

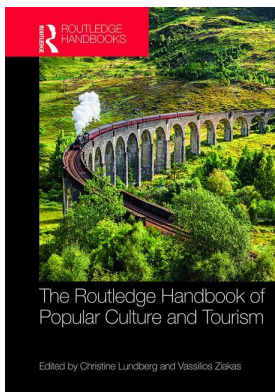
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## **The Routledge Handbook of Popular Culture and Tourism**

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### **Lifestyle tourism**

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## LIFESTYLE TOURISM

Combining place attachment and involvement in  
a destination management approach*Michael J. Gross***Setting the scene: introduction**

Tourism destinations have an ever-present imperative to create and sustain competitive advantage, which has led to increasingly large volumes of marketing appeals about a seemingly limitless range of destinations, all contending for the traveler's attention. Differentiation has become difficult to achieve since any number of destinations can now provide the benefits sought by any particular group of travelers, and destinations have become highly substitutable (Pike, 2002). It has become common in the postmodern world for destinations to conceive themselves as simulated places that have been created for consumption and within which consumption can occur (Urry, 1995), such as a Disney theme park or Las Vegas. This has happened in response to the much more open and fluid consumer culture ushered in by postmodernism, which has required a more adaptable and flexible consideration of the relationship between the tourism experience and the tourist (Hanefors & Mossberg, 1998). But are such simulated places the only possible competitive strategic option for destinations? What alternatives might exist for a destination that wishes to market itself in a different way? In their discussion of postmodern tourism, Oakes and Minca (2004) argue that the most revealing quality of tourism is the expression of postmodern subject formation as tourism occurs in actual places, and that tourism presents an enormous range of field sites for study. The present study engaged this challenge, and took the study of postmodern subjectivity out of the concept's textual home and into a living tourism environment where postmodern subjectivity could be empirically tested, the Australian tourism destination of the state of South Australia.

Increased competition to attract tourists has given rise to a wide range of destination marketing strategies. Typically, this will involve the promotion of scenic environments, iconic attractions, or events that appeal to specific target markets. In contrast, South Australia has pursued a strategy based on the attraction of the lifestyle offered within the state by attempting to achieve a position as a lifestyle tourism destination (SATC, 2002a). The strategy relies on a range of expressions of popular culture represented by the destination's lifestyle attributes, posing a unique comprehensive view of popular culture forms integrated and marketed with the concept of lifestyle. This offers a perspective on popular culture tourism suggesting that a destination may integrate and market its popular culture attributes, products, and experiences. An important implication of this approach is that the lifespan of popular culture tourism can be extended, or

even become sustainable, since it is built on an array of long-lasting destination characteristics and assets. The study reported in this chapter sought to examine the likely effectiveness of this strategy with four considerations guiding the research design: (1) the selection of South Australia as the setting for the research, (2) the choice of 'tourism experience' as the attitude object, and the use of (3) involvement, and (4) place attachment as measures of visitor attitudes towards tourism experiences.

Lifestyle tourism is an emerging concept in the marketing of tourism destinations, as will be represented in the following discussion of South Australia. As lifestyle aspects of leisure travel become increasingly important and travelers continue to search for new experiences, the range of destination marketing opportunities increases (Kelly, 2002). In 1998, the Australian Local Government Association (2016) initiated the designation of lifestyle regions in a number of places in the country (Larcombe & Cole, 1998). Annual reports on the 'State of the Regions' provide a stock take of the economic well-being of Australia's regions and their prospects for economic development and employment growth. Lifestyle regions are one of six types of regions that form a framework for regional development, which also includes the five other types of knowledge-intensive, dispersed metro, independent city, resource-based, and rural regions. The characteristics of lifestyle regions are loosely defined and include such elements as coastal areas with low employment levels and high reliance on transfer payments, environments that have attracted retirees, tourists, holidaymakers, and people in the workforce choosing a non-metropolitan and coastal lifestyle, and are sometimes characterized by elements of popular culture such as reference to lifestyle regions as 'sea change' regions after a popular Australian television series (Beer, Maude, & Pritchard, 2003, p. 50)

Tourism destinations that lack an apparent competitive *raison d'être* are obliged to create one, and South Australia has undertaken a strategy of using the lifestyle of the state as a marketing tool. The SATC, the destination management organization for the state, considers that South Australia has a relaxing, enjoyable, high-quality lifestyle, and believes that the state contains the ingredients necessary to develop lifestyle tourism as a key strategic asset. The good living lifestyle brand promotes South Australia as offering: a clean and green destination with a Mediterranean climate conducive to outdoor dining, relaxation, fun, health, rejuvenation, an experience that can be challenging, intellectual, and innovative all at once. The main lifestyle tourism attributes of the state are considered to include expressions of popular culture such as: wine, food, events, nature-based/ecotourism experiences, coastal experiences, the capital city Adelaide as gateway to the Outback, induction center for Aboriginal tourism, arts, culture, history and heritage, sport, recreation, and adventure (SATC, 2009).

