Towards an Integrated Relational-Evolutionary Perspective of Local Tourism Destinations as Complex Systems

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<td>• Which approaches have been proposed in previous research?</td>
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<td>• What can we learn from EG to go beyond the established approaches in TS?</td>
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Motivation

**Competing paradigms**
(Sunley, 2008)

- **Relational Economic Geography**
  (Bathelt & Glückler, 2003, 2011; Boggs & Rantisi, 2003; Yeung, 2005)

- **Evolutionary Economic Geography**

**Complementary and mutually formative paradigms**
(Hassink & Klaerding, 2009)

**Could these approaches be applied in the case of local tourism destinations?**

**Tri-polar Framework of cluster evolution**
(Li & Bathelt, 2011; Li, Bathelt & Wang, 2012)
Tourism destinations

**Organization**
Relational approaches

Tourism Local System (TLS)

**Evolution**
Evolutionary approaches

Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC)
### Precedents in Tourism Studies: TLS approach

<table>
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#### System of economic, noneconomic and institutional actors located in a given area that cooperate in order to enhance local resources through the commercialization of an integrated tourism product

- Specialized enterprises
- SMEs
- Social & economic relations

- Systemic consciousness
- Cumulativeness
- Strategic means display
- Spatial concentration

(Lazzeretti & Capone, 2006)

(Lazzeretti & Capone, 2006)

- Complex adaptive nature of tourism systems (Baggio, 2008b; Baggio & Sainaghi, 2011)
- Difficulties to operationalize the model
- Omission of basic qualitative aspects (Martinez et al., 2010)
- Lack of continuity in research

(Maulet, 2006)
Precedents in Tourism Studies: TALC approach

Tourism destination development

Tourism Area Life Cycle

Product Life Cycle

- Scale of analysis (Haywood, 1986)
- Lack of contextuality (Butler, 2004; Haywood, 2006)
- Role of human agency (Butler & Russell, 2010)
- Evolution of activity rather than evolution of destination

Butler (1980)
New paradigms in Economic Geography

Places

**Organization**
Relational approaches

Relational Economic Geography (REG)

(Bathelt & Glückler, 2003, 2011; Boggs & Rantisi, 2003; Yeung, 2005)

**Evolution**
Evolutionary approaches

Evolutionary Economic Geography (EEG)

New paradigms in Economic Geography: REG

Relational Economic Geography

(Bathelt & Glückler, 2003, 2011; Boggs & Rantisi, 2003; Yeung, 2005)

“How economic action and interaction take place in different locations and between agents in different places”

(Bathelt & Glückler, 2011)

- **Human agency**: Economic action is viewed as social practice
- **Contextuality**: Action is embedded in specific contexts
- **Path dependency**: Yesterday’s economic decisions, actions and interactions enable and constrain the context of today’s actions.
- **Contingency**: Agents’ strategies and actions may deviate from existing development paths
New paradigms in Economic Geography: EEG

Evolutionary Economic Geography


“How the economic landscape is transformed from within over time”
(Boschma & Martin, 2010)

Path Dependence Theory
(Martin & Sunley, 2006; Martin, 2010)
Evolution is shaped by the past development paths but need not lead to or involve lock-in
Path creation
(Garud & Karnoe, 2001)
Path plasticity
(Storz, 2008; Strambach, 2010)

Complexity Theory
(Beinhocker, 2006; Martin & Sunley, 2010, 2011)
Evolution is characterized by emergence, self-organization, adaptive behaviour and non-linearity

Generalized Darwinism
Evolution is shaped by competition between agents and rests on processes of variety, selection and continuity
New perspectives for Tourism Geography

Destination organisation
- TLS

Tourism evolution
- TALC

Precedents in Tourism Studies

Local Tourism Destinations Dynamics

New paradigms in Economic Geography

REG
Place construction

EEG
Place transformation
New perspectives for Tourism Geography: LTD concept

Local Tourism Destinations

Complex, socially-constructed & dynamic

Opened, emergent, self-organized, adaptive, distributed and connected system

Result of the activation of different elementary processes and in continuous evolution

SYSTEMIC CONSCIOUSNESS
Local identity & sense of belonging

LOCAL COMMUNITY
Society
Institutions

SOCIAL & ECONOMIC LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS

PRODUCTIVE ORGANISATION
SMEs
Specialization
Flexibility
Co-location
Co-competition

INDUSTRIAL ATMOSPHERE
Shared knowledge & productive culture
“Path- and place-dependent” process

that is determined by the action and interaction

of destination stakeholders

and their ability to adapt

or creating new development paths

and survive

in an increasingly competitive context
Concluding remarks

**TLS & TALC**
- Separated perspective
- Evolution of activity
- Reductionist approach
- Empirical research
- Isolated tourism analysis

**LTDD**
- Integrated perspective
- Dynamics of place
- Complex approach
- Theoretically based research
- EG integrated study of tourist places

**REG & EEG**

**Proper translation**
- to tourism geography

**Resolutive methods**
- to operationalize models
Thanks for your attention!

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References

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