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Modern Slavery and Tourism: When Holidays and Human Exploitation Coincide

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Title: Modern Slavery and Tourism: When Holidays and Human Exploitation Coincide

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Abstract:

The intersection between tourism and the trade in humans is a well-established phenomenon. In this exploratory academic-practitioner project, particular focus is given to orphanage tourism in less-developed-country contexts where the performance of this trade is underlined by encounters between comparatively affluent international tourists and less wealthy hosts in countries of the Global South. The principal question posed underlines the extent to which international multi-agency frameworks are harmonized (or not) in less developed countries where poverty and development concerns appear central to the development of orphanage tourism. We draw from an exploratory multi-modal study (content analysis, key informant interviews, field observations) underlined by a theoretical framework that embraces geographies of compassion (Mostafanezhad, 2013) and Rotabi, Roby, and Bunkers' (2016) notion of altruistic exploitation. The principal aim at this stage of the project is the development of a policy framework for how agencies (government, non-government, and civil society groups) can better cooperate to manage the orphanage tourism phenomenon. We compartmentalize our discussion and pay particular attention to orphanage tourism in South and Southeast Asian contexts.

The implications for this research are manifold, including the conceptualization of policy and practice approaches for greater agency-to-agency, government-to-government, and agency-to-government collaboration to protect the rights of children. In seeking to unpack extant multi-agency frameworks against the exploitation of children for tourism, we conceptualize a governance and policy framework that enables all actors to support social justice concerns of children who have been exposed to or vulnerable to exploitation via orphanage tourism. This paper seeks to advance the theoretical frameworks embedded in geographies of compassion and altruistic exploitation and integrate this into research centered on orphanage tourism.