Chapter 8

Economic Geographies of Tourism Revisited
From Theory to Practice

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Back in the mid-1990s, when we first embarked on the project that eventually resulted in the edited collection *The Economic Geography of the Tourist Industry* (Ioannides and Debbage, 1998), we were driven by our frustration that, at the time: (i) mainstream economic geography largely ignored the travel and tourism sector while (ii) the vast majority of tourism researchers were largely oblivious to theoretical discussions in economic geography. To a major extent our call reflected our respective roots in the study of geography, which had centered not on tourism but rather economic and urban geography. We argued that we could not quite comprehend this oversight given that some observers had already highlighted the explicitly capitalistic nature of tourism and the need to adopt a political economy approach in geographic examinations of the sector (Britton, 1991; Shaw and Williams, 1994; Ioannides, 1995). In retrospect we realize that much of our inspiration for this early work stemmed from a burning desire to legitimize ourselves and our chosen subject of study in the eyes of our fellow “mainstream” geographers. In other words, one could say that, at least to begin with, we were defensive, displaying the traits of insecurity and inferiority that Butler (2012) claims to be par for the course when it comes to tourism research.

Now, almost two decades later, we can sit back and reflect on what has transpired since those early days. The good news is the phenomenal explosion of literature relating tourism to the overall discipline of geography since the late 1990s. This growth in output reflects geography’s broader contribution to the study of various facets of tourism, which reveal “more than one paradigmatic approach towards the geography of tourism” (Hall and Page, 2009: 3); as Hall and Page put it, we can no longer talk about a single tourism geography but, rather, we have the appearance of tourism geographies (see also Gibson, 2008, 2009). The economic geography of tourism features as one of these approaches and, in fact, has become a growing area of preoccupation for many scholars especially since the emergence
of the “cultural turn” in economic geography (Thrift and Olds, 1996; Crang, 1997; Barnes, 2001; Debbage and Ioannides, 2004, 2012).

To be sure, the intellectual capital relating to the intersection of tourism and economic geography has grown in leaps and bounds in a matter of a decade. Theoretically stimulating discussions and debates have emerged, overall demonstrating that the area of tourism studies is beginning to throw off the shackles of inferiority associated with being a new subject (Butler, 2012). On the one hand, we now have a growing number of scholars fitting the mold of “tourism geography” but who certainly display an economic geography bent in their approach (Mosedale, 2006; Shaw and Williams, 2009; Hjalager, 2010; Brouder and Eriksson, 2012). On the other hand, a small but growing number of academics representing the various subdisciplines of human geography, including economic and urban geography as well as other related fields like urban studies and planning, offer important insights regarding tourism’s supply side (Fainstein and Gladstone, 1999; Hoffman et al., 2003; Gotham, 2005; Fainstein and Powers, 2007; Gladstone and Preau, 2008; Terry, 2009).

Nevertheless, it appears that one problem we have identified in the past (Ioannides and Debbage, 1998) – namely the isolationist stance plaguing much of tourism research in geography (see also Butler, 2012) – persists. To a large extent, most members of the so-called tourism geography group write in journals closely associated to tourism studies, including the Annals of Tourism Research, Tourism Management, or Current Issues in Tourism, while not surprisingly the one geography journal entirely dedicated to tourism, Tourism Geographies, has gained enormously in popularity as an outlet for these scholars’ work. Surprisingly, even one of the most important contributions concerning the state of the art in tourism geographies in recent years (Hall and Page, 2008) appeared in Tourism Management. Additionally, much of this work becomes “lost” in countless edited books, which in their own right may well be of high quality, but nevertheless address a limited audience. By contrast, with only a handful of exceptions (e.g. Tufts, 2004; Gibson, 2009), the very same authors for the most part avoid publishing in journals such as Economic Geography, Geoforum, Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, Progress in Human Geography, Antipode, Professional Geographer, or the Annals of the Association of American Geographers. Meantime, the small but growing number of human geographers (especially economic and urban geographers) who examine aspects relating to the tourism industry write for journals like the International Journal of Urban and Regional Research (e.g. Gotham, 2005) or Economic Geography (e.g. Terry, 2009), although their work does not yet seem to have been embraced by most tourism researchers.

That this remains a problem is very much the fault of many tourism geographers – including ourselves – who consistently preach to the choir rather than attempt to spread the fruits of their research to a broader audience of geographers. In other words, we tourism geographers are to blame for our academic isolation and this issue cannot be resolved until we take the plunge and begin submitting our work – at least our writings that specifically tie to tourism geography in its various guises – to so-called mainstream publications in geography.

