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CONSTRUCTING TOURISM RESEARCH
A Critical Inquiry

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Abstract: The articulation and conceptualisation of power relations in the field of tourism research has been the subject of recent scrutiny. This article makes a significant contribution to this discussion by addressing the world-building and knowledge creation we undertake as researchers. Actor-network theory is presented as a way to encompass knowledge as a relational effect of the creative and constraining workings of heterogeneous entities and performances in tourism research. The article highlights and critically interrogates the practices which generate tourism research and tourism realities, using research narratives to show how knowledge is constantly ordered and orchestrated. The article argues that tourism research can be conceptualised as fractionally coherent, hence cancelling out unproductive discussions of the tourism studies/management divide. **Keywords:** knowledge creation, research practices, research narratives, actor-network theory. © 2009 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenal growth of tourism in the past five decades is well documented and as it has burgeoned as an industry, so it has matured as a field of enquiry (Xiao & Smith, 2006, 2007). This has been especially the case in the last two decades, when tourism researchers have reached out to new learnings in the wider social sciences, particularly in postcolonialism, production-consumption and power, practice, and agency. Nonetheless, there remains a crucial challenge to develop conceptualizations of tourisms that encompass multiple worldviews

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and cultural differences as well as research praxis that recognizes and reflects the plurality of multiple positions, practices and insights.

This paper is in part a response to calls for greater reflexivity within tourism studies in order to raise political awareness of 'the discursive formations which underpin and structure tourism's architecture of knowledge' (Ateljevic, Morgan & Pritchard, 2007, p. 6). In it, we will contend that whilst the tourism knowledge community's seeming dichotomisation leads to contrasting notions of what are legitimate and relevant tourism research ethics and practices, to divide the community of tourism scholars into business and studies researchers is too simplistic and reductionist. We begin by briefly reviewing recent work which has scrutinised tourism research and its knowledge creation in order to contextualise our presentation of a relational approach to tourism research informed by actor-network theory (ANT).

In adopting this approach, we do not seek to answer the question of what tourism research *is* or *is not* but rather to consider tourism research as a heterogeneous, yet relationally constitutive network consisting of a multiplicity of actors. As such, we attempt to investigate the workings and effects of tourism research and how this is performed through a range of socio-material, discursive, technological and institutional practices. This approach suggests that the field of tourism and the knowledge production taking place within it is best regarded as effects of ongoing processes of aligning and ordering people, practices, discourses and technologies (Law, 1994). Tourism research and its production of knowledge are seen as a continuous, mutable and relational working. This continuous network of effects works in multiple and poly-directional ways in and with its actors in a mutually constituting fashion.

By using research narratives we will bring forward a number of discursive, performative and socio-material tourism research practices which simultaneously constitute and challenge the network. By applying such an approach, we hope to transcend an unfruitful dualistic perception of tourism research as split into tourism studies and tourism management, instead offering a perspective which challenges research undertakings as a 'pure' practice. As our descriptions will show, research practices are always intertwined with multiple mundane undertakings in the ongoing generation of tourism knowledge. Through our narratives we wish to show how scientific and research practice, production and generation are hybrids (Haraway, 1991) created through various modes of orderings (Law, 1994).

This challenges our traditional understanding of a hierarchy of knowledge. Rather than there being one hegemonic centre of tourism research, tourism is enacted in multiple versions through various practices and performances across and within different knowledge communities. We hope to provide a vision of tourism research as a heterogeneous and continuously negotiated entity, both creating and challenging the constant production of discourses on knowledge, usefulness and positions of insiders and outsiders, protagonists and adversaries. In doing so, we encourage tourism researchers to engage in what Mair and Reid (2007, p. 519) have characterised as: 'regular

systematic debate and reflection [in order to] provoke a broader debate about the nature of social research and the role that we, as researchers, can and should play in affecting social change.'

TOURISM KNOWLEDGE AND DISCOURSES

In this section we provide a brief discussion of the development of tourism knowledge as this has been extensively discussed elsewhere (e.g., Pritchard & Morgan, 2007; Tribe, 2010; Xiao & Smith, 2006, 2007). This can be likened to a series of ebbs and flows where different paradigms, traditions and disciplines have exerted influence, waxing and waning in response to prevailing political and social economies, disciplinary and institutional trends and generational change in the academy. The first surge of work in the field of tourism owes much to its first generation scholars in the 60s and 70s (Jamal & Kim, 2005)—the economists, anthropologists, sociologists and geographers who laid the foundations for the development of tourism as a multidisciplinary field of enquiry (see Nash, 2007). Whilst anthropological and sociological perspectives have remained significant in the field, a tidal shift occurred in the 80s and 90s when business and management approaches came to dominate tourism philosophically and institutionally. These approaches are characterised by what Habermas (1987) termed to be a hegemonic system world driven by economically- and technically-oriented imperatives and knowledge.

