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**04** RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

# GENDER DIMENSIONS IN TOURISM WORK

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04

## **Gender dimensions in tourism work**

Daniela Moreno Alarcón & Ernest Cañada Mullor

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# 1.

## INTRODUCTION

This report aims to develop a proposal on how to analyse tourism work from a gender perspective. To this end, we intend to clarify, from the existing bibliography and our own research, what seem to us to be a series of fundamental questions: How can women's work in tourism be addressed? What is and what is meant by the feminisation of tourism work? What are the key issues of gender analysis in tourism work? We end with a formulation for a proposal for an integrated gender approach in the analysis of tourism work and a series of conclusions and recommendations. Before addressing these questions, we first wish to clarify some key concepts that will be used throughout the report: tourism work, decent work and responsible tourism.

### Tourism work

Clarifying the limits and contents of tourism work is not an easy task. The debate about what is understood by this term has recurred repeatedly within the social sciences in recent years. To a large degree, the discussion has been motivated by recognition of the difficulty of defining what can be included in this category, given the plurality of activities related to tourism, especially as these types of activities often do not only involve interaction with tourists, but also the local population. Thus a particular activity may or may not be related to tourism depending on its specific demand.

**Fiona Jordan** (1997) considers that, if it is already difficult to measure tourism as a tangible product, the identification of what constitutes its employment becomes even more problematic. She indicates the risk that two mistakes will be made in research on tourism work. On the one hand, the inclusion of too many topics, which may lead to a homogenized vision that does not deal with the diversity of activities involved. On the other hand, however, there is also the risk of concentrating excessively on the field of hotels and catering services, thereby suffering what is known as, according to Thomas Baum, a *hospitality bias* (Jordan, 1997: 526).

Three types of employment have generally been differentiated: direct, indirect and induced

In the field of tourism studies, three types of employment generated by tourism have generally been differentiated, taking into account the

relationship established between the tourist and the place where spending occurs. Along with various authors (Archer, 1973; Goffe, 1975; Vaughan, 1977; Mathieson and Wall, 1986; Lea, 1988), **Agustín Santana** (1997) proposes a differentiation between:

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- a. *Direct employment*, generated by the expenditure of the visitor in the tourism nucleus, such as hotels or apartments;
- b. *Indirect employment*, including everything involved in provisions for tourists, such as transport, banking or agencies;
- c. *Induced employment*, resulting from the multiplier effects of tourism, such as currency exchange, supply of goods from other sectors or commercial activity (Santana, 1997: 76).

According to the same schema of direct, indirect and induced employment, **Heidi Keyser** (2002) proposes a somewhat different classification based on the relationship established by the tourist with a definitive business. This is considered *direct employment*, when it involves direct contact with tourists, such as hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, tourist information offices, airplanes, shops, etc. *Indirect employment* refers to activities involving restaurant suppliers, construction companies that build and maintain tourist facilities, as well as the infrastructure they require, aircraft manufacturers, handicraft products, or accounting services working for companies that are directly linked to tourism. Finally, *induced employment* (or auxiliary employment), is when a tourism development promotes the growth of employment in other areas, such as schools, municipal authorities, medical institutions, or security services, among others (Keyser, 2002: 291).

In 1997, the **World Tourism Organization** (UNWTO) developed the methodology to demarcate work related to tourism, called the **Standard International Classification of Tourist Activities** (SICTA), which classified companies in tourism according to their main activity. It identifies occupations linked to tourism with activities generated in hotels and motels, campsites, hostels, health-oriented accommodation facilities, restaurants, bars, fast food outlets, nightclubs, taxi services, airlines, car rental, travel agencies, and amusement parks, among other things (Obadić & Marić, 2009: 96).

Recently, the **International Labour Organization** (ILO) (2017) limited the term tourism to activities linked to the services of “accommodation (in hotels, guesthouses, motels, tourist campsites and resorts), food and entertainment (in restaurants, bars, coffee shops, pubs, nightclubs and similar establishments, as well as entities offering meals and refreshments in hospitals, factory and office canteens, schools, airplanes and ships),

In 2017, the International Labour Organization limited the term tourism to activities linked to the services of accommodation, food and entertainment, travel management and activities for travellers, and tourist attractions

travel management and activities for travellers (by travel agencies and tourist guide services, tourist information offices and congress and exhibition centres), and tourist attractions (in national parks, museums and related facilities)” (ILO, 2017: 1-2).

In this report we take this delimitation established by the ILO as our reference which, despite leaving out certain activities, such as those related to transport, and not being adequate for the particularities and dynamics specific to each context, has the virtue of having proposed a schema that may be considered universal, and which is easier to use than other suggested



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definitions.

We also use two categories to help us trace a horizon towards that which we aspire to advance, and about which we propose an introduction of gender dimensions. The two horizons of possibility we consider indispensable for the transversal addition of a gender perspective are Decent Work and Responsible Tourism.

## Decent Work

The concept of Decent Work was formulated by the **International Labour Organization** (ILO) through its Director General, Juan Somavía, during the 87th International Labour Conference of 1999, and was defined as:

[P]roductive work, in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity [which promote] rights at work; employment; social protection; and social dialogue (ILO, 1999).

