

# *Aspects of Tourism*

## **Classic Reviews in Tourism**



*Edited by*

### **ASPECTS OF TOURISM 3**

**Series Editors:** Chris Cooper (*University of Queensland, Australia*),  
Michael Hall (*University of Otago, New Zealand*)  
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Chris Cooper

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## Chapter 1

# ***Progress in Tourism Research***

CHRIS COOPER

*Progress in Tourism, Recreation and Hospitality Management* was launched in 1989 and ran to six volumes before reinventing itself as a quarterly refereed journal *Progress in Tourism and Hospitality Research*, now the *International Journal of Tourism Research*. In a sense the history of the publication reflects the development of the subject areas, partly as it was responsive to the needs of the research community, but also in an attempt to provide leadership and direction.

In the first editorial preface, I was critical of existing research in the field. Back in the late 1980s it was possible to identify a range of issues that are still familiar today:

- The field of tourism research remains bedevilled by conceptual weakness and fuzziness (Cooper, 1989; Cohen, 1974; Britton, 1979; Dann, Nash and Pearce, 1988). For example, there remains confusion and no real agreement over terminology, and this has led to a deep-rooted lack of rigour.
- Lack of focus remains an issue (Pearce, 1993). Research interests and foci sprawl across both the sectors of tourism and academic subject area, reinforcing the need for a disciplined approach and a more tightly focused research agenda.
- Tourism is still a relative newcomer to the academic world. Much of the research remains descriptive, often based upon one-off case studies, specific destinations or problems, still concerned with measurement but only exceptionally making links and identifying relationships (Sheldon *et al.*, 1987; Pearce, 1999). Attempts to build a core of theory or to make generalisations are rare, accentuating the fragmentation and lack of an organising framework that has characterised tourism research in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century.

- As if these issues were not enough, tourism research remains handicapped by problems with data sources, although the work of the World Tourism Organization has done much to improve matters since the first volume of *Progress* was published. Nonetheless, the quality and compatibility of much tourism data remain problematic and hold back the field from serious research and statistical manipulation.

It can be argued that these characteristics of tourism research condemn it to the 'pre-science' or 'pre-paradigmatic' stage of the development of a subject area (Echtner & Jamal, 1997; Pearce, 1993). Taking Kuhn's (1970) notion of paradigms, the current stage of the development of tourism research clearly does not fit the concept of a fully fledged paradigm. Kuhn's approach would therefore suggest that the danger for tourism research is that if it remains fragmented amongst myriad disciplines and subjects, who often do not speak the same academic language, then it will remain a shallow and loosely articulated body of knowledge. It will thus lack the defining characteristics of a paradigm; namely a 'shared constellation of beliefs, values, techniques . . . models and examples' (Kuhn, 1970: 175).

However, the current direction of tourism research refutes these fears, and indeed, there is much room for optimism to brighten the gloom that may accompany Kuhn's analysis. There are two main reasons for this optimism:

- (1) A newly emergent wave of tourism research, drawn from varied disciplinary backgrounds, is extending the boundaries of tourism research through their *disciplinary insights*.
- (2) The traditional schism between academic and industry-based research is closing as research *commercialisation agendas* are articulated and developed.

## Disciplinary Insights

It has to be recognised that Kuhn was developing his ideas at a time when there was greater rigidity and structure in academic subject areas (Ryan, 1997). In the early years of the twenty-first century – with the unlimited bibliographic and information access facilitated by technology – fields, subjects and disciplines are more free flowing with blurring boundaries and greater borrowing of ideas, theories and literature. Pearce (1993) argues that this is a strength for tourism and that we should not be concerned that tourism does not fit the Kuhn model. If this is the case then 'tourism should have a greater tolerance for eclectic and diverse approaches to investigation' (Echtner & Jamal, 1997: 869).

The debate is taken further by Echtner and Jamal (1997: 877) suggesting that the key issue for tourism studies is to diversify away from previously inappropriate approaches:

... the evolution of tourism studies might be seen to be plagued by the same phobia that dominates all of the social sciences, namely the need to become more 'scientific' and the resulting attachment to more traditional positivist methods.

There is resonance here across the writing of a number of researchers. For example, Ryan (1997: 3) wonders 'if we were not entrenched in a positivist tradition that was blinding us, as a group of scholars, to developments in the other social sciences'. In these other social sciences there are refreshing examples of the development of tourism research that rejects the positivist approach. For example, in tourism, Rojek and Urry's (1997) book *Touring Cultures* is overtly written from the standpoint of rejecting positivism and economic abstraction, whilst in leisure, Rojek's (1995) book *Decentring Leisure* is equally robust in challenging traditional approaches.

Franklin and Crang (2001) are more outspoken in their criticism of earlier tourism research, characterising it as stale and unexciting. They identify three reasons for this:

- The rapid growth of tourism has led researchers to simply record and document tourism in a series of case studies, examples and industry-sponsored projects, undertaken by a group of researchers 'whose work has become petrified in standardized explanations, accepted analyses and foundational ideas [with] ... a tendency for studies to follow a template ...' (p. 6).
- The understanding of tourism has been reduced to a set of economic activities.
- Tourism is framed for study as a series of discrete local events where destinations are viewed as the passive recipient of tourism activity.

