Conference, 9-12 June, University of Trento, Italy.
- Redfoot, D. (1984) 'Touristic authenticity, touristic angst, and modern reality', *Qualitative Sociology*, 7, pp. 291-309.
- Reed, M. S. (2008) 'Stakeholder participation for environmental management: a literature review', *Biological Conservation*, 141, pp. 2417-2431. DOI: 10.1016/j.biocon.2008.07.014.
- Reisinger, Y. (2009) *International Tourism: Cultures and Behavior*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Resnik, D. B. (2020) 'What is ethics in research and why is it important?', *National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences*. available <https://www.niehs.nih.gov/research/resources/bioethics/whatis/index.cfm>.
- Richards, G. (1993) 'Cultural tourism in Europe', in Cooper, C. P. and Lockwood, A. (eds.) *Progress in Tourism, Recreation and Hospitality Management*, 5, pp. 99-115.
- Richards, G. (1996) 'The Scope and Significance of Cultural Tourism', in Richards, G. (ed.), *Cultural Tourism in Europe*, pp. 3-18. Wallingford: CABI.
- Richards, G. (2001) *Cultural Attractions and European Tourism*. Wallingford: CABI.
- Richards, G. (2007) 'Introduction: Global Trends in Cultural Tourism', in Richards, G. (ed.), *Cultural Tourism: Global and Local Perspectives*. New York: The Haworth Press, Inc.

- Richards, G. (2010) 'The traditional quantitative approach. Surveying cultural tourists: Lessons from the ATLAS Cultural Tourism Research Project', in Richards, G. and Munsters, W. (eds.), *Cultural Tourism Research Methods*. Oxfordshire, UK: CABI.
- Richards, G. (2014a) 'Tourism trends: The convergence of culture and tourism'. *The Netherlands: Academy for Leisure NHTV University of Applied Sciences*.
- Richards, G. (2014b). 'Creativity and tourism in the city', *Current Issues in Tourism*, 17(2), pp. 119–144.
- Richards, G. (2018) 'Cultural tourism: a review of recent research and trends', *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 36, pp. 12-21.
- Richards, G. and Hall, D. (2002) 'The community: A sustainable concept in tourism development?', in Hall, D. and Richards, G., (eds.) *Tourism and Sustainable Community Development*, pp. 1-13. London: Routledge.
- Robertson, M. (2009) 'Àite Dachaidh: Re-connecting people with place – Island landscapes and intangible heritage', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 15(2-3), pp. 153-162.
- Rose G. (1997) 'Situating knowledges: positionality, reflexivities and other tactics', *Progress in Human Geography*, 21(3), pp. 305-320. DOI: 10.1191/030913297673302122.
- Rudolph, T. B., Ruckelshaus, M., Swilling, M., Allison, E. H., Österblom, H., Gelcich, S. and Mbatha, P. (2020) 'A transition to sustainable ocean governance', *Nature Communications*, 11, p. 3600.
- Ruhanen, L. (2013) 'Local government: Facilitator or inhibitor of sustainable tourism development?', *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 21(1), pp. 80-98.
- Saija, L., De Leo, D., Forester, J., Pappalardo, G., Rocha, I., Sletto, B., Corburn, J., Mwua, B. and Magnaghi, A. (2017) 'Learning from practice: Environmental and community mapping as participatory action

research in planning', *Planning Theory & Practice*, 18(1), pp. 127-153.
DOI: 10.1080/14649357.2016.1262982.

Salazar, N. B. (2012) 'Community-based cultural tourism: Issues, threats and opportunities', *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 20(1), pp. 9-22.

Santos, M. C. Veiga, C., Santos, J. A. C. and Aguas, P. (2022) 'Sustainability as a success factor for tourism destinations: a systematic review', *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*, 14(1), pp. 20-37.

Savin-Baden, M. and Howell Major, C. (2013) *Qualitative Research: The Essential Guide to Theory and Practice*. London: Routledge.

Schweinsberg, S., Wearing, S., and Lai, P. -H. (2021) 'Host communities and last chance tourism', *Tourism Geographies*, 23(5-6), pp. 945-962. DOI: 10.1080/14616688.2019.1708446.

Scriven, R. (2014) 'Geographies of pilgrimage: Meaningful movements and embodied mobilities', *Geography Compass*, 8(4) pp. 249-261.

Sedmak, G. and Kociper, T. (2017) 'The consistency of a tourism product: a new conceptual framework', *European Journal of Tourism Research*, 17, pp. 102-115.

Seetanah, B., Juwaheer, T. D., Lamport, M. J., Rojid, S., Sannasse, R. V., and Agathe, U. S. (2011) 'Does infrastructure matter in Tourism Development?', *University of Mauritius Research Journal*, 17, pp. 89-108.

Sharpley, R. (2006) *Travel and Tourism*. London: Sage.

Sheppard, G. and Beck, M. (2020) 'Stakeholder engagement and the future of Irish public-private partnerships', *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 0(0), pp. 1-19. DOI: 10.1177/0020852320971692.

Skarlatidou, A., Suškevičs, M., Göbel, C., Prūse, B., Tauginienė, L., Mascarenhas, A., Mazzonetto, M., Sheppard, A., Barrett, J., Haklay, M., Baruch, A., Moraitopoulou, E.-A., Austen, K., Baiz, I., Berditchevskaia, A., Berényi, E., Hoyte, S., Kleijssen, L., Kragh, G., Legris, M., Mansilla-Sanchez, A., Nold, C., Vitos, M. and Wyszomirski, P., (2019) 'The Value

of Stakeholder Mapping to Enhance Co-Creation in Citizen Science Initiatives', *Citizen Science: Theory and Practice*, 4(1), pp. 1-10.

- Small, N., Munday, M. and Durance, I. (2017) 'The challenge of valuing ecosystem services that have no material benefits', *Global Environmental Change*, 44, pp. 57-67. DOI: 10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2017.03.005.
- Smith, A. and Stirling, A. (2008) 'Social-ecological resilience and socio-technical transitions: critical issues for sustainability governance', *STEPS Working Paper 8*, Brighton: STEPS Centre.
- Smith, J. A., Flowers, P. and Larkin, M. (2009) *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: Theory, Method and Research*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Smith, L. (2006) *Uses of heritage*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Smith, M. K. (2003) *Issues in Cultural Tourism Studies*. London: Routledge.
- Smith, S. L. J. (1994) 'The tourism product', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 21(3), pp. 582-595.
- Smith, W. W. (2007) 'Social desirability bias and exit survey responses: The case of a first nations campground in Central Ontario, Canada', *Tourism Management*, 28(3), pp. 917-919.
- Sofield, T. Guia, J. and Specht, J. (2017) 'Organic 'folkloric' community driven place-making and tourism', *Tourism Management*, 61, pp. 1-22. DOI: 10.1016/j.tourman.2017.01.002.
- Song, H., Witt, S. F., and Li, G. (2009) *Advanced Econometrics of Tourism Demand*. New York: Routledge.
- Stake, R. E. (1995) *The Art of Case Study Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Stake, R. E. (2005) 'Qualitative Case Studies', in Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, pp. 443-466. London: Sage.
- Stasiak, A. (2006) 'Tourist product — trail', *Tourism and Hospitality*, 10, pp. 9-40.

- Stebbins, R. A. (1996) 'Cultural tourism as serious leisure', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 23, pp. 945-948.
- Stephenson, W. (1935a) 'Technique of factor analysis', *Nature*, 136, p. 297.
DOI: 10.1038/136297b0 .
- Stephenson, W. (1935b) 'Correlating persons instead of tests', *Character and Personality*, 4, pp. 17-24. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-6494.1935.tb02022.x.
- Stephenson, W. (1965) 'Definition of opinion, attitude, and belief', *Psychological Record*, 15, pp. 281-288.
- Sterling, E. J., Betley, E., Sigouin, A., Gomez, A., Toomey, A., Cullman, G., Malone, C., Pekor, A., Arengo, F., Blair, M., Filardi, C., Landrigan, K., Porzecanski, A. L. (2017) 'Assessing the evidence for stakeholder engagement in biodiversity conservation', *Biological Conservation*, 209, pp. 159-171. DOI: 10.1016/j.biocon.2017.02.008.
- Stets, J. E. and Burke, P. J. (2000) 'Identity theory and social identity theory', *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 63(3), pp. 224-237.
- Stoeckl, N. (2008) 'Enhancing the economic benefits of tourism at the local level', in Moscardo, G. (ed.) *Building Community Capacity for Tourism Development*. Oxfordshire, UK: CABI.
- Stone, L. (1992) 'Disavowing Community', in Alexander, H. ed. *Philosophy of Education*, pp. 93-101. Champaign: Philosophy of Education Society.
- Stuart, P., Pearce, D. and Weaver, A. (2005) 'Tourism distribution channels in peripheral regions: the case of Southland, New Zealand', *Tourism Geographies*, 7(3), pp. 235-256.
- Stylos, N., Bellou, V., Andronikidis, A. and Vassiliadis, C. A. (2017) 'Linking the dots among destination images, place attachment, and revisit intentions: A study among British and Russian tourists', *Tourism Management*, 60, pp. 15-29. DOI: 10.1016/j.tourman.2016.11.006.
- Sullivan-Wiley, K. A., Gianotti, A. G. S., and Connors, J. P. C. (2019) 'Mapping vulnerability: Opportunities and limitations of participatory

- community mapping', *Applied Geography*, 105, pp. 47-57. DOI: 10.1016/j.apgeog.2019.02.008.
- Sullivan, S. (2008) 'More unconsidered trifles', *Australian Archaeology*, 64, pp. 107-116.
- Tao, T. C. H. and Wall, G. (2009) 'Tourism as a sustainable livelihood strategy', *Tourism Management*, 30, pp. 90-98.
- The Irish Times (2002) 'Time closes the last chapter in the story of the historic hotel', *The Irish Times*, 29 August 2002, available: europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2279 [accessed 21 Aug 2022].
- Theerapappisit, P. (2012) 'The bottom-up approach of community-based ethnic tourism: a case study in Chiang Rai', in Kasimoglu, M. (ed.), *Strategies for Tourism Industry: Micro and Macro Perspectives*, pp. 267-294. Croatia: InTech.
- Theodori, G. (2005) 'Community and community development in resource-based areas: Operational definitions rooted in an interactional perspective', *Society and Natural Resources*, 18(7), pp. 661-669.
- Thompson, S. (2012) 'Famine Travel: Irish Tourism from the Great Famine to Decolonization', In: Colbert, B. (ed.) *Travel Writing and Tourism in Britain and Ireland*, pp. 164-180. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Timothy, D. J. (2011) *Cultural Heritage and Tourism: An Introduction*. Bristol: Channel View Publications.
- Timothy, D. J. (2018a) 'Geography: the substance of tourism', *Tourism Geographies*, 20(1), pp. 166-169. DOI: 10.1080/14616688.2017.1402948.
- Timothy, D. J. (2018b) 'Making sense of heritage tourism: Research trends in a maturing field of study', *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 25, pp. 177-180.
- Timothy, D. J. and Boyd, S. W. (2015) *Tourism and Trails: Cultural, Ecological and Management Issues*. Bristol: Channel View Publications.

- Timothy, D. J. and Nyaupane, G. P. (2009) *Cultural Heritage and Tourism: A regional perspective*. New York: Routledge.
- Torgerson, W. S. (1952) 'Multidimensional scaling: I. Theory and method', *Psychometrika*, 17(4), pp. 401-419.
- Tosun, C. (1998) 'Roots of unsustainable tourism development at the local level: the case of Urgup in Turkey', *Tourism Management*, 19, pp. 595-610.
- Tosun, C. (2000) 'Limits to community participation in the tourism development process of developing countries', *Tourism Management*, 21, pp. 613-633.
- Tosun, C. (2006) 'Expected nature of community participation in tourism development', *Tourism Management*, 27(3), pp. 493-504. DOI: 10.1016/j.turman.2004.12.004.
- Tourism Ireland (2019) *Annual Report 2018*. Dublin: Tourism Ireland.
Available at:
www.tourismireland.com/TourismIreland/media/Tourism-Ireland/Research/TOURISM-IRELAND-ANNUAL-REPORT-2018.pdf?ext=.pdf
- Towner, J. (1985) 'The grand tour: A key phase in the history of tourism', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 12(3), pp. 297-333.
- Towner, J. (1996) *A historical Geography of Recreation and Tourism in the Western World 1540-1940*, New York: Wiley.
- Tribe, J. (1997) 'The indiscipline of tourism', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 24(3), pp. 638-657.
- Tribe, J. (2004) 'Knowing about tourism: Epistemological issues', in *Qualitative Research in Tourism*, 1st edn. Oxfordshire: Routledge.
- Tumiel-Berhalter, L. M., Watkins, R. and Crespo, C. J. (2005) 'Community-based participatory research: Defining community stakeholders', *Metropolitan Universities*, 16(1), pp. 93-106.
- Turner, D. W. (2010) 'Qualitative interview design: a practical guide for novice researcher', *The Qualitative Report*, 15(3), pp. 754-760.

- Tutenges, S. (2012) 'Nightlife tourism: a mixed methods study of young tourists at an international nightlife resort', *Tourist Studies*, 12(2), pp. 131-150.
- Tweed, C. and Sutherland, M. (2007) 'Built cultural heritage and sustainable urban development', *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 83(1), pp. 62-69.
- Údarás na Gaeltachta (2021) *The Gaeltacht*, available: <https://udaras.ie/en/our-language-the-gaeltacht/the-gaeltacht/> [accessed 3 Nov 2021].
- Uittenbroek, C. J., Janssen-Jansen, L. B., Spit, T. J. M., and Runhaar, H. A. C. (2014) 'Organizational values and the implications for mainstreaming climate adaptation in Dutch municipalities: Using Q methodology', *Journal of Water and Climate Change*, 5(3), pp. 443-456.
- UNEP and UNWTO (2005), *Making Tourism More Sustainable: A Guide for Policy Makers*. Paris/Madrid.
- United Nations (2014) *Global Issues: Governance*, available <https://www.un.org/en/globalissues/governance/> [accessed 25 Aug 2022].
- UNWTO (2001) *Cultural Heritage and Tourism Development*. Madrid: UNWTO. DOI: 10.18111/9789284414796.
- UNWTO (2014) *Tourism Highlights, 2014 edition*. Madrid: UNWTO.
- UNWTO (2017) *Definitions committee on tourism and competitiveness*. CTC. <http://cf.cdn.unwto.org/sites/all/files/docpdf/ctcdefinitionsenweb.pdf>.
- UNWTO (2018) *Report on tourism and culture synergies*. Madrid: UNWTO.
- Urry, J. (1990) *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies*. London: Sage.
- Uzzell, D. L. (1995) 'Conferring a sense of place identity: the role of museums', *The International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 1, p. 4.

- Valentine, G. (2005) 'Tell me about... using interviews as a research methodology', in Flowerdew, R. and Martin, D. (eds.) *Methods in Human Geography: A Guide for Students Doing a Research Project*, 2nd edn., pp. 110-127. Edinburgh Gate: Addison Wesley Longman.
- Van Der Brugge, R., Rotmans, J., and Loorbach, D. (2005) 'The transition in Dutch water management', *Regional Environmental Change*, 5(4), pp. 164- 176.
- van Riper, C. J., Foelske, L., Kuwayama, S. D., Keller, R. and Johnson, D. (2020) 'Understanding the role of local knowledge in the spatial dynamics of social values expressed by stakeholders', *Applied Geography*, 123, p. 102279.
- Vogl, G. (2008) 'Work as community: Narratives of solidarity and teamwork in the contemporary workplace, Who Owns Them?', *Sociological Research Online*, 14(4), 4.
- Wagner, W., Duveen, G., Farr, R., Jovchelovitch, S., Lorenzi-Cioldi, F., Markova, I., and Rose, D. (1999) 'Theory and method of social representations', *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*, 2(1), pp. 95-125.
- Walker, S., Read, S. and Priest, H. (2013) 'Use of reflexivity in a mixed-methods study', *Nurse Researcher*, 20(3), pp. 38-43.
- Walsh, C., Saxena, D. and Muzellec, L. (2020) 'AirBnB: Managing trust and safety on a platform business', *The Irish Journal of Management*, 39(2), pp. 126-134. DOI: 10.2478/ijm-2020-0004.
- Walsh, J. (2014) 'Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way, the world's longest coastal route', *Irish Central*, 16 April. Available at: <https://www.irishcentral.com/roots/irelands-wild-atlantic-way-the-worlds-longest-coastal-route-photos-videos> [accessed 26 March 2020].
- Wang, S. and Chen, J. S. (2015) 'The influence of place identity on perceived tourism impacts', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 52, pp. 16-28.
- Ward-Perkins, D., Beckmann, C. and Ellis, J. (2020) *Tourism Routes and Trails: Theory and Practice*. Oxfordshire: CABI.

- Ward, A. and Linehan, M. (2017) 'An Investigation into the Impact of Airbnb on Hotel Accommodation in the Cork City Area', in Hanrahan, J. ed., *Tourism and Hospitality Research in Ireland: Entrepreneurs Driving Tourism and Hospitality*, pp. 95-109. Sligo: IT Sligo Ireland.
- Warf, B. (2010). 'Positionality', in *Encyclopedia of geography*, vol. 1, pp. 2258-2258. Sage. DOI: 10.4135/9781412939591.n913.
- Wassler, P., Nguyen, T. H. H, Mai, L. Q., and Schuckert, M. (2019) 'Social representations and resident attitudes: A multiple-mixed-methods approach', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 78. DOI: 10.1016/j.annals.2019.06.007.
- Waterton, E. (2005) 'Whose sense of place? Reconciling archaeological perspectives with community values: cultural landscapes in England', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 11(4), pp. 309-325.
- Waterton, E. and Smith, L. (2008) 'Heritage protection for the 21st century', *Cultural Trends*, 17(3), pp. 197-203.
- Watson, V. (2014) 'Co-production and collaboration in planning – The difference', *Planning Theory & Practice*, 15(1), pp. 62-76. DOI: 10.1080/14649357.2013.866266.
- Watts, S. and Stenner, P. (2005) 'Doing Q methodology: Theory, method and interpretation', *Qualitative Research in Psychology* (2), pp. 67-91.
- Watts, S. and Stenner, P. (2012) *Doing Q Methodological Research: Theory, Method & Interpretation*, 1st edn. London: Sage.
- Weaver, D. (2006) *Sustainable Tourism: Theory and Practice*. London: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Weaver, D. and Lawton, L. (2002) *Tourism Management*. Milton Keynes, UK: Wiley and Sons.
- Webler, T., Danielson, S., and Tuler, S. (2009) 'Using Q method to reveal social perspectives in environmental research'. Greenfield, MA: Social Environmental Research Institute. available www.serius.org/pubs/Qprimer.pdf [accessed 21 May 2020].

- Weir, L. (2015) 'Wild Atlantic Way: it is big and bold, but it also needs to be sensitive and fair'. *Irish Times*. 15 April 2015.
- White, B. (n.d.) *Methods Vignettes: Q Method (Q Methodology)*, STEPS Centre: Pathways to Sustainability, available <https://steps-centre.org/pathways-methods-vignettes/methods-vignettes-q-method/> [accessed 21 May 2020].
- Wickens, E. (2002) 'The sacred and the profane: a tourist typology', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 29(3), pp. 834-851.
- Wiles, R., Crow, G., Heath, S. and Vikki, C. (2008) 'The Management of Confidentiality and Anonymity in Social Research', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 11(5), pp. 417-428.
- Williams, W. H. A. (2008) *Tourism, Landscape, and the Irish Character: British Travel Writers in Pre-Famine Ireland*. Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Williams, W. H. A. (2010) *Creating Irish Tourism: The First Century, 1750 – 1850*. Anthem Press.
- Witt, S. F., Song, H. and Louvieris, P. (2003) 'Statistical testing in forecasting model selection', *Journal of Travel Research*, 42(2), pp. 151-158.
- World Tourism Organisation (WTO) (1985) *The State's Role in Protecting and Promoting Culture as a Factor of Tourism Development*. Madrid: WTO.
- Wylie, J. (2015) 'Poststructuralist Approaches: Deconstruction and Discourse Analysis', in Aitken, S. C. and Valentine, G. (eds.) *Approaches to Human Geography: Philosophies, Theories, People and Practices*, 2nd edn. London: Sage.
- Yang, Y., Altschuler, B., Liang, Z., and Li, X. R. (2021) 'Monitoring the global COVID-19 impact on tourism: The COVID19 tourism index', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 90. DOI: 10.1016/j.annals.2020.103120.
- Yin, R. K. (1994) *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 2nd edn. London: Sage Publications.

- Yin, R. K. (2009) *Case study research: Design and method*, 4th edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Zabala, A. and Pascual, U. (2016) 'Bootstrapping Q methodology to improve the understanding of human perspectives', *PLoS One*, 11(2), e0148087.
- Zabala, A., Sandbrook, C. and Mukherjee, N. (2018) 'When and how to use Q methodology to understand perspectives in conservation research', *Conservation Biology*, 32(5), pp. 1185-1194. DOI: 10.1111/cobi.13123.
- Zafra-Calvo, N., Pascual, U., Brockington, D., Coolsaet, B., Cortez-Vazquez, J. A., Gross-Camp, N., Palomo, I. and Burgess, N. D. (2017) 'Towards an indicator system to assess equitable management in protected areas', *Biological Conservation*, 211, pp. 134–141.
- Zawadka, J. and Pietrzak-Zawadka, J. (2018) 'Tourist trails as an element of a rural tourist product and their popularity among the inhabitants of Poland', *Ekonomia I Środowisko* 3(66), pp. 195-207.
- Zhang, S.-N., Ruan, W.-Q., and Yang, T.-T. (2021) 'National identity construction in cultural creative tourism: the double mediators of implicit cultural memory and explicit cultural learning', *Sage Open*, 11(3). DOI: 10.1177/21582440211040789.
- Zhang, Y., Cole, S. T. and Chancellor, C. H. (2013) 'Residents' preferences for involvement in tourism development and influences from individual profiles', *Tourism Planning & Development*, 10(3). Pp. 267-284. DOI: 10.1080/21568316.2012.747984.
- Zolfani, S. H., Sedaghat, M., Maknoon, R. and Zavadskas, E. K. (2015) "Sustainable tourism: a comprehensive literature review on frameworks and applications," *Economic Research – Ekonomska Istrazivanja*, 28, pp. 1-30.
- Zuelow, E. G. E. (2009) *Making Ireland Irish: Tourism and National Identity since the Irish Civil War*, 1st edn. New York: Syracuse University Press.

Appendices

**Appendix A: Marine and Coastal Tourism and Leisure Survey 2019
(MOSES Project tourist survey)**



343718

NUI Galway - Marine & Coastal Tourism & Leisure Survey 2019
CAPI QUESTIONNAIRE

Good morning/afternoon/evening. I am _____ from RED C Research & Marketing, an independent research agency. We are conducting a survey on behalf of the National University of Ireland Galway. The purpose of the study is to examine the market for coastal tourism and leisure in the West of Ireland. The information you provide will be used to help policymakers better manage our coastal and marine resources in the future.

In this survey, we would therefore like to ask you about your time in Ireland during your vacation and the activities that you have engaged in, or plan to engage in, during your trip to Ireland.

We are very interested in hearing your opinion. All of the answers you give will remain completely confidential. Can you spare 10 minutes to answer some questions?

By agreeing to participate in the survey you agree to provide information about your views and some demographic details such as your age and gender for research purposes. These details will be retained securely only for as long as reasonably necessary for the purpose for which we collected. You have the right to withdraw consent at any time.

Are you happy to participate?

Please tick the box if the respondent agrees to participate in the survey.

Section A. Screening

ASK ALL

Q.1 Are you on holiday in this area?

SINGLE CODE, DO NOT RANDOMISE LIST

1. Yes
2. No → **CLOSE**

ASK ALL

Q.2 What is your country of residence?

SINGLE CODE, DO NOT RANDOMISE LIST

1. Republic of Ireland
2. Northern Ireland
3. The UK (excl. Northern Ireland)
4. Germany
5. France
6. Italy
7. Spain
8. Portugal
9. Holland/the Netherlands
10. Belgium
11. Denmark
12. Sweden
13. Norway
14. Finland
15. Austria
16. Switzerland
17. Poland
18. Czech Republic
19. Slovakia
20. Hungary
21. Romania
22. Bulgaria
23. Russia
24. USA
25. Canada
26. Australia
27. New Zealand
28. China
29. India
30. Other, please specify:_____

SCRIPTER: QUOTAS PER SAMPLE POINT, I.E. 26 INTERVIEWS:

- **Minimum 11 Domestic (ROI Code 1 or NI Code 2 @ Q.1)**
- **Minimum 11 Overseas (Codes 3-30 @ Q.1)**

ASK ALL

Q.3 INTERVIEWER: Note Gender

1. Male
2. Female

ASK ALL

Q.4 What is your age? ___ years MIN-MAX VALUE 18-99

CLOSE IF LESS THAN 18

Section B. General tourism and leisure

ASK ALL

Q.5 How many people are travelling with you on this trip, including yourself? If you are travelling as part of a tour group, please do not include the entire tour group, just the friends and family you are on this trip with.

INTERVIEWER READ OUT

Adults aged 18 years and over: ___ adult(s) MIN-MAX VALUE 1-20

Children, less than 18 years: ___ child(ren) MIN-MAX VALUE 0-9

ASK IF TRAVELLING WITH OTHERS (SUM OF Q5_1 & Q5_2 > 1)

Q.6 Are you travelling with family or friends, or both?

SINGLE CODE, DO NOT RANDOMISE

1. Family
2. Friends
3. Both
4. Other, please specify: _____

ASK ALL

Q.7 Are you on an organised tour, i.e. a tour where most have been organised by one company in advance for you, e.g. accommodation, tours, sights to see, transport, etc.?

SINGLE CODE

1. Yes
2. No

ASK ALL

Q.8 Which of the following statements best describes how much planning of your itinerary you did before you started your holiday?

SINGLE CODE

1. I did not plan anything before I started my holiday

2. I planned to visit one or two places/sites but left a lot of flexibility in my itinerary
3. I have a general overall plan for the holiday but each day has some flexibility
4. Every day was planned in detail before the holiday started

ASK ALL

Q.9 How many days are you on holiday in the Republic of Ireland for this trip in total, i.e. including both the days you have already been here for and the days you have left?

___ day(s) MIN-MAX 1-99

ASK ALL

Q.10 How many days have you been on holiday so far?