This concept was raised in relation to the four strategic objectives of the ILO: employment, social protection, workers' rights, and social dialogue. This implies a labour model in which there are enough jobs that permit work, with sufficient remuneration, safety and healthy working conditions and that, in addition, have a guaranteed social protection system. At the same time, fundamental labour rights must be respected, such as freedom of association and the eradication of all forms of employment discrimination, forced labour and child labour (Espinoza, 2003; Ghai, 2003).

## Responsible Tourism

The concept of Responsible Tourism is currently used in a polysemic sense. In 2002, as part of the side events of the **World Summit for Sustainable Development** held in Johannesburg, South Africa, The Responsible Tourism Partnership and Tourism of the Western Cape, chaired by Harold Goodwin and Mike Fabricius respectively, organized a Conference that gave rise to the **Cape Town Declaration**. Within this, responsible tourism was defined as that which:

- Minimizes the negative impacts of tourism at an environmental, social and cultural level.
- Generates greater economic benefits for the host communities and contributes to their well-being.
- Involves the local population in decisions that affect their life choices.
- Contributes positively to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage, and to the maintenance of biodiversity.

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- Offers tourists more pleasant experiences, through meaningful relationships with elements of the local environment.
- Is accessible for people with physical limitations.
- Pays attention to cultural aspects.
- Promotes respect between tourists and hosts.

This conception focused fundamentally on the characteristics of a definite tourist destination. In its subsequent deployment, this approach has been fundamentally characterized by its commitment to the creation and implementation of tools that contribute to the development of good practices of a voluntary nature, particularly in the business environment, as a means of understanding responsible tourism.

At the same time, the needs of the business sector to find new market niches that allow greater differentiation, and the generation of singular and significant “life experiences”, have reinforced a concept of responsible tourism substantially reduced to a mode of travelling to particular destinations and, therefore, as a more saleable product. This has meant that a version of responsible tourism was popularized as a niche market.

Finally, a way of understanding responsible tourism as a social movement for the transformation of tourism has spread from the NGO and social movements sector in a sense of greater equity and sustainability. Originally, the idea was raised by **Jordi Gascón** and **Ernest Cañada** in the book *Travelling In Style* (Viajar a Todo Tren) (2005). This perspective assumes the need to denounce the negative impacts that tourism entails, or can entail, in host societies and the environment, and to be involved in the accompaniment of and solidarity with the affected groups. Furthermore, it considers the need to establish tourism development models that are both sustainable and specific for each destination area. Thirdly, it values and demands the responsibility of all agents that participate in the tourism process (travellers, hosts, tour operators and public institutions) when favouring sustainable tourism models, emphasizing desirable priority benefits for the host communities. This conception takes as its first concern the construction of a collective action that responds to the multiple negative impacts

A way of understanding responsible tourism as a social movement for the transformation of tourism has spread from the NGO and social movements sector in a sense of greater equity and sustainability.

inherent in dominant tourism developments, and contributes to the development of more sustainable, inclusive and equitable models of tourism.

These concepts, both decent work and responsible tourism, allow for their own development with a specific focus on gender relations, which has been insufficiently addressed until now. The purpose of this report, therefore, is to enhance the analysis of tourism work with a gender approach. Thus, we consider the most appropriate method for understanding this type of labour activity, from a standpoint built on the ideals of decent work and responsible tourism, is to incorporate the full potential of the gender perspective in its analysis.



## 2. HOW TO ANALYZE TOURISM WORK FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE?

Usually, there is a tendency to think of gender as a category of analysis limited to counting the number of men and women, without considering the qualitative differences in terms of presence, participation and exercising of rights. This occurs as a result of ignorance or as a means of limiting its critical content. According to **Rosa Cobo** (2005a, 2014), gender is a power structure called patriarchy composed of a symbolic and a normative structure:

- The **symbolic structure** is based on a practice that enhances the idea that authentically being a woman means, “assuming a way of being in the world in which motherhood, care, domestic work, heterosexuality and the absence of power are constitutive characteristics of the feminine gender “ (Cobo, 2014: 9). In this way, the symbolic structure prompts the survival and perpetuation of the patriarchy - which causes so much damage in the lives of women - throughout all cultures with various mechanisms of subordination and, worse still, leads women to accept it with total normality.
- The **normative structure** in turn assigns different spaces to women and men that limit the free choice of both in making decisions about their own lives, having to comply with the construction imposed on masculinity and femininity. According to the approach of **Teresa de Lauretis** (2000), the representation, self-representation and construction of gender are based on an ideology that, ultimately, is no more than patriarchy.

