

The Tourism Area Life Cycle, Vol. 2

ASPECTS OF TOURISM

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The Tourism Area Life Cycle, Vol. 2

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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'*

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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 (the original article, published in *The Canadian Geographer*, is to be found in volume 1). Indeed, 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 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.

The TALC also has a wider significance beyond a focus on tourism destination development because it challenges the notion of tourism studies having a simplistic theoretical base. As Meethan (2001: 2) commented, 'for all the evident expansion of journals, books and conferences specifically devoted to tourism, at a general analytical level it remains under-theorized, eclectic and disparate.' Similarly, Franklin and Crang (2001: 5) observed:

The first trouble with tourism studies, and paradoxically also one of its sources of interest, is that its research object, 'tourism,' has grown very dramatically and quickly and that the tourism research community is relatively new. Indeed at times it has been unclear which was growing more rapidly – tourism or tourism research. Part of this trouble is that tourist studies has simply tried to track and record this staggering expansion, producing an enormous record of instances, case studies and variations. One reason for this is that tourist studies has been dominated by policy led and industry sponsored work so the analysis tends to internalize industry led priorities and perspectives... Part of this trouble is also that this effort has been made by people whose disciplinary origins do not

include the tools necessary to analyze and theorize the complex cultural and social processes that have unfolded.

Yet the TALC actually remains a clear indicator of the importance of theory in tourism research and from people with a wide range of disciplinary origins. As Oppermann (1998: 180) noted: 'Butler's model is a brilliant example of how scientific progress could and should work. ... [having] been scrutinized in many different contexts with modifications suggested to fit specific situations and circumstances.' In fact these volumes extend the analysis of a significant concept even further by also providing a basis for an examination of the prehistory of the TALC and its origins in a manner that depends on our understanding of its contemporary application. Immediately, one of the things that then strike you in reading the various chapters in this volume is that substantive theoretical research in tourism studies, and in the geography of tourism in particular, has a lineage that dates to the 1920s and 1930s, with significant insights into the destination development process already being drawn by the 1950s and 1960s (Butler, this volume; Hall & Page, 2005).

Just as importantly, the discussions on the TALC indicate the importance of understanding the diffusion of ideas, not only within disciplines but also between disciplines. For example, a key point of debate in relation to the TALC is the relative importance of marketing and geographical/spatial ideas regarding life cycles, with several chapters in this volume arguing that the spatial dimensions of the TALC have not been sufficiently appreciated in the majority of writing on the TALC (Coles, this volume; Hall, this volume). Indeed, both Coles and Hall also emphasise that an understanding of the TALC also needs to appreciate the wider debates that have occurred within geography as to the significance of model building and the philosophy of knowledge (Johnston, 1991). Such discussions have immense practical significance for the student of tourism. It means we should be asking how is tourism knowledge developed, what is its relevance, to whom is it relevant, in what situation does and doesn't it apply, and why is there competition between ideas? In fact, for many students one of the greatest values of the two volumes, and this one in particular, is the extent to which you can trace the intellectual history of an idea. Unfortunately, the nature of technology and research means that increasingly many students just rely on works they can download or find on the world wide web. Yet, as both volumes demonstrate, there are a number of early studies that are not readily available for download and require either browsing through the library to access or even accessing on interlibrary loan. In addition, the second volume becomes especially valuable as authors of some of the earlier, predownload days, applications of the TALC in specific locations

have been able to revisit their earlier work and reflect on it. Again, this is something else that is, unfortunately, relatively rare in tourism, yet provides tremendous insights into the research process and the generation of tourism knowledge.

One of the other important dimensions of the TALC is that it was first published in a geography journal and not tourism. As noted above, and in a number of chapters in both volumes, the geographical and spatial dimensions of the TALC are important for understanding its intellectual history as well as issues surrounding the scale at which it applies. However, the fact that it was published in *The Canadian Geographer* also emphasises the blurred and shifting boundaries of tourism studies and of the traditional academic disciplines such as geography, sociology, economics and psychology as they relate to tourism studies. Although, it must also be noted that there has been a vast growth in the number of tourism journals since the TALC was published. By 1980 there were 13 refereed English-language (full or part) academic journals on tourism and cognate subjects; by 2003 Hall *et al.* (2004) had recorded 75, with the figure likely to be an underestimate. Nevertheless, the publication of the article in *The Canadian Geographer* and its first application by Gary Hovinen (1981) also in the same journal, was soon picked up in the *Annals of Tourism Research* and *Tourism Management* by Geoff Wall (1982a,b), a fellow Ontario tourism and recreation geographer and a person who had had the opportunity to personally discuss the implications of the TALC concept with Butler for a number of years. The importance of Wall's articles, and a second article by Hovinen (1982) which was published in *Annals of Tourism Research*, on the incorporation of Butler's (1980) ideas on TALC into the tourism literature, cannot be overestimated, as they immediately lay the foundations for the contested theoretical terrain that is the TALC. Arguably without the early focus on the TALC by Wall and Hovinen in tourism journals the incorporation of TALC into the tourism body of knowledge would have been significantly delayed and the nature of the debate may have been substantially different. Significantly, the vast majority of publications on the TALC have appeared in tourism journals and publications not in geography publications, unless they specifically relate to tourism and recreation geographies. This is not to say that TALC does not have implications to wider geographic debate, far from it; given the concern of the geographer on place, changing notions of place and competition between places, there is much in the debate on TALC that should be of interest. Indeed, it is telling to note the chapters in this volume that seek to connect TALC with wider geographies of space and place.

