

The Tourism Area Life Cycle, Vol. 1

ASPECTS OF TOURISM

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C. Michael Hall (*University of Otago, New Zealand*)

and Dallen Timothy (*Arizona State University, USA*)

The Tourism Area Life Cycle, Vol. 1

Applications and Modifications

Edited by

Richard W. Butler

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DEDICATION

To my wife, Margaret, and my children, Caroline, Richard and Antonia, who have lived with 'the cycle' and its demands and been there with support and encouragement over the last three decades, and:

IN MEMORIAM

To my father, Sgt. Pilot Richard Butler, RAF (VR), 106 Squadron, whom I never had the privilege of knowing, and the more than 55,000 men of Bomber Command, who like him, were killed in action in the Second World War.

*'When you go home, tell them of us, and say:
For your tomorrows we gave our today'*

Contents

Acknowledgements	ix
Contributors	xi
Introduction	
<i>C. Michael Hall</i>	xv
Part 1: Foundations of the TALC.	1
1 The Concept of a Tourist Area Cycle of Evolution: Implications for Management of Resources <i>Richard W. Butler</i>	3
2 The Origins of the Tourism Area Life Cycle <i>Richard W. Butler</i>	13
3 The Application of the TALC Model: A Literature Survey <i>Richard M. Lagiewski</i>	27
4 Evolution of Tourism Areas and the Tourism Industry <i>K. Michael Haywood</i>	51
Part 2: Implementation of the TALC.	71
5 Lancaster County, the TALC, and the Search for Sustainable Tourism <i>Gary R. Hovinen</i>	73
6 An Empirical Interpretation of the TALC: Tourist Product Life Cycles in the Eastern Townships of Quebec <i>Jan O. Lundgren</i>	91
7 The TALC in China's Tourism Planning: Case Study of Danxia Mountain, Guangdong Province, PRC <i>J. Bao and C. Zhang</i>	107
Part 3: The TALC in Heritage Settings	117
8 The TALC Model and its Application to National Parks: A Canadian Example <i>Stephen W. Boyd</i>	119
9 A Re-foundation of the TALC for Heritage Cities <i>Antonio Paolo Russo</i>	139
10 The TALC and Heritage Sites <i>Jane Malcolm-Davies</i>	162

Part 4: The TALC and Local Involvement	181
11 The 'Plantation' Variant of the TALC in the Small-island Caribbean <i>D.B. Weaver</i>	185
12 Shoring the Foundations of the TALC in Tropical Island Destinations: Kona, Hawai'i <i>Charles S. Johnston</i>	198
13 Residents' Perceptions of Tourism Development Over the Early Stages of the TALC <i>Jerry D. Johnson and David J. Snepenger</i>	222
14 The TALC Model and Politics <i>Bonnie Martin</i>	237
15 Seeking Sustainable Tourism in Northern Thailand: The Dynamics of the TALC <i>J. Marois and T. Hinch</i>	250
Part 5: The TALC and Rejuvenation	269
16 The Modification of the Tourism Area Life Cycle Model for (Re)inventing a Destination: The Case of the Opatija Riviera, Croatia <i>Sanda Corak</i>	271
17 The Rejuvenation of Atlantic City: The Resort Cycle Recycles <i>Charles Stansfield</i>	287
18 Rejuvenating a Maturing Tourist Destination: The Case of the Gold Coast, Australia <i>Bill Faulkner and Carmen Tideswell</i>	306
Part 6: Conclusion	337
19 The King Is Dead. Long Live the Product: Elvis, Authenticity, Sustainability and the Product Life Cycle <i>Brian Wheeler</i>	339
References	349

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Since 1980 in particular, many colleagues have assisted greatly, either by using the model (including all those featured in these volumes), or by just being there to talk, and to share ideas and good times. Some legitimately might feel their research should be included (or may be relieved it is not!), Gareth Shaw and Allan Williams in the UK in particular, but I do have one representative from the south west at least included, who was influenced by their work. Klaus Meyer-Arendt, Paul Wilkinson, Ngaire Douglas and Gerda Priestly especially are also owed apologies for apparently being ignored, but only by noninclusion of papers I can assure them. There are also a vast number of other writers who have used the TALC, most, if not all, included in Lagiewski's bibliography, and an even larger number of students at universities around the world who have probably driven their supervisors mad by using the model. (Arriving at an Australian university on sabbatical in 1992 I was greeted at coffee by a staff member there, with the comment, 'So you're the bugger that wrote that, I've just had to mark 20 reports using it!') Finally there is the family support team, to whom these books are dedicated, who have been hoping to heaven 'it' is finished soon and doing their best to make sure it is. They have eventually won and I am very grateful, not only for their support and encouragement, but for the ideas, suggestions (mostly) and willingness to lose sandpits, rooms and furniture buried under TALC-related material for far too long.

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Introduction

C. MICHAEL HALL

It is an indication of the significance of a concept that it starts to attract not only articles but entire books as to its nature. And, as the reader will find in going through the various chapters in the two volumes of this book, the Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) is one of the most cited and contentious areas of tourism knowledge. Even as Butler (this volume), himself notes 'there was nothing devastatingly complicated or original in the data or facts on which the model is based'. The TALC has gone on to become one of the best known theories of destination growth and change within the field of tourism studies.

As the second volume highlights, there is a substantial body of contested theory and concepts that surround the TALC. Although 'Butler put into the realistic cyclical context a reality that everyone knew about, and clearly recognised, but had never formulated into an overall theory' (Lundgren, 1984: 22), the TALC is arguably one of the most significant contributions to studies of tourism development because of the way it provides a focal point for discussion of what leads to destination change, how destinations and their markets change and, even, what is a destination. Moreover, the two volumes together highlight the manner in which theory informs the development and generation of tourism knowledge, the importance of understanding the intellectual history of tourism ideas, and the disciplinary dimensions of tourism studies. These come from a number of different areas of knowledge, are applied at different scales, and often seek to tackle different dimensions of understanding destination change. Nevertheless, they highlight the importance of the intellectual history of ideas in tourism, and of the intellectual heritage of the TALC in particular. Some of these issues are discussed at the outset of this volume in terms of the foundations of the TALC, however readers seeking to gain a wider appreciation and understanding of the TALC will need to read this section in conjunction with the discussions of the second volume. Nevertheless, it is readily apparent that the TALC remains one of the most oft-cited works in tourism studies even if many people have never read the original article and have instead only read interpretations of it in textbooks or journals.

This particular volume looks at the means by which the TALC has been applied in particular situations and settings. It commences with a reproduction of the original article from *The Canadian Geographer* and is followed by a chapter by Butler on the origins of the TALC. Being able to easily access the original article will be helpful to many students of tourism but the opportunity to read Butler discussing its background will be especially welcome. As noted in the introduction to the second volume, being able to encounter such a variety of insights into the TALC helps readers gain an appreciation not only of the significance of the TALC but also its intellectual history. In the case of Butler revisiting the origins of the TALC we see the significance of authors active in the 1960s and 1970s rarely cited in contemporary tourism studies, such as Roy Wolfe and Charles Stansfield, as well as even earlier authors from the 1930s and 1940s. Significantly, we also learn of the extent to which personal travel experiences, particularly in Scotland, may have influenced Butler's understanding of tourism destinations, as well as the role of his work with Jim Brougham, then a graduate student at the University of Western Ontario. These reflections highlight that in tourism research, as in other fields of knowledge, the generation of ideas rarely occurs in isolation and instead needs to be understood in relation to its personal and intellectual context.