___ day(s) MIN-MAX 0-99, VALUE MUST NOT BE HIGHER THAN VALUE FROM Q.9

ASK ALL

Q.11 Have you heard of the Wild Atlantic Way?

SINGLE CODE

1. Yes
2. No

READ OUT TO ALL

SHOWCARD 1

YOU ARE ON THE WILD ATLANTIC WAY WHICH IS A TOURING ROUTE ALONG THE WEST COAST OF IRELAND.

INTERVIEWER: SHOW RESPONDENT SHOWCARD 1 AND INDICATE THEIR LOCATION AND OUTLINE THE REST OF THE WILD ATLANTIC WAY

ASK ALL

Q.12 How many days do you think you have spent and/or will spend on the Wild Atlantic Way during your stay in the Republic of Ireland?

INTERVIEWER: IF NOT SURE, PLEASE ASK RESPONDENT TO GIVE HIS/HERS BEST GUESS.

___ day(s) MIN-MAX 0-99, VALUE MUST NOT BE HIGHER THAN VALUE FROM Q.9

ASK ALL

Q.13 What are the top three highlights of your visit so far or expected highlights planned along the Wild Atlantic Way during your holiday?

NAME AND CODE ANSWER IN BELOW

Multiple CODE

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. Refused

ASK QUESTION FOR EVERY HIGHLIGHT CHOSEN IN Q.13, IF Q13 IS CODE 4, SKIP TO Q18

Q.14 Has this highlight occurred already or do you expect it to happen later on in the holiday? <INSERT HIGHLIGHT FROM Q.13>?

INTERVIEWER, PLEASE ASK RESPONDENT TO GIVE HIS/HERS BEST GUESS IF NOT SURE

Multiple CODE

1. Highlight happened already
2. Highlight is expected to happen later in holiday

SCRIPTER: SHOW ALL EXPERIENCES CODE 1 @ Q.14

INTERVIEWER: SELECT ALL THAT ARE LOCATION/SITE BASED

SCRIPTER: RANDOMLY SELECT THIS LIST OF 'LOCATION/SITE BASED' 'HIGHLIGHT EXPERIENCES'

ASK QUESTION FOR FIRST HIGHLIGHT (LOCATION) THAT HAS BEEN VISITED ALREADY (CODE 1 IN Q14),

Q.15 Which statement best describes the level of tourist activity at <INSERT HIGHLIGHT FROM Q.13>?

Single CODE

1. I or my party were alone
2. There were a few other tourists at this site/location
3. There was a moderate number of tourists at this site/location
4. The site/location was busy but not over crowded
5. The site/location was overcrowded
6. Not applicable (**INTERVIEWER CODE IF HIGHLIGHT NOT SITE/LOCATION**)

ASK QUESTION FOR FIRST HIGHLIGHT (LOCATION) THAT HAS BEEN VISITED ALREADY (CODE 1 IN Q14),

Q.16 Which statement best describes the level of road traffic at or in the vicinity of <INSERT HIGHLIGHT FROM Q.13>?

Single CODE

1. Little to no road traffic
2. Low volume of road traffic
3. Moderate volume of road traffic
4. High volume of road traffic
5. Road traffic was in gridlock/traffic jam
6. Not applicable (**INTERVIEWER CODE IF HIGHLIGHT NOT SITE/LOCATION**)

ASK QUESTION FOR FIRST HIGHLIGHT (LOCATION) THAT HAS BEEN VISITED ALREADY (CODE 1 IN Q14),

Q.17 Which statement best rates the level of transport infrastructure (road capacity, parking, public transport, etc) for tourism at or to <INSERT HIGHLIGHT FROM Q.13>?

Single CODE

1. Very poor
2. Poor
3. Moderate
4. Good
5. Very good
6. Not applicable (**INTERVIEWER CODE IF HIGHLIGHT NOT SITE/LOCATION**)

ASK ALL

Q.18 Are you aware of the Wild Atlantic Way discovery points?

SINGLE CODE

1. Yes
2. No

ASK ALL AWARE AT Q.18 (CODE 1), OTHERWISE SKIP TO Q21

Q.19 Have you visited any of the Wild Atlantic Way discovery points?

SINGLE CODE

1. Yes
2. No

ASK QUESTION FOR THOSE THAT ANSWERED YES IN Q.19, OTHERWISE SKIP TO Q21

Q20. To what extent have Discovery Points along the Wild Atlantic Way enhanced your visitor experience?

1. Negatively enhanced my experience
2. No effect on my experience
3. Positively enhanced my experience

ASK ALL

Q.21 How many days do you think you have spent and/or will spend in/on/along the **Wild Atlantic Way (Near the coast)** in each of these Wild Atlantic Way counties of the Republic of Ireland?

SHOWCARD 2. INTERVIEWER, PLEASE ASK RESPONDENT TO GIVE HIS/HERS BEST GUESS IF NOT SURE. INTERVIEWER, PLEASE HELP RESPONDENT IDENTIFY CORRECT COUNTY BASED ON TOWN/CITY/DESTINATION, IF REQUIRED, USE MAP IF NEEDED.

1. Donegal ___ day(s)
2. Leitrim ___ day(s)
3. Sligo ___ day(s)
4. Mayo ___ day(s)
5. Galway ___ day(s)
6. Clare ___ day(s)
7. Limerick ___ day(s)
8. Kerry ___ day(s)
9. West Cork ___ day(s) [**INTERVIEWER: CLARIFY THAT WEST CORK INCLUDES KINSALE AND WEST OF KINSALE, CLONAKILITY, BANTRY, SKIBBEREEN, BEARA BUT DOES NOT INCLUDE EAST CORK - SUCH AS CORK CITY, YOUGHAL, COBH,**

MIN-MAX 0-99, VALUE MUST NOT BE HIGHER THAN VALUE PROVIDED IN Q.12

ASK ALL

Q.22 During your trip in the Republic of Ireland, how much do you estimate that you're travelling party will spend in total on the following categories? Please give your answer in euros.

SHOWCARD 3. PLEASE ASK RESPONDENT TO GIVE HIS BEST ESTIMATE/GUESS EVEN IF HE/SHE IS NOT SURE.
DO NOT RANDOMISE

- Eating out/socialising: ____ euros
Food/groceries, i.e. self-catering, snacks, etc. (not including eating out): ____ euros
Entrance to local visitor attractions: ____ euros
Hire of equipment, e.g. tents, sports, etc.: ____ euros
Petrol/diesel: ____ euros
Accommodation, e.g. hotels, Airbnb, etc.: ____ euros
Maps/guidebooks/leaflets: ____ euros
Bus/train fares: ____ euros
Car rental: ____ euros
Camper van rental: ____ euros

Other items (excluding flights/ferries to/from Ireland): ___ euros

SCRIPTER: MIN-MAX VALUE FOR THE ABOVE 0-9999

ASK ALL

Q.23 What proportion of your travelling party's total spend on holiday in the Republic of Ireland, do you think will be spent in Wild Atlantic Areas specifically? Please give an answer ranging from 0-100%.

INTERVIEWER: ASK RESPONDENT TO GIVE HIS/HERS BEST GUESS EVEN IF NOT SURE.

___% MIN-MAX 0-100

Section C Wild Atlantic Way based Activities

We are now interested in looking at land based and water based tourism activities in the coastal area along the Wild Atlantic Way, as well as water based activities in the sea along the Wild Atlantic Way in more detail.

ASK ALL

Q.24 During this trip to the Wild Atlantic Way have you or do you intend to engage in any of these leisure activities?

SHOWCARD 4

MULTICODE, DO NOT RANDOMISE

Wild Atlantic Way land based activities

1. Hill walking/Hiking/cross country walking in hills or forests
2. Walking along the coast/beach/promenade/cliffs, etc.
3. Other land based trips to the beach or seaside (sunbathing, picnicking, beach games, classes (e.g. yoga, boot camp), etc.)
4. Running/jogging
5. Cycling
6. Horse-riding/Equestrian sports
7. Fishing/ Angling in river or lake
8. Golfing
9. Visiting heritage attraction (castle, house, gardens)
10. Visiting National parks/nature reserves etc.
11. Bird and wildlife watching
12. Visiting lighthouses
13. Museums/art galleries/ interpretive centres
14. Touring/sightseeing
15. Any other sightseeing trip where the proximity to the sea was a necessity
16. Camping
17. Visiting festival or event
18. Visiting pubs
19. Visiting Spas

SHOWCARD 5

FISHING

20. Sea angling/fishing from shore or boat

SAILING/BOATING

21. Sailing in the sea
22. Boating in the sea in rowing boats, kayaks, canoes, etc.
23. Boating, cruising in the sea in power-boats, rigid inflatable boats or boats with in-board engine

SEA SPORTS

24. Swimming in the sea
25. Water skiing/jet skiing
26. Surfing/sail boarding/kite surfing/paddleboarding/ surf kayaking
27. Scuba diving/snorkelling
28. Other sea sports

OTHER

29. Climbing, bouldering and coastering at the coast
30. Whale/dolphin watching
31. Other trips to the islands
32. Other marine activities _____
33. None of the above (EXCLUSIVE)

**FILTER: ASK QUESTION FOR ACTIVITIES CHOSEN IN Q.24, IF Q24 IS CODE 33
'NONE OF THESE', SKIP TO Q27**

**SCRIPTER: LIMIT TO MAX OF 5 ACTIVITIES CHOSEN AT Q.24, WITH THOSE
HIGHLIGHTED IN GREEN AS THE 'PRIORITY' ACTIVITIES**

Q.25 How many days during your trip to the Wild Atlantic Way, do you think you have spent and/or will spend some time carrying out <INSERT ACTIVITY FROM Q.24>?

INTERVIEWER, PLEASE ASK RESPONDENT TO GIVE HIS/HERS BEST GUESS IF NOT SURE

___ day(s) MIN-MAX 1-99, VALUE MUST NOT BE HIGHER THAN VALUE FROM Q.9

ASK QUESTION FOR ACTIVITIES CHOSEN IN Q.24

**SCRIPTER: LIMIT TO MAX OF 5 ACTIVITIES CHOSEN AT Q.24, WITH THOSE
HIGHLIGHTED IN GREEN AS THE 'PRIORITY' ACTIVITIES**

Q.26 Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the facilities for <INSERT ACTIVITY FROM Q.24> in the Republic of Ireland.

SHOWCARD 6

1. Very dissatisfied
2. Somehow dissatisfied
3. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
4. Somehow satisfied
5. Very satisfied
6. Don't know

ASK ALL

Q.27 What proportion of your travelling party's total spend on holiday in the Republic of Ireland, do you think will be spent in pursuit of all the water based leisure activities you mentioned along the Wild Atlantic Way? Please give an answer ranging from 0-100%.

INTERVIEWER: ASK RESPONDENT TO GIVE HIS/HERS BEST GUESS EVEN IF NOT SURE.

___% MIN-MAX 0-100

Section D. Attitudes towards sustainability of the WAW

SHOWCARD 7

ASK ALL

Q28. For each of the statements below, please select your level of agreement or disagreement

28a. The Wild Atlantic Way has met my expectations about what coastal Ireland should look like.

28b. The Wild Atlantic Way has enriched me with a uniquely Irish experience.

28c. Touring the Wild Atlantic Way gives me a sense of adventure.

28d. I made a priority to meet and engage with local people along the Wild Atlantic Way.

28e. The destinations I visited along the Wild Atlantic Way were overcrowded with tourists.

28f. Overall, my experience on the Wild Atlantic Way was good value for money.

1. Strongly agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Somewhat disagree
5. Strongly disagree
6. Don't know

Section E. Background Info

Finally, in order to provide us with a profile of the people who have participated in this survey and to make sure that those we are surveying are from a wide range of backgrounds, I'm going to ask you some general questions about yourself. All of the information will be kept anonymous and confidential.

ASK ALL

Q.29 What is your highest education level achieved to date? Is it...

SINGLE CODE, DO NOT RANDOMISE LIST

1. Primary level or equivalent
2. Secondary level or equivalent
3. Third level or higher
4. Refused (DO NOT READ OUT)

ASK ALL

Q.30 What is your marital status?

SINGLE CODE, DO NOT RANDOMISE LIST

1. Married
2. Living as married
3. Single
4. Separated/divorced/widowed

ASK ALL

Q.31 Including you, how many people live in your household within the following age brackets:

1. 0-4 years ____
 2. 5-17 years ____
 3. 18-60 years ____
 4. Over 60 years ____
- MIN-MAX 0-9, SUM MUST BE 1 OR MORE

ASK ALL

Q.32 What is your current working status?

INTERVIEWER: PROMPT TO PRECODES

1. Working full-time (occupation/paid job of 30+ hours per week)
2. Working part-time (occupation/paid job of 18-29 hours per week)
3. Working part-time (occupation/paid job of 17 or less hours per week)
4. Student
5. Home maker
6. Retired
7. Unemployed

8. Unable to work due to sickness or disability
9. Other, please specify: _____
10. Refused (DO NOT READ OUT)

ASK ALL

Q.33 Could you please indicate the letter that best describes your total personal income per year (whether from employment, pensions, state benefits, investments or any other sources) before deduction of tax? **Again please keep in mind this information is strictly confidential.** Please answer in euros

SHOWCARD 8

- A. Less than 20,000
- B. 20,001 - 30,000
- C. 30,001 - 40,000
- D. 40,001 - 50,000
- E. 50,001 - 60,000
- F. 60,001 - 70,000
- G. 70,001 - 80,000
- H. 80,001 - 100,000
- I. Greater than 100,001
- J. Refused

Thank You for your time

Thank you for your participation in this survey which is being conducted on behalf of 'NUI Galway'. For further information please refer to RED C's privacy information notice <https://www.redcresearch.ie/about-red-c-research/privacy-information-notice>

INTERVIEWER COMPLETE:

C.1 Date of interview

C.2 Region where interview was conducted

1. Buncrana
2. Sligo Town
3. Galway City
4. Doolan
5. Dingle
6. Clonakilty

Appendix B: Interview Schedules (Community & Fáilte Ireland)

Community Interview Schedule & Participatory Mapping Prompts

Demographics:

Gender:

Age:

Nationality:

Questions:

1. How would you describe your community?
 - a. Probe: How would you define “community”?
2. How would you describe culture and how you relate to it?
 - a. How would you define “culture”?
3. Do you actively participate in your community?
4. Did/do you feel a sense of involvement in the development of the Wild Atlantic Way? How/Why?
5. Did/do you feel a sense of involvement in the implementation of the Wild Atlantic Way? How/Why?
6. Did/do you feel a sense of involvement in the progression of the Wild Atlantic Way? How/Why?
7. What benefits do you notice to your community after the implementation of the Wild Atlantic Way?
8. What barriers do you see/ think that your community has in relation to the Wild Atlantic Way?

Participatory Mapping Probes:

1. Where in your community does the Wild Atlantic Way demonstrate significant value?
2. Where do you consider to be the most significant area(s) for tourism in your community?
3. Where do you consider to be the most significant area(s) for the economy in your community?

Fáilte Ireland Interview Schedule

Demographics:

Gender:

Age:

Nationality:

1. How would you define/describe the Wild Atlantic Way tourism initiative?
2. Did/do you feel a sense of involvement in the development of the Wild Atlantic Way? - OR – What role did you have in the development of the Wild Atlantic Way?
3. Do you feel a sense of involvement in the progression of the Wild Atlantic Way?
4. Do you consider the level of community and stakeholder engagement during the development of the Wild Atlantic Way to be satisfactory?
5. What was the process for determining which communities to visit/engage with?
6. What do you view as the biggest success of the Wild Atlantic Way initiative?
7. What barriers do you see related to the Wild Atlantic Way?
 - a. How might future development address these barriers?
8. To what level is how tourism is dispersed a concern for the industry?
9. How might the collaboration with Local Authorities and Industry bodies be strengthened to maximise tourism potential?
10. The ITIC (2018*) highlights that “Global tourism continues to enjoy uninterrupted growth as one of the world’s fastest growing economic sectors”. What would you say contributes most to growth and/or success in Ireland’s tourism sector?

* Irish Tourism Industry Confederation (ITIC) –published in 2018 *Tourism: An Industry Strategy for Growth to 2025*.

Appendix C: Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form

Participant Information Sheet

Title of Study: *Along the Way: A community perspective of Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way initiative*

You are being invited to participate in research being led by National University of Ireland, Galway. This Participant Information Sheet is designed to inform you of the purpose and procedure of this research. If you choose to participate, you will be asked to sign a consent form. If you have any further questions after reading this information, please feel free to use the contact information provided. Thank you in advance for your time.

Introduction and Purpose

My name is Desiree Farrell and I am a PhD candidate in the Discipline of Geography at National University of Ireland, Galway. My research is focused on community perspectives of the Wild Atlantic Way, and I am delighted to have the opportunity to speak with you about your insights and experiences. Through interviews, this research seeks to examine the 'bigger picture' of what the Wild Atlantic Way means to you.

Procedure

I would like to meet with you for an interview, which would be audio-recorded with your consent. The interview will include questions relating to tourism, community identity and knowledge, policy, and the Wild Atlantic Way.

There are no foreseeable risks associated with participation in this research.

Confidentiality

Data collected during the course of this research is strictly confidential and will only be accessible to the researcher. Audio recordings of interviews will be transcribed for analysis, excluding personal and/or identifying details. You are entitled to a copy of this transcript and/or the audio recording, should you request one. Original recordings and transcripts will be stored in a locked file or under administrative password (if digital), as per NUI Galway's Data Protection Policy. Retention of data will be for 5 years, in order to allow for reporting, publication, and thesis submission. After this period, data will be shredded and disposed of, or permanently deleted, in accordance with NUI Galway's Data Protection Policy.

Rights

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You are entitled to change your mind and withdraw consent for participation at any point in the study without disadvantage or penalty.

Contacts

Desiree Farrell – researcher

(083) 0558915 | desiree.farrell@nuigalway.ie

Dr. Liam Carr – supervisor

(091) 492314
liam.m.carr@nuigalway.ie

Dr. Frances Fahy – supervisor

(091) 492315
frances.fahy@nuigalway.ie

If you have any concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent party in confidence, you may contact the Research Ethics Committee at the Research Office: ethics@nuigalway.ie; (091)495312.

Participant Identification Number:

Consent Form

Title of Study: *Along the Way: A community perspective of Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way initiative*

I confirm that I have read the information sheet provided (dated 6 October 2020) and consent to participate in the research conducted by Desiree Farrell from National University Ireland, Galway.

I understand that my participation in an interview is voluntary.

I understand that the data and information gathered in the interview will be used to complete a PhD thesis and related publications. I understand that audio recordings and transcripts are strictly confidential and will only be accessible by the researcher(s), and the use of pseudonyms and coding will protect my identity in the reporting stages of this research.

I understand that I can choose at any time to discontinue participation in the interview, or decline to answer any specific question, without disadvantage or penalty.

I have been provided a copy of the project information and consent form for my own records.

Participant's name (*please print*)

Participant's signature Date

Researcher's name (*please print*)

Researcher's signature Date

Appendix D: Interview Transcripts (Rathmullan and Fáilte Ireland Stakeholders)

Interviewer: Desiree Farrell (DF)

Respondent Code: 01

Location: Kerrs Bay, Rathmullan, Co. Donegal

Date: 29 September 2019

Audio length: 00:15:27.5

Demographics: F, Irish

[Start of Interview]

DF: So the first question is just kind of to get us excited about the topics that we're talking about. But I'm curious to see how *you* personally would describe the idea of community, or more specifically, your community here in Rathmullan?

R_01: Well, I am part of this community and I have lived here all of my life.

I have travelled bits, but not worked away from here... except for maybe Letterkenny, which would be the nearest bigger town –

DF: Yeah.

R_01: But, overall, I've spent all of my life here. And I've seen quite a lot of changes.

DF: Yeah?

R_01: I would have worked in small, family business that we would have had, which we don't any longer have.

I would have done various different jobs in different places, but always came back to here. And people have this thing of saying, 'when you live somewhere as beautiful as this, you mustn't notice it, or you must take it for granted'...

DF: Yeah.

R_01: And I can honestly say, I *always* notice it and I don't believe that I've ever taken it for granted!

DF: Oh that's good!

R_01: And even, you know, kind of being a teenager thinking 'far off hills look greener, and it'd be better to go to a city, or Dublin, or London, or whatever', still I have this hankering... you know? And I'm glad I'm here.

DF: Yeah, so you're like *drawn* here? To it?

R_01: Oh, very much! And very grounded and rooted here, yeah. Very much!

DF: Yeah, that's good – that's nice to have that sense of belonging in a place, um, so that's good that you feel that way, and it's nice that you feel empowered in your community then, is what I'm gathering.

R_01: Yeah.

DF: So then taking that a step bigger, how would you say that your community influences your idea of culture?

R_01: OK! Probably because we had a small business... I grew up knowing everybody.

DF: Mhmm, yeah.

R_01: You know, from school to church to business, to everything. And I was always volunteering in the community, I was always *part of* – you know? So my culture end of it would be, um – I think Rathmullan has lots of influences, you know, neighbouring towns would have Irish schools, would have Irish culture things. Rathmullan didn't have that! I think we were much more influenced by the British who were here, and the ships who were here during The War.

DF: Interesting.

R_01: And the Herring boats who came during the maybe the 40s – 30s/40s – I'm not quite sure of the year. But you know, there was all that influence – there was lots of British influence here. For example: we did Irish, of course at school, but it wasn't an Irish school – it wasn't what we would call a Gaeltacht.

[INTERVIEWER NOTE: Donkersloot, R., Menzies, C. Place-based fishing livelihoods and the global ocean: the Irish pelagic fleet at home and abroad. *Maritime Studies* 14, 20 (2015). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40152-015-0038-5>. For: source of history of Herring Fishing in Ireland – the establishment of the SFA (later the BIM).]

DF: Mhmm.

R_01: Uh, we would have soccer and football, not Gaelic GAA.

DF: Yeah...

R_01: There's none of that.

DF: Yeah! I noticed that at the Community Festival, it was really shocking actually.

R_01: Yeah, and you know, so I believe that's part of our culture here. And that's part of it. And my brothers would have played for local football teams.

When I made friends that I would have met, or people over the years, from other counties and they would talk about football, they're automatically describing GAA – Gaelic.

DF: Yeah.

R_01: Yeah, whereas *my* understanding would be *soccer* – you know?

DF: Soccer... yeah. Interesting.

R_01: So it's – that is a very different thing. Yes, we would have had different, um... there's a few Irish speakers here, but not a lot.

DF: Mhmm.

R_01: There's, uh, an interest I think more in the marine side of it, and the historical side of it. But, there's not Irish dancing, there's not [*inaudible* – 00:03:45.8], there's not that – you know, it's a bit different.

DF: Yeah, but it's still embraced.

R_01: Oh very much – oh absolutely, yeah!

DF: Yeah, like the festival and everything – you feel it when you're here, it's not absent necessarily. But it is just different. That's interesting .

R_01: Oh not at all! Yeah, yeah...

DF: So you've already mentioned that you do actively participate in your community – and you have, kind of throughout your life, in different roles – I was interested by that especially. So maybe you wouldn't mind going through the different phases of that, or kind of walking me down memory lane?

R_01: Probably from – I was quite young. I would have sold tickets for bazaars, for jumbo sales, for charity gatherings. I would have been involved in the church over the years. I would have been in the parent's committee in the school over the years. I would have been 15 years in the Tidy Towns group – you know that fell away, now that's coming back. You know all that there is re-emerging. We would have had scout here, for a certain short while – I would have been part of that. There's very little, really, over the years – you know I would have been, we used to have the ICA – Irish Countrywoman's Association – I would have been involved in that. Then I was founding member of – we have a radical group here, it's call Rathmullan and District Independent Chicks and Ladies – I'd have been one of the founder members of that. [chuckles] That was great fun! We had health days, and we had different stuff like that.

DF: Mhmm.

R_01: I'm no longer members of a lot of the committees that I would have been. And I'm quite happy to stand back and see new energy. And see a

continuation of – and people who maybe were born here, moved away, and are retired here – bring in all their new experiences and skills and energies in.

There would have been awhile probably, I would have seen Rathmullan go down, and felt the frustration of that – of things closing, and emigration, and stuff like that. That would have been a frustrating time.

DF: Yeah. When was that?

R_01: I suppose, the 80s were a very hard time here.

DF: Ok.

R_01: And probably been the first big recession that I remembered. And then, my children were born in the early 70s – it would have been around there – that was a dip. And then later, there was emigration here when there was part of the Marine Harvest Fish Farm in Fanad was here, and then they moved out of Rathmullan.

DF: Mhmm.

R_01: I mean, part of what I would remember of that time, there was a bus pulled down at the seafront, and 16 young people emigrated that one day! You know, and *that* for such a small area... was huge.

DF: Yeah, yeah.

R_01: And that was part of the soccer team, that was part of energy, that was part of – just the village's life blood really.

DF: You would feel that deeply.

R_01: Oh yeah, that was a big hit for a community like that. You know, and to see all that coming back now is great. In a different way.

DF: Yeah. Kind of a resurgence of that mindset.

R_01: Yeah. And we've still a long way to go. We still don't have a Bed n Breakfast in Rathmullan anymore. Some people are doing Airbnb's, but it's different. Different times... it's good. It's good energy, you know?

DF: Yeah. And would you say, how much of that do you feel like – the resurgence that you're talking about – how much of that do you feel is related, if at all, to the initiative of the Wild Atlantic Way?

R_01: A huge amount to Wild Atlantic Way. A huge amount to The Gathering that they have previous to that. And a huge amount locally to Rathmullan the Way Forward, and how they've umbrellaed the different groups in the area and brought them together.

DF: Yeah.

R_01: And that – and there will always be difference, and arguments, and debates – but it’s being held in a healthier way. You know? Whereas, I would have sat on committees over the years and I would have seen *them* and *us*. And I don’t see that now.

DF: Not at all?

R_01: There’s always little bits. It’s never perfect.

DF: But significantly reduced?

R_01: Oh, absolutely.

DF: And when you say *them* and *us*, who’s the *them*?

R_01: I think people are threatened by – they think that, you know, “they know more than me”, maybe – or maybe feel threatened by that. Sometimes...

DF: It would be natural, you know, human tendency...

R_01: Oh absolutely, absolutely. Or even, a kind of you know, they’re coming in to tell us, you know?

DF: Yeah. Like from Dublin, or wh-

R_01: Or *wherever*. Or even, they might not be willing to do it themselves, but they’re gonna criticise, you know that? And that’s sad... but I think it’s much more positive now.

