THE MORPHOLOGY OF TOURISM
PLANNING FOR IMPACT IN TOURIST DESTINATIONS

Philip Feifan Xie and Kai Gu
Morphological research studies the physical form of landscapes, including how landscape structures function and operate, the adaptability of forms, and how functions and forms change over time. Applying the methods and models of morphology to tourism, this innovative book explores some of the complex relationships between tourism and morphological changes in urban and rural destinations across the globe.

Tourism-related impacts on the physical environment and sociocultural values surrounding a given destination reflect the need for both theoretical and empirical approaches to strengthen our understanding of the ways in which tourism functions. This study examines key sectors and locations such as coastal tourism, urban tourism, and waterfront redevelopment, which are increasingly important in terms of their influence on sociocultural and morphological transformation. It advocates that awareness of the critical link between temporospatial impacts and morphological progresses is necessary to accommodate changes within a pattern of evolutionary growth.

International in scope, employing case studies from Asia, Australasia, the US, and Europe, this book makes a new contribution to the literature and will be of interest to students and researchers of tourism planning, urban design, geography, environmental studies and landscape architecture.

**Philip Feifan Xie** is Professor of the Tourism, Hospitality and Event Management program at Bowling Green State University, Ohio, USA. His areas of specialization include cultural and heritage tourism, tourism analysis, and event management.

**Kai Gu** is Associate Professor of the School of Architecture and Planning, University of Auckland, New Zealand. His areas of specialization are in urban morphology and urban design.
Although tourism is becoming increasingly popular both as a taught subject and as an area for empirical investigation, the theoretical underpinnings of many approaches have tended to be eclectic and somewhat underdeveloped. However, recent developments indicate that the field of tourism studies is beginning to develop in a more theoretically informed manner, but this has not yet been matched by current publications.

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

Suggested themes to be covered by the series, either singly or in combination, include consumption, cultural change, development, gender, globalisation, political economy, social theory, and sustainability.

44 Being and Dwelling through Tourism
   An Anthropological Perspective
   Catherine Palmer

45 Resort Spatiality
   Reimagining Sites of Mass Tourism
   Zelmarie Cantillon

46 The Morphology of Tourism
   Planning for Impact in Tourist Destinations
   Philip Feifan Xie and Kai Gu

For more information about this series, please visit www.routledge.com/New-Directions-in-Tourism-Analysis/book-series/ASHSER1207
The Morphology of Tourism
Planning for Impact in Tourist Destinations

Philip Feifan Xie
and Kai Gu
Contents

List of figures vii
List of tables ix
Preface xi

Introduction 1
The production of space 1
Urban morphology and tourism 4
The emergence of morphological thinking in tourism 7
Problems of the tourism-morphology nexus 10
The book’s structure and themes 11

1 The historical development of urban morphology 17
   Introduction 17
   Relevant theories in urban morphology 19
   Summary 37

2 A conceptual framework for the morphology of tourism 42
   Green spaces, genius loci and non-lieux 42
   The history of tourism morphology 47
   Elements of urban tissue for tourism 56
   Toward an integrated approach to the morphology of tourism 64
   Summary 67

3 Morphological changes and the evolution of coastal resorts 69
   Introduction 69
   BRM and conceptual framework 70
   Methodology 75
   Morphological analysis 76
   Research implications 86
   Summary 88
## Contents

**4 Destination morphology in an ancient Chinese city**
- Introduction 90  
- Urban morphology in China 92  
- Research setting 95  
- Methodology 104  
- Stages of tourism development 105  
- Summary 112

**5 Morphological processes and impacts of tourism**
- Introduction 115  
- Waterfront redevelopment and impacts of tourism 117  
- The morphological process of the waterfronts in  
  Auckland and Wellington 119  
- Methodology 124  
- The impact of governance structures on  
  morphological changes 125  
- Morphological processes in Auckland and  
  Wellington waterfronts 129  
- The impact of tourism on morphological changes 132  
- Summary 135