The power relations between women and men, who drink from the symbolic structure and the normative structure, have allowed men to construct themselves as individuals in the public sphere, that is, with an “outward” life in a sphere “created by males for males” (Cobo, 2014: 10) where power, decision-making, money, recognition and, ultimately, control of resources converge. In contrast, the origin of the construction of women is “inward”; it is a sphere “created by men for women” (Cobo, 2014: 10). Coexisting in this space are the roles of mother/wife, confidante, consoler, delegator of quality decision-making, understanding, submission, and the domestic sphere, which is completely invisible in the eyes of the public sphere. As a result of these power relations, paraphrasing **Cristina Carrasco** (2004), the participation of women in the public sphere (in the labour market, for example) is assessed in relation to the

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male world, which is the global value reference, to which one must measure up and appear similar.

Gender analysis is the means by which we obtain information about the differences between women and men; it is an indispensable objective for the purpose of eliminating stereotypes and creating the necessary conditions for women and men to make decisions and develop individually and socially, regardless of what is established by gender stereotypes. Definitively, it focuses on the power relations established by a patriarchy (the norm) that fosters language, behaviours, history and a very specific and defined economy for its masculinised purposes. When we analyse a specific society, presuming we do not take into account the differences derived from power relations, and instead assume that men and women are in the same situation, what happens is that sexist discriminations continue.

Gender analysis focuses on the power relations established by a patriarchy (the norm) that fosters language, behaviours, history and a very specific and defined economy for its masculinised purposes.

To conclude this section we wish to give visibility, albeit on a small scale, to the debate of the sex-gender system. The sex-gender system is the construction of the masculine and feminine exclusively through biological differences. According to **Ana de Miguel** (2010), the sex-gender system is, as with other systems of domination, a historical and social construction that cannot be properly understood without taking into account its configuration throughout history. In this sense, what it means to be a woman and a man is reduced to physical attributes, but not social and cultural ones. For example, girls are dressed in pink or “gender-marked” by holes in their ears (De Miguel, 2010; 2015), while the idea is reinforced in boys that looking like a girl is synonymous with weakness or disability. Thus, a series of idealisations flow, such as that men are stronger than women, or that women are more emotional than men, whereas women are often very strong and rational so as to be capable of overcoming serious crimes against their integrity, such as rape or many other situations related to gender violence. Moreover, for many women, rationality is the key to surviving the period after giving birth, which is a very special time, but simultaneously very difficult for some women.

However, this binary sex-gender system, that is, between women and men, has been challenged by *Queer* theory. Whilst *Queer* theory is something that is not addressed within this work, we do consider it necessary to mention. Briefly, **Judith Butler** (one of its founders) states that sex, as well as gender identity, also has a cultural and social connotation. Butler (2007) proposes working on the denaturalisation of gender and sex to avoid idealised morphologies of sex (male and female). In this way, the sex-gender system and, consequentially, the analysis of gender, must expand its borders so that the message of equality is more diverse. Therefore, other social categories such as homosexuals, lesbians, bisexuals and transsexuals enter the analysis (Butler, 1997).

Talking about the gender perspective implies talking about feminism, as “it is a framework for the interpretation of reality that makes gender visible as a power structure” (Cobo, 2014: 8). Feminism is key for the gender perspective to advance the

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representation of women and to avoid at all costs raising women to the level defined by men in the name of equality (Markus, 1990). That is, equality does not seek that women resemble men or that women want to be the same as men to be considered equal. Understanding this is essential to understand clearly and fairly how social life works and is organized, and to bring about a positive change in women and, therefore, in the progress of society (Blázquez, 2010). Gender, according to **Amelia Valcárcel** (2008), is an analytical instrument that dissects what happens in a specific reality. However, for good gender analysis to exist, it must be realised on the basis of a feminist policy because “if there is bad gender practice, a good, feminist policy<sup>1</sup> must correct it” (Valcárcel, 2008: 219).



Lima. Juan Arredondo, Getty Images Reportage

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<sup>1</sup> Translator's adaptation; original text translates directly as: “if there is bad gender practice, a good policy, feminist, must correct it” (Valcárcel, 2008: 219).

# 3.

## HOW HAS THE WORK OF WOMEN IN TOURISM BEEN ADDRESSED?

The most recurrent manner of addressing the participation of female workers in tourism is the approach that qualifies tourism as the most important employer. In 1990, the **ILO** requested studies on the situation of women in the Hotel, Catering and Tourism (HCT) industries, but it was not until 2013 that the organization commissioned **Thomas Baum** to produce the first official report on the situation of women in the hotel trade, catering and tourism (Baum, 2013). This research found that, at a global level, women constituted 55.5% of the workforce: (55.9% in Spain; 58.5% in Mexico; 65% in Thailand; 76.3% in Peru; and 85.6% in Lithuania) (Baum, 2013). The high participation of women in tourism was confirmed in another study carried out by **The World Travel & Tourism Council** (WTTC, 2014), which concluded that 66% of the total of tourism work done in Australia, France, Germany, South Africa and Turkey is done by women. Thus, tourism work constitutes the third labour force that women in all countries participate in, after education, second, and health and social work, first. The same study estimated that women's representation in tourism would increase by 36.5% by 2023. As **Kate Purcell** (1996) states, employment in tourism is feminised, that is, it is an economic sector largely sustained by work done by women.

