

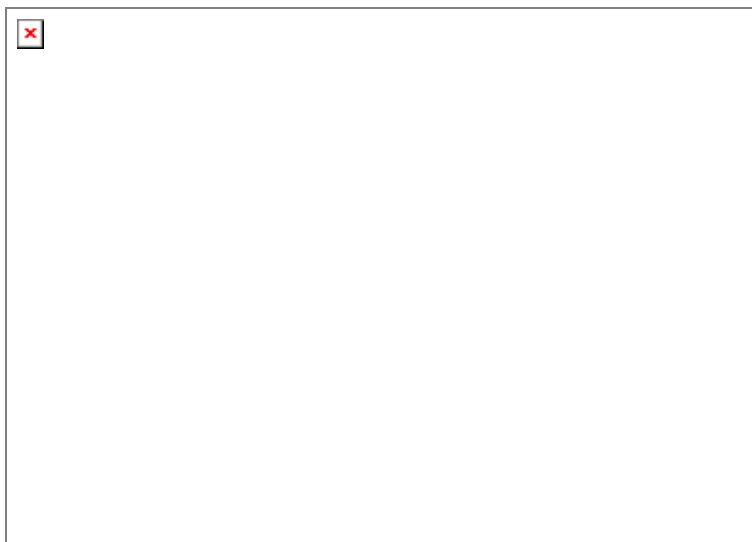


### THE DECLINE AND REJUVENATION OF TOURISM DESTINATIO

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[center][size=4]THE DECLINE AND REJUVENATION OF TOURISM DESTINATION IN ITS LIFE CYCLE[/size] Han Shen

[/center] Abstract: This paper apply Butler' s life cycle model as a framework to analyze tourism dynamics in an evolutionary context, and describe the decline tendency of destinations. On the basis of SWOT analysis, the author recommends hard and soft mechanisms for the rejuvenation of destinations. Introduction Tourism development of a destination is a dynamic process and evolves over time. Many scholars apply the concept of "Life cycle model" to indicate the development of tourism and form the perspective of evolution to explain the whole life-cycle process of the destination. Since the early 60s in 20 century, several models of life cycle of destination have been developed. Christaller proposed the first widespread life cycle model in 1963. Plog (1973) described a life cycle model from the perspective of the psychology of the travelers and he identified the tourists into three types: the allocentric, the midcentric, and the psychocentric. Gee, Makens, and Choy (1989) adapt a four stages model to tourist activity and name them as follows: discovery, initiative and local response, institutionalization, and saturation and alienation. Besides that, several other authors applying the product life cycle (PLC) concept to tourism (Agarwal 1992; di Benedetto and Bojanic 1993; Choy 1992; Cooper and Jackson 1989; Debagge 1990; Getz 1992; Haywood 1991; Ioannides 1992). The most popular and widespread model is the Tourist Area Life Cycle (TALC) Theory developed by R. W. Butler in 1980. In this paper, the author will apply the model of Butler' s TALC to describe and analysis the dynamic process of destinations. On the basis of the analysis of TALC, seven reasons for the decline of destinations are given and then, future strategies to avoid the decline of destinations and achieve rejuvenation are discussed. TALC and the Six-stage of Destination Development Figure 1: Butler' s Hypothetical Evolution of a Tourist Area diagram



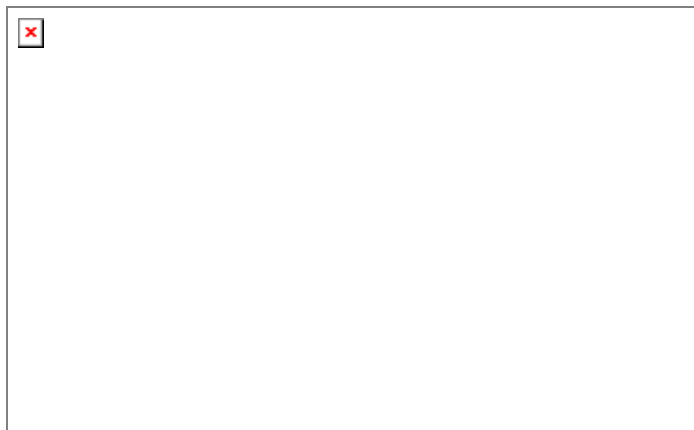
(Source: Butler, R.W. 1980, "The Concept of a Tourism Area Life Cycle of Evolution: Implications for Management of Resources." The Canadian Geographer 24 (1), p. 8.) Butler' s six-stage model describes a

