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COASTAL TOURIST RESORTS: HISTORY, DEVELOPMENT AND MODELS

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Abstract

This paper begins with a brief review of the historical development of coastal tourist destinations and the links between their characteristic design and structure, their markets and the means of access for visitors. It notes that early resorts were often developed by the transportation companies bringing visitors to them with a very distinctive purpose-focused morphology that still exists in many older resorts because it is still highly efficient today. It then discusses some of the models which have been created to explain these patterns of development and location, focusing particularly upon the Tourism Area Life Cycle model, the most cited of these frameworks in the literature. This model suggests that the pattern of development of most resorts goes through a series of stages from exploration to *stagnation* followed by a series of possible outcomes. The final stage depends upon management interventions being put into practice in earlier stages. If such interventions are not made by the appropriate agencies it is argued that a resort will fall into *decline* and experience great difficulty in rejuvenating itself and regaining its original or a new market. The paper concludes with a review of some of the applications and suggested modifications of the Tourism Area Life Cycle model, followed by some thoughts on potential future areas of research into resort development.

1. Introduction

The interface between the land and the sea, more commonly known as the seaside, has long held a great fascination for humankind as a location for participation in leisure (recreation and tourism). From Roman times and before, coastal areas have been used as sites for relaxation and pleasure, with classical towns such as Herculaneum representing early models of coastal resort development. This pattern of usage has continued unabated to the present day and coastal tourism resort development remains a major economic and social focus for many countries. In the case of some less developed countries tourism, primarily in the form of beach tourism, may be the major driver of their economies and their coastlines may resemble a series of tourist nodes dependent on air and cruise ship arrivals. This pattern of tourist-driven urban

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development displays many common features regardless of global location and has resulted in the development of a number of academic models which conceptualise the nature of the development process and pattern. This paper begins with a brief review of the history of coastal resort settlements, before discussing in some detail the key models which illustrate and explain this process and pattern. The paper concludes with a short discussion of the likely future direction of development of such places and their locational characteristics.

2. Historical development of coastal resorts

In the first instance many coastal destinations visited for tourist purposes were existing communities and at least part of their appeal as destinations was a combination of natural features (beaches, clean water) and attractive social and cultural heritage in the form of the communities themselves. In the early years of visitation tourists would make use of existing local facilities, particularly for accommodation and food and beverages and modification of the communities would be minor, thus allowing them to retain their inherent appeal while the numbers of visitors remained small in scale. Inevitably, however, if places were truly attractive and welcoming, this would become known to an increasing number of potential visitors and local facilities would eventually and inevitably become inadequate for the numbers then appearing.

As well, and of crucial importance in the context of northern European resorts, particularly those in the United Kingdom, the argument that taking (drinking) and bathing in salt water was a recipe for improving one's health was popularised by medical professionals (and charlatans) in some communities. Coastal resorts such as Brighton in England became in effect, for a while, coastal spas, mimicking the nature of spa development elsewhere in Europe. This involved the provision of medical or pseudo-medical facilities, bathing facilities, large well equipped hotels and often extensive pedestrian facilities such as gardens and promenades, along with associated entertainment opportunities, reminiscent of the type of development found at places like Bath in England and Bad Gastein, Karlovy and other locations in continental Europe. Thus the first purpose built, or at least purpose modified resorts catered to an affluent and somewhat mature segment of societies, as these were the only people able to spend the time and money to visit such locations and to partake of the opportunities and facilities offered there. These patrons arrived first by stage coach or sailing vessel, and later by steam boat. Numbers remained small because of cost constraints in particular and patronage by distinguished individuals such as members of royal families and titled aristocracy was important for continued visitation and development. The resorts which developed in such a way, for example Brighton, Deauville, Nice, Cannes, and Monte Carlo, experienced regular seasonal patterns of visitation, driven not only by climatic factors but also by social fashion, and thus become part of the high society's calendar. Gambling often was a major attraction as facilities were developed, a precursor of the Atlantic City model of coastal resort development of the 1980s.

Whether this pattern could have continued to develop in the late 19th Century is difficult to say because of the drastic innovations in technology and subsequent changes in social and cultural mores brought about by the Industrial Revolution and in particular, steam power and the railway. While steam power could simply have provided a more comfortable and faster method of transport for existing visitors to coastal resorts, in fact of course, it provided the means for the

movement of extremely large numbers of people, the *mass* as they are known today. Thomas Cooke's and others' (Walton, 2010) innovations in using the railway to open up travel to a very large segment of the population in Britain and later throughout Europe meant that there was a massive potential market for resorts and other areas catering to leisure needs. The railway companies appreciated and developed this market extensively, providing not only the transportation network necessary to move people from the rapidly growing urban conurbations of the mid-19th century to the coast and other areas, but becoming active promoters and developers of the resort communities themselves (Gilbert, 1939). They became involved in hotel development, other forms of infrastructure, the development of recreation attractions such as piers and gardens and were enthusiastic and effective marketers (Hart, 1966) not only in Europe but throughout North America and elsewhere.

The effect of the rapid arrival of large numbers of visitors accompanied by extensive and major development of facilities saw the existing resorts changed radically (Gilbert, 1939). The new mass visitors were characterised by immobility once they arrived at their destinations, and possessed relatively low incomes compared to the previous type of visitors. Their tastes in terms of desired attractions and facilities were markedly different also, related to the fact that they came for shorter periods (one to two weeks instead of perhaps one to two months, and later in many cases for one day only) and in many cases brought children with them. In some locations they would originate from specific towns for one or two weeks, with some towns virtually closing down for their one or two week holiday periods that were given to workers as a result of changes in legislation improving the lot of the labour forces in many industrial countries.

Thus the first major revolution in change that overtook resorts was the movement from class to mass, or the democratisation of leisure and tourism, driven primarily by steam powered technological innovations in transport.

