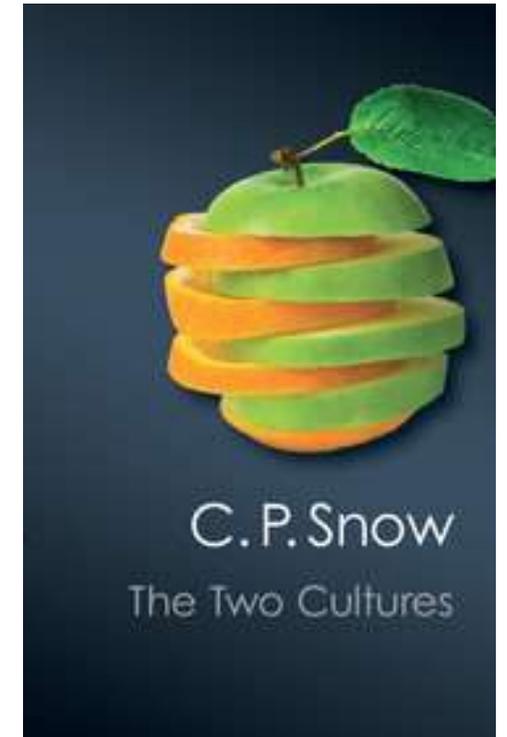


Tourism and Hospitality
Research –
From Innovation to
Commodification

Chris Ryan

A Golden Period of Being a Professor

- In the UK – universities were small by today's standards
- There were no Research Assessment Exercises
- Professors were paid wages at levels akin to those of judges and members of Parliament
- The Senior Common Room as a place for Senior Academics only – and there was always (according to legend) plenty of port and blue cheese





C.P. Snow – The Two Cultures – Rede Lecture 2009

1959 Rede Lecture: “The Two Cultures”

I believe the intellectual life of the whole of western society is increasingly being split into two polar groups. ...Literary intellectuals at one pole—at the other scientists, and as the most representative, the physical scientists. Between the two a gulf of mutual incomprehension—sometimes (particularly among the young) hostility and dislike, but most of all lack of understanding.

In tourism and hospitality research

- Are there two cultures?
- Or is there a merger of the two?
- What are the factors that have generated this divide?
- What are the impacts of this divide if it exists?
- Is the divide not one of science vs intuitive thinking – but of differing world-views between the West and Asia?
- Are universities falling into traps of “lazy empiricism” forced upon them government policies?

A digression

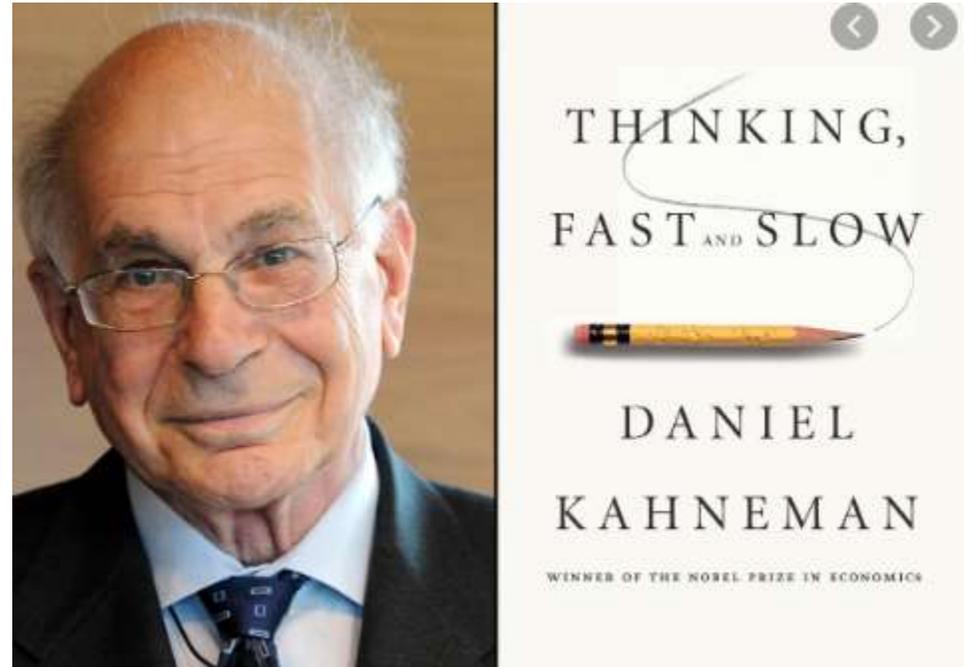
- If a bat and a ball cost \$1.10, and the bat costs \$1.00 more than the ball, how much does the ball cost?
- If you are in a race and you pass the person who is second, what position do you now occupy?
- If a lake fills with water and doubles the amount of water each day, and tomorrow on the 48th day the lake is full, how long did it take for the lake to get half full?