The first section also includes a chapter by Lagiewski that provides an overview of some of the writings that have utilised the TALC and a chapter by Haywood that seeks to relate the TALC to understandings of destination change. The Haywood chapter in particular should be read in conjunction with the chapter by the same author in the second volume, which notes the extent to which concepts of life cycle and change have been poorly understood and appreciated by the tourism industry itself. As the introduction to Volume 2 notes, such a situation reflects the need for a broader understanding of the processes of the diffusion of tourism knowledge that the various contributions to the two volumes partly illustrate.

The second section of this volume deals with examples of the implementation of the TALC. Hovinen discusses the relationship between TALC and concepts of sustainability in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. The reflections by Hovinen are particularly welcome as he was the first person to empirically apply the TALC to a specific location (Hovinen, 1981, 1982). Indeed, there are a number of chapters in this volume that illustrate the value of reflection on previous work and reconsiderations of its application. Similarly, Lundgren provides an empirical examination of TALC with respect to the eastern townships of Quebec, locations in which he has previously undertaken substantial research. The section is concluded with a case study of the role of TALC in tourism planning in China by Bao and Zhang.

The third section of the volume deals with the application of specific setting, that of cultural and natural heritage. The first chapter in the section is by Stephen Boyd, a former graduate student of Butler, who applies the TALC to Canadian national parks. Russo provides an appraisal of the TALC at a different scale by examining its relationship to heritage cities, while the final chapter of the section, by Malcolm-Davies, shifts the scale of analysis even further by dealing with its potential role at a site level.

One of the main points of debate that has emerged out of consideration of the TALC is its implications for the social and political dynamics that exist within a destination as it changes. Some of these issues are discussed in the fourth section of the volume, which discusses the TALC in relation to local involvement. Weaver and Johnston examine some of these concerns with respect to island destinations, examining the Caribbean and the Hawaiian islands respectively. Johnson and Snepenger discuss residents' perceptions of tourism development in a longitudinal investigation of Silver Valley, Idaho, with Marois and Hinch (another former graduate student of Butler) examining the links between TALC and sustainable tourism in Northern Thailand. The remaining chapter in the section, that of Martin on tourism and politics, discusses the significance of the political aspect of the growth that occurs as tourism progresses through the different stages of the life cycle. Martin provides a case study of Hilton Head, South Carolina to illustrate his general arguments regarding the politics of tourism growth.

The final section of the volume examines empirical studies of the rejuvenation stage of the TALC. Ideally, these should be read in conjunction with the chapters on conceptualising restructuring and rejuvenation in the second volume. Corak discusses the reinvention of a destination in terms of the Opatija Riviera in Croatia while Stansfield examines the rejuvenation of Atlantic City. Both locations have significance for the development of the TALC: Opatija in that it was the first continental destination visited by Butler; and Atlantic City, and the work of Stansfield (1972, 1978), because of the substantial insights it provided into the processes by which resorts rise and fall in popularity. Indeed, the length to which some of these ideas have now been circulating is reflected in Stansfield's chapter in which he refers to the recycling of the resort cycle. The final chapter in this section is by Faulkner and Tideswell and focuses on the rejuvenation of the Gold Coast, Australia.

The conclusion to this volume is an insightful and provocative chapter by Brian Wheeler who successfully managed to integrate issues of authenticity, sustainability and TALC with wildlife ecology, ecotourism and Elvis Presley. Nevertheless, Wheeler's chapter has a serious message in that it seeks to bring together a number of significant concerns in contemporary tourism studies as well as question some of

the assumptions made with respect to ethics, morals and tastes in tourism. The Wheeler chapter also provides a suitable springboard to some of the more theoretical and conceptual dimensions of TALC that are discussed in the other volume, particularly as it seeks to illustrate the manner in which empirical observation and experience and theory are interwoven.

This volume therefore provides a welcome overview of some of the ways in which the TALC has been applied and some of the implications of those applications for further theoretical and conceptual developments in understanding destination change. The second volume goes on to investigate some of these changes in further detail and the contested theoretical terrain that is the TALC. However, as noted above, it is important to realise that the contents of the two volumes are interwoven and ideally need to be read together in order to gain a wider appreciation of TALC, its intellectual history and its contribution to tourism studies, as well as understanding the processes of destination change.

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Part 1

Foundations of the TALC

RICHARD W. BUTLER

This first section of the volume serves to introduce the TALC and review in general terms its origins and uses. It begins with a reproduction of the original article. While this may be felt redundant given the frequency with which it is still quoted, in fact it appears to be an elusive publication. As noted below (Butler, next chapter), the journal, despite its quality, is not commonly found in the holdings of a considerable number of institutions focusing on tourism, unless they also have departments of geography. This has meant over the years that a number of potential readers have, or appear to have had, considerable difficulty in obtaining access to a copy and have relied on summaries in other sources. It seemed appropriate, therefore, to republish the original article in its entirety to increase availability, as well as to enable readers of this volume to have a copy to hand should they wish to refer to it.

The chapter that follows traces the origins of the concept, including a fair amount of reflexive comment by the author, in order to provide a context for the model. It was felt necessary to point out the limited nature and scale of tourism research in the decades before 1980, as well as taking the opportunity to acknowledge the contribution to the theoretical and conceptual development of tourism of authors whose works are, unfortunately, relatively unknown to many of the present day's tourism students and scholars. As is the case of many models, the original focus and purpose was somewhat different to what finally emerged, and the spatial emphasis explicit in the original model had become implicit at best in the final version.

Lagiewski's chapter presents a review of several of the major initial applications of the TALC, and some of the authors whose work is reviewed have contributed chapters in this and the accompanying volume. Of particular value is the table listing applications of the model and the extensive bibliography resulting from it. While no bibliography is ever likely to be complete, this one would appear to have more references to the use of the TALC than any other single piece of work, and is in itself a valuable reference tool for other potential users of the model.

Finally in this first section of the book is the chapter by Haywood, who was one of the first to write a detailed full critique of the model once it had been published. His chapter in this volume focuses particularly on

aspects of the model that need addressing in order to improve its potential value for application in areas such as destination development, policy and strategy formulation, and destination management. His comments are particularly valuable in identifying issues that still have to be resolved, some of them coming from the same points that he raised in his original review in 1986. In the section on Configuration and Transformation he discusses in detail issues such as the unit of analysis and unit of measurement most applicable for application of the TALC. He concludes by linking the TALC to sustainability, a theme dealt with in several chapters in this volume (Hovinen, Marois and Hinch, Russo, and Wheeler in particular).

After this the book proceeds with chapters applying the TALC in a variety of situations and locations, at different scales, and through different approaches. Hopefully this introductory section provides sufficient detail on the background and foundations of the TALC for the reader to be able to place these later chapters in an appropriate context.