The lifestyle concept has featured in SATC's strategic planning since the early 2000's (SATC, 2002b) in a variety of contexts, indicating a focus that made the state an ideal location for the present study. Lifestyle is integrated in the destination marketing strategy from the perspective of vision, consumer trends, target markets, positioning, and branding. Specific strategies include encouraging special interest tourism, positioning South Australia as a destination in which one will find an authentic Australian experience, and providing experiences that reflect local lifestyles. The overall strategic direction for tourism in the state is towards providing a diverse range of activities and experiences.

It is in the tourism community's interest to explore to what extent the lifestyle offerings of a destination may be unique and distinctive, and how that knowledge might be developed into competitive advantage. While lifestyle has been used as a branding tool in the general marketing environment for a variety of products and services, such as consumer electronics, furniture, health care, magazines, real estate, and television programs (Pegler, 1996), the use of lifestyle as a branding tool for a tourism destination has had limited application or theoretical exploration,

a fact that provides productive ground for the investigation of the use of lifestyle as a tourism destination branding tool both from the perspective of the tourist and that of the tourism professionals who are responsible for the implementation of marketing strategies and tactics. Therefore the purpose of this study was to determine what, if any, theoretical basis may exist to support the viability and utility of a lifestyle tourism strategy for the marketing of a destination.

## Theoretical underpinnings

### *Lifestyle in a postmodern tourism context*

In popular culture, lifestyle has come to mean that which is trendy and generally contributes to an attractive and comfortable existence (Chaney, 1996). Edensor (2002) suggested that a postmodern view of lifestyle includes recognition of increasing trends towards broader notions of sociality and consumer choice and taste, as well as reflexive, technically skilled, self-authoritative individuals who construct and reconstruct their identities and lifestyles. Among the central features associated with postmodernism are: the effacement of the boundary between high and mass/popular culture; a stylistic promiscuity favoring eclecticism and the mixing of codes; parody, pastiche, irony, playfulness, and the celebration of the surface 'depthlessness' of culture; the decline of the originality/genius of the artistic producer; and the assumption that art can only be repetition (Featherstone, 1991). The sociological discourse of postmodern tourism consists of two theoretical frameworks – the 'simulational' and the 'other' (Munt, 1994). The simulational line of scholarship has focused around the analysis of 'hyperreal' experiences, using simulated theme parks and other contrived attractions as manifestations of typical postmodern environments (Acland, 1998; Baudrillard, 1983; Belk, 1996; Johns & Gyimothy, 2003; Pretes, 1995; Ritzer & Liska, 1997). Conceptualizations of the 'other' postmodern tourism stress the search for the 'real' and point to the growing appeal of the natural environment as expressions of postmodernism (Galani-Moutafi, 2000; Goulding, 2000; Urry, 1990a). Urieli (1997) suggests that the two theoretical frameworks are not mutually exclusive, but are rather complementary, and reflect the 'both-and' nature of postmodern theories, whereby conceptualizations of postmodern tourism depart from the tendency of modernist theories to homogenize the tourism experience as a general type, and postmodern tourism is characterized by a multiplicity of motivations, experiences, and environments.