This second volume pays particular attention to the theoretical debate that surrounds the TALC. Ideally, it should be read in conjunction with the original article and the account of the various applications of the

TALC in the first volume, particularly as much of the conceptual contestation that exists in this volume has been substantially impacted by empirical research. It is divided into five main sections. The first examines some of the conceptual origins of the TALC (although also see the first section in the other volume which includes some of Butler's own insights) with a discussion of epistemological and ontological dimensions of TALC by Johnston as well as an examination of the extent to which the TALC has become legitimised as a theory of tourism development and change by Haywood. Indeed, Haywood's comments as to the extent to which life cycle ideas have not been incorporated into the tourism industry's development discussions, at least in the Canadian context, may also provide significant insights into issues surrounding the diffusion of ideas, not least between the academy and industry.

The second section draws together some of the geographical and spatial analyses of the TALC. Coles and Hall both relate the TALC to broader concepts of spatial analysis and the intellectual history of ideas, more than has been the case in many other discussions of the TALC, while Papatheodorou also draws upon the concepts of competition between location in space as a way of highlighting the extent to which destinations should not be seen in isolation.

The third section provides a wider array of conceptualisation of TALC in relationship to entrepreneurship theory and Chaos Theory (Russell), the relationship between TALC and concepts of change with respect to protected natural areas (Weiznegger), the implications of Lamarckian theory (Ravenscroft & Hadjihambi) and time path analysis. All of these chapters indicate the importance of TALC with respect to analogue theory (Hall, this volume), while it is also interesting to note the parallels between some of the spatial considerations in Coles and Hall and the time-path analysis by Lundtorp and Wanhill. Indeed, these chapters are also noteworthy in their attempt to provide a mathematical basis for TALC (also see Butler, the origins of TALC, other volume).

The fourth section investigates a particular stage of TALC, by examining the issue of the renewal stage and the rejuvenation of destinations, an issue of contemporary importance to many destinations in Europe and North America. Cooper discusses the anatomy of the rejuvenation stage while Agarwal examines the restructuring of coastal resorts with particular reference to the UK situation. Baum also poses a fundamental question as to whether it is possible for a place to exit tourism, and therefore TALC, or otherwise reinvent itself. Issues of renewal and reinvention are also the subject of the final section that examines the extent to which TALC is predictive and features contributions from Manente and Pechlaner, and Berry. Finally, the volume concludes with a chapter by Butler on the future of the TALC in which he highlights issues surrounding its key elements of dynamism, process,

carrying capacity, management, spatial analysis, triggers, as well as its potential continued relevance.

Given the undoubted interest in these two volumes and the ongoing utilisation of the life cycle by students of tourism, there is little likelihood that the relevance of TALC to contemporary tourism will decline in the near future. We are therefore in these two volumes witnessing something of the life cycle of the life cycle. We have reached a stage of maturity in which there is the opportunity for a collective look back as to the trajectory of the TALC concept and the publications and debate it has spawned. It is also highly likely that the collection of work in these two volumes will only serve to further encourage continued discussion and debate for a new generation of studies and conceptualisations of TALC that will provide the basis for ongoing rejuvenation of studies of destinations and that will also be a lasting legacy of Richard Butler's contributions to the study of tourism.

Part 1

The Conceptual Context and Evolution of the TALC

RICHARD BUTLER

Prologue

The opportunity to revisit one's own work is never easy, for one tends to see in it that which one wishes to see or imagines is explicit, while to others such insights may remain at best obscurely implicit, if present at all. In this introduction it is clearly neither appropriate nor possible to consider all of the applications, modifications undertaken and suggested, and criticisms of the original paper (Butler, 1980). Others have done such reviews, and Prosser (1995) in particular has written much of what this author would have been tempted to say. As well, Legiewski in his chapter (other volume), examined in considerable detail a good number of the earlier applications and evaluations of the TALC, concluding with a detailed table of the majority of the published applications of the model, thus it would be pointless to repeat or précis these earlier works. The purpose of this introduction, therefore, is to set the scene for the chapters that follow, which individually perform specific roles of criticism, reconceptualisation, theoretical modification and presentation of alternative variations on the original model. This short chapter represents a more personal discussion of the role and place of the model in tourism research, rather than a full review of its use. There are many additional references to those not specifically cited here or elsewhere in this volume that reflect the variety of ways and frequency with which the model has been utilised, particularly by students. Almost inevitably, by the time this volume is in press, it is likely that other variations and applications will have appeared, hopefully building on and improving the basic model. The next section reviews the literature on tourism (and recreation and leisure) that was particularly influential in providing the conceptual base for the TALC.