DF: Yeah, I see. Well that’s good. You know, a lot of the talk in policy – and kind of initiatives like The Gathering you mentioned, and the Wild Atlantic Way is so much rooted in community engagement –

R_01: Very much.

DF: And it’s critiqued, as a system, whether or not it’s actually done in the best way. But it’s a learning curve like you said, you know, it’s getting better...

R_01: Yeah.

DF: Um, so it’s good and reassuring to see that you actually have seen it in practice, and that you think that it’s working –

R_01: I do, yeah. Definitely do. And having worked with different stuff over the years, I would have seen that. You know, being PR for local soccer teams, working with Earagail Arts Festival outside of here. And you know, different kinds of stuff.

DF: Yeah. What would you say would be like the biggest benefits that Rathmullan sees because of the Wild Atlantic Way? Or some of the barriers, if that's more noticeable?

R_01: The *barriers* are: we don't have the ferry for long enough. It finishes today, for example. And it won't be back until next year.

DF: Oh! Yeah.

R_01: That's a barrier. Because even though it's up that – it's signed, that's it finished until the next season, cars will still pull up and come down the pier. And people will say, "Oh there's no ferry?" *That* is a barrier.

DF: Yeah.

R_01: Because then people drive the wrong way. And maybe they won't come back.

DF: Like they'd have a bad taste for it then, after that?

R_01: It can be frustrating for them. Maybe they're glad that they came, and it was a nice visit, or whatever, but...

Infrastructure is a barrier. *Internet* is a barrier. They're really much more needed here. Because people could live *here* and work in London, or work in Dublin.

DF: Yeah.

R_01: You know, if that was in place. And rather than everyone having to move to cities. You know, it would be wonderful, like. More hubs, and more small... and more community-based. And even that's gotten better, but there's still barriers around stuff like that.

DF: Yeah. So maybe, would it be safe to say, that those kinds of barriers are just in a time lag. Like, the initiative was put forward, but not so much planning in the forefront about that kind of stuff?

R_01: Yeah, I think so. I think that would be part of it, yeah.

DF: Interesting. So not so much just the fact that – you know, like some communities would say they don't feel involved at all in the implementation of it – but Rathmullan is so involved, and so *grassroots* –

R_01: And I think too, people keep themselves very informed. You know, at a *local* level, at a *political* level, at a wider level, at a *Brexit* level. You know, people are informed. And they are interested, and they are willing to find out and know, and do.

DF: Yeah, so they have that initiative?

R_01: Oh very much. And to add to that – so many people have, from here, have family away. So they’re aware of what happens away. You know, all the young people are bringing all that knowledge into the small community when they come back.

DF: **Yeah.**

R_01: There’s all that different. So, for example, if there’s families from here and their children are in Australia and America, they go and visit them. So all that whole distance and travelling...

DF: **It becomes like a melting pot of ideas...**

R_01: Oh yes, absolutely!

DF: **Yeah, oh that’s good. Yeah that’s fascinating. So, let’s see – Fáilte Ireland did the Wild Atlantic Way initiation in, what was that, 2014 now at this stage. So, I’m curious at what point the Rathmullan community felt they were *on* it? Or was it kind of, immediate?**

R_01: Yeah, not necessarily immediate. But because I live *here*, and there’s a restaurant *there* and there’s another restaurant *there*. I would see more people from different places coming there.

DF: **Mhmm.**

R_01: I only have to step outside my door, and people will say, “will you tell me where the bridge is?” “Would you tell me where Fanad light is?” “Would you tell me where Rathmullan House is?” That’s *endless*, you know, just living here.

DF: **Mhmm.**

R_01: Just walking. It’s just – I’ve met more people in the last five years than I might have met in the previous *ten* years, because of people to and saying, “Oh we’ve never travelled this far North before”. You know, “we came in to Shannon, and we went South to Kerry”, or “we came into Dublin and we went across to Galway”.

DF: **Mhmm.**

R_01: And because we’re so near a border region, we would have been very influenced by Troubles in Northern Ireland over the years. And now it’s different, and now people are coming this way. And I mean, there’s been people here saying “we’ve cycled the Wild Atlantic Way... we’ve driven it... we’ve walked it”, you know, or – family are having get together. So there’s lots of talk. Maybe it’s died down a wee bit, but in the beginning there was lots of stuff.

DF: **Oh good yeah. Well you do have like the prime location for seeing it in action, don’t you?**

R_01: Yeah, very much. Yeah.

DF: **What season would be the busiest then, summer?**

R_01: Summer, oh yeah. This now, from the ferry ending today, this will quieten. And this is also a Scottish weekend, so when that goes, this will quieten. And then the next thing we have in the village is – we have Fright of the Earls. And it's *fabulous!*

DF: **[chuckles] Yeah! I'm so excited for that.**

R_01: And beautiful! Will you be here?

DF: **When is it this year – what are the dates, do you know?**

R_01: The 31st is Halloween, so it's the lead-in days into that.

DF: **Oh perfect! Well I'll be up again on October 19th... so hopefully I'll hear the buzz and see some of the prep work. But I've been hearing about that for the last year, and it does sound like so much fun! And who would be mainly in charge of that, then?**

R_01: Again, that would be Rathmullan the Way Forward.

DF: **Yeah, ok. And that would be like a sub-committee that they have within that group? Or is it them collectively?**

R_01: Them collectively, *and* volunteers.

DF: **That's fun. Perfect, well I think that's all of my questions. You actually answered more in some of your answers than I had to ask, so that's brilliant. So, are you ready for *this* [Q sorting] part now?**

R_01: Oh, yes!

DF: **Ok, so I'll pause this now then...**

[end of interview]

Interviewer: Desiree Farrell (DF)
Respondent Code: 02
Location: Beinn Aoibhinn, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal
Date: 29 September 2019
Audio length: 00:14:11.5
Demographics: F, Irish

[Start of Interview]

DF: OK – So the first I have, we talked about a little bit when we met – was kind of describing your idea, or the way you understand ‘community’. Whether that be general, or your community specifically.

R_02: Well, a community is made up of everybody in the area. Though of course, everybody in the area doesn’t participate in the community.

DF: OK.

R_02: It em... there’s no borders on a community. Even though, in Ireland when we talk of a community, it’s generally *parishes*, or *towns*... or the population within those.

DF: OK – so a community in your mind then can be, sort of nested? So you have maybe a county community, and then you have a smaller one, and then a smaller one still?

R_02: That’s right, yeah.

DF: OK. That’s actually a really common answer, especially among Irish people, because of how you said parishes are established; and that kind of sets that precedent. So that’s kind of interesting.

R_02: Yeah.

DF: So if we were to expand that idea out a little bit bigger, how would you describe how communities relate to culture – the idea of your culture?

R_02: Yeah... the culture of communities can vary hugely within 40 miles.

DF: Mhmm.

R_02: Because when I was a child, I moved from one culture to another.

DF: How do you mean?

R_02: I moved from Glenties to Gweedore.

DF: Mhmm.

R_02: I moved from an English-speakin’, Irish-speakin’ peripheral community to an all-Irish community in 1960. And it was a totally different place. Totally

different people. They had totally different *songs*. Totally different... yeah, stories, you know?

DF: Yeah, kind of like things that they would use to describe themselves... that would be different. So did you experience the idea of a 'culture-shock' then?

R_02: Yeah, I did. I'm still with it! [laughs] And a different language, of course.

DF: Yeah, so you would have had to pick that up really quickly, wouldn't you?

R_02: Yeah... 6 months, I think I picked it up in.

DF: Did you... would you have had any Irish prior to that?

R_02: No, I knew the name for *cat* and *dog*...

DF: The basics!

R_02: Yeah... my grandmother wouldn't let us speak -my mother speak Irish to us, she said we would have to emigrate. Because there was no work - *still* no work - in the place I was brought up, you know? So... as it happened, we didn't have to emigrate.

DF: Oh... what would be the main, I guess job, or industry where you grew up?

R_02: What would be the main industry?

DF: Yeah.

R_02: Farming.

DF: Farming... and that's still true today?

R_02: Yes. But most people today might have job, if they're lucky, somewhere else. To keep the farm going.

DF: Mhmm.

R_02: Sheep farming.

DF: And then when you moved to Gweedore, what would - what was that difference in jobs and econom-

R_02: It was probably a fishing community... at that time.

DF: Fishing...ok.

R_02: At that time... though that's gone now.

DF: Oh it is? Altogether?

R_02: Yeah... more or less. You see, after we joined the EEC we just had – they had – the quotas were so small.

DF: Mhmm.

R_02: You see, the main fishing would have been herring in September, October, November...whatever. And salmon in the summer. And that's all gone now.

DF: Mhmm... and the quotas were just not sustainable then?

R_02: Yeah.

DF: So then having moved from different communities, you've been a part of different communities your entire life: would you say that you've been actively participating in communities. Or do you feel a sense of belonging to any community in particular?

R_02: Yeah, I feel a peculiar... well, of course I spent a lot of my time in Letterkenny, working... but I never felt part of the community. Um, I lost the community I was from...

DF: Mhmm.

R_02: And it's only recently, after 50 years, that we've been asked to participate in the new community.

DF: Like your family?

R_02: Yeah.

DF: OK.

R_02: After 50 years, we're part of the community.

DF: Jeez.

R_02: I've been part of a play, I've been reading at church, and given out communion and that... after 50 years, it has taken that long to be accepted.

DF: Yeah. So then, until, like up within that 50 years, were you considered – what is that Irish phrase? – a 'blow-in'?

R_02: Oh a blow-in! Oh I was a blow-in! Once a blow-in, always a blow-in in Gweedore. They're very *clannish*.

DF: Yeah? I was going to say: are they very particular then, like how long you'd have to acclimate into being accept- like is 50 years normal, or... does that seem a little outrageous? To me it seems like–

R_02: I don't know – maybe other people. You see I was at college, and I was away and all that – and I was a teacher.

DF: **Yeah.**

R_02: But, em, maybe other people would have assimilated quicker, you know?

DF: **Yeah, ok. So it just would depend, then?**

R_02: Yeah.

DF: **Yeah. Um, so being so close to the Wild Atlantic Way – and I suppose, you know, Donegal is advertised as a big venture on the Wild Atlantic Way – would you say that you feel, or have felt, a sense of involvement in that initiative? Um, not being necessarily part of any tourist business, but you know, being a resident in Donegal?**

R_02: I *have* had a tourist business.

DF: **Oh you *have*!?! Even better [laughs].**

R_02: I *have* had one, in the past.

DF: **OK.**

R_02: But I closed it down, because – I had a self-catering bungalow – and I was registered with Bord Fáilte.

DF: **Yeah.**

R_02: You know, and – but now I don't have that business anymore. Because the work in it – you had to work *yourself* in it...

DF: **Yeah.**

R_02: You didn't get, you know, any *allowance* that you worked yourself in it, you know? And it was an awful lot of cleaning on a Saturday – I used from Saturday to Saturday, so I couldn't continue it. So...

DF: **Yeah. It is a lot – it's a big commitment to do something like that.**

R_02: Yeah, mhmm.

DF: **And, so you're saying there wasn't – from Bord Fáilte – any *support* in that kind of business, or –**

R_02: *No*, it was *taxation* became too high on it.

DF: **Mhmm, oh ok.**

R_02: And then you may have had to pay water rates, you know? And even though it was just a summer business – it was just a 12-week or whatever business, yeah...

DF: **Yeah. Ok, so when would you have let that go? Was it before...**

R_02: Umm, probably 02/06 (February 2006). That was before the promotion.

DF: **Ok, so that was before the Wild Atlantic Way. But do you think now, having owned a tourist business *prior* to the Wild Atlantic Way – do you think if you still had that, it would be different now?**

R_02: I think... yeah, there may be *more*. There may have been more people coming, but of course a lot of the people who come now only want to stay one or two nights.

DF: **Mhmm, yeah.**

R_02: And that wouldn't work with what I was doing.

DF: **Yeah.**

R_02: You know, during my time doing it, The Troubles in the North were very bad. People used to come from Belfast, to get a week away from – a week away from, you know, from The Troubles.

DF: **Yeah.**

R_02: And there were families mostly, of people who'd come from England.

DF: **Mhmm.**

R_02: You know, it wouldn't work on a one- or two-night basis. Because you'd have too much – you weren't getting the money for the week...

DF: **Yeah.**

R_02: You know what I mean? And you'd have to turn around and –

DF: **Yeah, that turnover would be –**

R_02: The trouble was on the turnaround, all the washing... the cleaning, you know?

DF: **Yeah, it definitely would catch up with you quick in that case.**

R_02: Yeah.

DF: **So then, have you noticed with the implementation of the Wild Atlantic Way, any particular benefits to your community system? So whether that be here in Letterkenny, or in Donegal more generally?**

R_02: Well I know definitely it has brought more people to Donegal. Particularly, em... the Highest Cliffs in Europe. That has benefitted – we never knew we had the highest cliffs here, until the Wild Atlantic Way was mentioned, you know?

[INTERVIEWER NOTE: Slieve League (Glencolumcille, Co. Donegal) are the second highest cliffs in Ireland, and the sixth highest cliffs in Europe]

DF: **Yeah, everyone's learning stuff for that, right? So then it brings a lot of-**

R_02: Slieve League!

DF: **Yeah, Oh I've actually hiked up those... Wooo!**

R_02: Have you been there?

DF: **Yeah, that view is *stunning!***

R_02: It is stunning, yeah. I've been there three times in the last two years, I was never there before!

DF: **Oh I know, it's so – it *is* kind of tucked away, obviously being cliffs, but once you round that corner, that view is amazing!**

R_02: Yeah, yeah.

DF: **And I'm from Arizona, so we have the Grand Canyon...**

R_02: Oh, yes!

DF: **And I liken it to that, because it's almost as if when you look at it, your brain can't comprehend what it's looking at, it looks like a painting.**

R_02: Right, yeah!

DF: **Yeah, It's so unreal. So then that would be – I guess, bringing people then would be a benefit.**

R_02: Yeah.

DF: **Obviously that's generating some kind of income, or you know, advertising and stuff like that. But what about any barriers? Do you see any barriers that your community experiences?**

R_02: Our barrier is that we're in the Northwest.

DF: **Mhmm.**

R_02: And that we're in the North, but we're not in the North *politically* – we're in the South, politically. And we have been *historically* cut off. And, nobody bothered with us.

DF: Mhmm.

R_02: You know, tourists came as far as Sligo. In the past, we didn't have a 5-star – 4- and 5-star hotels, so the American tour companies were not adding us to an itinerary for Americans.

DF: Yeah.

R_02: That's what I'm told, yeah. Because we would have American relations, who would come as far, and they wouldn't be booked any nearer than Donegal Town, you know?

DF: Yeah... and that's still barely up here!

R_02: Yeah! That's not, yeah – it's still, there's not a lot of 4- and 5-star outs in Donegal Town now.

DF: So then that would kind of lead into maybe *infrastructure* still being an issue that you notice in Donegal specifically then?

R_02: Yeah, but I suppose...

DF: Like, the Initiative is advertising, but there still isn't everything that tourists are looking for?

R_02: No.

DF: Is that what you think?

R_02: But we have Glenveagh Forrest [National] Park – that's another big – but we could do with more, em tourist spots. But of course the best bits are unknown. The best places to go are unknown.

DF: Yeah, and that's part of the, I guess, appeal of the area.

R_02: Yeah.

DF: Especially Donegal, is it's so *rugged*, and you know *alive* in the sense that it just is, you know *wild*.

R_02: Yeah.

DF: Let's see... well that kind of covers all of those. Um, where in your community then do you think would be of the greatest value? Whether it be as an economic driver, or culturally valuable. Are there any places that stick out in your mind as part of your community that you would highlight?

R_02: Well the islands, of Gweedore. We have three islands – three small islands – and I would think that they would be of great cultural value. And there's a

place that's unknown to a lot of people. It's a glen – a remote glen – and there's only one person living in it.

DF: Oh my gosh!

R_02: Yeah, and it's just – it's just *stunning* really – beautiful, and remote and it's in the middle of the Blue Stacks.

DF: Oh wow.

R_02: Yeah, and there's a place near that where they have music. Eh, every Saturday night, but mostly the last Saturday of the month. And, we were in Ardara, they have 6 festivals in the year – which is very near the Highest – Slieve League Cliffs.

DF: Mhmm.

R_02: Yeah, they had Johnny Doherty Music Festival at the weekend.

DF: Oh yeah!

R_02: He's a renowned, itinerant fiddle, here from Donegal.

DF: I think I saw some advertising that on the way up – posters or something on the way.

R_02: Oh, ay... we went there, we had great fun on Saturday night – my brother, my nephew, and myself.

DF: Oh, how fun! Well thank you, that's awesome... Ok, so that part is finished.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

Interviewer: Desiree Farrell (DF)
Respondent Code: R_03
Location: The White Harte, Rathmullan, Co. Donegal
Date: 30 September 2019
Audio length: 00:29:43.6
Demographics: F, Irish

[START OF INTERVIEW]

(recording begins in a conversation already being had)

DF: How would you – how do you feel, then, that those obstacles of seasonality, and kind of getting over that speedbump, so to speak, would be accomplished?

R_03: With great difficulty, I think. But, I think that's probably where we need to realise that community – we need to look after the visiting tourists, who might only be from Letterkenny...

DF: Yeah.

R_03: And the locals, so we'll say people that Donegal consider "locals", but if they come here today and there's nowhere for them to *eat*, why would they come back? And then they will tell other people. So, I think what we need to do is look at – you don't look at your turnover, or your income, on a month-by-month basis...

DF: Mhmm.

R_03: It has to be looked at for the 12 months of the year. But how – I know it's probably easy for *me* to say that because we have a family business. And realistically, only family work here.

DF: Yeah.

R_03: So you're not constrained by workers, as such. You don't say, "Ok, you have to come and work 9-5; but you need a break in the middle, so you need someone else to come in and work for those" –

DF: That's true, yeah.

R_03: So, how you get over that factor – I know a lot of people say, maybe the VAT rate, minimum wage – because obviously when the VAT rate went up, minimum wage went up. So it is difficult when you are running, maybe a food business.

DF: Yeah.

R_03: But there *must* be places that do this extremely well, and can open at 9 in the morning and they're not closed until 9 at night.

DF: Yeah. But it -

R_03: It's that thing of doing a little bit extra, but – it's like working overtime, but you don't get paid for it. So how do you–

DF: [laughs] **Yeah... but then getting people to be willing I guess –**

R_03: To buy into that! It's the concept that –

DF: **But it is kind of like an investment: you're investing into your community then.**

R_03: Yeah! Exactly. How you do it...? The other part of it would be volunteerism. Like, people volunteer to do – like when we do the clean-ups – people volunteer to do that. So they have no problem giving an hour or two of their time.

DF: **Mhmm.**

R_03: But how do you reward those... Like some people don't look for a reward, they just do it, because it's just...

DF: **- it's just *in* them, to do it.**

R_03: Exactly. But how do we convince everybody to get involved?

DF: **Yeah... that's the main question isn't it?**

R_03: Isn't it? It is! It bugs me [laughs]. And that's my burning thing of...

DF: **Is that ever talked about with others? Like during the meetings, do you guys ever get into issues of, say seasonality, because I know that is one of the main... [concerns of others].**

R_03: Yeah, yeah we do! Yeah, but I think there's a fear of getting inv- of people mentioning it. Because people say "oh it's ok..." – you know that phrase: "It's ok for *you*, because you don't have the expenses *we* have" ...

DF: **Yeah.**

R_03: But I think – I think it's like – on a Monday night, it'll be quiet in here tonight. But if we had music in here tonight, people would come out.

DF: **Yeah.**

R_03: And I think what we need – a lot of people work weekends, so they come out on a Monday. So their days off are on a Monday and Tuesday. But why would they come here [Rathmullan] if there's nowhere to go, or there's nothing to entertain them, or...?

DF: **Mhmm.**

R_03: You know? It's that... Now I *do* think that the weekend thing of the rural transport – you know the bus?

DF: **Yeah –**

R_03: - is *fantastic!*

DF: **Yeah. I saw that running yesterday –**

R_03: Well my husband drives – like he left, he finished up in the bank, and he just loves driving, so he does that. But I am amazed at the number of people who *use* it.

DF: **Hmm... yeah.**

R_03: People said: “Why would you put a bus on? Nobody’ll use it!” But people *have* used it! So that’s why I think have a rest- open a restaurant. I think *definitely* we should have – there should be somewhere to eat on a Monday night.

DF: **Well yeah [laughs]. You can’t cook *all* the time!**

R_03: Yeah! But it will be interesting to see how many people will come in here – usually I have [aside: 2, 3, 4...] lots of people come in and say: “Is there somewhere to eat tonight?” So-

DF: **Then how would you respond to that then?**

R_03: I just say, “Well, Rathmullan House...”

DF: **Yeah.**

R_03: And they – but all we can say is: “I’m really sorry...”

DF: **Yeah.**

R_03: But the problem is, from here to Fanad Head there’s nowhere to eat...
Portsalon-

DF: **Yeah we’ve done that ride... that road.**

R_03: Yeah, so – I think the challenge now is the seasonality...

DF: **Mhmm.**

R_03: - to get people to think outside that box!

DF: **Kind of beyond that limit.**

R_03: Yeah.

DF: Yeah. It seems like, when communities, and you know, what we've noticed coming to Rathmullan is the seasonality plays a big role in, kind of, the *functioning* of the community here?

R_03: Yeah.

DF: And it almost seems to me, as an outside observer, that it's like a mental roadblock.

R_03: Yeah! It is!

DF: Like it becomes a problem before it's actually manifested as a problem.

R_03: Exactly! And then it's – people say "Ok, today's the last day of September – OH! That's the end of the year now".

DF: Yeah, because the ferry ended yesterday, right? Yep.

R_03: The ferry ended yesterday. And you have to think "No! we must, you know, keep going."

DF: So then it is, just kind of, you have to break that cycle – that habit – of thinking that way? Yeah. Oh, that *is* a challenge.

R_03: It is a challenge, but I think we will overcome it, but it could take a while.

DF: Yeah.

R_03: I mean, Belle's Kitchen is probably one of the most successful restaurant/cafes in the county. So, I would think – or, maybe Ronnie *is* thinking of opening maybe 7 days a week.

R_03: Which would be great!

DF: Yeah.

R_03: But that's a huge commitment on his part as well, because he is so involved in the business.

DF: He's the main chef, isn't he?

R_03: Yeah.

DF: Yeah, so he'd be working all the time [laughs].

R_03: Yeah, he loves it. I mean I know he loves it, but you do need a work-life balance as well.

DF: Oh definitely!

[interview breaks for Q sorting activity]

DF: That was fabulous, and what a good segue! So then, with all of these topics that you've sorted so graciously on my map here – thinking about those topics and seasonality and other barriers that you guys experience here, how would you describe your community? Whether it be as Rathmullan, specifically, or Donegal more generally...

R_03: Uh... ok, *Donegal*: I find them to be more on the negative side.

DF: Mhmm, in what sense?

R_03: In that they say "We're forgotten about up here".

DF: Oh ok... so kind of like pessimistic? [quiet laugh]

R_03: Yeah... definitely. They're glass-half-empty, a lot of the time. And I think it's – ok, *geographical location* –

DF: Mhmm.

R_03: Because, during The Troubles, you know years ago, you would have had people saying, "Oh, I'm not gonna go to Donegal because you have to cross a border twice". And now I think people have gotten into this mindset now with Brexit – that this is the way it's going to be again –

DF: Yeah.

R_03: And we're not gonna have people coming up here, and we're going to be in economic dire straits again. And yet! In times of – is someone has a personal tragedy, or a personal *anything*, you know to do with illnesses or family – the community is *fantastic*!

DF: Yeah?

R_03: They all come together and they all help each other. And then they disappear! It's like as if they don't want people to know that they helped out each other.

DF: [laughs]

R_03: It's a crazy –

DF: That, like *humility* that's ingrained.

R_03: Yeah.

DF: It is a funny dynamic –

R_03: It is!

DF: -because Irish people are often described as being very generous.

R_03: Yeah.

DF: **Which is *so true*, I've found that-**

R_03: Yeah!

DF: **-as an American, to be extremely true.**

R_03: Mhmm.

DF: **But then, you say, like they're almost *shy* about being generous...**

R_03: Yeah, it's like –

DF: **So it is an interesting dynamic.**

R_03: - It's like, they'll say: "Sorry, sorry about that. Sorry about *that*. I didn't mean-". And you're like, "What are you sorry about?" There's nothing to be sorry for! But I have found – and you see it all the time – we are extremely generous when there's a fundraising event on.

DF: **Mhmm.**

R_03: Erm, different-ish things that happen. The Inch Mile Swim, for example:

DF: **Yeah!**

R_03: That was outsiders that came in and organised. But they were willing to accept all – *any* help at all – so there were lots of volunteers from the village, helped. And the same thing will be now in December with the Polar Plunge that the *guards* do; everyone will participate though.

But I think, the other thing that I find is, there are a lot of people who are *genuinely* shy – and won't *offer* their services – but if you *ask* them, they will help. And it's – they're so happy that you asked them to help.

DF: **Yeah.**

R_03: So, like that, I think if we would just get rid of the negativity...

DF: **Mhmm. Would you say Rathmullan is different from the county then altogether?**

R_03: Erm, I think Rathmullan has improved – not *improved*, that's the wrong word – we're coming along much better. Because, maybe because there's new families coming in to live in the village, and they're more – they're getting involved. The schoolchildren, I suppose because the parents mix more, with them.

DF: **Yeah.**

R_03: And I think that's also a challenge for us, that we should try to get more of them involved.

DF: **Mhmm.**

R_03: Because it's for the *betterment* of the children's lives, and the thing about the kids – the kids can see all the *good* things.

DF: **Yeah. And well if you, you know – the whole idea, I guess, to keep a community sustainable is to have multiple generations involved at the same time.**

R_03: Yeah, exactly... yeah. And then – and we, like we are so blessed to have *that* out there [points to beach]. To have the beach... the sea.

DF: **Yeah. Well and this window is so great! You couldn't ask for a better view.**

R_03: Yeah. And then the sailing school and the sailing club is probably one of the most successful ventures in the village, in the last 10 years. Without a shadow of a doubt.

DF: **And would that be mainly Rathmullan...?**

R_03: No. That's the thing.

DF: **ok.**

R_03: Because when we were growing up, the yacht club was always over there... in Fahan. So you sort of thought – sailing was sort of seen as being elitist.

[INTERVIEWER NOTE: Fahan, Buncrana. Now: Lough Swilly Yacht Club]

DF: **Mhmm... ok.**

R_03: Now we were lucky, I suppose because of our location, they always came over here – they used to always drink in here.