Yet another issue extends beyond this problem. In an intriguing geography-related article, which ironically also appeared in a nongeographic journal (Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing), Coles et al. (2008) point out that for years some of us have lamented our ongoing failure to embrace economic geographic perspectives when theorizing about tourism and have sought to relay to the rest of our scientific community why the time is right to do so. What we have not done is consider how the crossbreeding of tourism and economic geography should actually play out. As Coles et al. point out there remain several practical “limits to
the degree to which we are able to develop new interpretations and understandings in studies of tourism inspired by and rooted in new economic geography” (2008: 322).

Chastened on this last point we wholeheartedly agree that after all this time we need to move on from mere theoretical discourse to a more action-oriented agenda. Space constraints restrict us from shifting far in this direction but in what follows we try to weave a more empirical bent to our area of focus on the economic geography of tourism by considering the literal explosion of research relating to the spatial dimensions of the tourism–air transportation interconnection. Before we do this, however, and given this volume’s primary objective, we summarize for our readership some of the major issues that have emerged in recent years regarding the new economic geography of tourism.

A Retrospective on the Economic Geography of Tourism

In his contribution to the volume *The Routledge Handbook of Tourism Geographies*, Bianchi (2012) reiterates his earlier argument (Bianchi, 2009) that the widespread embrace of the so-called “critical turn” in tourism studies, which ties to the “cultural turn” in economic geography, is problematic since it evades the political economy approach so vigorously argued for in the 1990s by observers like Britton (1991). Maintaining that “tourism geography has its own geography production and circulation” Gibson (2008: 418) also emphasizes the point that highlighting social and cultural matters in the study of tourism ends up diluting those issues that have to do with “political economy, industrial structure or relations of production” (Gibson, 2009: 528).

The appearance of such critiques is a sign that all is well when it comes to the discourse relating to the economic geography of tourism. For over a decade now we have witnessed intriguing pieces and stimulating debates on themes relating not only to the cultural turn in economic geography (e.g. Ateljevic, 2000; Aitchison, 2001; Milne and Ateljevic, 2001; Ateljevic et al., 2007) but also writings touching upon the broader mobilities paradigm to tourism (Hall and Page, 2009). For instance, recognizing tourism’s association with flows of capital, goods, and commodities authors like Mosedale (2006, 2008) and Judd (2006) utilize the concept of commodity chains to describe the structure and organization of the tourism sector and to show how inputs and outputs are interrelated.

Meanwhile, d’ Hauteserre (2006) questions the commodity chain concept, drawing inspiration from the “relational turn” (Yeung, 2005: 37) in economic geography. Relational geography stresses “the complex nexus of relations among actors and structures that effect dynamic changes in the spatial organization of economic activities” (Yeung, 2005: 37). It incorporates *inter alia* actor-network theory (ANT) as a means of grasping the workings of industrial districts, clusters, and learning regions. ANT, according to d’ Hauteserre, offers an improved way for conceptualizing the tourism-production system compared to commodity chains because it bypasses the latter’s excessively productionist bias by seeking to explain how “production and consumption are mediated in creating tourism experiences” (Debbage and Ioannides, 2012: 152). Although a relational economic geography of tourism may be weak in terms of explanatory power, it could be a useful approach for disentangling how tourism is shaped by both consumption and production processes. This links to the argument of Ateljevic and Doorne (2004: 298) that to best comprehend tourism we have to visualize “producers as ‘consumers’ and consumers as ‘producers’.”

While debates between advocates of a tourism-production system/political economy outlook as opposed to those inspired by the cultural and relational turns in geography have
become dominant, it is increasingly apparent that yet another, more recent, "turn" in economic geography has influenced certain tourism scholars. We are referring to the "evolutionary turn," a fresh approach for tackling regional development issues, which have always been a dominant theme in economic geography.

Evolutionary economic geography (EEG) applies core concepts and methodologies from evolutionary economics in the context of economic geography. It provides alternative explanations for the main explananda including agglomeration and regional growth differences. The starting point is to open the black box of organizations and to view organizations as competing on the basis of routines that are built up over time. . . . Routines can be understood as organizational skills, which cannot be reduced to the sum of individual skills. (Boschma and Frenken, 2006: 277)

In contrast to neoclassical location theory, which emphasizes the development of spatial agglomerations through rational decisions, EEG maintains that these agglomerations occur due to the "historically grown spatial concentration of knowledge residing in organizational routines. In this respect, there are several evolutionary mechanisms that may produce the spatial concentration of firms" (Boschma and Frenken, 2006: 279). In other words, EEG postulates that firm survival or failure through time relates to the amount of knowledge entrepreneurs accumulate over time. Individuals starting up a company, having gained previous experience in a similar line of work, are likelier to see their firm's survival. This occurs since "the routines of the old firm are successfully transferred to the new firm which increases the staying power of the entrant" (Brouder and Eriksson, 2012: 4).

