

A paradigm shift in researching the event experience?

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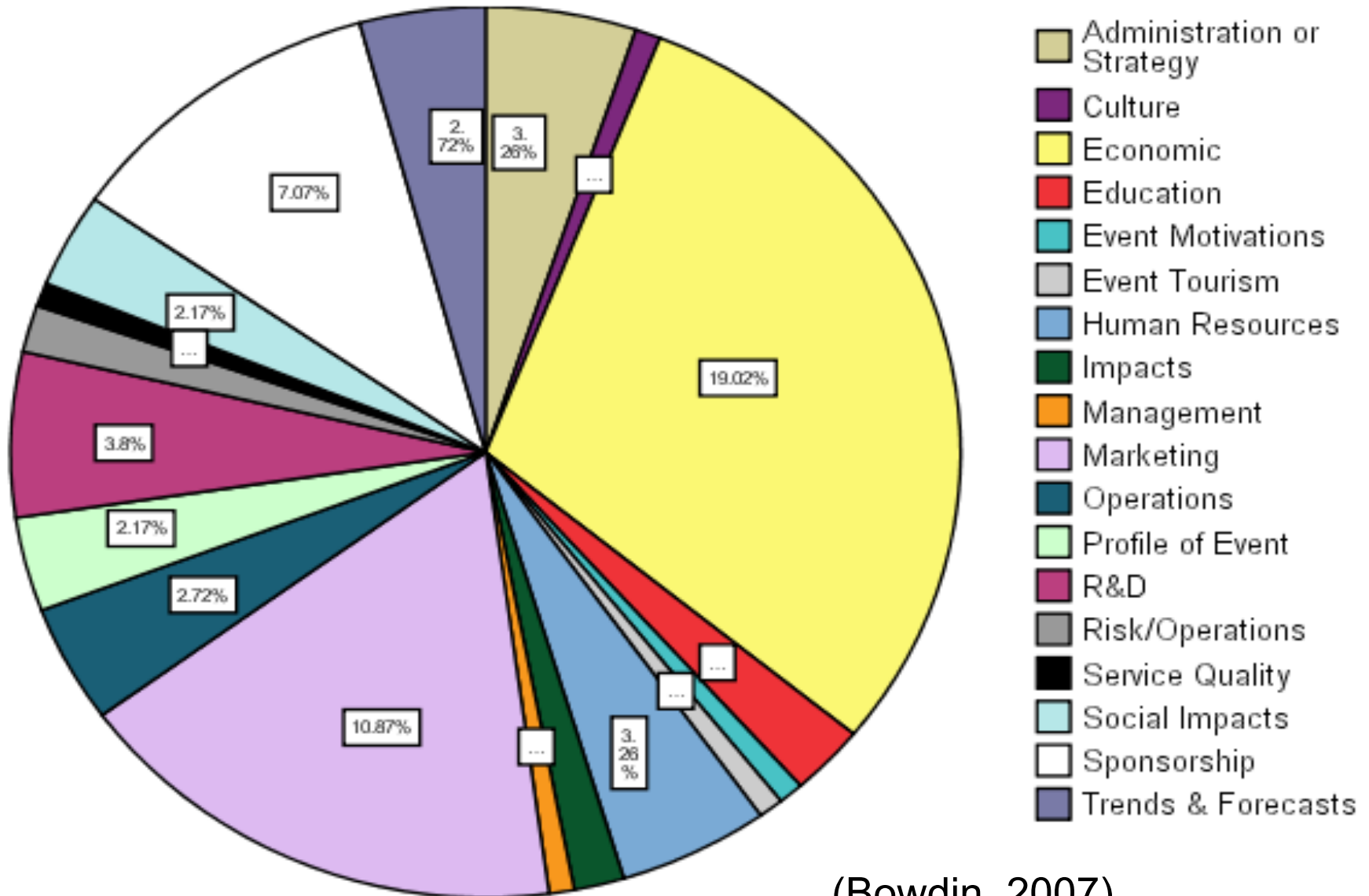
Introduction

- Event research – current position
- Researching the event/leisure/ tourism experience
- Influencing disciplines
- Influencing methodologies
- What is a ‘paradigm’ ?
 - Is there a ‘shift’?
 - Do we need one?



