
Tourism policy research: avenues for the future

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Abstract: Combining an understanding of past achievements with a more critical review of the meta-theoretical assumptions on which each research endeavour is based, helps to highlight gaps and contradictions suggesting bridges to future research. Similar to other areas of business research, tourism research cohorts generally coalesce into one of three perspectives within functionalism: economics, systems or political economy. Each perspective arrives at correlative conclusions. Few tourism policy researchers have employed phenomenology and such research has been conceptual. Future research would benefit from a triangulation of perspectives combining qualitative with quantitative methods to explicate and generalise the values and processes driving policy outcomes.

Keywords: tourism policy; research; ontology; epistemology; methodology; literature review.

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1 Perspectives in tourism policy research

A review of the field of tourism policy and policy research might be undertaken in a variety of ways. The approach taken here has been to view the nature of such an appraisal as a combination of detail and synthesis. It was with this concern for balance between an exhaustive list of more than 400 papers of past tourism research on public policy and a need for overall insight concerning the accomplishments of the past and challenges for the future that this review was prepared.

Using a simplified version of Burrell and Morgan's (1979) seminal framework, exemplifying public policy papers were selected and mapped. As a heuristic device the selected papers were located along a continuum that extends broadly speaking from 'rationality' (scientific policy analysis in order to achieve the 'best' or 'right' outcomes) to 'social' (the formation-disintegration of groups around shared meanings).

As methodologies are contingent on the ontological and epistemological assumptions, they range from nomothetic (macro-economic and quantitative) to ideographic (historical cognitive processing and qualitative).

Borrowing from established academic disciplines, over the past three decades there has been a broadening of perspectives on tourism public policy and a coalescence of research cohorts. For example, Edgell (1983, 1999) and Dwyer and Forsyth (1997, 2006) have remained in the area of positivist economics and modelling using macro-data while Linda Richter (1983a, 1983b, 1993, 1999) from political science has studied comparative tourism politics through case studies. Since the 1970s there has been an increase in the number of tourism policy studies from the rationality perspective. Concurrently, the recognition of human agency has added depth and enrichment to explicate policy processes. Methods used to reveal the policy processes are varied from case studies (e.g., Pforr, 2001) and in-depth interviews (e.g., Bramwell and Sharman, 1999) to surveys (e.g., Sheehan and Ritchie, 2005).

Despite the enrichment, the managerial solution proposed by most papers is that a country or a destination, although unique with its distinct complex institutional framework, need only employ a 'recipe' and introduce certain procedures for all to be well. The correct application of the recipe will allow a country or region to achieve domestic homeostasis that will buffer the internal tourism industry from the constant evolution of exogenous relations and forces. Correlating with the rise of open systems theory, over the past decade the most common solution is more collaboration between stakeholders.

In short, common conclusions cascade from each research approach because the process to arrive at those conclusions is similar. To map these similarities a selection of the meta-theoretical framework is the starting point. Thus, the first part of this paper describes Burrell and Morgan's (1979) seminal work and a brief discussion of the paradigm debate. Then I propose a simplified continuum from subjectivism to objectivism to classify the papers and provide a brief explanation of the paper selection. The present research does not purport to be an exhaustive review of all the literature in the field. Rather, it seeks to examine selected works which are typical of ontological and epistemological traditions to reveal trends, gaps and possible bridges between the traditions. One contribution is to assist those unfamiliar with tourism policy research to better understand the perspective and approach of different cohorts. More broadly, it is hoped that the map and site-markers provide useful clues to chart future research.

2 The heuristic device

2.1 The paradigm debate

Like any review, the foundation is to determine the key criteria which unite or distinguish certain papers. The characteristic selected for comparison is the ontological and epistemological position of the researcher. The charting technique chosen is Burrell and Morgan's (1979) four paradigms or quadrants: radical humanism, radical structuralism, interpretive sociology and functionalist sociology. Each quadrant represents a group of shared meta-theoretical assumptions regarding the social world and the scientific world. These four paradigms are on two continua: objective to subjective and regulation

to radical change. The regulation assumption is that society is essentially cooperative but punctuated by conflict. Broadly speaking, society is harmonious and orderly. Conversely, the radical change assumption is that despite the superficial appearance of equilibrium, the individual (or society) is in perpetual flux and conflict due to power asymmetries. As for the objective-subjective continuum, objective implies a disembodiment of the observer (researcher) from the subject, the object of study and the ability to determine predictable relationships. Conversely, subjective assumes the impossibility of extracting the researcher from the object of study and questions the veracity and utility of a subject-object division. Thus, relationships are contextually bound and socially constructed.

