

Tourism Sustainability Redefined: A Non-Antagonistic Definition Through Tourism Forms Iteration

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Abstract:

The dominant discourse on tourism sustainability frames development and sustainability as antagonistic concepts, leading to intractable issues like overtourism. This paper proposes a theoretical re-evaluation of sustainability, emphasizing the non-antagonistic relationship between growth and the sustainability of tourism forms. Drawing on Butler's Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) model, we argue that the conventional definition, rooted in the scarcity and preservation of finite resources, is insufficient to capture the diverse resources that underpin modern domestic tourism. We redefine sustainability not as resource limitation but as the periodic, dynamic iteration of tourism forms. Our proposed framework shifts the focus from limiting resource use to fostering the formation and iteration of new tourism forms. We identify that while development hinges on resource exploitation methods and foundational infrastructure, successful iteration is critically dependent on two processes: 1) the abstraction of effective tourist demand from the accumulated practical knowledge of successful (and saturated) existing forms, and 2) the discovery and creation of novel resources and forms through the integration of this abstracted demand with assets from other industries. This redefinition opens significant avenues for empirical research in domestic tourism statistics, including data analysis and the application of computational models.