DF: **Yeah.**

R_03: And then the first sailing race of the season is always for the White Harte Cup.

DF: **Oh, lovely!**

R_03: So, like *we* never really saw it as elitist.

DF: **Mhmm.**

R_03: But, I think in the village, a lot of people thought: "Ohh... you've got a sailing boat" [spoken with suspicion] Which – sailing boats *are* expensive...

DF: Yeah.

R_03: But, I think there are more and more locals getting involved now, because their children are getting involved.

DF: Mhmm.

R_03: But the vast majority, I mean most of the sailing club is all volunteers – which is fantastic!

DF: Yeah.

R_03: But that, it's just a pity – but then that's *seasonal*. So what – I think if we – we probably do need to develop more of an outdoorsy... outdoor adventure.

DF: Yeah. Something that would kind of cycle through with the seasons.

R_03: Exactly, yeah. Because you're always going to have hill-walkers – walkers don't mind any sort of weather.

DF: Yeah.

R_03: Ok, you'll have cyclists. I mean, ok, we have the swimmers and that – that's a summer event. But... let's hope we can... do something. *That's* probably, you know with the whole development of the Battery.

DF: Mhmm.

R_03: I think the Battery might unite people as well. Might bring more people out...

DF: Yeah, the buzz surrounding that would bring people who have – even like, with family ties to Rathmullan – and that would have people that have spoken about that, or have memories or photos...

R_03: Yeah. Because when we were children – because we used to pass it every day – we were over in there... we used to play there *all the time*. But an awful lot of the local children now, that are in primary school, wouldn't go in there because they see that big yellow sign: "Keep out! Danger!"

DF: Yeah.

R_03: And they know: "Oh, we'd be in big trouble if we..." Whereas, it was always – it was probably always a bit of a *danger*.

DF: Risky –

R_03: Risky business in there –

DF: Risky playhouse.

R_03: But there was no sign up, so we were allowed to... so... I don't know if that answers your question...

DF: **Yeah, definitely. So you mentioned growing up – did you grow up here in the village?**

R_03: Mhmm, yeah.

DF: **And had you ever moved to anywhere else?**

R_03: Oh yeah! I lived in Dublin for 20 years!

DF: **Oh ok, and then came back?**

R_03: Then came back, yeah.

DF: **Very good. Were you, um – what's the phrase? – *pulled back*? Or was it –**

R_03: Well, the funny – I mean, I absolutely love Dublin, love the city. And we lived in Stoneybatter, which – I always lived in the city centre. So, used to cycle all around the place. Had a car, but never really used it except to come home, *here*.

DF: **Yeah.**

R_03: And then, we lived in Stoneybatter, which was right in the heart of the city. But I always wanted to be beside the sea.

DF: **Yeah.**

R_03: And then, we thought: "Right ok, if we buy a house by the sea in Dublin..." and we weighed it up.

DF: **Mhmm.**

R_03: And we said, "No, you know what? We'll move back." And it has been the best thing probably.

DF: **Yeah?**

R_03: Like, you still can go – you go to the city now and it's, you know, it's great...

DF: **It's like a little novelty?**

R_03: Yeah! And even – it doesn't bother *me* if I'm stuck in traffic in the middle of the city!

DF: **Yeah, because it's not your everyday experience, so it's ok.**

R_03: Exactly, yeah. And "it's expensive"... I don't care, it's just – if you're only there for a day or two...

- DF:** **Yeah, that's true. That's a good way to look at it: you can go and enjoy it, but you can come back and be comfy-**
- R_03:** Yeah, but I think that's part of the problem; people who *don't* move. You know they say: "Oh yeah, I went to Dublin for the weekend", but it's not the same as living in another place.
- DF:** **Mhmm.**
- R_03:** I think it makes you appreciate – like with me, I really appreciate what goes on in the city.
- DF:** **Yeah.**
- R_03:** And, you know, it's not an easy life either. Whereas, up here, you know they think: "Oh no, it's really tough up here", and I just think: "No, it's not".
- DF:** **It's tough both, but in different ways.**
- R_03:** In different ways, yeah. And the other thing they say: "Oh Dublin gets *everything!*" But they don't! And in fact, part of the property tax that's collected in Dublin, is distributed country-wide, so...
- DF:** **So it's all the little things that people don't actually think about then...**
- R_03:** Yeah, but I think – yeah, and that's the thing, all the little things add up to big things.
- DF:** **Mhmm, yeah. That's true. So then if we were to kind of expand that idea of community that you talked about and brought it up to the next level where that kind of accumulates: how would you define, or describe, the *culture* of Rathmullan?**
- R_03:** [repeats in a whisper: "How would I define the *culture*..."] I'm not sure-
- DF:** **Or, like has that *changed* over time, that you've noticed?**
- R_03:** Well I think people have always really appreciated the fact that we have the most – you know, our biggest asset is the sea. The seashore. The fact that the sea runs the length of the village.
- DF:** **Yeah.**
- R_03:** And I think we're beginning to appreciate it more. But having said *that*, I mean, I am a big advocate of climate change and all that. Whereas, people say: "No, no, nothing has changed". But in fact, the shoreline has changed, different things have changed. But, I think people realise now that it's a really – they appreciate *more* the fact that it's a really great place to live, and to bring up your children, and it's very *safe*.
- DF:** **Yeah.**

R_03: And that sense of safety within a community, I find is – makes people look after each other.

DF: **Yeah, like you were talking about earlier where they all come together.**

R_03: Yeah, whereas, they mightn't admit to that. That they were there. Because they might be perceived as being nosey, or something. Whereas it's not, it's... *caring*.

DF: **Just checking in.**

R_03: Yeah.

DF: **Caring! Yeah.**

R_03: I think that we have become a very *caring* community.

DF: **That's good!**

R_03: Mhmm, it is good!

DF: **What would you say has motivated that growth, or that change?**

R_03: Well, I do think the way The Way Forward is now with the different focus groups...before it was always the same people in different – who were maybe, looking after things.

DF: **Oh, ok yeah.**

R_03: And other people may have thought: "Oh, I'm not interested in going out and cleaning up every Wednesday, so there's nothing really for me to do", whereas now, with the different focus groups... but having said *that* – you know you've got the History Society and that – and I know there are still people who would sort of look at it and say: "oh, I'd like to get involved, but there's nothing I'm interested in" ...

DF: **Mhmm.**

R_03: But I think that's still a fear of coming into a group. Whereas – that's why I hope at this public meeting, you know the meeting tonight – although I'm not sure if there'll be a big turnout for it.

DF: **It's on at 8, that seems a bit late too.**

R_03: I know.

DF: **Because the last one wasn't that late, was it?**

R_03: I didn't think so...

- DF:** I didn't think so either. I'm driving home tonight too, after the meeting. So I'm like: "I hope it's *quick*, but I hope it's *valuable*".
[laughs]
- R_03:** Yeah!
- DF:** So obviously you're *very* involved in The Way Forward and the focus groups, with the beach cleans and Tidy Towns and all of that -
- R_03:** Mhmm, yeah.
- DF:** So would you, having lived here during the implementation of the Wild Atlantic Way, do you personally feel any involvement in that implementation phase of it? Or, did you just notice signs coming up and-
- R_03:** Oh yeah, but I would have always been a great advocate of not just focusing on what we have here, in Rathmullan. And I think that - you know, I would always be like, "How long are you here for; are you here for three days or four days" ... whatever. You should go to diff - like Fanad Lighthouse, go to Slieve League, which is - go over to Inishowen - promote other places as well as, not just what you have -
- DF:** Yeah, not just the café and the...
- R_03:** Yeah, and get people - because I think once we promote other places, people will realise, you know there's a lot of things to do here, so it brings them back all the time.
- DF:** Yeah, and then they think like, "Oh, we want to go up to Fanad, so we'll stop in Rathmullan to eat there", or whatever.
- R_03:** Yeah, yeah! And it's just given us more - it's like a tool to work with. Big time!
- DF:** Yeah.
- R_03:** And I do think that Fáilte Ireland have really embraced smaller communities and not just the big things, like, say tourists - say Americans were coming, you'd always have said to them: "Go to the Rock of Cashel, the Cliffs of Moher..."
- DF:** Yeah.
- R_03:** Whereas now it's more - they're interested in other things. And they want to see rural *and* urban life!
- DF:** Mhmm, like they want the more *full* experience?
- R_03:** And I *do* think that the Wild Atlantic Way has helped us that way.

DF: One of the main critiques of the Wild Atlantic Way has been that it kind of *homogenises* the whole west coast. In that, the way that it's branded, especially to overseas visitors is that "anywhere you go along the Wild Atlantic Way, you can get cliffs, sheep, and Guinness" [laughs]

R_03: Yeah... yeah.

DF: Would you say that that is an accurate, or valid critique? Or, what you were just describing seems that you would think the opposite...

R_03: Yeah... because, you know, people would say "Oh, Donegal is very like Kerry", but it couldn't be further from the truth, really. The *scenery* is very similar, but your *cultural* experiences would be very different.

DF: Yeah.

R_03: Because we have – I know what they're trying to say – but the actual offerings are very different. Ok, traditional bars – even traditional bars are very different.

DF: Yeah you can get so many different experiences in different pubs.

R_03: Yeah! And that's probably something that could be *exploited* – I know that's not a good word to use [laughs], by them a bit more.

DF: Hmm?

R_03: Because, you know they'd say: "Oh, I've been to, say Slieve League, so I wouldn't be bothered to go to Cliffs of Moher now", but they're not – they're similar, but they're different.

DF: Yeah.

R_03: And I know that the thing about Donegal, up here it's different.

DF: [laughs] Isn't that the slogan?

R_03: [laughs] Yeah, that *is* the slogan. But I think people have adopted that say: "We're different".

DF: Yeah, so they kind of have taken that on to push others away, almost. Instead of describing it in a positive way, it's become almost *negative*.

R_03: Yeah... negative, yeah.

DF: Interesting...

R_03: It is. You know, it's like if you're listening to the radio they say: "Well, oh we're different up here, you know we vote-" And even so much down to voting and referendums. They didn't even – "We always vote 'no'", they say. And I was like, "What?!" Because they voted – there was a Children's

Amendment – there was a referendum do with children, and they voted ‘No’. And, like, it was the most ridiculous thing, but just because they had that thing in their head “We’re going to vote against. We’re not votin’ the way the rest of the country are going to vote!” And it was for the betterment...

DF: “Just because we’re different!”

R_03: Yeah, so it has that negative connotation... but I think – I know that you can get sheep, you can get Guinness... cliffs, but it’s *different*. They all have different offerings, and *all* are good. Just different experiences are good.

DF: **Mhmm, yeah. I think, actually, what you were saying about suggesting to take advantage of the different traditional pubs...**

R_03: Yeah.

DF: **That would actually be a brilliant idea to do – you know how they have the Wild Atlantic Way passport-**

[participants’ phone rings... takes call]

R_03: I’m sorry! What were you saying?

DF: **Oh, they have the Wild Atlantic Way passport, you know where you can get stamps at all the different places?**

R_03: Oh yeah! Yeah yeah!

DF: **They should do one for pubs, so you could do a pub crawl... that would be funny.**

R_03: Yeah!

DF: **But anyway – we’re coming to the end now: couple more questions. So you did mention that Fáilte Ireland has been, or was – in the implementation phase – supportive of communities and using communities to *promote* the Wild Atlantic Way. Do you know how many times, or if at all, they have come to visit Rathmullan, specifically? Before kind of, establishing the signs and stuff?**

R_03: I’m not sure... but I do know that one of the signs was in the wrong place. I’m trying to think, is it still.... Oh, yeah! You know the one there? [points out the window to the signpost on the corner of the mini golf green and the pier parking lot] They had *that* up at the post office!

DF: **Oh no!**

R_03: So we made representation to them, because we said: “People are avoi – are missing out on... the pier!”

DF: **Well yeah! And you pass the Beachcomber, the Abbey!-**

R_03: The Abbey! You pass the Abbey! They avoid – they would have missed the abbey, beachcomber, the pier... the ferry.

DF: **The meat of Rathmullan... you miss it all. Oh geez!**

R_03: Yeah!

DF: **So did you have to petition to have that moved, or?**

R_03: No, we just-

DF: **Or did they just come out and move it?**

R_03: Well, we just sort of said, “Look”, you know? And they said, “Yeah, but it’s on the map...”, we said, “it doesn’t matter... like, nobody’s gonna notice you put another 100 yards on it?”

DF: **Yeah.**

R_03: But they were – I know they were out – it’s just... I think – I don’t know, was it a *mistake* when the signage went up there? You know?

DF: **Or just an oversight?**

R_03: Whoever put it up, really didn’t appreciate what Rathmullan was about at the time. But having said that, since then they’ve been extremely supportive.

DF: **Do they come out often? Or check in? Would The Way Forward kind of be their point of contact?**

R_03: Yeah... yeah it would be; but they *do* – they bring people out quite a bit to Rathmullan... to Rathmullan House in particular.

DF: **Yeah.**

R_03: It’s a great place to bring them.

DF: **Yeah, and I was being told, from someone else, yesterday that there are few – what was it – 4- and 5-star places to stay in Donegal. So Rathmullan House would be a big draw in that sense.**

R_03: Yeah! Yeah, and because of the Walled Garden, you know? And they do their own produce-

DF: **Yeah! All the menu in the Taproom is all the garden stuff. Which is brilliant.**

R_03: Yeah – but they do... I think they *like* Rathmullan.

DF: **Because it’s so involved?**

R_03: Yeah...

DF: **Because it's embracing the whole concept, they're willing to work with you?**

R_03: Yeah! And because before... I think – I often hear people say, “Oh, if this was Kerry... such and such – the Healy-Rae's would have done all the rest...”. And I said, “No! It's not just the Healy-Rae's!” In Kerry, *my* experience of Kerry is that they do a lot for themselves. And that's what we have started to do, up here.

DF: **Mhmm... so you have to adopt a system that has worked for others?**

R_03: Yeah. Adopt the good things. And what works...

DF: **And then you have the opportunity then to modify?**

R_03: Yeah, exactly.

DF: **Well that's great, thank you!**

[END OF INTERVIEW]

Interviewer: Liam Carr (LC)

Respondent Code: R_04

Location: An Bonnán Buí

Date: 22 March 2019

Audio length: 00:30:00.3

Demographics: M, 53, Irish

[START OF INTERVIEW]

LC: So, just formally, what this project is about is looking at opportunities or challenges that either your business faces, or Rathmullan more generally faces, when it comes to the tourism aspect and in generating some identity in the tourist space. We [Respondent 14] spent a lot of time talking about the business side of things: some of the challenges with marketing, some of the challenges with unfair competition between large places that have large volume and small villages like here that are working to generate volume.

R_04: Yeah.

LC: And then we also talked a little bit about community, and how you all sit within that community space – as a place that people come to meet – as parents of local children etc., and stuff like that.

R_04: Yeah, yeah.

LC: So we can continue to touch on those, but I have about 3 other questions that we didn't really jump into. So when it comes to community, for *you* in particular – you're from here, if I remember correctly, right?

R_04: Yes, yeah.

LC: Do you get the sense that the community today is – how do you feel the changes in the community over the, say the last 20 years?

R_04: The changes... hmm, well we opened up here in '93, ok? So we're here now – I think... [inaudible] was away for 10 years – I came back here, um... if I'd have known what I knew now, I wouldn't have come back, in a way.

LC: Mhmm.

R_04: But I came back. I suppose at the time, not that it was a bad thing, but I mean, my wife says "Martin, tell me what this place was like before". But I don't really know, because I left [inaudible] ... Ireland, and uh Galway, when I was 17.

LC: Yeah.

R_04: So it was like going from – you know there's no real *here* in the home, in the house. You have friends here, and school, and then you go off... and it was a normal –

LC: **It's what you did.**

R_04: I mean, if I hadn't off gone to college... it would have been different. How it's changed? I mean, I wouldn't have known a huge amount about the community as *per se* a young man... I mean you know you were *there* and you had friends, but I mean, there was more people in the town. In the village. Like say, in the house here at the corner here, I think there was 9 kids. And the next door there was 6, and the next door there was 4, and the next door there, there was 6.

LC: **That's a lot *right* here.**

R_04: And the door there, there was 6 as well. And then up from there, there was 4. So, just from there to there, you had 9, 6, 5, 4... you had about...

LC: **[cross talk] Two soccer teams!**

R_04: Three.

LC: **Three soccer teams!**

R_04: I'd say nearly three. But now you don't. I mean there's no kids there now, from there to there now. From the front street up, you know I'm saying there was 6, there was 8, there was 12, there was 4... all gone. And that there has been the most significant change, as a dip in population, of an age group, and of opportunities for the town. You see, now you're educated now to go away. Which was [inaudible] as well, because here you didn't have jobs. But it's changed now, you have the Primerica, you know? You do have these kind of mass jobs, there's IT jobs here now. I mean, there are – you know there are jobs – but people are still being educated to leave. There's a huge shift from rural to urban. Urban is the kind of, the new gold like you know? And if you want to a call centre... bigger town.

LC: **Yeah. You've made it when you can live in a city.**

R_04: Well, it's like you have more opportunity there, you're freer. You're away from all the connections, like the localness, the colloquialism of – you know? Monica there, she comes from a place in Brazil, everybody knows your business. But in a big place, nobody gives a shit. You may know where the person's from [inaudible], but –

LC: **But here you know everybody...**

R_04: Here, everybody knows everybody. But no one knows anyone too, like. Because it's very close – because here it's like they're all related. It's hard to get into here. I mean, you can be welcomed in, but you will seldom be seen as an insider too. It's not easy to get into this. You know if you do all the right things; if you play football, you do GAA, you do all that there, you

participate through the school or through the church or whatever, then you *can* get into [inaudible]. But if you don't partake, you're just further away. But I mean, change to me – and now, people that *used* to live here, have moved away. There's what, holiday homes here in the area, or their family home has been turned into a weekend retreat – it's not too often they'll stay.

LC: **Yeah.**

R_04: So you got the front street, from the start of the rocks there, up to John Gallagher's house- you know at the beginning of the town? –

LC: **Yeah.**

R_04: [cross talk] From here to there, there isn't one house with kids in it.

LC: **It's a huge change.**

R_04: Huge. And every house, I mean I could walk through and I could count – I mean, the school here had 168 kids in school when I was in it. I used to do the roll call.

LC: **Oh wow...**

R_04: You know, like the real big book [inaudible] ... I mean, I think there were 167, 168 I remember. And, ok, they came from Craig as well, and from Ray, you know so there was a few from there. But I mean here, I mean *huge*, I mean there was 12 kids... 14... there was a woman here with 22 kids... There was a person here, Karen, with 24 kids, you know from birth, 1, 2 years of age.

LC: **Mhmm.**

R_04: I mean, it's a very interesting... when you get into the historical culture aspect here of the amount of people who lived in this town and have moved away – it's amazing. I mean, it's a small town but the space used to be jammed. [inaudible] It's a busy town, like, but you're talking years ago, you know what I mean. And just slowly, you know, because of cars... The car was the main killer here, I would say. And then slowly shops began to open up, wealth began to grow, options began to increase, you know what I mean.

Now back to your question. Change. I would say the change is for the worst, in respect to the actual core town here. There's more people now who live outside the peripheral here, because of family land, because it's bad to buy a house in town – because it's expensive – because of holiday homes, I mean a house over there sold for 280 [euro 280,000] there last year... 2 bedroom. I mean, I think small towns, they should say, "houses can't be sold unless you're going to live full time", I think within the bounds. That's easy done, but it's political here... but if you want to maintain a small town, you have to give people the opportunity for them to buy within the town area –

LC: Mhmm, they have to invest themselves into the town.

R_04: I think, once you're outside and you have a car, it's far easier for you just to drive – to bypass the town. While if you live here, you'll walk to the shop, you know? It just creates more momentum, like, you know what I mean?

LC: Mhmm.

R_04: Like here now, there's kids up there... [counting], yeah, there's 7 kids.

LC: And you have two, right?

R_04: I have two living in Galway. One is here, but he's doing his last year –

LC: He's about to leave.

R_04: And he's going to leave, and he won't be back. He can't wait to leave.

LC: He can't wait?

R_04: But see, he grew up in Brazil too, you know? He knows... [inaudible]. But I think too, it's naively as well. You know, there are good points and bad points about a small town. But a small town, it all depends who's in the town and who becomes actively involved in trying to maintain the village.

LC: So, in a generation and a half, you've seen – what'd we say, 30? – at least 30 kids right in town...

R_04: No, no no... more

LC: Way more. How many have gone back, besides yourself?

R_04: Here?

LC: Or never left? Either, or.

R_04: Right. From my class, I think my class was about 30+, you know I'm just going off of averages. There's one, there's one still... in the town here, all of the boys have all gone. None are here... none. The girls, one is still in the town... she's 53, going 80. There's one in Craig, there's one in... I'm trying to think.

LC: So not even a handful?

R_04: No.

LC: You're trying to find five people and you can't even get to five.

R_04: No, in the town here itself, in this space here... [trails off].

- LC:** So then, the follow-on question to that is: if your experiences growing up here, collectively, are now down to a handful of people, who helps shape the identity of the community now?
- R_04:** Now, I think it's the older people that come into the town. I mean there is an active... I mean, sporting now has been great – I'm amazed, when we left to Brazil the last time, everyone was obese. I was the only one, out of all the fellas, that used to go out on the bicycle.
- LC:** Mhmm.
- R_04:** And then I hear this news: there's been this transformation in Ireland, like everyone's gone running and stuff... it's gone nuts! And that there has been great- like it's free, but around that there come events, like you've got there-
- LC:** Is there a race this weekend? Somebody was putting up a sign when I was walking in.
- R_04:** Umm, possibly. I think it's ne -
- LC:** Or maybe it's next weekend or something.
- R_04:** Well it's in the next few weekends.
- LC:** Oh, ok. Ok.
- R_04:** It's uh, the Duathlon: short like, you know.
- LC:** Oh that's what it is, yeah.
- R_04:** So that there has been a transformation. Like here, I have ____ here, and we were the ones who set up – myself and Rick LeVert – you know who that is?
- LC:** Mhmm. Kinnegar?
- R_04:** Yeah, right. We set up a s_____, here. And we had done a study here in the town, back in 2008. We contracted this company from Scotland, it's a Dutch company, I forget the (name). They do feasibility studies and they do construction work, but our idea was to find out the strengths and weaknesses of the town, and what would be... how to promote that there.
- LC:** Promote the strengths. And address the weaknesses.
- R_04:** And obviously, tourism was the main one. It was kind of the main thing that came out of that there. And now this just links in so well with the fact that people walk, they run... so here now, slowly. These things here are, it's so slow to get things done. Like, say, even to put up a sign, the amount of bureaucratic shit you've got to go through, it's fuckin nuts.
- LC:** Yeah.

R_04: You know, it worked 50 years ago, but now they have to streamline it. That there puts you off trying to do things, because you expect...

LC: **Follow through.**

R_04: The bureaucracy... I mean, if you want to do anything *real*, it's like you're still paying, paperwork, (taps table), and it sits on a desk. So, the State has to catch up and free up time for people who are putting in their own time in order to get things done because it takes so long. I mean, to say you're going to this [the sign example], before you actually see it: two years. And people during that time are asking: "What are you doing?" And you're like: "I'm fucking doing *loads*, like!" But there is nothing concrete...

LC: **To show, yeah.**

R_04: But once you drive it out, I mean the ones who are inv... I mean, it's always the older ones – and I'm one of the older ones now – but I'm kind of tied here. But it's Mick McGlynn, John as well, you know, *they* put in the hours of work. But, I mean no one else would do it. *They're* retired, and their finances are secure, and they're the people – and there's another cohort as well, as you saw at the meeting – you know there's ones involved there. It's great like, you know for a small town.

Now how much progress they can actually do? That's the determined by the Council. You know, the Councillor, they're an entity in their own. And they just don't budge like, they have not changed, they haven't streamlined, they haven't made progress. Ok, they've gone online, but apart from that they're still a snails' pace. You've seen the stones they have here, you know those stones? To me, it's a pure waste of cash, in a way, because I think the stones are *small*. But it was done. But I mean, they had to have planning permission for each fucking stone! It was fucking nuts, like. When this idea came up, they should change the law and say look, "We're gonna mass approve", like if you're going for one, that's one thing, but have to do that then for each stone. I mean, Jesus Christ!

LC: **This is totally an aside, but I think it's humorous in a really sad way, but in Galway I was meeting with somebody and they said that their aunt or uncle made the stupid idea of asking Planning Permission whether or not you needed planning permission to scatter ashes on the beach. And guess what?**

R_04: You do.

LC: **You do! (laughs) So then, this is going to be, almost an ironic follow up to that. And this is actually the next-to-last question. (I feel so successful today!) Do you have, it's an ironic question: Do you have an agency who is your go-to for things? Is there somebody you that you can rely on – we just talked about the County Council and – is there Fáilte Ireland that you can lean on? Is there, is it Rathmullan the Way Forward that you can lean on?**

R_04: Well you see, when I was involved, when we were applying for grants here, it's all about *who* you know. And I would go up to ones that I knew, and who was around Fáilte Ireland at the time, like Joan Crawford, Sean _____ [18:28], you know Sean? He's retired now, but he used to be on Fáilte Ireland, or Bord Fáilte – Tourism Ireland – and he has a house in the town. And then we used to get involved with DLDC, which is a Donegal local development company who wants to disperse grants for use through the... you know, like I said each county of Ireland. So we had contacts in there, and I'd be like: "Sinead, look can I do this here? What do I need?" Council-wise; I would not go to the Council unless I knew a person, because it's a pure waste of time going there and saying, "Excuse me, I'm trying to find...", pure waste of time! You need to know a person who's in that department, and then you go. Now I don't, because now in the town, I would speak to Mick and John, give ideas and just say "Look, this here, or that...", you know "I think you need to prioritise...". Mick and John had a huge friction here in the town about trying to, I mean one's saying "They're doing this", then "they're not doing this..." I say, No, you have to look... To deal with a small town you have to be so flexible, and you can't be dictatorial, you can't, you have to bend, you twist, and you coerce and you cajole. Because if you do it the other way, it will fall flat.

LC: **Yeah.**

R_04: And you'll fuck it up. You know, and all the time you spent: it's gone.

LC: **It's gone, yeah.**

R_04: You know the tourist is gone, whatever. And if you want things done, at the end of the day, you need to cooperate. You don't need to *discuss* everything, but you can't fall out with everybody. But, going back to your question: No I don't know, because I'm not involved, but if I do I could still call up the odd person...