It seems this approach to female workers in tourism sometimes strengthens the singular idea that this, in itself, is already an engine of empowerment for women.

However, the reality is quite the opposite, as a greater quantity of women does not necessarily imply a reduction in gender gaps. In

Tourism work constitutes the third labour force that women in all countries participate in, after education, second, and health and social work, first.

the same respect, nor does it imply that fewer numbers of female workers in tourism means a lower capacity for gender equality. For example, in Albania there are more men than women who work in tourism, despite which, it is urgent to work

on employment in tourism from the gender perspective as women do not access the 'tourism labour market' due to the country's intrinsic inequalities, and because the sector is masculinised. A similar issue occurs in Colombia as, according to **Manuel Leguizamón** (2016), women represent 37% of the population employed in tourism.

The data showing the large number of women is just an antechamber, which ought to pique curiosity for more knowledge on gender dimensions in employment in tourism.

## BOX 1

**Women in decision-making positions: the case of the United Kingdom\***

In June 2013 the Equality in Tourism organization, with its study *Sun, Sand and Ceilings: Women In The Boardroom In The Tourism Industry*, demonstrated that female workers in the United Kingdom tourism industry are not represented at the executive level in the principal tourism businesses of the world located in this country, despite constituting the majority in tourism work. Of a total of 78 surveys delivered, only 15.8% of the boards have a woman in executive positions. For example, in TUI Travel, one of the most important tour operators worldwide, women perform 59% of the work, but only 13.3% are on the board of directors. The report concludes that the tourism industry is failing to promote female workers to senior management and decision-making positions.

Source: own elaboration based on Equality in Tourism (2013).

\*Currently, Equality in Tourism is preparing a second part to this report, which will be published during 2018 with updated data.

According to **UNWTO** and **UN Women** (2011), tourism is an important source of employment for women, especially in developing countries, but with deep limitations, as this report acknowledged:

Tourism presents a wide range of income-generating opportunities for women in formal and informal employment, and tourism jobs are usually flexible and can be carried out in different places, such as work, community and the home. In addition, tourism creates a wide range of opportunities for women through the complex value chains that it creates in the destination economy, as well as the challenges faced by women in the workplace. Tourism: Women often focus on low-level, low-paid and precarious jobs in the tourism industry (UNWTO & UN Women, 2011: 2).

This last reflection is important as, on the one hand, it praises the capacity of tourism to employ women workers, whilst on the other, it demonstrates the precarious aspects that accompany this process. However, UNWTO, almost three years later in 2014, declared that tourism is perfect for women with family responsibilities, as quoted below:

Being a labour intensive sector, tourism offers opportunities for employment for persons entering the labour market for the first time or having difficulties in finding employment elsewhere. Thus tourism plays a role in providing opportunities for low-skilled workers and workers with little qualification in general, ethnic minority groups and migrants, unemployed youth, long-term unemployed, as well as women with family responsibilities who can take only part-time jobs (UNWTO, 2014: 17).



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Regrettably, these statements leave a sense of regression regarding the report produced by UNWTO in 2011, together with UN Women. On the one hand, they affirm that tourism is a labour-intensive sector and on the other that it is perfect for women who can only opt for part-time jobs. In addition, to declare that tourism is perfect for women with family responsibilities and with little time dismisses, at one fell swoop, a series of fundamental factors to generate decent employment, and erases from the map many women who do not find themselves in this situation. That is, these declarations do little more than observe that the tourism sector has before it a tremendous responsibility if it intends to promote quality and decency in the employment it generates.



Chuttersnap, Unsplash



# 4.

## WHAT DOES THE FEMINISATION OF TOURISM WORK REALLY MEAN?

Despite the widespread idea that the feminisation of employment is the fact that there are more women than men, it is actually much more than that. **Nazneen Kanji** and **Kalyani Menon-Sen** (2001) state that the term feminisation is used to emphasize the incorporation of women into the labour world during the last three decades, and to describe the degree to which flexibilisation causes irregular conditions and women to be viewed as second-class workers, leading to “work which becomes a woman” (Morini, 2007; 2014). Of course, this accentuates the gender inequalities that this situation entails, the real causes and, therefore, the implications to which the feminisation of labour gives rise.

Therefore, the feminisation of work could be interpreted as that work in the “inflexible flexibility” format defined by **Cristina Morini** as “a form of increasing submission of existences and of intelligences put to work” (2014: 99), to which she adds:

Women are not only functional to a flexible labour market, both in terms of entry and exit, according to the social and productive demands of the moment, but they also condense in themselves, in a single body, the possibility of assuming the productive and reproductive role. They have the advantage of contributing to an immense cost saving for capitalism (Morini, 2014: 83).

For this reason, the methodological and political approach of feminism is key to marking the path that tourism must take to be an engine for equality of gender and the empowerment of women. The feminisation of employment in tourism, contrary to how it appears, leads to a series of situations that cause the impoverishment of a large part of the labour market, and even constitutes one of the causes of the constant precaritising effects suffered by the sector. Hence, it is considered that addressing this issue is fundamental to transparently addressing the precaritising effects that impact both women and men. Thus, **Nilufer Çağatay** and **Sule Özle** (1995), proposed that tourism should answer at least two questions: how does feminisation affect the quality of life and the health of women? What are their impacts on salary contribution or the quality of labour laws and policies?