Tourism researchers must therefore *break the meniscus* of the poverty of tourism studies by taking the many conceptual and theoretical approaches to tourism that have yet to be tested. By freeing tourism research from the straitjacket of positivism, and opening up the subject to other approaches we can build upon the strengths of the contributory disciplines to analyse and understand the nature of tourism and the tourist (Hall, 1998). Two examples illustrate the potential richness of this approach:

- (1) Crouch (1999: 12) takes contemporary geographical concepts and applies them to tourism. He argues that current concepts of tourism are too narrow and should be broadened to a concept of 'leisure/tourism'

given the overlap and hybrid nature of the two fields. Central to his approach is tourism as an 'encounter':

*Enlarging the qualitative and ethnographic investigation of what people do, and make sense of, in leisure practices will improve the critical texture of understanding. There is a much needed extension of practices, spaces and knowledge towards a greater understanding of their social distinctiveness and relativity.*

- (2) Franklin and Crang's (2001) review of the sociological literature suggests that a new research agenda is urgently needed, an agenda which recognises that tourism studies is about mobilities, the hybrid nature of both the activity and the academic approach and above all, should reflect the activity of tourism itself and be 'enjoyable'. In pursuing this agenda we should not

*... be in the business of importing wholesale theories from some other topics in some fit of 'theory envy' ... tourist studies should be fertile ground for testing and developing social theory (Franklin & Crang, 2001: 18).*

## **Commercialisation Agendas**

The tension between academic and industry-based research in tourism is a constant. As an applied field of study, it is inevitable that academics are involved in supplying research to the tourism sector, both industry and government. However, the tension between the two types of research is rooted in the different aims and objectives of the groups involved (Cobanoglu & Moreo, 2001). Jenkins (1999) provides an insightful articulation of the debate between academic and practitioner research in tourism. Academics he suggests, are employed as technicians and specialists to support practitioners. But it is the practitioners who formulate and implement policy and decisions. As such, the academic literature has little impact upon the tourism practitioner (see Table 1.1).

Much of the tension is caused by poor communication between academics and industry. As tourism matures as an industry it is vital that it adopts a 'knowledge-based' platform upon which to make its commercial and policy decisions (Jafari, 1990, 2000; Smith, 1995). Ritchie (2000) provides a useful framework here, categorising the different types of research and their appropriate use by the industry. In part what is needed in tourism is the true development of learning organisations (Flood, 1999) allowing tourism organisations to be ready for the unpredictable and to harness intellectual property in order to be more competitive, profitable and

**Table 1.1** The differing approaches of academic and practitioner tourism Researchers

<i>Academics</i>	<i>Practitioners</i>
Advance knowledge and understanding of the subject	Work in a contractual, project specific and profit driven environment
Disseminate information through teaching, publications and conferences	Disseminate information through project specific reports, plans and studies that are commissioned and have a limited circulation
Educate and influence students, academics and the industry	Aim to develop their expertise and reputation to secure further work

Source: Jenkins (1999)

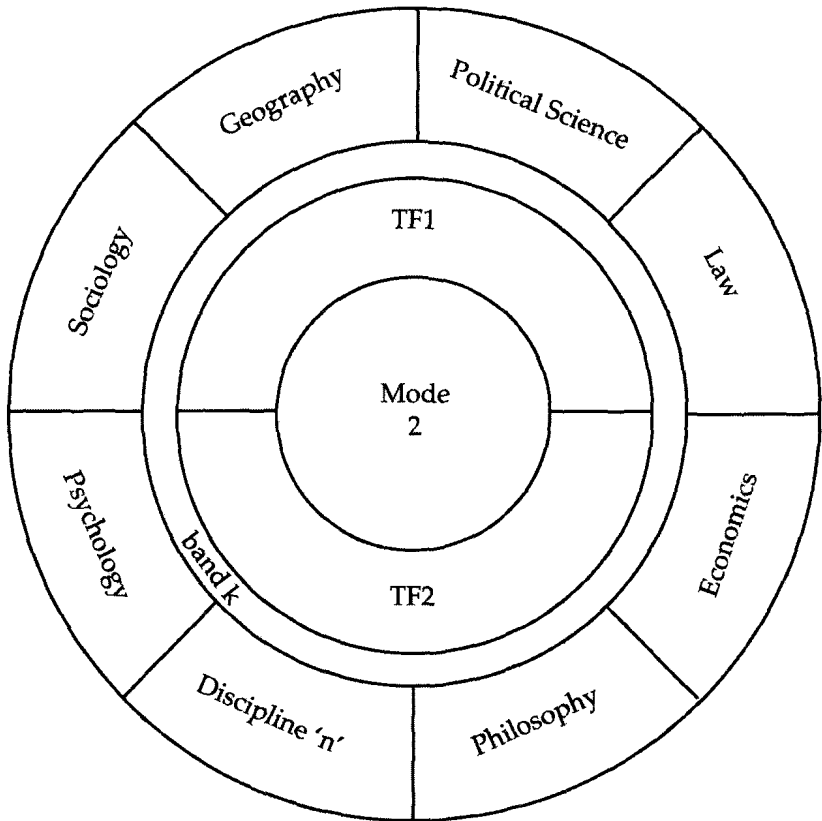
responsive to events such as the 11th September terrorist attacks on the USA.