Non-answers

- 50% of people say the bat cost \$1.00
 - At least one-third of people say you are in first place
 - About 40% state 24 days.
-
- Is intuitive thinking less valid?
 - If we lack mathematical skills, does that leave us only with intuitive thinking?
 - If the world lacks logic, then is (faulty) intuitive thinking the way to progress?

Heuristics and decision taking

- The questions are derived from Daniel Kahneman (2002 Nobel Prize winner) for his work in heuristics and biases.
- Academics do write popular books, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*.
- Kahneman contrasted two modes of thinking—System 1 (fast and intuitive) and System 2 (slow and deliberate)—to show how we often grab the quick answer, only to see that our brains mislead us



Source: The Daily Beast

What has this to do with tourism and hospitality research?

- It is not a question of intuitive or logical thinking?
- Intuitive thinking has been called *latent logic*.
- Examination of executive decision taking provides evidence of high dependency on “gut feelings” in the face of uncertainty.
- In a period of covid-19 perhaps what leaders require is thinking informed by logic and intuition, including consideration of the consequences of decisions.
- Decision trees can help in these types of situations.
- Mousavi, S., & Gigerenzer, G. (2014). Risk, uncertainty, and heuristics. *Journal of Business Research*, 67(8), 1671-1678 Academic research is behind the reality of decision taking?

Historical perspective of tourism and hospitality research

- Stage One

- Curiosity, Observation and Description

- 1899 Veblen, *Theory of the Leisure Class*
- 1966 Miossec's theory of the changing periphery
- 1973 Young *Tourism: Blessing or Blight*
- 1977 Dann's work on tourism motivation and anomie
- 1979 Cohen, *A phenomenology of tourist experiences*
- 1980 Butler's *Tourist Area Life Cycle*
- 1982 Mathieson & Wall, G. *Tourism, economic, physical and social impacts*
- 1989 Murphy's *Tourism: A community approach.*
- 1990 Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*

Assessment

- Many of those listed papers (and others by Morrison, Iso-Ahola, Don Getz *et cetera*) have become seminal papers -
- YET – absent from these papers are large usage of statistical formula, very large sample sets, tests of statistical reliability
- Driven by a broadly sociological-human geographical perspective.
- This work has developed and shaped many of the questions and frameworks that have shaped the analysis of tourism and hospitality management that we continue today.

Historical perspective of tourism and hospitality research

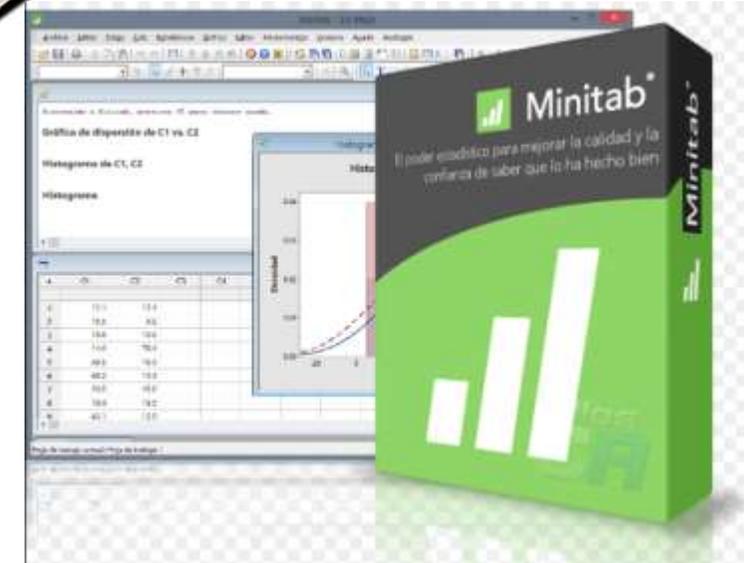
- Stage Two –
- The advent of more powerful computing
- From the 1990s many more quantitative oriented papers emerged
- The precursors existed:
- 1978 - Tourism's Impacts: The Social Costs to the Destination Community as Perceived by Its Residents *Journal of Travel Research*,
n=1,626 residents of Cape Cod

But such papers general did not progress much past descriptive statistics and OLS regression.