The postmodern tourism consumer may well remove the impetus from the standardization and globalization of tourism products. Such tourists will require more individualistic and highly developed products, likely demanding greater variety and choice of tourism products (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007, p. 197). As Cohen (1979) has suggested, different kinds of people may desire different modes of touristic experiences; hence *the* tourist does not exist as a type. It is all about the individual and how meeting their personal preferences affirms their individuality. A postmodern counter-movement of consumers against the McDonaldization of consumer products as described by Belk (1996) has also been manifested in the tourism industry. An example of the operationalization of this phenomenon has been the introduction of boutique, or lifestyle hotels (Munsters & Freund de Klumbis, 2005), which operate as unique properties of 50–100 rooms, with attention to fine detail and individual decoration. Lifestyle hotels serve as an alternative to the traditional 'box' hotels, and target customers who seek a more customized hospitality experience with higher levels of personal service. They are predominantly non-chain operated, although traditional box hotel companies have entered the lifestyle hotel market, with Starwood launching the 'W' brand in 1998, and Intercontinental Hotels Group introducing the 'Hotel Indigo' brand in 2004. The entry of larger companies into this market suggests a recognition of

increasing levels of demand from postmodern tourists seeking more customized and individualized tourism and hospitality experiences (Pizam, 2015).

In an investigation of lifestyle tourism it is important to move beyond the study of tourism as a commodity, and to recognize the experiential aspects of tourism. Sternberg (1997) has characterized the literature on tourism experience as a struggle between a camp that laments the passing of the genuine art of travel (Boorstin, 1963), and one that celebrates the deeper quest for authenticity (MacCannell, 1976). Critics of the latter camp reject the 'pseudo-event' quality of postmodern tourism, while critics of the former camp object to its elitist nature, and call for a more inclusive attitude about what constitutes the tourism experience. MacCannell (1976) is considered to have recognized the importance of the authenticity concept for tourism analysis, with authentic experiences characterized as the worthwhile and spontaneous experience of travel, and having the elements of spontaneity, worth, and genuineness (Pearce & Moscardo, 1986).

With the growth of knowledge of tourism consumer behavior (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007), it is now more possible and realistic to conceptualize a lifestyle tourism experience, as our understanding and the tools available to examine the components of that construction are more available, deployable, accurate, and ultimately more useful. The research work done in the consumer literature in recent decades by such authors as Hirschman and Holbrook writing together (1982) and in combination with other authors (Hirschman & Stampfl, 1980; Holbrook, Chestnut, Oliva, & Greeneleaf, 1984; Holbrook, O'Shaughnessy, & Bell, 1990) has advanced the state of knowledge of experiential consumption and demonstrated the utility of such knowledge for practical application in industry. Consumption experience has also been conceptualized within the postmodern dialogue, sometimes viewed from a critical perspective on the commodification of experience (Holbrook, 2001).

Researching in the areas of tourist motivation and typologies, Prentice (2004) identified three sociological paradigms that described the purposes of tourism in terms of consumption experience. The first two, the romantic paradigm and the mass tourism paradigm, described tourism respectively as personal enlightenment, and as escape from the everyday tedium of work. Prentice described the third paradigm of lifestyle formation as 'becoming' rather than 'being' through tourism, whereby tourism activities are undertaken with the specific purpose of expressing an aspect or multiple aspects of lifestyle through the consumption of tourism experiences. He likened the lifestyle formation paradigm to a modular approach to the tourism experience, with a blurring of boundaries between producer and consumer, and with the construction of the experience increasingly shared between producer and consumer. This perspective was supported by Richards and Wilson (2006), who contended that many postmodern tourists are becoming tired of encountering the serial reproduction of culture in different destinations, and are searching for alternatives. In their conceptual paper, they offered lifestyle as an important component in considering the increasingly creative skilled consumption undertaken by tourists. They proposed that as tourists become increasingly creative in their search for tourism experiences that connect with their lifestyles, creative tourists are in essence 'prosumers,' engaged in a combination of skilled consumption and skilled production. They cited lifestyle entrepreneurs as examples of this, such as the avid surfer who either becomes a professional surfer, or else opens a surf-related business as a means of supporting a lifestyle preference.

Chaney (1996) provides an insightful summarizing thought to this discussion of lifestyle in a postmodern tourism context highlighting the simultaneous operation of conflicting forces sometimes present in the contradictory nature of postmodernism, and reinforcing Uriely's (1997) view that the 'simulational' and 'other' exist complementarily: "There is a necessary tension between a global rationality imposed by cultural corporations seeking economies of scale

in the manufacture of taste, who are opposed by local knowledges which diffuse, subvert and appropriate commodities and services for 'irrational' styles" (p. 84). The present study examines these forces in a destination management context.