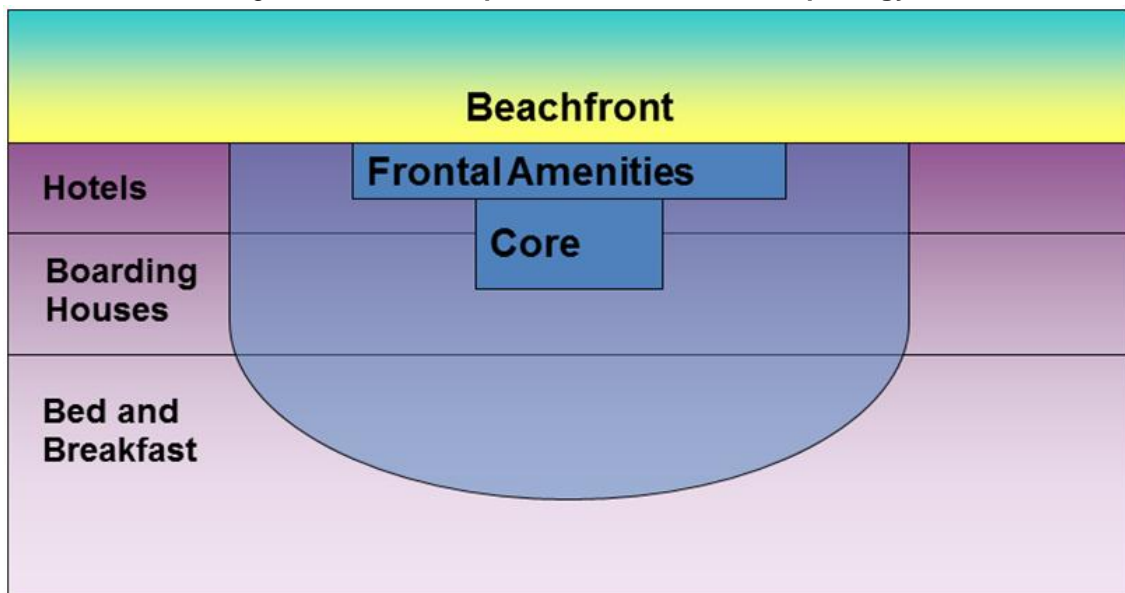
3. Coastal resort morphology

As mentioned previously, resorts began to take on a common appearance, which reflected the types of visitor and their needs. As the type of visitor changed, so too did the design and morphology of these resorts to better and more efficiently meet the different preferences and needs of their customers. Thus the resort morphology developed to reflect the basic goals of tourist destinations which began to emerge as tourism grew and became appreciated as a major economic force. These can be summarised as first, the desire to maximise expenditure by visitors while in the destination, and then as tourism developed, to maximise the potential employment that could be generated, to disperse the benefits from tourism within the destination community and to minimise the spatial spread of negative impacts such as congestion and disturbance. This resulted in efforts to concentrate use and attractions to minimise infrastructure provision and to maximise the 'season' of visitation by providing additional created facilities such as amusements.

Resorts had developed a distinctive morphology from their outset, caused mainly by the fact that unlike most urban settlements, they could only develop through 180 degrees because they were adjoining the sea. This meant that apart from any other reason, their physical

manifestation was almost unique and over time became more formalised and stylised. From the beginning the beach or shoreline was the primary focus, and development remained focused on the land/water interface which remained the most important element of the resort. This importance and pre-eminence is illustrated clearly in the first conceptual model of resort morphology, that developed by Barrett (1958). His study of a large number of British resorts gave rise to the distinctive pattern (Figure 1). This reflects above all, the price gradient of land which exists in resorts, with the maximum value of land being that adjoining the beach. This is reflected in the price of buildings and hence accommodation units, which decreases as distance from the beach increases, and which is at its highest for property on the promenade or beach road. It is also the reason why rooms which overlook a beach generally rent for more than those looking inland, i.e. the premium for *sea view* accommodations. Thus hotels on the beach front give way to guesthouses and these in turn to bed and breakfast enterprises, with rental costs falling as one moves through these categories and away from the beach.

Figure 1. First conceptual model of resort morphology



Source: Barratt (1958) in Pigram/Saleh (1977).

Barrett's model also implies that the centre of the beach strip in a resort represents the *peak value intersection* as that area most commonly contains the majority of what he describes as the *frontal amenities*. This means that land values also tend to *decline* laterally along the beach the further a site is from the centre of the beach strip and these amenities. Barrett's model, although developed on the basis of British holiday resorts, is compatible with resort development in other parts of the world. Manley and Bondi Beach in Australia follow this pattern, as does Nusa Dua in Bali and many of the resorts along the US seaboard, particularly Atlantic City and Wildwood in New Jersey, Myrtle Beach in South Carolina, and in their initial years, Miami and also the coastal communities south of Los Angeles. The model still has relevance today and reflects the overwhelming importance of the beach to coastal holiday resorts.

Following Barrett's conceptualisation of resort morphology is the work of Stansfield (1971) and Stansfield and Rickart (1970). Based on studies of the lay-out of English resorts such as Brighton and Margate, and American resorts such as Atlantic City, Cape May and Wildwood, Stansfield and Rickart coined the phrase *Recreational Business District* to describe the concentration of frontal amenities in Barrett's model. They argued that tourist resorts developed a unique pattern of development particularly including the retail element of their economy. A tourist town needs a different set of economic and retail services to a conventional urban centre, with the emphasis on the supply of goods and services which people on holiday need rather than the standard set of goods and services found in more conventional communities. This unique pattern of demand and supply came about initially because tourists arriving by train to these centres were limited in mobility when they arrived and constrained in their baggage to what they could physically carry. Thus additional items were often needed for rent or purchase when on holiday, specifically related to the activities they would be undertaking while on holiday. Thus the conventional *Central Business District* of most urban centres was replaced in resorts by the *Recreational Business District*, reflecting their different focus.

By the late 19th century the railway station had become the key access point for most visitors in the rapid development phase of a resort, particularly those resorts which experienced heavy day visitor use. The station was also important in terms of the location of other facilities and infrastructure. Many railway companies tried to locate their stations in resorts as close as possible to the *Peak Value Intersection (PVI)*, which is the point at which the pedestrian access from the railway station reached the beach. In some cases the station had to be located away from the beach because of pre-existing developments and the pedestrian route from the station to the beach became the major thoroughfare into and through the *Recreational Business District*. Such a route tended to include establishments like food and beverage enterprises, and holiday equipment rental services, often culminating in amusement facilities at the PVI in the frontal amenities.

Stansfield (1971) argued that a resort's morphology became an expression of its image, and that the shorter the visitors' length of stay, the more insistent they would be on staying close to the seafront and the stronger would be the pattern of the *Recreational Business district*. In other words, the shorter the stay and the lower the class of visitors, the more intense would be the development of services for them. Resorts which catered primarily for day visitors (normally arriving by rail) tended to be lower priced and lacking in many of the more prestigious (and expensive) amenities such as gardens, baths and traditional pedestrian parklands and paths. The focus was more heavily on the route to the beach and the use of the beach. This pattern tended to become more dominant through the late nineteenth century as mass visitation increased and each decrease in time-distance from markets resulting from improvements in transportation enabled increasing proportions of lower income segments to visit, albeit for shorter time periods.