#### 4. WHAT DOES THE FEMINISATION OF TOURISM WORK REALLY MEAN?

Data on the situation of women in tourism is concentrated in the hotel and restaurant industry; hence, the majority of women work in activities that are considered an extension of domestic work (Baum, 2013; Muñoz-Bullón, 2009; Ordóñez, 2001), as is the case of housekeepers (Cañada, 2015). To this end, **Kristine McKenzie Gentry** (2007) has named it the *housewifization* (housewife + zation)<sup>2</sup>, which identifies the devaluation of domestic work as a common factor of all female workers, regardless of age, race, culture or religion. This occurs because domestic work is perceived as a feminine attribute, a gift of the feminine condition. Therefore, when domestic work is transferred to the market it is assumed to be an easy job to do and thus undervalued.

Domestic work is perceived as a feminine attribute, a gift of the feminine condition. Therefore, when domestic work is transferred to the market it is assumed to be an easy job to do and thus undervalued.

The historical luggage of invisibility, contempt and gratuity of domestic work is part of the hidden (and sometimes visible) curriculum of employment policies. Is tourism perhaps positive due to the remuneration of this invisible work? Unfortunately not, as this does not eliminate the causes of

gender inequalities in the world of work, nor the symbolic poverty that exerts pressure when domestic work and care is commoditised without any gender awareness, as in tourism. Neither does it establish conditions for gender equality and, indeed, less for the empowerment of women. So, is the solution to quantitatively masculinise employment in tourism? Nor does this seem to be the answer, as it would expel many women from the market, which would constitute an act of direct discrimination against all of them, and further exacerbate their impoverishment.

According to **Thomas Baum** (2013), female workers face a series of additional and particular challenges that depend on the tourism demand cycle, which is highly variable and imposes working hours of an antisocial and unpredictable nature. The same author notes that the seasonality of tourism leads to intense concentration at certain times of the year, which prevents work planning. In addition, in some cases the remoteness of the location of businesses, preferentially in impoverished countries, supposes an unaffordable transfer cost for some people. This situation hinders the implementation of sustained conciliation policies over time and in accordance with tourism demands in periods of greater labour intensity.

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<sup>2</sup> This term was used by María Mies (1986) in reference to the process that has used the sexual division of labour to relegate women to the role of housewives.

# 5.

## WHAT ARE THE KEY ISSUES IN THE GENDER ANALYSIS OF TOURIST WORK?

This section will highlight the most frequent and necessary areas of analysis in the situation of female tourism workers: informal work, precarious work, selection pool criteria, wage gap and sexual harassment.

### 5.1. Informal work

Even when its very nature makes tackling informal employment in tourism difficult, it is still absolutely necessary to do so, to the extent it constitutes a fundamental element of tourism employment. Given its unconventional structure and broad range of micro, small and medium enterprises, tourism reinforces the existence of informal employment throughout diverse segments (Aykac, 2010). According to **Manuel Leguizamón** (2016), even beyond the question of whether or not informal employment in tourism meets legality or guarantees quality, it is associated with vulnerable conditions, being devoid of social security coverage and desirable labour benefits, such as social benefits or a fair income. Indeed, the gender case for addressing this issue is primarily based on three arguments:

1. The majority of studies dealing with the subject of tourism and gender/women include neither unstructured workers nor unpaid family workers. In tourism, more than in other sectors of the economy, there is a significant number of family workers and also those classified as unpaid family workers (Ordoñez, 2001).
2. There is a direct relationship between being a woman, working in the informal sector, and living in a context of poverty; this implies fiscal paucity, and the total or partial absence of capacity building and decision-making (Moreno, 2017).
3. At a global level, most women working in the informal sector do so at home or as street vendors (Chen, 2001). Hence, it is also important to address informality in tourism from a gender perspective, especially given that tourism employment 'with a woman's face' has historically been strengthened in its domestic context, both in the home and as vendors.

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However, informality also leads to the marginalization of women in their training aspirations. For example, in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, street vendors (mostly immigrants) expressed the feeling that, despite being important for the productive tourism chain, their situation of informality excludes them from training programmes (which often allow access to financing for business improvement); in the long term, this leads to a stagnation of production (Wilson, Gámez & Ivanova, 2012). Informality also results in an unequal balance in decision-making and myopia in visualising particular situations of clear inequality, which prevents women from being subject to rights.

**BOX 2****The case of Sucupira and Plateau Markets, Cape Verde**

Between 2010 and 2012 at Praia Cape Verde, the project “Training and Conditions of Sale Improvements for Plateau and Sucupira Market Vendors” was implemented by two organisations: ‘MORABI Associação Cabo-verdiana de Auto-Promoção da Mulher’ and ‘O’DAM NGO’, with funding from the Câmara Municipal de Praia and AECID. The main objective of the project was to strengthen the capacities of around 500 vendors in topics such as small business management, marketing, health and self-care, as well as improving the personal health of their children (who go to work with them, including nursing infants).

