

Rethinking decent work: the value of dignity in tourism employment

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SHTM School of Hospitality and Tourism Management
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Today's agenda

- Why dignity?
- Context – tourism employment
- Decent work
- Dignity and work
- Dignity and identity
- Psychosocial understanding of dignity
- Q&A



Why dignity?

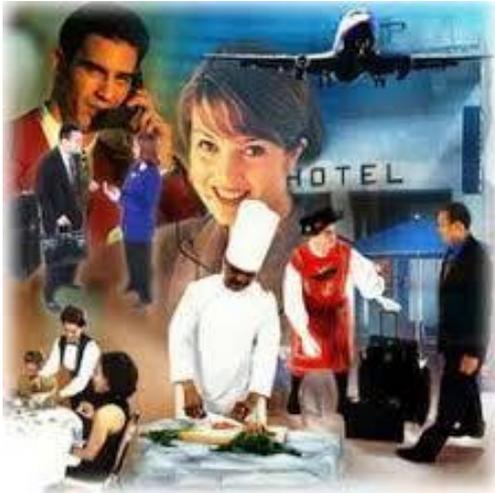
VALUE	HUMAN DIGNITY	SOLIDARITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE	ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY	TRANSPARENCY AND CO-DETERMINATION
STAKEHOLDER				
A: SUPPLIERS	A1 Human dignity in the supply chain	A2 Solidarity and social justice in the supply chain	A3 Environmental sustainability in the supply chain	A4 Transparency and co-determination in the supply chain
B: OWNERS, EQUITY- AND FINANCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS	B1 Ethical position in relation to financial resources	B2 Social position in relation to financial resources	B3 Use of funds in relation to the environment	B4 Ownership and co-determination
C: EMPLOYEES	C1 Human dignity in the workplace and working environment	C2 Self-determined working arrangements	C3 Environmentally friendly behaviour of staff	C4 Co-determination and transparency within the organisation
D: CUSTOMERS AND BUSINESS PARTNERS	D1 Ethical customer relations	D2 Cooperation and solidarity with other companies	D3 Impact on the environment of the use and disposal of products and services	D4 Customer participation and product transparency
E: SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT	E1 Purpose of products and services and their effects on society	E2 Contribution to the community	E3 Reduction of environmental impact	E4 Social co-determination and transparency

We envision a society and an economy that works for all. Such a society promotes organizing practices that honors the inherent value of all life and protects human dignity



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Why tourism employment?

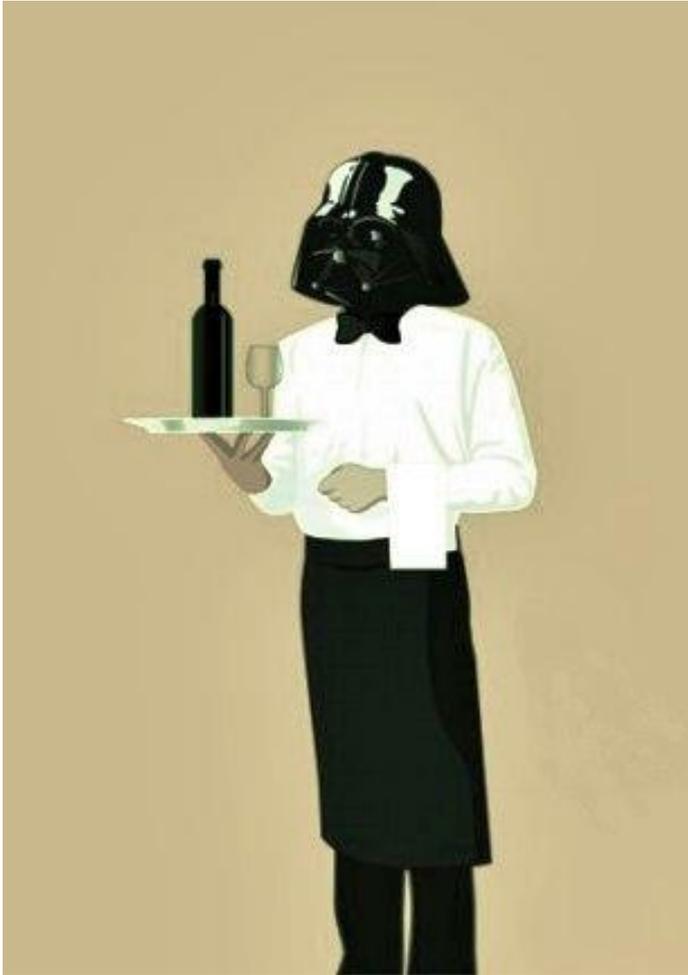


Labour intense industry & opportunities for women, migrants and young people

- Opportunities during economic transition and livelihood diversification (Stead, 2005);
- Opportunities for the less skilled, minorities, and women (Ashley et al., 2000);
- New knowledge and skills;
- Meeting new people, and
- Enabling social and labour mobility (Ladkin, 2011).