The work of Tribe (1997) is helpful here. He reworks traditional models of the discipline / subject debate in tourism. He proposes that tourism can be conceptualised as two fields – ‘the business of tourism’ and ‘the non-business of tourism’ – each of which are approached by four main methods of enquiry (Figure 1.1). In Figure 1.1 the outer band is formed of the key contributory disciplines to tourism; the middle band represents the two tourism fields of business and non-business of tourism; and between the two is band k where tourism theories and concepts are distilled. For the centre of the diagram Tribe draws upon the work of Gibbons *et al.* (1994). They view the production of knowledge as:

- ‘mode 1’ which is primarily generated in the disciplinary areas; or
- ‘mode 2’, which is developed from the application of research to specific problems outside of the disciplinary framework. In tourism this would be industry-generated research completed by governments, consultants, industry and professional bodies.

In tourism research the tension between academics and practitioners is effectively that between these two modes of knowledge production. This approach neatly encapsulates the two key issues identified in this chapter: (i) the expansion of the research agenda to take account of developments across other disciplines by a new wave of research in the outer bands of Figure 1.1; and (ii) the tension between a business management, industry-focused approach and other approaches in tourism research.

The way forward to resolve this tension is clear: where appropriate, the academic tourism research community needs to embrace concepts of



**Figure 1.1** The creation of tourist knowledge. Outer circle = Disciplines and subdisciplines; Middle circle = Fields of tourism; Inner circle = World of tourism; TFI = Business interdisciplinarity; TF2 = Non-business related tourism

Source: Tribe (1997)

research commercialisation and diffusion of their intellectual property (IP) to the tourism sector. Here, the Cooperative Research Centre for Sustainable Tourism in Australia has taken a lead in this approach, working out detailed commercialisation and diffusion strategies for tourism research projects and IP undertaken by academics (Cooper *et al.*, 2002; Scott, 1999). By adopting a commercialisation process, tourism research developed in the outer bands of Figure 1.1 can be developed for, and utilised by, the tourism business and government community, thus closing the traditional gap between tourism academics and the tourism industry.

## Progress in Tourism Research

This chapter is optimistic for the future of tourism research. Given the interdisciplinary nature of tourism studies and the new approaches and material now being published, there is a need to constantly synthesise and draw material together for researchers, teachers and students. This was the original concept of the *Progress* book series and the tradition is updated and continued in this volume of 'classic reviews'. *Progress* aimed to provide 'state of the art' reviews of research in the subject area. If anything, this need is even greater in the early years of the twenty-first century as new researchers enter the field, journals proliferate and tourism is taken seriously by a range of disciplines and subject areas.

This book revisits the leading authors and reviews from the first six volumes of *Progress* and provides updated 'state of the art' reviews. There is no doubt that many of the papers in the original *Progress* book series have stood the test of time and become oft-cited classics. The earliest of the updated reviews first appeared 15 years ago and the books are now out of print; I therefore felt that there was real value in identifying these influential papers and asking the authors to revisit them. Each author has interpreted this challenge in a different way, some staying very close to the original review, others radically changing their stance. The 'classic reviews' range from updated extensive subject area literature reviews – economics, sociology, statistics, history, human resources and marketing – to classic essays on gender, alternative tourism, urban tourism, heritage tourism, environmental auditing and Auliana Poon's 'new tourism'.

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## Chapter 2

# ***The Sociology of Tourism***

JOHN URRY

### **Introduction**

The sociology of tourism has been a rapidly developing specialism over the past decade or so. This development has stemmed from:

- the growing interest in services as they become of overwhelming employment significance in Western economies;
- the belated recognition of the complex nature of tourist-related services;
- the increased attention being paid to the 'culture' of societies and hence to the variety of possible images and meanings conveyed by different tourist sites; and
- the rapid changes in the tourist industry, such as the growth of industrial, green, city centre and 'dark' tourisms which have induced interest in the sociological causes and consequences of such unexpected and often somewhat bizarre developments (see Lennon & Foley, 2000, on the 'dark tourism' of Auschwitz, assassination and murder sites, prisoner-of-war camps and so on).

The discipline is, however, characterised by intellectual underdevelopment. Still the best book is MacCannell's *The Tourist* (1989; and see 1992). Empirical studies abound, but until recently, few of them contributed to a sophisticated corpus of research findings (the best are in the *Annals of Tourism Research*). In the last few years, however, the sociology of tourism has been strengthened by an increasing input from other sociological sub-disciplines, from cultural and leisure studies, industrial sociology, urban and regional sociology, museum studies and the sociology / anthropology of culture. Overall, the sociology of tourism is gradually adapting to the dramatic transformations occurring within those social practices we conventionally classify as 'tourism'; but this is being achieved through drawing on, and in part incorporating, a variety of literatures and debates