Burrell and Morgan's (1979) typology sparked much debate (e.g., Donaldson, 1988; Lewis and Grimes, 1999; Marsden, 1993) and its detractors argue that the mutually exclusive paradigms constrain theory development (e.g., Deetz, 1996; Willmott, 1993). Deetz (1996), in particular, argued that the differences outlined are arbitrary and do not provide insight into genuine differences in research programmes. He suggested a focus on the discursive moves and social relations of the researchers themselves rather than on procedures and individuals. He recommended two continua. One continuum represents research orientation extending from emergent or grounded theory to a-priori or theory-testing. The second continuum represents the tone of the discourse and extends from consensus or reproductive practices to dissensus or disruptive practices. Consciously mimicking Burrell and Morgan, Deetz' two continua produce "a spatially and visually convenient four-discursive space solution" labelled Normative, Interpretive, Critical and Dialogic which Deetz (1996, p.198) admits is "arbitrary and fictive", the exact criticism that Deetz levelled at Burrell and Morgan's quadrants.

Defending Burrell and Morgan's (1979) framework, Lewis and Grimes (1999) observed that any form of "paradigm bracketing may reproduce the very dualisms it seeks to transcend (p.1998)". Nonetheless, Lewis and Grimes (1999) argued that cognisance of paradigmatic ontological-epistemological dyads provides new avenues of theory-building and research through the explanation and testing of contradictory results. Applying Burrell and Morgan's (1979) four differentiated quadrants to one organisational type, Lewis and Grimes (1999) illustrated how to chart topics that would benefit from meta-triangulation or multi-paradigm research approaches.

Although the above authors use the full four quadrants or paradigms, the typology here is simplified to the object-subject continuum from positivism to interpretivism. Due to the relatively low number of tourism public policy papers and none employing radicalism, this object-subject dimension was found to be sufficient to classify the perspective and approach of different cohorts without the added complexity of the regulation-radical change continuum. Moreover, inherent in 'policy making' is the pursuit of equilibrium or homeostasis. The assumption implicit in much research is that regulation and order are achievable.

2.2 The continuum

The framework selected for assessing tourism public policy research extends from rationality or objectivist (scientific policy analysis in order to achieve the 'best' or 'right' outcomes) to social or subjectivist (the formation-disintegration of groups around shared meanings). Burrell and Morgan (1979) describe the differences as follows. The first perspective is

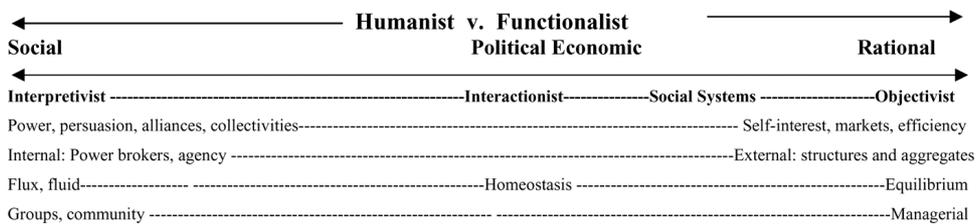
“Highly pragmatic in orientation, concerned to understand society in a way which generates knowledge which can be put to use. It is often problem-orientated in approach, concerned to provide practical solutions to practical problems.” (Burrell and Morgan, 1979, p.26)

Conversely, they describe subjectivism as a quest to understand the very basis and source of social reality, a quest for fundamental meanings which underlie social life (1979, p.31).

Today, the most commonly held ontology and epistemology are functionalist, in particular, systems theory. The common methodology is research based on systematic protocol and technique (quantitative research methods). Although there has been an increase since the mid-1990s in some interactionist theories, papers applying critical perspectives such as phenomenology and interpretivism are rare.

This spectrum of tourism policy perspectives could be summarised in Figure 1.

Figure 1 The spectrum



Source: Adapted from Burrell and Morgan (1979)

In order to locate the key epistemologies of policy research, it is necessary to identify the worldview of the researcher. If the researcher embraces meta-theoretical assumptions of rationality and objectivism then the researcher is seeking a universal causal explanation through the analysis of the nature of structures and institutions in order to find regulating processes of its constituent parts. In papers with these implicit assumptions, researchers present a historical description of ‘order’ and regulation in order to prescribe ‘solutions’ so as to achieve a form of ‘success’ in the unquestionably beneficial economic sector of tourism.