Indeed, most historiographies of tourism research suggest that scientific-positivistic imperatives continue to dominate its knowledge force-field (Tribe, 2006) which remains underpinned by neo-liberal values of 'performativity, consumerism and profitability' (Tribe, 2009, p. 41). This is in no small part due to the location of many tourism researchers in business and management schools, which have themselves been heavily criticised recently for a failure to promote research addressing fundamental social and political questions, preferring to focus instead on small-scale, technically-based problem-solving research (Corbyn, 2008; Tuchman, 2009). Thus many tourism researchers, often numerically outnumbered in academic collectives where technical and instrumental 'knowledge interests' (Habermas, 1987) dominate have little scope for values-based or emancipatory studies.

Regardless of our own individual paradigmatic or methodological orientations we all actively shape our research through the choices we make and are given and the ways in which we do/not articulate the voices of the researcher and the researched. Whilst tourism researchers' engagement with plural approaches is growing, the hierarchies which serve as the field's academic gatekeepers have rarely been subject to scrutiny (Hall, 2004). Extant research suggests that tourism 'tribal ''elders'' . . . whose headdresses are adorned with feathers of esteem' (Tribe, 2005, p. 372) exhibit little diversity. Gatekeepers have traditionally been male, first generation scholars grounded in the Western, Anglocentric epistemic research traditions and located in business, geography or (in the USA) recreation departments—thus

only three women are included in one recent 'definitive' list of leading tourism scholars (Zhao & Ritchie, 2007). Over three-quarters of journal editors are based in the USA, the UK, Australia, New Zealand and Canada (Hall, Williams, & Lew, 2004), whilst journal output is similarly dominated by institutions in these countries (Jogaratnam, Chon, McCleary, Mena, & Yoo, 2005).

This we claim affects both the accessibility and renewal of the field of research. This situation exemplifies that in order to gain access to and be recognised as part of the research community, one must perform research in recognisable ways, not only in terms of one's language, writing and researching, but also in terms of one's gender, social class and race. Collectively, the gatekeepers of the tourism academy are responsible for setting the 'parameters in which individuals are encouraged to work if they wish to be at the centre of issues in their discipline' (Spender, 1981, p. 186). This continues to impact the production of tourism knowledge and the occlusion of particular voices is evidenced in the Eurocentric practitioners, practices and epistemologies which continue to shape and dominate tourism scholarship. Indeed, Tribe (2006, p. 364) notes how the tourism academy evidences 'an overwhelming patriarchal power at work'. However, he goes on to observe how, in the spirit of 'Foucauldian notions of resistance', gender research is evident within tourism inquiry; as indeed, we would argue so too are alternatives to the field's dominant technically-oriented research agenda.

On the basis of this short reading of the field of tourism, one might assume the tourism research community and its production of knowledge as highly disassociated. Is it even correct to speak of *one* research community? Indeed, the tourism research field has been often characterised as a divided community, based on those who are oriented towards or against business management approaches (Hollinshead, 2007). Tribe (2010) identifies two deep knowledge networks in tourism (social science and business) but recognizes the emergence of others such as sustainable tourism and critical tourism researchers. The latter has developed as second and third generation scholars engage with the 'reflexive turn' and with the challenges of creating a more sustainable, equitable and secure world. Indeed, Ateljevic, Pritchard and Morgan (2007) have labelled this 'hopeful tourism scholarship', arguing it is a values-based, life-world approach which embraces culturally critical and reflexive scholarship; it is enquiry which requires the researcher to '... reconceptualise ways of researching and dealing with new local-global challenges' (Jamal & Everett, 2007, p. 61).

Recently, however, there have been calls for more dialogue across tourism's perceived knowledge divide, emphasizing the need to move away from such straight-jacketing dualism (Pritchard & Morgan, 2007). To this end, we propose here a new approach to understanding the tourism knowledge community—that of actor-network theory (ANT). After a short explanation of this approach, we will explore how insights from ANT may further an understanding of tourism research as a contested and negotiated, yet still somewhat coherent network. This will be exemplified by three narratives illustrating the

ordering and assemblages (Law, 1994) of heterogeneous and often 'messy' workings and doings enacting tourism academia.

ACTOR-NETWORK THEORY AND KNOWLEDGE: A RELATIONAL APPROACH

Within the last decade ANT has spread with increasing speed from the sociology of science where it was first conceived in the late 70s (Latour & Woolgar, 1979) to other fields of social research offering accounts of and insight into the entangled relations between various actors in a given network. ANT describes how in the process of creating, negotiating and stabilising networks a number of entities are engaged through seamless intertwining of actors. In the workings of assembling the network, one can observe how a multiplicity of things, categories and rationales often conceived as divided are related as they are 'stitched together' across divisions and distinctions (Murdoch, 1998; Law, 2001). ANT studies elucidate how relational-gone-solid categories or entities are stabilised and become durable through their constant performance 'in, by and through [...] relations' (Law, 1999, p. 4). The temporary stabilising of networks takes places through so-called modes of ordering (Law, 2001), a process of 'negotiation, mobilization, representation, and displacement among actors, entities, and places' (Duim, 2007, p. 966) potentially leading to the (at least temporary) stabilising of a network.