- *Events Beyond 2000*
 - Getz, D. (2000). Developing a research agenda for the event management field.
 - Harris, R., Jago, L., Allen, J. & Huyskens, M. (2000). Towards an Australian event research agenda: first steps.
- Getz, D. (2007). *Event Studies*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Content analysis of EM/FEM 1993-2006



Event experience

- “If we cannot clearly articulate what the event experience is, then how can it be planned or designed? If we do not understand what it means to people, then how can it be important?” (Getz 2007, p.170)
- Berridge, G. (2007). *Events Design and Experience*.
- “At the consumer level, most studies have employed satisfaction measure, leaving the more complex and difficult experiential and meaning outcomes under-researched.”
(Getz, 2007,

Researching the event experience

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- **Whose experience?**
 - **How is the experience captured?**
 - **How is the experience understood?**

What is 'it' ?



How do I measure this?



Foundation Disciplines

History

Future studies

Anthropology

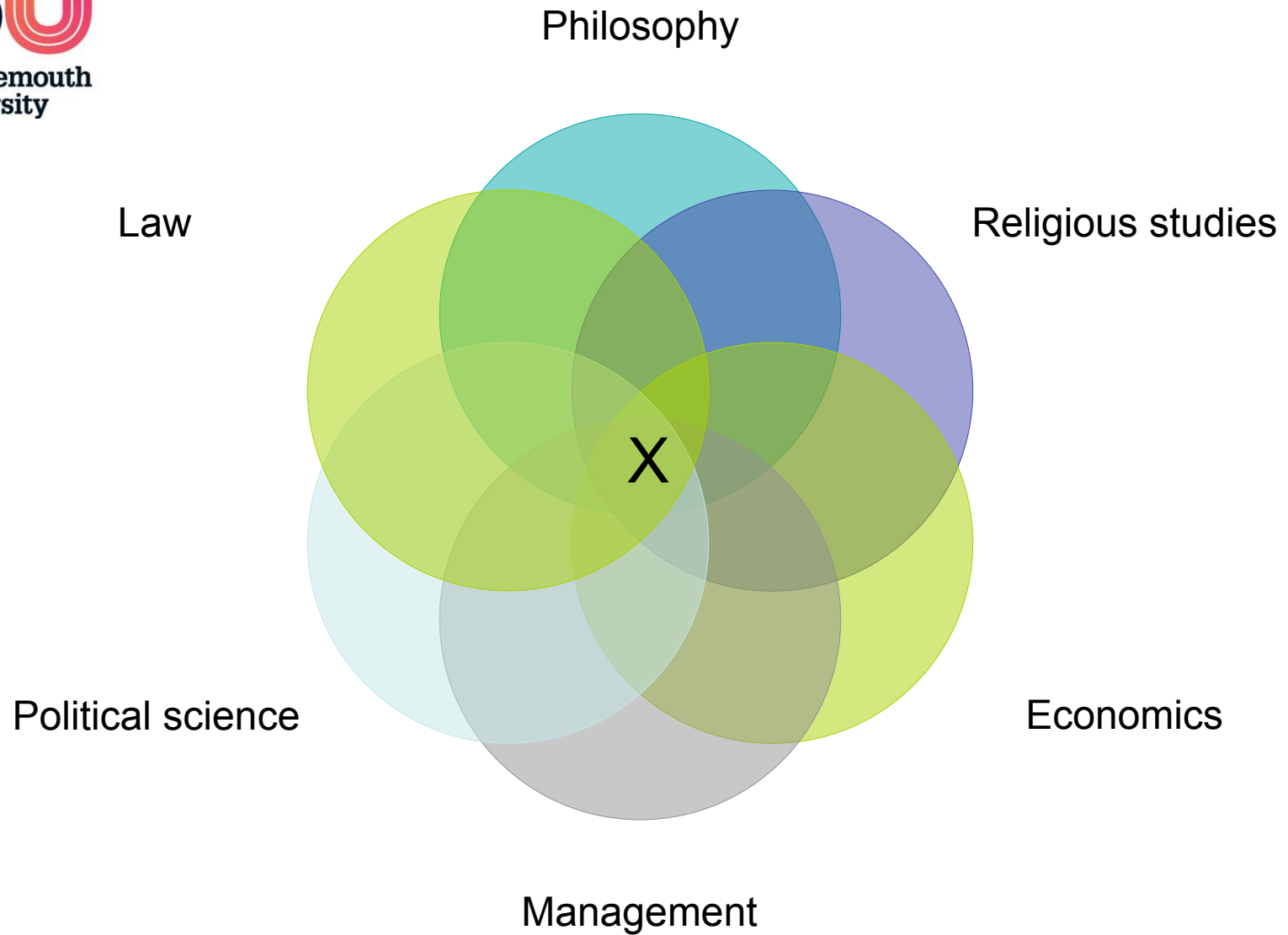
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Human geography