At the other extreme, if the researcher is writing from a phenomenological-interpretivist perspective then the scholar is attempting to interpretatively (reflexively) understand social action through the use of common language and the interactions of everyday life in order to find a description of the courses and effects of social action. Here, the papers contain historical analyses of significance and semantics of power, persuasion, and alliances. From this perspective, the focus is actors and individuals as they produce/reproduce the system and institutions.

Between these two ends of the spectrum, there exist interactionist assumptions of scholars who, like the positivists, consider their observations as disengaged from their subjects in the belief that their perspective is (almost) value-free. Also, similar to the positivists, interactionists focus upon the analysis of structures and do not necessarily question the benefits of tourism. But, unlike the positivists, these investigators are cognisant of human agency and of history. These scholars, while acknowledging voluntarism, see the roles and institutional patterns as determining individual behaviour. Bounded by structure, agents make decisions which are influenced by ‘mechanisms’ that have formed and calcified over a period of time.

Social systems theory is similar to interactionism. Of particular relevance to public policy research is that which applies to open systems: the process of exchange with the environment which in turn transforms institutions and organisations. As Burrell and Morgan (1979) write

“An open system can take a wide variety of forms. There are no general laws which dictate that it must achieve a steady state, be goal directed, evolve, regress or disintegrate. **In theory anything can happen.** One of the purposes of open systems theory is to study the pattern of relationships which characterise a system and its relationship to its environment in order to understand the way in which it operates.” (emphasis in the original, p.59)

In short, it differs from interpretivism in that the emphasis is on structural and cultural influences to account for the continuity and constraint in social structure (Scott, 2001). Although subtle, social systems theory differs from interactionism in its focus on institutional change rather than on human behaviour determined by those structures.

2.3 Sample selection and resulting categories

A selection of key papers runs the risk of overlooking criteria that others consider more important than those selected. Perhaps the greater risk is that it omits reference to specific individual contributions, which, although worthwhile, did not emerge in the course of citing examples for the present review. Again, it should be noted that the current analysis has been undertaken with a view to balancing the breadth and depth of coverage when choosing examples of both strengths and weaknesses in the field.

In view of the proliferation of tourism journals in the past decade and to obtain examples spanning two or more decades, recent papers on tourism journal rankings (McKercher et al., 2006; Ryan, 2005; Pechlaner et al., 2004; Jamal et al., 2008) were cross-referenced for convergence. From this cross-reference, the top 18 journals were selected (see Annex I). The 18 journals were searched for papers referring to public policy from 1980 to 2007. Using LeisureTourism.com and Hospitality Index, the titles of peer-reviewed papers from 1980 to date were searched for the words ‘public’ and ‘policy’ located in title and tourism policy (or policies). Only the title was searched in order to find papers focused on policy phenomena and to avoid those papers commonly employing the expression “this study has policy implications”. The bibliographies of key papers were mined for further references which were then reviewed. The results of the search yielded a total sample of over 400 papers which were then analysed, selected and classified into one of four categories: objectivism, social system theory, interactionism or interpretivism. Based on the ontologies and the papers found, the research types can be loosely but heuristically classified in Table 1.

Table 1 The categories of tourism policy and policy research

Objectivism (Positivism)	Tourism economics
Social system theory	Network analysis and stakeholder analysis
Interactionism	Political economy, statism and social capital
Interpretivism	Phenomenology, participatory action research, praxis

Each research type is discussed in the following sections drawing on exemplary research in tourism policy research that contains a critical mass of work, and is judged to be especially insightful and/or rigorous, in order to detect gaps, contradictions and possible bridges that could advance the field. While other scholars and the authors might choose to identify and structure their locations differently, it is hoped that the present approach will prove useful in promoting further discussion.

3 Key continuum categories

3.1 Objectivism: tourism economics

This area of tourism policy research provides a starting point for a comprehensive examination of the field. As one reviews the entire field of travel and tourism, it becomes evident that it is one which, from its very beginning, has been driven by individuals with a strong quantitative and positivist orientation. Accordingly, in research and publications related to this position in the spectrum there is a strong and unquestioned assumption about the inherent good of tourism. Whether the method is regression analysis, modelling or other calculations, the underlying theme is to improve the efficiency of tourism so as to increase economic growth and overall individual welfare.

