

NEW DIRECTIONS IN TOURISM ANALYSIS

# Tourism Destination Evolution

Edited by  
Patrick Brouder, Salvador Anton Clavé,  
Alison Gill and Dimitri Ioannides



# Tourism Destination Evolution

Outlining the need for fresh perspectives on change in tourism, this book offers a theoretical overview and empirical examples of the potential synergies of applying evolutionary economic geography (EEG) concepts in tourism research. EEG has proven to be a powerful explanatory paradigm in other sectors, and tourism studies has a track record of embracing, adapting and enhancing frameworks from cognate fields. EEG approaches to tourism studies complement and further develop studies of established themes such as path dependence and the Tourism Area Life Cycle. The individual chapters draw from a broad geographical framework and address distinct conceptual elements of EEG, using a diverse set of tourism case studies from Europe, North America and Australia. Developing the theoretical cohesion of tourism and EEG, this volume also gives non-specialist tourism scholars a window into the possibilities of using these concepts in their own research. Given the timing of this publication, it has great potential value to the wider tourism community in advancing theory and leading to more effective empirical research.

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## **New Directions in Tourism Analysis**

Series Editor: Dimitri Ioannides, E-TOUR,

*Mid Sweden University, Sweden*

Although tourism is becoming increasingly popular both as a taught subject and an area for empirical investigation, the theoretical underpinnings of many approaches have tended to be eclectic and somewhat underdeveloped. However, recent developments indicate that the field of tourism studies is beginning to develop in a more theoretically informed manner, but this has not yet been matched by current publications.

The aim of this series is to fill this gap with high quality monographs or edited collections that seek to develop tourism analysis at both theoretical and substantive levels using approaches which are broadly derived from allied social science disciplines such as Sociology, Social Anthropology, Human and Social Geography, and Cultural Studies. As tourism studies covers a wide range of activities and sub fields, certain areas such as Hospitality Management and Business, which are already well provided for, would be excluded. The series will therefore fill a gap in the current overall pattern of publication.

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# **Tourism Destination Evolution**

**Edited by Patrick Brouder,  
Salvador Anton Clavé, Alison Gill  
and Dimitri Ioannides**

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# Contents

<i>List of illustrations</i>	vii
<i>Notes on contributors</i>	viii
<i>Foreword by Dieter F. Kogler</i>	xi
<b>1 Why is tourism not an evolutionary science? Understanding the past, present and future of destination evolution</b>	1
PATRICK BROUDER, SALVADOR ANTON CLAVÉ, ALISON GILL AND DIMITRI IOANNIDES	
<b>2 Destination dynamics, path dependency and resilience: regaining momentum in Danish coastal tourism destinations?</b>	19
HENRIK HALKIER AND LAURA JAMES	
<b>3 Contested pathways towards tourism-destination sustainability in Whistler, British Columbia: an evolutionary governance model</b>	43
ALISON GILL AND PETER W. WILLIAMS	
<b>4 Tourism area research and economic geography theories: investigating the notions of co-evolution and regional innovation systems</b>	65
ROBERT HASSINK AND MULAN MA	
<b>5 Moments as catalysts for change in the evolutionary paths of tourism destinations</b>	81
CINTA SANZ-IBÁÑEZ, JULIE WILSON AND SALVADOR ANTON CLAVÉ	
<b>6 Path dependence in remote area tourism development: why institutional legacies matter</b>	103
DORIS ANNA CARSON AND DEAN BRADLEY CARSON	
<b>7 Knowledge transfer in the hotel industry and the ‘de-locking’ of Central and Eastern Europe</b>	123
PIOTR NIEWIADOMSKI	

<b>8</b>	<b>Co-evolution and sustainable tourism development: from old institutional inertia to new institutional imperatives in Niagara</b>	149
	PATRICK BROUDER AND CHRISTOPHER FULLERTON	
<b>9</b>	<b>Regional development and leisure in Fryslân: a complex adaptive systems perspective through evolutionary economic geography</b>	165
	JASPER F. MEEKES, CONSTANZA PARRA AND GERT DE ROO	
<b>10</b>	<b>Tourism and economic geography redux: evolutionary economic geography's role in scholarship bridge construction</b>	183
	DIMITRI IOANNIDES AND PATRICK BROUDER	
	<i>Index</i>	194