Of course, "evolutionary terminology in economic geography is far from new" given that "evolution was central to humanistic and behavioral understandings of the ‘geography of enterprise’ in the 1960s. . .and Vernon’s product life cycle was widely utilized during the 1970s and 1980s" while "the hugely influential Marxist theorizations of the 1980s were centrally concerned with the long-term development of the capitalist space economy" (Coe, 2010: 82). Nevertheless, over the last two decades the explosion of work relating to concepts like "path dependence," previous experience, and the geographic origins of entrepreneurs signifies, according to Coe, that it is time to blend economic geography and evolutionary economics to better comprehend the space economy.

Evolutionary thinking has caught the attention of some tourism geographers who are specifically concerned with tourism’s role in regional development. During the 2013 annual conference of the Association of American Geographers in Los Angeles three sessions specifically relating to the theme of tourism geography and evolutionary research were organized reflecting this new interest. These included presentations on topics such as path dependency and its effect on resort transformation as well as microfirm survival.

Although tourism entrepreneurship itself has long been of interest to geographers (Shaw and Williams, 1998; Page et al., 1999; Ioannides and Petersen, 2003; Getz and Nilsson, 2004; Ateljevic and Page, 2009) it is only in the last 2 years that EEG has appeared as a point of departure in studying the success or failure of tourism businesses in economically peripheral regions. We refer specifically to Brouder and Eriksson (2012) whose empirical study in northern Sweden tested their hypotheses that: (i) entrants in the tourism sector with prior knowledge gained in similar sectors – so-called “spin-off entrepreneurs” – “have a higher chance of staying in business than other types of entrants without related competences and skills” (Brouder and Eriksson, 2012: 2) and (ii) that the entrepreneurs who are from the area and have both local “know-how and know-who” are far likelier to succeed than those who...
immigrate from elsewhere “because of access to network externalities and because the interregional variety of routines, competences and norms tends to be greater than the intraindustrial variation” (2012: 2). Arguing that their approach directly responds to calls for superior links between scholarship in tourism and economic literature (Ioannides, 2006), Brouder and Eriksson demonstrate that their hypotheses are confirmed, while also proving that surviving tourism firms contribute positively to employment through time. They maintain this finding has vital policy implications, especially in peripheral regions with limited economic growth options other than tourism.

The intersection between economic geography and tourism research remains a fertile area of study while the latest “turn” in the field, namely EEG, appears to be a useful avenue for further study whereby we can learn more about tourism’s contribution to regional development. This work offers the possibility of reigniting our previous calls (Debbage and Ioannides, 2012) for broadening the study of the economic geography of tourism by linking to existing work on innovation, knowledge spillovers, and learning regions. Already, Hjalager (2002, 2010) has maintained, among others, that innovation in the tourism sector stems from knowledge transferred through a variety of avenues including technology and regulation while Sorensen (2007) has investigated how social networks (both local as well as nonlocal) influence innovation. Meanwhile, Shaw and Williams (2009) have highlighted the necessity to further investigate innovation and knowledge transfer in tourism in order to comprehend the competitiveness of firms and destinations. Whether such contributions would benefit by adopting the EEG approach remains to be seen.

Regardless of where the study of the economic geography of tourism takes us over the next few years we take note of Coles et al. (2008) who point out serious limitations when applying theoretical concepts directly borrowed from economic geography to the study of tourism. To demonstrate this they examined tourism innovation on Cyprus, research which yielded the unexpected finding that academics’ understanding vis-à-vis that of practitioners when it comes to tourism innovation is far from identical. This finding alerted Coles et al. that one of the problems with the predominantly qualitative studies, which appear to be the major avenue through which researchers seek to disentangle highly fuzzy concepts in the economic geography of tourism, may be problematic. They state: “However alluring agenda-setting prescriptions may be, the time has come to move from ‘the why’ to more careful consideration of the ‘how’.” The aforementioned work of Brouder and Eriksson (2012), where within the realm of EEG they carried out a quantitative study of tourism entrepreneurs, provides a useful point of departure but it is clear that far more must be done from an empirical point of view to further our understanding of the economic geography of tourism.