**6 Urban fringe belts and the tourist-historic city**
- Introduction 139  
- The historic city of como 142  
- Methodology 145  
- Streets, plots and buildings in Como 146  
- The three fringe belts of Como 148  
- Evolving trajectories of tourism development 152  
- Summary 155

**Conclusions**
- Summary of the chapters 160  
- Conjoining habitus, parallax, and the longue durée 166  
- Critical considerations for the morphology of tourism 168

**References** 173  
**Index** 199
List of figures

1.1 Basic elements of the ground plan 22
1.2 The Traditions of Landscape Research and Urban Morphology 38
2.1 The Cheonggyecheon Stream in Seoul, Korea for Changing the Natural Context 59
2.2 Fatehpur Sikri (the City of Victory) in the Northeast of India 60
2.3 Conceptual Framework of the Morphology of Tourism 66
3.1 Conceptual Framework for Denarau Island, Fiji 75
3.2 Cartographic Representation of the Morphological Elements of Denarau Island from 1977 to 2007 78
4.1 An Aerial View of Pingyao 95
4.2 Morphological Frames and Fixation Lines in Pingyao 97
4.3 Morphological Hierarchy of Streets in Pingyao 99
4.4 Plot Types in Pingyao 101
4.5 Changes of Ownership Boundaries and Building Block-Plans in Pingyao’s Courtyards 103
4.6 Evolutionary Morphology in Pingyao 111
5.1a The Waterfront Areas Adjacent to the CBDs in Auckland 120
5.1b The Waterfront Areas Adjacent to the CBDs in Wellington 121
5.2 The Formative Processes of the Waterfront Areas in Auckland and Wellington 122
5.3 Principal Plan Units in the Waterfront in Auckland and Wellington 123
6.1 The Main Built-Up Areas and Topography of Como 144
6.2 Fringe Belt Evolution and Land Use in Como 149
6.3 The Three Fringe Belts 151
List of tables

1.1 The Existing Morphological Analysis 39
3.1 The Development of Resort Morphology Research 73
3.2 The Morphological Changes in Denarau Island, Fiji 79
5.1 Key Urban Planning and Design Documents Prepared for Auckland’s Waterfront Redevelopment 126
5.2 Key urban Planning and Design Documents Prepared for Wellington’s Waterfront Redevelopment 127
5.3 Characteristics of Streets, Plots and Buildings of the Plan Units in Auckland’s Waterfront Area 130
5.4 Characteristics of Streets, Plots and Buildings of the Plan Units in Wellington’s Waterfront Area 131
The impetus for this book was responding to a number of theoretical gaps in the fields of urban morphology and tourism studies. The former primarily focuses on the physical form of landscapes, including how landscape structures operate, the adaptability of structural forms, the dominant functions of a given structure, and how functions and forms change over time. Urban morphology has long been utilized in a wide range of disciplines, ranging from geography, archaeology, history, and ecology, to urban planning and landscape architecture. Its methodologies and theoretical concerns facilitate multisite explorations of urban form while providing a context for a gamut of seemingly disparate literature. However, only a few, if any, attempts have been made to apply the methods and models of urban morphology to tourism. *The Morphology of Tourism* is perhaps the first book-length study addressing the morphology of tourist destinations. Our aim is to facilitate a better understanding of the relationship between tourism, the physical environment, and changing sociocultural values; as well as the flow of people, capital, goods, and ideas that form the core of tourism development. The key centers on the impact studies distributed in space and time at various locations.

