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Care-full academic activism for sustainable transformations in tourism

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ABSTRACT

The urgent need for radical changes towards sustainability provides an opportunity to reconsider the epistemology and methodology of tourism research. The present study discusses this opportunity by adopting the concept of deep leverage points for sustainable transformations and an ethic of care perspective. The discussion highlights the vital role that a deep form of reflexivity plays in care-based tourism research that aims at sustainable transformations. This reflexivity is identified as the core component of a conceptual model that is developed to illustrate the crucial aspects of a type of scholarly engagement that, in accord with feminist scholarship, is termed care-full academic activism. These aspects concern attentiveness and responsiveness, which relate to interconnectedness, and imagination and critical thinking, which relate to transformational agency. The present study emphasizes the communalities between the concept of sustainable transformation and the ethic of care. It provides a holistic and innovative view of care-based sustainability research and a practical guide for scholars.

Introduction

Sustainability scholars increasingly recognize that radical changes are needed to achieve better living conditions and preserve the natural environment worldwide. Global challenges deriving from unsustainable production and consumption patterns require multi-dimensional and multi-actor interventions of diverse types – technological, organizational, institutional, political, economic, and socio-cultural (Feola, 2015; Köhler et al., 2019; Olsson et al., 2014; Zolfagharian et al., 2019). In the sustainability literature, several approaches and frameworks are adopted to study such interventions (Köhler et al., 2019). The concept of sustainable transformation is emerging in the literature as an analytical tool and metaphor for major system changes (Feola, 2015). A transformation has been defined as a process that 'challenges incumbent structures, while pursuing contending, even unknown ends' (Sievers-Glotzbach & Tschersich, 2019, p. 164). Unlike transitions, which are reorganizations of systems towards specifically defined goals, transformations embrace both uncertainty and non-linearity. Sustainable transformations go beyond the logic of manageable and achievable green growth and emphasize the urgent need for more justice and well-being worldwide (Feola et al., 2021). Thus, considering the scope of the advocated necessary changes, new ways of thinking are required to achieve sustainable transformations.

Several scholars discuss the need for radical changes in tourism; however, the potential of a sustainable transformation approach remains nearly completely unexplored. Radical changes centred on well-being, responsibility and ethics are advocated in some studies (e.g. Caton, 2012; Chassagne & Everingham, 2019; Fennell, 2019). For instance, Dwyer (2018) argues that operators, communities and tourists must adopt a mindset focused on responsibility, and Jamal and Higham (2021) mention the potential of post-humanism and feminism for novel approaches to sustainability and justice. Approaches to sustainable transitions in terms of management at various levels are also discussed (e.g. Amore et al., 2018; Gössling et al., 2012; Hall, 2013), and the aspect of the unpredictability and non-linearity of changes observed about transformations in the sustainability literature is partly discussed in these studies and in others that adopt chaos theory (e.g. Faulkner & Russell, 1997; McKercher, 1999; Zahra & Ryan, 2007). What it is missing in the tourism literature is a holistic framework for large-scale shifts that is metaphorically inspiring, analytically grounded and practically useful. Fennell and Bowyer (2020) suggest that the sustainable transformation framework has the potential to fulfil this gap and apply it to explore food waste by proposing a stepwise model for practitioners.

The present study aims to contribute to the still scant tourism literature about sustainable transformations and adopts the concept of leverage points for sustainability to reflect on the role and practice of tourism scholars interested in promoting sustainable changes. It argues that sustainable transformations can be fruitfully approached by adopting the ethic of care, a philosophical perspective that emphasizes the relations between the self and others and between reason and emotions (Gilligan, 1995). The paper begins by presenting the concept of leverage points for sustainability and its epistemological and methodological implications. Then, it presents the core ideas of the ethic of care and how they are applied to sustainable transformations. The paper continues by presenting a conceptual model of how tourism scholars can engage in sustainability research by following the ethic of care. This model is developed using tourism studies to identify and exemplify aspects that are relevant to a care-based approach to tourism research on sustainability and by combining such aspects in a new and coherent way. The study makes three contributions: it highlights the common ground of the ethic of care and sustainable transformation thinking; it provides a holistic and innovative view of care-based research; and it offers a guide for scholars who want to adopt a care-based approach in their research practice.