Stansfield (1971) goes on to note that form and function of establishments interact in the first few blocks back from sea. The *Recreational Business District* placed an emphasis on *cheap convenience* rather than on quality, and its distinctive pattern of use is shown by the fact that such districts universally remained open until late in the evening and in many places were open on Sundays, which was often the second busiest day of the week in resorts. This is in sharp

contrast to a conventional Central Business District which is normally closed early in the evenings (except for restaurants) and most establishments are closed on Sundays.

One additional feature also characterises the morphology of coastal resorts that developed in the nineteenth century and that is the creation of piers. Stansfield (1971) notes that Atlantic City had six piers, including one triple decker in its heyday and that all of these, as were the vast majority of piers elsewhere, had been built for retail and entertainment purposes rather than as agents of transportation. The piers were extensions of the Recreational Business District and the Frontal Amenities, and were an attempt to maximise benefits from the beach by extending its use into sea. Very few piers had their origins in serving boats, although in a few locations, the Clyde Estuary in Scotland is a noticeable example, piers combined both transportation and retail/amusement functions, with railways often extending along the pier to meet with boats taking visitors to other destinations. In the context of the Clyde estuary, main line railway terminals at resorts such as Gourock, Wemyss Bay, and Largs were on or adjacent to piers from which boats sailed across the estuary to smaller resorts such as Dunoon, Millport and Rothesay, the latter two being on islands. This pattern is maintained to this day with the Gourock to Dunoon service now being a car ferry, while Britain's one remaining seagoing paddle steamer, the *Waverely*, duplicates some of these old routes during the summer season with great popularity.

In a more contemporary setting, Devenport, in Auckland, New Zealand, is a good contemporary example of a modern functioning multi-purpose pier, serving several ferry routes, and also providing holiday equipment rental services, restaurants and retail stores as well as a local radio station studio, with a nineteenth century hotel opposite the land entrance to the pier and a bus service halting at the pier in place of a railway. A similar situation exists at Manley, a coastal suburb of Sydney, Australia (Butler and McDonnell, 2010), where the pier serves the local ferry to downtown Sydney and also contains some amusement and catering facilities. It faces a strip of development that is the recreational business district of Manley that runs across the peninsula to the main beach on the Pacific coast. Manley was envisaged and constructed by an individual who had grown up in Brighton, England, and copied many of the features of the classic English holiday resort in his Australian creation (Butler and McDonnell, 2010).

The work of Barrett and Stansfield in particular represents some of the earliest models that describe the development of coastal tourist destinations. The timing of their appearance in the literature reflects the increasing academic interest in tourism that began in earnest in post Second World War years as international tourism in particular experienced significant growth. The cessation of hostilities, a gradual increase in affluence, a greater propensity and ability to travel and the disappearance of many restrictions to international movement, and the availability of airplanes, many surpluses to military requirements in the time of peace all stimulated the rise in leisure travel. The actions of a number of entrepreneurs such as Reitz and Lunn enabled large numbers of people to take advantage of this situation and travel abroad for their holidays for the first time. The expansion of tourism and as a result, the rapid development of destinations, followed, not always characterised by sensitive planning and construction, and with this rise in popularity came increased attention by researchers. The next section discusses several models which subsequently appeared in the academic literature, in particular the *Tourism Area Life Cycle, which is still in use today.*

4. The life cycle of tourist destinations (TALC)

The original Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) article first appeared in the mainstream academic literature (Butler, 1980) over three decades ago, and it is somewhat surprising that the article is still being cited and the model used in tourism research. Most academic models are soon relegated to at best a passing reference in current subsequent works and the reason for the longevity of the TALC is not immediately obvious. It proposed a common pattern of the development of tourist resorts, which it argued was common to many resorts irrespective of their location throughout the world. This was, clearly, a bold claim to make but such generalised models had begun to appear with increasing frequency in the tourism literature from the 1960s onwards.

As this author has noted elsewhere (Butler, 2006a), the TALC was a product of its time, and reflected the literature which existed in that period. Other researchers (for example Miossec 1977), had suggested patterns of tourism development (see Pearce 1986 for a comprehensive review of this literature). In the case of resorts, the work of Christaller (1963) is particularly relevant, as one of the first authors to discuss a general pattern of changes in both the market and the appeal of individual resorts, ending in their transformation and in some cases, a *decline* in attractiveness, at least to the initial visitors. The changes in the tourism market were discussed by Cohen (1972) who suggested that visitors fell into four segments, depending on their travel arrangements and groupings, again with the suggestion that the first visitors to a new destination were in small numbers and more appreciative and less impacting than subsequent large numbers of less discriminating arrivals. This was a theme picked up by Doxey (1975) who argued that residents of tourist destinations also underwent changes in attitudes as tourist numbers increased, generally moving from being enthusiastic supporters of tourism to become annoyed or angry opponents of further tourism development. These sentiments were to some degree also reflected in another highly cited article, that of Plog (1973), who suggested that *destinations carried with them the seeds of their own decline* because of the manner in which they changed as they became more popular with tourists.

Plog's work is important as it is really the first such work which brought together both supply and demand in that he suggested not only that destinations would change as tourism increased but as they changed that the characteristics of the tourists would also change, from being a small number of jetsetters (*allocentrics* in his article) through peak numbers of *midcentrics* and finally the market would shrink again to a small number of *psychocentrics*. His characterisation of the dynamic tourist market may not be overly sophisticated but his model gained considerable visibility and is still cited. His argument that ultimately all resorts would *decline* in both appeal and market share was in line with the noticeably anti-tourism sentiment which was becoming present at that time in academic writing, particularly in the case of papers by sociologists and anthropologists. Stansfield (1972) as noted, had commented on the different forms of resorts that developed in response to changing markets, particularly the appearance of the mass tourism market, but without the rather moralising and critical attitudes of writers at that time. Wolfe (1966) also discussed how second home communities in particular changed over time as numbers increased, but did not share the negative conclusions with respect to declining markets. By contemporary standards of research in tourism these references are subject to criticism for not being based on empirical research to any great degree, and few, including the TALC article would survive the current refereeing process of academic journals. However, all of

these papers displayed innovative ideas and made what have proved to be significant contributions to the development of tourism theory.