Chapter 1

The Concept of a Tourist Area Cycle of Evolution: Implications for Management of Resources*

R.W. BUTLER

University of Western Ontario

There can be little doubt that tourist areas are dynamic, that they evolve and change over time. This evolution is brought about by a variety of factors including changes in the preferences and needs of visitors, the gradual deterioration and possible replacement of physical plant and facilities, and the change (or even disappearance) of the original natural and cultural attractions which were responsible for the initial popularity of the area. In some cases, while these attractions remain, they may be utilized for different purposes or come to be regarded as less significant in comparison with imported attractions.¹ The idea of a consistent process through which tourist areas evolve has been vividly described by Christaller:

The typical course of development has the following pattern. Painters search out untouched and unusual places to paint. Step by step the place develops as a so-called artist colony. Soon a cluster of poets follows, kindred to the painters: then cinema people, gourmets, and the jeunesse dorée. The place becomes fashionable and the entrepreneur takes note. The fisherman's cottage, the shelter-huts become converted into boarding houses and hotels come on the scene. Meanwhile the painters have fled and sought out another periphery – periphery as related to space, and metaphorically, as 'forgotten' places and landscapes. Only the painters with a commercial inclination who like to do well in business remain; they capitalize on the good name of this former painter's corner and on the gullibility of tourists. More and more townsmen choose this place, now en vogue and advertised in the newspapers. Subsequently the gourmets, and all those who seek real recreation, stay away. At last the tourist agencies come with their package rate travelling parties; now, the indulged public avoids such places. At the same time, in other places the same cycle occurs again; more and more places come into fashion, change their type, turn into everybody's tourist haunt.²

While this description has most relevance to the European and, particularly, to the Mediterranean setting, others have expressed the same general idea. Stansfield, in discussing the development of Atlantic City, refers specifically to the resort cycle,³ and Noronha has suggested that 'tourism develops in three stages: i) discovery, ii) local response and initiative, and iii) institutionalized 'institutionalization').⁴ It is also explicit in Christaller's concept that types of tourists change with the tourist areas. Research into the characteristics of visitors is widespread, but less has been done on their motivations and desires. One example is a typology conceived by Cohen, who characterizes tourists as 'institutionalized' or 'non-institutionalized,' and further as 'drifters,' 'explorers,' 'individual mass tourists,' and 'organized mass tourists.'⁵ Research by Plog into the psychology of travel, and the characterization of travellers as allocentrics, mid-centrics, and psychocentrics, substantiates Christaller's argument.⁶ Plog suggests that tourist areas are attractive to different types of visitors as the areas evolve, beginning with small numbers of adventuresome allocentrics, followed by increasing numbers of mid-centrics as the area becomes accessible, better serviced, and well known, and giving way to declining numbers of psychocentrics as the area becomes older, more outdated, and less different to the areas of origin of visitors. While the actual numbers of visitors may not decline for a long time, the potential market will reduce in size as the area has to compete with others that are more recently developed. Plog sums up his argument thus: 'We can visualize a destination moving across a spectrum, however gradually or slowly, but far too often inexorably toward the potential of its own demise. Destination areas carry with them the potential seeds of their own destruction, as they allow themselves to become more commercialized and lose their qualities which originally attracted tourists.'

While other writers, such as Cohen,⁷ have warned against the problems of unilinear models of social change, there seems to be overwhelming evidence that the general pattern of tourist area evolution is consistent. The rates of growth and change may vary widely, but the final result will be the same in almost all cases.

A Hypothetical Cycle of Area Evolution

The pattern which is put forward here is based upon the product cycle concept, whereby sales of a product proceed slowly at first, experience a rapid rate of growth, stabilize, and subsequently decline; in other words, a basic asymptotic curve is followed. Visitors will come to an area in small numbers initially, restricted by lack of access, facilities, and local knowledge. As facilities are provided and awareness grows, visitor numbers will increase. With marketing, information dissemination, and

further facility provision, the area's popularity will grow rapidly. Eventually, however, the rate of increase in visitor numbers will decline as levels of carrying capacity are reached. These may be identified in terms of environmental factors (e.g. land scarcity, water quality, air quality), of physical plant (e.g. transportation, accommodation, other services), or of social factors (e.g. crowding, resentment by the local population). As the attractiveness of the area declines relative to other areas, because of overuse and the impacts of visitors, the actual number of visitors may also eventually decline.

The stages through which it is suggested that tourist areas pass are illustrated in Figure 1.1. The *exploration stage* is characterized by small numbers of tourists, Plog's allocentrics and Cohen's explorers making individual travel arrangements and following irregular visitation patterns. From Christaller's model they can also be expected to be non-local visitors who have been attracted to the area by its unique or considerably different natural and cultural features. At this time there would be no specific facilities provided for visitors. The use of local facilities and

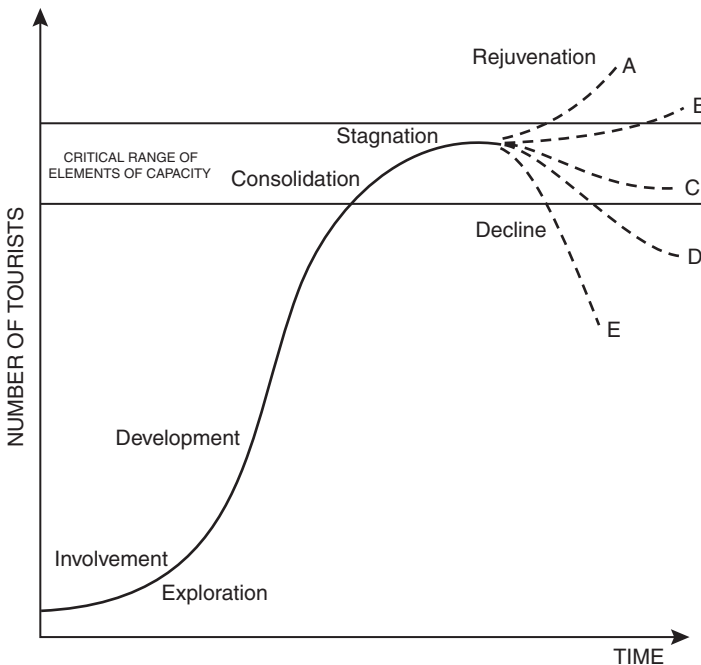


Figure 1.1 Hypothetical evolution of a tourist area. (For explanation of A–E see 'Implications.')

contact with local residents are therefore likely to be high, which may itself be a significant attraction to some visitors. The physical fabric and social milieu of the area would be unchanged by tourism, and the arrival and departure of tourists would be of relatively little significance to the economic and social life of the permanent residents. Examples of this stage can be seen in parts of the Canadian Arctic and Latin America, to which tourists are attracted by natural and cultural-historical features.