This project is especially interesting for two reasons. Firstly, although a large number of these women worked informally, this was not a criterion that excluded them from its potential benefits. Secondly, both organizations were always aware that these two markets are highly frequented by tourists; for this reason, despite not being considered entrepreneurs, much less tourism-linked entrepreneurs, something had to be done.

As well as improving the working conditions of these women, the project also improved the two spaces visually that, from the visitors’ perspective, could be attractive to tourists. Consequently, both markets improved their infrastructure, for example, by installing washroom facilities with potable water. To date, there are still a number of women in both markets who continue to work informally, but the fact that the project improved their working and living conditions has unquestionably served to motivate the start of changes in the legal and technical issues that hamper their formalisation; the aim of which would be to achieve a way of formalising this situation that is adaptable to their individual circumstances, and to attract and receive tourists responsibly.

Source: own summary based on the project report provided by MORABI.

In relation to this last point, the coordinator of a rural community tourism project in Nicaragua, which is managed by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), explained a clear example in November 2014 during an interview with the co-author of this report. In order to grant more participation to women in (informal) activities other than cooking and cleaning, the men of a community decided to allow them to sell cheese on roads

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with a high tourist influx (tourist corridors). Initially, what seemed like a wise decision was far from being the case. In the first place, it was the men who decided what kind of work is 'for women'; secondly the work of selling on roads or highways is harsh, precarious, and even dangerous, as they risk being run over or robbed to steal the merchandise. Thirdly, they were only allowed to sell the goods (and they sold a lot), but not to manage the money; that is, they could access the money, but not control it.

It would appear that work at home or part-time tourism work have become structural forms of employment for women, a situation which, to a certain extent, also legitimises informal employment (Munck, 2002). Informality is considered invisible to the market and leads to complex situations for female workers, especially when national tourism registers are very strict on issues of formality. In addition to the fact that jobs in the informal sector tend to be undervalued in social and income terms, and evade the generation of economic rights such as retirement pensions or unemployment subsidies, informality is also a survival strategy that is marked by gender inequality.

## 5.2. Precarious work

Precarity in work is a sociological construction that refers to a lack of, or change in, labour regulations to which certain people are more vulnerable and experience worse conditions than those who work with stable or standard employment; understood as a "full-time job with a contract of unlimited duration, only one employer, and where workers are protected against dismissal and enjoy social security" (Benach & Muntaner 2010: 142). The concept of precarity serves, therefore, to identify the "most negative aspects of salaried work and the social and labour conditions that accompany its performance" (Carrasquer & Torns, 2007: 143). Precarity has resulted in the extension of atypical forms of employment, such as temporary employment, partiality or subcontracting, through which the contractual obligations of employers to their workers have decreased (Recio, 2007: 280). This has produced greater flexibility in the organisation of work (i.e. job categories, working hours, work agendas, mobility, functions); as well as the weakening of capacities for collective action built around unionism, which, in turn, leads to greater uncertainty, vulnerability, and worker dependence (Cano, 2004: 68).

According to the contribution of **Jesús Rubio** (2010), precarious work has, in principal, four main dimensions:

- Temporality (insecurity of the employment relationship).
- Vulnerability (degradation of working conditions).
- Insufficient wages (salary levels below the minimum necessary to cover primary needs).
- A lack of job protection (reduction of social security benefits).

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These aspects have been widely recognized in jobs related to tourism, to such an extent that it has come to be considered as a structural problem in the sector. In Spain, the chambermaids struggle, (self-described in some cases as “Kellys”, a popular expression meaning “female hotel cleaners”), has given broad visibility to the precarious situation of a labour collective central in the functioning of the hotel sector.

**BOX 3****The rebellion of the chambermaids in Spain**

In recent years, chambermaids, workers dedicated mainly to the cleaning of hotel rooms and popularly known as “Kellys”, as some have self-styled themselves, have burst onto the public stage in Spain. Dressed in green or white t-shirts, or adorned with the flags of their unions, they have become increasingly present in the media, social networks and street gatherings. In just a few years, thanks to an intense process of social mobilisation, which has found its main expression in the field of communication and political advocacy, the chambermaids’ labour collective has gone from virtual invisibility to taking centre stage during key moments of Spanish political debate.

Historically, the cleaning of hotel rooms has been a job done almost entirely by women, socially considered as an extension of household chores, and therefore devalued and poorly paid, whilst also being particularly hard. However, since the international financial crisis began in 2008, a series of changes have taken place of which a primary effect will be a generalized, radical degradation of working conditions in the hotel sector, especially for the chambermaids. This situation affected in a very particular way middle-aged female workers that had made their professional career in this sector; they had experienced a specific aspect of improvement, but found themselves trapped in an increasingly difficult job, performed in worsening conditions, with lower salaries (which in many families became their only income), with enormous challenges in changing employment, and greatly deteriorated health conditions.