Objectivism employs aggregates in a variety of quantitative methods and models to determine trends which authors consider important to inform public policy. Although the use of macro level or aggregate travel statistics and modelling is not exclusive to tourism economics, these tools are used primarily within this approach. The key variables in this perspective are supply, demand, employment, income generation, and balance of payments (Sinclair and Vokes, 1993).

In addition to regression analysis, various authors use macro-economic modelling to provide evidence for the 'right' direction of policy initiatives (Swart et al., 1978; Dwyer and Forsyth, 1997, 2006; Dwyer et al., 2000). The modelling allows the policy maker(s) to find the best course of action in order to efficiently achieve some hypothetical standard of economic growth.

Far more common than the pure macro-economic analytical methods is the use of economic description that generally focuses on domestic policies and structures in order to recommend the optimal policy (Ahmed and Krohn, 1990; Andriotis, 2001; Andriotis and Vaughan, 2004; Edgell, 1983; Godau, 1991; Lickorish, 1991; Smyth, 1986). For example, Edgell (1983) presents the key policies impacting tourism in the USA, in particular, the National Tourism Policy Act of 1981, and concludes that tourism policy is important in planning to achieve orderly growth. Andriotis (2001) argued that the combination of concentration of tourist arrivals in time and space, inappropriate use of resources, and the lack of consensus in the planning process are the causes of conflict over tourism policy in the island of Crete.

The papers mentioned are some of the exemplary literatures employing the important perspective of tourism economics. This perspective uses ex-post aggregate analysis to recommend changes to outcomes. Although this ontology has been criticised for its application of physical scientific methods to the social sciences, and its focus on outcomes rather than processes, the contribution is important to emerging areas such as performance benchmarking.

3.2 Social system theories: stakeholder theory, network theory and competitiveness

Systems can be studied as either closed or open. Simplistically, a closed system is one where the subject of the study is removed from its environment in order to be analysed. An example of a closed system experiment is economic modelling such as that explained above. The model is expected to indicate/replicate the point of equilibrium when a limited selection of variables is introduced.

Conversely, an open system is characterised by exchange with the environment, a focus on processes and the assumption that the goal is to achieve a steady state (homeostasis) rather than equilibrium.

“One of the purposes of open system theory is to study the pattern of relationships which characterise a system and its relationship to its environment in order to understand the way in which it operates.” (Burrell and Morgan, 1979, p.59)

Collaboration, rather than an outcome, is a process that must be evaluated and monitored to achieve homeostasis. Some examples of research employing these theories include insights into inter-organisational collaboration (Jamal and Getz, 1995), local collaborative arrangements (Bramwell and Sharman, 1999) and threats to collaboration (Sheehan and Ritchie, 2005). Unlike interpretivists who employ language and semantics to analyse social constructions of the world, social system theorists examine how the structures or institutions impact organisations and collaboration between actors. From this ontology, authors (Jamal and Getz, 1995; Frooman, 1999; Bramwell and Sharman, 1999; Sheehan and Ritchie, 2005) analyse how environments constrain collaboration and the achievement of homeostasis. Homeostasis is achieved through cooperation, collaboration and consensus. For example, Bramwell and Sharman write that:

“collaborative tourism policymaking is inclusionary and promotes collective learning and consensus-building. Concern for the important systemic constraints which affect collaboration is integrated with the need to identify whether there is evidence of more democratic forms of policymaking.” (Bramwell and Sharman, 1999, p.395)

Network theory and stakeholder theory are subsets of open system theory (Frooman, 1999). A stakeholder can be defined as

“Actors with an interest in a common problem or issue and include all individuals, groups, or organisations directly influenced by the actions others take to solve a problem.” (Jamal and Getz, 1995, p.188)

Stakeholder theory is founded on the idea that institutions

“Depend on continued support from other organisations or groups (beyond shareholders) within their environment [and that dependence] is given by the degree to which the actor has a concentration of, and discretionary control over, important resources. This dependency can be seen as the source of power that the actor can wield, hence, having the potential to threaten the organisation by withholding resources.” (Sheehan and Ritchie, 2005, p.712)

Thus, power is an attribute of the stakeholder, not the relationship.

Network theory is an extension and a refinement of stakeholder theory. Network analysis seeks to detect levels of influence on an issue by locating stakeholders relative to the problem or issue, the proximity of stakeholders to one another, and the

density of inter-connections between stakeholders. The network of organisations clustered around an issue is considered a political unit. Policy outcomes are explained through these inter-organisational interactions. Policy ‘failure’ is explained by an absence of key actors, a lack of commitment to the goals or insufficient information (Keogh, 1990). Again, the theory seeks to explain a pattern of relationships in order to explain the ‘success’ or ‘failure’ of collaboration (Sheehan and Ritchie, 2005; Pforr, 2001, 2005, 2006).