Introduction

The specific origins of the TALC have been discussed in the first chapter in the accompanying volume, in which I trace the links between the early versions of the TALC, and the literature on tourist flows and resort development that existed at that time. I noted in that chapter, and

repeat here, that the 1960s were not a period of great conceptual development in tourism research, primarily because there was very little tourism research being done in the academic realm. Much of the research that was being done was of a descriptive nature and in many cases, primarily single case studies not related to models or theories. Criticism along these lines was still being made in the 1970s (Mitchell, 1979) and 1980s (Smith, 1982) with considerable relevance, and to a lesser extent is still valid today (Hall & Page, 1999). Part of the reason may relate to the fact that tourism is often not considered a proper academic discipline, a position which I support, although others would disagree. It has meant that tourism research, where it has utilised concepts and theories, has generally taken them from other disciplines, such as anthropology, economics, geography, management and sociology. (*The Annals of Tourism Research* has twice published special issues dealing with distinct disciplinary approaches to tourism, which while useful, have perhaps served to perpetuate the fragmentation that exists within tourism.)

The 1960s did see some significant developments in the academic literature on tourism and recreation. To present day readers it is perhaps important to point out that in this time period much of the relevant research for tourism was being done under the headings of recreation and leisure, particularly in the USA. At the time of writing the original article and its predecessors I was at the University of Western Ontario in Canada, and fortunate by being there, to have access to the North American research being published in these areas. Much of this research was published in the form of government reports, specially commissioned studies, and not in conventional academic publications such as journals (in the 1960s there were no academic tourism journals in English and none of the current major recreation or leisure journals either). Of considerable relevance to tourism and in particular TALC development were three elements. One is a very small group of publications, including one particular book, *The Economics of Outdoor Recreation* by Marion Clawson and Jack Knetsch (1966), which built on the ideas expressed by Clawson in his earlier report for the Resources for the Future Foundation, *The Crisis in Outdoor Recreation* (1959). This latter review was perhaps the first publication to recognise and enunciate the pressures that were beginning to build in North America (and, although not stated, in Europe also) on recreation, tourism and leisure facilities as demand built up from the economic and population boom of the post-war 1950s. Clawson and Knetsch's book was a superb exposition of then contemporary theories, concepts and approaches to research in outdoor recreation, and remained relevant for some two decades, not least because of the quality of the writing and clarity of explanation. It was particularly significant because it introduced to outdoor recreation concepts such as the recreation experience (with its five components of anticipation, journey to site,

on-site experience, journey from site and recollection), which has been much utilised and modified since then. Two other volumes from that period were of specific relevance to tourism in terms of highlighting some of the issues existing and unfolding with respect to pressures on destinations. One was *Man and Nature in the National Parks* by Darling and Eichorn (1967), which presented results of a study of the US National Parks system, and revealed clearly the management problems being experienced as a result of rapid growth of tourism and recreation travel in the USA. Finally, although not directly related to tourism or recreation, was Ian McHarg's (1967) *Design with Nature*, an articulate expression of why mankind should accommodate nature rather than the other way around, and a precursor of techniques such as Geographic Information Systems in terms of the use of overlays for land use and resource planning.

The second element was the publication at the end of the late 1950s, over a series of years, of the 27 volumes of the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission (ORRRC, 1962). This represented a breakthrough in recreation research, and while not all volumes are of equal high standard, overall, this set of publications represented a real benchmark in terms of 'modern' research into outdoor recreation. (An excellent comprehensive review of the ORRRC reports is contained in Wolfe's article *Perspectives on Outdoor Recreation*, 1964.) These reports were in many ways the key reference works for researchers in outdoor recreation, tourism and leisure for at least a decade, and their scale and comprehensive nature have never been matched in any country before or since.