LC: **Use a third party.**

R_04: Yeah, but like, you see when you do this here, if you do get involved in this here, it's such an amount of time. It's a *huge* commitment on time. And because of our job... before it was easier because we didn't open up in the day time. So you know I was doing prep all day, and you would open up at night time. And now you're in here from 1:00, and you just can't. You see it's so hard most days, you see it's quiet, and then busy. And like, you always have to be prepared, you have to be there to do it. So now, just no time. But the town, say, going back to the Wild Atlantic Way, I mean, I think you should be – I mean *we* should be trying to prioritise how can we become a point on that map. And what this place needs here are numbers, *consistent* numbers. I don't know if she [Respondent 14] talked about this or not, but to me, I won't stay here unless I can stay, because now I'm 53, I want to have more cash – because we're just struggling with cash, you know, otherwise it's just a pure waste of time. But when it's packed, it's *packed*. But you know, Easter time the _____ [22.01] are here, then May, June are ok. Even July, August I guess, and then it goes down, and I just think "Fuck this!" I mean you need consistency from that there, so like _____ in the

town. What you need to get this as a point here, like even across there, between the lighthouse and Malin Head, these are two points, and *here* should be your point across, how you get there.

LC: **It's almost like they never came to talk to you... when they made the map.**

R_04: Well, I mean I don't know how – I was in Brazil, so... I think it's one of the best ideas. It's the only fucking thing they've *ever* done that worked. I mean, all they did was put a few signs up and market it. And it's amazing, and it's been repeated now the world over. It's like, you use what you have, you don't even have to build anything, you just have to *tell* people, and then provide what they need to come here. But don't overdo it like, you know what I mean? But here, to me, is still totally left out.

LC: **Mhmm. And then, just as kind of a follow-up to the last question, in terms of "they provide something". Are you aware, either individually or as a business owner, aware of either opportunities, or trainings, or workshops that you could take advantage of?**

R_04: I was *before*. When I was here before, and we had more time, I was more kind of aware. Now I just don't know what I need, I mean, I'm still just thinking, "Do I want to stay with this or not?" But I know if I stay here, it needs to move. Staying the same is not possible. And now, each thing chips away. You know, you can't drink and drive, I'm saying you can't even have a *pint* and come out to eat. You know what I mean?

LC: **And if you don't live in the village...?**

R_04: If you don't live in the village, then it's a taxi and this and that. So you have to be in the town. If you go down, you can go to Belle's or whatever, but *here*, it's a different market. It's just, I don't know, it's touch-and-go. And I think it needs something to look forward to, because when we opened up here, the talk then was that there was going to be a marina here – there's supposed to be one here. And it _____, [24:34] for whatever reason. So that there was the big talk; it was going to be in 1999, it was going to be in 2000, and then 2001, and then it stopped because, whatever, there's pull, there was objections and this and that there. But then you were in the boom time, and you know, here was openin' up, there was more cash, it was busy then until 2008. Down, and then you just struggled on for a few more years. Could have survived, but we thought, "No... we'll go; good for the kids, go to Brazil to see a different culture. You know, to see there's more to the world than small town, parochial Ireland. I mean, I'm not saying there's a flaw in us here, but it's nice to see the world. Because the world now, is not *here*, you'll wanna going abroad.

But, to come back here, yeah, I don't know. But you need to have something to say that "this is going to improve". And I think it's not, because I think in order for it to improve, I would say I would need to become involved, but I would be extremely targeted... and I would currently shed these unachievable goal. Go through this town, stay in the town, stay in the cash. But, one thing I was saying right: small town, small places like this here if

they can't make an income stream, *for themselves*, they're fucked. Like, if you always depend on fundraising, grants, huge time. I mean, there's a person in the States, and I keep on forgetting, he's a community activist, and he's based in Chicago I think – and he says communities – He's world renowned, he gives talks, he's in his 60s. But he says, 'community groups should not have no cash'. Community groups, in order to be a community group, if you want to instil change – you know, say you're in Harlem or some kind of poor area, like let's say Chicago – and you're going to the State, i.e. you're going to the City Council and saying "We want you to improve our streets...", then they'll just say "Well, no we can't, we have no cash". He says, 'you're always *begging*', he says. In order for you to have power, as a small community, he says you should not have less than \$250,000. If you've got cash, then people will hear. Fuck you, if not. And if you start to do stuff without them, then they want to take credit for your work. So if you can go out and do it, then... he says 'the power is yours', because they see you as a pure waste of time.

Now, I haven't read enough how you're supposed to get this \$250,000 – I could never find it – but see if you don't have your own income, you're always going to be begging. And people get tired of being tapped all the time, "Can you support this, can you support that there?" So you have to find some sort – and I was saying – like charge for the toilet, charge for the car park... minimum. But even that there is enough. If you're bringing a few grand here, 3 or 4 grand here, 3 or 4 grand to a small town, it's huge like. You know, for marketing, or for simple things. For putting in marketing, for putting in WIFI. And you don't depend on the County – if you can say "Fuck you!" – believe you me, *they* will come to you.

LC: Yeah.

R_04: Because they –

LC: **When you don't need them anymore –**

R_04: Yes, exactly. *Then* they come to you.

LC: **Because they see you as a success, so then they tie themselves to you.**

R_04: Yeah. You know, so you have to empower yourself. And I think, that there to me, if you want small towns to survive – I mean they're all – all small towns now are doing... like they're putting on festivals and – but they're still stuck in the same... they're dependent on support from this, and a few hundred quid from some slush fund of the Councillor, and applying for grants. A pure nightmare applying, people just think "Ah, it's a form again!" ... I don't mind them because I've done a few... hard work, but once you have all the data, because it's more or less the same stuff you need for each form.

LC: **Yeah. First couple times is...**

R_04: Yeah, it's a real *slog* like, you know what I mean? But, I'm saying – I spoke to a boy here, I said "For us to do that there, there's a change of laws, it needs to be voted" ... And the *fucking* mentality of the Council, like, you know like, for the vote, it has to be *proposed*, you know it has to be done – County like

studies – but that’s looking at 5 years. And then it goes to Councillors then who vote and, you know what I mean? *That* is going to be what kills small towns. Small towns cannot control their own destiny. Without that there, and if you don’t have cash, you’re fucked. If you’re depend – always beggin’ – you know?

LC: **The um...**

R_04: That’s my rant there.

LC: **Oh no, you’re fine! The -**

[END OF INTERVIEW]

Interviewer: Desiree Farrell (DF)
Respondent Code: R_12
Location: Galway (DF) – Rathmullan (R_12) *phone interview during COVID lockdown
Date: 09 July, 2020
Audio length: 00:35:20
Demographics: 50, F, Irish

[Phone conversation prior to interview not transcribed]

[START OF INTERVIEW]

DF: Well, if you don't mind, I won't take up too much of your time and we can just go ahead and work through some of the follow-up questions?

R_12: Yeah, for sure.

DF: So, the Q activity that you did online covered a lot of the topics that the questions will revolve around, but the questions here that I have for you are – again I just want to remind you that they're personal to your experience. That's really what we're looking for, we're looking to gather a community-wide experience, but on the personal level.

So the first one I have for you is: How would you describe your community?

R_12: Erm, we have a [poor connection/audio cuts out] ... Way Forward, and lots of – well I would say *all* – of the local groups sort of feed into that group. So it's quite connected, and people sort of know what's going on because there are – I think it's something like *quarterly* meetings, where members of the public are invited to attend and it's reported on in the local newspapers and there's an email sent out and things like that. So, there's a good, active community, I think, in Rathmullan.

DF: Yeah, and I would definitely agree with you having been included in some of those meetings as well. Have you lived in Rathmullan your whole life?

R_12: No, I have lived in Rathmullan now for about 14 years, I think. I got married to a man from Rathmullan, and we're living here now, since then.

DF: Perfect, so then having married into the community so to speak, do you feel – did you have any of the experiences I've heard from others where you initially maybe felt like an outsider, or were treated as an outsider?

R_12: Erm, I would say actually the opposite for me because –

DF: Oh good!

R_12: [relief in voice] Yeah! I had had a new baby when we moved up after getting married, and I suppose I just really enjoyed that. That, in itself, you know kind of introduced me to groups of other, you know, young moms and things like that. And even having a baby sometimes draws people to you. I actually found that having the children here – you know not having been from here – actually used to make [poor connection/audio cut out] ... and I suppose through the school then and everything that's a few years later, and I didn't have any problems at all. And while I was off, I even *myself* would have kind of started up little groups doing, you know beach cleans and looking for funding opportunities – I got involved with, at the time Flight of the Earls Festival was kind of going on.

DF: Oh yeah...

R_12: So, I suppose I was off of work, looking after young children and I had a computer, so I thought I can help the groups that were active at that time. So I just became involved with whatever I could do, locally. And through that, I suppose, I got to know a lot of people. I never really felt – well, I suppose when you say an *outsider*, the thing about when you're an outsider it sort of gives you a little bit of freedom as well because you can just go and do whatever you want to do too. You know what I mean? There's none of that kind of inhibitions of "well you couldn't do this or you couldn't do that".

DF: Yeah.

R_12: Sometimes when you live in an area, you're kind of restricted to kind of – I don't know – what people expect or whatever. But when people don't even know you, you just can go ahead and have a go at things, and people don't have those preconceived ideas or attitudes. There's a certain amount of freedom, actually, in not being from the area too.

DF: **Yeah, well that's a great way to look at it. I think you know, optimism aside, that is a value in itself. Um, so then you kind of touched on one of my other questions which was: How do you participate in your community? Did you want to expand at all on the groups that you participate in, or go through how that maybe has changed over time?**

R_12: Well, the change I think, has been the setting up of the group Rathmullan: the Way Forward. Because, like I said, that has given sort of a direction – it's set a sort of vision, I suppose, for Rathmullan – and it has put together a structure that groups can sort of... well, first of all that *agencies* can contact if there's funding available. So Donegal County Council would, you know, be in contact with RtWF if funding becomes available – for things like environment or whatever – they would be aware of RtWF group so they would be contacted for funding opportunities. And also just as a way for tapping into the community, the fact that there is that group there, I think that it's a big benefit to Rathmullan, you know?

DF: Yeah.

R_12: So what I would say has changed is where you might have had a number of community groups in Rathmullan, the RtWF has brought them all together with a common, shared goal.

DF: **That's great.**

R_12: And the more groups that work together and support each other, the better.

DF: **I've heard a similar sentiment from people involved – like *intensely* involved – with RtWF and it – just hearing people speak about it, the pride that they have when they talk about it is really inspiring to hear. Just in the voices, you know?**

R_12: Well it was, I think it was lacking for the setting up of the group. And while I'm not *actively* engaged with that group, I do support the activities. I'm not on the committee or anything like that.

DF: **Yeah.**

R_12: You know, I suppose it enables you to kind of feed into whatever it is that you're doing in the community. That it's contributing towards what they're looking to do as well. They're [audio unclear] until you meet them. Rathmullan is small, so everybody kind of knows everybody, so. It's um, I think that there are a lot more benefits to come as well, from that group, in terms of the development of the Battery site and even the Abbey in Rathmullan.

DF: **Yes, yeah!**

R_12: A lot of work planned for those sites which will be fantastic.

DF: **Yeah, a lot of focus on the heritage and culture of Rathmullan, which is really good to see because – especially being *on* the Wild Atlantic Way – that's a big draw for people.**

R_12: Mhmm.

DF: **So that kind of leads into the next question I had which is: How would you describe culture, and how do you relate to it? Um, whether that be, you know, Rathmullan culture, or Donegal culture... just *your* culture specifically.**

R_12: Yeah, well I am interested in local history and I'm interested in, I suppose I'm definitely interested in the local environment. I'm also interested in the arts. So living in Rathmullan – actually at this time of year there would normally be the Earagail Arts Festival – which I'm not sure if you're aware of that but –

DF: **Yeah –**

R_12: But that festival is organised throughout Donegal and there's friends all over the county participate in that. And in Rathmullan there would

normally be – or actually I think there even is this year – there’s an event in Rathmullan House with a performer doing something on the grounds and Rathmullan House is a part of it. But there are good links to, say the Earagail Arts Festival programme, and through – I suppose, in fact our proximity to Letterkenny – you’ve got the Regional Cultural Centre, the Grianán Theatre, and there’s good opportunities for music and things like that.

DF: Mhmm.

R_12: And Rathmullan heritage – the historical heritage – the potential is just huge I think. I think it will – again, you know the whole history around the Flight of the Earls – I think there’s a huge potential around that for Rathmullan as a visitor attraction.

DF: Definitely

R_12: And also to kind of allow people to learn a little bit about the history of Ireland and the impact that the Flight of the Earls has had on Ireland as a whole, really, even up to present day, you know? I think it’s big, myself, but I don’t know how other people have... I think local people don’t appreciate it as much.

DF: Yeah?

R_12: I think the Flight of the Earls, that event, happening for Rathmullan is something that definitely could be explored and developed for the town. And I do think it would be a big attraction for Rathmullan.

DF: Definitely, yeah. And I do agree with your comment about people sometimes not appreciating, or just maybe forgetting what’s right under their noses. That happens everywhere and it’s a funny phenomenon, but it’s kind of pervasive.

R_12: *It is!* It is. No, absolutely I think you’re right. Like I would have learned about the Flight of the Earls and their departure from Rathmullan in primary school when I lived in Galway – growing up in Galway.

DF: Mhmm.

R_12: So it always stayed with me, you know, so I think I have – perhaps just because it was right here under- they just didn’t understand that this is something everybody, the *entire country* learns about...

DF: Yeah, the *significance* of it.

R_12: You know, because it’s here under their noses they don’t see it at all. Well I wouldn’t say *not at all*, but they don’t see the potential it has, or appreciate that, I think.

DF: Yeah. So, since you were talking about things that could be a draw for, or explored on the Wild Atlantic Way, we can move kind of into that section of questions here. When the Wild Atlantic Way was being, you

know, developed or talked about across the country, did you feel a sense of involvement in the development of the Wild Atlantic Way? Or even, like if not in the initiative as a whole, kind of the development of it in Rathmullan?

R_12: Erm, I could say I didn't at the beginning. Because, what jogs my memory, is I remember seeing the road signs for the Wild Atlantic Way and not knowing what they were...

DF: **Mhmm, okay.**

R_12: And not understanding the symbol, I thought, "*what is that?*" I couldn't even decipher what the symbol was. And then gradually through that, then, it was the Wild Atlantic Way. Then there was probably an advertising campaign, and then I started to read maybe a little bit about it in the papers, and things like that. So that's how I became familiar with it.

DF: **Okay.**

R_12: Erm, and to my knowledge Rathmullan wasn't on the route at the very start...

DF: **Correct, yeah.**

R_12: Yeah. Um, it was sort of bypassing this area, maybe going for Malin Head – you know the Signature Points, or the Discovery Points, whatever they're called.

DF: **Yeah, yes.**

R_12: Malin Head... and Fanad Head –

DF: **...Fanad Head...**

R_12: Was Fanad Head even on the first lot? I can't remember...

DF: **I think it was... but I don't know for –**

R_12: Yeah, it could have been, actually. Fanad Head could have been – it was Malin Head, Fanad Head, and Slieve League were the three big draws, but coming through Rathmullan at the time wasn't part of the Wild Atlantic Way.

DF: **Yes.**

R_12: But then, I suppose as the years went on, you know, just seeing the success of the Wild Atlantic Way as a way of *marketing* the western seaboard of Ireland it just became clear that Rathmullan should be part of it. And all, you know, there's lots of little outlying areas off the Wild Atlantic Way that have huge potential as well for visitors when they come, so.

- DF: Yeah. Then it just becomes a matter of, “well, what do we include and where do we draw that line?”**
- R_12:** Yeah, I know. I know... there is *that*. And I suppose, in a way, while the Wild Atlantic Way has its own roadmap down the coast, um there is room for, you know “If you stop at this point, check out A, B, C, and D”. You know, that kind of thing.
- DF: Yes.**
- R_12:** And I think they’ve done that quite well. There used to be an app that they had, that I used to – I was signed up to. But I think it’s through the website now or something?
- DF: Yeah, I think they have the interactive roadmap on their website? I don’t know if they have an active app anymore.**
- R_12:** No... I don’t think they do. Um, the app was good, I liked the app, actually. I did tap into it a couple times when I was down the country. I haven’t done that since... since it’s been closed, I haven’t gone into the Wild Atlantic Way website. When I had the app, I kind of made more use of it, but...
- DF: Interesting, yeah. I guess when it’s right at your fingertips, it makes it a lot more accessible, doesn’t it?**
- R_12:** Mhmm, yeah. Exactly! Exactly, but that’s not to say now that I wouldn’t use the Wild Atlantic Way app – or, not app, *website* – if I was travelling, or touring down the west coast I definitely think I would, but I’m just not as familiar with it now as I was when I had the app.
- DF: Yeah, it wouldn’t be something you just click into when you’re bored.**
- R_12:** Yeah... no, it was great because it had, sort of, hidden gems and treasures... you know, it had lovely features on it.
- DF: Yeah...**
- R_12:** So it was – I’m sure the website it perfectly the very same – you know it was broken into the accommodation... the attractions...
- DF: Oh, yeah... yeah.**
- R_12:** It was nicely broken down... you could just access the information you wanted very easily.
- DF: Yeah, oh that’s good, yeah. I wish that they would come back with something like that because it really would be extremely useful for tourists who are kind of navigating it on their own, you know?**
- R_12:** Yeah! And um, like I said I imagine it was probably just a bit of duplication going on, you know the app and website. It was probably more to do with just keeping them updated, I imagine, you know?

DF: Yeah, definitely.

R_12: Yeah, it was good... I did like it when it was running.

DF: So then, once the Wild Atlantic Way as an idea or a concept was developed and kind of implemented throughout the region there in the west coast, since then do you feel – and especially as you're involved, to some degree, with groups in Rathmullan – do you feel any sense of involvement in the *progression* of the Wild Atlantic Way, or how it's evolved over time?

R_12: Well, I – to be honest I personally am not, I suppose, involved in the tourism venture...

DF: Okay...

R_12: So, I haven't been participating in – there's been different events organised by the Wild Atlantic Way that have been open to people in Rathmullan –

DF: Yeah.

R_12: Erm, you know, for training and even Bord – is it Fáilte Ireland – have organised presentations and things like that so, while I personally haven't been actively involved in those different events, they have been open and available to groups or to people who are involved in tourism to do that. So I think that probably restaurant owners, RtWF, maybe sailing club here in Rathmullan, they have had the opportunity to engage with those events organised for the Wild Atlantic Way. If I had been involved with them, I would have been able to avail of them, but I'm not working in that sector, so... I'm aware that it's ongoing and there has been good resources made available, I think, but I haven't actually been involved in them myself.

DF: Yeah. Well as a community member then, or even just you know, living your daily life within the community, what kind of strengths have you seen – or opportunities – that have come up for the community because of the Wild Atlantic Way? Has Rathmullan's relationship with the Wild Atlantic Way been beneficial, in your opinion?

R_12: Yeah, I definitely think it has. One of the things I think that it has sought to do is to identify different types of traveller. So they've looked at the profile of... you know, people that would be coming to Ireland and what they might be looking for. So whether they're looking for history, or a clean environment, or heritage, Fáilte Ireland has been good at being able to look at people that might be interested in that type of travel and then offer different – the tourism opportunities that are available. So, I suppose in a way, it's been avoiding that *mass tourism* and making it a bit more sustainable.

DF: Mhmm.

R_12: But what I've seen in Rathmullan – what I've noticed is we're on Lough Swilly here and I suppose, that would have divided say, Inishowen from the Fanad Peninsula here. And so, we kind of think – we just head to Letterkenny for all of our services and things like that – but I think in a way, what the Wild Atlantic Way has done, it has kind of looked at the *area* all around Swilly – now that there's a ferry that operates from Rathmullan to Bunrana – and it has kind of said, “well if you're, say, in Bunrana now you have the opportunity to look all around... you know, say, Rathmullan headin' up... maybe up to Port Salon.” You know, it has kind of brought the communities that are living amongst Lough Swilly *closer*.

DF: **Yeah.**

R_12: It has looked at more of a *region*, where's like the water kind of would have separated us up to now. I think there's more integration of communities right around Lough Swilly because we can kind of work together now. They say well, you know if there are tours in Bunrana now, instead of then maybe just heading into Letterkenny and out, they can come over now to Rathmullan, explore over around here. And likewise, from Rathmullan they can explore Inishowen, you know? So, I think the Wild Atlantic Way has done a good job there, sort of marketing what's going on right around the Lough...

DF: **Yeah.**

R_12: You know, so there's water sports activities, boating, fishing... the two lighthouse– or the lighthouse in Fanad Head. So that has been – I think that has had positives, definitely for – from what I can see, yeah, for this whole kind of region. It has changed, kind of the way you look at what potential there is to do in the area. You can look at Swilly and not kind of, looking at it as somewhere you have to move away from...

DF: **Yeah, oh definitely. That's really interesting... so it's kind of brought about a new kind of *inclusion*.**

R_12: I think so. You know, we can – communities around Swilly can kind of work together, promoting the different tourist activities they have, and I think it's strengthened everyone's... erm, kind of – because the spinoffs from all of these things, so whether it's kayaking – there's lovely kayaking now at Fort Dunree.

DF: **Yeah.**

R_12: And there's different possibilities for things to do that wouldn't sort of been – I wouldn't have seen them as being open or available prior to the Wild Atlantic Way. It would've meant driving down to Letterkenny... and driving all the way up around. So it sort of opened up new – the ferry and that as well – and that's supported by Fáilte Ireland, that's allowed that to happen. But the marketing as well, that's been done of the area has kinda highlighted the different activities that are available to tourists.

- DF: Yeah. Oh that's great. Have you noticed then, on the flip side, any barriers within your community – for opening up the potential for the community in the Wild Atlantic Way, what barriers or areas of opportunity do you notice?**
- R_12:** Erm, I don't really see barriers... from, you know, being involved in the Wild Atlantic Way. Because, like I said, I think they have done a good job identifying types of travellers who would be interested in coming to this part of the country.
- DF: Yeah.**
- R_12:** And... with Rathmullan itself, it doesn't have a high occupancy – beds – you know numbers. There are holiday homes available for people to stay in... a very small number of BnBs... so maybe a barrier for Rathmullan is actually that it probably needs more affordable accommodation. And maybe even a properly serviced camper-van site or something like that.
- DF: Oh yeah...**
- R_12:** For people who are touring around to be able to come and stay at.
- DF: Yeah, and that would kind of allow then to maybe stick around Rathmullan a bit longer... if they had that option available to them.**
- R_12:** Yeah. There was a hotel – you're probably aware – the Pier Hotel. It was a centre landmark in Rathmullan, but that hasn't been redeveloped. So, you know, there is just a gap there I think, when it comes to accommodation in Rathmullan.
- DF: Yeah. I've noticed that's a common sentiment in the community.**
- R_12:** Mhmm.
- DF: So, it's good in the one hand to see that everyone is kind of recognising the same things. But then, it's frustrating as a researcher to know that everyone sees it, but they're just kind of stumbling on how to fix it.**
- R_12:** Mhmm, yeah.
- DF: So then I just have three more – if you don't mind – quick ones. Where within your community do you think demonstrates the most significant value? And that could be like – it doesn't have to be economic value, it could be cultural value or personal value.**
- R_12:** Erm, well I think, like again, that RtWF group is *inclusive*... and that's very important, I think, for the community to have a voice and it really is – you know, it does include all the groups in Rathmullan from groups for elderly people... even younger groups. There's such a broad range that I think, the fact that it is inclusive and everybody is welcome and everyone has a chance to have their say is very positive. Erm, so, I don't know if you could call *inclusivity* a value...

DF: Yeah... oh, absolutely, yeah.

R_12: Yeah, I think that that is the big thing for me, is that everybody is welcome and has kind of a platform to have their voices heard, you know, on their... maybe different ideas... do you know, just how they feel? Or, you know, maybe their needs as well, so.

DF: Yeah. Oh definitely, that's brilliant! Um, well perfect... I think that's really all I have for you by way of questions. Do you have any questions for *me*? Or any other comments you want to make sure I have for the narrative?

R_12: Erm, no I don't think I have any more questions... just to ask, are you – is this research part of a doctorate that you're working on at the moment, or is it a part of a project for Rathmullan, or...?

[END OF INTERVIEW; conversation continues]

Interviewer: Liam Carr (LC)
Respondent Code: R_14
Location: An Bonnán Buí
Date:
Audio length: 00:23:12.5
Demographics: 53, F, Brazilian-Irish

[START OF INTERVIEW]

(Audio recording begins after interview starts)

R_14: Look, what I can say in terms of tourism here, obviously, like when you open this place you do have to believe in what you're doing, otherwise it's a waste of time. When it's busy, it's extremely busy and you have to be organized yourself in order to cope with it, you know? But then you have 6 months when you just (crawl?) and before you could manage better because the wages are not as high as they are now; or um, you see the problem with the North as well now, because of sterling, you know you have the [inaudible] that come here as well to support this area here... what I'm trying to say that in the past, in a way it was easier for us because we could manage better in terms of, you have a margin and you could actually try to survive for that long winter that you have ahead you know?

LC: - because of the margins in the summer -

R_14: - exactly. So you'd be able to survive. So what I have noticed now- now it's almost impossible, in the extent that we are closed for 6 weeks this year, after the new year, even though we have the breakfast- we have to work in our kitchen, we have to change the floors, so that you know, it takes time because you have to rely on the builders to come and so on. And then that's our holidays as well, because everybody takes time off, you know, some whenever- that's when we actually have time to relax. But what we've noticed is we won't be able to do that anymore. If you manage to not be open for 2 weeks, you're doing well. And then after that you have to keep going because otherwise the bills, you know-

LC: - begin to pile up.

R_14: Yeah. And then it takes a long time to catch up, you know? So, it's very hard. And especially the VAT- they're charging us the same here now that they charge in Dublin, Cork and Galway. And here's a totally different reality. So, I find it very hard to do business here at the moment because of all these things against us. You know, you have Brexit, you have the VAT, going totally against us. In terms of tourism, yes, it has increased. And I think it's the first time I actually saw the Wild Atlantic Way as just - I think in all the years it's been here - as the first time I've seen it as something like actually

positive, that is actually attracting people. Actually, it didn't work before, they tried different things you know, and it never really attracted anybody to come here- because it's too far, because of this and that. Now, you have- like in Fanad, the lighthouse- you know, it's been great and buses even passes through here. So, it's very positive in that aspect, OK? But for us here at the moment, in this place here- in rural Ireland- it's a struggle, because of the things I just said. Everything is against you. And you do have to work extremely hard, or harder than everyone else, because, you know, you pay the same rates- you know VAT- and so on so on so on, and we don't generate the same amount of business.