Another branch of stakeholder theory is applied to competitiveness (Crouch and Ritchie, 1999; Ritchie and Crouch, 2000). Social system theorists such as Crouch and Ritchie see the most logical unit of analysis in tourism as the destination. They argue that this is the locus of the confluence of elements, relationships and processes of the competitiveness as

“This is where the totality of the cumulative interactions among tourism host (including residents and suppliers) and the natural environment for a given destination, can be observed, studied and understood in a holistic and integrated manner.” (Ritchie et al., 2002, p.21)

Unlike previous authors who referred to competitiveness as a qualifier for micro-level variables such as firms or costs (e.g., competitive cost structure), Crouch and Ritchie made competitiveness a dependent variable that explains the attractiveness of destinations and nations. Imputing the unquestioned benefits of tourism development, these authors propose a model to analyse and prescribe structures to improve the competitiveness of a tourism destination to improve economic efficiency.

3.3 Interactionism: political economy, statism and social capital

Moving toward interpretivism but still not within critical perspectives, is political economy, statism and social capital. These theories serve to explain the intended and unintended outcomes of tourism processes and policies. Like the systems approach, interactionism recognises the strategising of collectivities and the iterative processes involved in policy formulation and implementation. Also similar to systems theory, the debate is primarily one of regulation and homeostasis vs. conflict and chaos. There are implicit or explicit evaluative assertions of ‘good’ policies and ‘bad’ policies that lead to ‘good’ or ‘bad’ outcomes. However, unlike systems theory, part of the analysis is a questioning of the tourism sector itself. In other words, tourism as a favourable economic sector is no longer a taken-for-granted assumption. This shift from implications for management to implications of tourism development for communities and individuals means evaluating facts from the perspective of societal/community wellbeing rather than market economic efficiency.

Studies applying political economy differ from the more positivist approaches that focus on the nature of structures that impact processes. Political economy is preoccupied with the nature of the processes and how individual actors influence those processes. Also differing from the other functionalist approaches is the recognition of context and history as well as a questioning of the inherent ‘goodness’ of tourism. Wilber (1983) contrasts the differences between static end-goal economic models and dynamic process-focused political economy.

“The orthodox paradigm is a theoretical umbrella spanning free-market models, planning approaches, and the distributional issues raised by growth-with-equity critique. Its unifying thread is the underlying value assumption that economic growth and consequent high mass consumption are desirable ends that rational and efficient utility-maximising agents will pursue ... The political economy paradigm challenges economic growth as a static end-goal, contending instead that the nature of the process of economic development is crucial. What is important is the means by which economic development is pursued and how these means affect the everyday lives of people. This approach is historical and appreciates the dialectic relationship between society, the polity, and the economy.” (Wilber, 1983, p.2)

Although focusing on processes and power, political economy is still located in functionalism due to the ontological assumption that tangible structures can be observed and measured by disassociated analysts to produce ‘better’ results. One example is Dredge (2001) who describes, historically, the tourism regional politics in Australia. Then in 2003, Dredge and Jenkins further the discussion using resource dependency theories and contextualised description of behaviour to outline policy making and the personalities behind the policies. Similarly, Bramwell and Meyer (2007) attempt to bridge the agency-structure dualism by recognising values as well as institutions in a case study of East German power politics over a ten year period. While acknowledging human agency, these scholars still see the roles and institutional patterns as determining individual behaviour, and the desirable outcome as homeostasis.

Statism is the degree of government involvement in the economy. Levels of intervention extend from little intervention of relatively laissez-faire economies such as the USA, to highly directed economies such as China. Examples of longitudinal descriptions (case studies) of highly statist tourism development include the development of China (Dichen and Guagrui, 1983); several Asian countries (Richter and Richter, 1985) and Mexico (Clancy, 1999, 2001). Dichen and Guagrui (1983) recognised the need for political will in order to organise the tourism industry in China through the ‘production’ of policies. The authors argued that the industry was anarchic until the government intervened and wrote (1983) that

“The establishment of a specific Chinese-style development route for tourism has put an end to the chaos existing in the trade. Since then, Chinese tourism has had a set of guidelines to follow.” (Dichen and Guagrui, 1983, p.79)

In another study of state intervention, Richter and Richter (1985) observed increasing but differing involvement in the tourism industries of seven different southeast Asian countries over 20 years. Richter and Richter (1985) suggested that areas of government control depend as much on political and cultural considerations as on economic factors. Clancy (1999) argued that contrary to neo-liberal theories of modernisation and the neo-Marxist interpretations of dependency theory (Francisco, 1983), it is likely that Mexico’s success is due to a heavy statist hand guiding tourism investment.