### ***Combining involvement and place attachment***

Consumer involvement can be defined as the perceived personal importance and/or interest consumers attach to the acquisition, consumption, and disposition of a good, service, or an idea (Mowen & Minor, 1998, p. 64). From the early conceptual work (Bloch & Bruce, 1984; Selin & Howard, 1988) linking leisure with involvement, most leisure involvement research has focused on activity contexts (Dimanche & Havitz, 1994). Specific tourism involvement studies have been less prevalent, and include grouped touristic activities (Dimanche, Havitz, & Howard, 1991); opinion leadership (Jamrozny, Backman, & Backman, 1996); travel motivation and destination selection (Josiam, Smeaton, & Clements, 1999); tourist profiles (Gursoy & Gavcar, 2003); destination branding (Ferns & Walls, 2012); backpacking (Akatay, Cakici, & Harman, 2013); and sport travel (Brown, Smith, & Assaker, 2016).

The reason for wide research interest in leisure involvement is that, relative to other products and services, touristic activities tend to engender high levels of both enduring and situational involvement (Havitz & Howard, 1995). In a paper reviewing 52 leisure involvement data sets over a ten-year period, Havitz and Dimanche (1999) concluded that involvement has proven to be a reasonably good variable for explaining and predicting leisure behavior. The same authors have also affirmed that the consumer involvement profile (CIP) multidimensional scale originally developed by Laurent and Kapferer (1985) has proved reliable and valid in touristic contexts (Dimanche & Havitz, 1994). Consistent with these findings, the CIP scale was selected for use in the present study, which examined the applicability of a modified version of the CIP scale, using the attitude object of tourism experiences to better understand the nature of tourists' involvement.

Place attachment is conceived as an affective bond or link between people and specific places (Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001). Leisure researchers have studied place attachment primarily as a psychological element of recreation experiences (Williams, 2002). The place attachment construct has been defined as having two distinct dimensions: place identity, which refers to a symbolic or affective attachment to a place, and place dependence, which refers to a functional attachment to a place (Kajan, 2014; Loureiro, 2014; Suntikul & Jachna, 2016).

The study of involvement and place attachment in combination is an emerging stream in leisure and tourism research. There is growing evidence suggesting involvement with activities leads to attachment to settings (Kyle, Bricker, Graefe, & Wickham, 2004). The use of the place attachment and involvement constructs in combination has occurred only recently in leisure studies, and in the context of recreation. Moore and Graefe (1994) used the conceptual frameworks of activity specialization and place attachment to study recreation trail users, finding predictive relationships that were moderated by frequency of use. Bricker and Kerstetter (2000) studied whitewater recreationists, using involvement to measure levels of specialization and levels of place attachment to a particular river. A relationship was noted between dimension levels of specialization and place attachment. Moore and Scott (2003) used commitment and place attachment to study users of a trail in a park, and found predictive relationships between the dimensions. Kyle, Graefe, Manning, and Bacon (2003) investigated the relationship between activity involvement and place attachment through a study of hikers on a particular trail. A relationship was also noted between dimension levels of involvement and place attachment, along with some predictive properties of a proposed model. Their analysis of data gathered

from hikers on the Appalachian Trail in the eastern United States has provided the basis for a number of studies along similar lines of enquiry, all of which have contributed insights into the underlying motivations for recreationists' engagement in specific leisure pursuits and visitation to specific recreation settings (Kyle, Graefe, Manning, & Bacon, 2004). Hwang, Lee, and Chen (2005) sampled groups of national park visitors in Taiwan, finding that both involvement and place attachment had positive effects on perceived service quality and satisfaction. These results suggested the value of combining involvement and place attachment as measures in the present study of tourism experiences. By combining examination of the dimensions of involvement with those of place attachment, the present study sought to assess the suitability of measuring both in a tourism context.

### **Study methodology and findings**

The study research design consisted of two sequential mixed method phases. Phase 1 established the meaning of lifestyle tourism among members of the South Australia tourism industry, in order to ascertain to what extent the concept could offer a competitive advantage for the marketing of a tourism destination. This phase asked whether professionals in the tourism industry recognized lifestyle tourism as a concept, and what meaning, if any, lifestyle tourism had for them. Phase 2 considered the perceptions of the consumer, and was an examination of the dimensionality of lifestyle tourism with the aim of obtaining an understanding of how tourists in South Australia perceived the concept. The four research objectives of the study were to:

1. develop an understanding of the concept of lifestyle tourism;
2. develop a model representative of the proposed elements of lifestyle tourism;
3. develop a method for measuring lifestyle tourism;
4. test the measurement method using the model developed of lifestyle tourism.

