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Caring at a Distance: Towards Care-ful Imaginaries and Practices

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Title: Caring at a Distance: Towards Care-ful Imaginaries and Practices

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Abstract:

To build a hopeful imaginary of another economy, it is crucial to understand the dynamic interplay between the fluid boundaries of the organisational, individual, and societal realm in everyday business practice. This creates a complex framework in which business–stakeholder negotiations occur, raising questions about to what extent and in which ways practices of responsible behaviour can be co-constructed. Building on limited existing research on care in business ethics, this study contributes to the conceptualisation of caring at a distance, reflecting on the wider social, geographical, and philosophical context in which such an ethic of care is being voiced.

The articulation of distance in care relations is studied with a focus on corporate philanthropy in tourism. Different stakeholders involved in care practice are included in the research process to move away from a unidirectional view of care towards understanding multidirectional care networks. This is achieved through adopting a case study strategy that dis/locates care practice by drawing together the remote spaces and presences of tour operators and local stakeholders in the negotiation of care, using the example of the Education for All project in the High Atlas Mountains region of Morocco.

Findings show that tour operators' investment in destination projects emerges primarily through an ethic of care between them and destination communities, underpinned by multiple layers of performed, displaced, and shared responsibility. Trust is positioned as a central driver of these processes, which combine, unsettle, and reconfigure distance and closeness. This might open up opportunities to shift from a unidirectional view of care towards shareable interpretations of interdependencies in care practice that build on responsibility *and* vulnerability.