**The Sustainability Discourse in Tourism – Some Critical Reflections on Ethics**

Matthias Fuchs

The keynote critically reflects on contemporary understandings of ethics in (tourism) science and practice. After highlighting that ethics is at the heart of sustainable tourism (e.g. *hospitality, care, justice, fairness, creativity, social innovations, environmental protection, etc.*)*,* the proposition is made that fundamental *misconceptions* of moral and ethics hinder sustainable tourism to unfold its true ethical potential. Rather, ideologically inspired and ontologically untenable concepts, like *equilibrating market forces*, *technical* *efficiency*, *competition* and *speculative investment,* tend to dominate the sustainability literature in tourism as criticized by Boluk et al. (2019). Following the German philosopher K-H Brodbeck (2003), the keynote briefly reflects on the very *foundations* of ethics and morality and critically discusses weaknesses and strengths of major *ethical systems*, e.g., the *traditional* [i.e., Buddhist, Demiurgic, Eudaimonic, Utilitarian], the *rationalist* [i.e., Kant, Rawls, Habermas] and the *evolutionary* school of ethics [i.e., Hayek], respectively. By so doing, the ethical deficiencies of the *Cartesian thinking form* (i.e., *subject-object dualism*) and of Popper’s *critical empiricism* (i.e., *fact-value antinomy*) are stressed and shown to dominate contemporary (tourism) science (Brodbeck, 2022; Fennell, 2019; Fuchs, 2023). Despite this trend, the keynote ends by demonstrating promising research trajectories of major ethical frameworks in tourism, i.e., *localizing, socializing and regenerative tourism* (Akhoundoghli & Boluk 2025). Finally, some praxeological evidence is offered by a destination case study from St. Vigilio di Marebbe, South Tyrol, Italy. Through intensive communicative bottom-up exchange between various destination stakeholders and visitors, 16 ethical values have been established which ethically guide the destination towards true sustainability (Runggaldier, 2024).

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