LC: As you would in Galway, or Dublin?

R_14: Obviously not, you know, because they have the volume. It's all to do with numbers here. And we don't, we don't have the numbers. And then for 6 weeks, when they actually come- I don't know if I'm answering your question...

LC: No no no- this is -

R_14: Is that what you want to know?

LC: No you keep going; you're doing great!

R_14: Because I don't really know if that's - but anyways... so, yeah, as I said like through Easter and to the end of August, mid-September, it's OK, alright? After that we have to be so creative, in the extent that we started this film festival in February, which was great. OK, so that was our second year, and it brings people. And I hope we'll be able to carry on, because at least February that's when, you need a little bit of boost, because you have to rely on Easter at least to survive. So at least in February, if you have a little bit of business, it helps you to carry on, you know? So things like that- we're trying to do then, Halloween, what we did the Fright of the Earls.

LC: Yeah.

R_14: Yeah, you know- things like that [laughter].

LC: Clever. Very clever.

R_14: So, if you don't try to create your own solutions, you - it's my feeling that we won't survive - because you cannot rely on somebody else, or - I feel like we're totally alone. Like, 'Save the Government', no no, we don't. Because even that letter we wrote, to the politician here, to Joe, the minister- and he uh, you know, there's no support, he just says "no, that's the way it is...". I say, now, everybody- the economy is strong enough- it can be done, just not here in our space here.

LC: So you sense there is a recovery, but it's not as good as it was before you guys left and went to Brazil?

R_14: No, no it's not. I mean, as I said, the wages are higher- you know?- the minimum wages here. And then, the VAT for instance, that doesn't help us one bit. I find less people in a way, because of Brexit. There's no way to deny it- they don't spend as much as they used to spend; because of the money situation, because uncertainty. So I do find it really is harder compared to 6, 7 years ago. And then, I think since 2008, things have started to change- slowly and gradually. And then 2011 was a disaster, 2010 you know, really took a cut. So, the expectations are higher for a lot of things, but you know, to actually keep this place here going when everybody was leaving because they had no jobs, so...

LC: When it comes to- you mentioned writing to Joe McHugh- When it comes to an agency that you would look to primarily as your go-to resource, either for your business or to answer questions for the community, do you consider the County Council and the local authority, or do you consider -

R_14: No, Bord Failte -

LC: Bord Failte -

R_14: - is the. Yeah, that's the one that we would have a better relationship with. But in terms of local authority, no. So The Way Forward, it was an idea to then have that sense of community that we would then work together- so that's what is actually helping us, you know, because of the festival ideas - for me- it makes a difference because it attracts people to come here, you know?

LC: Yeah.

R_14: So through them, and with them, we can work together and get something. But again, it's us and I think, Bord Failte, yes, but apart from than, no- nobody else really.

LC: And then, as a representative for the community, a group like Rathmullan The Way Forward, have you seen a positive response by their activities and some of their demonstrations of success and commitment to the community? Do you feel that they positively represent the community, or are they sometimes -

R_14: No, I think they are- they are doing it. Because they are doing a job that nobody else wants to do. And I do admire the amount of time that they put in it- it's great to have it. But there is a natural resistance here- especially when you look [as an outsider]- I know the difficulties that they probably face: the resistance, the natural resistance, to go forward. So I think there is

a little bit of reluctance from some people here, like they think: "Oh who are these people trying to tell us, you know, what to do." But on the other hand, when they actually have the meetings, the attendance is good- and people actually are trying. They know they have to go and support something, otherwise you're gonna end up with nothing. So, there's a bit of conflict, but overall I think it's positive and I think it's great they are there doing what they do. You know, in that way, it may not be the best way- the best approach- you know, like sometimes we don't have the skills to talk to people trying to get [phone rings; inaudible] but I think it's positive.

LC: And you get a sense- even as an outsider- you get a sense you are a member of the community here in Rathmullan? Generally? All of the time, some of the time?

R_14: [Laughter] Um, well I'm married to one of them so I think they have to take me, you know, because I've been married to Martin for a long time and my kids are Irish and - yeah yeah, they do- but it takes a long time for you to feel... you'll be part of it, but you're never going to be *part* of it.

LC: Mhmm.

R_14: You know? It's not like, that you're going to be totally embraced. The ones that work here for us, they're so loyal- they worked for us before, and they come back, and there's a lot of that sort of support, so I do feel like they're great people. The community in general, I've never really had any problems per se, because as I said to you, you know, I'm married to a local person so it's - but, of course, I did feel several times that, you know, I wasn't - when the kids were in the primary school, whatever, you could feel that you won't be - because you have clans, you know and the families there. You know, sometimes I had to go to a coffee morning, but I was there on my own, and it was very hard to walk in alone. And nobody would say "Oh come to this table", so you know...

LC: Does An Buinnean Bui help alleviate some of that for you? Because they know you, not only as a parent and a wife and mother, but now also an employer and a visible presence - a committed presence?

R_14: It did, because the place has been here for a long time, almost 20 years now. And when we came here, nobody could actually believe this place would work. So I think we proved that you could do business here. So, and then we employed people, so it's a sense of identity for me - obviously, now I was accepted - because you created something that was a lot of resistance. And then we got the [inaudible], so many awards over those years that we were here before. So yes, it did put the place on the map, if you like. And then, the new ideas that always here come with the Sailing Club - Martin was involved in that there, along with Rick LeVert, you know? - they worked really hard for that.

LC: Mhmm.

R_14: And then now all this, some sort of frequent, you know (event), that we try to do. So, I hope that we invest in here and then... it's not that we do it to be appreciated, not only that, but I just think that they do recognize. People do come and say, you know, "It's great!" about the Film Festival. Their reaction to it was very good. And the place here, they do support a lot you know, so it's great to see it. So I think, overall, it's very positive, but I cannot deny saying –

LC: **You haven't – you still have work to do. The community, the economy... there's still more that needs to be done.**

R_14: Oh a lot. But I think what really, for me personally, I think if we could feel like at least we some sort of, at least have more support. Like this thing about the VAT, nobody was heard. I just thought, like for us it was another challenge. How are we going to start 2019 with this VAT, Brexit, and the place... like, you know? I thought it was so unfair. So the fact that we nobody to actually listen to a place like this here – in the middle of nowhere – and if you, like our daughter goes to UCC in Cork –

LC: **That's a long drive!**

R_14: Definitely [laughter]! And when we're there, and we mention "ah, we're from Donegal... I work there". So they (others) have no idea how to get here, they think they can take trains. Even like, you know now, just "Are you part of the North", things like that. You know, so that really... it's a fight – But look, I think the key for me is we need to get together. But sometimes, the English (?) has this tendency, they don't want to work as a community; but if you don't do that I don't there's any way out of it.

LC: **Mhmm.**

R_14: You know, so... resist and so on "I don't want to get involved..." No you *do* have to get involved, I'm sorry, if you want to see this place going forward. So we try our best here, me or Martin, to get involved along with them – the group Rathmullan the Way Forward – because we think that's the way to go. Because otherwise it won't be...

LC: **Everybody will be hurt, if –**

R_14: Yeah, at least you hope – you know there are all different ideas. Martin has this thing about "they are doing it the old way". That we should be trying to do it a different way – the way they're trying to raise money – they're always coming to the businesses, but it's hard for the business because we have no cash to give, or it's very limited.

LC: **Yeah.**

R_14: He thinks you should be trying a different way, to try to raise – that's his, not his *problem* – but he puts that to Mick and to John a lot. That you should be trying to raise cash in a different way, try to do things in a more creative way.

LC: Yeah.

R_14: But he can talk to you about his view on that.

LC: Yeah. So just a couple more; we actually have several questions, but you're actually hitting them all on your own so I don't even have to ask them. Aside of a better representation in the government and hearing your concerns about the VAT and that, are there things that, specifically the Wild Atlantic Way or Ireland's push for more coastal tourism, could bring to Rathmullan? Is there some piece of the tourism question that you'd like to see developed here that currently doesn't exist?

R_14: Look, I think the Sailing Club is fantastic, you know? And the water sports... it should be more promoted and pushed. The school is doing so well now and the infrastructure is going to be even better now. So I think, that's what we have, we have this natural beauty. If we can push more of *that...* and it's very safe as well, so for family breaks and things like that, it's ideal. They talk about, "we don't have trip accommodations here", but there's a lot of Airbnb's now, places around the village. So you can't just give them that, say "We're not coming here because Rathmullan has very expensive..." - No, I'm sorry, now I think people are trying in different ways to create that. I think it could be certainly better, but what we have out *there* is just fantastic. And I think it's great for the kids to see them get that sort of skill - ours did - and I think it's just so positive. So we could see that being more promoted. And also the historical part of here. We try to have this enormous exhibition upstairs, but there's very little interest, to be honest with you. That was related to the Battery. The Battery then stopped, because it couldn't keep going, the ones who had the Flight of the Earls exhibition there, the group - anyway, it's a nice story. So they stopped exhibition there, the things that were left in a warehouse in Letterkenny. When we decided to recycle that, the materials were lying there on the floor - I don't know if you went upstairs, I can show you -

LC: No.

R_14: So the textiles - beautifully done, you know, like - the mannequins as well, were left. Everything was broken- it was a disaster. And that was made in Madame Tussaud's in London, so... it was a beautiful exhibition put together. And then... I'll show you upstairs, right? And we have this mirror as well, the glass which tells a bit of the history here, that was left there. Water was dripping, we took it and cleaned it, and put it upstairs. But, the History Society, they do help us a lot, in terms of keeping things going, you know? And they try to promote in September, for people to come and visit. During the year, now for Easter, we can get people upstairs to visit it. But it's a huge aspect of the history and yet it's not even being targeted.

LC: Mhmm.

R_14: And we don't know how long we're going to keep that upstairs for, you know? Because we're going to do something else with that space

eventually, and where all of that is going to go to... I don't know. I'll show you... it's nice, you know?

LC: And then, just actually the last question, on speaking of that promotion: I know you all are on Facebook, in terms of either promoting your business or promoting Rathmullan, do you sense where it might be able to be improved? Is it something that needs to be done at the business level, or is Rathmullan the Way Forward, as a community voice, need to have a role? Does Donegal Tourism Office need to do parts? In terms of that promotion of Rathmullan, whether it's an event, a festival, a Film Fest, or just generally, where do you see the opportunities to raise awareness?

R_14: So to me, there's no way to deny it, we need to – we use that all the time – to promote. But I think that it has to have a link. Bord Failte says to us “You have to give us months in advance”, because they do, whatever... so we have to tell them, let's say, I don't know, 6 months in advance what's happening... let's say for the Film Festival, whatever. So yes, I find sometimes there's no link... there's a bit here, a bit there a bit there, but at the same time it could be more connected, also for better. And for the page here [Facebook], Paul Deeney I think does a great job. That keeps everybody that goes outside, doesn't live here, whatever – they do visit his page a lot.

Is that what you're asking?

It would be great if we could work together, you know... [inaudible example]. But I don't think there's such a – cause you forget, and they don't come to see you, you don't pass the message to them, there's no, you know? It's just a, and then it becomes like commands – and they come sometimes here because, in the past they're promoting something. We had last year, the one who does the Late Late Show...

LC: Oh, um... Tubridy. Ryan Tubridy.

R_14: Yeah, he was here.

LC: Yeah, I was here!

R_14: You were here with him.

LC: Well, I wasn't here *with* him, but... I was here, yes.

R_14: So he was – and then, Bord Failte was here and then they went upstairs, and... but they didn't have a clue, you know, about what was going on. So, and then they kept saying to us “Oh, here, there's loads of festivals here” because The Way Forward have been putting posters saying the events we have here in the village. And they say “Oh, can I –?”, and I say “Yes of course, take it. Take this page, and keep it.” So you can see there's a lack of knowledge there. Now, where the fault is, I don't know. Is it ours, or The Way Forward – who to blame? – is it theirs? Who should know? So, in that aspect, they came here, they saw that on the wall... “Oh, [inaudible]”. So

have nobody tell us to need to give up this amount of time, you know? So, in that aspect, yeah, for me it just showed there is no communication in the way there should be. Of the messages passed, they didn't take it... I don't understand...

LC: All that's required is coordination all the way through -

R_14: Yeah...

LC: Almost like a marketing strategy?

R_14: Exactly! That's another problem here, because every meeting we go we keep saying "We need to market this place...". That's one thing always comes up in meetings, is the fact that it hasn't been marketed properly. Because we need to get an expert here, a person who actually knows what they're talking about. Because we're all very busy and trying to survive. But at the end of the day, you need to get the person who knows what is needed to be done. So I think this is a huge problem here. But you need something to market, right... a brand, if you like, you know?

LC: This is the most challenging question -

R_14: Why?

LC: - I always feel. Can I ask your age?

R_14: [laughter] Yeah, you can! I'm 53.

LC: Wonderful.

R_14: Do you want to have a look upstairs?

LC: YES!

[END OF INTERVIEW]

Interviewer: Liam Carr (LC)
Respondent Code: 15
Audio length: 00:30:19.5
Demographics: 53, F, Irish

[START OF INTERVIEW]

LC: The first kind of, easy questions, how long have you been in – you were born here, yeah?

R_15: I wasn't *born* here, we moved here when I was 8.

LC: 8. So you're a 'blow in'?

R_15: (chuckles) A blow in? Yeah, we'll always be.

LC: Yeah, but in that time between then and today, you've seen various fits and starts in the village, in terms of: who the community is, who comes and goes, the businesses and –

R_15: Oh for sure. I mean, I'd hardly even call it 'fits and starts', it's been just a gradual decline.

LC: Mhmm.

R_15: A change over time.

LC: Yeah.

R_15: And I suppose a very big switch in the balance from indigenous residents to, you know, just a huge number of holiday home owners. So, just a big change that way.

LC: And in terms of – is it a *steady* gradual change, or was it big prior to 2008 and then kind of flatlined for a couple of years and then it's slowly coming back again?

R_15: Well, I was away for – how long was I away? I was away for the guts of 20 years.

LC: Mhmm.

R_15: But I would always be coming back here fairly regularly, so I had a fair idea of what was going on. So I suppose things went – the *population* steadily declined. And with the Celtic Tiger, there was a, I suppose a sudden influx of money and development, and that came to a screeching halt in 2008.

LC: Mhmm.

R_15: And that was really grim times, here for Rathmullan, I think. And you know, a very abrupt drop off. And then I'm not sure it's really getting going again, but –

LC: **And when did you all officially start up here?**

R_15: Um, we started the – kind of at commercial-scale in July 2013.

LC: **Ok, so kind of on the heels of the beginning of the recovery.**

R_15: Yes. We had the pilot brewery from 2011.

LC: **Ok, well that's nearly 10 years.**

R_15: Yeah nearly 10 years. So we've been selling beers since, either late 2011 or early 2012.

LC: **Yeah. And the first one was Rathmullan House?**

R_15: Nah...

LC: **Or close enough?**

R_15: No, the... uh...

LC: **The White Harte?**

R_15: The first customer, you mean?

LC: **Yeah.**

R_15: Um, I think The White Harte was officially the first customer. The first time it was *served* in public was at Rathmullan House. We had a tasting, kind of a beer and food lunch. And it was *sold* for the first time in The White Harte.

LC: **How do you sense your business, in terms of its role or ties, to the community? Is it just a purely business thing – you guys are good at brewing beers, so brewing beer is what you do? Or do you sense, between the names of the locations and everything else, do you feel like your business has kind of a community root?**

R_15: I think it *definitely* has a community root. We see it very much as it's, kind of embedded in its community, and part of its community. Whether the *community* sees that, feels that or not, is a very different thing. But definitely, we've tried to embed it *in* the place. I mean, it's chance that it happens to be this community, I suppose – because that's where I come from, and where Rick has ended up living – it didn't *have* to be this community, but since this is our community, we've embedded it.

LC: **Yeah. Do you feel – since 2011 or so, do you feel like the community has *embraced* you – or the two of you I guess, or the business – or is it more *transactional*?**

R_15: Oh no, I think it definitely has embraced us. My position in the community is quite odd in many ways, because I grew up here, went to school here... knew everybody. Went away for 20 years, came back, and the only people that knew *me* in the community were the people that I had gone to school with – what few of them there were remaining – and *their* parents. For everyone else, I was – just, I could have landed from Mars... no connection to the place. And Rick was always a, obviously a *complete* outsider.

LC: **Mhmm.**

R_15: But he had already become quite involved in the community through – I mean *he* set up the Sailing School in the town. And for a couple of years we ran a festival, called Sea Fest, which himself, Mark Wheeler, and Martin Kelley were the three people behind it.

LC: **Mhmm.**

R_15: So he was already, I suppose, being embraced by the community. And then, you know obviously, he became quite well-known through the brewery.

LC: **Yeah.**

R_15: Now to the extent that he won't go out in Rathmullan because he just doesn't want to talk about the brewery.

LC: **Right. And then I run into you guys in Galway, on Christmas Eve of all things.**

(both laugh)

LC: **Kind of further on with that – and since you brought up Martin, because I know Martin's story as well – he was able to name 30-something kids in the downtown area, the front street, and then when *he* came back, almost everybody had disappeared and he said he was one of just a couple people.**

R_15: Yeah.

LC: **You're 20 years away, you come back to a similar circumstance where a lot of the faces you recognise are gone, or only come back on holidays.**

R_15: Yeah.

LC: **Does that give you a special purpose, having established business here? You know, to champion the Rathmullan sense of living, or is it just – you're just back home?**

R_15: Um... that's a good question. I certainly don't feel any *obligation* to champion it, but my natural inclination would be to champion it. It's a great place, and I love it, and it has a huge amount going for it... I don't feel any

obligation to do it. And I think that's something that actually – it's something that I get quite worked up about, in the community where different members of the community are – it's *assumed* by the community that they have a responsibility to something.

LC: Mhmm.

R_15: Whereas I don't think they should have. And I certainly don't feel that I have a responsibility to promote the area, but if I can, I will.

LC: So any volunteering, or time within the community outside of work, is just your natural personality?

R_15: Yeah.

LC: You're not being like dragged in and asked to do things, more than you want to do?

R_15: No, I used to get asked quite a lot in my capacity as a graphic designer, because graphic designers are needed for everything.

LC: Yeah.

R_15: And then, you know, I reached the point where I said, "I've served my time... there are other graphic designers in the community".

LC: Yeah, yeah...

R_15: So, to be honest I don't contribute all that much. But if I'm asked, I'll certainly try to...

LC: Yeah... consider it or something like that.

R_15: Yeah.

LC: And you would recognise then, initiatives that – even if you didn't have the time to support – you could recognise an initiative that you could consider a good thing, and you'd go "Yeah, that's..."

R_15: Yeah.

LC: So you're at least *in tune* with what's going on?

R_15: I'm pretty aware of what's going on, but something that I've felt constantly since I've come back to live here, unless you're a church goer and if you don't have children, you have very little access into the community. You actually *don't* know what's going on; they're your two avenues into knowing what's going on. And so, my best access to knowledge about the community is actually my mother. She's very active and very engaged in the community, and just naturally involved.

LC: Very tied...

R_15: Yeah.

LC: **There's a good dog-walking group on Sunday mornings on the beach...**

R_15: Is there? Yeah.

LC: **I saw them this morning... so that could be another tie-in as well
[chuckles]**

R_15: [laughs] Now!

LC: **Following along on that: In, say 2013/2104, the Wild Atlantic Way began its process of development, now we're about 4 or 5 years in. Have you seen a change to the village because of the tourist route?**

R_15: I think so, definitely. I mean I suppose, we experience a little bit of it when we had the brewery here, because there were definitely people coming to the brewery who were in the area because of the Wild Atlantic Way. No question about it. And I would say – Now my assessment of it would be based just on the amount of traffic down at the pier, and the RVs parked in the car park...

LC: **Mhmm.**

R_15: ... kind of a thing, so I would guess that, yes. And I don't think it's just a *natural* upturn in tourism, I *do* think they're here because the Wild Atlantic Way has kind of given them a reason to be here.

LC: **Has been bringing them through here.**

R_15: Definitely.

LC: **And were either of you, or your sister, or your mom actually – were any approached by Failte Ireland at any point in time? Did you contribute to, you know, telling them about Rathmullan? Or, was the road laid down, and it just happened to...**

R_15: Prior to the Wild Atlantic Way being set in stone?

LC: **Yeah.**

R_15: I certainly don't remember being consulted.

LC: **Ok.**

R_15: Maybe I was, I don't remember.

LC: **It's *ok*, that's... I don't want to lead that question any further, but that was...**

R_15: I'd be very surprised if people like us were consulted.

LC: Yeah. It's a good reason to ask. Um, and then, so since then you've seen a change that you would attribute to increased visibility of the WAW, increased numbers, the stretch of the season, and the *type* of visitor that's coming – even when you guys closed here and moved down to Letterkenny. Do you have a sense that the visitors coming are getting an enhanced experience when they're in Rathmullan? Do you think that the village itself is kind of meeting their-what they're looking for?

R_15: I would say with the exception of accommodation, yes. Um, I mean, for a village our size, where we are, we have a pretty good offering of places to eat, even though several places are closed... I think that's practically the number one thing people need when they visit a place. The lack of accommodation, *affordable accommodation*, is a massive massive massive drawback here. But other than that, I think, yep, the place has *loads* to offer a traveller. I think it could offer a whole lot *more!* There could be a lot more things to do.

LC: What are some of those – what are some of the things that are either offered or that you think would be an opportunity, but aren't offered yet?

R_15: Well the biggest thing we have to offer is the beach, as an amenity, and the space. And the fact that it's an attractive, reasonably well-kept town. And some historic buildings, you know it has a culture – it has a history, I suppose, that's of interest. It doesn't bother me unduly that there isn't a great interpretive centre, in fact I think that's almost nice. I just think there is a lot that could be made of the environment around the town – the hinterland – for walking and cycling and things like that, without putting footpaths out the road or anything. I don't think that's... I don't think you have to make it accessible for people who wouldn't normally do that sort of thing, but for the people who do want to rent a bike, or find a good route to go for a challenging walk, I think we could probably do a bit more.

LC: Mhmm. And just as an aside knowing – having *done* the tour – did you guys ever consider, knowing that you were going to increase production and so you had to move, did you ever consider keeping this one going as a tourist...

R_15: Absolutely not!

LC: No.

R_15: Everyone assumed we would, but not a hope. Because to us, the story is about the *production*.

LC: Not necessarily the...

R_15: You know that we tried to develop it down here?

LC: Yeah.

R_15: Yeah, so like we very definitely wanted to keep it in Rathmullan. But no, to us the reason that brewery tours – the tourism side of the business is a by-product of production, so you can't divorce the two.

LC: **Ok.**

R_15: There's no point in having the tourist facility if there's no production there.

LC: **Right... right.**

R_15: Other breweries would do it differently, but the way that we run the thing, that's how it works.

LC: **And you guys are still a family-sized affair too.**

R_15: Pretty much... the family's getting big. [laughs]

LC: **That's true. Just a couple more questions. So, as far as you know, you weren't at least asked about the Wild Atlantic Way; when it comes to either your business – and I know you probably have very specific departments that you would go to for very specific things, like the Vintners group or something – ugh, what are those groups called...?**

R_15: Trade Associations or something...?

LC: **Trade Associations and things like that! Is there one or two agencies that, when you need a question answered or you need some follow-up, that you would grab the phone and call, whether it's the county or...**

R_15: Umm, they tend to be – there's no satisfactory, one-stop-shop for us. We, obviously the Revenue Commissioners are people that we quite often talk to, um... and the Local Enterprise Office. We've given up talking to Failte Ireland... there's no point.

LC: **Hmm.**

R_15: I don't think there's one single place that we would say, "I'm going to lift the phone, because I have a question". It depends on the question.

LC: **It depends on the question. And, why is Failte Ireland a dead end for you all?**

R_15: Erm, a couple of reasons I think. Something that's become increasingly a problem for us, is that they are so terrified of anything to do with alcohol. So, on the one hand, they want a tourism offering, and the brewery – and I'm sure it'd be the same with the distilleries that are developing in the county – they're ideal, they know that's what tourists want, but they won't promote them because they can't be seen to be promoting alcohol.

LC: **Yeah.**

R_15: So they have such an immature understanding themselves of how to go about something like that. So it's just a "one size fits all" approach that they take, and they're not able to deal with it intelligently. In general that's the criticism, I suppose, we would make of them, is that they don't try and think constructively with a business. They don't – it's probably difficult for them in some ways, that tourism is our by-product rather than our main product. They're used to kind of a fairly programmatic approach, where they're dealing with tourism providers. And I think they miss a huge amount of opportunity with us because we just don't fit their mould perfectly.

LC: Yeah.

R_15: Whereas, I think there is massive potential to use the brewery as an attraction in Letterkenny. But, we would like to be doing more, I suppose, on the tourism side, but production always takes priority and we have limited resources, so in due course we will.

LC: You have two jobs and one person, that the production job will go first.

R_15: Exactly.

LC: Well – not go first... it'll be *taken care of* first.

R_15: Yes – yeah, exactly.

LC: Yeah yeah [laughs]. *Please, make my beer!* Um, and then, just a couple... very... more broadly: How would you *define* the Rathmullan community? Like, what makes Rathmullan, *Rathmullan*?

[pause: respondent thinking, but does not readily answer]

You mentioned the beach, and the amenities of the beach, and that relationship – and some of the historical buildings, and the stories. Is there something that makes Rathmullan, *Rathmullan*?

R_15: No – I don't think so; I think it is... It's its unique self because of its unique town fabric, and I suppose *geographic* location and history. Um, but I don't think it has any particular characteristic. I genuinely believe that practically all communities are the same, the world over –

LC: Mhmm. OK.

R_15: - it just depends on the personalities that are in it at any particular time.

LC: So mainly the people?

R_15: Yeah.

LC: And while a lot of people that you grew up with left, and the ones that have arrived are arriving from who-knows-where... would you say that the community today is a *functional* community? Or is it a bunch of *splintered groups* that are – some people are minding their own

business, and some people are actively engaged? Um, is there a – I hate to use the word *typology* – but is there a typology for a community member in Rathmullan?