ANT's objects of study are networks made up by a range of social-material entities, or actors. Both the network and its actors must be seen, according to de Laet and Mol (2000) as 'a result of collective action and of evolution over time'. The networks of ANT are not seen as stable or a priori substances, but rather as relational *effects* created by the complex and intricate linking and ordering of heterogeneous entities (Latour, 1999; Law, 1994), outcomes of the relations in which they stand or are put. Describing tourism research as an entity under constant production enables us to see how it carries out a material impact and exercises durability, while still proving to be continuously transformative and contingent—or even, as suggested by Mol (2002), while being enacted as a multiple object.

In ANT, knowledge is perceived as a social product rather than something generated through the operation of a privileged scientific method. Knowledge is always a product or an effect of a network of heterogeneous materials as it is ordered and materialised in and through conference presentations, publications or grant applications and as skills embodied in teachers, researchers or students. The reason for choosing ANT to inquire into tourism research is its sensibility towards close descriptions of the constant workings and effects of tourism research; of the ongoing ordering and fluid heterogeneity of discourses, materials and practices which, to us, are all striking features of its practices.

With its relational ontology and methodology, ANT highlights associations and multiplicity, rather than division. Hereby, it offers

an alternative to understanding occurrences as detached or as pulling in opposite directions. It provides descriptions of powerful and knowledge-generating positions, not only explaining incongruence as a struggle between an inside and an outside. This approach invites us to see knowledge generating entities such as grant awarding bodies, editorial boards, publication channels and industry interests, in which both 'business' and 'studies' researchers are part, as continuous enactments constantly constructing, negotiating and stabilising a tourism research body, the 'what and how to know' of tourism. It also rejects the existence of a constant and homogeneous body of knowledge, instead displaying how 'notwithstanding the coordinations of the many strategies for coordination, the strain toward the single is counterbalanced by the heterogeneity of multiplicity' (Law, 2000, p. 18). There never is, and can never be, uncontested knowledge.

The relational and processual understanding of knowledge allows us to examine tourism research as *fractionally coherent* (Law, 2002, p. 8) as it is continually shaped through local processes of patterning, social orchestration, ordering and resistance. These processes show that knowing is not a singular activity. Rather, there will always be different and valid knowledge that can neither be entirely reconciled, nor dismissed. The body of tourism research can be addressed as a strongly divided field of research, a viewpoint which is responded to and felt by many of its scholars. However, it may also be conceptualised as a network of fractional coherence, in which standards, compromises and intellectual innovations are locally negotiated and in which highly diverse knowledges and ways of knowing are assembled and enacted.

As shown in the following, the undertakings and processes of constructing tourism knowledge may be traced and described in the everyday working of the tourism research network. Thus, echoing Botterill's (2003) auto-ethnographic narrative of tourism research epistemologies and Ateljevic, Harris, Wilson, and Collins's (2005) exploration of researcher reflexivity, the next section offers a reflexive account of three researchers' entanglements with the patterning, ordering and orchestration of tourism knowledge. Using interviews and close descriptions of everyday practices in tourism research and drawing from personal experience and 'self-ethnography' (see Coffey, 1999) the authors attempt to relate fragmented practices and locate them as part of the highly contested and heterogeneous network of tourism research.

METHODOLOGY: NARRATIVES FROM THE TOURISM ACADEMY

The following three accounts are based on experiences of everyday practices of conducting research in tourism. By merging the personal, the public and the academic in our accounts we wish to challenge the traditional scientific division between the person and the researcher in the creation of knowledge. Law (2000) addresses and challenges this attempted 'purification' (Latour, 1993) in which the subjective and

personal is cut off from research practices. Law critically investigates how an understanding of '''the problem of the personal'' in academic writing' (Law, 2000, p. 7) creates a divide between 'whatever is ''personal'' on the one hand and that which does not change on the other' (Ibid., p. 6). By pointing to the constructedness and contingency of this divide, Law reveals how distinctions such as public and private, knowledge and personal are 'distinctions made, constituted in the enabling logics of discourse that run through, permeate, and perform the materials of the social. They go everywhere, into our bodies, our practices, our texts, our knowledges, our town plans, our buildings, and all the rest' (Ibid., p. 13).

The three narratives serve the purpose of exposing and discussing this entanglement between commonly separated entities in connecting and discussing their place and working in the fractionally coherent network of tourism research. Thus our accounts, based on interviews, interventions and discussions concerning research practices and experiences, are concerned less with *what* we study as scholars and more with *how* we study tourism. This method provided us with the opportunity to use our own lived experience as a resource and to overcome that sense of artificial opaqueness in much tourism scholarship. Although the 'personal experience' and 'everyday practice' referred to here are not commonly included in 'conducting research', we will try to show, the production of tourism knowledge and the continuous construction, challenging and reinforcement of the tourism research network is a simultaneously mundane, practical, discursive and material undertaking. By bringing our experiences and doings to the fore, we wish to exhibit the intricate linking between the personal and knowledge using it as one of the 'practices of knowledge-relevant embodiment that do not perform themselves as ''self-revelations''' (Ibid., p. 8). By refusing to consign mundane experiences and practices to the realm of the personal we seek further a deconstruction and weakening of the object/subject divide and endeavour to contribute to debates of what is relevant to research and what is not.

