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## Destination morphology: A new framework to understand tourism–transport issues?

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## ABSTRACT

This special issue arises from the recognition of the need to maintain focus on further disentangling the relationship(s) between tourism destinations and transport. It remains, despite strong and illuminating contributions over the past few decades, a comparatively understudied topic in either field. We start by offering a simple framework based on geomorphology for clarifying how tourism and transport issues might manifest themselves and be characterized. We then outline the contributions in this special issue before concluding with questions of next steps.

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### 1. Introduction and overview

The role of transport in tourism has almost always been inherently symbiotic and, perhaps more specifically, co-dependent (Hall, 1999). It is critical, therefore, that the attention of governments and policy-makers is directed toward both simultaneously. The parallels between tourism and transport can be characterized as follows:

- *Regulatory synergies:* Tourism occupies regulatory space(s) that incorporate provisions of safety, environment, and economic contribution. The regulation of one, particularly in the case of transport, can have a meaningful and direct impact on the other. For instance, a successful, targeted tourism marketing campaign can foster increased competition for transport. Similarly, new airline business models can render previously cost-inefficient destinations more attractive (Lohmann & Duval, 2011). For road transport, regulations affecting the use of a tourists' home driver's license can severely curtail self-drive destinations (see Prideaux and Carson (2003)).
- *Objective function:* Both transport and tourism largely involve personal mobility, albeit with different end results. Tourism provides experiences and value. This, in turn, means movement at different scales, using varying modes of transport which also seek to provide experience and value. Both seek to increase market share by selling differentiation in their products and experiences to key market segments: destinations target specific types of travelers seeking particular experiences; transport providers build fare structures and on-board amenities that hopefully match the expectations of key market segments.
- *Shared emphasis on sustainability:* Both transport and tourism have been fundamentally transformed in recent years by the drive toward sustainable operations and a reduced footprint (Gössling, Hansson, Horstmeier, & Saggel, 2002; Peeters,

Szimba, & Duijnsveld, 2007), and both have questioned future development prospects if and when constraints are established to mitigate emissions and other negative externalities (Lohmann & Duval, 2011; Peeters & Dubois, 2010). This includes shaping user (i.e. tourist) behavior (Barr, Shaw, Coles, & Prillwitz, 2010; Cohen, Higham, Peeters, & Gössling, 2014; Dallen, 2007). Beyond the mere environmental aspect of sustainability, transport operations in various modes of transport can be challenging also in regards to social, economic and cultural perspectives. These can be particularly significant in very remote parts of the world, as Lohmann and Nguyen (2011) showcase for Hawai'i.

The transport/tourism nexus is arguably not understood well enough in order to model mutual impacts with confidence. A number of aspects can explain this disconnection. First, in many instances tourists are just one of the many types of travelers seeking mobility: one example being public transport in a large metropolis. Most urban transport providers focus on providing transport services to the local population and daily commuters, not necessarily perceiving tourists as their major market. Secondly, displacement of tourists involves several geographical scales, ranging from long-haul trips between places to displacements within destinations. Typically, tourism and transport management organizations and policymakers seldom cover all geographical locations during a travelers' trip; highlighting the challenges inherent to implementing and enforcing transport policies that will be consistent throughout the whole journey. Thirdly, differences in destination geomorphology, concentration of attractions, seasonality of visits, and the nature of the environment can influence the choice of modes of transport and its viability.

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## 2. Toward a (bounded) geomorphological framework

While there are several ways of trying to understand the relationship between tourism destinations and transport provision, destination morphologies provide a framework that takes into consideration the geomorphological characteristics of different types of destinations, particularly in regards to demand dispersal, attraction sprawlness, centrality and peripherality in regards to markets for public transport provision and the type of activities undertaken by visitors. Despite the potential for destination morphologies to impact on transport provision, travelers' behavior and accessibility, a framework dealing with these issues is still lacking in the literature. This paper deals with these matters, aiming to learn what has been presented in the literature by proposing three main morphological types (i.e. urban; islands and archipelagos; rural and mountain destinations).

### 2.1. Urban environment

It is generally acknowledged that urban destinations play a significant role in tourist travel, as in many cases they serve as the point of entry, or gateways, for tourists into the country or region, as centers of accommodation and as bases for excursions to rural areas, in addition to being destinations in their own right (Page & Hall, 2003). Hence, cities have their own challenges to address tourism mobility, not only within their boundaries (Albalade & Bel, 2010), but also with regard to visitors en-route to other destinations (Lohmann & Pearce, 2010, 2012). Marketing and adequate promotion are also critical.