Like other areas in tourism research, research based on theories of social capital is still rare. Because of its recent introduction into tourism public policy the research found was conceptual. In these papers, researchers debated the definition of ‘social capital’, the location of social capital (with the individual or the community) and its usefulness as a concept. Blackshaw and Long stated that social capital has

“Two decisive features: on the one hand it is a tangible resource made by advantage of family, friendship or other kinds of social networks, and on the other, like all forms of capital, it has a symbolic dimension, which contrives to hide networks of power woven into the fibres of familiarity.” (Blackshaw and Long, 2005, p.251)

Such a definition implies the ontological assumption of a socially constructed ‘reality’ and community networks which are attributes of an external structure. Similarly, Macbeth et al. (2004) wrote that “community needs to be factored into planning and development strategies to balance the traditional economic view (p.503)”. Despite a discussion of the nebulous and socially constituted ‘community’, their approach is interactionist due to the assumption that the roles and institutional patterns determine individual behaviour. Again, we see the importance of identifying the meta-theoretical assumptions of the papers employing the concepts of communitarism and social capital to determine its location on the continuum: whether the ‘reality’ being investigated is the product of individual consciousness (interpretivist) or rooted in structures (interactionist).

3.4 Interpretivism: participatory action research, praxis

As with other areas of business research, the least common research is that from the interpretivist perspective. It is also one of the most difficult to conduct successfully due to the variety of protocols that can be used and the depth of analysis required. The result is that published research in this area requires more explanation as to the methods employed to satisfy the replicability criteria of peer-reviewed research.

“It [the interpretive paradigm] rejects any view which attributes to the social world a reality which is independent of the minds of men. It emphasises that the social world is no more than the subjective construction of individual human beings who, through the development and use of common language and the interactions of everyday life, may create and sustain a social world of intersubjectively shared meaning. The social world is thus of an essentially intangible nature and is in a continuous process of reaffirmation or change.” (Burrell and Morgan, 1979, p.260)

From this perspective, consciousness creates structures. The focal point is power, not structures, to explicate policy formulation and implementation. Lasswell (1951) cited in Stone (2002, p.32) defined power simply as “the capacity to overcome resistance, the capacity to change the behaviour of others and stop them from getting what they want. It determines who gets what, when and how”. From this perspective the historical analysis of significance and semantics of power, persuasion, and alliances explains the integration/disintegration of groups that inform policy. Unlike systems theory where power is an attribute of the stakeholder, here power is at the juncture between actors.

Relatively recently has there been a foray into interpretivism in the general field of tourism, but it is almost exclusively limited to the study of ‘experience’ and the tourist ‘gaze’ (Urry, 2002). Within policy research many researchers are at the junction of interactionism and interpretivism. For example, Reed (1997) argued that the forces behind policy making and policy outcomes are not explained coherently and cohesively by traditional political scientific or open systems theoretical application of overt relationships. Motivations guiding decision making are the result of hidden cognitive processes beyond institutions. He wrote that

“The conceptual framework has focused most attention on institutions of power. However, at the local level, these struggles may be rooted in the personalities and circumstances of individual parties which this paper only discussed superficially. For example, even if all parties seek the same vision for development, this vision may elude them because of idiosyncratic circumstances such as historical interaction, personal grievances, inexperience, or attempts to build a career or reputation.” (Reed, 1997, p.588)

Reed (1997) recognised the limitation of political science to fully explicate power struggles, shared meanings, and values which influence outcomes. Individual circumstances and idiosyncracies complete explanations of occurrences.

In conclusion, tourism policy research could be enriched through interpretivism because it adds greatly needed understanding of shared values and meaning, and personalities to the construction of the destination, the tourist and tourism in general. This was exemplified in the paper by Jamal and Getz (1999) who found that the space for collaboration can be a contested terrain wherein meaning is reconstructed by those with power and legitimacy. Another example is the use of Foucault’s notion of the power of surveillance by Hollinshead (1999) who argued that power acts through the institutions of tourism and travel carried by an authoritative mix of normalising discourse and universalising praxis which routinely privileges certain understandings of heritage/society/the world. Cheong and Miller (2000) produced another theoretical paper applying Foucault’s conception of the ‘gaze’ and argued for increased analytical attention to the role of brokers prominent in tourism development that have the power to direct the ‘gaze’. Although all these papers are important contributions to tourism research, no example was found of a deep application of the Foucauldian method requiring long-term detailed archival analysis of the emergence and evolution of tourism discourse and modes of thought. Also insightful would be the application of Foucault’s theory of ‘governmentality’ to illustrate how dyadic power informs local, national or international tourism decision making and policy outcomes.