Finally, there was also an ongoing series of reports on research being conducted by the US Forest Service, research which is ongoing and still available. Among the many excellent (and generally free) publications in this series were two in particular that received wide citation among other researchers in the 1960s. This research, and these two publications in particular, reflected the realisation among public sector agencies that, as Clawson (1959) had argued, the pressures on outdoor recreation (and tourism) resources were increasing rapidly, and that these pressures brought with them the potential for very considerable negative impacts on both the environments being visited and the quality of the visitor experience in these sites. One of these studies was by J. Alan Wagar, *The Carrying Capacity of Wildlands for Recreation* (1964), which was the first study to draw out the links between motivations to participate in outdoor recreation (and by implication, tourism) and crowding or carrying capacity. The second was by R.C. Lucas (1964), *The Recreational Carrying Capacity of the Quetico-Superior Area*, and in this study for the first time a researcher demonstrated how carrying capacity levels could be produced for a specific area.

These two studies started an ongoing research relationship between carrying capacity and related management issues for wilderness areas in the USA which continues today, and has produced innumerable other valuable reports such as *The Limits of Acceptable Change* (Stankey & Cole, 1985) and *The Recreational Opportunity Spectrum* (Clarke & Stankey, 1979). The research on carrying capacity led directly to the importance placed upon this concept in the development of the TALC, and is similarly reflected in subsequent research reviewing the relationship between tourist destination development and carrying capacity (Getz, 1983; Martin & Uysal, 1990). The idea that the overuse of resources would ultimately lead to both environmental deterioration in the quality of the resources involved and thus diminished visitor satisfaction, and ultimately reduced visitation is both logical and, in the 1960s and 1970s, fairly obvious on the ground in an increasing number of places.

The 1970s were a time of greater conceptual development in tourism. Many of the models and concepts put forward in that decade are still quoted in the literature today, including the work of Cohen (1979), Doxey (1975) and Plog (1973), although much of this appears with hindsight to have been based on 'seat of the pants' intuition and personal experience. At a time when there was little research on tourism, such a state of affairs was neither unusual nor unreasonable. It is, perhaps, a tribute to the insight of these individuals that their ideas continue to be debated, tested and used in the current literature. Despite these pioneering efforts, and those discussed elsewhere (Butler, other volume), there was still continuing criticism in the tourism academy about the relative absence of conceptualisation and theoretical development. Smith (1982) emphasised this point in his inimically titled paper *Reflections on Geographical Research in Recreation – Hey Buddy Can you S'Paradigm?*

The research noted above, particularly the work of Clawson, and also that of Wolfe (1951, 1962, 1964, 1966) suggested that the pressures on recreation areas were likely to be felt on tourist destinations also, and that just as outdoor recreation sites were having to change to meet the increasing and changing demand, so too would tourist destinations have to reflect market shifts in preference and taste, and changes in mobility and accessibility. One thing which seemed apparent in the late 1960s and 1970s was the failure of many destinations and those involved with the planning and development of tourism to recognise that the offerings of the pre-World War II era would not be capable of meeting the needs and desires of the post-war generations. It did not seem a blinding revelation to this writer that there were a number of general similarities between what was offered at a tourist destination and what is offered by producers of any other product made available to the market. Once this idea was accepted, it seemed equally obvious that what happened to other products was likely to happen, in its own form, to tourist products,

i.e. destinations. The most widely known model appeared to be that of the Product Life Cycle (PLC), and intuitively this seemed to fit the tourism destination scenario. This served to provide a rationale and a conceptual base from which to challenge the then current wisdom. This can perhaps be summed up as 'once a tourist destination, always a tourist destination', with little need to accommodate the changes taking place in the external world (or in more current idiom, 'having built it, (even 50 years before), they will always come').

The TALC, as it finally appeared in 1980, was certainly a product of its own times and its creator's training and interests. As several of the authors in this volume discuss (Agarwal, Coles, Hall, Johnston and Papatheodorou), it has very clear geographical antecedents and links to theories and models commonly used in geography. As I note in the introductory chapter in the other volume, in the first attempts at developing the TALC, one of the key ideas related to the location of destinations and the process of new destinations being established in other locations as the older resorts lost their initial attractivity and competitiveness. Perhaps ironically, given the current predominance of tourism in universities being located in management schools, the business literature associated with the PLC (see Coles, this volume) was never discussed in either the very first version of the model (Brougham & Butler, 1972) nor the original article. In essence the basic PLC idea was appropriated for what was essentially a geographical article, and to my now embarrassment (as a staff member in a School of Management), none of the relevant business literature was ever cited. In many respects it is others who have focused on the comparison with the well established PLC in business, along with the relevant criticisms (for example, Haywood, 1986, this volume). I am particularly grateful to Coles (this volume) for discussing much of this literature and its relevance to the TALC and thus helping correct a rather large omission in my literature review.