In the following section we have chosen to demonstrate one very practical aspect relating to the economic geography of tourism. We are referring to the manner in which airline networks and flows influence resort development and the broader economic geography of tourism. In choosing to do this we are inspired partly by Hall and Page (2009) who maintain that the connection of tourism to transportation studies is not an area that has been explored in any depth. We begin first by situating our discussion within Castells’s (2000) conceptualization of changing flows of capital, information, and symbols.

**Flows of Capital**

Castells (2000) visualizes contemporary society based entirely on flows of factors like capital, technologies, information, images, and symbols. This space of flows is made up of three layers,
the most important of which, for the purposes of our discussion, is based on a system of nodes and hubs. Within such a network, which Castells perceives as an electronic web, some places function as hubs, which coordinate everything that goes into the network, whereas other places are linked-in nodes. Although Castells's argument is based entirely on what he terms “advanced services” such as finance, insurance, real estate, marketing, advertising, research and development, and so on, his discussion also has relevance in terms of tourist flows.

Indeed, despite many arguments regarding the so-called spatial fixity associated with tourism (Urry, 1990; Gotham, 2005), meaning that various visitor-related commodities can only be consumed at the site of production, it is obvious that individual destinations are dependent on flows linking them to markets and control centers. To begin with, whether a certain destination emerges as a popular venue for tourism or not depends not only on what natural or cultural amenities are on offer but its ability to attract capital in the form of investment and also visitors themselves. We have argued elsewhere (Ioannides and Debbage, 1998) that major tourism companies such as mass tour operators often demonstrate limited loyalty to individual places, preferring to concentrate on reproducible product types in numerous places, for reasons of risk minimization. Similarly, the manner in which transnational hotel chains operate in various destinations reflects that they have the power to quickly shut shop if they feel they are not getting a healthy enough return on their investment while choosing new settings, which may be more popular.

Where property developers, tour operators, transnational hotel chains, and airline companies choose to do business and where tourists choose to spend their holidays have clear implications for the flows of tourism-related capital. Importantly, such flows have significant consequences in terms of the fate of individual places, rendering some of these more vulnerable than others. Further, we have to factor in that while some places rise in popularity others, because of a combination of both internal and external factors (including the choices of the determinants of the aforementioned flows), wane over time. Importantly, if we also account for the issue of seasonality that affects certain destinations more than others we may end up with highly irregular flows of capital.

The rest of this chapter examines capital flows based on airline networks and discusses the implications these have on individual destination developments.

**A Case Study: The Economic Geography of Air Transportation and Tourism**

One key area of research where significant progress has occurred in recent years is at the intersection of the economic geography of air transportation and tourism. This is a highly illustrative example of Castells's flow of capital since both sectors (but especially the airline industry) can fundamentally restructure the relational position of many places (both small and large) through a complex global commercial and social network (Gibson, 2008). According to the US Department of Transportation (2011: 42), “the total output of civil aviation-related goods and services amounted to $1.3 trillion in 2009 and generated more than 10 million jobs, with earnings of almost $394.4 billion.”

The crucial role that air transportation plays in shaping the tourist product has been widely acknowledged in the literature (Britton, 1991; Debbage, 2002, 2013; Forsyth, 2006; Debbage and Alkaabi, 2008; Graham et al., 2008; Debbage and Gallaway, 2009; Lohmann et al., 2009; Duval, 2012; Duval and Koo, 2012). Transport is widely viewed as the key element that matches tourist demand (origin) with tourist supply (destination areas).
A pivotal moment in the evolution of this sort of research may well have been the 2005 Hamburg Aviation Conference, which largely examined how spatial variation in tourist traffic levels can shape new strategies for destinations, airlines, and airports. More importantly, several of the papers presented at the conference were then featured in a 2006 special issue of the *Journal of Air Transport Management*, one of the leading journals in the world focused on the air transport industry.

The Hamburg Conference opened with the Martin Kunz Memorial Lecture by Forsyth (2006), who suggested that tourism benefits (e.g. visitor expenditure), when accurately measured through computable general equilibrium models, can sometimes be key considerations in aviation policy decisions. In several case studies, Forsyth (2006) stressed the key role that aviation liberalization can play in determining the price and availability of air travel which, in turn, directly influences the spatial distribution of tourist flows and the total level of tourist demand. He argued that liberalization has been a major contributing factor in the rapid expansion of international tourism since it has driven down the real cost of air fares, expanded the availability of seats and routes flown, and provided new opportunities for lower-cost airlines to enter the marketplace.

