

Call for Papers

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Re-orientation through Humanistic Management?

The promotion of dignity, well-being and flourishing in tourism contexts

Tourism arguably stands at a crossroads and faces a veritable identity crisis. On one hand, it has been heralded as a global industry and one of the world's powerhouses of economic growth, providing employment and income to millions of people while it helps fulfill holiday dreams and travel desires (e.g. Comerio & Strozzi, 2019; Holloway & Humphreys, 2020; Lew, 2011) causing relentless travel streams floating around the globe in ever-greater numbers (pre-COVID-19). On the other hand, many experts and stakeholders voice substantial doubts regarding tourism's (future) viability and legitimacy if continued on recent pathways (e.g. Ioannides & Gyimóthy, 2020). In academia as well as in broader public spheres there are accounts drawing our attention to tourism as a phenomenon or an industry that is essentially characterized by morally and ethically questionable practices, detrimental structures, and harmful consequences for people and planet (e.g. Büscher & Fletcher, 2019; de Bellaigue, 2020; Meyer-Hentrich, 2019). The pandemic putting a halt to most of international travel and tourism activity has accentuated this identity crisis, and it has triggered more debate on possible transformations or re-orientation (e.g. Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2021; Lew et al., 2020).

In this regard, tourism can be understood as part of a wider debate, as the identity crisis apparently concerns global capitalism (despite variations in different parts of the world) and the contemporary lifestyle it has shaped. Despite the undoubted potential of capitalism to enable wealth creation through business activity and to catalyze progress for humanity (e.g. Bryson, 1999; Rangan, 2015), its destructive forces, exacerbated through large-scale 'corporate social irresponsibility' (e.g. Riera & Iborra, 2017) have reached levels that a large audience around the world is not willing to accept any longer. Particularly the ongoing exploitation of labor even in versions of modern slavery, soaring income inequality, the undermining of community and common good, and the depletion of natural resources forming the basis of life on Earth feature in the public critique (e.g. Berry, 2010; Boltanski & Chiapello, 2018; Kara, 2017; Piketty, 2014; Sassen, 2014; Urry, 2010). Even the World Economic Forum – widely perceived as capitalist elite forum – has announced 'The Great Reset' initiative to improve the state of the world (WEF, 2020).

Critical thinkers have pointed to flawed narratives at the very core of latter-day capitalist economy (e.g. Pirson, 2017; Waddock, 2018). These narratives include conceptualizations of ‘businesses existing to maximize profits’ or of ‘shareholder value as the only responsibility of the firm’, even ‘market-compliant democracies’ (e.g. Schulze, 2012; Stout, 2012). Some of them rest on assumptions that are either scientifically unsubstantiated or oversimplified, such as ‘homo oeconomicus’, which has certain merit as one aspect of human behavior and motivation in economic contexts, but is misleading as *the* model explaining *all* human behavior (e.g. Pirson, 2017). Some of them even rest on fictitious assumptions, such as the ‘free market’ phantasm; at least since Karl Polanyi’s seminal works it has become publicly known that a free market cannot and does not exist (e.g. Block & Somers, 2014).

Büscher and Fletcher (2019) point out that tourism assumes an active role in sustaining capitalism through processes of capital accumulation and structural violence. The latter comes in the three guises of inequalities (that are necessary to maintain tourism as capital and include notions of commodification and alienation), waste (in different forms) and spaces of exception (mainly ‘tourist bubbles’ shielding a solvent clientele from the mundane world at the destination). In order to address the identity crisis in tourism as part of the larger debates and to promote the search of more viable future pathways in this domain, *Humanistic Management* could lead the way and devise alternative paradigms of ‘organizing’ applicable to the world of business as well as other institutional settings.

Humanistic Management draws on famous philosophical pillars that emphasize human dignity, embeddedness and the pursuit of a meaningful life. Key thinkers inspiring the concept are Immanuel Kant with his propositions of unconditional dignity and human freedom; Hannah Arendt with her view of humans as social animals who crave meaning; and Amartya Sen with his ideas on capability promotion enabling human beings to achieve a life they have reason to value. Furthermore, the notion of qualitative freedom comprising the responsibility to use it in socially and ecologically sustainable ways provides fertile ground (Dierksmeier, 2011; 2016; Melé, 2016; Pirson, 2017).

“In a nutshell, the idea behind humanistic management is to bring the notion of dignity (back) to management theory and practice. We argue that the function of organizing is not only wealth creation but well-being creation in a way and form expressive and supportive of human dignity. We clearly acknowledge the importance of wealth as a factor in well-being and human flourishing but underline that a good and dignified life requires more than financial wealth” (Pirson, 2016, p. 2).

Hence, the Humanistic Management community is committed to business, management (beyond business) and entrepreneurship as a powerful force for a meaningful market economy in service of both the individual and the common good in a healthy natural environment. Therefore, it advocates substantial change at the roots of management and organizing.

“Humanistic Management, with its emphasis on restoration, protection, and promotion of dignity, helps us to reorient the way business is conceived and practiced, opening up valuable avenues for research, teaching, and practice” (Mejia, 2019, p. 155). As a foundation and as enabler of transitions to such ends, Waddock (2018) suggests the replacement of the (above-mentioned) flawed socio-economic narratives through a new one that promotes human dignity, well-being, and sustainable conceptualizations of an economy in service to life.

With regard to tourism, tourism management, and tourism studies, the search for new narratives and a transition towards Humanistic Management-inspired practice has just begun. Whereas there are countless contributions in the realms of sustainable tourism, responsible tourism and tourism ethics, explorations of the symbiosis of tourism and Humanistic Management are still at an early stage, with a few noteworthy pioneer works (Della Lucia & Giudici, 2021a; 2021b) following first philosophical elaborations on how to foster humanist(ic) perspectives in tourism (Caton, 2016). We are convinced that Humanistic Management provides huge potential for applications in tourism and for fruitful debates about the field’s future.

We welcome conceptual papers, reflection pieces, case studies and empirical work with relevance to Humanistic Management (HumMgt); i.e. with relevance to the promotion of human dignity, well-being and flourishing as well as the common good through alternative paradigms and practices of organizing in tourism contexts in the broadest sense. Potential themes and topics for contribution include (but are not limited to):

- Conceptual avenues for transition towards HumMgt practice in tourism
- How to overcome flawed narratives in tourism ventures and/or tourism planning
- Creation and/or dissemination of (a) new socio-economic narrative(s) in/through tourism
- Specific aspects of dignity, wellbeing and/or flourishing regarding workforces in tourism
- Specific aspects of dignity, wellbeing and/or flourishing of locals at tourist destinations
- Qualitative conceptualizations of human freedom and autonomy in tourism contexts
- The role of tourism business and/or entrepreneurship in promoting HumMgt principles
- HumMgt-inspired re-framing of relationships between various tourism actors
- HumMgt-inspired re-framing and/or re-organizing of tourism products or value chains
- Aligning/contrasting sustainability conceptualizations and HumMgt in tourism discourses
- Case studies exemplifying HumMgt implementation in regional/national tourism contexts
- Reflections on tourism-specific catalysts, challenges, inhibitors or promoters of HumMgt

Manuscripts will be double-blind reviewed and a limited number of papers will be selected by the guest editors for publication in the special issue. **Full paper submissions are due on 17 July 2022**, review process notification will follow on 18 September 2022, and revised resubmissions will be due on 13 November 2022. The manuscript word limit is 8,000 (excl. figures, tables, references and appendices). For further journal guidelines and policies, please refer to <https://www.degruyter.com/journal/key/tw/html>. For questions you may have, please contact the guest editors indicated at the top of this call for papers.

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