Radical changes towards sustainability and implications for research practice

One key to encouraging radical changes towards sustainable transformations is creating a shift in people's mental models and beliefs. Although all types of advancements (technological, organizational, etc.) can contribute to sustainability, several scholars argue that large-scale shifts towards sustainability require inner changes in people (Abson et al., 2017; Horcea-Milcu et al., 2019; Ives et al., 2020). For example, the concepts of mindfulness (the capacity to be aware of and compassionate to others in a non-judgmental way) and mindset (the internal lens through which people see and navigate life) are adopted to discuss the promotion of sustainability at all scales (Ericson et al., 2014; Wamsler et al., 2020). Scholars advocating for this type of change are critical of the reduction of sustainability challenges to the exclusive search for practically feasible solutions, as such solutions can be limited in both scope and time. They argue for the necessity to reconsider the very premise of any change that can be called radical: the mental models and beliefs that guide the choices about what to do and how, and the evaluation of the effects of such choices on ourselves and others.

Inner changes required for sustainability transformations can be described using the concept of deep leverage points. Donella Meadows (1999) defines leverage points as 'places within a complex system […] where a small shift in one thing can produce big changes in everything' (p. 1). Deep leverage points indicate those places where changes are particularly difficult to achieve but also truly transformative. In the sustainable transformations literature, deep leverage points refer to

values, visions and goals relevant to sustainability and constitute the underlying worldview of the actors who may influence sustainable or unsustainable developments (Abson et al., 2017; Chan et al., 2020; Davelaar, 2021). Scholars proposing the use of deep leverage points in the context of promoting a shift towards sustainability regard the concept's strength as lying in its system- and change-oriented perspective (Leventon et al., 2021). Deep leverage points are the levers that can help us envision and create a new and more sustainable world.

The emphasis of the concept of deep leverage points on values, visions and goals has some important consequences for epistemology and methodology. Several scholars argue that sustainability transformations require new ways of knowledge production (Lang et al., 2012). These concern the reconsideration of issues like the legitimacy of diverse types of knowledge, the process of knowledge co-production, the role of science in society and the explicit inclusion of values, beliefs and contextual characteristics into the research process (Ives et al., 2020; Lang et al., 2012). Some scholars are sceptical of the way researchers have tended to address these issues and, in both recent and older studies, alternative epistemologies and methodologies are discussed (e.g. Funtowicz & Ravetz, 1993; Meyer & Peukert, 2020). For example, Ives et al. (2020) note that researchers engaged in sustainability do not usually show enough introspection and self-analysis in relation to their own role and practice, while Fazey et al. (2020) are critical of the way that scholars operate in formalized knowledge systems. The bottom line of such criticism is that it is unrealistic and even contradictory for scholars to aim to contribute to radical changes in conceptualizing and practicing sustainability without reconsidering their own ways of thinking and acting.

In response to such criticism, some scholars explore alternative research approaches and methods. Discussing sustainability and transdisciplinary research, some argue for individual and collective changes from the inside out, highlighting the importance of research practices that prioritize individual and community well-being (Ives et al., 2020; Moriggi et al., 2020; O'Brien, 2013). For example, Sellberg et al. (2021) propose the Triple-S model: caring for Science, Society and Self. This model depicts scholars engaging in a research effort characterized by scientific rigour and excellence, social engagement and impact and self-care. Regarding the research methods to apply, several scholars discussing sustainability and change indicate as opportune the development of partnerships between academia, local communities and practitioners and the adoption of action-oriented creative approaches (e.g. Fazey et al., 2020; Moriggi et al., 2020; Sellberg et al., 2021).

The ethic of care for sustainability

The present study discusses the opportunity to reconsider the epistemology and methodology of sustainability research by adopting the concept of care suggested in the Triple-S model (Sellberg et al., 2021). Care is a fundamental human activity and consists in being aware of and paying attention to our own and others' needs, taking responsibility and acting consequentially (Tronto, 1987). Relationships, responsibility and practice are the central dimensions of care. Accordingly, the ethic of care begins with and revolves around connections and interdependence, and its essence is the intention and effort to maintain and repair our world for a more just future (Gilligan, 1995; Noddings, 2013; Tronto, 1987). These aspects, acknowledged in particular by feminist scholars, point to the suitability of the ethic of care for addressing sustainability challenges. The role of connections and interdependence has the potential to make the oft-devalued worlds of some stakeholders, such as minority groups and nature, more visible, to critically evaluate hierarchies and, crucially, to transform our sense of awareness and responsibility into action (Becker, 2011; Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013; O'Hara, 1998).

