

There's No Such Thing as Sustainable Tourism: Innovation through Challenging Assumptions

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Introduction

Innovation can come in many forms but all of these share three common elements – creativity, a problem solving approach and a new way of thinking. This paper proposes that current approaches to tourism and sustainable regional development have a number of problems and new solutions to these problems could come from using creative thinking methods. It is argued that challenging basic assumptions can lead to very simple but powerful new ideas. Specifically, this paper will seek to demonstrate that by taking the position that there is no such thing as sustainable tourism, a number of new ways of thinking about the role of tourism in sustainable regional development can be described. Typically discussions of tourism development concentrate on the resources, skills and infrastructure that a community offers to tourism developers. This paper will take the inverse of this approach and will explore a number of ways in which regional communities can use tourism developers and tourists to achieve the destination region's broader goals and aspirations.