
Dr. Claudia Eger

Assistant Professor at Copenhagen Business School
ce.int@cbs.dk

Emerging Scholar Profile

Claudia Eger is an Assistant Professor at Copenhagen Business School, Denmark. Her research centers upon the challenges and complexities of business in society and the ways in which these interrelate with wider questions about equality and sustainable development.

Claudia's academic journey brought her from Vienna University of Economics and Business to King's College London and University of Surrey, UK where Claudia conducted her Ph.D. studies supported with a scholarship from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). Her doctoral dissertation, "Empowerment through education: Tour operators promoting gender equality through capacity building in destination communities", focused on tour operators' engagement in corporate philanthropy and sustainable development through work on the socio-cultural impacts of philanthropic projects. This entailed an exploration of tour operators' philanthropic selection processes and the effects these projects have on gender empowerment through building capacities at the local level. Since being awarded her Ph.D. in 2016, Claudia has continued to develop her research program that builds on current academic debates and theoretical understandings of corporate responsibility, gender and development.

One of the key areas of her research explores the interplay between corporate responsibility and ethics. More specifically, Claudia is interested in studying the ethical frameworks guiding responsible business practice in tourism. Her work has focused on the subjective mechanisms driving corporate philanthropic decision-making processes. Results have indicated that the enactment of ethical frameworks relies on the same set of skills employed in day-to-day management practice, with both trust and intuition becoming core determinants of moral action. Claudia has proposed an ethic of care for business practice based on an embodied understanding of ethics as practiced and derived from relationships. This work contributes to the emerging tourism literature on corporate philanthropy providing insights to the ethical foundations of responsible business practice.

Claudia has recently started a new project collaboration with Adriana Budeanu. A main focus area of the five-year project is hotels' responsible management in Zanzibar. The study is funded by the Danish international development agency Danida and conducted in collaboration with local partners in Zanzibar. The research aims to explore how responsible management practices form and diffuse throughout the hotel sector by employing an action research approach. It combines organizational learning and institutional theory to investigate both the organizational processes and institutional structures that (dis)enable organizational responses to corporate sustainability.

Another key area of Claudia's research focuses on gender (in)equality in the context of organizations and international development. Claudia developed a core concern for various forms of inequality during her Master studies in 'Tourism, Environment and Development' at King's College London, where she graduated with distinction in 2012. Claudia's work on gender strives both toward socially and culturally embedded understandings of equality and empowerment and toward theoretical frameworks that capture and are responsive to these nuances. Her experiences in conducting empirical research across different Middle Eastern and African countries have been key to this process.

Building on social cognitive theory, Claudia has studied the effects of education on processes of empowerment in Berber communities of Morocco. She conducted six-months of fieldwork combining visual methods with qualitative interviews and participant observation to gain a situated understanding of these processes. This led to the development of an original gender-aware empowerment model of capacity building. The model carries wider relevance for both tourism academics and practitioners, as it deepens existing knowledge of the ways in which processes of empowerment interweave with culture and social learning experiences at multiple levels. Claudia collaborated with an industry partner in this project, which allowed her to translate the results into tangible recommendations that are now being used by the partnering organization to inform their current practices.

In a further ongoing project, Claudia is working together with an international team of academics to investigate how public policy can encourage female labor force participation and help shift cultural barriers to women's employment in Saudi Arabia. The study received funding from the Evidence for Policy Design initiative of the Harvard Kennedy School. Claudia started this project, while working as a Research Fellow at the University of Warwick. This work also bears wider relevance for tourism, as Saudi Arabia is a central destination for

religious tourism, but there is limited knowledge of the barriers to leveraging the female employment potential that tourism can bring as a development strategy.

Claudia's research has been published in academic journals, including the *Journal of Business Ethics*, the *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* and *World Development* and she is an active member of the academic community contributing as reviewer to various journals.

Claudia's journey of becoming an academic is characterized by her interdisciplinary background and by the wider research community she feels part of. In her new academic home at Copenhagen Business School, Claudia feels a shared commitment to critical scholarship that also forms part of her academic activities. Claudia has organized different gender workshops with Ana Maria Munar and colleagues to encourage dialogue, reflexivity and action. This includes a workshop on sexual harassment held at the Critical Tourism Studies Conference in 2017, which led to the publication of a handbook. Claudia is an active member of the Geographies of Leisure and Tourism Research Group (GLTRG) and has been organizing sessions and presenting her research at the Royal Geographical Society Annual International Conference over the last six years. Through this continued engagement, Claudia strives to contribute to building vibrant and interdisciplinary scholarly communities.

The development of awareness and sensitivity to difference and inequality that lie at the heart of Claudia's research were fostered by her personal experience of living in various countries, including Burkina Faso, Peru and Colombia. Traveling and learning about cultures is an ongoing passion.