As numbers of visitors increase and assume some regularity, some local residents will enter the *involvement stage* and begin to provide facilities primarily or even exclusively for visitors. Contact between visitors and locals can be expected to remain high and, in fact, increase for those locals involved in catering for visitors. As this stage progresses, some advertising specifically to attract tourists can be anticipated, and a basic initial market area for visitors can be defined. A tourist season can be expected to emerge and adjustments will be made in the social pattern of at least those local residents involved in tourism. Some level of organization in tourist travel arrangements can be expected and the first pressures put upon governments and public agencies to provide or improve transport and other facilities for visitors. Some of the smaller, less developed Pacific and Caribbean islands exhibit this pattern, as do some less accessible areas of western Europe and North America.

The *development stage* reflects a well-defined tourist market area, shaped in part by heavy advertising in tourist-generating areas. As this stage progresses, local involvement and control of development will decline rapidly. Some locally provided facilities will have disappeared, being superseded by larger, more elaborate, and more up-to-date facilities provided by external organizations, particularly for visitor accommodation. Natural and cultural attractions will be developed and marketed specifically, and these original attractions will be supplemented by man-made imported facilities. Changes in the physical appearance of the area will be noticeable, and it can be expected that not all of them will be welcomed or approved by all of the local population. This stage can be seen in parts of Mexico, on the more developed Pacific islands, and on the north and west African coasts. Regional and national involvement in the planning and provision of facilities will almost certainly be necessary and, again, may not be completely in keeping with local preferences. The number of tourists at peak periods will probably equal or exceed the permanent local population. As this stage unfolds, imported labour will be utilized and auxiliary facilities for the tourist industry (such as laundries) will make their appearance. The type of tourist will also have changed, as a wider market is drawn upon, representing the mid-centrics of Plog's classification, or Cohen's institutionalized tourist.

As the *consolidation stage* is entered the rate of increase in numbers of visitors will decline, although total numbers will still increase, and total visitor numbers exceed the number of permanent residents. A major part of the area's economy will be tied to tourism. Marketing and advertising will be wide-reaching and efforts made to extend the visitor season and market area. Major franchises and chains in the tourist industry will be represented but few, if any, additions will be made. The large numbers of visitors and the facilities provided for them can be expected to arouse some opposition and discontent among permanent residents, particularly those not involved in the tourist industry in any way, and to result in some deprivation and restrictions upon their activities. Such trends are evident in areas of the Caribbean and on the northern Mediterranean coast. The resort cities will have well-defined recreational business districts,⁸ and, depending upon the length of time involved, old facilities may now be regarded as second rate and far from desirable.

As the area enters the *stagnation stage* the peak numbers of visitors will have been reached. Capacity levels for many variables will have been reached or exceeded, with attendant environmental, social, and economic problems. The area will have a well-established image but it will no longer be in fashion. There will be a heavy reliance on repeat visitation and on conventions and similar forms of traffic. Surplus bed capacity will be available and strenuous efforts will be needed to maintain the level of visitation. Natural and genuine cultural attractions will probably have been superseded by imported 'artificial' facilities. The resort image becomes divorced from its geographic environment.⁹ New development will be peripheral to the original tourist area and the existing properties are likely to experience frequent changes in ownership. The Costa Brava resorts of Spain and many cottage resorts in Ontario manifest these characteristics. The type of visitor can also be expected to change towards the organized mass tourist identified by Cohen and the psychocentric described by Plog.

In the *decline stage* the area will not be able to compete with newer attractions and so will face a declining market, both spatially and numerically. It will no longer appeal to vacationers but will be used increasingly for weekend or day trips, if it is accessible to large numbers of people. Such trends can be clearly seen in older resort areas in Europe, such as the Firth of Clyde in western Scotland. Miami Beach would also appear to be entering this stage. Property turnover will be high and tourist facilities often replaced by non-tourist related structures, as the area moves out of tourism. This latter factor, of course, is cumulative. More tourist facilities disappear as the area becomes less attractive to tourists and the viability of other tourist facilities becomes more questionable. Local involvement in tourism is likely to increase at this stage, as employees and other residents are able to purchase facilities at

significantly lower prices as the market declines. The conversion of many facilities to related activities is likely. Hotels may become condominiums, convalescent or retirement homes, or conventional apartments, since the attractions of many tourist areas make them equally attractive for permanent settlement, particularly for the elderly. Ultimately, the area may become a veritable tourist slum or lose its tourist function completely.

On the other hand *rejuvenation* may occur, although it is almost certain that this stage will never be reached without a complete change in the attractions on which tourism is based. Two ways of accomplishing this goal can be seen at present. One is the addition of a man-made attraction, as in the case of Atlantic City's gambling casinos. Obviously, though, if neighbouring and competing areas follow suit, the effectiveness of the measure will be reduced; a major part of Atlantic City's anticipated success is the element of uniqueness which it has obtained by the change.

An alternative approach to rejuvenation is to take advantage of previously untapped natural resources. Spa towns in Europe and the summer holiday village of Aviemore in Scotland have experienced rejuvenation by a reorientation to the winter sports market, thus allowing the areas to experience a year-round tourist industry. The development of new facilities becomes economically feasible, and simultaneously serves to revitalize the older summer holiday trade. As new forms of recreation appear, it is not impossible that other tourist areas will find previously unappreciated natural resources to develop.

In many cases, combined government and private efforts are necessary, and the new market may be not the allocentric section of the population (which would suggest a recommencement of the complete cycle), but rather a specific interest or activity group. Ultimately, however, it can be expected that even the attractions of the rejuvenated tourist area will lose their competitiveness. Only in the case of the truly unique area could one anticipate an almost timeless attractiveness, able to withstand the pressures of visitation. Even in such a case, human tastes and preferences would have to remain constant over time for visitors to be attracted. Niagara Falls is perhaps one example. Artificial attractions, such as the spectacularly successful Disneyland and Disneyworld, may also be able to compete effectively over long periods by adding to their attractions to keep in tune with contemporary preferences. Many established tourist areas in Britain, the United States, and elsewhere attract visitors who have spent their vacations in these areas consistently for several decades, and the preferences of these repeat visitors show little sign of changing. In the majority of cases, though, the initial selection of the area to be visited by these people was determined by cost and accessibility rather than specific preferences.

Implications

Although a consistent evolution of tourist areas can be conceptualized, it must be emphasized again that not all areas experience the stages of the cycle as clearly as others. The establishment of what has become known as the 'instant resort' is a case in point. The process whereby areas for development, such as Cancun in Mexico,¹⁰ are selected by computer from a range of possibilities allowed by certain preselected parameters has meant that the exploration and involvement phases are probably of minimal significance, if they are present at all. Under these circumstances the development phase becomes the real commencement of the cycle. Even here, however, it can be argued that, at the national scale, Mexico is experiencing the cycle illustrated in Figure 1.1. Perhaps the later stages of the cycle are more significant, then, because of the implications which they hold for tourism in general and for the planning and arrangement of tourist areas in particular.

The assumption that tourist areas will always remain tourist areas and be attractive to tourists appears to be implicit in tourism planning. Public and private agencies alike, rarely, if ever, refer to the anticipated life span of a tourist area or its attractions. Rather, because tourism has shown an, as yet, unlimited potential for growth, despite economic recessions, it is taken for granted that numbers of visitors will continue to increase. The fallacy of this assumption can be seen in the experience of older tourist areas, such as those of southern Ontario, over the past two decades.