The TALC model likewise reflects the nature of tourism in the 1970s, which saw the rapid expansion in numbers of destinations following the introduction of jet aircraft, and increasing ability of people to travel. Travel abroad was becoming available to many, and mass tourism in its modern form was well established. The fundamental changes which were occurring in tourism generally were increasingly being reflected in tourist resorts, particularly those which had been established a century or so earlier, based first on limited elite markets and then on the masses arriving by the railways. It could well be argued that tourism changed more in the last quarter of the 20th century than at almost any other comparable time period. Tourism had finally overcome the negative effects of two world wars, the Great Depression and the Oil Crisis of the 1970s in earlier parts of the century which had delayed or prevented expansion. One might have expected that models which appeared at the beginning of this era of great change would have rapidly become irrelevant. Somewhat surprisingly, the TALC model has continued to be used to describe and understand the process of the development of tourist destinations in a wide variety of settings, most recently in the context of China (Liu and Chang, 2014).

5. Development of the TALC model

More detailed discussion of the TALC model, including its origins, can be found elsewhere (Butler 1990, 1997, 1998, 2000, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c, 2009a and 2009b) and will be summarised comparatively briefly here. A relatively recent review of the application of the TALC by other researchers is found in Legiewski (2006), and thus much of that literature is referenced but not cited in detail here. The thought behind the TALC (Butler, 2006a) was that resorts are essentially products; they represent phenomena that have been developed and modified over time to appeal to their specific markets (tourists) in a similar way to the production of many other items. It appeared reasonable therefore to assume that resorts would follow a generally similar pattern of development to that of many other products, and in line with the business literature to have a "life cycle" (Catry and Chevalier, 1974). This cycle would represent the acceptance and perhaps ultimately the rejection of the product, revealing how the market first desired the product and then eventually found it outmoded and unattractive (Avlonitis, 1990). Over time the life cycle model has fallen out of favour in the business literature (Dhalla and Yuspeh, 1976; and Tellis and Crawford, 1981), thus perhaps ironically proving itself, but the concept remains a simplistic representation of the appeal of a product, and would appear to still have relevance.

Tourism and tourist resorts are different to other products in number of ways, including the fact that what are sold at destinations are intangible experiences rather than hard products, and these cannot be stored for another day. If a hotel bed is not sold on a particular day, that *bednight* is lost and cannot be resold later. As well, the experiences purchased by tourists are personal to each one of them and vary accordingly in many respects. Thus while selling a holiday experience a destination is, in effect, selling itself in a myriad of ways. One other major difference to the manufacturing of products is that of control. Tangible products are manufactured by companies which exert control over the product design, production and marketing of their product, whereas most tourism resorts lack a single controlling force and often display inability to co-ordinate key elements such as image, offerings and rate, scale and

nature of development. The frequently large number of enterprises present which almost inevitably differ in size, ambition and focus makes over-riding single control and direction of development extremely rare, limited normally to single owner resorts such as the Disney theme parks. In such cases, one corporate owner putting forth a consistent theme and image with the ability to make any necessary modifications and innovations without lengthy planning or public participation exercises have a great advantage over most in tourist resorts, where the multiple elements may have no common direction or goal.

Reflecting the fact that at the time of its creation many tourist destinations were growing and changing, it was perhaps not surprising that the original TALC model also drew on the concept of *evolution* in the biological sense in a very simplistic way. This has been criticised by Ravenscroft and Hadjihambi (2006) from the conceptually correct viewpoint that resorts, while dynamic, are not living phenomena and therefore not capable of evolution in the strict Darwinian sense. In defence, I would argue that the term *evolution* in the context of the TALC was following a fairly common pattern of use of that term, which is to refer to a process of apparently uncontrolled change in a generally consistent direction. Resorts are not biological phenomena but they are dynamic, although the time scale over which they operate is far less than required to undergo the natural evolutionary process of a species. However, their development process can be described as evolutionary in that it is generally gradual, albeit with occasional shocks to its system (representing the effects of technological innovations or entrepreneurial activity for example), and generally reflects adjustments to ensure survival in a competitive environment (Ritchie and Crouch, 2003). It is reasonable to accept the conclusions of Ravenscroft and Hadjihambi (2006), namely that changes in tourist destinations “are best viewed from an evolutionary perspective in which the external environment is understood in relation to Darwinian selection, while changes to the built environment are mediated according to Larmarckian inherited traits” (Ravenscroft and Hadjihambi, 2006: 163).

Taking this line of thought further, most evolutionary developments are improvements to enable the host to better survive and compete in its environment. In many cases without evolution, the host would become extinct. In the context of resorts, this analogy is very relevant. A resort which does not evolve is likely to be overtaken in the market by competitors who offer updated and more modern attractions and variations on themes. A few resorts are able to maintain their market by appearing to be unchanging and thus offer nostalgic visions of past times, although in reality few have not undergone considerable internal change and approaches to marketing, even if their external appearance is *traditional* or *old-fashioned*. Some of the exclusive small resorts in the South of France or in the Alps maintain this image of *old world charm* offering historic facades in front of exclusive modern facilities with high levels of comfort that are far from unchanged, although the service offered may be at a historic classical level (normally at high cost).

The basic argument presented in the original article, represented by the subtitle was *Implications for Management of Resources* was that adjustment and modification of all resorts were necessary for them to maintain their appeal and market share (Butler, 1980). The implication was that resorts would be likely to face *decline* (however measured) if appropriate intervention to manage their resources (in the widest sense of the word) did not take place. Such interventions would have to come as a result of the deliberate actions of parties in charge of the planning and development of the resort, and clearly not from biological evolutionary

forces. The expectation would be that without appropriate and necessary interventions, then a *decline* in the appeal of the destination and likely *decline* in market share was probably inevitable.