R_15: I honestly don't feel that I could say because I... I could say by *reputation*, but not through first-hand experience. Because I really feel that I don't – like I live here, I'm entirely engaged with the place... to the extent that I need to be. Um, but I don't – I mean there's a huge amount that I just don't know, there are an awful lot of people that I don't know, now. At the moment, I don't think I'm a member of any club, or organisation, or church, or... partly because we're just so busy with work; there is no free time. I don't feel particularly... *involved* in the community, and I don't think I would be able to say that there's a particular type that you need, or that you get pigeon-holed as...

LC: **Right. But there *is* a community... for sure. But it might just be 'every village has a community. And *this* is the Rathmullan community'?**

R_15: I think that's what I feel, yeah... there's de facto of a community in every gathering of people, residences, business... and I know that Rathmullan has the reputation for being certain things, and not being other things – I don't see it myself. To me, it's a plain, ordinary community where it has the same average number of *these* people and *those* people.

LC: **Right, right, right... Alright, um, two more questions. And this is the most difficult of the two that I have to ask: Can I get your age?**

R_15: 53. That's very easy, it's not difficult at all [laughs].

LC: **Some people... you have no idea. It's alright, I was talking to somebody yesterday and he asked me to guess...**

R_15: That's tough!

LC: **And I went over. I was diplomatic about it.**

R_15: Did Respondent XXX happily tell you their age?

LC: **They very happily – actually they mentioned it without even being asked!**

R_15: Good. Respondent XXX and I were in the exact same year, and in the same class in secondary school – we were in school together the whole way. And they were the youngest, always, in the whole class [laughs].

LC: **Oh wow... right right. The latest birthday, or whatever?**

R_15: Exactly.

LC: **Um, and then as a final *final* question – so the hard one is out of the way, this would be the hardest for you – Is there anything pressing on your mind that you maybe wanted to say but we didn't get there?**

R_15: Um...

LC: **Some people come with notes, of things they want to get off their chest.**

R_15: No, I don't have anything to get off my chest. I suppose, I just feel that there's... I think the town, the area, the community – and the place where the community is based – just has immense potential. It's such a *great* place, here that I grew up. And I loved every minute growing up here. I went away happily – I wasn't someone that *had* to leave, I *chose* to leave. And I've always considered it to be one of my greatest privileges of my life that I had a place that I knew I wanted to go back to. You know, when you're away for twenty years, you meet so many people who are living somewhere – whether it's New York, Berlin, Dublin, *wherever* – and you reach that point where you know, "I don't want to stay here for the rest of my life... where am I going to go?" But I always had a...

LC: **- a place to come to.**

R_15: and I dunno how I ended up getting [partner] to come here, but I did!

LC: **the sailing.**

R_15: Possibly, yeah. And there are some people, I suppose, who have come back here and... I suppose, there's a nice... it's a very difficult balance to achieve, I think, where you're engaged and active and doing something for your community, and where you're actually *pushing* a community that has been here in your absence, for decades, in a way that may or may not be appropriate. Or I suppose, um... I think it's a very sensitive issue where the kind of *blow-ins, returnees, indigenous folk*... it's very difficult to get that balance right so that there is positive momentum, without people having chips on their shoulders.

LC: **Or questioning motives...**

R_15: Questioning – that's a big thing – questioning motives. There can be such suspiciousness – I mean, it's a fundamentally Irish thing, to be suspicious of anyone is doing something that might be good, they must have... It's one of the reasons, to be honest, that [partner] pretty much doesn't engage with the community anymore. Because his motives for some of his *completely* generous efforts were questioned – how much was he making out of it? – and he's a person who has brought a *massive* amount of money into this community, in terms of funding, and put a huge amount of personal effort into it, and it's very tough to accept that question, from different fronts, from people who should know better, like. "What's in it for you, buddy?"

LC: **Yeah... I can understand that quite well. Um, I always get, somewhere in the first 5 seconds of any conversation: "That's a Donegal name! Where..." The other side... the west side of it...**

R_15: The best thing I can do is tell people that my grandmother is from Donegal, and people... relax a little bit. My family's big problem is the accent – you've met Rachel probably, my sister, sounds exactly like me – she was 2 when she moved here. And we just don't have a Donegal accent at all, so no matter how long we live here...

LC: **It doesn't matter.**

R_15: It doesn't matter, you know. We weren't *born* here, our parents weren't born here, and we don't have the accent.

LC: **What is the accent?**

R_15: It's... I dunno. My father's from Dublin, my mother grew up in Offaly. Um, so... it's kind of a Dublin-midlands.

LC: **Yeah, it's one of those things that I always notice: when I get far enough up the road – like when I hit Sligo or something like that – and the accent begins to shift. And by the time I get here, it's... the Donegal accent is the *Donegal* accent. So whenever I hear an accent that's not Donegal... like John Gallagher doesn't have a Donegal accent either.**

R_15: Ehhhh... John does, I think –

LC: **It comes and goes.**

R_15: Yeah.

LC: **Um, but I check that as a... you know one of those secret indicators. You know, "Donegal man, Donegal accent... not a Donegal accent, not a Donegal man."**

R_15: It's interesting because in the very south of the county, like Ballyshannon, Bundoran, that kind of area, to me they don't have Donegal accents at all, or a lot of them don't. They have midlands, north-midlands accents; it's extraordinary how it changes... it's fascinating.

LC: **Yeah, and the one here, matches up with the Derry one pretty well. When I go further west, like to the...**

R_15: To the Gaeltacht areas... the Rosses

LC: **Yeah, that one almost to me sounds like it went past Derry and to somewhere on the way to Belfast. And I don't know how, but the accents from the west side to the east side of Donegal – to my ear – there's just a little bit of a difference that I notice.**

R_15: Oh I think there definitely – and of course the accent, even within the area that is different is – a person who is a native Irish speaker would speak English with a different accent to the person who grew up beside them that wasn't a native Irish speaker.

LC: Yeah. A lot of my stakeholders out west are Gael-goers, *or* first language was Irish. So, they have a patois... they'll just throw some words in, and I'll be like "I'm learning, man. But I don't know what you mean by that particular word".

R_15: But it's intonation and everything. A very good friend of ours, TM, I don't know if you met him, he's an architect. He's from Letterkenny. But myself and [partner] lived in Berlin for 7 years, and TM lived in Berlin for 5 of those years – came a year later and left a year earlier.

LC: Mhmm.

R_15: But, most Germans thought that he was not a native English speaker. He would have grown up with Irish as his first language, you know, bilingual. He grew up in an English speaking area, but his parents were great Gael-goers, so he grew up with Irish as his first language –

LC: And inside the house?

R_15: Yeah. So he speaks English with an a– it's not even an accent, it's an *intonation* and a way of constructing his sentences sometimes. It's just different.

LC: Yeah, I have a master's student whose family is from Inis Meáin and he grew up in Galway City, but his family is Islanders, all the way! And he just opens his mouth and I'm just like – he writes incredibly well, he's probably the best writer in the class – but when he talks I'm just like, "I'm not so sure what you're doing here, man... I know where you're going with this point, but structurally you've made me a different statement that what I thought you were saying". But, neither here nor there!

[END OF INTERVIEW]

Fáilte Ireland Interview

Interviewer: Desiree Farrell (DF)

Respondent ID: TA_19

Location: Virtual, via Zoom

Date: 5 November 2020

Audio Length: 00:39:57

Demographics: F, 47, Irish

[START OF INTERVIEW]

DF: How would you define/describe the Wild Atlantic Way tourism initiative?

TA_19: In my own words, it's probably the greatest thing that has happened to the west coast. It's given it a unique selling point on an international stage; it addressed huge issue in terms of seasonality on the west coast. In terms of – the route was always there, all we did was put sign posts on it, but it gives us something that set us apart from the rest of Ireland in terms of, when the international market was looking at it – you know it's the longest defined coastal touring route in the world, so it gives it that unique selling point.

DF: It really puts it on the map, so to speak.

TA_19: It does, yeah, it puts it on the map!

DF: How does your role interact with the Wild Atlantic Way initiative (development/implementation/etc.)?

TA_19: Well when we – when the concept originally was come up with, we went out and we did townhall meetings in the community, and we didn't even have a sign on the road at that stage. So we were looking for people to buy-in to a concept that they didn't really understand.

The biggest selling point for us would have been the fact that we were looking to rejuvenate small towns and villages along the west coast of Ireland and that we could have the possibility of creating year-round employment in those towns and villages. And that we were gonna give the next generation an opportunity to stay in their local area.

DF: Yeah – that's so exciting! It sounds like it would have been so conceptual at the beginning, but so exciting because it would have been – you knew you were going into it with the longest route and –

TA_19: Yeah, it has been really exciting! It's a project that I've been at from the start – from the initial concept.

And I suppose, as I've watched it grow, and you've seen the results and the impact in small towns and villages, it does give you great heart in terms of moving the project forward.

But there's times you feel we're not moving fast enough, and economic conditions can change tourism overnight.

DF: **Yeah, definitely. And it would be, I guess, hard to kind of see certain communities struggle while others are really thriving. I think that would be difficult to watch, knowing that overall it's very successful, but –**

TA_19: Yeah, and you will have towns and villages that are performing better than other towns and villages.

And that can be just down to, you know: a stronger community, they've a stronger infrastructure base, they have a good accommodation base to start off with, and they're *on the coast*.

So that's definitely – yeah, you have seen towns that are performing better than other towns and villages along the route.

DF: **So in summation, do you feel that you have a sense of involvement with the progression of the WAW?**

TA_19: Oh yeah! We do, like, we would sit down and we do our high-level plans on, you know, an annual basis, but you're also looking at what the long-term game is gonna be for the Wild Atlantic Way. So how do we actually *protect* and *harness* the Wild Atlantic Way going forward, because the last thing you want to do is actually *spoil* what is the uniqueness of the Wild Atlantic Way. Because we're saying *wild, rugged* landscapes –

DF: **Yeah...**

TA_19: And like, the last thing we want to do is end up with a mass jungle of concrete on the WAW, spoiling the actual views that people are coming to see.

And for us, it's not about people actually, you know, doing the full 2,500 km. We'd actually like people to come and immerse themselves in a section of the WAW. So our long-term game at the moment is, we're developing Visitor Experience Development Plans in geographic areas along the route. The long-term for that is, when people are looking at that geographic area, that there's enough for them to see and do that it's gonna make them want to stay, like 3-5 days.

So that it's not a short-term – that people aren't just coming in and doing the full route, and you know, "I want to get from end to end".

DF: **Yeah, yeah**

TA_19: But saying, "no, come immerse yourself in a section of the WAW", and make it a lifetime of holidays.

DF: **Oh that's so cool! It's neat when you break it up like that into, like obviously it already has the regional breakdown, but to really see how**

different communities kind of interact with the idea and the concept on their own –

TA_19: Yeah...

DF: – is really interesting to see, because, you know, depending on what's naturally there in their backyard, that's what they're going to be kind of pushing, and it gives the regions their own identity, but also the communities and villages within; so it's really a cool, kind of, Russian-doll-effect of the whole route.

TA_19: Yeah, and like the WAW has two separate regions as such, because 70% of the traffic would have come into Dublin, across to Galway and headed south on the WAW.

So we would have a disparity in terms of visitor numbers north of Galway.

So the long-term game plan now is to grow those numbers more evenly along the route.

DF: Ok –

TA_19: But you have to look in terms of “What are going to be our USP's to drive those visitors north on the WAW?”

You know, the Cliffs of Moher are drawing over 1M visitors, we don't have another attraction north of Galway that is going to get that visitor pull...

DF: Yeah, yeah – you mentioned USP's, what does that refer to?

TA_19: Um, Unique Selling Point. So, what is your unique selling point? What would you put in the shop window that is going to attract...

DF: Ok, perfect! Good lingo for me to include –

TA_19: [laughs] I know, I should remember that not everyone knows the acronyms we use!

DF: No, you're fine... I'll just ask to clarify. And you're actually already touching on a lot of the other questions, so if some of them are repetitions, I'll just kind of re-word them or skip over...

[INCLUDED IN THE REPOSSES ABOVE:

1.2 How is the tourism sector currently managed on the Atlantic coast of Ireland?

1.3 Please share with me any thoughts you have on how tourism is dispersed on the Atlantic coast (or Ireland more generally).

a. Is this a concern?]

DF: How would you describe the level of community and stakeholder engagement during the development of the WAW?

TA_19: Oi, yeah, it was a struggle.

DF: **Yeah?**

TA_19: You know, in terms of getting the industry to um – everyone embraced it, and they loved the concept of it being a touring route – but actually getting the industry then to develop WAW experiences, and to showcase them on their site and to incorporate the branding onto their own businesses and stuff, that has taken work. And I wouldn't say that we're 100% there by any means.

DF: **Ok, so then that leads to the next question: Do you feel that this level [of community and stakeholder engagement] was satisfactory?**

But you said, "no, it's not quite where it needs to be"?

TA_19: It's satisfactory to the level where we have all the State agencies working together in terms of that.

We have, probably 80-85% of the industry working with us, in terms of putting the WAW as the forefront of their business. But there'll always be – Desiree, there will always be room for improvement.

DF: **Yeah... [transition to next question]**

**Are you familiar with what the process was for determining which communities or villages to visit/engage with?
You mentioned townhalls, what was the process for determining where to go?**

TA_19: Well, what we did was – like for us, you would have taken the county and you would've said "Right, you know, where have we got strong accommodation hubs at the moment?"

DF: **Ok, yeah**

TA_19: And "where have we that are nearly living and breathing the WAW of life, it's just, we don't have a badge on it?"

DF: **Mhmm, ok**

TA_19: So we were looking at where we had large accommodation hubs where we could make impact quickly...

DF: **Yeah, kind of get the footprint –**

TA_19: And where tourism was a way of life for them.

DF: **Ok, so like Doolin!**

TA_19: Like when we started the concept, it was the year of the really, really bad storm in Ireland.

And we were out doing townhall meetings, and we were suffering huge coastal erosion along the west coast [laughs]. So it was a bit ironic, really.

DF: [laughs] **Yeah, a bit satirical. Like, "It's going to be so beautiful! Just follow our vision... it'll get there!"**

TA_19: Yes! [laughs] But the tourism industry on the west coast were looking for something that could unite all of them under the one umbrella.

It's very hard to make noise in an overseas market for one region. Like, if someone mentions a region to you in France, there's only one or two regions that will stick out in your head.

DF: **Yeah, yeah. And it would be ones that have been heavily marketed.**

TA_19: Yeah, yeah! So yeah, if you look at the like of Mayo, Donegal or you know, West Cork.

They can't stand alone in an international market and you needed something that was going to be that anchor, in terms of that overall sales pitch.

DF: **Yeah, definitely. That makes total sense... and in these smaller places, too, the accommodation is still – especially in Rathmullan – that's probably their biggest struggle. I hear from *everyone* I talk to up there, "if we could just get accom-"**

TA_19: Aww yeah... Rathmullan would have been my playground as a child.

DF: **Oh really? Oh, it's gorgeous up there!**

TA_19: And it's the one town and village which I feel has so much potential.

DF: **Oh my gosh, yes, they are so organized... it's amazing! They just need more accommodation and they'd be set, I think, honestly.**

TA_19: And they need more for the visitor to do while they're in the village.

DF: **Yeah, the Battery getting fixed is going to be –**

TA_19: Yeah! It's gonna to be *amazing!* The plan for the Battery is amazing.

DF: **It really is! I've gone to a few of their meetings and, kind of seen all the plans and the options that they have for the Battery.**

TA_19: Yeah

DF: **And, just seeing – who is it? – [name redacted], he's working up there on all those options, and he is just *so* passionate about it, I love to see it.**

TA_19: [Name redacted] has some fantastic concepts! He's been a great asset to Donegal.

DF: **Yeah, definitely! Um – ugh, that's exciting! So that kind of brings us into the next section which is identity and sense of place. Um, so you were talking about how different communities, kind of have identities of themselves that are encased within the overall, kind of, big picture.**

TA_19: Yeah

DF: **How would you describe the identity (cultural or community-level) presented by the WAW initiative to tourists?**

TA_19: Oh, the identity? I suppose in terms of – it's, for us it would be that *wild, rugged landscape*, it's that *total immersion*. You know, you're getting away from it all, but it's also – you know, the WAW is immersed in culture.

And it's, um, it's along the route that's where you'll experience the true Ireland; in the smaller communities you'll get to embrace the Gaeltacht, you'll get to embrace the Irish music, you'll get to embrace the seafood.

It's all of Ireland packed up on the west coast, on a touring route.

DF: **Yeah, it's so great. One of the funny criticisms that comes through a lot from the way it is marketed; because it *is* the longest route and it's so hard to get like every little niche represented – one of the key criticisms that has emerged is like, "Oh, it's all cliffs, Guinness, and sheep!" [laughs]**

TA_19: [laughs]

DF: **And so, it's interesting to see the different communities come out and say, like "No, Rathmullan is Lough Swilly, and we have Fanad Head, and –"**

[responses now refer to Donegal/Rathmullan's identity and uniqueness]

TA_19: – the maritime story!

DF: **Yeah!**

TA_19: The maritime story. But also, for Rathmullan, it's the opportunity to link with the peninsula across.

In terms of Fort Dunree, and to do that as an overall experience, in terms of that *military might* and, you know, how that was positioned.

DF: **Yeah, definitely. So I'm just wondering, then, in your head how Donegal aligns with the brand of the WAW. Or even Rathmullan, specifically, since you're so familiar. [rephrasing of next question]**

TA_19: Um, for us it's – Donegal has that really strong sense of community and about immersing the visitor in the actual experience.

DF: **Mhmm, yeah**

TA_19: And for us it's about bringing that cultural experience to life for the visitor, in terms of, you know we would have on of the largest Gaeltachts along the WAW.

But it's getting the opportunity to immerse the visitor in those smaller towns and communities and villages, so that they're getting to see the little hidden gems along the route, which are the experiences that people go home and talk about. And it's not necessarily the Cliffs of Moher –

It's someone showing them how to make brown bread, or showing them how to make an Irish coffee, or they've been out fishing on a boat.

DF: **Yeah, ugh all the really unique experiences!**

TA_19: Yeah! It's just – Donegal has embraced the WAW probably more so than any other county. Because we're the county that would have struggled, in terms of those visitor numbers, *more*.

DF: **So they're almost more willing to buy in and invest, because it's so crucial?**

TA_19: Yeah. And we're very seasonal. We would have been a very seasonal county. So, like, you would have had businesses that were only operating for 12 weeks in the year.

So the WAW was seen as an opportunity to make these businesses year-round; make them more viable. And we've seen *lots* of new small businesses crop up on the back of the WAW.

DF: **Yeah**

TA_19: Like Rathmullan's even a brilliant example, in terms of, you now have Eco Adventure doing water spots on the beach there in Rathmullan. You have the new little coffee pod, you have the new café along the Battery and behind the wall there...

So, like you know, and Rathmullan House has opened its doors to do the Taproom pizzas and stuff. So, people are starting to embrace it and maybe add on to their businesses and they've gained additional revenue streams that weren't there previously.

DF: **Yeah, and that's all so exciting. I love that you're so familiar with Rathmullan because it really just brings all of it even more together.**

[Question combined with above: How does the identity of Donegal align with the brand identity of the WAW?]

DF: How might the collaboration with Local Authorities and industry bodies be strengthened to maximise tourism potential?

TA_19: I have to say, Desiree, we couldn't have a stronger relationship with Local Authorities along the WAW at the moment.

We're working really hand-in-hand, in terms of tourism policy development within the counties. And you know I talked to you about the Visitor Experience Development Plans?

DF: Yeah

TA_19: One of the key linchpins in those is that you have all of the State agencies, that have a stake in that geographic area, sitting at the table and buying into the plans.

So you have a 3-5 year plan for a geographic area, that all the State agencies have aligned to.

So that we're not creating plans anymore in isolation. So that we're then trying to impose that plan onto a Local Authority, that hadn't any of that geographic area maybe on their radar for their own plans.

DF: Yeah

TA_19: It just means that now plans are starting to get aligned by agencies and that the long-term development for an area is being more coordinated.

DF: Ok, so you're kind of giving them the tools to kind of take it and run with it.

TA_19: Yeah!

DF: Yeah, ok. Well that is really great to hear that the collaboration is already so strong! [Blue Growth Strategy explanation for next question]

What policies are needed for Ireland to pursue a sustainable Blue Growth Strategy?

TA_19: For us – and like, all of our consumer research will show us – people want access to the water.

Like, there's a perception that when you come to the WAW, that you're going to get out onto the Atlantic and onto the water.

DF: Yeah

TA_19: And consumer research has shown us that that's what people are looking for. And at the moment, as you look at the west coast of Ireland, we're not using it to its full potential.

DF: Yeah

TA_19: And it's something that we're addressing as well, in terms of even, um shared facilities at beaches...

DF: **Mhmm**

TA_19: Say, for like the Eco Adventure and for the Sailing Club in Rathmullan, the new toilet block changed the landscape for them, in terms of having changing facilities and having toilets available for the visitor.

We have so many fabulous beaches along the coast, where you're watching surfers changing out of the back of cars and stuff [laughs]

DF: **[laughs] Yeah**

TA_19: And like, we're trying to get away from that at the moment. And we're working with Local Authorities around a programme of looking at shared facilities along the coast so that you could – places where you would have two or three existing water sports activities people, they will be able to use the shared facilities in that area.

Just get away from people changing in the back of cars and stuff and us not having – we *have* an internationally renowned product, we just need the internationally renowned facilities.

DF: **Yeah, oh definitely!**

TA_19: And the pontoons, and giving people access to boats, and getting people out onto water.

And I think that that's the one thing that has come out of COVID that is really going to change people's thinking going forward. People are looking for wide-open space. People are looking to get out onto water. There's been a *huge* increase in terms of people taking part in water sports activities over the last six months.

DF: **Just reconnecting with nature.**

TA_19: It is! It's reconnecting with nature. And I think it's gonna to take a while before, you know, the city-breaks start picking back up.

DF: **Definitely! That is so interesting – so if *one* good thing could come from COVID...**

TA_19: [laughs] One good thing from COVID: I think it's the fact – and we would have even seen it in our domestic market, Desiree – is the east coast made for the west coast of Ireland.

Like, we had *unprecedented* numbers on the WAW from the domestic market this year!

DF: **And that's not even the target audience! Which is so great.**

TA_19: [laughs] No, it's not the target audience! But it was the concept of, "I'm looking to get away from it all... I'm looking for wide-open space", and *that's* the WAW.

DF: **That's where you go.**

TA_19: Yeah, *that's* the WAW resonated.

DF: **Yeah. If other countries were to embark on developing a similar initiative like the Wild Atlantic Way – what kind of advice would you offer them?**

TA_19: "Start from the ground, up!" Community involvement is key for the success of any project. And take them with you every step of the way.

And that is what we've done. Even in any plans that we have done for, like maybe Glenveagh National Park, or for Ards Forest Park, or for what we're going to do – the big masterplan for Malin Head – we've done public consultation at every level.

DF: **Yeah**

TA_19: And you don't want to do it, Desiree! [laughs]

Public consultation is really – it's not that you don't want to do it – it's an extremely difficult part of a planning process. Because you need to get all, you're taking everyone's opinions onboard with you, and developing a lot richer plan.

And if people have bought into it, from the ground up, it will be a success.

DF: **Yeah, I can imagine it would be a lot like herding cats in the beginning.**

TA_19: [laughs] It is! But it's – but where you go in and impose something on a community, it will not succeed.

DF: **Yeah, exactly.**

TA_19: And there was one other thing that probably worked for us: you know, we picked ambassadors for the WAW at the start. You know, people that we knew were gonna to help us get the brand out there, and get the name out there. And I think that can be important as well.

DF: **And those were *community* ambassadors? Like in the villages?**

TA_19: Yeah, they were town community ambassadors.

DF: **That's a great piece of advice, that people might not necessarily think of...**

TA_19: No.

DF: Like, having that designation kind of gives a sense of empowerment too. Like you said, it's not imposed, it becomes *theirs*.

TA_19: You have to want to know that the communities want the kind of project that you're driving. But the one thing about touring routes is: every community feels that they stand to benefit from it, but it's working with those communities to ensure that they get their share. In terms of being able to grow their employment, and to grow revenue.

DF: Yeah, um -

TA_19: - Rathmullan has huge potential, but it just - there's two or three really great people driving all of that community piece at the moment, and you just wish there was a lot of a younger generation coming in behind them.

That has the same, like - there's room for an ice cream parlour, there's room for the craft shops, there's room for, you know?

DF: Yeah! They've actually talked about that a lot, in meetings and with interviews I've had with people there. They're just missing that, kind of - like, they're nervous that they're going to get burned out before someone else is ready to take over.

TA_19: Yeah, mhmm. And that's the issue, Desiree, with every community across the country, because if you look at most couples now, two of them are working extremely hard. Like, it's not until people get into their late 50s, or early 60s, that they have time to start to give to you - to projects. And it is a pity, because you do need that young cohort, that have the passion and the drive, and that aren't afraid. [laughs]

DF: Yeah, fearless.

TA_19: But I think we have a new generation of entrepreneurs coming through.

DF: Yeah?

TA_19: That are - and I've always said this, even watching stuff on the WAW, we've a new generation of entrepreneurs that aren't afraid to make mistakes, and aren't afraid that if it doesn't work, they can move on to something else.

DF: Yeah. Oh, that's really good! That's good to have, you know, especially it coming into however many years since the launch at this point, you do need that revitalization ever so often to keep it propelling forward and improving.

What pressures (economic, political, environmental, demographic) do you see related to the WAW? [clarification: We've talked about generational demographic pressures...]

TA_19: Um, environmental would be a huge issue for us going forward, because you need to be careful what you create, in terms of being able to manage that.

And we have ran into areas where we're suffering with congestion in peak periods, down in Kerry and stuff, and that's something we want to manage.

So for us, it's all about visitor management. So, if you look at a lot of our Signature Points, there's only one way in and one way out.

So if we're driving hundreds of thousands of people into those areas, we need to look at the wider plan for that area. So for us, it'll be visitor management, it'll be environment – are two of the really long-term gamechangers for us. And we'd really like to build that equal tourism brand, in terms of being a *green* WAW, as such.

DF: Yeah; and you had mentioned, kind of spreading that tourism load along...

TA_19: Yeah. By creating year-round business and addressing that whole issue of seasonality and disparity. So that, you know, we have large capital projects north of Galway that are gamechangers in terms of driving that visitor north.

DF: Yeah. So, on the inverse of that, what are the innovations occurring in the sector that will lead to it being different in the future?