For this purpose we wish to accentuate and bring forward the connectedness of seeming divisions and highlight our contributions to the network, addressing our own construction as research subjects in the process. As will be clear, doing research is about many things and all these 'many things' engage with the ongoing construction of tourism research in turn challenging and sustaining the way tourism knowledge is ordered, performed and materialised in various contexts. We do so as we believe that knowledge interests are significant for the development trajectories of tourism as a field of study and that the ways in which we study and create knowledge about tourism are in need of further scrutiny.

Whilst many social science fields now value and foreground the embodied and voiced researcher, this is an emerging trend in tourism studies and a highly contested area in tourism management, many of whose dominant members and gatekeepers privilege the 'scientific realist' style (Hall, 2004; Phillimore & Goodson, 2004;

Tribe, 2004; Westwood, Morgan, & Pritchard, 2006). Although it has been neglected by the tourism academy, the notion that in order to fully reflect the human element, the self-awareness, the perspective and the cultural consciousness of the researcher must not only be acknowledged but must become an integral part of the process has gained ground elsewhere (see Botterill, 2003; Morgan & Pritchard, 2005). The value of autobiographical ethnographic writing has also been emphasised by feminist and postmodernist research approaches (e.g., Kreiger, 1991; Reed-Danahay, 1997) and by proponents of naturalistic research (Richardson, 1994), who remind us that the researcher is the key research instrument and the architect of the final research text.

Here, therefore we foreground our own lived experiences while at the same time describing the entanglements of the 'personal' and 'science'. We do so in order to highlight the researchers' role in creating and generating knowledge, rendering visible that which is traditionally masked by a supposed aura of objectivity. In contrast to field notes (which are frequently private) and partial autobiographical accounts (which are often orientated to the research process), auto-ethnographic writing 'gives analytical purchase to the autobiographical' (Coffey, 1999, p. 125). The narratives presented here arise from both field experience and conversations between the three authors, which were either taped or recorded in note form. We each reflected in depth on our various narratives and the topics in the conversations covered the emotions we felt as researchers, reflexivity as a private and public practice, our reactions to our institutional and academic practices, our individual values as academics and what meanings they hold for us.

As Phillimore and Goodson (2004, p. 19) have commented, one of the difficulties in publishing any research is that it has to be presented in 'manageable chunks', which as they note constrain writers from presenting their findings in ways that do justice to the complexities present in everyday life and the processual character of knowledge creation. This is especially the case in narrative and auto-ethnographic writing, which since it generates large amounts of 'messy' data, is not easily presented to conform to established conventions of research reporting (Hall, 2004). In the study reported here, we generated lengthy narratives, which we have necessarily had to selectively 'write up', itself an iterative act which is also an important phase in the analysis. Whilst we could have chosen other narratives to describe the complex connections and alignments which may be part of the enactment of tourism research, we chose three which focused on doctoral research (as a key space for the creation of 'new' knowledge), editorial board activities (as a crucial gatekeeping space) and conference organising (as the principal academic networking space). As we shall see, the first account describes how the private and public intermingle, how research objects and subjects conflate and how through this complex and messy process it is assembled and ordered as a 'PhD on Tourism and Intercultural Communication'.

Carina's Narrative: Subject and Object Determination in Tourism Research Practices

> 'Carina has come to Poland from Denmark. She is writing her PhD on tourism and intercultural communication. The place where she decided to work on her ambitious project is Zakopane… Where does the idea of going to Zakopane from Denmark come from? It came four years ago during a visit to Poland… where she was fascinated by a Górale [local ethnic group, ed.] wedding. "I was enchanted by this event. I remember someone—probably influenced by alcohol—singing wrapped up in an EU flag", says Carina. "I got back to this fascination when I decided the topic of my PhD. That is when the memories became vivid again". Carina's PhD studies are still in progress… She had gathered a lot of material so far. She has been researching the history of literature and the Podhale folklore and culture. She has been gathering information on the region from websites, brochures, catalogues and newspapers. She has visited many museums and tourist attractions. She has been to ski slopes, churches and galleries. She has made many interviews with people working within tourism and culture. She has interviewed mountain guides, regional artists, ethnologists, local restaurant owners. She has also talked to young people still in school. She has taken an active part in the city's cultural life. She has visited the 'Atma' villa during March chamber music evenings. She has talked to sculptors, painters, members of folk groups, musicians, journalists. She contacted the local tourist agencies and the ones organising trips from Denmark to Poland. She has also interviewed the organisers of the International Highland Folklore Festival and the Highland Film Review.'