Moriggi et al. (2020) refer to the ethic of care in relation to deep leverage points for sustainable transformations and propose it as a useful perspective to reconsider research practice. They further observe that, as in the sustainable transformations literature, the deepest leverage points in the ethic of care literature also concern values and worldviews. The authors' argument highlights that the three aforementioned dimensions of care – relationships, responsibility and practice – are based

on the realization of our interconnectedness with others, both human and non-human and can be linked to the concepts of attentiveness and responsiveness (Haraway, 2016; Tronto, 1987). Attentiveness refers to cognitive and emotional awareness and implies competence along with emotions and values (Moriggi et al., 2020; Tronto, 1987). This is a key point in the discussion by Moriggi et al. (2020), as it highlights one aspect that those authors acknowledge as a major contribution of the ethic of care to sustainability: the way individuals, including academics, address sustainability is not and can never be emotionally and morally neutral.

Responsiveness is the caring ability to respond to something or somebody from the socio-ecological environment in which one is embedded (Haraway, 2016; Moriggi et al., 2020). Responsiveness is particularly valuable as it highlights the relevance of taking action as key to generating changes towards sustainability. Change practices are conceptualized as a form of experimentation based on a nuanced understanding of highly specific circumstances (Moriggi et al., 2020). This kind of experimentation constitutes the conditions for sustainability learning and, in relation to research practice, is connected to the opportunity suggested in the transdisciplinary and sustainable transformations literature to apply alternative methods to research for and with non-academics (e.g. Fazey et al., 2020). Among such methods, a particularly significant role is assigned to creative methods, as imagination is considered a crucial factor in questioning the status quo and creating a new world (Fazey et al., 2020; Moriggi et al., 2020).

These considerations about the ethic of care and deep leverage points for sustainability are pertinent to research practice and more precisely to reflexivity. This is a process, often explicitly noted in qualitative studies, that consists in researchers' reflecting critically on their subjectivity and role (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Finlay, 2002; Maxey, 1999). Reflexivity is about introspection and intersubjective reflection, social critique and discursive deconstruction (Finlay, 2002). Intersubjective reflection is related to the ethic of care concept of attentiveness, and social critique and discursive deconstruction can constitute motivations for action, which is also one of the main aspects of the ethic of care, as expressed by the concept of responsiveness. In the sustainability literature, several scholars emphasize the importance of reflexivity (e.g. Grunwald, 2004; Knaggård et al., 2018; Popa et al., 2015). Their argument is that sustainability research is characterized by numerous uncertainties and dilemmas, and this complexity naturally generates in researchers many questions about themselves, their relations with others and their role in society. By adopting the care perspective, the process of reflexivity is triggered by that complexity, and it is then scholars' sense of responsibility and self-care that determines the extent and modality of their engagement.

Applying a care lens to tourism research for sustainability

The previous sections have presented the implications of the need for radical changes towards sustainable transformations on epistemology and methodology and discussed how the ethic of care can play an important role. Based on these considerations, this section develops a conceptual model of conducting care-based research for sustainability. It starts by briefly presenting how tourism scholars discuss the ethic of care in relation to sustainability before using those insights to develop a model that is described and demonstrated with reference to studies from the tourism literature. The section closes by highlighting the model's contributions to the literature and the practice of tourism for sustainability.

Academic engagement through the ethic of care for sustainable transformations

The link between the ethic of care and sustainability is discussed by some tourism scholars with reference to the industry and, in some cases, also to the academia. Camargo et al. (2016) offer a comprehensive discussion of the potential of care in relation to sustainability, advocating for a joint ethic of justice and care. This position is also held by other scholars who use the care concept to approach issues of ethics, justice and equity (e.g. Fennell, 2019; Fennell & Sheppard, 2021; Higgins-Desbiolles &

Monga, 2020; Jamal, 2019). For example, Carnicelli and Boluk (2021) argue that a care-based critical pedagogy can be a crucial element in foster positive changes among future academics and help advance a truly sustainable tourism. The case of academics is discussed by Camargo et al. (2016), who refer to knowledge production and highlight the emancipatory function of research to promote social change and, not least, to reinvent itself. The latter refers to a renewed paradigm that emphasizes the personal, emotional and embodied dimensions of conducting research. According to Camargo et al. (2016), the inclusion of the 'I' in sustainability research is essential, and scholars should break free of the positivistic conventions that consider subjectivity and reflexivity as contaminating knowledge production.