In the same 2006 special issue, Bieger and Wittmer (2006) advocated that a systems model approach be utilized to fully analyze the interrelationships that exist between global air transportation networks and tourism. They argued (Bieger and Wittmer, 2006: 43) “the timing and frequency of flights, together with the nature of the airlines offering services, can effect the quality of the tourists arriving.” They suggested it becomes possible to see how different airline business models generate visitor streams in different ways, where diverse attraction-based destinations relying on a mix of business and leisure traffic tend to rely on full-service network carriers, while resort-based destinations with a heavy mix of leisure travelers may be more dependent on low-cost carriers and charter airlines.

Before the publication of this special issue in the *Journal of Air Transport Management*, the transportation literature rarely addressed the movement of tourists or leisure travel explicitly. Of course, most tourism-focused books and articles also tended to understudy air transportation, considering it as just one of several component parts of the international tourist industry. Although it is hard to determine cause and effect, it is certainly the case that since the publication of the 2006 special issue research focused on the symbiotic and reciprocal relationships between tourism and air transportation has increased dramatically in geography, transportation, and tourism journals.

An exhaustive list of all the contemporary research focused on tourism–air transport synergies is beyond the scope of this chapter but the work of Lohmann et al. (2009) stands out as an illustrative example of some broader trends. They examined how the growth of air transport networks and deregulation has allowed Singapore and Dubai to become major international tourism destinations. Lohmann et al. (2009) argued that to be successful places need more than just location or an attractive range of amenities. They also need a well-designed and implemented air transportation policy to develop tourism.

Wu et al. (2012) examined the impact of charter services on international tourism in Japan with a specific focus on Japan–China tourist flows. They suggested that chartered airlines have contributed to the geographic spread of tourism destinations in China since they reach locations previously not well served by the scheduled airlines. By contrast, Warnock-Smith and Morrell (2008) analyzed the differential geography of air transport liberalization in US–Caribbean markets and its impact on tourism-dependent economies. Based on a regression analysis, they found that a positive statistical relationship existed between air policy
reform and traffic/capacity growth with a flexible policy towards new carrier entry leading to greater output and competition levels. Other recent research has focused on the impact of the European Union/US Open Skies Agreement and how it has influenced the geography of origin-destination tourist flows across the North Atlantic (Button, 2009; Humphreys and Morrell, 2009), while Pentelow and Scott (2011) examined how aviation’s inclusion in international climate policy regimes might impact the Caribbean tourism industry.

All of the aforementioned articles have appeared in the *Journal of Air Transport Management* since the 2006 special issue, highlighting a broader trend where many transportation journals are increasingly open to publishing research focused on the tourism–airline interface. Both the tourism and geography journals have not been immune to these new trends, and *Tourism Management*, the *Journal of Transport Geography*, and *Tourism Geographies* have all recently published articles focused on the aviation–tourism linkage. Castillo-Manzano et al. (2011) examined the impact low-cost carriers have on niche tourism markets at five Spanish regional airports in a recent issue of *Tourism Management*. Based on interviews with nearly 500 tourist establishment managers and a discrete-choice model analysis they concluded that most tourist establishments considered low-cost carriers to be perfect substitutes for network carriers although travel agent managers questioned this, particularly with regard to promoting conference tourism. More recently, Graham (2013) examined the relationship between low-cost carriers and their choice of airport, concluding that the choice is very much determined by each carrier’s business model although over time a wide variety of models have evolved that complicates any generalized finding.

The *Journal of Transport Geography* has also published several articles focused on air transportation and tourism. For instance, Warnock-Smith and O’Connell (2011) examined the impact of air policy on incoming tourist traffic in the Caribbean and Middle East. Based on a structural equation model, they concluded that “it was still possible to hypothesize, based on the empirical results, that movements towards deregulation and liberalization of the aviation sector does not always represent the only or most appropriate strategy for facilitating further catalytic spending in local economies” (Warnock-Smith and O’Connell, 2011: 273). They point out that in the Middle East region record tourism growth has been accompanied by liberal air service agreements where local carriers are protected vertically through a comprehensive multisector cooperation policy. In addition, Davison and Ryley (2010) analyzed the tourism destination preferences of low-cost airline users in the East Midlands region of the UK. Based on an air travel household survey and chi-square analysis, they concluded that significant demand existed for cultural tourism-based opportunities and that the demand for an annual holiday appeared relatively inelastic despite the price-sensitive nature of the low-cost airline market.

