

BEST Education Network
Think Tank VI
Corporate Social Responsibility for Tourism

Authenticity in Cultural Heritage Tourism as means to Sustainability

By

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Abstract

This work aims through a clarification of philosophical assumptions to define authenticity in a dialogical perspective on the premise that there is a linkage between authenticity and sustainability. This paper will discuss the development of a tool to identify the uniqueness of a given cultural heritage to underpin a sustainable tourism development. The field of the research is wide, ranging from the authenticity of the tourist experience over the socio-cultural authenticity of a host community to the intrinsic authenticity of an asset or event. The discourse on authenticity will be clarified and discussed with emphasis on a philosophical definition of the concept and the relationship between tourist and object. This project is to be seen as an attempt to combine the existentialistic philosophical tradition (Kierkegaard) with the literary concept of the *Chronotope* (Bakhtin). The chronotope constitutes a dialogical principle, which is preconditioned by the conflict of time and space. As time represents flux and space fixity the chronotope deals with a duality that can be applied to human existence as well as to tourist's encounter with cultural heritage. The chronotope will be investigated as a tool for developing a strategy among stakeholders for decision making, policy and practices. The suitability of the chronotope as a tool for mediating cultural heritage will be analyzed against the context of implementing the chronotope as a mediating strategy in a cultural heritage institution, entitled Taarnborg, and empirical research among the visitors of the institution. The analysis will in this way discuss to what extent the theory can be transformed to enterprise level.

The paper, which is a work in progress, aims to make a philosophical contribution through empirical research to a theoretical development in cultural tourism research that can be of value to tourism stakeholders.