Combining the main ideas presented by Moriggi et al. (2020) with the discussion by Camargo et al. (2016), the present study proposes a conceptual model for tourism research for sustainability: *care-full academic activism*. Care-full is used to signal the adherence of the model to the position of feminist scholars who interrogate academia from an ethic of care perspective (e.g. Motta & Bennett, 2018). Activism is chosen to differentiate the engagement represented in this model from academic engagement as broadly understood, i.e. knowledge-related interactions by academics with non-academics (Perkmann et al., 2021). Some tourism researchers who discuss the desirability and measurability of academic engagement comment on the scholarly mindset and the possible tension between engagement and performativity in neoliberal terms (Font et al., 2019; Thomas, 2020). The latter topics are addressed by some critical scholars who use the term 'academic activism' to indicate scholars' value-laden, cognitive and emotional involvement in sustainability-related practices through their individual and collective work and possibly through other channels such as public media, arrangements, interest groups and associations (Dredge, 2017; Hales et al., 2018). In line with the latter position, the model developed in this study uses the term activism to emphasize the fact that scholars can play the role of change agents.

In accord with Camargo et al. (2016), the model identifies reflexivity as the crucial element in sustainability research based on the ethic of care. Thus, the care-full academic activism model has reflexivity at its core, with attentiveness, responsiveness, imagination and critical thinking comprising its other components, which are paired and related to interconnectedness and transformative agency. Figure 1 illustrates the model, which is detailed below the figure, highlighting the interrelations among the various components and referring to examples of tourism studies relevant to those components.

The reflexivity process is the core of the model and represents the fundamental component of a care-based research that, regardless of its ontological standpoint, aims to promote radical changes that lead towards sustainability. In the tourism literature, Ateljevic et al. (2005) extensively discuss the concept of reflexivity. This is explained in terms of entanglements with our ideologies, legitimacy, positionality and entanglements with the researched and in relation to research accountability. This resonates with some aspects of the Triple-S model by Sellberg et al. (2021), according to which scholars should care for science (research accountability), society (the researched) and themselves (ideologies, legitimacy and positionality). In their discussion of reflexivity, Ateljevic et al. (2005)
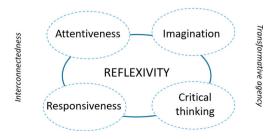

Figure 1. The care-full academic activism model.

also highlight the impossibility of separating our life-worlds from our academic contexts and ourselves from the intricate web of relations of which we are all part. Such aspect emerges quite clearly also in the recent work by Schweinsberg et al. (2021), who warn against forgetting, underestimating and, not making explicit the human element (the researchers' life histories, values, beliefs, goals) in the process of knowledge production. These considerations are important in sustainability research, which is intrinsically value-laden and practice-oriented, and point to the opportunity to consider the reflexivity process as relevant to any kind of research.

Tourism research practices vary widely in terms of reflexivity, which can compromise the quality of the resulting studies. There is a tendency to consider some aspects of the research process as too private to be shared and, in some cases, to consider reflexivity considerations, or at least the communication thereof, as irrelevant or dangerously in conflict with the dominant view of research as a values-free search for the one objective truth (Crossley, 2019; Hall, 2004; Schweinsberg et al., 2021). As sustainability is an inherently value-laden concept, a deep form of reflexivity is well suited to sustainability-related studies, but it is rarely communicated. For example, spirituality is among the deepest leverage points identified in the sustainable transformations literature (Abson et al., 2017) and could thus be considered critically relevant to sustainability. Nevertheless, tourism scholars discussing sustainability tend to omit reflections about their own spirituality and how it may influence their research. It can be argued that the tendency to dismiss the process or communication of reflexivity as irrelevant derives from the underestimation of the crucial role played by subjectivity in several research phases, including choice of focus and the selection of possible research partners. Thus, the partial or complete omission of deep reflexivity considerations in sustainability research can be problematic and compromise the transparency and ultimately the quality of the research (Xin et al., 2013).