The process illustrated in Figure 1.1 has two axes representing numbers of visitors and time. An increase in either direction implies a general reduction in overall quality and attractiveness after capacity levels are reached. In the case of the first visitors, the area may become unattractive long before capacity levels are reached and they will have moved on to explore other undeveloped areas. It can be anticipated also that reaction to the visitors by the local population will undergo change throughout this period, a process suggested by Doxey in his 'irridex' (index of tourist irritation); the scale progresses from euphoria through apathy and irritation to antagonism.¹¹ More recent research has shown that resident reaction to tourists is not necessarily explained by increasing contact with visitors or increasing numbers of visitors alone. It is a more complex function, related to the characteristics of both visitors and visited, and the specific arrangements of the area involved.¹²

The direction of the curve after the period of stabilization illustrated in Figure 1.1 is open to several interpretations. Successful redevelopment, as for example in Atlantic City, could result in renewed growth and expansion as shown by curve A. Minor modification and adjustment to capacity levels, and continued protection of resources, could allow continued growth at a much reduced rate (curve B). A readjustment to

meet all capacity levels would enable a more stable level of visitation to be maintained after an initial readjustment downwards (curve C). Continued overuse of resources, non-replacement of aging plant, and decreasing competitiveness with other areas would result in the marked decline (curve D). Finally, the intervention of war, disease, or other catastrophic events would result in an immediate decline in numbers of visitors (for example, Northern Ireland from 1969), from which it may be extremely difficult to return to high levels of visitation. If the decline continues for a long time, the area and its facilities may no longer be attractive to the majority of tourists after the problem is solved.

To date, the arguments put forward in this paper are general and are only now being substantiated in terms of quantifiable data. A major problem in testing the basic hypothesis and modelling the curve for specific areas is that of obtaining data on visitors to areas over long periods. These are rarely available, and it is particularly unlikely that they will date back to the onset of tourist visits. However, those data which are available for a few areas for periods in excess of thirty or forty years substantiate the general arguments put forward in this paper.

At the same time, the shape of the curve must be expected to vary for different areas, reflecting variations in such factors as rate of development, numbers of visitors, accessibility, government policies, and numbers of similar competing areas.

It has been clearly shown, for example, that each improvement in accessibility to a recreation area results in significantly increased visitation and an expansion of the market area.¹³

The development of health resorts in Britain, France, the north United States bears witness to this process.¹⁴ If development of facilities and accessibility is delayed, for whatever reason (e.g. local opposition, lack of capital, lack of outside interest), the exploration period may be much longer than anticipated. In the case of new 'instant' resorts, where tourist facilities are established in an area in which there has been little or no previous settlement, the first two stages in Figure 1.1 may be of minimal significance or absent, a situation noted by Noronha as particularly applicable to some developing nations.¹⁵ The classic, well-established tourist areas of the world (i.e. those which have been popular over several decades), frequently reveal evidence of having passed through all of the postulated stages.

The resort areas of the northern Mediterranean, Britain, the north-eastern seaboard of the United States, and parts of Florida have moved steadily through an evolutionary sequence. Other areas, such as Hawaii, the Caribbean and Pacific islands, and the resort areas of north Africa, are in earlier stages of the cycle, but the pattern of visitation strongly approximates the curve illustrated in Figure 1.1.

These observations also suggest that a change of attitude is required on the part of those who are responsible for planning, developing, and managing tourist areas. Tourist attractions are not infinite and timeless but should be viewed and treated as finite and possibly non-renewable resources. They could then be more carefully protected and preserved. *The development of the tourist area could be kept within predetermined capacity limits, and its potential competitiveness maintained over a longer period.* While the maximum number of people visiting an area at any one time under such arrangements may be less than most present policies of maximum short-term development, more visitors could be catered for in the long term. In a few localities already, limits to the growth of tourism have been adopted, chiefly because of severe environmental damage to attractions (e.g. the erosion of Stonehenge in England, or the damage to prehistoric cave paintings in Spain and France). Unless more knowledge is gained and a greater awareness developed of the processes which shape tourist areas, it has to be concluded, with Plog, that many 'of the most attractive and interesting areas in the world are doomed to become tourist relics.'¹⁶

Acknowledgements

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Chapter 2

The Origins of the Tourism Area Life Cycle

RICHARD W. BUTLER

Introduction

The origins of the Tourism Area Life Cycle model have been discussed before in a number of academic papers, both by this author (Butler, 1990, 1998a, 2000) and others (see contributors to this and the accompanying volume). It is felt appropriate at this point to expand further upon those origins in order to place the model and its development in a clearer context. This is done partly to correct what may have been misperceptions of the real origins of the initial (1980) article (Hall, personal communication, 1996), and to elaborate upon comments made by this author in the earlier papers referred to above. As well, it is felt necessary to re-emphasise the importance of understanding from whence the academic literature on tourism, of which the TALC paper is a part, has evolved. All too often, in this writer's opinion, current students of tourism are led to believe, or come to the conclusion themselves, that tourism is a recent phenomenon, and that relatively little had been written on it before the 1990s. Such misperceptions have partly contributed to the still relatively low academic reputation which tourism has as an academic subject, and the all too familiar occurrence of scholars in more established subjects venturing into publication in tourism on the faulty assumption that it is a 'new' area waiting to be discovered and 'enriched' by their often somewhat limited contributions.

The TALC model as it initially appeared in its 1980 form had a distinct gestation period and was based on, and integrated within it, several strands of research and conceptual development. Although it may not appear overly so in its published form, it was inherently based in the geographic literature, reflecting the author's training and interests in geography. It is not by accident that several of the contributors in these two volumes (in particular Coles, Hall and Papatheodorou, all geographers themselves) draw attention to this linkage in their own chapters. The 'facts' on which the model is based are fairly obvious to any would-be observer of tourist resorts (as shown in the Postscript to this chapter), just as people were generally aware that apples appeared to always fall to the ground before one hit Newton on the head, resulting in the

explanation of gravity. Before any reviewer draws the erroneous conclusion that the TALC is being compared to, or thought equal in significance to the theory of gravity, let me dispel any such arrogance of thought. The point that is being made is that there was nothing devastatingly complicated or original in the data or facts on which the model is based. Lundgren (1984: 22) summed up the situation very aptly when he commented 'Butler put into the realistic cyclical context a reality that everyone knew about, and clearly recognised, but had never formulated into an overall theory.' As noted below, at the time of its development, while it seemed to make good sense, the future wide application of the model was not anticipated. The chapter proceeds first by emphasising the reflexivity inevitably involved in the formulation of any model or concept.