Sociology

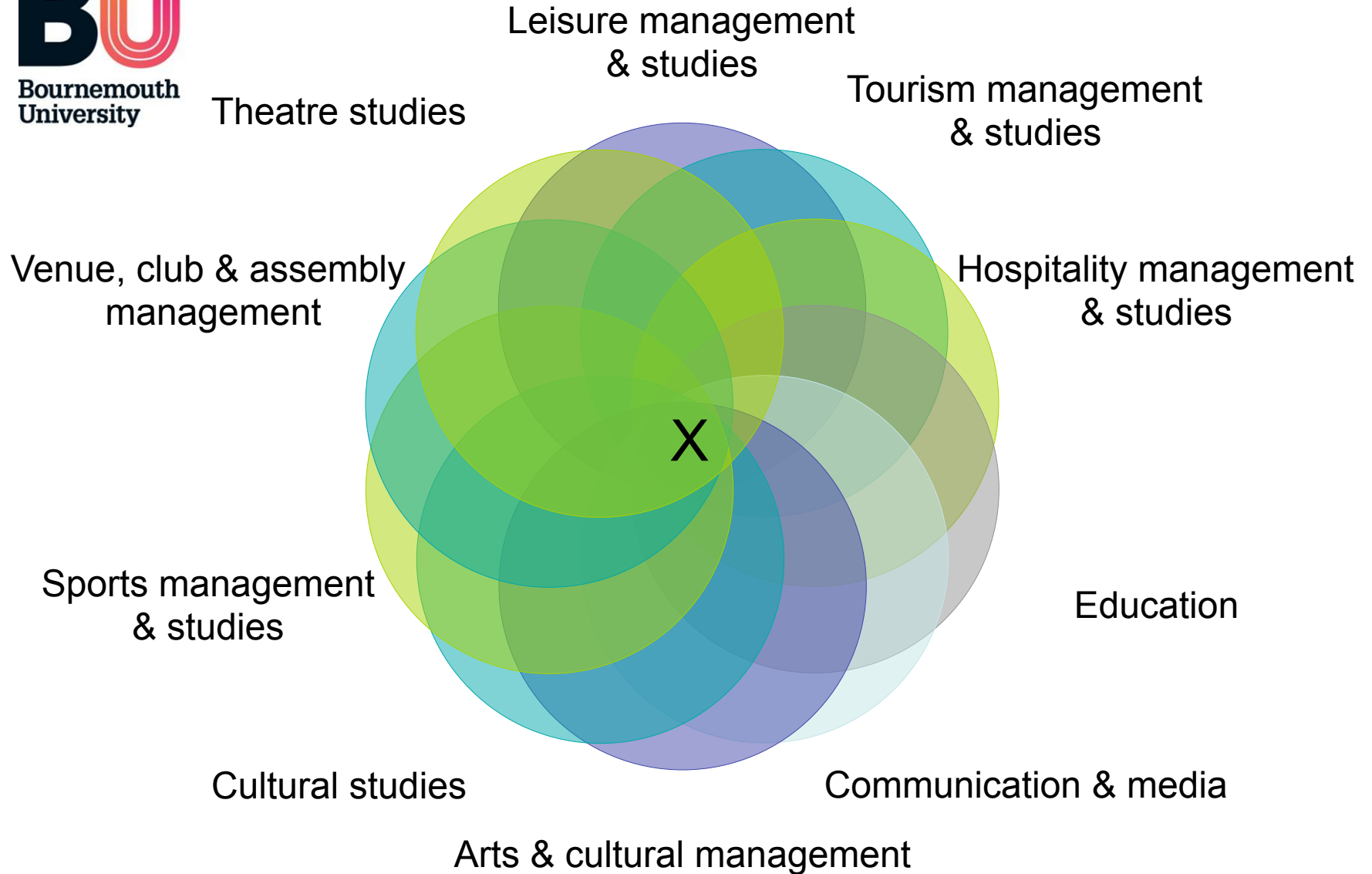
Psychology

(Getz 2007)



(Getz 2007)

Related professional fields



(Getz 2007)

Paradigm?

- French: sociolinguistic analysis of discourse
- Anglophone: ideologically scientific
- Greek: “a representation or copy” → “moral exemplar of reality” → “second-order realm of cultural connotation which was emically grounded and captured.”

(Dann

1997)