# Illustrations

## Figures

2.1	Maps of (a) Denmark and (b) the North Jutland region of Denmark	26
2.2	Number of commercial overnight stays	33
2.3	Economic impact of commercial overnight stays	34
3.1	A model of constraints and catalysts in destination community governance transition towards sustainability	49
4.1	Co-evolution in tourism areas	70
4.2	The co-evolutionary process of tourism area development	70
4.3	Tourism local innovation model	75
5.1	Discourses of the moments in tourism destination evolution	88
5.2	PortAventura as a moment in the evolution of the central Costa Daurada	92
6.1	Map of Central Australia	110
8.1	Tourism evolution in the Niagara region of Canada	153

## Tables

1.1	Selected papers on destination evolution with approaches other than Evolutionary Economic Geography	5
1.2	Tourism papers incorporating Evolutionary Economic Geography theory	10
3.1	Selected defining characteristics of growth- and sustainability-oriented governance models	55
7.1	Main business models of international hotel groups	128

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# Foreword

It is estimated that over 1 billion tourists travel abroad every year and that the tourism industry generates an economic impact of well over 2 trillion US dollars, representing about 3 percent of global GDP (statistics vary according to sources). More importantly, indirect contributions of this sector, as well as domestic tourism, generate benefits that are of an even considerably higher magnitude. As such, tourism frequently constitutes a vital component of the economic system across all spatial scales. From the transformation of difficult-to-reach mountain villages into international ski resorts to the promotion of whole regions built around landscape characteristics and culinary offerings, tourism seems to permeate the entire globe, from metropolitan cities to rural hinterlands.

Considering the widespread economic impact of this particular sector, as well as its spatial extent, tourism should be given special attention in economic geography. While there has been substantial research effort over the past decades, much work remains to be done. This is particularly true when it comes to the incorporation of evolutionary approaches to the study of service sectors and the economic trajectories of places, something that has recently gained popularity within the field of geography. The present edited volume constitutes an important step in this direction, and thus it is a key contemporary contribution that will significantly advance future research efforts aiming to untangle the complexity of ‘tourism destination evolution’.

One could argue that tourism is an ideal playground for Evolutionary Economic Geography (EEG). Above all, this sector is more place-bound and reliant on local institutional conditions, production systems and socio-historical constructs of reality and imagination than many other segments of the economy. On the one hand, it is embedded in the complex social and political relationships which uniquely characterize places, while, on the other hand, it also experiences heightened exposure to constantly evolving extra-local trends, consumer preferences, and cultural and lifestyle fashions. The potentially low entry barriers combined with the power to transform the economic fortunes of places across the entire spectrum of localities indeed raise the question of why tourism is not an evolutionary science. The constant balancing act of having to re-invent itself by means of adaptation and branching processes, while battling institutional lock-in and managing co-evolution with other sectors in the economy, suggests that EEG provides an ideal framework to study tourism.

The present volume is a testimony to the usefulness of EEG approaches in the study of tourism, but it also points to many open avenues for future research efforts, encouraging others to contribute to this exciting and highly relevant line of inquiry.

Dieter F. Kogler  
Dublin, 22 December 2015

# 1 Why is tourism not an evolutionary science?

Understanding the past, present and future of destination evolution

*Patrick Brouder, Salvador Anton Clavé, Alison Gill and Dimitri Ioannides*

## Introduction

More than a century ago, Thorstein Veblen (1898) famously asked ‘Why is economics not an evolutionary science?’. At its core, Veblen’s paper of the same name questioned the dominant thinking of the day that economic systems tended towards equilibrium, arguing instead that economies evolve over time. Thus, it is not enough to merely describe the economy, but rather conceptualize it in terms of long-term change processes and development (Boulton 2010). While the study of economic systems has slowly opened up to account for Veblen’s ground-breaking thinking, there is no denying that the epistemological parameters of classical economics still dominate scholarship on economic systems well over 100 years later.