This representation of the doctoral research process is taken from a newspaper published in the area in which Carina's fieldwork took place at the Polish tourist destination of Zakopane. In the article, the enumerated entities such as cultural events, specific places, people, organisations, artefacts and undertakings are seemingly thrown together unstructured. Still, they appear to fit into a whole for the interviewee (the researcher), the interviewer/conveyor (the journalist) and—presumably—the recipients (the newspaper's readers) as a 'PhD on tourism and intercultural communication'. The excerpt from the article demonstrates the materialisation, the embodiment and the enactment of the research process in all its irrefutable, situated and local presence (Haraway, 1991). By looking at the things, people and actions included and combined in the article, it also becomes clear how traditional divides between research object and research subject, between the private and the public are transformed into a borderless blur. The construction of and intervention in a given field of research are not the privilege of the researcher. The field itself also contains such a potential (Wikkelsøe, 2007). What is studied and how knowledge is constructed in this process becomes rather unclear and fuzzy.

By seeing how the field is also part in constructing itself as object of study, the idea of a research body of knowledge 'behind' the researcher and the research field 'in front' of her is challenged as is the disembodied and authoritative perspective of objective science.

Instead, the tourism researcher emerges as a produced and producing body connected both to tourism research and to the field of study. At the same time, the 'field' is no longer to be seen as a physically demarcated space or as something you might 'step into' or 'leave' by physically locating or distancing yourself. Equally and simultaneously the field of study is no longer seen as stable. Rather, as it is connected to and ordered through 'arrangements that recursively perform themselves through materials—speech, subjectivities organizations, technical artefact; and that therefore, since they perform themselves alongside one another, also interact with one another' (Law, 2000, p. 23). This is done using theories, picture documentation, voice recordings, field notes and newspaper articles. Gradually it transforms in conference proceedings, journal articles and a thesis (Ren, 2009). As the research project moves on (in the form of writing research articles from Carina's thesis), it becomes clear that a transformation is continually taking place with the research object, with the field of research as well as with the researcher 'as a researcher' as these actors continually manifest themselves in different configurations. Neither of these entities are any longer the same as a consequence of the ongoing processes of relation and transformation of knowledge, of research subjectivity and of entities of study which have taken place.

As part of constructing and intervening in the field, the newspaper article as well as the thesis into which it was later incorporated is but one example of the various components constructing and enacting tourism research. Through the meticulous plaiting of components such as these, knowledge emerges through a continual process of ordering The ongoing and relational transformation of knowledge, people and objects elucidate how these leap into (or rather are a part of) the research production and materialised product. Related parts of research and knowledge practices and production working within this specific research project interweave in their simultaneous assembling of, relating to and transformation by heterogeneous discourses, people, things, places and representations.

Knowledge production however does not take place solely as an isolated process in the field of research. As noted by Latour (1986), entities such as power or in this case knowledge are not something to be possessed—or something that just *is*. Knowledge does not exist 'in potentia'. In order to work it needs to be put 'in actu' by other actors of the network. From this perspective, knowledge is seen not as an absolute entity but rather as a performance between actors. If there is no enactment, no materialisation, no dissemination, then knowledge ceases to spread, to have an effect and hence to exist. To become and be recognised as knowledge, research must be put to work. This is illustrated in the next account from an editorial board member describing research related practices where knowledge in tourism is produced in and through its relation to concrete—and often very 'mundane'—processes of legitimisation and negotiation.

Annette's Narrative: Editorial Practices in Tourism Research

> *Journals are like some closed black box which our narratives, stories and emotional labour enter and then emerge from transformed. If you are not involved in their editorial boards or reviewing processes then you are often unsure of the rules of the game and many academics begin publishing alongside more senior colleagues—often their doctoral supervisors—in order to learn the rules. How do editorial boards 'work', what processes govern their practices and how does one become a board member or reviewer? In practice, the answer to this last question is that one is asked. In my experience, invitations to join editorial boards have been based on my academic expertise, a particular research specialism, a track record of publishing in that journal and often some personal familiarity with the editor or existing board members. The editorial policies of journals differ widely, especially in terms of how they deal with the length of service and composition of their membership, despite the fact that such issues can have real consequences for knowledge production and the shape of the academy.*

> *One journal board which I joined a few years ago has very rigorous recruitment policies in terms of maintaining its gender balance and is striving for a more ethnically and racially diverse board and reviewer base. Because of this the journal operates a strict rotation policy whereby members serve for a time limited period and as a result, there are frequent opportunities to refresh its board's composition, interests and experience to respond to emerging issues in the field. This in turn provides opportunities for emerging scholars in the field and acts as a structural interruption to the perhaps unintended consequences of the formation of entrenched interests and possible constraint of the field. Other journals where I am an editorial board member do not operate such practices which results in very little turn over of membership. The consequence of this is that either they stagnate or in order to recruit 'new' talent, they become ever expanding, resulting in an unwieldy bureaucratic structure where more and more individuals micro manage aspects of the board's work.*