While obviously feeling that the model had validity and was worthy of application, this author did not anticipate either the scale or positive nature of the reaction to the model over the past two decades. The first reaction to the model was positive but raised some valid criticisms (Wall, 1982, this volume), and the second review article was even more specific in its identification of shortcomings and problems (Haywood, 1986, this volume). Interestingly enough, however, the first application of the model came only one year after publication (Hovinen, 1981), and since then the number of papers using the model has been very considerable (Legiewski, other volume). The examples used have ranged from single resorts (e.g. Weaver, 1990) to multiple groups of islands (e.g. Choy, 1992), in a wide range of physical, social and economic contexts. Not surprisingly, practical and theoretical issues have been identified, and

the chapters in this volume focus on the latter set of problems (the other volume of this pair of publications contains chapters providing examples of applications and modifications of the cycle in a wide range of settings and at different scales).

The frequency of use and the range of applications analysed in the literature would tend to support the view that the TALC has validity in terms of being a descriptive model, with applicability in a wide variety of spatial, temporal, cultural and economic situations. It provides a conceptual hook for case studies of specific locations, and given the propensity for case studies from an industry and business perspective in tourism and the desire to undertake specific field work examples in research, the TALC would appear to still provide a valuable methodology and a stimulus for continued conceptual development in tourism research. Because the TALC is a generalised and essentially simplistic model, it is inevitable that it would not fit perfectly, or in some cases even closely, every specific situation to which it has been applied. The question best asked perhaps, is whether, in its original form, it successfully described and explained the process of tourist destination evolution. Whether it really does represent a paradigm in tourism research on destination development is a judgement better left to others, but after almost two decades of use the model may just cause Smith (1982) to question his earlier opinion.

Chapter 1

The Ontological Foundation of the TALC

CHARLES S. JOHNSTON

Introduction

Martin Oppermann (1998: 179) wrote, in response to a paper by Agarwal (1997): 'I am sure that almost everything that can be said about the advantages and disadvantages of Butler's model has indeed been said already.' Yet on the next page he was to note:

Butler's model is a brilliant example of how scientific progress could and should work. In fact, it is probably the only model in tourism that has been scrutinized in many different contexts with modifications suggested to fit specific situations and circumstances. (Oppermann, 1998: 180)

This is certainly true. Since 1980 there have been dozens of published works utilising the TALC model. Most of these focus on basic research but, in addition, the model is now included in text books (Boniface & Cooper, 1987) and defined in glossaries (Middleton & Hawkins, 1998). In one case study, Burns and Murphy (1998) noted that tourism operators at a mature destination in Australia had used knowledge of the model to determine they would be in trouble if they didn't plan ahead. These examples show that, a score of years after publication, Butler's message is truly 'out there'. Within the contemporary research community, however, there is little consensus about the model's usefulness. The depth and breadth of criticism is now extensive. Further, Pearce's (1993) complaint that there has been no solid comparative work done continues to be valid.

Because of this situation, the objective of this paper is to raise and examine ontological and epistemological issues, as an attempt to shore up the theory underlying the model and, hopefully, facilitate future comparative research. The organising method for the paper was a modified form of 'grounded theory'. This is an inductive approach to research developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). These authors asserted the major goal of inductive research was to generate theory, not verify it. This was considered particularly useful in new contexts, for which theory had not been established. The extant body of work on the

destination life cycle model seemed to represent such a situation. Here, ontology will be discussed first, then epistemology. Points from TALC literature will be introduced when relevant, as illustrations. Because the focus is on ontological and epistemological underpinnings, the chapter attempts to be something more than a literature review, but is also less than a fully described grounded theory of destination development. The final section of the paper is synthetic and suggests a formula for integration in case study research.

Ontological Considerations

As a word, 'ontology' is generally defined abstractly as relating to the 'nature of being' (Webster, 1983). In this paper the word is used to define a set of basic concepts that underpin the understanding of the reality Butler's model attempts to describe. This is not an idle exercise, for it relates to the basic question: 'How can a tourist destination – a *place* – have a life cycle?' Haywood (1992) and Agarwal (1997) have wondered aloud whether the concept of the 'resort cycle itself' has validity. Choy (1992: 2), in his study of Pacific Island destinations, cited Hart, Casserly and Lawless to show that there were cases in which the product life cycle did not apply. It is therefore crucial to settle the issue of whether the model is based merely on a metaphor, or whether it has a firmer ontological foundation.

Structuration theory

Giddens' (1984) theory of structurationism provides the necessary underpinning to answer the question. As well as providing an ontological basis for concepts such as 'structure' and 'agency', Giddens established that there were 'institutions' of social behaviour which were real in an ontological sense. He defined 'institutions' as the sets of practices of individuals that encompass 'the more enduring features of social life' (p. 24) and are 'deeply embedded in time and space' (p. 13). Based on these definitional elements, tourism can clearly be interpreted as an excellent example of an institution. Writers such as MacCannell (1976: 49) and Urry (1990: 9) have in fact referred to the institutional nature of tourism. Cohen's (1972: 169) section on 'The Institutionalised Forms of Tourism: The Organized and the Individual Mass Tourist' is perhaps the most developed treatment. In contemporary tourism, there are at least four sets of practices that are 'institutional' in nature: the practices of tourists themselves; the practices of the tourist industry; the promotional efforts from which evolve a standardised image of the destination; and the practices of the community in relation to the presence of tourists.