Evolutionary economics has emerged as an important part of economic studies in recent decades (Dosi and Nelson 1994), and its natural progression to economic geography was heralded as recently as 1999 in Boschma and Lambooy’s crossover paper ‘Evolutionary economics and economic geography’ (Boschma and Lambooy 1999). In the decade which followed, many geographers presented the case for a distinct sub-discipline of ‘Evolutionary Economic Geography’ (EEG), where ‘we start from the definition of economic geography as dealing with the uneven distribution of economic activity across space. An evolutionary approach specifically focusses on the historical processes that produce these patterns’ (Boschma and Frenken 2011: 286).

EEG has had a marked influence on economic geographers, prompting certain observers to ask whether this amounts to ‘yet another turn’ in the subject’s progression, following so-called turns such as the critical turn and relational turn (Grabher 2009). Empirical research has delivered results in studies of industrial clusters and regions with historical legacies in manufacturing (e.g. Klepper 2007), clearly focusing on the regional level (e.g. Neffke *et al.* 2011). The *Handbook of Evolutionary Economic Geography* was published in 2010 (Boschma and Martin 2010a) and the sub-field continues to be adopted by geographers working in various regional environments. Tourism appears to lend itself particularly well to an EEG empirical approach, especially within localities that depend heavily on this sector for their economic revival and diversification (Brouder 2014a).

Has tourism research been limited by a lack of an evolutionary perspective? Many tourism researchers have long been interested in the development of destinations over time, though they have resisted the temptation for simplistic modelling of destination development with early calls for multilineal models of tourism development (Cohen 1979). The most influential model for the evolution of tourism destinations was put forward by Butler (1980) in the Tourist Area Life Cycle (TALC) Model. The primary concern of the TALC model was understanding resource management under conditions of increasing visitor numbers, but the stages of the model from exploration (in the early stage) to consolidation (during the peak stage) and beyond certainly implied ongoing evolutionary processes at work. EEG is one approach for helping academics understand change processes at the destination level and, as such, tourism geographers have become increasingly eager to utilize an EEG lens in their empirical studies.

This volume brings together a group of scholars who have been conducting research on tourism destinations using evolutionary approaches and, in particular, EEG perspectives. This introductory chapter offers an overview of EEG and tourism research to date and presents the empirical chapters that follow.

### **Evolutionary economic geography**

Boschma and Martin (2010b) argue that EEG is a distinct sub-discipline in economic geography and not a subset of either neoclassical or institutional approaches. EEG research pays attention to the long-term processes of change in the spatial economy, with an empirical focus on individuals and firms at the regional level. EEG theorists have been inspired by Schumpeter (1934) and emphasize novelty and innovation through human creativity as the main drivers of economic evolution. Thus, there is a focus on knowledge creation and dissemination throughout firms and within regions. While knowledge creation is inherently a dynamic process, EEG theory also deals with long-term change and the barriers to dynamic knowledge creation are just as important as the aids.

EEG has three antecedent theoretical pillars on which it has developed: path dependence, complexity theory, and Generalized Darwinism (Boschma and Martin 2010b). Path dependence is an established area of research within economic geography (Arthur 1994; David 1997). It implies that history matters and that feedback loops in, for example, a region's economy become self-reinforcing over time. This can lead to increased product and market development for a particular sector and can result in increasing sectoral productivity and regional prosperity over time. However, path-dependent regional economic evolution also tends towards regional 'lock-in', whereby the processes of knowledge creation and sharing, regional institutions and political support for the dominant path tend to reinforce that path over time. Lock-in can prove successful for decades, but behind the overt success is a hidden change in the exposure of the regional economy – by placing all of the regional 'eggs in one basket'. This classic pattern of success followed by collapse is most notable in the former industrial regions

of Europe and the ‘rustbelt’ of North America. Much of the research on EEG has been inspired by the ‘industrial ruination’ (Mah 2012), which has affected formerly prosperous regions, with scholars hoping to understand ways to break away from regional path-dependence before ruination occurs. As tourism has reached maturity in many destinations, the same worries relating to the negative outcomes of path dependence have become concerns of researchers but also locals. In many mass tourism destinations, tourism’s status as a single-sector economy thus raises the spectre of future regional ruination.