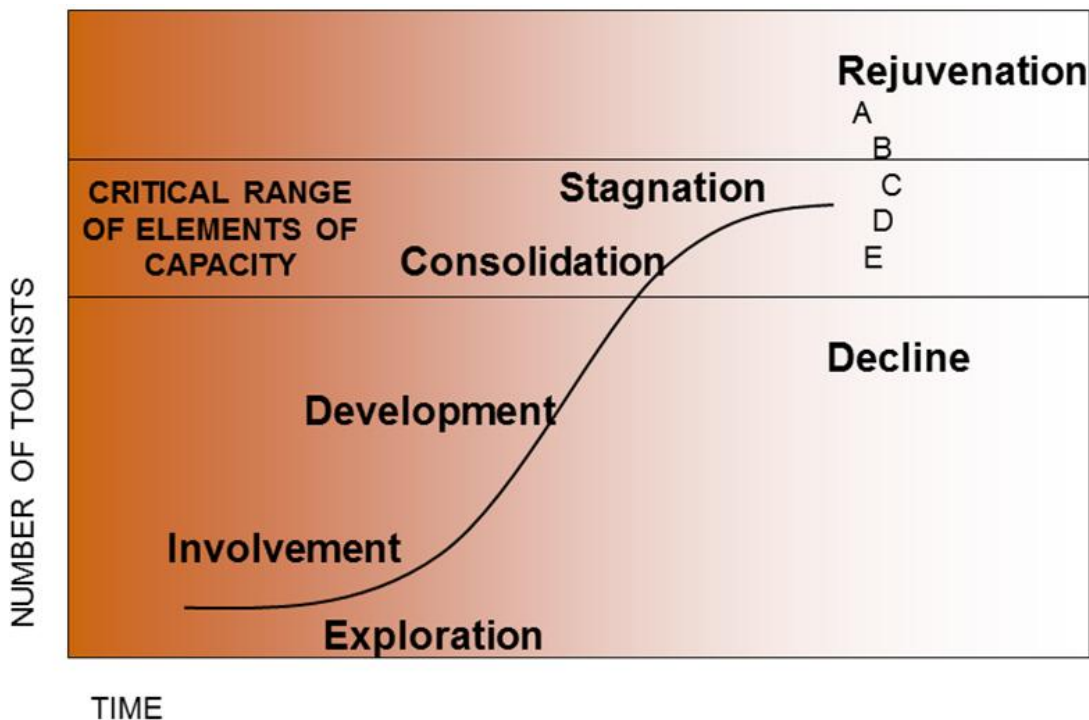
What became a focus on the *Cycle of Evolution* appears to have distracted readers' attention from the argument about the need for intervention by a resort to ensure its survival. The figure that accompanied the original article was developed from earlier research on the process of destination location and development (Brougham and Butler, 1972). The argument in that research was that new tourism development would not take place in a declining resort but most likely would be located in proximal areas that shared the natural attractions of the original resort and where land would be cheaper and not marred by aging earlier development. Potential developers would locate in sites with lower costs, untouched resources and greater opportunities for expansion. This pattern can be seen at a larger scale in the development of the *Costas* of Spain, beginning in the north, the closest to northern markets, with the Costa Brava and extending over time down the Spanish coast to the southernmost, the Costa del Sol. At the scale of the Mediterranean, initial development on the French Riviera spread to Italy, then to Spain, then on to the Adriatic Coast and to Greece, followed most recently by Turkey, while a similar process occurred in North Africa beginning with Morocco and until current unrest, through Algeria, Tunisia and Libya. Malta and Cyprus were early resort locations based on the British market because of their role as British military bases, and this linkage has continued following independence. The key issue for those investigating such patterns would be to identify when the peak had been reached. This aspect of the potential predictability of the model was not discussed at the time of its first publication, and was only explored some time later by other researchers (Manente and Pechlaner, 2006; Berry, 2006).

The intended focus of the model was to illustrate the dynamic nature of destinations and suggest a generalised process of development which might end in *decline* without appropriate interventions of planning, management and development of the resort and its resources. As shown in (Figure 2), the model suggested that there were identifiable stages of development through which resorts passed. These were exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, *stagnation*, and then a range of possibilities from rejuvenation to *decline*. The first stage, *exploration* was when the destination is first visited by tourists. These would be few in number, *discoverers* of the place, using the existing local facilities and visiting because of the inherent attractions, and there would be little need for investment in facilities as the *naturalness* or *authenticity* of the location would be part of its appeal. There would be no expectation of tourists arriving every year or at the same time of year. This stage would be followed by *involvement*, during which there would be a noticeable increase in visitor numbers, sufficient to justify mostly local investment in additional or enlarged and improved facilities. A tourist season would begin to appear on a regular basis and marketing of the destination would begin to attract tourists. Some impacts or changes would be apparent and local authorities would become involved in the provision and management of infrastructure needed for tourism.

The *development* stage would see substantial visitor numbers as the destination became better known and there would be changes in the visitor profile, partly because the destination and its services and facilities would be changing. Major national chains would become involved in providing facilities and services, and resources will be under pressure and might start to be degraded. The first signs of potential conflicts between tourists and their needs and local

residents might emerge and greater public involvement for policy creation and resource protection will probably be needed. This stage would see the peak rate of increase in visitor numbers. The *consolidation* stage would see visitor numbers continue to increase but at a reduced rate. The resort would be firmly established and well known and be attracting more conservative visitors, with many services now provided by large national and international companies. Management of the resort and its resources is critical to the future direction of development. *Stagnation* sees visitor numbers peak and possibly stop increasing. The visitors are attracted by familiarity of facilities and services and are relatively unadventurous. By this stage it has become necessary to promote the destination and create new products in order to maintain visitor numbers.

Figure 2. Hypothetical evolution of a tourist area (Butler 1980)



Source: Butler (1980).

Sustained operation may allow original resources to be conserved for the long term if they have a degree of protection. It will be clear that the rapid growth of the past is unlikely to continue. What follows depends very much on what policies and interventions have been put into operation. The resort may continue to operate at the current or a slightly lower level of visitation if the actions taken have been appropriate. If unlimited and uncontrolled growth has taken place, then quality of experience for both tourists and locals may fall as a result of overdevelopment and negative impacts on the environment and resources of the resort. If that occurs, the resort will enter the *decline* stage, characterised by falling visitor numbers, a shift down market in visitor characteristics, and an increasing reliance on promotion to attract sufficient visitors to return a profit on investments. Many facilities and services will close or return to local ownership and a significant proportion of establishments may be available for sale, with a high rate of turnover reflecting declining business. The resort may seek to

rejuvenate itself through a change in products and thus in market segments, or may accept *decline* and ultimately even move out of tourism. *Rejuvenation* is not an automatic or inevitable stage, some resorts may fail to do this successfully, some may not attempt this and a very few may not need to do so. It would be characterised by a change in emphasis and image of the destination, possibly reflecting entrepreneurial activity and a successful reimagining of the resort.

A key influence on the suggested pattern of development was the concept of carrying capacity or the limits of use a resort could accept without incurring irreversible change occurring (Figure 2) meaning that if the carrying capacity of a resort was exceeded, then its appeal would most likely *decline*, which would make it less competitive, and this reduced appeal would be mirrored by *declines* in visitation, investment, and development. Management interventions were seen as key to preventing the various carrying capacities (economic, social-cultural and environmental) were exceeded, or alternatively, were increased to meet growing pressures.