TA_19: Well we're looking at our 15 Signature Points now on the WAW, and we're looking for them to be the gamechangers for the geographic area, ok?

DF: Yeah

TA_19: So what you want to do is, you create that Signature Point with a USP and then you create the smaller experiences around that, so that you're not creating – we don't want another Cliffs of Moher or Giant's Causeway where people are driving in, driving out.

Doing that – the big, iconic – and not doing anything in the wider area. So, for us it'll be the development of the Signature Points on the WAW, and then about creating the wider experiences around them to ensure that people are staying in a geographic area for a longer period of time.

**DF: Exciting! One final question, then, before I let you go...
What do you consider to be the biggest success of the WAW initiative?**

TA_19: The community involvement.

DF: Yeah?

TA_19: Yeah, the community involvement. And the passion that the communities have now, in terms of even talking about the WAW.

DF: Yeah, it's become a very impassioned emblem of communities on the west coast, so –

TA_19: – Like we had 56 hotels, for instance in Donegal, and more than half of them would have been operating on a seasonal basis [pause] and we're down to

single digits now, in terms of those businesses that are operating on a seasonal basis.

DF: That's so amazing!

TA_19: Yeah, but, that's not to say it's not going to be a struggle, Desiree, moving forward.

This is the biggest fear I have, now, at the moment. It'll be really important for us that we keep that capital spend money happening. Even while we're trying to regrow the tourism numbers.

Like, we would have identified four markets – France, Germany, the US, and the UK – as offering the best return-on-investment for us, in terms of they were warmed to the product.

So, it's going to be a while before those markets are ready to return. So, like, we're looking at three years recovery, probably two years growth.

DF: Yeah, well if you remember from the infographic I sent you, we did a survey of tourists on the whole WAW –

TA_19: Yeah

DF: – So you'll be happy to note that it's something – high 80s or 90% consider it good value for money, so it's heading back up and –

TA_19: Are you nearly finished your PhD, or are you only starting, Desiree?

DF: No, my fourth year starts in January.

TA_19: Desiree, I'd *love* to do my PhD!

DF: Do it! I think, like especially with your position and your experience, there's so much room – like, the WAW is super under-researched...

TA_19: Oh, yeah

DF: Like at the academic level, for whatever that's worth. But I mean, it is significant in its impact to the tourism literature and industry, which is really cool!

TA_19: Yeah, but you know what I think happened with us – and this is probably just me coming from my own personal perspective – is we developed the WAW, and then pressure come on from the other areas to have a brand.

So Hidden Heartlands was developed, and Ireland's Ancient East was developed... and I think we should have had enough faith as an organization to say "No, let's get this one brand right and get it developed really well, and then we can look at –". We've too many brands.

And it's too noisy for the overseas market, to comprehend all of that.

DF: Yeah, and that's so interesting too! That would be a really good project to take on, because you'd have the tourism and marketing numbers...

TA_19: Yeah. Ireland's Ancient East brand did not register with the trade as strongly as the WAW brand registered, and it would be interesting to do the comparison, in terms of even the approach and stuff.

DF: Definitely! Because those markets would have already been so well established. Like all of those Heritage sites would have already been a huge draw for tourism.

TA_19: Yeah. There wasn't buy-in from the tourism industry, to the same level as there would have been for the WAW.

DF: Oh interesting!

TA_19: And you could look at the geography and you could say, "Well, they were probably getting a high level of tourism anyway, they felt..." -

DF: - They were content.

TA_19: They *were* content, they didn't need it. They weren't hungry for it. Whereas, the west coast of Ireland were very hungry, in terms of "We need to increase numbers. We need to get a longer season out of it". And like, we're still at the stage, Desiree, where we're not fully year-round. Like, we have businesses open in January, February that are keeping the door open, but they know that their cash cow isn't going to start until St. Patrick's weekend.

It would have finished previously at the end of August; we're pushed out now until the end of October. You know, and every year we're getting a few more weeks on the year.

DF: Well that's good that the extension is consistent.

[continued discussion outside interview topics]

[END OF INTERVIEW]

Appendix E: Q statements (theme designated in bold)

1. The Wild Atlantic Way initiative enhances the identity of my community. **(I)**
2. My community has unique local knowledge that should be used to pursue local tourism opportunities. **(LEK)**
3. Policy makers do not fully engage with my community with regards to tourism opportunities. **(T)**
4. National policies can help address emerging issues along the Wild Atlantic Way. **(T)**
5. My community is empowered to be involved in the development of the Wild Atlantic Way. **(LEK)**
6. I feel empowered by the Wild Atlantic Way to be involved in the experience of visiting tourists. **(LEK)**
7. The Wild Atlantic Way operates separate from my community. **(T)**
8. The success of the Wild Atlantic Way locally is owed to my community's engagement. **(T)**
9. My community prioritises satisfaction levels of visiting tourists. **(T)**
10. My community provides a unique 'non-touristy' experience for visitors. **(T)**
11. Tourism is not just a business. **(T)**
12. The Wild Atlantic Way has improved my quality of life economically. **(T)**
13. The Wild Atlantic Way has improved my quality of life socially. **(T)**
14. The Wild Atlantic Way has improved local environmental conditions. **(LEK)**
15. My community's cultural heritage is not solely defined by the Wild Atlantic Way. **(I)**
16. Tourists share in our Irish heritage when they visit my community. **(I)**
17. My community's cultural values exist beyond marketed local tourism destinations. **(I)**
18. The values which define my community offer a unique identity unlike that of other destinations along the Wild Atlantic Way. **(I)**
19. The Wild Atlantic Way route itself connects my community to neighbouring communities in new ways. **(I)**
20. The value of my community can only be fully understood through the process of living in it. **(LEK)**
21. The Wild Atlantic Way has always existed. It has just been given a name and signs to help tourists find their way around. **(T)**
22. My community views all visiting tourists as the same. **(T)**
23. Local authorities have met their legal obligations to consult with my community when developing tourism plans. **(T)**
24. The growth in tourism due to the Wild Atlantic Way can be felt in my community. **(T)**
25. The Wild Atlantic Way substitutes my community's existing character with one marketed to tourist expectations. **(I)**

Appendix F: Research Ethics Committee Approval Letter



Leas-Uachtarán
um Thaighde

Vice President
for Research

09 April 2019

Ref: 18-Oct-04

Desiree Farrell
School of
Geography and
Archaeology
NUI Galway

Dear Desiree,

Re: 'Unpacking the Wild Atlantic Way: A Community Perspective'

I write to you regarding the above proposal which was submitted for Ethical review. Having reviewed your response to my letter, I am pleased to inform you that your proposal has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

All NUI Galway Research Ethic Committee approval is given subject to the Principal Investigator submitting annual and final statements of compliance. The first statement is due on or before 25 March 2020.

See annual and final statement of compliance forms below. Section 7 of the REC's Standard Operating Procedures gives further details, and also outlines other instances where you are required to report to the REC.

If you have any questions regarding the Committee's decision and follow-up procedure, please email ethics@nuigalway.ie, including the reference number of your application.

Yours sincerely,

Kevin Davison
Chair, Research Ethics Committee

Please note the following important points in regard to ACREC review of research proposals:

- Applicants must adhere fully to the approval decision, conditions or contingencies specified by the REC.
- The researcher must not commence data collection until FULL APPROVAL has been granted.
- Applicants must ensure that the research is not extended, modified, or altered in any way without obtaining prior approval for such amendments from the REC.
- It is the sole responsibility of the applicant to comply with all the Irish and European Law relating to research.
- Neither the University nor the REC or its individual members accept legal liability for any advice or assistance offered to the applicant or to any third party in the processing of the application or the carrying out of the research.
- As a minimum, the REC will require an annual statement of compliance from the Principal Investigator, but the Committee can agree to more frequent reporting at the time of approval.

Appendix G: Rathmullan Stakeholder Interview Transcript with Highland Radio

Highland Radio: *How is the Wild Atlantic Way impacting Rathmullan?*

3 June 2020

<https://highlandradio.com/2020/06/03/how-is-the-wild-atlantic-way-impacting-rathmullan/>

John Gallagher (JG): Well, this project started almost three years ago now, and the plan was to come to a conclusion by the end of the year. So, obviously with the COVID situation, we haven't been able to continue the collaboration on the ground, with personal interviews and the researchers meeting with local people and so on. So we've had to move it online, and that was the basis of the communication that we sent out to advise everyone that the project will continue – it will continue online. And we're obviously asking for even more people to participate than have already participated.

Highland Radio (HR): I suppose, it's reflected in what you're trying to do as well that you's have had to think about doing things differently here and going online.

JG: Yeah, yeah. When we started the project obviously, you know we didn't know what COVID was – it didn't exist. But now the whole thing has changed and we've had to consider how we continue with the project while, obviously doing everything online. And it works perfectly well doing it online. In our communication – it's very easy for people to connect to the researchers at the National University in Galway. And we should be able to finish the project as planned.

The project is actually looking at the impact that the WAW has had on rural communities. So it's particularly relevant to Rathmullan which is on the WAW between the two Signature Points of Fanad Head on one side, and Malin Head on the other side.

HR: And what have you found so far – I'm sure it has had a positive impact on Rathmullan and further afield?

JG: It's definitely had a positive impact. But, you know, don't forget that Rathmullan existed long before the WAW existed – and the same for all rural communities existed. So um, the WAW was a branding that was stood on top of existing locations, so it's very interesting to try to understand if the WAW has had sort of a social impact, or economic impact, and how to measure those impacts. So, that's really why we're doing the collaboration – because it's quite a complex issue to try to figure out the social and economic impacts of the WAW. Particularly on rural communities – it may be easy to understand the impact on somewhere like Fanad Head or Malin Head – but on places in-between, like Rathmullan, it will be quite interesting when we get some feedback on the results.

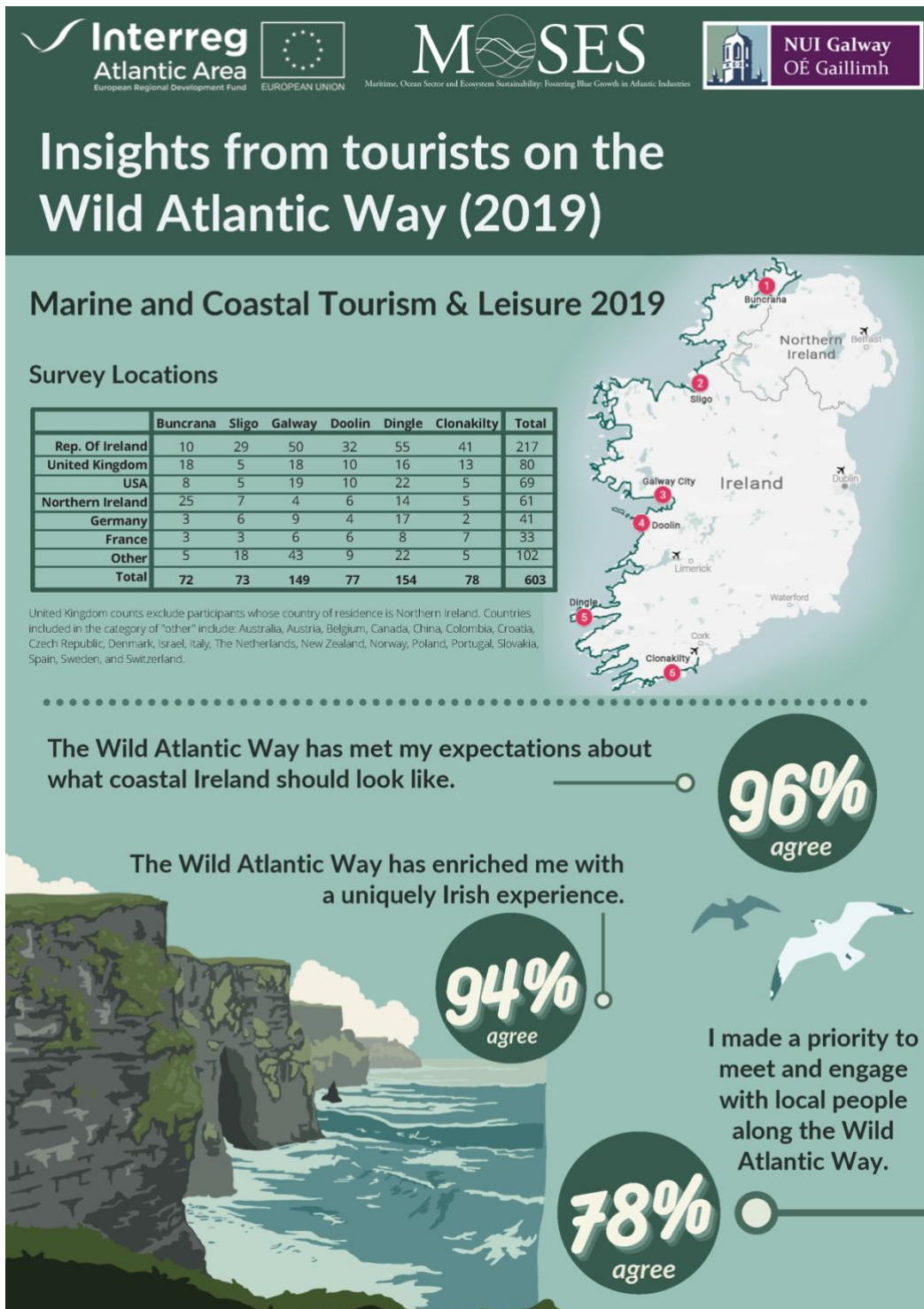
HR: And how can people get in touch with yourselves?

JG: Oh, it's all in our email – all the details to get in touch with National University of [Ireland] Galway, and Rathmullan the Way Forward. Rathmullan the Way Forward is an active community group in Rathmullan, so our details are in the communication we sent out.

HR: And I'm sure participation from people right across the county, not just in Rathmullan, is key in order for yourselves to come up with the findings and study it further. I suppose from maybe particularly business people, who are in different rural parts of the county?

JG: Yeah, business people are particularly interested – and particularly, not just Rathmullan, but let's go with the Fanad Peninsula – we're particularly interested in the impact in the Fanad Peninsula. And we regularly meet with local businesses in Rathmullan, and they're particularly interested in the WAW and what the development plans that Fáilte Ireland have. We communicate frequently with Fáilte Ireland as well. You know, we know the impact has been positive, but we're just trying to quantify what that actual impact is.

Appendix H: MOSES Project Tourist Survey Infographic

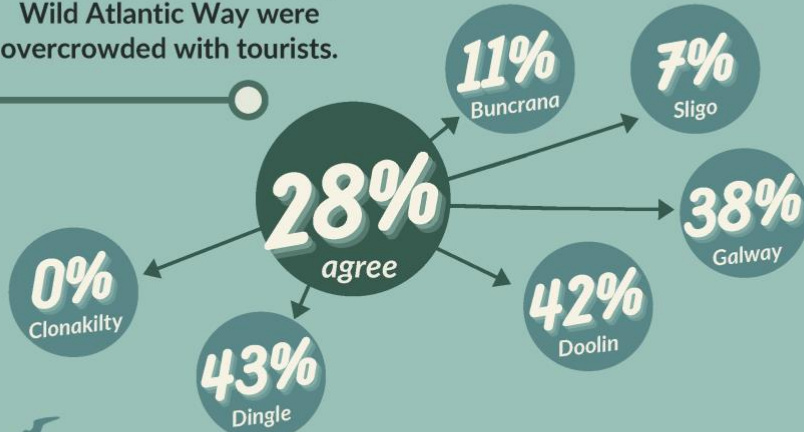


Touring the Wild Atlantic Way gives me a sense of adventure.

93%
agree



The destinations I visited along the Wild Atlantic Way were overcrowded with tourists.



Overall, my experience on the Wild Atlantic Way was good value for money.

83%
agree

Specifications

Marine and Coastal Tourism & Leisure Survey 2019

The survey was created by researchers at The National University of Ireland Galway as part of the EU Interreg Atlantic Area MOSES project to examine the market for coastal tourism and leisure in the West of Ireland.

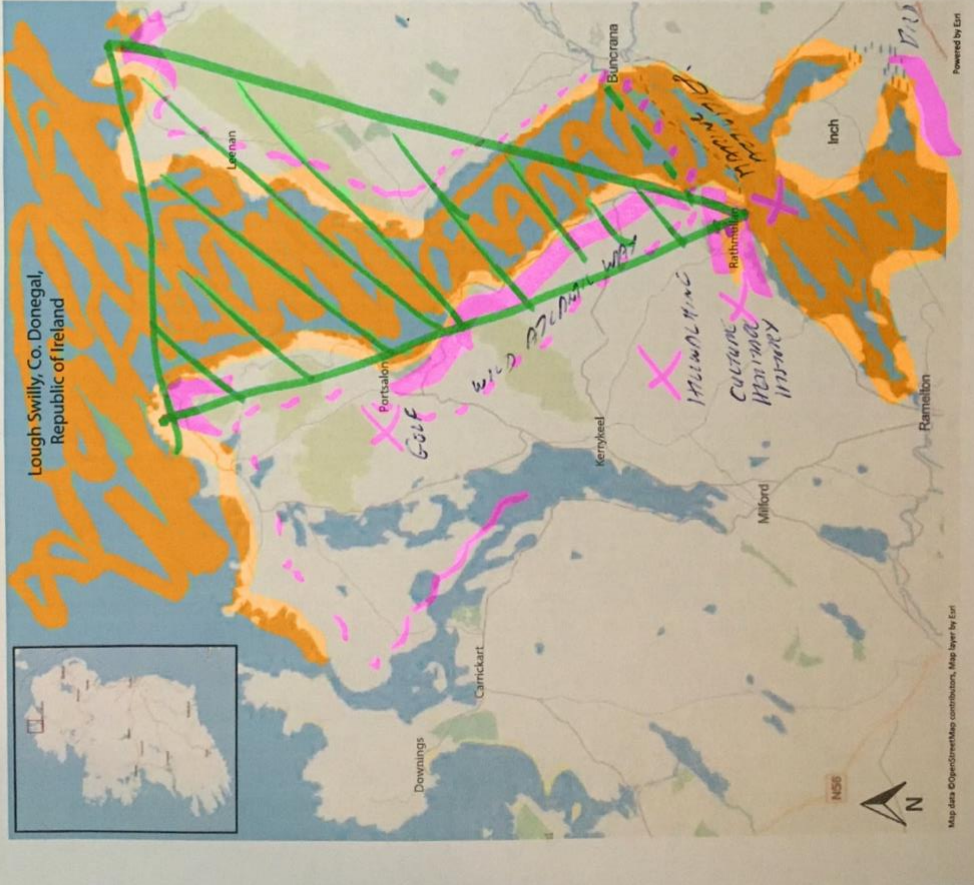
The information provided is intended to help policymakers better manage our coastal and marine resources in the future. Participants were asked about their time in Ireland during their vacation and the activities that they engaged in, or planned to engage in, during their trip to Ireland.

This infographic highlights questions related to Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way.

More about the MOSES project can be found at mosesproject.eu

Survey data: MOSES
Infographic design: © Desiree Farrell 2020





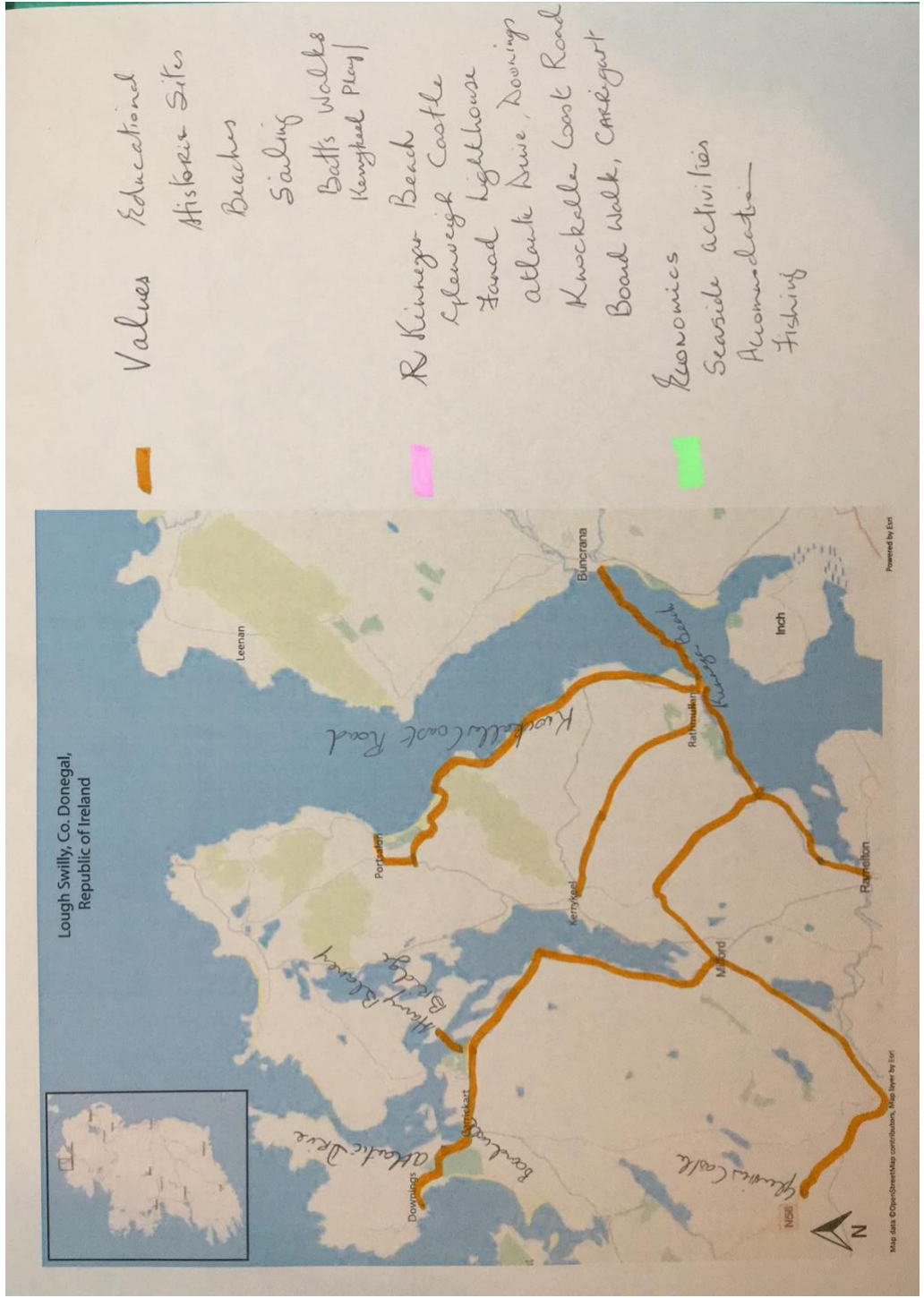
VALUES

all of Lough Swilly & Farnah in village and of outstanding natural beauty. A fantastic place to grow up.

TOURISM activities but needs facilities to be developed like a BUNEWAY.

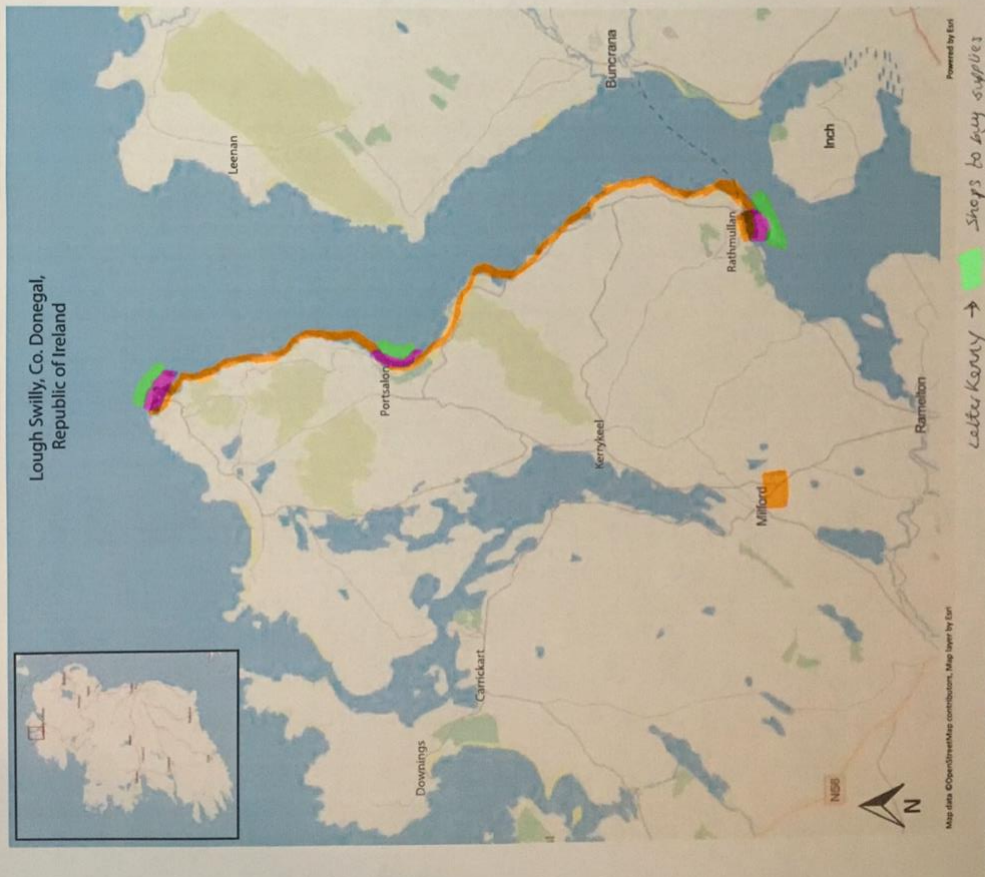
ECONOMIC - TOURISM would be a huge amount. With 1100000 people in the area.

R_06



R_10

- Values - cultural, recreational
- Tourism - Paddle Boarding
- Beautiful Drive in between activities
- Lough Swilly - Paddle Boarding to Kinagar
- Ballyvaanar beach - surfing.
- The people
- Farad Lodge - park Trailer of Goods
- The Accommodation
- Reciprocal Agreements - Accommodating each other
- Packages - Rathmullon House, Ardglas Cottages, Portsalon Yurts, Farad Lodge
- Belles kitchen → iron boards/huts
- Community Events - watersports
- Beautiful people, beautiful beaches
- Economic value
- Surf Lessons/Rental in Rathmullon
- Packages - Accommodation, Buses
- Food places - Belles kitchen, Farad lodge



R_11