The first research objective was pursued through qualitative methods in Phase 1, which was an exploratory analysis of lifestyle tourism. Phase 1 sought to examine whether industry practitioners understood and supported the concept of destination lifestyle and the extent to which they had participated in activities consistent with the aims of a marketing strategy based on lifestyle. A total of 25 respondents from the South Australia tourism industry participated in interviews and focus groups using a sampling strategy intended to assure sectoral balance, with professionals participating from across the state tourism industry.

The remaining three research objectives were pursued through quantitative methods in Phase 2, which was an examination of the dimensionality of lifestyle tourism. Phase 2 integrated the Phase 1 findings into an instrument that was used to survey visitors to South Australia. The personal experiences of the tourists, that is, their involvement in the destination, and their attachment to place were used as indicators by which to measure the degree to which lifestyle tourism is rooted in unique, place-specific experiences.

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed to check the dimensionality of the survey instrument before using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to establish a measurement model for the manner in which the instrument measured the constructs of tourists' involvement and place attachment in tourism experiences. Place attachment was conceptualized as a multidimensional construct consisting of place identity and place dependence. Tourism involvement was also conceptualized as a multidimensional construct consisting of centrality to lifestyle, attraction, and self expression. As South Australia markets itself using the food and wine aspects of the lifestyle of the destination as a point of difference, a lifestyle dimension was also included that attempted

to measure tourists' attitudes of how food and wine feature in their tourism experiences in the state. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was then used to test the relationships between the involvement and place attachment constructs representing lifestyle tourism.

Three themes emerged from the Phase 1 findings:

1. lifestyle tourism as experience;
2. the role of food and wine in lifestyle tourism;
3. the importance of place attachment in lifestyle tourism.

Phase 1 findings were integrated into the quantitative methods for Phase 2, through a survey instrument formulated using the involvement and place attachment constructs. Following a pilot study to test the instrument, the main survey was conducted with tourists ( $n = 476$ ) in five South Australian tourism regions from November 2004 through May 2005 that measured respondents' levels of involvement and place attachment for tourism experiences in South Australia.

EFA of the data generated six dimensions proposed to represent lifestyle tourism: *centrality to lifestyle*, *attraction*, *self-expression*, *food & wine*, *place dependence*, and *place identity*. CFA was used to develop and test a measurement model for the six dimensions contained within the constructs of involvement and place attachment, substantiating that the survey instrument resulted in a summated scale that reliably and validly measured separate dimensions of lifestyle tourism. SEM was then used to develop a structural model that was found to effectively measure the relationships between the constructs of involvement and place attachment representing lifestyle tourism (see Gross, Brien, & Brown, 2008; Gross & Brown, 2006, 2008). The structural model, showing coefficients in standardized form, is shown in Figure 39.1. The configuration of the latent constructs was of the involvement construct consisting of the four dimensions of *centrality to lifestyle* (8 items), *attraction* (6 items), *self expression* (6 items), *food & wine* (3 items), and the place attachment construct consisting of the two dimensions of *place dependence* (4 items), and *place identity* (4 items). The key structural model fit statistics are shown in Table 39.1.

### **Implications for popular culture tourism: conceptualizing lifestyle tourism**

The findings of the study make a contribution to the body of popular culture tourism knowledge in both theory and practice. From a theoretical standpoint, the study validates the view that, in a South Australian context, a theoretical basis exists to support the viability and utility of a lifestyle tourism strategy for the marketing of a destination. It also recognizes the viability of combining involvement and place attachment in a tourism context. From a practical standpoint, the study provides a validated model that can be used by destination managers and operators to diagnose and measure the elements of lifestyle tourism that are relevant to their destination.

Table 39.1 Summary of structural model fit statistics

Model	Chi-square	DF	Chi-square/DF	P-Value	CFI	RMSEA	90% C.I. RMSEA
Final SEM	1177	414	2.843	.000	.912	.062	(.058, .066)