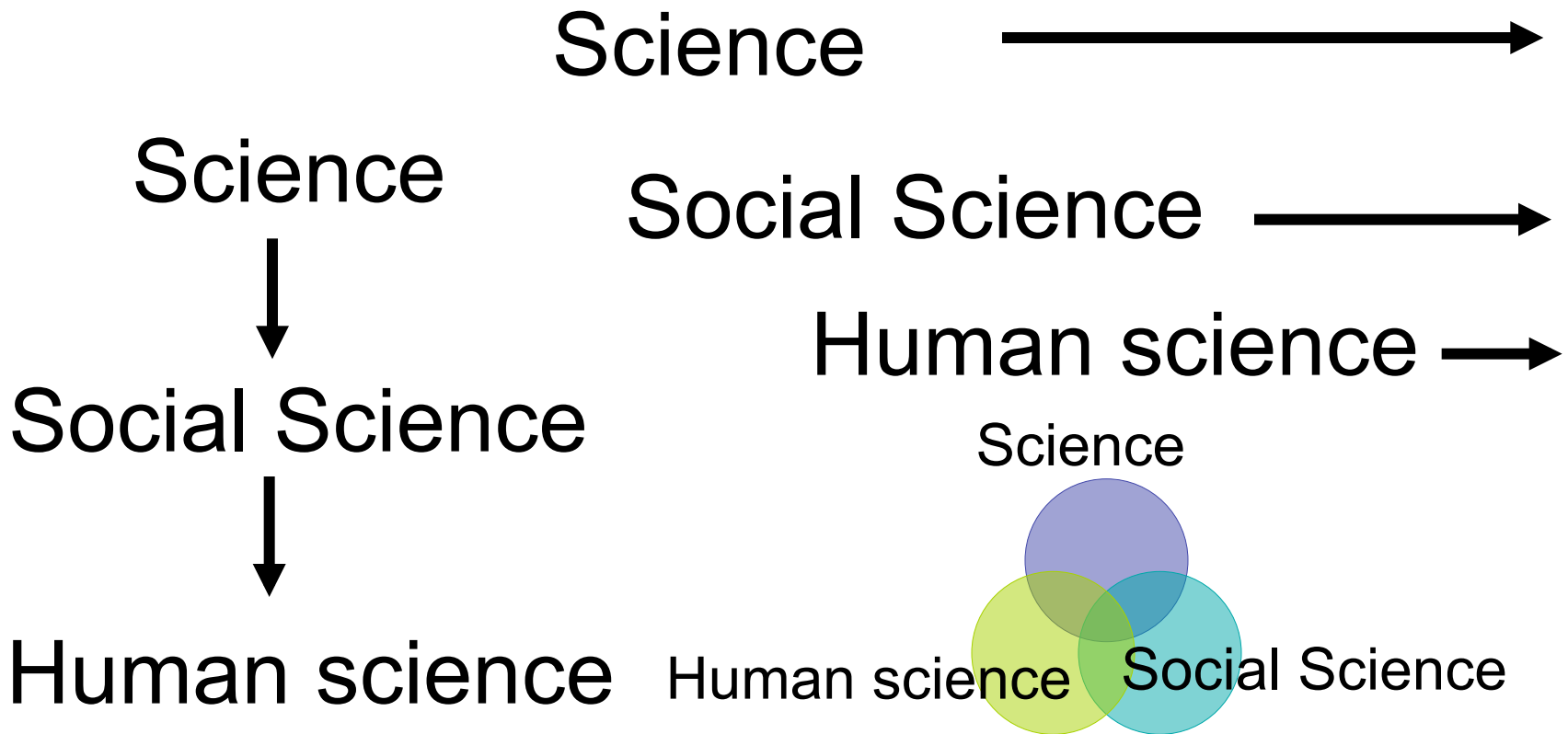
Leisure experience

- Experience: special issue of *Journal of Leisure Research* in 1998 and *Leisure Science* in 2007.
- Parry and Johnson (2007, p.122) argue that “a genuine valid account of *lived experience* exists and that such an account can be understood, captured and/or represented by scholars.”
- Methodology: 13% of 150 articles reviewed in 5 leisure journals used qualitative methods of research - Floyd, M.F., Bocarro, J.N. & Thompson, T.D. (2008).

Tourism experience

- 1996 Symposium of RC 50 (International Tourism) of the International Sociological Association - Dann (1997) 'Paradigms of Tourism Research'
- Jamal & Hollinshead (2001) 'Tourism and the forbidden zone: the undeserved power of qualitative inquiry'
- Tribe (2006). 'The truth about tourism'. "Signs include the emergence of more reflexivity and evidence of research which complements tourism as a business practice and which encourages innovative and radical lines of enquiry." (p.376)

Shift/development/rationale



Is it possible to 'blend' research paradigms or does it depend on our own personal 'beliefs' or 'comfort-zone' ?

Research paradigms - 'the 'isms'

- Positivism
 - Deductive
 - Finding the 'truth'
 - Descriptive & relational
 - Facts & figures
 - Statistical analysis
 - Theoretically based i.e. led by the literature
 - objectivity
 - Validity, reliability, generalisability
- Post/Neo-positivism:
 - Inductive
 - Understanding & meaning 'life-world'
 - *verstehen*