general picture of the life cycle of a destination. Exploration stage is the beginning of the development of the area as a tourist destination. Only small number of allocentrics or explorers visits the area and the tourism infrastructure is little or none. Involvement stage comes with the increasing visitation that attract the local investment in tourism and public investment in infrastructure. The destination and market share come into being with the efforts of advertising and marketing. Development stage is a period at which the outside investment flow into the destination and the local control becomes weak. With the heavy advertising, the number of visitors exceeds the number of residents and the market area is well defined. Human-made attractions replace natural or cultural ones and the original characteristics are fading away. Midcentrics replace explorers and allocentrics, and the majority of the population is accepting the destination. At consolidation stage, the main income of the local economy comes from tourism and the visitation levels continues to increase but at a decreasing rate. Extensive efforts in advertising and marketing are made to overcome the seasonality and develop new markets. The importance of tourism is fully appreciated by the local people. At this stage, the least adventuresome “psychocentrics” are attracted and the growth rate is slowing down. When the peak visitor numbers and the capacity limits are reached, and the area are no longer fashionable, the destination enters into the stagnation period. New visitors are little and the destination relies on repeat visitations and conventions for business. When tourists are drawn away by other destinations, the market share of the destination suffers heavy decreases, the tourism infrastructure run-down and replaced by other non-tourism uses, and the external investment move out of local tourism industry, the destination proceeds to the decline stage. But some dramatic change will probably occur when the new attractions replace original attractions, or previously unexploited new resources are used to renew the image of the destination. In this situation, a rejuvenation stage will occur.

The Reasons for the Decline of Destinations:

1. Competition from Other Destinations Competition faced by the existed destinations is large and severe, not only from domestic but also from abroad; not only from the same type of destination but also from other types of tourism attractions; not only in a traditional competition method but also in other forms of mechanisms. With the development of economy, leisure and tourism have become a big industry and experienced great increase throughout the world. There are more and more destinations emerging in different countries and some traditional destinations are facing the competition both from domestic and from abroad. With the reducing of transportation cost, especially the emergency of low cost airlines, travel abroad is no longer an expensive activity. And the simplification of application for visa also encourages the out-bound tours. Many visitors choose foreign destinations as their holiday destinations and the choice range is much wider than before. The types of destinations are increasing; many new destinations such as theme park, adventure tourist resort, conference centre, and festivals are competing with the traditional destinations (Andriotis, 2001) E-tourism is a new technology and some destinations apply Internet as the marketing tool to promote themselves. And the rapid progress in multi-media and other technologies offer opportunities for the destinations to display the features adequately and increase the attractions greatly. Those old destinations that cannot keep up with the development of technology and marketing mechanism will loss their comparative advantages and suffer decline in a fast moving competition environment.
2. The change of Customer Travel Patterns

Figure 2: Distribution of Selected Tourist Destinations with Respect to Changing Preference According to Life Cycle and Generation Succession:



(Source: Oppermann, Travel Life Cycle, Annals of Tourism Research, Vol. 22, No. 3, pp. 535-552, 1995)

According to Oppermann, the travel pattern varies along two axes: with the age of individual and with the different generations. In the above figure, he classified many destinations according to the changing preferences of individuals and generations. If a destination gain visitation both through the age of the individual and through generation succession, it will be classified into the (+, +) sector. For example, Greece and Turkey are both popular in different generations and in different life course of an individual. As Oppermann indicated, these destinations are likely to experience increasing tourist numbers in the short and medium term. In the (-, -) sector, the destinations have decreasing preference on both axes and they will face decline in visitation. Whilst in the (-, +) sector, for example, Spain, France and Italy are very attractive to younger generation and during the earlier age of the individuals. In the (+, -) sector, the destinations are very attractive through the life course of individual but not to the younger generations. Therefore, the destination managers should make efforts to promote the product among the younger people. Through Oppermann's coordinate system of travel pattern and destination choice, we can find that the life cycle of destination is influenced by the travel pattern of individuals and generations. The marketing target and other planning of a destination have enormous impact on the future development of that destination. For example, those destinations that depend on the older generations as their target market may suffer decline in future because the younger generations will not certainly follow the predecessors' steps. The travel pattern and destination choice are changing through different generations and the life course of the same individual. The travel pattern of the tourists is a dynamic and complex phenomenon that is hard for destination managers to cope with. Therefore, the destination whose marketing strategies ignore or drop behind the travel pattern of the visitors will decline over time.