Martin and Sunley (2015:10) argue that ‘local and regional economies are complex, multilayered systems, both connected to and in part also constitutive of their (competitive) environments, and that to understand fully their evolutionary development over time requires analysis of their multi-scalar and interdependent character’.

Entrepreneurs and labour operate in complex, multiple environments (e.g. social, cultural, technological, institutional, industrial), and these environments are interdependent and marked by reciprocal causality (Martin and Sunley 2015). Neither is any one sector self-contained and there is interaction between sectors as well as within sectors. While this point is obvious, it is important to remember since most empirical studies, and this is certainly the case in tourism studies, tend to be reduced to single-sector examinations. An evolutionary perspective opens up for broader conceptualizations, which may be incorporated into empirical studies. For example, the concept of co-evolution is utilized in EEG studies and shows that new paths may emerge endogenously and grow independently of the dominant path (or paths) while still interacting with those paths due to the complex environment at the regional level. Co-evolution within the region or between sectors thus negotiates the tension between the interdependent environments and the individual agencies.

The terminology of generalized Darwinism is the most obvious marker of EEG studies. Generalized Darwinism includes the concepts of novelty and continuity, variety, selection and retention. It is promulgated as a universal, multi-level approach to studies in social and economic evolution (Hodgson and Knudsen 2010). In EEG it is the widely used terminology for understanding how knowledge is constantly produced and reproduced in a given region. Some scholars argue that institutions are an important part of a generalized Darwinian framework of economic evolution (Essletzbichler 2009; Hodgson and Knudsen 2010), while others argue that the evolutionary project in economic geography cannot supplant institutional geography (MacKinnon *et al.* 2009). An important distinction in EEG (in comparison with other regional development frameworks, e.g. innovation systems and agglomeration economies) is that regions are not seen as units of selection, but rather as selection environments upon which evolutionary processes operate (Boschma and Martin 2010b). An important focus in generalized Darwinism is the desire for variety, in contrast to diversification per se, as a driver of regional innovation and growth. The distinction between variety and diversification centres on the idea that it is related variety, which is similar enough to other things going on

in the region that it is complementary without being in direct competition. This would lead to a situation which is optimal for regional development. This idea is readily applicable at the destination level since tourism is a sector made up of a number of related industries.

### **Destination evolution**

Since the emergence of interest in studying tourism as an activity that creates and develops productive spaces, a range of significant studies on destination evolution has appeared (Saarinen 2004; see also Table 1.1). Pioneer approaches such as those of Gilbert (1939) were followed by further endeavours through the 1950s, which combined empirical and theoretical considerations within the frame of different regional academic traditions of tourism geography (especially the French, German and Anglo-American approaches). These analyses mainly focused on the role of tourism demand as the main driver of economic and spatial change (Wolfe 1952; Christaller 1964). Several models (e.g. Plog 1973; Doxey 1975; Miossec 1977; Stansfield 1978; Cohen 1979) revealed that the impacts of tourism are linked to specific stages of destination development. These frameworks also provided the ability to build in acceptance that destinations can experience processes of rejuvenation if they are able to adapt themselves to the changing habits and preferences of the visitors (see Pearce 1989). Parallel to this is a long tradition of empirical research, mainly focused on the analysis of the specific history of each destination. Usually these studies portray destination evolution as a process mainly caused by the growth in the number of tourists and by changes in the provision of services, facilities and infrastructure for tourists (see Brey *et al.* 2007 for a complete review).