This book would never have taken shape as it did without two reasons. First, our long-standing interest in the morphology of tourism is kindled by a familiarity with and curiosity about vacationscapes, which was solidified by the completion of a PhD degree in urban and regional planning. Both authors graduated at the University of Waterloo, Canada, and our experiences have fed the curiosity about planning and urban design. Particularly, Dr. Kai Gu was former Secretary-General of the International Seminar on Urban Form who has been active in the study of urban morphology. Second, our interests in morphology are based on our experiences visiting and living in a number of radically changing cities worldwide. In recent decades, economic prosperity has precipitated the redevelopment of urban areas, and many cities are building futuristic skylines of gleaming metal and glass towers at breakneck speed. While these cities benefit from their regeneration, some are increasingly becoming places for tourists rather than for inhabitants. As part of this process, a growing number of tourist
destinations have been stripped of their sense of place and are in danger of entering a state of “placelessness.” For example, both authors have visited major metropolises like Hong Kong and Macau, where burgeoning numbers of jewelry shops and pharmacies selling milk powders mainly target tourists from Mainland China, filling the already overcrowded streets. As a result, the changing morphology of streets, spaces, and buildings has led to a dramatic rise in rental prices and a marginalization of local businesses, affecting the livelihood of local people. There is a lack of balance between tourism development and protection of a city’s history, personality, and sense of community.

It is evident that the socioeconomic milieu in which research and practice are undertaken is a crucial factor in understanding spatial arrangements. Urban morphology goes hand in glove with tourism development. However, this is not to suggest that the direction of the relationship is or should be unidirectional. In the fertile interrelationship of research and practice, understanding gained from the experience of tourism activities can contribute to the advancement of morphological theory. Tourism is not only a means of creating new urban forms but also a means of understanding them. Hence, morphology and tourism can become mutually supportive. There is a strong need to broaden the scope of morphological research in tourism, which can be accomplished by further combining a realm of research as a geographic subdiscipline in its own right and by embracing this study area within a number of other disciplines such as urban and regional planning.

The book is comprehensive in nature and provides a good foundation for examining the nature of tourism morphology. It attempts to (1) show the causal relationships between morphology and tourism using different models, particularly the historico-geographical approach, in order to contextualize changes within a pattern of evolutionary growth; (2) demonstrate how tourism morphology can be theorized from historical, cultural, social, and economic perspectives; (3) present case studies that compare decision-making and regional planning processes between multiple countries in Asia, Australasia, and Europe; and (4) make suggestions about the future of morphology research and development in tourism.

The main goal of this book is to provide systematic analyses of the tourism–morphology nexus. By tracing the historical development and current state of tourism and morphological changes, it pays close attention to key sectors, such as coastal tourism, urban tourism, and waterfront redevelopment, which influence the morphological change of origin–destination flows. We will substantiate the choices in terms of compelling reasons for case studies work here, consisting of the current diversification of urban forms. We believe this study, and the field it outlines, will be useful for planners, marketers, and practitioners, and serve as a scholarly text for tourism researchers, geographers, and urban planners interested in enhancing their understanding of the morphogenetic process and forms of tourist
destinations. It should be of interest to tourism industry and policymakers who wish to enhance their cognizance of the management of morphological transformation.

We are grateful for the intellectual support and friendship of urban morphology researchers such as Dr. Jeremy Whitehand, Professor Emeritus of the University of Birmingham, who is one of the world leaders in this field. He not only provided invaluable assistance in our research but also continues to challenge, test, and refine our understanding of the morphology of tourism. We are indebted to Adrienne Hill at Bowling Green State University in the US, who did an outstanding job copyediting the manuscript and made many helpful suggestions for improving both the writing and the content.

Finally, we express our appreciation for the continuing support and assistance of Ms. Carlotta Fanton, the Editorial Assistant at Taylor & Francis/Routledge. Her generous support and involvement, with whom we are proud to be associated, has placed Routledge as the world's leading publisher of scholarly tourism texts.
The production of space

The rubrics of architecture, emphasizing *firmitas*, *utilitas*, and *venustas*, reflect a complicated system for the built fabric of cities. In this system, urban materiality is inextricably intertwined with space usage. Both are influenced by the cultures that inhabit a given space, and urban form reshapes culture in turn. Changing landscapes have functioned for different purposes over periods of time. For example, former fortifications, such as walls and fortresses, have become major tourist attractions; coastlines and waterfronts originally reserved for the shipbuilding industry have been set apart distinction for the purpose of leisure, and transportation infrastructure, such as railways and highways, has been appropriated for a range of recreational activities. Concomitantly, aspects of urban form contribute to socially dividing the city into precincts now turns into a draw for tourists to gaze the gentrifying neighborhoods. Whether cultural landscapes progress gradually over time or result from extensive urban planning, they demonstrate and influence the city’s multitude of identities, industries, and economies at varying points in its history.