The “dark side” of tourism employment

Dark side of tourism employment is unsustainable



- Low-wage, low-skill, seasonal, and part-time employment, limited opportunities for career development, gender discrimination (Baum, 2007; 2015);
- Staffing challenges relating to recruitment, engagement, and retention – questions of dignified work in hospitality (Lee, 2006);
- Employees feel undervalued and unappreciated based on low prestigious job images (Kusluvan et al., 2010);
- In the UK alone, labour turnover costs the sector £274 million annually (People1st, 2015)



19th March 2020

Private & Confidential
Alvaro Garcia Quintas
Hand Delivered

Dear Alvaro,

Services no longer required

Taking the latest Government advice, this letter is to confirm that from 20th March 2020 your employment has been terminated as your services are no longer required.

Your final payslip will include all hours worked up to and including 19th March 2020, and any accrued holidays not already taken and one week's pay in lieu of notice.

Please understand that if you have taken more holidays than you are entitled to, an allowance for, then, this amount will be deducted from your final pay and conditions of your contract of employment.

You are asked to vacate the Hotel accommodations and return the keys to the property to John Macfarlane, Hotel Controller before leaving the premises.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you every success in your future endeavours and thank you for your time at Britannia Hotels.

Yours sincerely

BBC

Your account

NEWS

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UK

World

Business

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Tech

Science

Health

Family & Education

Scotland

Scotland Politics

Scotland Business

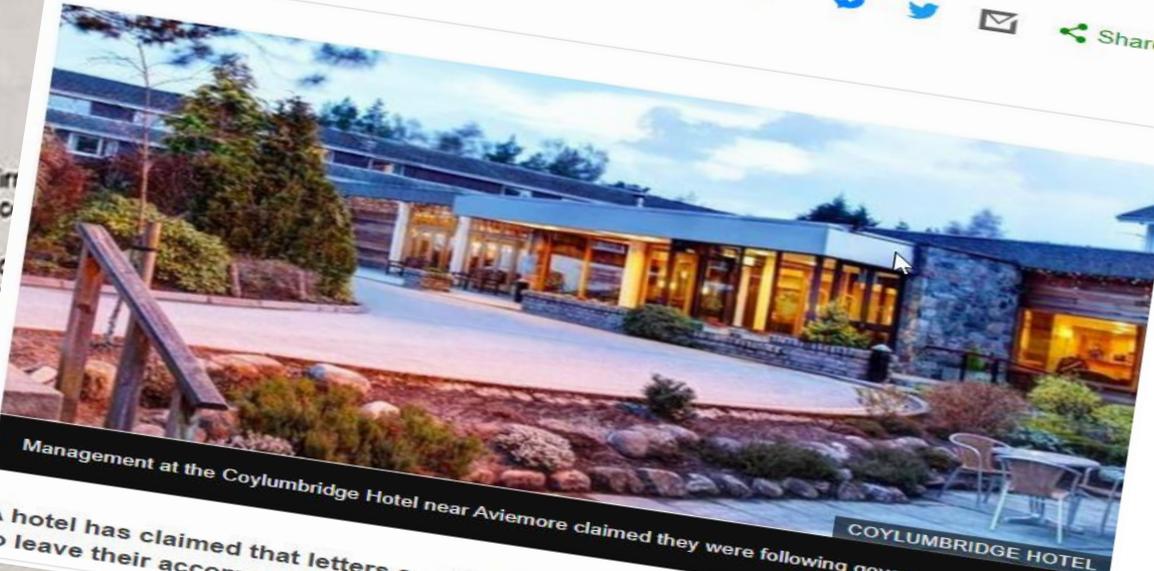
Edinburgh, Fife & East

Glasgow & West

Coronavirus: Hotel made staff homeless in 'admin error'

21 March 2020

Coronavirus pandemic



Management at the Coylumbridge Hotel near Aviemore claimed they were following government advice. **COYLUMBRIDGE HOTEL**

A hotel has claimed that letters sent to staff sacking them and ordering them to leave their accommodation immediately were sent in error.

Denial of the problem

Problem is not that only that the issues are under-researched, but that tourism institutions, the tourism academy and tourism organisations are largely unwilling to commit to changing the status quo.



Decent work – tourism responses



SDG8 “Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”
UN World Tourism Organisation’s (UNWTO) SDG8 focus on economic growth = ‘business as usual’



Decent work: “[p]roductive work under conditions of freedom, equity, security and **dignity**, in which rights are protected and adequate remuneration and social coverage are provided” (ILO, 1999, p. 15).

ILO’s guidelines on decent work and socially responsible tourism (ILO, 2017) tourism-specific targets

But what is dignity?