Editorial boards are of themselves evidence of the temporary stabilising of networks and expressions of those networks. Annette's reflections on the role of the editorial boards were in part prompted by a thought provoking article by Mair and Reid (2007), exploring the relationships between leisure research and social change. This article is one of a number of 'state-of-the-art' reviews which have appeared in the tourism and the leisure research fields lately (e.g., Jafari, 2005; Tribe, 2010; Xiao & Smith, 2007). In their article Mair and Reid challenge journal editors to reflect on the extent to which they operate reflexively and 'challenge themselves through greater regular, systematic debates and reflection' (2007, p. 519). This prompted Annette to further reflect on how different editorial practices do or do not facilitate reflexive spaces for editors to consider such issues. When she was a member of the editorial board discussed above she felt that its members were particularly fortunate to meet to discuss the journal's operation, that is, its outputs, review processes and the composition of its reviewers and editors. This experience contrasts with her experience of some other journals where the lack of such spaces engendered a much more removed and reactive relationship with the editors-in-chief.

Editorial boards thus feed very different entities into the actor network in terms of editorial and research practices, discourses and spaces. As a result, very different effects are created and by extension so are very different capacities for relational transformation.

This personal reflection on editorial practices clearly differs from the common 'scientific' understanding of editorial boards in which standards and guide lines are transparent. In opening up the black box (Latour, 1993) of editorial work many practices are unravelled with little or no apparent 'scientific' relevance, such as personal familiarity, pointing out the importance of a number of relationships and connections which are nowhere to be found in the scholarly work of tourism. The mainstream board appointments are seen to be fed by choices favouring scholarly and academic, but also social, cultural, gender, and race similitude. Hence, established academics act as invisible guiding hands, nominating and mentoring those who are similar to them, in many cases their former students, who often share their epistemological perspective. Openly expressed equal opportunities policies would counterbalance this, challenge editorial boards to engage in reflexive practices and disrupt dominant knowledge systems, removing our 'cloak of neutrality' (Hemingway, 1996, p. 29).

For example, the continued gender imbalance of tourism journal editorial boards has serious consequences for particular types of research. Mair and Reid (2007) argue that critical theory exhibits a gendered dimension and our analysis of abstracts presented at the three Critical Tourism Studies conferences (2005, 2007, 2009) reveals that 70% of presenters were women. This next (largely female) generation of critical tourism scholars are currently under-represented amongst the academy's gatekeepers and do not find it easy to challenge publishing agendas, influence the discourses of what a research article should look like or how tourism research and knowledge should be performed, created or disseminated. This brings us to the issue of whether journals actually do offer a rich and supportive research environment? Mair and Reid's (2007) research suggests that published leisure research is dominated by what Habermas (1987) termed hegemonic/system world imperatives and knowledge, the exception to this being *Leisure Studies*, where almost half of the papers (43%) reflected lifeworld/emancipatory ways of knowing. This situation is even more polarised in tourism research where several recent reviews (e.g., Page, 2005) have confirmed that it is overwhelmingly oriented towards the technically motivated, system world. Given this situation, to what extent are journals truly operating as fora for intellectual debate and exchange and where are their spaces for editorial debates?

These personal practices and institutional problematics are all known to us. Yet the question remains, how do we perceive and incorporate these 'non-scientific' orderings and orchestrations into our understanding of research and knowledge creation? Based on a relational and practice oriented understanding we argue that heterogeneous doings such as editing—and appointing people for that task— are involved not only in building and shaping academia and its the staff, literature and curriculum, but also in specific knowledge

construction. Our intention is not to argue for a separation between 'spheres', as we do not believe in the feasibility of such an undertaking to begin with. Research never is—and never must be eluded as being— pure, that is, separated from 'personal' or otherwise 'irrelevant' areas of the social. Rather we speak in favour of embracing the hybridity of research and knowledge. The researchers and their production, that is, how they address and describe the world using what tools and theories, may not be perceived as disassociated. Therefore, describing and addressing this relational work of ordering between individual researchers, practices of academic integration (or exclusion) and the creation and dissemination of knowledge is of vital importance. The last narrative on academic practices in tourism demonstrates an attempt to challenge the reproductive and dominating character of tourism research and knowledge creation. However, as will become clear, the messy and entangled character of tourism academia does not escape this narrative either.

Nigel's Narrative: Organising a Tourism Conference

It was the day after a major international tourism conference and a group of us were having coffee at a nearby hotel. It had been a useful conference (or so we thought), although there was a general feeling amongst us that too few of the papers were innovative and too many were case studies which followed known routes. Our conversation soon turned to how dissatisfied we were with most of the conferences we attended and how constraining they felt, especially to us as qualitative researchers interested in gender issues. Two of the group based in southern hemisphere universities felt particularly aggrieved that large tourism conferences ghettoised qualitative researchers by running generic panels which lacked any clear theme or coherence other than to group all qualitative and gender-based papers together. We very definitely saw ourselves as 'outside' those well-established gate-keepers of tourism knowledge who were usually conference chairs and journal editors.