Reflexivity and the TALC

Just as 'we are what we eat', our knowledge and understanding of the world around us is, to a large degree, based on what we observe first hand. My initial interest in tourist destination development came from personal experience with a number of British holiday resorts and destination areas from the 1950s onwards. Living in Birmingham, the major town in England that is furthest from the sea, meant that family holidays were not confined to the nearest resort linked to the home town by the railway, as was the normal pattern in that time period, because many resorts were equally distant and thus equally inaccessible. During my formative years holidays were spent in locations as varied as Rhyl (North Wales), Weston-Super-Mare and Skegness on the west and east coasts of England respectively, and Stonehaven, St Monans and the Isle of Arran in Scotland. A good sampling of classic railway-dominated resorts, mass tourist destinations and small fishing communities using tourism to support their traditional economic activity. Arran was an interesting and somewhat different example, because it could only be reached by boat, at that time by several of the fleet of steamers (some still paddle-wheelers then) that serviced the resorts of the Firth of Clyde. Some of my abiding favourite memories are of spending 10 days of a summer holiday on the Clyde steamers, setting out from Glasgow on the train to railheads such as Gourock and Wemyss Bay, to catch the steamers and visiting different resorts each day. By the time I began doctoral studies at Glasgow University in the mid 1960s, the fleet of steamers was rapidly diminishing and being replaced by roll-on roll-off car ferries, catering efficiently to a new breed of tourists but about as interesting to sail on as a modern day Ford car is to drive compared to a pre-war convertible Jaguar.

It became apparent that the resorts of the Clyde, as well as those elsewhere, were beginning to change significantly, in appearance, in accessibility, in tourists, in economic health and in attractiveness. Like most Northern European resorts they were, for the first time, facing competition from Mediterranean resorts for the mass tourist market. Whereas in earlier years they had been shielded from such competition by continental conflict, relative inaccessibility, cost and what Plog (1973) might call 'psychocentricity', from the 1960s onwards attitudes, accessibility and affluence had all changed dramatically. The old resorts were no longer as attractive to potential tourists, nor catering to the same market as effectively as in the past. Working alongside a colleague who was undertaking his own doctoral research on the Clyde resorts (see Pattison, 1968), these changes were frequently discussed. During the course of my doctoral research the same patterns became evident in other smaller resorts in the Scottish highlands and islands (Butler, 1973). In particular, the changes taking place in the Spey Valley, with the development of winter sports, meant that villages such as Aviemore and Grantown on Spey, previously quiet Victorian summer destinations, were now being developed or redeveloped to cater to a very different winter market. The physical, as well as social and economic changes were very obvious.

My first experience of continental Europe in 1966 included a visit to Opatija (see Corak, this volume), providing further visual evidence of changes taking place in well established resorts. A subsequent visit to Mallorca provided first-hand experience of why Mediterranean resorts were attracting a sizeable segment of the traditional British holiday market from British holiday resorts. Thus by the end of the 1960s I had witnessed very clearly the dramatic changes that were taking place in tourism in Britain and parts of continental Europe. At that time few people realised what might be the full extent of these changes and their implications, and extremely little had been written on the subject. In the 1960s and earlier the tourism literature was very limited, although publications such as those by Gilbert (1939, 1954), Ogilvie (1933), Pimlott (1947), House (1954) and Barratt (1958) had all discussed and analysed aspects of resort development, markets, morphology and dynamics. Their contributions today go almost unnoticed and uncredited, although they laid the foundations for much of the later work on resorts and tourist destinations. Barratt's model of resort morphology predates the work of Stansfield and Rickert (1978) on Recreational Business Districts, for example, but is rarely mentioned unless in the context of the citation in Mathieson and Wall (1982). The model Barratt produced is as valid in the 21st century as it was some five decades earlier when he first produced it. It is against this backdrop of personal experience and limited references that the resort cycle began to take shape.

Antecedent Literature and Concepts

In an earlier review of the TALC (Butler, 2000), two major bases for the model were identified, the Product Life Cycle and models of wildlife populations. While these were major influences, other specific writings predate these concepts in terms of influence on TALC establishment, in addition to those noted above. The first of these were articles relating to the flows of tourists and their patterns of movement, both at the micro (destination) and the macro (global) scales. This author's interest in modelling these flows and accounting for their patterns owes a very great deal to discussions with and contributions from Jim Brougham, then a research student at the University of Western Ontario. A paper produced jointly (Brougham & Butler, 1972) is, in reality, the first version of the TALC. Entitled 'The Applicability of the Asymptotic Curve to the Forecasting of Tourism Development', it was presented at the annual meeting of the Travel Research Association, held in Quebec City in 1972. To say that it did not set the audience on fire would be somewhat of an understatement, and despite a continuing interest in the ideas contained in the paper, neither author felt the topic practical to pursue much further at that time, mainly because of the perceived nonavailability of the data that would have been required.

That paper does deserve some attention, however, in the context of the origins of the TALC, as it introduced many of the key points of the 1980 model and appears to have been the first time 'the resort cycle' appears in print. (This is contrary to what I had stated in a paper and subsequent chapter (Butler, 1998a, 2000), where I mistakenly credited the origin of the phrase to Charles Stansfield in his 1978 article on Atlantic City.) The 1972 paper argued that much more attention should be paid to flows of tourists, building on the work of Williams and Zelinsky (1970) and Yokeno (1968). We stated that 'from the point of view of prediction of flows of tourists, and consequent growth of tourist destination areas, the need is greatest to explain the choice of specific locations and the process of movement from one location to another over time' (Brougham & Butler, 1972: 1). The second section of the paper was headed 'The Resort Cycle', and it utilised data from the resorts in the Firth of Clyde from 1949 to 1966 to illustrate (not tremendously convincingly it must be admitted) an asymptotic curve. It also made reference to the fact that an article in the *Nice Matin* (1971) suggested other areas were at 'this state in their cycle' and made reference to Christaller's (1963) article and the pattern of resort development described therein. We concluded that section by suggesting 'that a point will be reached, however, at which the rate of increase of visitors begins to decline, and may even, as in the case above, become a decline in numbers. Such a trend may be due to a number of factors, such as increasing pollution, increasing land

values limiting expansion of facilities, congestion of facilities, and the availability of alternative areas' (Brougham & Butler, 1972: 6).

Most of the rest of that paper was taken up by attempting to model a hypothetical pattern of development of a tourist destination. It was suggested that the process 'may be satisfactorily approximated by the solution of the logistic equation:

$$\frac{Dv}{Dt} = kV(M - V)$$

where V is the number of visitors, T is time, M is the maximum number of visitors and K is an empirically derived parameter representative of the telling rate, or the spread of knowledge of the resort from tourists to potential tourists' (Brougham & Butler, 1972: 6).

The solution was proposed as:

$$V = \frac{MV_0}{V_0 + (M - V_0) - Mkt}$$

where V is the number of tourists at time t . The resulting curve is shown in Figure 2.1.

It should be emphasised that the main focus in the 1972 paper was the prediction of where tourist development and flows would be in the future, not the resort cycle per se. Undoubtedly reflecting the authors' geographical roots, we referred to the 'shifting rule' of Garrison, as cited in Bunge (1966: 27).

Where capacity increases require physical expansion, where the expansion cannot be in the vertical dimension and where the new space is made more 'expensive' by the presence of the phenomena itself, a shift is likely during times of capacity strain and the shift will probably occur to a new location as near to the old location as the area of induced expense will allow.

It was argued in our paper that when relocation to a new development took place in the same general location or region as the original tourist development, the pattern of development would be as illustrated in Figure 2.2.