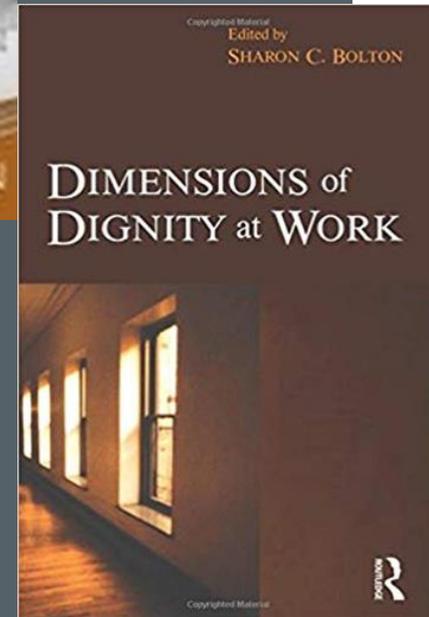
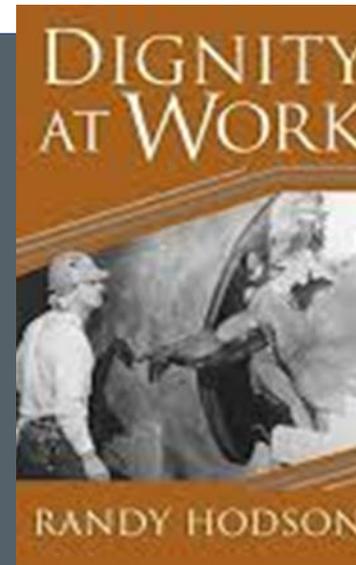
... a powerful, yet “complex, ambiguous and multivalent” (Moody, 1998:14) concept, which must be understood in the current socio-political context of society (Meyer, 2002).

Dignity and work

Dignity at work includes dimensions of

- Self-respect;
- Meaningful and satisfying work;
- Pride;
- Autonomy;
- Mastery;
- Recognition of contribution;
- Flourishing ; and
- Class

...“is not either material reward (dignity at work), or dignity in work that is required, but both; not either/or, but *and*.” (Bolton, 2011)



Dignity at work is “the ability to establish a sense of self-worth and self-respect and to appreciate the respect of others” (Hodson, 2001:3)

Dignity and work

Table 1. Spheres of dignity-promoting and dignity-violating features of work.

Sphere	Dignity-promoting features	Dignity-violating features
Individual worker	Self-respect, meaningful and satisfying work, pride, autonomy, mastery, efficiency, recognition of contribution, job satisfaction and flourishing	Humiliation and abuse, constraints on personal autonomy and voice, violations to physical and mental health
Organisational context	Respect, equal opportunity, safe and healthy working conditions, economic security, fair remuneration, collegiality and solidarity, participation and co-determination in organisational matters	Constraints on workplace autonomy (i.e. how to approach tasks), disrespect, hazardous working conditions, overwork and underpay, insecure work agreements, suppression of friendships and collective voice, constraints on co-worker relations, strict hierarchies
Wider socio-economic and policy context	Prestige and social standing of job, equality, economic growth as a means for achieving dignified work, minimum wage legislation, moral economy, dignified work recognised and promoted through international agendas and policies	Low social standing of job, inequality, treatment of people as a means to an end, and commodification of humans, weak legal and policy structures

Dignity in practice



“I am inspired and empowered here, and my development is taken seriously.”

“I have a young family and I am encouraged to have a work-life balance.”

“I am recognised by very senior management for being individual and for adding value to the company.”

“I’ve progressed through the ranks with both training and informal coaching from inspirational managers.”

“There is a well-developed benefit scheme, and the work environment allows fair and constructive feedback.”

“Firmdale in the five years I have been here has always felt like working as part of a family. Like any family you have ups and downs, but you feel supported and encouraged.”

“I feel my company treats both its customers and staff with equal respect, which in turn builds the atmosphere that we all feel. It seems to be a mini eco-environment where we all give a little more, and as a result we all gain a lot more. I wish more companies would wise up to this.”

<https://bestplacestoworkinhospitality.co.uk/2019/en/page/2018-winner>



Adapted from Jacobson (2009)

Dignity in tourism employment consists of psychological, physical, structural as well as socio-economic and policy aspects, involves different actors, and can affect individuals as well as groups of people or wider society; yet, circumstances on one level influence the other.

Dignity - a cross-cultural concept?

Many aspects relatively universal across status groups, time, and place (Hodson, 2001:168)

Depends on the socio-economic context including employees' ethnic and cultural background (Adler and Adler, 2004; Sayer, 2007).

Demand for **non-exploitative working conditions**, an **emphasis on shared moral values**, and wider dignity definitions such as **feeling respected by others, self-respect, recognition and humanity**

Thank you! Any questions?

Please stay in touch:

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