Inspired by the aforementioned literature and, especially, the concept of the Product Life Cycle (Vernon 1966; Cox 1967), Butler's TALC model (Butler 1980) appeared as a fundamental framework for analysing the evolution of destinations. The TALC model has been used to study a myriad of destination cases and has also been a source of inspiration for further conceptual work on destination development. For instance, Haywood (2006) has called for an adjustment of approach to how tourism scholars utilize the TALC, by arguing for the necessity to move away from the notion of changed stages or states and instead to focus on the actual processes of change. Others have sought to validate it (see Butler 2006a, 2006b) and to modify and extend it (Hovinen 1981; Haywood 1986; Cooper 1992; Getz 1992; Ioannides 1992; Benedetto and Bojanic 1992; Meyer-Arendt 1993; Agarwal 1997; Baum 1998; Priestley and Mundet 1998; Faulkner 2002; Russell and Faulkner 2004). The TALC has generated the most relevant destination evolution research stream. It is even more relevant than historical studies related to specific destinations (see, for instance, Walton 2000; Cirer 2009; and Battilani and Faure 2011).

Nevertheless, parallel to the adoption of the TALC model as a convenient theoretical framework, other longitudinal models have also been proposed since the 1980s. For example, the French analyst Chadeffaud (1987) built a useful

*Table 1.1* Selected papers on destination evolution with approaches other than Evolutionary Economic Geography.

<i>Authors</i>	<i>Main contribution</i>	<i>Year</i>
Gilbert	Changes and growth of the built-up area in seaside health resorts acting as residential population attractors with a spatial development perspective.	1939
Wolfe	Interest on the processes of change of tourism destinations and its potential effects with special interest in second-home areas.	1952
Christaller	Tourist flows and patterns explaining the spatial distribution of tourist places from a demand perspective.	1964
Plog	Changes in the tourist market are related to subsequent changes in the destinations visited. Destinations decline is predictable and inevitable.	1973
Doxey	Model suggesting that communities pass through a sequence of reactions as the impacts of tourism in a destination become more pronounced.	1975
Miossec	Destination evolution is driven by the continuous adaptation of demand and supply with 5 phases from a pioneering stage to a congestion stage.	1977
Stansfield	Seminal case-study about rejuvenation of tourism destinations. Rejuvenation is possible if destination emphasises its (unique) locational advantages.	1978
Cohen	Discussion of the need to conceive multilinear models of tourism development illustrated by an elaboration of MacCannell's fundamental concepts.	1979
Butler	Seminal model – Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) – starting a long trend of research on the evolution of tourist-area demand. Defines pattern and stages in the tourist area's evolution.	1980
Gormsen	Spatio-temporal model explaining common factors in the development of destinations over increasingly peripheral zones of the world.	1981, 1997
Chadefaud	The 'collective myth' – the mental representations of demand – as the driver of the tourism product's evolution.	1987
Smith	Focus on development from a spatial perspective. Tourism development linked to urbanization process. Comparative spatial evolutionary model for contemporary beach resorts.	1991, 1992
Gill	Uses growth theories to highlight importance of social and political processes in the evolution of resort destinations.	2000
Agarwal	Exploration of the theoretical relationship between Butler's TALC and the restructuring thesis.	2002
Equipe MIT	Distinction between types of spaces created by tourism and types of spaces transformed by tourism and exploration of links between them.	2002, 2005, 2011

(Continued)

Table 1.1 (Continued)

<i>Authors</i>	<i>Main contribution</i>	<i>Year</i>
Papatheodorou	Theoretical model of tourism evolutionary patterns from an economic geography perspective, illustrating the interaction of market and spatial forces in destination evolution and development	2004
Prideaux	Multidimensional model – Resort Development Spectrum – based on the long-term evolution of demand in a destination.	2004
Andriotis	Identification of the principal characteristics determining morphological change of coastal resorts in a predictable sequence of stages.	2006
Agarwal	Relevance of relational spatiality for spatial planning in coastal resort restructuring.	2012
Anton Clavé	Categorization of different types of mature Mediterranean mass coastal destinations according to the (re) development strategies implemented by decision-makers.	2012
Weaver	Paper positioning sustainable mass tourism as the desired outcome for most destinations. It defines three distinctive paths: the market-driven organic, the regulation-driven incremental, and the hybrid induced.	2012
Pavlovich	Critique of the linear models of destination evolution based upon the concept of networks as rhizomic. Change as anti-hierarchical, self-organised and locally inspired.	2013
Clivaz <i>et al.</i>	Development of the concept of ‘touristic capital’ of resorts in order to analyse their specific trajectories over time.	2014

