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The Moralization of Gender Inequality

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Title: The Moralization of Gender Inequality

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Abstract:

This paper studies the persistence of inequality permeating tourism, being embodied in its interactions, constructed in the gendered division of labor and inscribed on representations of destinations. It focuses on the ways in which relationships of gender inequality are performed and reproduced in the workplace and everyday life through doing gender (West and Zimmerman, 1987). The conceptual foundations of doing gender lie in its critique of the essentialist binary construction of gender and the effects thereof on normative conceptions of gender that maintain intersecting systems of inequality.

The paper adopts an interdisciplinary perspective drawing together organizational, feminist and philosophical studies to capture the complex intersections between gender, religion and access to tourism work. Departing from a view of gender inequality as rooted in the different valuation of genders, it develops a novel view of the social foundation of inequality based on respect. It argues that socially constructed disadvantages persist due to their moralization. More specifically, it studies the effects of women and men's differentiated sense of entitlement to respect on women's access to paid employment.

The framework is applied to the study of gender in Muslim majority countries, which are increasingly leveraging tourism's employment potential as a development strategy. The tension between universal norms and moral relativism have been at the center of debates in business ethics and development. Galvanized by women's movements in the Arab spring uprisings, an increasing reflection on the position and role of women in Muslim societies, and society as a whole in the 21st century, has acquired renewed urgency. In theorizing about inequality-supportive norms and practices in organizations and society, this paper aims to provide an insight to the sometimes-subtle transformations that represent sites of resistance and empowerment within gender trouble.