 - Thoughts & feelings
 - Primacy of the 'data'
 - Voice of the participant
 - Voice of the researcher - reflexivity
 - Trustworthiness & value

Event experiences

- Dominated by ‘easier to measure’
 - Motivations
 - Satisfaction
 - ‘Flow’
- Recognising:
 - Emotions
 - Meanings
 - Identity
 - Values

‘empathic research’ being adopted in ‘practice’ :

“not about finding out what people want but ... how they ‘work’. It aims to lead to an understanding of customers at an emotional level, knowing not just what they say and do but also what they think and feel. In this way, customers’ latent needs can be uncovered and, more importantly, it helps to identify what makes them tick.”

(Voss and Zomerdijsk 2007,

pp.18-19)

Conclusions (challenges)

- Multi-disciplinarity (post-disciplinarity?) and multi-contextualisation complicates our research effort, it also enables us to be flexible and open or is it just a power struggle?;
- how do we or should we create our own distinctiveness?
- We need to be aware of epistemological discussion and accepted paradigms so that we can converse with a wider academic audience and be taken more seriously;
- We need to have an ontological discussion about the legitimate ‘voice’ of the ‘participant’ and the researcher
- We need to challenge and be inclusive – see the editorial change of *Annals of Tourism*
- “*Because the core phenomenon of Event Studies is experiential, phenomenological research is essential.*”
(Getz, 2007, p.

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