Early 1990s to 2000

The emergence of statistical methods

- An emergence from punch cards and centralised computers to personal computers;
- Increased accessibility to statistical packages;
- The period of sampling and searches for causality
- Emergence of SEM software



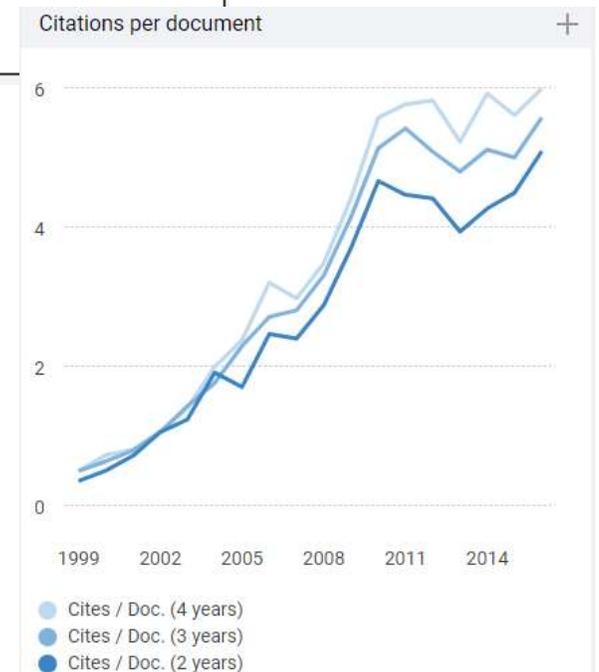
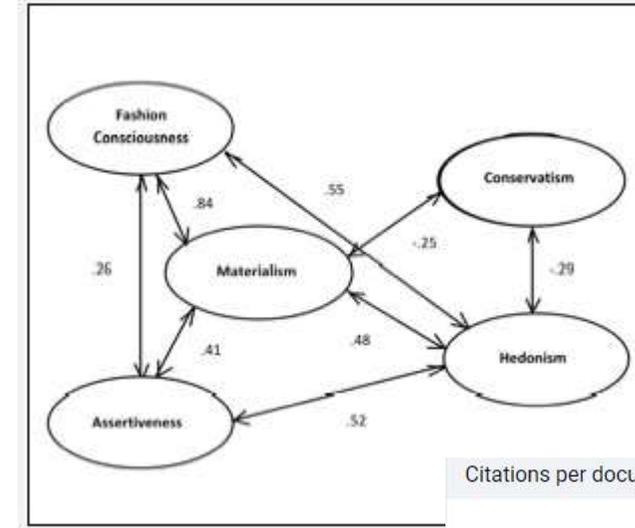
Implications of new computing power

- Begin to test relationships between variables
- Begin forecasting based on ARIMA and other techniques
- Tests of the reliability of the data are possible – alpha coefficients, KMO, measures of normality of distribution, parametric vs. non-parametric data issues, multi-collinearity and auto-correlation.
- These techniques are embraced by researchers
- And new journals appear
- A symbiotic relationship between publishers and researchers as computing power enables more research and cheaper and more profitable publishing.