In 2008, the decomposition of the Spanish economy rapidly spread from the financial sector to the real economy, with devastating effects on the working class (Murray, 2015). The beginning of the crisis quickly led to a vertiginous increase in unemployment, reaching a rate of 26% in 2013. Job losses were principally concentrated in construction and related sectors. However, there was a steady deterioration in the quality of employment in other sectors and the spread of precarity (Díaz & Feu, 2018; Oxfam, 2018; Vicent, 2017). In the case of tourism, despite the affectation of the first years of crisis, it regrew rapidly and has experienced an extraordinary expansion; the arrival of international tourists to Spain has increased from 58.6 million in 2007 to 77.8 million in 2017 (INE, 2017).

Being profoundly conditioned by European Union austerity policies, the response of the Spanish government was the adoption of a rescue programme along with a new adjustment in labour policies, bringing a new twist to the neoliberal labour policies that had been applied

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since the eighties (Etxezarreta, 1991). The rhetoric behind these reforms was that the rigidity of the labour market and high labour costs stifled economic growth. With the 2012 labour reform, promoted by the government of the Popular Party via the “Royal Decree-law 3/2012, of February 10th: urgent measures for labour market reform”, and processed as a draft Law on 8th March of the same year with support from the Popular Party, the Convergence and Union Party, Union of the Navarrese People, and the Asturias Forum, conditions were modified that have allowed greater facilities for dismissal and the extension of outsourcing (Aragón, 2012). In the regulation of the working day, schedule, salary and professional classification, the companies trade agreement would take priority over other existing collective bargaining agreements. Thus, outsourcing became an attractive formula for the hotel owner, as they could discard of employees directly linked to the hotel industry’s collective bargaining agreement, and instead contract a multi-service company whose workers were under company trade agreements, often signed by fraudulent representation, or associated with other areas of activity that had less professional recognition and remuneration, such as cleaning.

Outsourcing in Spain has been regulated since approval of the Workers’ Statute on March 10th, 1980. It was accepted to the extent that a series of responsibilities were established by employers in the case of subcontracting works or services (Article 42). However, it was not frequently used because it was not profitable enough, as the same had to be paid to outsourced workers as to those who were directly contracted (articles 81, 82 and 83). In this way the sectoral agreement prevailed over any other agreement by establishing minimums. Therefore, a worker could not earn less in the annual calculation of his salary than that which the sector agreement established. Thus, the company trade agreements that did take precedence at that time were those where conditions were superior to whatever the sectoral agreements established.

The labour reform caused a greater fragmentation of labour relations, undermining the power of workers and union organisations (Banyuls & Recio, 2015). Unions had experienced a progressive loss of support since the political transition period, and it was in this weakened context that the application of a highly extensive policy of outsourcing of core activities in the hotel sector took place. This had particular impact in housekeeping departments, and resulted as being one of the main factors in provoking job insecurity among chambermaids.

In this respect, the effect this set of transformations has had on chambermaids has been disastrous: loss of wages; degradation of contractual conditions and fragmentation of the workforce; intensification of work; strong impacts on both physical and mental health; reduced professionalization; the spread of fear and greater vulnerability. All this has resulted in shaping a framework of increasingly precarious labour relations, which only the commitment and fight of the chambermaids to improve their working conditions themselves, within the framework of a plural movement, will be able to revert.

Source: Cañada, 2016, 2018.

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In the tourism field, job insecurity from the women's perspective has resulted in wage gaps, deterioration in contractual conditions, heavier workloads and the routine-operational character that provides little stimulation in most labour options; this negatively impacts the sense of belonging, thus provoking dissatisfaction and minimal loyalty towards the company or business. Furthermore, certain types of recruitment, such as part-time work, reinforce women's segregation at work and act as a source of inequality. Thus, women tend to work part-time as this is the form of employment that has developed in predominantly female sectors (Puech, 2007: 60).

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**Darcie Vandegrift** (2008) suggests that in the framework of economic restructuring, tourism has paid little attention to women's work from the viewpoint of feminist analysis. Feminism would criticise the fact that the feminisation of tourism work means that women are the invisible supporters of the sector, for which reason they are perceived, in many cases, as flexible and interchangeable workers. For example, a significant number of Nicaraguan women have emigrated to Costa

Rica and have done so knowing that, in that country, there is a negative perception, which catalogues them as docile workers with little experience, by the owners of tourism businesses (mostly European and American), who consider them desirable as employees due to the low salary they are paid for their work (Vandegrift, 2008). The latter is what **Celia Amorós** calls the "generic workers model" (Cobo, 2005b; Girón, 2009), that is, flexible, able to adapt to different schedules and tasks, and substitutable by others when they do not accept the exploitative labour conditions.

We find another relevant point in that tourism persuades women with the promise of labour flexibility in terms of schedules, especially those classified as tourism entrepreneurs. The approach is the following: as women have little time in their day to day, tourism allows them to work flexibly and therefore the sector, in itself, would be of benefit to them and promote gender equality. However, this point, whilst appearing positive, turns against the workers, as it is assumed that flexibility is exclusively an issue of time self-management, and that it also provides an opportunity for women; with the result that *de facto* aspects that are necessary to truly promote gender equality and the empowerment of women are not taken into account.