Besides defining recognisable sets of behaviour as institutions, Giddens asserted these did not occur randomly but were situated in time and space at *locales*. A locale was not of any fixed size, it could be even an area within a room, or it could be something larger. The importance of the concept is Giddens' assertion that place makes a difference to behaviour. Conceptually, then, tourism at a destination can be considered as locale-based institutional behaviour. By itself this is atemporal. But Giddens also asserted institutions had life cycles; he referred to this as their *longue durée*. Within such a life cycle the institutionalised behaviour was passed (and evolved) from generation-to-generation and could last several hundred years or more. A destination can therefore be said to have a life cycle on the basis that, as a locale, it is in the process of completing its *longue durée* with respect to the institution of tourism. This in turn allows the assertion that *all* destinations can be interpreted to have begun a life cycle once minimum definitions of institutionalisation have been met. Ontologically there are no exceptions, whether or not the model is capable of predicting aspects of the life cycle of a particular area, or whether in its generalised form it fits a specific destination very well. The question – when does life begin? – is as tricky here as it is with human life. A general answer, applicable to many situations, would be that a destination's tourism life cycle has begun when *any* aspect of tourism has become institutionalised. A more specific answer, based on research done in Kona (Johnston, other volume), is that the involvement stage of the cycle began when institutionalised features of the tourism industry were constructed at the locale.

A conceptual expansion may be made at this point. When tourism is considered as an institution, it is apparent that it will be just one of many to dominate a locale over the course of its history. Such an idea is familiar in the discipline of geography, as expressed through Whittlesey's (1929) concept of a locational 'sequent occupance', consisting of several eras. Over the course of the longer sequent occupance, tourism will be just one of many institutional eras. There will likely have been pretourism eras, and post-tourism eras will follow after the institutional 'death' of tourism (Baum, this volume). Butler did not discuss this broader picture in any detail, though Young (1983) has theorised a pretourism era with two stages.

Relying solely on Giddens has limitations, for he did not theorise the nature of the institutional *longue durée* beyond defining it. Yet as will be seen, other life cycle models break down the whole of the cycle into meaningful stages and substages. Butler (1980) focused on identifying stages; so has all subsequent case research. Therefore, the stages of the life cycle become an important component in the concepts of institution

and *longue durée*. This is an aspect that Giddens failed to examine and inspiration must be sought elsewhere.

'Basic process' theory

The stages of the *longue durée* relate to the process which the institution of tourism undergoes while progressing through its life cycle. The word 'process' can be used to refer generally to a 'progressive course' but this often includes 'a number of steps' (Webster, 1983). The word also has ontological significance when used in research about social life. Glaser (1978: 98) has noted that the concept of process is 'a way of grouping together two sequencing parts of a phenomenon'. That is, a process can be ontologically defined when there are two or more temporally distinct parts to a phenomenon and these occur directionally, from one to the next. An 'institutional process', then, may be defined as one in which the *longue durée* can be broken into stages and substages occurring directionally.

Glaser (1978: 97–100) has also noted that certain processes are 'basic social processes' because they are 'fundamental patterns in the organization of social behavior as it occurs over time.' Basic social processes were considered to have three properties: 'stages', 'variability' and 'pervasiveness'. With respect to stages, he asserted they are relatively unique in form/condition and consequences. They have 'breaking points' that can be discerned on the basis of a sequence that has general time limits. Stages are in fact 'theoretical units' and the point of identifying them is to be able to show that variations exist in the pattern of behaviour being studied, and to account for these variations. The length of time for each stage is not fixed, but is a function of the conditions that create the changes leading to the next stage. These conditions might occur quickly, in which case there would be a 'critical juncture' or more slowly, as a 'blurry transition'. It is unlikely that they will occur identically in different case situations. Basic social processes are thus variable in the sense that no two entities ever go through a specific process in exactly the same manner. The final point is that social processes were considered *basic* because they were pervasive. They occur again and again because of the 'patterned, systematic uniformity flows of social life'.