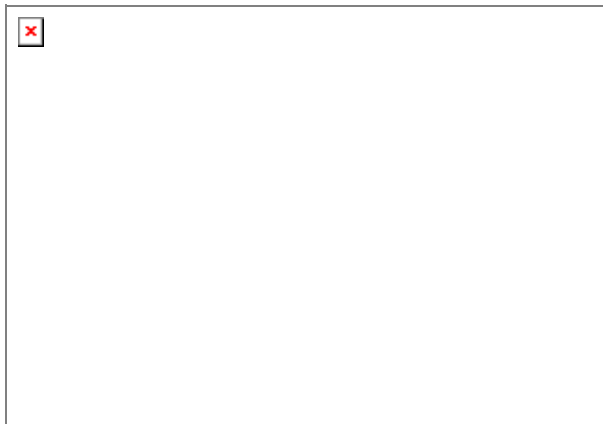
3. Unsustainability of the Destination Resources Some of the destinations are famous for the natural beauty and cultural traditions. But with the development of tourism, many resources are disappearing and replaced by the artificial ones. And in many under-developed countries, pollution and resources destroy are very severe. The unsustainable method of tourism planning and development accelerate the decline of the destination in its life cycle.

4. Marketing Strategies and Promotion Failure The marketing strategies and promotion mechanism are becoming increasing important in a competitive environment. But many managers of destinations ignore or lag behind the ever-changing demands in the tourism market. As Oppermann indicates in his coordinate system, different destinations have various visitor preferences in generation axis and at different life course of individuals. In such a dynamic process, destinations should keep a close look at the marketing and promotion innovation according to the target group's travel pattern and the competitors' strategies (Tse and Elwood, 1990).

5. Quality Control Failure The facility and local social capacity of the destination is designed at the earlier stages of development and during the mature period, when the number of visitor reaches the peak of the capacity and even exceeds the limits, the quality of the product will be out of control and the customer satisfaction will drop down dramatically (Goncalves and Aguas, 1997). The crowded visitors, the noisy and dirty circumstances, and the lagged services will ruin the beauty and attraction of the destinations. Furthermore, in order to extend the market and overcome seasonality, many destinations build up human-made attractions and sometimes, these artificial creations replace the natural or cultural attractions. The originality and uniqueness of the destination is losing during the mature of the destination and the quality of local tourism products is deteriorating during an awkward artificial disintegration process. That will destroy the image and reputation of the destination and degrade the attraction for visitors.

6. Facilities Insufficiency and Aging The facilities and infrastructure of local tourism are mostly built up during the early life cycle period. Whilst in the later stages, with time passing by, these facilities, such as hotels, restaurants, transports and shopping centers are becoming outdated and insufficient. Furthermore, the design of the destination that is formed decades ago cannot fulfill the ever-changing requirements of the visitors, and the level of comfort and sustainability is relative low by comparison with the new destinations. Under this situation, the general attraction of the destination is declining and many visitors seek out new places to visit. As Russo (2002)

indicates, the nature of tourism is its “transversality” across industries, the use of central space and its seasonal pattern. It influences the value of urban facilities and drive citizens and firms out of the central locations. In this sense, tourism can damage the other urban functions and increase the costs of economic development. The unguided expansion of tourism will lead to a decline in late stages of tourism and the local economy. 7. The Changing Bargaining Power As Berry (2001) pointed out, the bargaining power of the visitors is increasing. Generally, bargaining power is measured by the cost to look at alternatives, the level of ease for the user to switch from one product to another, the cost of the offering, the differentiation between the offering and the competition, and the degree of the prospect’ s need (Douglas, 1997). In the tourism market nowadays, the bargaining power of tourists is increasing and the market is transferring from supplier-side to buyer-side. Tourism destinations are no longer the rare resource and the competition between destinations is becoming increasing severe. Furthermore, the information technology reduces the cost to look at alternatives and makes the switching of alternatives easier and less risky. Therefore, visitors are easy to select other destinations instead of visit or re-visit one destination. The visitation frequency and visitor number for one destination will decrease, which in turn accelerate the decline process of the destinations. Future Recommendations to avoid the decline of destination and achieve rejuvenation The life cycle model suggests a proactive management to deal with the decline and achieve rejuvenation of a destination. Martin and Uysal (1990) pointed out that the managers should control the flow under “the threshold of carry capacity”, find the comparative advantages and analyze the core resources of the destination. Porter’ s SWOT analysis model is efficient to find out appropriate solutions. Figure 3. M. E. Porter’ s five forces model:



There are five forces that influence the fluctuation of exist destinations. The threat of substitute comes from different types of destinations; the threat of new entrant comes from the new resort of the same type; the threat of suppliers is combined with the local economy; the threat of buyers derives from the increasing bargaining power of tourists; and the threat of industry rivalry is the competition from existed destinations in the same market. Any analysis of destination development policies and strategies should be put into the above framework. The managers and policy makers should consider the five factors and evaluate the competitive capacity on the basis of the local resources to work out the countermeasures to renovate the resort and rejuvenate the destination For example, when an old seafront destination faces competition from new planned coastal resorts and other type of substitutes, renovation and modernization of the destination facility and infrastructure are necessary to keep the attraction and image of the resort. Marketing strategies renovations are of great importance to keep up with the dynamic travel preference and market requirements. According to the various travel patterns of different generations and individual groups, the managers should apply different marketing mechanisms (Oppermann, 1995). Utility of new technology, such as e-tourism, is also a good solution to promote the tourism more effectively. Furthermore, diversification of the products and exploration of new resource are helpful to attract new market segments and encourage repeat visits. Table 1 is a collection of the hard and soft interventions for destination managers and policies makers to refer for the rejuvenation of declining destinations. Table 1: Policies and Strategies for Rejuvenation

Hard Mechanisms	Soft Mechanisms
1. Socioeconomic Capacity Control	1. Pricing strategies

2. Zoning and Re-planning	2. Advertising and promotion strategy
3. Exploration of new resources	3. Services improvement
4. Creation of new attractions	4. Renovation of distribution channel
5. Renovation and modernization of facilities	5. Use of high technology in marketing
6. Improvement of intra and inter regional infrastructure and transportation	6. Diversification of products
	7. Image and reputation enhancement
	8. Quality control

(Source: Adapted from Martin and Uysal, 1990) Conclusion Decline is an unavoidable tendency for many destinations but is not an inevitable come-off. Based on a good analysis and understanding of the strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats of the resort, the life cycle can be rejuvenated. The hard and soft mechanisms are useful to smooth the fluctuation of the development and restore the tourism evolution. Besides that, the coordination and cooperation between destinations is also a good mechanism because by sharing the resource and avoiding the overlapping of development, the rivals can become strategic partners and achieve win-win outcomes beneficial to all of them. Reference Andriotis, K. (2001), Strategies on resort areas and their lifecycle stages, *Tourism Review*, 56(1/2), pp. 40-43 Berry E. N (2001), An Application of Butler' s (1980) Tourist Area Life Cycle Theory to the Cairns Region, Australia 1876-1998, Doctor Thesis of James Cook University of North Queensland, Cairns Campus Butler R.W. (1980), The Concept of a Tourism Area Life Cycle of Evolution: Implications for Management of Resources, *The Canadian Geographer* 24 (1), pp. 8 Cooper, C., and S. Jackson (1989), Destination Life Cycle - The Isle of Man Case Study, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 16 (3): 377-98. Douglas, N. (1997), Applying the life cycle model to Melanesia. *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 24, No. 1, pp.1-22 Getz, D. (1992), Tourism planning and destination life cycle, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 19(4), pp.752-770 Goncalves, V.F.C. and Aguas, P. M.R. (1997), The concept of life cycle: an application to the tourist product, *Journal of Travel Research*, 35(1), pp.12-22 Martin, B.S. and Uysal, M. (1990), An examination of the relationship between carrying capacity and the tourism life cycle: management and policy implications, *Journal of Environmental Management*, 31, pp.327-333 Oppermann Martin (1995), Travel Life Cycle, *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 22, No. 3, pp. 535-552 Russo A. P. (2002), The "Vicious circle" of tourism development in heritage cities, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 29 (1), pp 165-182 Stansfield, C. A. (1978), Atlantic City and The Resort Cycle, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 5 (2): 238-51. Tse, E. C., and C. M. Elwood (1990), Synthesis of the Life Cycle Concept with Strategic and Management Style: A Case Analysis in the Hospitality Industry. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 19 (3): 223-36. Tooman L. Alex, Applications of the Life-Cycle Model in Tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 24, No. 1, pp. 214-234, 1997

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