The two components of the care-full academic activism model represented on the left side of Figure 1 are attentiveness and responsiveness. These components relate to the care aspect of interconnectedness discussed by Moriggi et al. (2020) and thus to the model's core of reflexivity in its dimensions of introspection and intersubjectivity (Finlay, 2002). First, attentiveness in sustainability research practice can be described as our understanding and emotional awareness of the existence and legitimacy of perspectives on tourism and sustainability that are different than ours (Camargo et al., 2016). This component of the model indicates that our subjectivity overlaps with the subjectivities of others, whose voices must be included to make the research process more open and truly relevant to sustainability. This leads to some practical consequences regarding which research methods to adopt. As in the sustainability literature (e.g. Fazey et al., 2020), the methods that are identified in the tourism literature as particularly valuable for an inclusive form of sustainability are those that combine research with action. Examples from the tourism literature are studies applying participative action research (PAR) approaches, such as collaborative design (Duxbury et al., 2021) and appreciative inquiry (Raymond & Hall, 2008).

Next, responsiveness is understood as the ability of researchers to act in response to the signals from the socio-ecological environment in which they are embedded in their role as academics. In particular, responsiveness is linked to the choice of research method(s). Some methods adopted in tourism studies pay particular attention to the impact of the research and to a broad type of inclusiveness; they are thus in line with a care-based approach to research about sustainability. In addition to the aforementioned example of appreciative inquiry (Raymond & Hall, 2008), other examples include the adoption of the theory of change as the overarching perspective of a workshop methodology (Bertella et al., 2021) and of the knowledge translations framework for impactful research (Fennell, 2021). Broadening the meaning of inclusiveness and being critical of the dominant anthropocentric view of sustainability, some scholars propose videography as a method to adopt a non-human perspective-taking (Haanpää et al., 2021).

The two components of the model represented on the right side of Figure 1 are imagination and critical thinking and constitute the two sides of transformative agency, which is the capacity to prepare and navigate changes towards new realities (Moore & Milkoreit, 2020; Westley et al.,

2013). The capacity to envision is essential for sustainable changes (Galafassi, 2018), and imagination has recently entered tourism research practice in a more pronounced way. This is exemplified by two of the aforementioned studies: one about appreciative inquiry that invites workshop participants to envision possibilities desired futures (Raymond & Hall, 2008), and one applying the theory of change that uses creativity by adopting the empathy-provoking method of design thinking (Bertella et al., 2021). Critical thinking, which is the fourth component of the care-full academic activism model, is well represented in the tourism literature; indeed, it is central to what is known as the critical turn in tourism studies (Ateljevic et al., 2013). Here, sustainability is extensively discussed (Mura & Wijesinghe, 2021), sometimes from a care-related perspective (e.g. Camargo et al., 2016; Swain & Swain, 2004). Critical thinking and imagination are complementary. This is argued, among others, by Bramwell and Lane (2014): 'the application of critical theory in tourism entertains ideas about utopia and the good life for tourism' (p. 3). Thus, the third and fourth components of the model are also related to the core process of reflexivity, as utopian visions demand serious introspection and social critique.

The contributions of the care-full academic activism model

The care-full academic activism model offers a holistic, innovative and practical perspective on care-based tourism research aiming at sustainability. As the discussion following Figure 1 shows, the various components of the model are noted in some tourism studies but, apart from Camargo et al. (2016), these accounts tend to be fragmented, so a complete picture of a possible care-based approach to research for radical changes towards sustainability remains lacking. The care-full academic activism model fills this gap by highlighting the interrelation and coherence of five concepts relevant to the epistemology and methodology of sustainability research. The model's innovativeness resides in the interrelations among the various components of the model. This web of interrelations helps answer the need expressed by some post-humanist scholars for a disruptive type of reflexivity that is sometimes called diffraction (Jenkins et al., 2020). As a metaphor, diffraction is about multiple truths and, related to reflexivity, it indicates a critical consciousness and commitment to make a real difference in a messy, entangled and uncertain world (Haraway, 2016). Thus, the developed model, based on care and relying on processes that value pluralism, criticality and action, responds to the call by Jamal and Higham (2021) about alternative approaches to the study of sustainability.

The practical aspect of the care-full academic activism model consists in its possible use as a guide to what aspects to consider when conducting research adopting the ethic of care and aiming at changes towards sustainability. The studies reported in the description of Figure 1 as corresponding to one or more of the model's components offer some examples. To supplement them, Table 1 offers a number of questions that scholars can use when approaching a sustainability-related research project from a care-based perspective. These questions have been categorized into the model's five components, although some may (and likely do) overlap. Reflexivity-related questions are focused on the researcher, while the inter-subjectivity dimension is captured by the questions about attentiveness. The questions about responsiveness are more practice-oriented, and those about imagination and critical thinking concern the potential and possible obstacles to stimulate innovation and change. The list of questions is by no means intended to be exhaustive. It is based on experiences reported by the authors of two studies (Ateljevic et al., 2005; Hales et al., 2018) and on the author's involvement in two PAR projects relevant to sustainability (Bertella, 2019; Bertella et al., 2021).