The paper concluded with a brief discussion on the way that such a curve might be used for predicting the future patterns of tourism development (see Marente & Sheclader, and Berry, other volume, for examples of how the TALC can be used in a predictive manner). It suggested sufficient empirical regularities might illustrate patterns, assuming tourists would opt for nearby alternative developments,

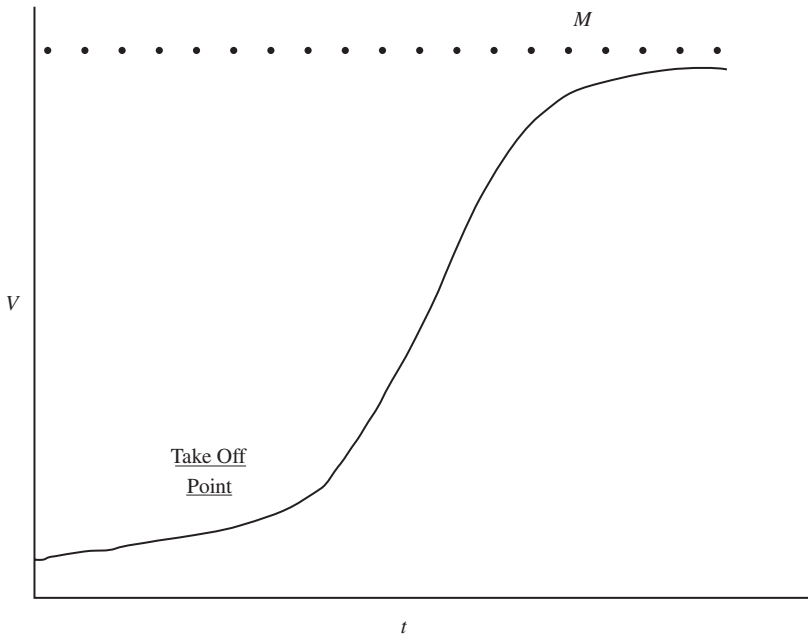


Figure 2.1 A theoretical asymptotic curve

although this was recognised as being a dubious assumption. An alternative approach suggested involved manipulating potential surface maps of migrant populations of specific regions, an idea not pursued in the context of tourism flows. A tentative pattern of tourist development matching the 'shifting rule' was suggested in the Mediterranean, beginning on the French Riviera, spreading to the Italian Riviera, then to Spain, the Adriatic coast and to North Africa. At this point, perhaps puzzlingly with the advantage of hindsight, Malta and Cyprus were overlooked, and Turkey not anticipated.

Contemporary Literature

(In this section contemporary is used in the context of the development of the TALC, not the present day.) Reference has already been made to Christaller (1963) and his seminal work, although it is interesting to note that the key comments in that article on the development process of tourists resorts are not the main focus of the article, but like that by Brougham and Butler (1972) were on explaining the flows and patterns of tourists. Christaller's contribution was significant, not least because, coming as it did from someone who was generally regarded as one the

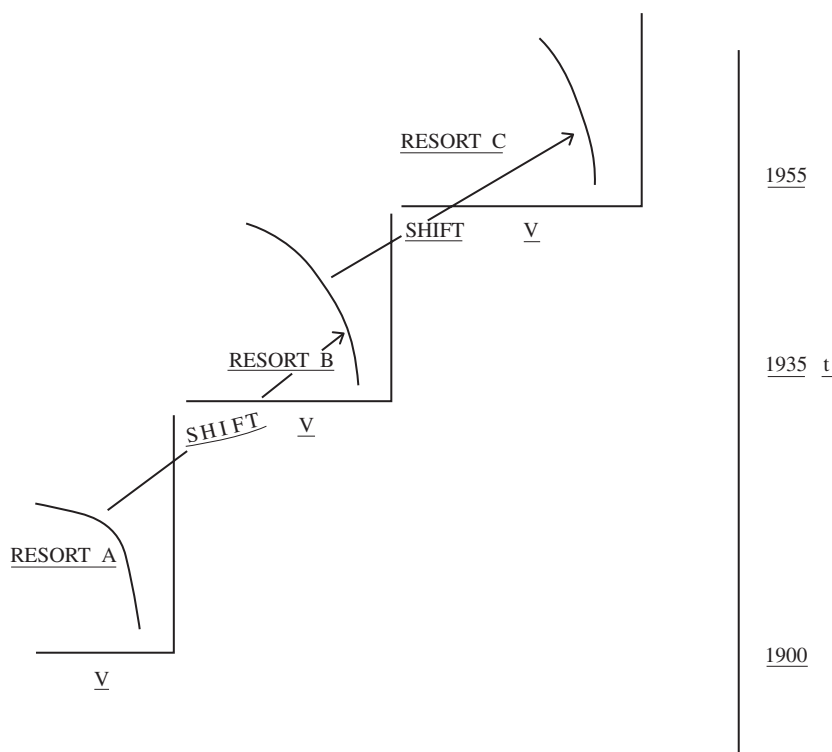


Figure 2.2 Modelling resort development in space and time

greatest contributors to theory in geography, it gave added gravitas to a tentative paper in a fledgling subject by young researchers.

Of equal importance in the development of the 1980 article was the frequently cited paper by Plog (1973) on the psychographics of tourists. It was titled 'Why destination areas rise and fall in popularity', and again, the title of this article does not really reflect the empirical work on which the article was based. This was a survey of American travellers to determine why some people were prepared to fly and others not. Perhaps ironically, it had been presented first at a meeting of the Los Angeles chapter of the Travel Research Association the preceding year, the same time and to the same association as the Brougham and Butler article had been presented. What made Plog's article of particular relevance and importance to the TALC model was that it put forward a suggested model describing how changes in the tourist market were related to subsequent changes in the destinations visited. It also included Plog's oft-quoted statement about destination areas carrying with them the seeds of their own destruction, making it one of the few articles at

that time to even raise the topic of the decline of destinations. The points made in Plog's article fitted in extremely well with the ideas germinating from the 1972 paper and with Christaller's description of changes in visitors to destinations over time.

Three other papers were of particular relevance also. The first (although last in chronological order of publication) was Stansfield's (1978) article in the then recently established *Annals of Tourism Research*, titled 'Atlantic City and the Resort Cycle'. In this paper Stansfield discussed and analysed the rise and decline, and then rebirth of Atlantic City through the legalisation of gambling there. In doing this he supplied support in the academic literature for the concept of a cycle and a convincing example of the process of rejuvenation of a tourist destination. Stansfield has been one of the major contributors to the literature on resorts, and his earlier articles (1972) on the Recreational Business District (1970) were both highly insightful and innovative.

A second paper of considerable importance was that by Doxey (1975), yet another paper that was first presented at a meeting of the Travel Research Association. His well quoted 'Irridex' proposed a process of change in resident attitudes towards tourists in destinations. It suggested, in line with the adage 'familiarity breeds contempt', that over time residents of tourist destinations would move from a positive to a negative attitude towards tourism. While it has been argued (Butler, 1975) that such a view is probably too simplistic, the overall proposition of the article, that destinations and the attitudes of their residents change as tourism development takes place, clearly complemented well the other literature on resorts available at the time. Subsequent research on resident impacts (see, for example, Johnson and Snepenger, this volume) has shown how much more complicated this subject is, but such research was not available in the 1970s.