The word “architecture” is widely used to describe what urban morphology refers to as the form and diversity of urban spaces (Kropf 2009, 2017). The rediscovery of place through temporospatial analysis becomes a norm in contemporary society. Lefebvre’s seminal book, *The Production of Space*, proposes the existence of a “differential space” in urban environments, where planning was not considered a subject in its own right until the rise of medieval towns and the subsequent establishment of “urban systems” in Europe. His conceptual triad for space encompasses spatial practice, representation of space and representational space. Lefebvre (1992: 46) further suggests that the impact of industrialization has morphed in the mode of production where “the shift from one mode to another must entail the production of a new space.” In a similar vein, Foucault (1982: 187), through the study of Heidegger’s “nearness” of both time and place, proposes a “space of domination,” in which isomorphic forms illustrate institutional regimes in the built fabric. Space has a morphogenesis, including
Introduction

Socioeconomic and environmental impacts, and is an ever-changing historical entity (Mugavin 1999).

Spatial development has been an integral part of the urban planning and landscape architecture fields since the Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution, during which many European cities were remade into symbols of the nation-state (Vale 1992). The ensuing movements, from the City Beautiful in the late 1800s, to the Garden City in the early 1900s, to contemporary New Urbanism, reshape identity, experience, and behavior in urban settings (Smith 2002, Lew 2017). For example, DeJean (2014) documents that the Parisian model for urban space was in fact invented in early seventeenth century, when the first full design for the French capital was implemented. During this period, Paris became the first city to tear down its fortifications. A large-scale urban plan was created and executed, with organized streets and boulevards, modern bridges, sidewalks, and public parks. Venues opened for urban entertainment of all kinds, from opera and ballet to recreational shopping. Therefore, a great city should be more than a collection of major buildings or monuments. It is worthy of a visit because of contemporary architecture, economic life, cultural activities, and the range of entertainments that made it vibrant.

From an architect-urbanist perspective, an urban reality, in the form of chaos, constantly produces new types of spaces, which become fundamental to the everyday practices of a society (Castello 2010, Certeau 2011). A space is not a background object, but a specific social production, supporting usages that are themselves specific (Depaule 1995). As time passes, space becomes more mobile and dynamic, bearing the mark of temporal flows (Grosz 2001, Gehl 2011). Similarly, the concept of fabrique urbaine (Noizet 2009) posits a socio-spatial urban development model, in which the practices and representations of the residents may be analyzed as a series of historical moments, or “social temporalities.” Then the spatial structure of the town, especially the aggregation of plots into street blocks, can be precisely described, but with its own temporalities. The link between social history and urban morphology illustrates that social temporalities are not conscious steps in the process of the development of the urban fabric. Instead, there is a dialectical interaction between these two orders of facts.

In a sense, a space perceived as a territory frames chaos provisionally and in the process produces qualities (Grosz 2008). However, the space increasingly becomes heterogeneous at higher spatial levels, containing a variegated mix of commercialization (Prideaux and Singer 2005). Over time, such spaces can become popular tourist destinations. The spatial values, perceptions, memories and traditions become a landscape with a new meaning. Tourist cities are palimpsest which have changed over time and demonstrated evidence of these changes. Particularly, a city represents a layering of multiple activities and cultures that unfold within the same place over time. Each layer constitutes the base for the next layer that gets
Introduction

added, and consequently, built elements can be sustained through time and leave their own distinct imprints in space.