The resources on which destinations depend for their success in the tourist market vary widely. As the visitor markets grew, their demands and expectations changed. In becoming more sophisticated they grew more demanding with respect to quality of infrastructure and facilities, in terms of a greater range of attractions, and in terms of less costly but more convenient access from their origins. Resorts failing to make such changes very quickly fell out of favour and consumers were attracted to new resorts, many being created in locations previously undeveloped for tourism but possessing the appropriate natural amenities and easy access. Over recent decades resorts have been developed in which technology has been substituted for many of these attributes, for example in the cases of Dubai, Las Vegas and Macao, as well as the Disney theme parks. In these new forms of resorts, rides and *artificial* experiences (e.g. pseudo movie sets, or artificial ski slopes) and massive luxurious hotels, some imitating real world locations, e.g. Venetian, Luxor, New York, substitute for traditional beaches or cultural heritage.

6. Applications and critiques of the TALC

As the TALC model was conceived in the context of resorts that had their origins a century or more before, with access being by railway or earlier forms of transport and were equipped with relatively few facilities and attractions, it is not unreasonable to question its continued relevance (Prideaux, 2000). It would not be surprising if modern resorts did not follow precisely the TALC process of development and potential *decline*. One aspect of the original model that could be expected to be different in modern resorts is the rate of change and the time which a resort would take to pass through its life cycle. No fixed time scale was suggested and it was felt that some resorts might take a century or more to pass through their cycles but with greater competition appearing, it is likely that destinations may pass through their cycles in a few decades. Markets now have a vast range of choice from destinations throughout the world, quite often at very low travel cost, and repeat visitation caused by transportation limitations has diminished and with it, resort customer loyalty.

The TALC model has attracted considerable use and application by other researchers and inevitably criticism and modification. Since Lagiewski's (2006) review, the TALC has received further attention (see for example Dodds and McElroy, 2008; Cole, 2009; Kompula et al., 2010;

Pechlaner et al., 2010) which would suggest that it still has relevance. Kapczynski and Szromak (2008) applied the model to Polish spas and found that they have followed the basic TALC model over the last half century, the major upheavals in Poland during this period notwithstanding, and survived a *decline* phase to enter a new expansion phase recently. In general it is only when *decline*, or initially *stagnation* occurs that attention is given to proactive rather than reactive interventions.

More recently the TALC model has been used in different contexts to its original focus on resorts. Xie and Lane (2006) in their paper on Aboriginal Arts Performance in Tourism, substituted a 'cycle of authenticity' based on the TALC, and Putra and Hitchcock (2006) applied the model in reviewing redevelopment and the life cycle following the Bali bombing of 2002. Kompulla et al. (2010) applied the TALC to examine a specific tourism offering, Christmas in Lapland, a product tied to the image of its location. In a more traditional setting, an article in *Surf Economics* (Nelson, 2008) examined the life cycle of surfing sites. The model has also been used in the context of the life cycle of wine tourism by Tomljenović and Getz (2009), in terms of the development of wine tourism regions in Croatia, and Sundt (2006) examined hotels in Switzerland from a life cycle perspective. Whitfield (2008) applied the model to patterns of conference tourism in the UK and noted the potential use of refurbishment of facilities as triggers for rejuvenation.

Other researchers have used different approaches and alternative models. Toh *et al.* (2001) for example used a travel balance approach in their study of the tourism life cycle of Singapore, and Cole (2009), used logistic modelling to explore whether the tourism industry was 'chaotic', concluding that quite different dynamics were exhibited compared to traditional growth models. The application of sophisticated statistical modelling techniques has also been followed by Chinese researchers (see for example Xu, 2001; Xie, 1995; Yi, 2001), along with more conventional applications of the model (Bao 1994 and 1998) in a variety of settings, both physical and cultural.

The TALC has also been used in the context of gambling by Moss et al. (2003) who applied the model to casino winnings, concluding that "The model supports the position that casinos conform to Butler's S-shaped product life cycle for resorts, suggesting that the rapid increases in early-period gaming revenues will not continue without intervention to rejuvenate the industry" (Moss et al., 2003: 393). In the context of gambling, the continued success and subsequent lack of *decline* of Las Vegas suggests at least one kind of resort to which the cycle does not appear to apply. However, Las Vegas, like the other *technological* resorts mentioned earlier, relies heavily on continued renovation and replacement of, and additions to its attractions in order to maintain its appeal. These can be seen to be appropriate interventions by major developers with support from local and state administrations. It may well be that continued high levels of capital investment can enable a resort to delay any *decline* and prolong its life cycle, if not indefinitely, then at least for many decades beyond what might have been expected to be its zenith.

It was almost inevitable that there would be reviews of the model and although the first application of the model (Hovinen, 1981) appeared only a year after the original article, criticism followed relatively quickly (Wall, 1982; Hayward, 1986). Wall's comments were mostly conceptual relating to the application of carrying capacity to the development cycle, and

reflected the *decline* in interest in the topic of carrying capacity in a tourist context over the past few decades (Butler, 2010). Hayward's valid criticisms related measurement issues and the identification of the stages outlined in the model. In a subsequent review of the model pointed out that many of these issues had not been resolved completely also noted that the "within the industry, however, the TALC concept is virtually ignored" (Hayward, 2006: 29). This led him to suggest that the TALC "may need to be reconceptualised. Operational ambiguity must be overcome" (Hayward, 2006: 30). He did agree that tourism is a living system and that there is a necessity to identify constraints to change, to progress and to possible actions in resorts. Hayward also commented on the possible relevance of the application of chaos theory to destination development, a subject discussed below.

Few researchers have argued for the abandonment or rejection of the TALC as strongly as the late Neil Leiper (2004) who stated that the model "should now be assigned to the archives of history – as a former theory, now discredited, shown to be false" (Neil Leiper, 2004: 135). However, other researchers have debated the validity of the model and its perceived failings (Choy, 1992; Bianchi, 1994; Prideaux, 2000; McKercher, 2006). Aguiló et al. (2005) argued that the model was essentially purely theoretical, despite Getz (1992) having supported its relevance in tourism planning. Prosser (1995) listed several criticisms, including doubts about there being a single model of resort development, limitations of the capacity issues and the life cycle model itself, a lack of empirical evidence and limited practical utility. Despite these comments, he concluded (1995) "The extensive criticism levelled at the resort life cycle concept shows no sign of dissuading researchers from adopting the model as a framework for their research (...) the original model survives largely intact and according to some, offers the prospect of further development" (Prosser, 1995: 9). Considering the range of resorts, settings and environments it is to be expected that any model could be irrelevant or inaccurate in specific cases. The fact that the model is still be used by researchers to examine resort development suggests that it still has validity.