2000 to 2020

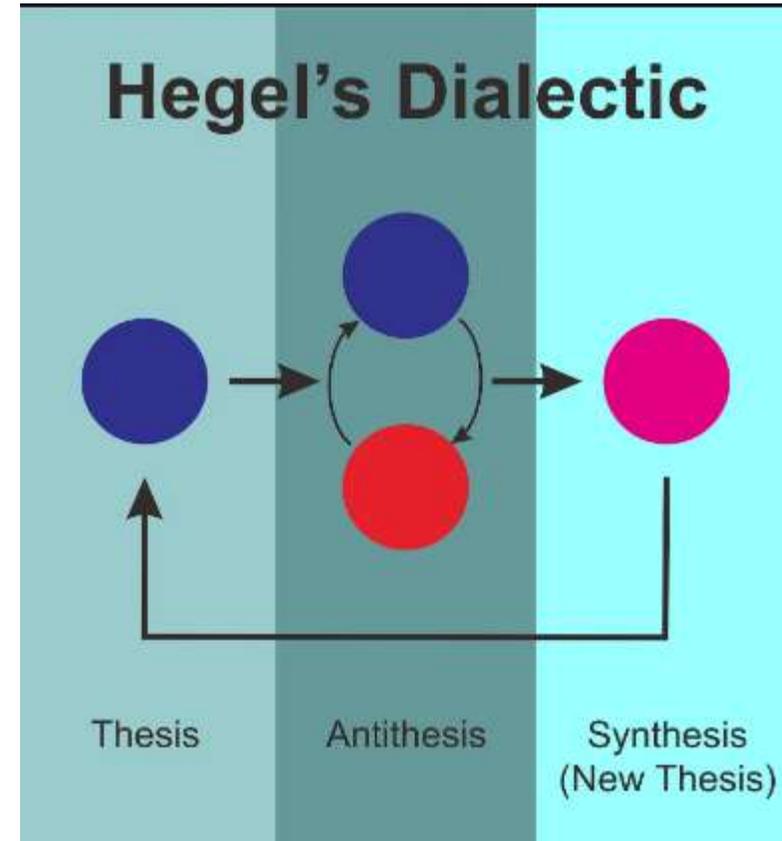
The emergence of the research assessment and metrics

- Slowly obtaining better understanding of statistical methodology (SEM, econometrics)
- Greater variety of analytical software – Nvivo, QDA Miner, Leximancer, EQS, Amos, Smart-PLS)
- The greater emphasis on publishing metrics
- The mixed methods movement – emic and etic
- The emergence of big data, AI, ML



So – where are we now?

- The mixing of paradigms and the application of the pragmatic paradigm – has John Cresswell conquered?
- Is the pragmatic the *Weltgeist* "world-spirit", *Volksgeist* "national spirit" and *Zeitgeist* "spirit of the age" of today



Are universities pragmatic?

- Increasingly universities behave like corporations, so management is based on “gut feeling”?
- Research, was (and ideally still is) about the betterment of the human (and natural) world,
- Today – research is prized for the publicity the university gains, the research grants made possible, the improvements in QS and other rankings,
- The lesson for young scholars is publish or perish,
- And these lessons apply to tourism and hospitality management research.
- In many parts of the world, such university courses are stressed because tourism is adversely impacted by Covid-19
- Does pragmatism contain vision?

Is our research pragmatic?

- Research assessment exercises recognise the flows of conventional citation metrics,
- So now, researchers will be asked to state how they impact decision policy making.
- Does this lead to incremental rather than disruptive changes in research?
- But potential disruption exists – Internet of things, advances in AI, changes in the natural environment
- As our research becomes increasingly technical and complex – does it retain the quality of “understandability”?

The costs

- Young academics perceive research as the path for promotion, not for the contributions it makes to well-being,
- Universities encourage doctoral degrees by and with publication, because it aids research metrics,
- Problems increasingly exist for those wishing to secure promotion if they are teaching oriented,
- Research is in danger of being divorced from daily realities of most people,
- Research becomes increasingly shallow but hides that by implementation of increasingly sophisticated means of analysis

What to do in tourism and hospitality research?

- Many seek to place the focus on human-environmental relationships given the experience of Covid. The mantra “small is beautiful” is powerful. Implications for “experience” in tourism are what?
- Corporations were required because of the need for major sums for investment – will aircraft and constructions costs fall? With what implications?
- Consider the policy implications of research findings in more detail – there are many generic recommendations in our literature – but context of time and place are important.
- Adopt the new techniques of analysis – and the conventions of EQUATOR and COPE – require transparency in out published research

What to do in tourism and hospitality research?

- Give young academics breathing space – and stop telling them only top SSCI journals count! Replication studies have value in a world if everything else is changing!
- Encourage researchers to come out of behind their computers – give appointments to people who immerse themselves in the lives of their respondents. Ban data derived from panels! (No – not really, or possibly yes – think about it).
- Work with the industry – there are numerous examples of good practice. UN SDG's and opportunities in UNWTO INSTO program.

What to do in tourism and hospitality education?

- Admit it – much of our teaching to undergraduates has been known for decades. Perhaps it is better taught in vocational colleges and polytechnics.
- Design courses that make mandatory units in analytical techniques, environmental studies and incorporate basic social science disciplines.
- Have internships in courses.
- Provide opportunities for students to engage with those living and working in tourism destinations.

Thank you for listening