Gradually the mood of our group became clear: we wanted to organise our own conference and we wanted it to be an event aimed at emerging tourism scholars which would provide an encouraging and inclusive atmosphere. Whilst we didn't know each other that well at the time, we felt a synchronicity over coffee as we not only shared research interests, approaches and worldviews but also a common sense of the disconnected community of qualitative researchers. We wondered whether as a group we had sufficient legitimacy, expertise, resources and authority to run our own conference. However, that afternoon we drew up a plan of action, we wanted our conference to be the type of event which we ourselves would want to attend. Fearing a loss of momentum, we agreed to run it the following summer even though time was tight to publicise the event and we needed to convince our respective institutions to commit resources to the project.

Over the next 12 months we worked hard on both the logistical and academic organisation and the conference ran as planned. Our delegate list topped 80 allaying our fears that we would be talking to ourselves in an empty conference hall. Several years and events of different sizes later, these individuals form a growing network of researchers and our momentum remains strong. Books have

*been produced; journal special issues organised and there is a grouping of indi-
viduals who champion qualitative approaches who others can turn to as a pool
of potential external examiners, reviewers and referees for grant proposals and
promotion applications.*

This narrative shows how the seeming dominance of certain research
practices and discourses within the tourism academia is challenged and
resisted through the organising and holding of a conference. This
demonstrates 'collaborative advantage' (Huxham, 1993) when some-
thing unusually creative is produced which no single organisation or
individual could produce on their own. For Nigel and his colleagues,
collaboration meant a pooling of access to resources and networks, less
risk in the face of a labour-intensive activity and lower costs. Also, they
reaped the benefits of co-operation, namely commitment, trust, com-
munication, reciprocity, influence and perceived success. Such collab-
orations are more successful between equal partners (Huxham, 1993)
and this was the case here; perhaps even more crucial, however, was the
human chemistry within the group. Collaborations are effective when
you close interpersonal gaps and when each partner has different
competencies.

During and after this conference new connections were made and
put to work between people (organisers, delegates, scholars), scientific
approaches (gender studies, qualitative studies etc.) and practices
(conference attendance, publishing, examination, reviewing, referee-
ing) through a range of experiences and events. This led to the mate-
rialisation and generation of new tourism knowledge, for instance in
the form of publications. This alignment and ordering *within* (and
not outside) the network made it possible for us to draw strength
and resources for other things: external examiners, reviewers, etc.
and also resulted in a new set of partnerships and collaborations.
The network is itself an example of 'critical interpretive praxis …
[where] change occurs through active intervention and disruption of
dominant discourses' (Jamal & Everett, 2007, p. 71).

The narrative demonstrates both the relatedness and the fractional
coherence of the tourism network. It shows how it is not possible to cre-
ate change from outside, simply because there is no 'outside', but only
a lack of ability to affect and work on the network. In order to affect
change, an individual or group in the network must be connected to
alternative discourses and practices but an entrée is needed in order
to be part of and work as part of the network. In order to create an
alternative research space and place in the tourism research network,
some pre-established relationship and overlapping network member-
ship or personal connection needed to be in place. Luckily, Nigel's
group included individuals who already had some handholds on the
rock-face, resources which could then be engaged in the network.
Moreover, the effects of organising the conference created new ways
of affecting, participating in and being recognised as part of the knowl-
edge creating network of tourism research. The collaboration thus led
to a greater degree of credibility, acceptance and legitimacy in tourism
research entanglements (Ateljevic et al., 2005).

Once again this narrative displays the connectivity and ordering of people, artefacts, discourses and politics within what is commonly black boxed and labelled as 'a tourism conference', disclosing a highly complex and hybrid network of 'mundane' and 'scientific' jumble. Seeing the field of research and knowledge production within tourism as a network of connected and co-constitutive entities challenges the common view of tourism research as divided between a business-oriented 'inside' and non-business 'outside' with different paradigms and conflicting goals. It also dismisses the notion of research as separated from everyday practices. This does not disqualify science or research, we argue, but rather highlights its importance and relevance. Instead the tourism research network may be considered as highly heterogeneous—and yet still as connected through its capacity of producing and ordering knowledge and power. In this fractionally coherent entity, differences are constantly ordered but also challenged by using, as seen in this last narrative, institutional, discursive and socio-material tools. In understanding processes of knowledge and power creation in our research community, we must not merely focus on opposing paradigms or methodologies, but also integrate daily doings such as teaching, editing, data collection, conference organising and participation.