From this description it would not seem unduly assertive to claim that Butler's destination life cycle model focuses on what could be called a 'basic geographical process'. The model captures the general sequence – the set of stages – through which destinations go as they evolve from isolated areas, to developed resort towns, to fully urbanised towns (or abandoned derelict landscapes). The concepts of 'pleasure periphery' (Turner & Ash, 1975) and 'periphery frontier' (Zurick, 1992) show that the pervasiveness of tourist destination development is increasing

worldwide. Lastly, life cycles will be destination specific, as Cooper (1992: 149) has asserted. The existence of this variability, however, cannot be used to disprove the general accuracy of the theory upon which the model is based. Rather, it can be argued that the reverse situation exists – the theory and model become validated as reasonably accurate portrayals of a basic geographical process whenever a researcher is able to utilise them. Because the theory and model are inductive, all subsequent variation discovered in case studies should therefore be interpreted in such a way as to broaden the general theory of destination development.

Epistemological Considerations

Trusted (1981: 23) has defined 'epistemology' as 'the theory or science of the methods or grounds of knowledge'. Tribe (1997) has recently written a discussion of how epistemological questions can be applied to tourism studies. He noted that pertinent concerns include the use of concepts and boundaries, and the character, validity and reliability of claims of knowledge about tourism. Focusing on aspects such as these would seem useful in removing what he regarded as the excessive 'indiscipline of tourism' (the title of his article), and get at the 'how do you know?' considerations. Pollock (1986) has shown these are crucial to epistemology. The next part of the paper discusses such epistemological concerns.

Beyond having an operational definition, it is necessary to identify a set of epistemological elements that could be used to shore up the theory in the existing corpus of literature. A variation of the 'constant comparative method' (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was used to do this. Specifically, literature on four other types of process research was read and compared to see what elements were held in common and therefore might be transferable to the study of a tourism process. The literature was chosen simply on the basis of familiarity; the processes identified were: the human life cycle, the product life cycle, port development and ecosuccession models. The reading was not exhaustive, yet the exercise in comparison was successful, in that seven epistemologically oriented elements were found to be (mostly) held in common. These are: the entity undergoing the process; its internal characteristics; its users; stages as conceptual units; the mechanisms that cause stage changes; the macro-structural conditions under which the process occurs; the typical sequence and the variability of stages. The comparative details are provided in Figure 1.1. The next section of the paper will elaborate on each element and also discuss it in relation to salient points found in the destination area literature.

Type of Process → Epistemological Element ↓	Human Life Cycle	Product Life Cycle	Port Development	Ecosuccession
Unit-Entity	Individual lives	A specific product	A coastal port	A patch of vegetation
Internal characteristics	Biological Cultural Psychological	Product type and modification Marketing and costs Parts and servicing Trade-ins, etc.	Port physiography Built environment of port facilities + nearby urban areas Linkages to inland cities	Vital attributes of key component species
Users	None	Consumers	Shippers	None
Stages	Infancy Childhood Adolescence Adulthood Old age	Introduction Development Maturity Decline	Primitive era Marginal quay expansion Marginal quay elaboration Dock elaboration Simple lateral quays Specialized quays	Varies with types of plants: simplest version = grasses, shrubs, trees
Mechanisms of stage change	Generally "blurry transitions"	Competition	Change in ship design	Based on properties of plant species
Typical sequence and variation in stages	Precociousness Premature aging	Product non-acceptance Mass marketing Innovation	None	"Pathways" Facilitation Tolerance Inhibition
Macro-structural conditions	Family Community Society	Economic system, Levels of technology and communication Organizational capability	Trade conditions	Climate Latitude Altitude

Figure 1.1 Epistemological elements found in the literature on several types of process research
Sources: Bird, 1963; Noble and Slayter, 1981; Onkvisit and Shaw, 1989; Rink and Swan, 1979; Spier, 1981

The entity undergoing the process

In any process research there is always some type of 'entity' that represents the 'unit' of analysis. In the human life cycle, that entity is an individual human being. A human being of course has a discrete scale, his or her physical body. This is not always the case. With product life cycles, the boundary can be inexact and sometimes an imposition of arbitrary definitions is required. As an example, Rink and Swan (1979: 225–227) have noted that for tobacco, there existed three levels of product aggregation. The 'class' was composed of all tobacco products. The major 'forms' they comprised were pipes, cigars and cigarettes. 'Brands' were the subdivisions of each. Butler's (1980) discussions of the typical features of each stage were general and lend themselves to analysis at many types and scales of destination areas. Subsequent theoretical development has not shown much epistemological concern over boundaries. In terms of Rink and Swan's (1979) discussion of tobacco products, we might say that different classes, forms and brands of destinations have all been compared against a single model. Transferring these ideas, the epistemological issue becomes one of bounding tourist destinations so that they can be compared. Three points require examination: the nature of the destination entity; the type of destination; and the spatial scale.

By the late 1990s, confusion seems to have arisen over the nature of the entity being studied. Butler adapted the product life cycle model to *destinations* going through a particular life cycle. Other writers have chosen to focus on some component of the tourism product at the destination rather than the destination itself. Haywood (1998), for example, noted that different products within a destination will display their own patterns of evolution. Based on the discussion of institutional behaviour above, this is undeniably true. Thus both the destination and sectors contained within could be legitimate objects of study. However, the capability of studying the life cycle of, say, the attractions sector, does not neutralise the validity of studying the life cycle of the destination itself.