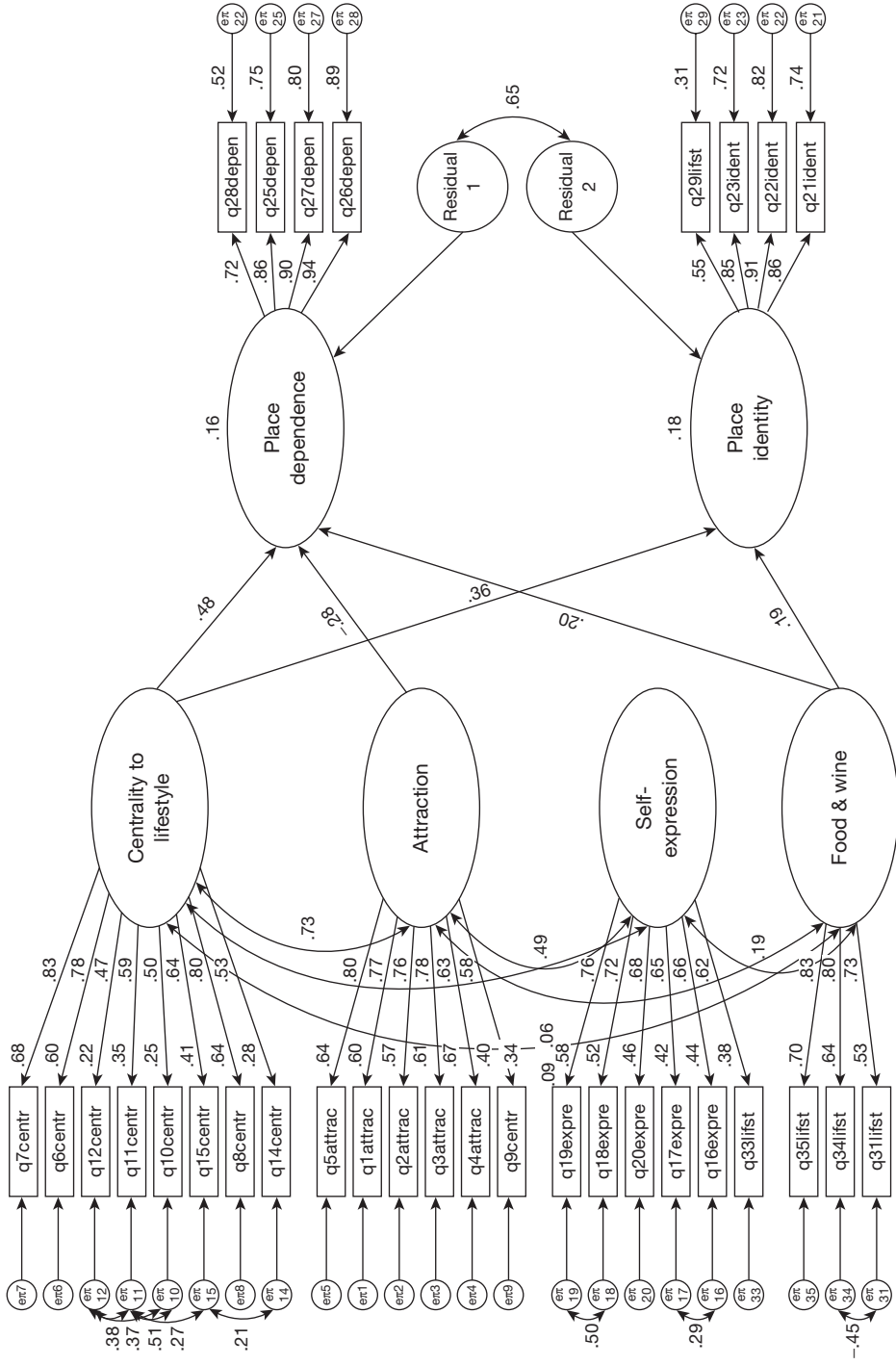


Figure 39.1 Structural model of lifestyle tourism constructs.

Lifestyle tourism is not theorized as a type of special interest/niche tourism, but rather as an umbrella concept that potentially includes a wide range of niches. This study is about the importance of tourism experiences in tourists' lifestyles, and how that importance relates to the places where the tourism experiences are consumed. Lifestyle tourism was conceived as the relationship between the levels of place attachment of tourists to a destination and their levels of involvement in tourism experiences in that destination. The essence of the conceptualization of lifestyle tourism in the present study is the relationship as revealed in the structural model between the involvement dimensions of *centrality to lifestyle* and *food & wine* and the place attachment dimensions of *place dependence* and *place identity*.