diachronic model to analyse the evolution of destinations/products based on the relationship between the dominant and dominated classes’ mental representations (see Suchet 2015). The spatio-temporal model of Gormsen (1981, 1997) defined stages in temporal development of tourism in seaside resorts according to the following aspects, taking an evolutionary, global scope: availability of specific tourist services; source of capital for development; origin of supplies (local, regional or further afield); effects of tourist traffic; and the environmental stress imposed upon the coastal area. Additionally, Smith (1992) identified coastal-area tourism development as a process of urbanization that could be clearly defined in terms of physical expansion, functional diversification and environmental impacts.

Following in this vein, the new millennium has seen the appearance of several new contributions. For example, Agarwal (2002) framed the analysis of the destination evolution processes within the concept of restructuring, and Gill (2000) examined social and political dynamics in the evolution of a new mountain-resort destination. Building a comprehensive general theory of tourism development, the Equipe MIT (2002, 2005, 2011) in France strongly argued how tourism has the capacity to allow places to emerge with new systems of actors and new social and

urban practices (see also Stock 2003). Parallel to this, Prideaux's (2004) Resort Development Spectrum (RDS) related the evolution of destination resorts to long-term changes in demand, while Papatheodorou (2004) theoretically explored the evolutionary patterns of destinations linking markets and spatial evolution. Additionally, Andriotis (2006) returned to the domain of morphological studies such as those of Meyer-Arendt (1993) and Smith (1992) and defined the morphological transformation of Mediterranean coastal destinations through a number of development stages. Beyond the specific value of each of these separate constructs, their most important contribution was their ability to introduce new perspectives to the issue of the evolution of destinations and to continue the debate about the utility, the limitations and the findings obtained from the well-established TALC model.

More recently, other approaches have appeared, reflecting that the evolution of destinations is highly dependent on enacting human agency. Anton Clavé (2012a) categorized different types of mature Mediterranean mass coastal destinations according to the redevelopment strategies implemented by decision-makers. Clivaz *et al.* (2014) used the concept of *tourist capital of resorts* to discuss how collective agency could generate a metamorphic dynamic able to facilitate the conversion of resorts into urban places. Pavlovich (2014) adopted the Deleuzian concept of networks as *rhizomic*, in the sense that they are anti-hierarchical and change can occur in an unexpected manner in any direction, and thus, through collaboration, network connections are fundamental in destination change. In notable contrast with other previous approaches, these contributions focus the analysis on the evolution of destinations as places instead of analysing changes of tourism in places. Also during this period, Weaver (2012) differentiated between organic, incremental and induced paths in mass tourism, and Agarwal (2012) went back to the restructuring approach. In her 2012 paper she utilizes Healey's (2004) conceptualizations of space and place and explores the role of relational spatiality in destination restructuring.

All of the cited papers were produced with a general evolutionary (but non-dependency) interest and they illustrate how the study of destination development dynamics has been a relevant issue in tourism studies. Nevertheless, much has to be done to synthesize the diversity of concepts used by these authors in order to develop a coherent approach. However, taken together, they indicate the existence of certain key issues other than the evolution of demand, facilities and services that should be discussed when analysing destination evolution. Obviously, these approaches could also be linked to other tourism analysis perspectives, such as resilience (Tyrell and Johnston 2008; Calgaroa *et al.* 2014; Lew 2014), the well-established research on sustainability development (Bramwell and Lane 2012) and tourism geography relational approaches (Pastras and Bramwell 2013), including, in this last case, the aforementioned research on destination regeneration as viewed from a relational perspective (Agarwal 2012).

In contrast with early frameworks focused on the role of demand in destination evolution, the most recent understanding of destination change includes the role of the social, economic and political context in enabling and constraining change processes. Both Haywood (2006) and Butler (2004) state that analysis needs to be