*Tourism Geographies* has also recently published research on the linkage between air transportation and tourism including Liasidou (2013), who conducted a two-step cluster analysis to determine how airline strategy influenced British tourist decision-making processes when visiting Cyprus. She found that tourists as consumers are very familiar with contemporary airline strategies and utilize this knowledge in preparing their holiday itineraries. Perhaps one of the most useful contributions is provided by Duval (2012) who essentially outlined the critical issues emerging in air transport and tourism based on a state-of-the-art literature review. He argued that three key issues have emerged: better understanding of the evolving economic regulation of international commercial air transport; analyzing the interconnections between destinations, connectivity, and airline business models; and studying aviation-related emissions and climate policies. Duval (2012: 2) argued that these issues will
profoundly influence air transportation and “have immense relevance to the structure and intensity of global tourist flows.”

Beyond the academic journals, there are very few specialist texts focused on aviation and tourism but a major exception to the rule is Aviation and Tourism: Implications for Leisure Travel, edited by Graham et al. (2008). A key underlying theme in the book is elaborating on the complex two-way, reciprocal nature of the airline–tourism relationship and the importance of recognizing this key dynamic during any decision-making process. Graham et al. (2008) also concur with Duval (2012) that emerging airline business models, innovation, and climate change have the potential to substantively impact the geography of tourism in the future but they also note that any future research should also consider how the emerging giants of India and China will reconfigure global tourist markets.

Overall, the emerging field of tourism/air transportation studies seems to be alive and well, which may partly reflect the increasingly substantive ways in which both industries have continued to influence the economic geography of origin–destination tourist flows in recent years. Referring back to Cole et al.’s (2008) plea to return to the practicalities of applying concepts of economic geography to the study of tourism, we are struck by the absence of the “critical turn” literature in much of the recent research focused on the economic geography of the air transport–tourism interface. Instead, the air transport/tourism research largely sticks to conventional positivistic spatial science in examining how airline policy shapes the economic geography of tourism, although it is based on a very rigorous and accountable methodological foundation, unlike the fuzzy concepts that continue to envelop much of the more critical geography of tourism.

The existing disconnect between these two forms of discourse needs to be remedied. Indeed, Goetz et al. (2009) has recently suggested that transport geography represents a fertile subfield in which a more critical geography can be integrated with more conventional spatial analysis. Duval and Koo (2012: 213) have piggybacked this plea by suggesting that “a mix of different approaches (a hybridized approach) will help generate diverse perspectives on the interplay between the politics of international air access and tourist mobilities.” We encourage this sort of thinking as the economic geography of tourism literature continues to grapple with issues of both theory and practice, and a proliferation of methodological proclivities.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

As we mentioned earlier, Hall and Page (2009) coined the phrase geographies of tourism to reflect the pluralistic nature of contemporary research focused on better understanding tourism’s spatial attributes. Given the plurality of approaches, we believe an economic geographies of tourism has emerged in recent years largely inspired by the quantity and quality of work focused on the various so-called “turns” in economic geography and related disciplines (Debbage and Ioannides, 2012). Some of this work includes research focused on cultural commodification and the experience economy, mobilities, commodity chains, ANT and the relational turn, tourism industry clusters and learning regions, entrepreneurship and innovation, and, most recently, evolutionary economic geographies of tourism.

That said, we are reminded by Coles et al. (2008) that the new economic geographies of tourism needs to move beyond mere advocacy to a more pragmatic and practical adoption of best practice to better understand the spatial dynamics of tourist behavior and the tourism industry. They suggest that while the new economic geographies of tourism “may hold
considerable promise for advancing our understanding of tourism production and distribution, some theory and concept may not adequately reflect what happens on the ground” (Coles et al., 2008: 320). To that end, we have suggested that the recent research focused on better understanding how the economic geography of air transportation shapes and influences the geography of origin–destination tourist flows offers some hope in this direction. Much of it appears grounded in empirically rigorous, spatial analysis although curiously little of this literature makes reference to the cultural and critical turn or, indeed, any of the other turns that are so influential in other arenas. Although this tension between theoretical and management-related research is likely to continue, it is also clear that the broader economic geographies of tourism literature is increasingly vibrant and likely to contribute significantly to the broader development of spatiality in tourism research.

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