One of the more pertinent critical comments is from Papatheodorou (2004) who noted the relative absence in the literature of the relationship between the development process and competition. He pointed out that competition exists between resorts at one level, and between individual enterprises at another level, and the final demand pattern is a result of the combination of these elements of competition with consumer tastes and constraints. He argues that "the demand management policies of the TALC should be complemented by an integrated, supply-driven planning framework" (Papatheodorou, 2006: 81). In a somewhat similar vein, Coles (2006) argued for the TALC to be reviewed in the context of related retailing and marketing models. In that context he noted that many of the criticisms of the generic business Life Cycle model apply to the TALC, in particular the question of products being living things, that stages are not definable and placing a product at a specific location on the curve at a particular time is not feasible (Papatheodorou, 2006: 56). In addition Cole notes that price is not considered explicitly in the model, nor are individual actions (e.g. of entrepreneurs) and or the multiple forms of tourism often present in what are mainly mass tourism destinations. In response one might note that competition is implied within the TALC in the sense that it postulates that one of the main reasons why resorts *decline* is because they have ceased to be attractive to customers, i.e. uncompetitive, sometimes at both the local (regional) and global scales. The issue of price is also implicit, if not in the original model, then in the discussion in

later papers about the tendency of destinations to resort to lowering prices in order to retain a market and remain competitive if and when they are experiencing a *decline* in visitor numbers.

The criticism concerning the non-consideration of entrepreneurship and the role of key individuals in resort development has been addressed in subsequent contributions to the literature, especially by Russell (Russell, 2006b; Russell and Faulkner, 1999; Butler and Russell, 2010). The need to pay more attention to the importance of the local political context was highlighted by Gale and Botteril (2005). This aspect of the TALC has also been addressed by Weaver (1988 and 1990) who noted that in certain economies, (plantation societies for example), it may be local-resident ex-patriots initiate development rather than local indigenes as the former have the necessary capital.

Another area worthy of attention is whether it would be appropriate to add additional stages to the model. Agarwal (1994, 1997, 1999 and 2002) has explored this aspect in considerable detail, and it has also been discussed by Priestley and Mundet (1998), Knowles and Curtis (1999) and Smith (2002). Agarwal (2006) has made a case for adding another stage after *stagnation* and before *decline* called *reorientation* that represents what she terms *the series of restructuring efforts that are inaugurated before decline sets in* (Priestley and Mundet, 1998) also discussed the need for additional stages along very similar lines to Agarwal. There is little doubt that many resorts do go through a process, if not a stage, of re-orienting themselves, or attempt to do so, often described in terms of *going up-market* and/or becoming more sustainable. Such actions are presumably in the belief that they would result in market retention or increase, although if true sustainability was achieved it would almost certainly appear a continuation of a relatively flat or only very slightly increasing line from *stagnation* over the long term future because of the need to remain within the limits of the resort's carrying capacity. If a re-orientation was unsuccessful in terms of market retention or gaining a new market, then in line with Baum (1998) it may be appropriate to add an additional stage at the *end* of the cycle of *re-invention* a complete change in the nature of a destination's offerings, as for example in the case of Atlantic City (Stansfield, 2006). Here a traditional family summer beach resort was changed into a year round ambling destination. Baum also suggested an alternative final stage, which would be *exit* when a resort decided to abandon tourism.

The idea of re-invention is not entirely new to the TALC as the case of Atlantic City was noted in the original article as an example of rejuvenation. It would be assumed that the destination would then begin a new cycle of development, which may well mirror the previous cycle over time and thus need another reinvention in due course. Where such reinvention is made on the basis of technological attractions, the subsequent new life cycle would probably be relatively short, as in time a competitor would reproduce a similar, larger, more complex, and inevitably, more attractive form. The appearance of ever more bizarre and larger hotels and casinos in Las Vegas support this argument.

7. Potential future directions of resort model research

The TALC essentially focused on the pattern of the development process of resorts. It has functioned well for a considerable time, perhaps because many of the destinations first studied were well established and represented an earlier stage of tourism. It is important to test the

TALC on modern *instant* resorts, with respect to their patterns and rates of investment, physical development and markets. Determining the speed with which resorts move through the cycle and whether different types of resorts operate at different rates would be useful. Di Benedetto and Bojanic (1993) suggested that the faster the speed at which a destination was developed the shorter would be its lifecycle. If true, this idea has significant implications for many modern destinations. Clarification of the stages of the cycle would also be valuable. Berry (2006) was the first to work on the predictive potential of the TALC and in so doing clarified what indicators can be used to identify the stages and which could also help predict imminent movement from one stage to another. The basic supposition of stages has not really been challenged. It would be of interest however to determine whether there are objective empirical indicators of the stage of a resort in its cycle and if this placing was matched by the subjective perceptions of decision makers and operators of services and facilities within that resort. In terms of innovations and interventions, it is the perceptions of decision-makers (stakeholder and politicians in particular) that determine if, when and what actions are taken. In recent years the advent of low cost air carriers, particularly in Europe, has created the potential for rapid almost instant growth of tourism in places not previously exposed to tourism (Papatheodorou, 2002 and 2010) but as yet, the growth patterns of these locations have not been examined. Whether they will follow the traditional life cycle or face a different future with a different pattern of growth, given that their initiating causes were external agencies concerned with the means of access to a destination while not being directly concerned with its development remains to be seen.

In the context of the changing nature of tourism and the issue of resort restructuring, Gale (2007) has noted that a problem with *uni-linear* models such as the TALC is that they do not explicitly address broad external changes such as economic restructuring or cultural changes in society, a similar argument to points raised by Gordon and Goodall (2000).

