**Overcoming the Neoliberal Creativity Discourse through Post-Cartesian Ontology –A Circular Economy Study in Tourism**

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**Abstract:** Unbridgeable socio-economic and ecological global crises demonstrate the need to challenge current neoliberal development discourse which links creativity to the primacy of global markets as a factor in place-competition. Despite its lack of validity and empirical support (e.g., *Negative Trickle Down, Easterlin Paradox*), this discourse dominates contemporary tourism science and practice. After reviewing the changing notion of creativity throughout history of thinking, this keynote highlights mainstream economics’ incapability to grasp the nature of creativity. It is shown that creativity possesses the capacity to transform any economic decision-space characterized by economic theory as closed and *mechanistically* pre-determined into an open and undetermined *cognitive* space (Fuchs & Baggio, 2017). As an alternative to current Cartesian science ontology inherent to mainstream economic science, insights from Buddhist philosophy are introduced to overcome destructive economic thinking and to deduce the elements of a post-mechanist economic theory (Fuchs, 2023). Finally, by elaborating on the idea that creativity represents the core economic activity within the boundaries of socio-communicative relationships, an advanced Input-Output (IO) methodology is used to assess how the creative & cultural sectors favor the formation of a regional circular economy. Empirical validation takes place for the Swedish county of Jämtland-Härjedalen (Fuchs & Kronenberg, 2024). The focus is on leakages, inter-sectoral linkages, as well as taxes induced by the creative sectors. Findings demonstrate that the creative, arts & entertainment, museum and cultural sectors most strongly contribute to the sustainment of the regional circular economy, thus, show the needed potentials for transforming current linear-extractive economies into regional circular economies (Tomassini et al., 2024)

**Keywords:** Creativity, critical epistemology, creative & cultural sectors, Input-Output methodology, regional circular economy

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