Perusal of case studies in the literature shows that several 'types' of destinations have been examined. Getz (1992) has studied the cities of Niagara Falls (Ontario and New York state), which are built near the waterfall, an environmental attraction. Hovinen (1981, other volume) looked at Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, where the cultural practices of a religious minority were the main draw. (See Weizenegger this volume for a discussion on the validity of identifying protected areas as destinations, editor's note). These are destinations at which tourists have very different types of experiences and at which the institutional development has been very different. In an inductive approach to theory

generation, each of these types of destinations might require its own subtheory, with a corresponding model, because the resource base providing the foundation for institutional behaviour is different.

Research has also been conducted at a variety of spatial scales. At one extreme, di Benedetto and Bojanic (1993) (and Bao & Zhang, other volume) have studied the life cycle of a theme park, Cypress Gardens, while at the other extreme McElroy *et al.* (1993) compared the island regions of the entire Caribbean Sea with those of the Pacific Ocean. With this range of variation, it would seem epistemologically important to determine, or at least narrow down, the legitimate spatial boundaries that the model can handle without requiring extensive modification.

Ontological points made above permit this. Examination of the case literature indicates that many studies have now been done on resort towns, i.e. at the urban scale. Smith (1992: 304) has in fact asserted that beach resort evolution represents a form of urbanisation. In terms of the existing theory, tourism as an institution develops when tourists arrive at a particular destination site, to experience some feature of it, and when businesspeople respond to their presence by developing a tourist industry. Together, the attraction and the commercial area constitute a locale. Thus the spatial scale for which the TALC model is most appropriate, in its present form, would seem to be a resort town that has an environmental or cultural resource as its basis of attraction, plus a recreational business district (or the potential for one to be built). Studies of destinations at scales much larger or smaller than this may require modification to the model because the institutional nature of tourism development would likely be different.

Numerous studies have been done on destination areas much larger than a resort-city scale. At large spatial scales, a difference that must be taken into account is the existence of multiple destinations. When there is more than one, the concern becomes that different types of destinations, and destinations that have individually developed during different time periods (see Formica & Uysal 1996), are all being aggregated into a single life cycle. When multiple site development occurs, what is going on at individual areas must not be glossed over without examination. Such glossing may miss important variations that are occurring at each locale. Digance (1997), and Priestley and Mundet (1998) have done studies that analysed such situations of multiple site development within a larger region.

Characteristics of the resort

Any sort of entity undergoing a process has internal characteristics that are what in fact changes. It is the state of these at any given point in time that provides an indication of what stage the entity is in. Agarwal

(1997: 65) has noted that there has been more attention of late in examining the internal dynamics of resort development. This section attempts to underpin which characteristics to consider.

Research on ecosystems and ports was found to have particular relevance to the study of resorts. First, ecosystem patches contain 'key component species' that have 'vital attributes' (Noble & Slayter, 1981: 313). In any successional patch some species dominate physically; plants of that species took up most of the area of the patch. Their presence was in fact what determined the stage in the succession. Second, Bird's (1963) study of ports indicated that the state of docking facilities was critical. These were just one feature of the port, along with the condition of the shoreline, suprastructural facilities (e.g. warehouses) and structures representing control (e.g. the customs house). Yet it was the docking facilities that were the crucial feature and stage interpretation was based on their level of development.

Butler defined quite a number of internal characteristics that might be considered important. Subsequent case researchers have expanded on these and studied a bewilderingly wide variety. Figure 1.2 aggregates some of them into a smaller group. The left column identifies three main characteristics that seemed particularly important at destinations.

The first characteristic is the 'base resource' that provides the major experience/s which tourists visit the destination to have. This is the

CHARACTERISTIC UNDERGOING CHANGE	SUB-TYPE	SUBSTANTIVE EXAMPLE
BASE RESOURCES	Environmental	Beaches, ski mountains, spa
	Cultural	Ethnic group
SERVICE RESOURCES	Tier 1*	Accommodation, food, souvenirs New resource creation: - Casino
	Tier 2 & 3	Doctors
	Post-hoc Tier 4 services	Housing
GOVERNMENT	Post-hoc services Infrastructure	Post Office, police/jail Public works projects - Beach modification - Transportation
	Structuring documents	Development plans Legislation at large

Figure 1.2 Important internal characteristics of tourist destination areas
 *Tier 1 shops serve tourists almost exclusively; tier 2 shops serve both tourists and locals; tier 3 indirectly serves the tourist industry; tier 4 serves locals only (see Smith, 1988)