4 Avenues for future research

4.1 Summary

A review of the field of tourism policy and policy research might be undertaken in a variety of ways. The approach taken here has been to view the nature of such an appraisal as a combination of detail and synthesis. The first step is to identify and classify exemplary literature over a period of time. The breadth combined with the depth of certain perspectives serves to highlight the achievements in the field while mining for the key assumptions on which a particular focus was founded to reveal trends, gaps and possibilities for bridging.

Based on the seminal book by Burrell and Morgan (1979), a simplified spectrum from positivism to interpretivism was used as a heuristic device to situate the research according to the meta-theoretical assumptions underpinning the papers. From the ontological-epistemological position of the research a methodology is derived that can vary from macro-economic analytical models to surveys, case studies and in-depth interviews to archival-based detailed discourse analysis to explicate the creation of modes of thought. Above all, each perspective makes recommendations

as to policy, policy making, and research into the domain. These, too, flow organically from and are consistent with the perspective. Stone (2002) refers to the spectrum of policy making as the rationality project on one end and the social project on the other. The rationality project views public policy as generally chaotic and messy from which the process must be rescued in order to efficiently achieve the ‘right’ outcome.

“The fields of political science, public administration, law, and policy analysis have a common mission of rescuing public policy from the irrationalities and indignities of politics, hoping to make policy instead with rational, analytical, and scientific methods.” (Stone, 2002, p.7)

Scholars who analyse policy from this perspective study the best means to mechanistically and industrially assemble policy. Public policy requires identifying a problem so as to place the issue on an agenda; refining the goals of an initiative; implementing the decisions; evaluating the outcome and measuring its success in order to adjust policy delivery. The rationality project “proceeds from the idea that policy making in practice deviates from some hypothetical standards of good policy making” (Stone, 2002, p.8). At its most extreme, this perspective can be described metaphorically as a biological system or machine that represents

“society and suggests that society can function smoothly when the various interacting elements behave in certain ways – although it does not imply that this is guaranteed or automatic, the system will malfunction if the various elements fail to interact in certain ways.” (Veal, 2002, p.6)

The key to ‘good’ decision-making is to consider all possible outcomes and choose the course of action that maximises the likelihood of success. The assumption is that the best course of action can be chosen and implemented unhindered by personalities and power-plays.

Opposing the rationality project, the social project views public policy as a collective struggle over ideas and meaning, in other words, values. Individuals form informal and formal groups (communities) that cluster around shared values. In an effort to broaden the cluster of shared meanings and goals, a group may attempt to influence others. “Shared meanings motivate people to action and meld individual striving into collective action” (Stone, 2002, p.11). Instead of a ‘right’ way of conducting politics and producing policy, the social project investigates the fluid formation/disintegration of groups; the cooperative as well as antagonistic processes within the groups; and the means employed by groups to influence internally and externally in order to legitimise their values and augment the collective belief in those values.

4.2 Future research: bridging opportunities

Because policy actions could result from research conclusions, it is important that researchers in each paradigm be cognisant of the limitations. For example, a limitation of the macro-economic approach is the fusion of policy processes. In economic analysis, planning and policy are collapsed rather than acknowledged as separate but interrelated events. This implies that policy planning and coordination is tantamount to policy making and implementation. The focus on macro-economic outcomes means that this type of analysis often suffers from a high level of abstraction and remoteness

from life. Although characteristics may be identified, delimited and 'measured', policy recommendations based on such measurements could be misleading.

Conversely, from a statist perspective a detailed and longitudinal case study of alliances and power-plays at a particular destination or around an issue could be erroneously applied to a broader context. If society is a set of commonly held beliefs and habits embedded in a group of people and observed over time, then the macro-level of analysis could provide benchmarks as to trends. Since the 1980s there has been more and more research on statism and social capital. A macro/micro integration could provide a more dynamic model of continuity, change and collapse of institutions benchmarked longitudinally through modelling. Moreover, this combination helps to suggest future paths that are subsequently monitored and modified.