Finally, the third paper, which helped throw additional light on the process of change in tourist destinations, was one of several invaluable publications by Roy Wolfe (1954). Acknowledged as the 'Dean' of Canadian, and perhaps North American researchers in the 1950s and 1960s in outdoor recreation and tourism, Wolfe and his contributions are far less cited and well known in the tourism literature than they deserve to be. His epic study on second homes in Ontario (1948) provided a key link between 'old' and 'new' studies of tourism, and his works with the Ontario government on highway travel models are far in advance of most academic work in this area being published at that time. Wolfe's article on Wasaga Beach (1952), the classic Canadian 'honky tonk' resort, discussed its 'Divorce from the Geographic Environment' and traced its development from a quiet second home location to the major tourist and recreation destination in Ontario. In this he confirmed

the importance of location, the way that development changes the role and importance of natural features in a destination's attractiveness, and the influence of exogenous factors on tourism patterns. It was published in *The Canadian Geographer* almost three decades before the original TALC article.

To this rather limited number of references on resort development processes and related research should be added an even shorter list of writings that pertain to the other 'leg' or foundation of the TALC, that dealing with wildlife ecology and populations. This literature and its influence were not, in fact, cited in the 1980 article, although they have been referred to in subsequent discussions of the TALC (Butler, 1990, 2000), and Haywood (1986) also drew attention to such an analogy with wildlife population cycles. The comparison with wildlife populations was key to the development of the asymptotic curve in the 1972 article discussed earlier but the links were somewhat more tenuous and less profoundly academic than might be imagined. Again, my personal background intervenes. I had for a long time been a keen bird-watcher, and thanks to an excellent school library, had become familiar with the writings of the late Frank Fraser Darling, a naturalist and scholar. His books *Island Farm* (1943) and *Island Years* (1941), read in lieu of assigned school material, encouraged me to read more of his work, including *A Herd of Red Deer* (1936) based on his PhD research. Some of my apparently misspent afternoons in the school library proved useful eventually, and Darling's comments on the population fluctuations of 'his' herd of deer obviously remained in my memory. When writing the 1972 paper and looking for support and assistance in drawing the development curve, his comments proved invaluable:

Mathematicians have helped ecology enormously by their analysis of data of experimental animal populations. . . We know now the nature of the asymptotic or S curve applied to animal populations, that after a slow start of increase in a population in an ample habitat there is a sharp rise in increase or productivity until near saturation of the habitat, whereafter the curve flattens out, making the numbers of the population more or less static. The animal manager gets ready for a catastrophic fall if he has read the signs. (Darling, cited in Thompson & Grimble, 1968: 47)

The analogy to a tourist destination, growing rapidly, without apparent regard for the future or the preservation of its resources, of a wildlife population increasing with a natural lack of regard for the future and the ability of the environment to sustain the increased population was a strong one to us, even if a little peculiar to others at the time. It has been interesting to read of support from others for an analogy between TALC and wildlife ecology and natural systems (Haywood, 1986;

Ravenscroft, other volume), especially as this was not discussed in the 1980 model.

Final Comments

This chapter has been intended to provide more detailed background to the development of the TALC model than had hitherto been available in order to provide a context for the chapters in this and the other volume. It may be pretentious to argue that the old generation have an obligation to interpret the past for future generations, but it is surely better for those who were working in the past (even if we occasionally appear to still live there) to take on that task rather than to leave it to those who were not. Admittedly we may at times be guilty of putting a more favourable gloss on developments and processes to hide our ignorance and embarrassment, but we are the only ones in a position to know how and why particular ideas emerged at specific times and others did not. What we cannot do is explain *why* particular ideas take hold and remain popular when others disappear.

There remain a few items to address. One is why a tourism article should appear in a journal such as *The Canadian Geographer*, which did not have a strong record of publishing articles on tourism. Excellent journal though it is, its relative obscurity outside the field of geography and thus absence from libraries in institutions that do not offer geography (the author's current university is a case in point!), mean that increasing numbers of students and others working in tourism do not have easy access to the original article. It is clear from citations appearing in the literature that some writers citing the TALC are doing so 'second hand', and its all-too familiar curve is taking on more variations than Paul McCartney's 'Yesterday'. This inaccessibility of the original publication was one of the reasons for reproducing it in this volume, and I am most grateful to the Canadian Association of Geographers for giving permission for this. *The Canadian Geographer* was the vehicle of publication because the original paper was presented at the annual meeting of the Canadian Association of Geographers in Vancouver, 1980. At the urging of Peter Murphy, for the first time in its history, the journal produced a special issue, one devoted to tourism and recreation, containing some of the papers presented at the annual meeting, reviewed and edited by Murphy.

A second point that needs addressing and is much more difficult to explain, is why the TALC has received the continued attention and application that it has over the past two decades. It is unusual, as all academics know, for any article to remain popular and apparently relevant for two decades, especially in social science. One of the authors in this volume, on being asked to contribute a chapter based on an

article he had written, commented to the effect that he was somewhat surprised to hear from someone who had actually read the article as he never took it for granted that one's journal articles were actually read (Snepenger, personal communication, 2001), a feeling I imagine most academics share. One might conclude that the TALC has remained accepted because, as Wall (1982: 18) commented, it is 'elegant and useful'. But long-time friend and colleague though he is, he did go on to note a number of difficulties and gaps, some of which have since been addressed, but many of which are still causing researchers problems, as noted in many of the chapters in these two volumes. The reasons probably lie in a few simple realities including that noted by Lundgren earlier. First, the model is simple and easy to use, and able to accept a variety of forms of data. It is intuitively appropriate and provides a conceptual 'hook' on which case studies of specific destinations can be 'hung', a rather valuable aid, especially to students undertaking thesis research and to other researchers examining a specific location. Second, it appeared at a time when concepts and models were lacking but being eagerly sought in tourism as research in the subject moved beyond simple description towards interpretation and analysis. Finally, it has proved capable of modification and adaptation, as shown by the chapters that follow, and as discussed later (Butler, other volume) still has some relevance in the context of concepts such as sustainable tourism and appropriate development.

Postscript

Although it may appear from the previous discussion that Brougham and Butler (1972) coined the term 'resort cycle' before Stansfield (1978), the concept of a consistent process of resort development and change, with recognisable phases or stages, is in fact almost a century older at least. In 1990 I received copies of several articles and letters from Dr Bill Clark of the Graduate School of Geography at Clark University in Massachusetts. They ranged in date from 1883 to 1914 and are rather devastating in terms of their implications for supposed academic originality! While too long to reproduce in their entirety, some selected quotations are revealing. The earliest piece, and the initiator of the correspondence which followed, was, according to Clark (personal communication, 1990) an editorial in *The Nation* on July 19, 1883, entitled 'Evolution of the Summer Boarder' by E.L. Godkin, the editor of the paper (Godkin, 1883: 47–48). Godkin notes that 'The growth of the American watering place, indeed, now seems to be as much regulated by law as the growth of asparagus or strawberries and is almost as easy to foretell. The place is usually first discovered by artists. . . or a family of small needs in search of pure air. . .'. He goes on to