Thus, lifestyle tourism may be said to exist in those settings in which the key involvement dimension of *centrality to lifestyle* is observed to relate positively and significantly with the place attachment construct's dimensions of *place dependence* and *place identity*. 'Setting' in this usage denotes the simultaneous consideration of the relationship between the involvement and place attachment constructs as represented in the study's structural model. A key additional element of lifestyle tourism would be the particular involvement dimension(s) provided by the destination under study. In the present study, *food & wine* was such a dimension in a South Australian setting. It is expected, however, that different dimensions of popular culture are likely to emerge as significant in other destinations. While the postmodern debates around authenticity versus inauthenticity may inform the environment in which the concept of lifestyle tourism may be said to exist, those debates cannot completely account for the concept. There will be enough room in existing and emerging markets to accommodate MacCannell's (1976) tourists in search of authenticity and Urry's (1990b) post-tourists. Evidence for this is seen in the expansion of the Disney theme parks around the world (Tokyo in 1983, Paris in 1992, Hong Kong in 2005, Shanghai in 2016) occurring simultaneously with the growth of continually more inventive and esoteric forms of alternative tourism (Macbeth, 2000; Mason, 2000; McGehee & Norman, 2001). As Walter (1982) expressed, the opportunities for discovery abound, and there is no limit to what may be found. Existing and emerging markets will be sufficiently large to allow the coexistence of an increasing variety of niche markets, and the tourism industry will need to develop strategic visions and operational delivery skills that present a flexible menu approach to product and service provision to those markets.

As a practical matter, the tourism industry needs to bring operational order to the postmodern explosion of variety of consumer choice. The industry can no longer rely on a business model that considers demand to follow supply. Rather, the tourism industry will need to develop increasingly sophisticated skills in the supply and delivery of customized experiences that match the identified needs of consumers. The findings of the present study suggest a number of ways that lifestyle tourism may have utility in the marketing of tourism experiences in a state such as South Australia. First, lifestyle is among the most stable and enduring qualities of a destination (Hjalager, 2004), and may provide insulation from the often fleeting and volatile nature of consumer tastes and popular culture (Larson, Lundberg, & Lexhagen, 2013). Brands that are built on less enduring features appear less stable, and vulnerable to the boom or bust cycles that plague destinations that chase trendy, often transient images (Whang, Yong, & Ko, 2016). Many lifestyle destinations exhibit characteristics that allow them to adapt to changing circumstances without losing the integrity of their offerings, which renders the place less sensitive to the fleeting fashions and postmodern distractions of tourists' experience appetites (Richards & Wilson, 2006). When world or national events, such as the destruction of the World Trade Center in New York on September 11, 2001, produce rapid, massive, and long-lasting impacts on tourism behavior (Michman, Mazze, & Greco, 2003), lifestyle destinations may have a natural resilience because of the intrinsic value they offer tourists.

Second, a lifestyle brand is built on a range of tangible and intangible attractions and should therefore be more durable than a destination based primarily on a single attraction. As a state lacking an iconic attraction, South Australia has assembled a range of complementary features that are bundled under the umbrella term of lifestyle. Organizations that market, develop, and manage places are well advised to aim for some diversification in both their industries and their target markets (Kotler, Haider, & Rein, 1993), given that a range of attractions parceled under a unifying theme is likely to assist in the strategic placement of the destination.

Third, the concept of lifestyle operates along a spectrum comprehensive enough to make both the marketing of a narrowly focused single activity as meaningful as marketing an array of experiences. Even when a lifestyle attraction appeals primarily to one segment in the market, for example, divers attracted to a dive tourism destination, elements of the destination can also appeal in terms of a broad range of activities that fit the varied lifestyles of popular culture tourists.

Finally, marketers describe the need to live the brand (Bendapudi & Bendapudi, 2005; Gotsi & Wilson, 2001), which refers to the passion and authenticity with which brand champions advocate and model the values represented by their brand. The nature of lifestyle as a way of life (Veal, 2000) represents an ongoing opportunity to truly live the brand of the destination.

As the fields of popular culture tourism research and destination management develop, the directions and the methods used to pursue those directions will reach for and achieve increasingly high levels of creativity, complexity, and sophistication. The present study brings the fields a step closer in the search for understanding of the complex relationships between tourists and the places they visit. Like the broad notion of lifestyle itself, the range of possible destinations in which the concept of lifestyle tourism could be explored is extensive. This study contributes to that discourse and suggests a framework for the future development of a research agenda of this kind.

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