Another example of bridging research could be the combination of research on statism and social capital with in-depth inquiry into cognition that drives the alliances formed and the techniques of persuasion used. The formulation, legitimisation and implementation of public policy are value-laden, context-driven, political activities. Outside of tourism, business disciplines such as managerial accounting employ psychological testing in experimental settings to better understand cognitive processes (Sprinkle, 2003).

Although relatively recent compared to positivist and political scientific studies, the open systems paradigm is an equally important approach used in tourism public policy research and one of the most illustrative. Network theory and stakeholder theory offers much explanatory power as to how and why certain stakeholders cluster around issues and how they influence those issues. One area of enrichment is to bridge studies of density and centrality with an understanding of personalities and human psychology to illustrate the potential for convergent as well as divergent outcomes of similar processes.

Thus, further into interpretivism, tourism policy research would greatly benefit from a broadening of perspectives from problem-solving into phenomenology in order to uncover the values and personalities driving the competing pressures on the dynamic sector of tourism. The challenge and power of this type research is that it is more than confirmatory and reproductive, it seeks to reconceptualise (Tribe, 2005). As one example, Foucauldian analysis requires the subjective historical analysis of the policies from the perspective of individuals who are directly or indirectly acted upon, such as the tourist. Tourists are subject to a range of policies, from immigration to transportation to judicial, that break or intersect and articulate with their experience. Ethnographic, case or other modes of interrogation are used to reconstruct experience from the starting point of the tourist. In short, the methodologies and methods advanced by Foucault, Bourdieu and Giddens, although complex and eclectic, serve to reconceptualise and reveal the domain of tourism.

Despite criticism and continuing debate over the subjective-objective dyad, the heuristic device was used to illustrate avenues for future research to overcome paradigm allegiance and bridge the gaps in current research. From ontologies and epistemologies, methodologies and methods cascade. Conclusions and recommendations are advanced, and, possibly, actions are taken. Very revealing is that within each research group similar language is used and similar conclusions are derived. Economic perspectives refer to supply and demand, and seek to improve economic efficiency. Open systems researchers refer to stakeholders, and networks and call for more collaboration to improve management and governance. Interactionists also call for more collaboration but with a

focus on communities rather than on managerial solutions. Although the discourse is one of power or power differentials, the recommendations remain prescriptive. Further afield into subjectivism, interpretivists also explore power and power differentials. However, unlike interactionists, the interpretivists explore how power is used to routinise discourse and practices which leads to the creation of structures. Rather than structures determining behaviour, certain actors have the legitimacy to determine structures. In short, in accordance with each cohort, conclusions and recommendations emerge from the research. The use of the continuum reveals these similarities and uncovers the gaps. Although resource intensive, objectivist approaches could be fruitfully combined with subjectivist analyses to illustrate and explicate change as well as continuity in tourism public policy. However, the successful combination of subjectivism and objectivism means overcoming the pressures and limitations of academic governance (Coles et al., 2006).

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Annex I: List of journals consulted

<i>Journal</i>	<i>Number of papers</i>	<i>Range of years</i>
Annals of Tourism Research	22	1983–2007
Tourism Management	32	1982–2007
Journal of Travel Research	9	1982–2005
Journal of Sustainable Tourism	12	1994–2007
International Journal of Tourism Research	8	1999–2003
Tourism Analysis	2	1997 and 2005
Asian-Pacific Journal of Tourism Research	4	2002–2006
Journal of Tourism Studies	1	1990
Tourism Economics	4	1992–2006
Tourism Geographies	7	2000–2007
Current Issues in Tourism	16	1999–2006
Tourism Recreation Research	4	1991–1995

Annex I: List of journals consulted (continued)

<i>Journal</i>	<i>Number of papers</i>	<i>Range of years</i>
Journal of Vacation Marketing	2	1994 and 1995
Event Management	1	2004
Tourism Review International	3	2004–2007
Anatolia	1	1999
Leisure Studies	2	1995 and 2001
Leisure Sciences	2	2003 and 2006
<i>Total</i>	<i>132</i>	<i>1982–2007</i>

Of the over 400 papers found, the following were the papers consulted in detail as to the focus on tourism *public* policy and to determine the paradigm location. If the paper was particularly important the author's papers were searched further to verify the content. The bibliography contains only those papers that were cited in this research. The list was compiled, analysed and categorised by the sole author. Any errors and omissions are the responsibility of the author.