The cultural geography tradition has begun to draw on an actor–network theory in thinking about the complexity and richness of space (Oliveira 2016). For example, Thrift (2003: 95) argues that space is not a common sense external background to human and social action; rather, it is “the outcome of a series of highly problematic temporary settlements that divide and connect things up into different kinds of collectives which are slowly provided with the means which render them durable and sustainable.” One of his proposed dimensions includes the place space, which not only offers certain kinds of interaction, but also provides cues to memory and behavior. Place is involved with embodiment and continuous transformation. In such a case, morphology may be understood as the form and function of a place, as well as the shifting relationship between form and function over time. The interplay of time and space determines the characteristics of morphology. Stanilov (2010) considers the reciprocal benefits of connecting urban modeling more closely with morphology and argues that combining land-use dynamics with building typology gained from morphological analysis is critical in understanding of how cities grow and change. He also envisages recreational activities for strengthening the sense of place in the management of the built environment beyond its role in conservation.

Despite the growing importance of spatial-temporal development, only a small body of literature addresses the possible link between spatial changes and tourist activities. Logan and Molotch (1987) initially propose a theory of “urban fortunes,” which assumes that a growth machine can be fueled by a select group of players via a process of continuous spatial development and reinvestment. This theory implies that the emergence of urban centers through spatial development produces wealth, which, if appropriately reinvested, can lead to additional upward mobility. The emerging tourism space is a type of urban fortune, which transforms both rural and urban landscapes and creates an assortment of identities (Makowska-Iskierka 2013). Similarly, Clark (2004) coins the term “entertainment machine,” emphasizing the role of the entertainment and tourism industry in attracting large numbers of visitors and causing the local economy to flourish. In recent decades, the development of cultural and entertainment activity has become a kind of a new urban development factor. The green space has gradually morphed into a “city of leisure” and exerted potential impact on spatial organization. As a result, the city yields a variety of images of “third places,” places where individuals spend most of their time after regular home and work (Oldenburg 1989). Clark argues that even in a former industrial power like the city of Chicago in the US, entertainment has become a leading industry, in which city officials define as including tourism, conventions, restaurants, hotels, and related economic activities. An entertainment machine arises when “workers in the elite sectors of the postindustrial city make ‘quality of life’ demands, and in their consumption practices can
experience their own urban location as if tourists, emphasizing aesthetic concerns.” These practices impact considerations about the proper nature of “amenities” on urban growth. The city is an “entertainment machine” whose fortunes are increasingly constituted by flows, mobilities, and connections, as well as the product of performativity leveraging culture to enhance its economic well-being. From the notion of “spaces of flows” (Castells 1989) to “a sociology of fluids” (Urry 2007), spatialized encounters activate processes of cultural negotiation and new identity formation, which underpin the symbolic relevance of the city. As the entertainment components of cities are actively and strategically produced through political and economic activity, they become the work of many urban actors.

**Urban morphology and tourism**

Morphology comes from the Greek root word *morph*, meaning “shape.” Urban morphology originated from morphogenetic studies reveals the physical and spatial structure of cities (Moudon 1994). It studies all physical elements of the cities, including streets, squares, buildings, and plots of land; and its theoretical concerns include the relationship between form and function, how structures operate, and how features of the urban landscape adapt and change over time (Pearce 1978, Liu and Wall 2009). It began to take shape at the end of nineteenth century as a field of study concerned with landscape (Whitehand 2007). Urban morphology is characterized by a number of different perspectives, but some of its most important roots are in the work of German-speaking geographers. Arguably, the father of urban morphology was the geographer Otto Schlüter, who envisaged the city as part of the wider landscape (*landschaft*) (Schlüter 1899). Particularly under his influence, the urban landscape (*stadtlandschaft*) came to occupy a central place within human geography in the first three decades of the twentieth century. This early period of urban morphology within geography had a marked influence on how the field developed in the course of the twentieth century. From its very beginning, urban morphology was, in keeping with its origins in geography, inherently about distinguishing, characterizing, and explaining urban landscapes.