CONCLUSION

In this article we have presented a new way of looking at the workings of tourism knowledge production by examining not *what* but *how* we research as tourism scholars. Following ANT, knowledge production is not encompassed as a hegemonic and stable entity situated in one place, but rather as a set of ongoing practices. Since we constantly deal in multiplicity and 'the conditions of possibility do not necessarily come in large blocks' (Law, 2000, p. 18), knowledges are never homogeneous and uncontested. Rather, they are connected parts in shaping the concepts, questions and terrain of tourism research. Just as tourism may not be embraced in its entirety in one narrative, statistic or discourse analysis, so tourism research is not accounted for or told in one consistent way, from one position, with one voice. In fact, Tribe's (2010) analysis of tourism's tribes, territories and networks ''presents a macro picture of the field of tourism driven by dynamic networks''. As a fractionally coherent network created by and producing multiple actors, tourism research is dependent upon the mobility of its participants and on their ability to shift between different roles that are inconsistent with one another and that do not add up (Law, 1997). For instance, many of us who teach on tourism management programmes transcend the seeming divide between business and social science research in our everyday teaching practices as well as our relationships, networks and our writings.

We have illustrated in this article how within this tourism research network, human connections and relationships are vital in effecting change and producing Huxham's (1993) collaborative advantage. All three narratives describe the intricate link between the personal and

knowledge construction, describing and exposing the entanglements between commonly separated entities. Positioning and personal relationships clearly emerge as an unarticulated and unrecognised factor in shaping the constitution of tourism research. These ongoing silences are major omissions in our understanding of tourism knowledge production as 'all of what I am affects the problems I see and the power dynamics I experience as a researcher' (Swain, 2004, p. 102). It must be said that these are selected narratives pertaining to the co-construction of knowledge and there are countless others which would bear scrutiny, including the dialogues between and amongst journal editors, reviewers, grant referees, research supervisors, authors, students and research participants.

In academia, where so much of one's self and so much emotion (whether these are revealed in the research writing or more commonly, not) is invested in the research process, personal friendship and human chemistry are vital ingredients in successful collaborations. Relationships based on equality, trust, reciprocity, co-operation and frequently friendship have the potential to yield greater success and satisfaction. Related to this role of relationships, we have also raised questions here about whether individuals are 'inside' or 'outside' the network and thus why some groups and individuals (and not others) have come to define, frame and talk on behalf of others or to represent the network. We suggest that such essentialist categories of inside and outside obscure the fine-grained pattern of academic and social relations. Indeed, we suggest that there is no 'outside' for an individual tourism researcher, merely an inability to influence the tourism research network. In order to affect and work on the network, an individual has to be linked into it by 'a set of relationships, such as the transfer of resources, overlapping membership or friendship' (Bramwell, 2006, pp. 155–156).

Our examination of the partial coherence of tourism research has a wider importance than simply suggesting that successful collaborations spring from personal relationships. By offering descriptions of how the perceived tourism studies/management boundary is constantly traversed, a relational approach such as ANT offers us a chance to make room for alternative configurations and seeking positive interventions (Mol, 2002). In spite of the undoubted challenges which confront tourism research, the field has much to build on and to be optimistic about. This requires that we as tourism scholars have the confidence to reach out to new coalitions, alliances and agendas. On a theoretical level, it necessitates an acceptance of the living-in-tension between different versions of reality (Mol, 1999). Arguably there are global challenges such as the drive to create tourism education and research which responds to the need for a more equitable and sustainable world which are reordering tourism knowledge networks. Moreover, there is evidence that the composition of the academy's gatekeepers is beginning to embrace diverse ways of knowing and to reflect greater gender and racial diversity (as the Annals of Tourism Research has in a series of recent appointments) and some journals are embracing first person

writing and actively encouraging submissions from authors whose first language is not English.

Some in the wider research community have for some time been arguing that social scientists need to move away from 'one dimensional epistemological prescriptions and competitive and antagonistic research environments', suggesting instead that cooperation will enable researchers to 'find what is of value in each approach' (Seale, 1998, p. 2). We advise researchers trained in the traditions of social science and management to embrace a ''both/and'' rather than an ''either/or'' approach, since, according to Rosengren (2000, p. 10), 'the really interesting problems are to be found when we combine ... seemingly contrary alternatives'. Recognising the interconnectedness of tourism studies and tourism management in creating and performing tourism knowledges and realities will allow us to gain what is strong and redress what is weak in either approach, promising more holistic understandings of tourism.

Here, we have begun to piece together narratives of tourism research based on a relational understanding of our common field. These narratives depart from the idea of a 'purified' and dichotomised vision of tourism research and knowledge as rooted and committed to *either* management *or* socio-cultural approaches and descriptions of tourism. We have identified a path to more thoughtful and challenging ways of knowing tourism and to understand and mediate its place in the lifeworlds of peoples around the globe. At the same time, we have underlined the need for cooperation and collaboration within tourism research (and related disciplines and sub-fields) to develop and influence new academic and policy agendas. As researchers we are conscious of the crucial challenge to develop conceptualisations of tourisms that encompass the plurality of worldviews and cultural differences and research methodologies that recognise and reflect multiple positions, practices and insights. The future development of the field may well depend on our ability to find more such spaces for dialogue, reflexivity, equality, empowerment and co-created knowledge in our scholarship by realising the role of our research work and interventions in co-constructing our field. This entails not only awareness on a personal level, but as shown in this article an understanding of the ongoing practices which order and enact a field too often perceived and performed as divided. ◾

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