Considering the concentration of population and the current trend of growth of cities, sustainable urban transport measures have become extremely relevant, with a number of initiatives and policies currently implemented in megalopolises around the world (e.g. London, Singapore, São Paulo). Such initiatives include promoting the use of public transport; rejuvenation of central business districts; change in land use in order to provide closer proximity to everyday facilities; accessibility restriction to the central business district; pedestrianization and weekday banning of cars; and technology innovation, including the decrease in the need for travel or electronic tolls (Aftabuzzaman & Mazloumi, 2011; Banister, 2008).

Successful public-transport provision for leisure and tourism demand presents a number of challenges. Gronau and Kagermeier (2007) demonstrate that there are some relevant conditions from the supply side that can contribute to achieve successful public transport services. These include

- *Quality of the public transport service:* Among several attributes, homogeneous quality service across the whole transport network is fundamental to encourage the use of public transport, particularly in terms of frequency. Data collected in four different leisure parks found empirical evidence to link increased use of public transport with increased frequency of provision.
- *Constraints on private cars:* Measures such as charging for parking had an increase in public transport by 5% in Zoo Hellbrunn, while restricting car access at certain hours of the day at the Bavarian Forest National Park, when buses run on

natural gas were available, was success as a means of increasing public-transport patronage.

- *Symbiotic co-operation between leisure facilities and transport providers:* Combined tickets including the entrance fee to an attraction or leisure facility and public transport have proven successful in inducing the use of public transport among travelers with a private car availability in studies conducted both in Munich (Gronau & Kagermeier, 2007) and Greater Manchester (Lumsdon, Downward, & Rhoden, 2006).
- *Long-term effects of transport implementation:* As leisure and tourism travelers are not everyday users, it takes a while before public-transport options are widely recognized as suitable alternatives. Promoting new public-transport options can be challenging and it should not be expected that overwhelming success will be achieved in the first season. The examples of bicycle tourists in two low mountain ranges in Germany show that only in the third and fourth seasons was the maximum level of demand for public transport achieved (Gronau & Kagermeier, 2007). This echoes the results obtained by Dickinson and Dickinson (2006) in the UK.

In terms of non-motorized options for displacement, a number of cities around the world have invested in the establishment of extensive bikeway networks and encouraged commuters to walk. In a study analyzing the connection between built environment and non-motorized transport in Bogotá, the capital city of Colombia (in South America), Cervero, Sarmiento, Jacoby, Gomez, and Neiman (2009) focused particularly on walking and cycling for utilitarian purposes, but also analyzed the use of the reserved Ciclovía lanes for recreational-leisure activities. Aspects found to favor non-motorized trips were lower-than-average journey length and avoidance of congestion with public transport, when private cars have a lower average speed than walking and cycling. On the other hand, some factors that inhibited the walk and biking options included rainy seasons, air pollution, lifestyle and obesity, lower income, concerns over traffic safety, urban design, topography and ultimately the city's elevation which makes physical exercise more tiring.

### 2.2. Islands and archipelagos

In spite of the differences with regard to size, shape and distance to the continental mainland, islands are heavily dependent on transport. Nations and sub-national island entities can be remote, relying on air and maritime transportation to connect them to other regions. The size and development of tourism in an insular environment, in addition to the means of transport to access them, have an impact on how tourists choose their means of transport.

Lohmann and Nguyen (2011) analyze several attempts to establish new air transport routes between the Hawaiian islands and its major external markets (i.e. mainland US and Japan), as well as inter-island air transport routes. Fierce competition, fuel price increases and the global financial crisis were the major reasons for the failure of a long-established airlines (i.e. Aloha Airlines) and the merger between recently established airlines (i.e. Mokulele and go! airlines) which occurred in the second half of the 2000s. Mergers and acquisitions raise concerns over competition and accessibility, which in island environments can be crucial (e.g. Luis (2004)). Provision of airlift along thin island routes can, however, be questionable from a business perspective and involves substantial risks (Minato & Morimoto, 2011). It is for this reason that island states must often struggle against their geographic handicaps (Armstrong & Read, 2006) and find way to ensuring adequate inter- and intra-destination tourist mobilities.

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