A major area that has not been dealt with to any extent is the identification of what may be called *triggers*, key agents of change in a resort that affect the transition process from one stage of development to another. Keller (1987) first raised this topic in discussing instability (a considerable time before the application of chaos theory in tourism). He argued that periods of instability, such as political change (Butler and Suntikul, 2010) or economic unrest, appear in resorts which may trigger changes from one stage of development to another. It would obviously be of great value to destinations if it were possible to identify and anticipate situations and events which might act as triggers to such unrest and stage change in the life cycle. At present it is unknown as to whether there exists a common set of triggers, if different triggers are more influential at different stages or whether specific triggers affect destinations of particular types or in specific locations. It would also be advantageous to determine if any or all of such triggers could be controlled and managed in a proactive manner or only reactively. Gale and Botteril (2005) suggested some of these elements and noted that development decisions in resorts reflect the perceptions and choices of those controlling or influencing the future of such places. Haywood (2006) argued that "TALC studies must consider, not simply the existence of choice in reaction to change, but the conditions that both underlie change and enlarge or restrict choice" (Haywood, 2006: 63). Decision-makers can and perhaps should be pro-active than reacting to changes in markets and visitors in order to keep destinations attractive, as called for in the original model (Bramwell and Lane, 2000). Clearly research into the politics of destination development control is necessary if more is to be understood about the life cycle of resorts, an approach long argued for by Hall (1994) in particular.

The vulnerability of destinations to both internal and external *shocks* also warrants more detailed examination. Endogenous influences often reflect local politics and viewpoints (Martin, 2006), an issue that has received attention from tourism researchers for several decades through research on attitudes of local residents towards tourists (Andereck and Vogt, 2000; Ap and Crompton, 1998; Brougham and Butler, 1981; Lannkford and Howard, 1994; Smith, 1978). Exogenous influences (including the introduction of low cost airlines, terrorism, natural disasters and economic recession) also have the potential to create massive impacts upon destinations but have been studied much less. Increased turbulence at the global level has resulted in instability and shocks to systems within resorts, and one response has been the application of chaos theory in tourism and specifically in the context of destinations and the TALC model (McKercher, 1999; Faulkner and Russell, 1997 and 2001). Russell and Faulkner (1999) examined the importance of individuals (chaos-makers) to tourism development and how they changed the fortunes of destinations. This is a topic that needs further examination, both for tourism broadly (Butler and Russell, 2010) and specifically at the destination level, where single individuals can initiate development (Butler and McDonnell, 2010) and also be capable of moving a resort from one stage of its life cycle to another (Butler and Russell, 2010).

Perhaps surprisingly, there has been little criticism of the TALC model for using only one cycle to illustrate the development of a destination (Butler, 2009). In reality there are multiple such life cycles at work in any destination. Some of these undoubtedly will be in their early stages, some at their peak and others perhaps in *decline*. The TALC curve for a destination, therefore, represents the pattern of development based on an aggregation of these multiple cycles. Just as different elements of supply at a resort will be in different stages of development, so too different market segments (demand) of a resort will be at different stages, some growing, and some declining. Zimmermann (1997) suggested there different cycles exist for different forms of tourism and for individual activities and illustrated this with a figure showing patterns of activity popularity or life cycles from 1860 to 2000. Most recently, Li and Chen (2014) have reinterpreted the TALC model based on investment patterns and argued that the *curve* in the model is composed of the aggregation of different investment patterns. How such cycles relate to and influence each other has yet to be determined.

Zimmermann (1997) as discussed the interruption in resort cycles that occurred as a result of war, and similar interruptions might also be anticipated as a result events such as the rapid rise in energy prices in the 1970s, the Gulf and Balkan wars, the recent economic recession, and even, although over a different time scale, climate change (Gossling et al., 2010). Significant rises in energy prices would negatively affect those destinations dependent on long haul travel or that are high in energy consumption (e.g. Dubai). Climate change might be expected to impact on resort cycles in more complex ways, including rises in tourist numbers in some locations from *last chance* tourists, and *declines* in other areas as attractions *decline* in quality or disappear or potential tourists succumb to pressure to *do-right* or *do-good* and decide not to travel at all. In all cases, such effects on the TALC of specific resorts could be significant. Corak (2006) noted the effect of conflict (wars in 1914-19, 1939-45, and 1991-5) on the TALC of resorts in Croatia which caused the cycles to begin over again after each conflict ended, resulting in opportunities for destinations to re-orient themselves and change the nature and rate of development. Although the onset of war is normally disastrous for tourism in areas experiencing hostilities, in other parts of the world, resorts may benefit from reduced competition from the affected areas, while new resorts may become established to serve the

needs of the military and become conventional resorts when conflict is over (Butler and Suntikul, 2012).

Research is needed to integrate the multiple forms of tourism, their respective markets, and development cycles with the cycles of the host resorts. As an example, Atlantic City is in *decline* and near the end of its cycle as a beach resort but has already reached the development stage if not consolidation in its cycle as a gambling destination. A single aggregated curve for that resort can capture neither the detailed dynamics of the individual cycles or their effects on the destination. In earlier times tourists at resorts were more homogeneous, mostly having a common origin and socio-economic characteristics and engaging in a more limited number of activities than is the case now. This made it much easier to anticipate the likely pattern, scale and timing of development, however, as tourism has become more fragmented and resorts more complex and varied in development, the prediction of patterns and rates of change has become far more problematical.

Finally, there have been initiatives to explore the applicability of the TALC model to predict the nature of future change in destinations. Berry (2006) illustrated how this might be done in the context of a part of the Queensland coast in Australia, and Manente and Pechlaner (2006) integrated the model into an *early-warning system* to predict *decline* in destinations. Predictions, however, are of little value unless they are correct and are acted upon. Decision-makers generally are well aware of the potential of *decline* but denial and *business as usual* is frequently a more common reaction than endogenous intervention. It is rare to undertake the depth of research and subsequent attempts to ensure sustainability and a prolonged life cycle that Hawaii has (Sheldon et al., 2005). Even where such research has been undertaken and policies framed accordingly (Cooper, 1992) the effective implementation of relevant policies is rare (Dodds and Butler, 2009).

8. Conclusions

Despite all the changes in tourism and in the world at large that has taken place over the last century alone, coastal resort tourism has remained a major feature of global tourism (Aguiló et al., 2005) and is likely to continue to do so in the future. Whether the TALC model will continue to be relevant to the development of resorts remains to be seen, as it has already had a life span longer than would normally be anticipated. Probably the most important and fundamental future research agenda item in this field should be to explore the forces at work that provoke change in destinations to create knowledge for those who shape the development of resorts and enable them to understand the reasons behind resort development and cycles. While the major forces acting on resorts, such as economic conditions, social and cultural beliefs, and environmental quality are known, the way such forces impact on specific locations and communities, the duration and degree of permanence of their effects, and what can be done to mitigate or control such forces are still relatively unclear. Identifying the likely pattern and process of destination development is useful, but detailed knowledge on how this process might be controlled, maintained and managed would be a considerable step forward and well worthy of continued research effort.

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