Historically, there are at least two schools of urban morphology: the British school advocated by M.R.G Conzen, and the Italian school, founded by the architects Muratori and Caniggia. Both schools concern themselves with “a study of the city as human habitat” (Moudon 1997: 3), and they define the city as “the accumulation and the integration of many individuals and small groups, themselves governed by cultural traditions and shaped by social and economic forces over time.” The field stresses the concrete outcomes of socioeconomic forces and analyzes the prism of its physical form. It reflects a dominant function in a specific setting, such as commerce, residence, recreation, or industry (Pearce 1978). In recent decades, urban morphology has become increasingly interdisciplinary, deriving from
more traditional fields of knowledge, such as archaeology, architecture, history, geography, landscape architecture, urban planning, and urban design. A number of generalizations with respect to morphology and the functional structure of towns and cities are apparent in the field of urban geography. Only a few, if any, attempts have been made to apply these models in the context of tourism and resource management planning (Xie and Gu 2011).

The enthusiasm for the morphological approach that has developed in the past decades is inextricably tied to the increasing interest in cultural heritage and the political project of urban revitalization. Urban morphological features often form the focal point of tourism promotion, and some are important tourist attractions. The space of tourism impacts land use, recreational buildings, and the development of spatial patterns. Thus, urban morphology can be utilized as a tool to make analytical assessments and to find answers for the preceding questions (Edwards et al. 2008). Generally, recreational land use begins with minor modifications to the natural landscape, with small-scale tourism development, the success of which initiates further development and extensions until the landscape has been completely transformed. This leads to concerns about environmental, social, economic, and cultural degradation, as the decline and failure of tourism infrastructure begin. Similarly, the growing rural transformation development forces traditional villages to reshape themselves. It is accompanied with the land-use change, especially the changes of arable and residential land (Long and Li 2012).

Tourism is traditionally viewed as less important to cities than activities such as manufacturing or finance; however, it has increasingly become a global priority and has changed the way the cities operate, look, and feel. Tourism development benefits local land markets, elevating property values by increasing demand for centrally located sites and by creating positive externalities for space adjacent to tourist sites (Fainstein et al. 2003). Tourism impacts on the multidimensional urban space are of great importance nowadays. “Tourist-historic cities” (Ashworth and Tunbridge 1990) and “cultural-creative city” serve to improve pedestrian access in the city centers, develop tertiary services, and retail settings, along with the necessary refurbishment of streets and historical buildings.

The significance of tourism can be understood via a developmental perspective encompassing four interlocking themes (Spirou 2011: 2). First, postwar urban restructuring forced cities to search for alternative means of economic development. Rapidly evolving elements of globalization led cities to embrace a variety of entrepreneurial strategies, which, in turn, helped position tourism as a viable industry, one that came to be quickly viewed as capable of generating positive economic benefits. Second, the emergence of tourism as a fiscal growth strategy reorganized the physical landscape of cities. The massive development of infrastructure changed the built environment in ways not seen since the early period of city building. Third, the remaking of the urban core through tourism altered the culture of cities,
and drew greater number of people from all walks of life. Fourth, some of the implications associated with the rise of tourism included controversial social and economic benefits, the diversion of valuable resources, and difficulty sustaining an identity for both visitors and residents in the long run.

By the end of the twentieth century, most world cities have focused on tourism as a source of revenue (Hoffman et al. 2003). The economic and cultural production of cities through tourism becomes instrumental in late capitalism (Rabbiosi 2015). It is an intensely geographic phenomenon involving the pursuit of the embodied experience of other places, both as individuals and in groups, and at scales from the local to the increasingly global. Tourism appears in diverse forms, such as entertainment places, shopping malls, historical settings, museums, and hybrid complexes, directly impacting the urban form. Gotham (2002: 1753) opines that tourism is “something involving people traveling to locations that are consumed as spaces of consumption, instead of the circulation of commodities among people.” Urban commodification and the construction of tourist spaces are omnipresent in major cities that Berdet (2013: 155) defines as fantasmas du capital postmodernes (postmodern phantasmagorias of capital).