Conclusions

The point of departure of this study was the urgent need for radical changes towards sustainability and the related epistemological and methodological implications, especially the opportunity for

Table 1. Questions that scholars engaged in care-based research can ask when reflecting on the methodology of their research projects.

Reflexivity	Who am I? What are my values and beliefs? What is my understanding of sustainability and my perspective on humanity and its future? What is my perspective on non-humans? How do my values, beliefs and perspectives relate to tourism as a phenomenon and an industry? What are my motivations and goals for engaging in this research? What emotions does this research provoke in me? How open am I to the reconsideration of my values, beliefs and perspectives? What are my strengths and weaknesses relevant to this research? How much do I know about and to what extent do I understand the specific context? How am I perceived by those who will be affected by me, my research and its results? How am I perceived by those with whom I will interact during this research? How can I position myself in relation to these others? Do I have the legitimacy to engage in this research?
Attentiveness	Who and what can influence and be influenced by this research and its results? Who are the stakeholders relevant to this research? Who are possible relevant partners? Who can help me to identify the relevant stakeholders? Who can help me gain (more) legitimacy and contextual knowledge relevant to this research? Who can 'speak' for any possible 'silent' stakeholders? How (practically, cognitively, emotionally) and when (short or long term) will those affected by me, my research and its results be so impacted?
Responsiveness	How can possible collaboration compensate for my weaknesses and limitations? How can I include relevant stakeholders' perspectives in this research? To what extent and how can all stakeholders participate in this research? How do I stimulate critical thinking and imagination among research partners and stakeholders?
Imagination	What are my and the stakeholders' perspectives on utopian and dystopian futures? How can sustainability challenges and the urgency to act be communicated to and by the stakeholders? How can sustainability be re-imagined within this research?
Critical thinking	Is there a shared understanding of sustainability among the stakeholders? If not, is it possible, necessary or desirable to achieve it? If so, how? Are there power relations that might support or impede this research? If so, how can I deal with such relations? Who 'owns' this research and its results? How and by whom are the goals, activities and results of the research communicated to the stakeholders? How and to what extent can this research and its results affect the sustainability of the present situation and of possible futures?

tourism scholars to reconsider their research practice. Based on the concept of leverage points from the sustainable transformations literature, this study discussed the adoption of the ethic of care to explore how tourism scholars can engage in a type of research that aims at radical changes towards sustainability. The study notes that although the ethic of care is adopted in some tourism studies about sustainability and that some scholars have discussed knowledge production and research practices in this context, these discussions tend to be fragmented. This led to the development of a conceptual model – the *care-full academic activism* model – that represents a care-based approach to sustainability research. The model has its core in reflexivity and comprises four other interrelated components concerning interconnectedness and transformative agency: attentiveness, responsiveness, imagination and critical thinking. These components were discussed in reference to examples from tourism research; gaps were identified and emerging trends noted.

This study's contribution to the tourism literature lies in the holistic and innovative aspect of the care-full academic activism model and the adoption of the sustainable transformations literature to link the concept of care to sustainability in tourism. The model depicts a form of reflexivity that is in line with a feminist and post-humanist understanding of academic engagement. The latter is based on the recognition and acceptance of multiple co-existing truths and indicates the scholars' critical consciousness and commitment to making a difference in a messy, entangled and uncertain world. Thus, the developed model responds to the call by Jamal and Higham (2021) for alternative approaches to the study of sustainability in tourism. The relevance of care to sustainability noted in the present study accords with some existing research, but the contribution of this study is that the care aspect is discussed with reference to the literature about sustainable transformations, which highlights the communalities between the ethic of care and sustainable transformations thinking.

From a practical point of view, this study offers a guide for tourism researchers aiming to promote changes towards sustainability. This is done by presenting a set of questions relevant to each of the five model components. Future studies could seek to examine these questions, along with alternative and complementary questions that correspond with the five components of the model. This discussion could be based on the review of studies from the tourism literature and other relevant fields,

particularly sustainability science and developmental studies. Crucially, these studies could explicitly strive to include methodologies rooted in different ontological traditions.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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