Tourism research explores subjects such as the patterns of and processes behind the distribution of tourist phenomena, the evolution of land use, the influence of landscapes, and the nature of attractions offered by different destinations. The consequence of travel also brings about urban fragmentation, referring to the morphological differentiation of pieces of urban land and their dispersal within urban space (Carsjens and van Lier 2002, Wei and Zhang 2012). Every city and town has its own physical distinctiveness, and their spatial implications are uneven encompassing a mix of physical geography, place morphology, and infrastructure. For example, Urry and Larsen (2011: 40) document that tourism has reshaped the landscape of Blackpool in the UK due to “land ownership patterns and scenic attractiveness.” A landscape should be understood as something that is “shaped” and “produced,” and which is contingent on human or natural “processes and agents” (Andrews and Roberts 2012). “Touristic cultures” eventually emerge as the localized morphology and produce new meaning for both residents and visitors. For this reason, Rothman (1998: 10–11) claims that tourism is a “devil’s bargain” because it triggers “a contest for the soul of a place.” The mix of tourism and other sectors explain why some regions become popular destinations while others do not, and it accounts for variations across urban forms in different places in terms of their planning and marketing strategies.

Tourism also displays a dual effect on the urban landscapes of cities and towns. On the one hand, “vacationscape” (Gunn 1972) is created through multiple forces that work together, simultaneously becoming “places of cloning” (Castello 2010: xvii). Ringer (1998) proposes that tourism is constantly place-centered and constructed by means that both establish and falsify local reality. The tourism landscape has increasingly become
locally constructed, and destination communities both adapt to and modify tourism in such a way that is no longer easily divorced from the cultural mainstream. On the other hand, tourism forms the intervening variables that require newly designed morphological structures. They cannot be easily copied and, once built, will bring individuality and distinctiveness to their adjacent built environment. In North America, the rise of the “creative class” conceptualized by Florida (2002) has had a considerable influence on cultural distinctiveness as tourism is nurtured as a way to foster the competitive edge of cities and towns. It has an intimate relationship to morphology where the built form of the tourist destination becomes a complex representation of social, political, technological, and economic forces. Davis (2001: 127) notes that “histories, cultures, power relations, aesthetics and economics all combine at a place to create a context.” Knudsen et al. (2008) further argue that the locus of study for tourism is and should be the landscape, or tourism landscape, stemming from the humanistic tradition in geography and the end result of a process of social construction that has played out over a number of decades, and perhaps centuries and millennia (Minca and Oakes 2006).

The emergence of morphological thinking in tourism

The concepts of morphology and evolution in resort destinations were first introduced by Gilbert (Butler 2011), who addressed a prevalent phenomenon in seaside resort development in the UK. These were later separated and evolved in different directions, which, after some time intertwined together as evolutionary models between the 1970s and the 1990s (Brent 1997). In the generic model, Barrett identified several common features of resort morphology, such as the significance of the seafront to the structure and location of the commercial core, “distinct zonation” of visitor accommodation and residential areas, and an extension of settlement parallel to the coast (Pigram 1977: 525, Getz 1993: 584). Barrett’s model identifies a zone of frontal amenities that encompasses tourists and touristic activities and facilities, and observes that with distance from the central beachfront, tourism-related activities decrease, creating a “concentric pattern” of architectural and the phenomenological recreational patterns (Jeans 1990, Smith 1992a,b, Meyer-Arendt 1993). This pattern of development where the intensity decreases with distance is reflected in the market value of the land. In North America, Wolfe’s pioneering work on tourism geography in the 1950s examined the historical evolution of the resort area of Wasaga Beach, Ontario, Canada. This study also expands the scope and depth of the scholarly research on recreation migration, tourism flows, urban development, and demand systems.

In contrast, Stansfield and Rickert (1970) focus specifically on retail activities in resort towns, and develop a concept of the Recreational Business District (RBD) through studies of the New Jersey seashore as well as