The first of these are the causes of that time shortage, such as:

- Abundant (and exclusive) family and care responsibilities.
- The lack of training and contact networks, which in many cases foster the need to generate simultaneous self-employment (and sometimes all under the umbrella of tourism) that, paraphrasing **Rosa Renzi** (2012), converts them into female "holdalls".
- Insufficient funding to design and implement tourism projects that integrate a gender perspective in all its phases and levels (Ferguson & Moreno, 2015).

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The second issue, and a consequence of the first, is the intersection of gender with the nationality, race and ethnicity of tourism workers, given that, in many hotels, a series of precarious jobs are not only perfect for women in a generic sense, but also for a certain type of women; that is, for those occupying a lower category on the social scale, usually immigrants from lower income countries. The lack of legal work permits adds degrees to the dependence situation of many workers towards their employers (Guerrie & Adib, 2003).

Therefore, precarious, feminised work in tourism, with little attention to gender analysis, repeatedly presents a mode of being within a labour market of adverse conditions - in its motive, development, expressions and effects. Given its ability to attract a significant number of female workers, it is time for the tourism industry to accept it has an inevitable responsibility to integrate gender analysis (in theory and practice) into its labour market, and execute any action related to decent work and sustainable development in tourism with quality.

### 5.3. Criteria for the selection of the labour force

In order for the skills and attitudes required to obtain a job in tourism to not promote gender gaps, it is essential to address the sexual division of labour as, in addition to causing difficulties in reconciling the work and family life of women and men, it also affects them in all spheres of life. The sexual division of labour constructs an imaginary grouping of adequate jobs for women and men and also exerts pressure on each person's time management, especially on women. According to **Amaia Pérez Orozco** (2014), the sexual division of labour is a concept that captures three dimensions:

- It is a distribution of tasks that is not the result of chance or mere individual negotiations, but of socio-economic and political structures that make this negotiation extremely difficult, if not impossible.
- Gender functions as a key criterion of work distribution, and is accompanied by ethnic and class divisions.
- Jobs that hold less power and are more invisible are associated with femininity.

Women are categorised into those jobs considered an extension of domestic work or that respond to typical feminine characteristics (Bolles, 1997), thus converting the feminine characteristics imposed by patriarchy<sup>3</sup> into commodities (Sinclair, 1997) useful for assuming, above all, the posts found in the base of the occupational pyramid. This fact can have implications for the training of female workers, turning them into *parking areas* (Burrell et al., 1997), that is to say a zone where women see few development opportunities for a professional career, as they are aware that the company has little interest in investing in their training.

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3 The word "patriarchy" has been added to the posited idea by the author.

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The skills necessary to work in activities related to cleaning are based on knowledge acquired by women in the domestic sphere; therefore, they are not recognized as occupational qualifications, but as 'natural' feminine abilities.

Hence, the skills necessary to work in activities related to cleaning are based on knowledge acquired by women in the domestic sphere; therefore, they are not recognized as occupational qualifications, but as 'natural' feminine abilities. This in turn partially explains why many of the health problems suffered by women in these types of jobs, such as musculoskeletal disorders or skin diseases related to the use of cleaning products, are rarely recognized as occupational illnesses. (Puech, 2007: 55).

There is a long tradition of empirical studies that have widely documented gender segregation in tourism employment. For example, **Judie Cukier, Joanne Norris** and **Geoffrey Wall** (1996) identified that, in Bali, Indonesia, although tourism had given men and women greater occupational options, access was differentiated by gender, in which women would be concentrated mostly in

activities associated with tasks considered feminine. Their study was based on a survey applied to 240 male and female differentiated tourism workers in four categories: reception staff in prominent hotels; drivers/tour guides; souvenir shop employees; and street vendors in beach locations. In addition, they found that in the formal sector they would be receiving lower salaries than men for similar jobs. Furthermore, "[a]t the same time as gaining access to employment outside the home, many women are expected to maintain current roles in religious matters and in the home" (Cukier, Norris, & Wall, 1996: 265-268).

According to **Mari Carmen Sigüenza, Matilde Brotons** and **Raquel Huete**, in the Spanish tourism industry, executive and management jobs are occupied mainly by men with higher and middle education, and a duration of between 10 and 20 years in the profession. Conversely, production tasks are carried out mainly by women, in jobs that reproduce social stereotypes linked to customer service, cleaning, reception, administrative tasks and assistants. Despite certain advances detected in terms of formal equality, the authors conclude that women receive lower salaries than men, with an average difference in the hospitality industry of around 4,000 euros per year. Women see their promotion to managerial positions hampered by what is known as the "glass ceiling", because their situation is considered to require greater commitment and be more demanding, and is rarely compatible with the domestic responsibilities attributed to them. That the construction of female identity attributes the responsibilities of motherhood and home care –to which must be added the unequal distribution of domestic responsibilities between men and women, and a lack of social support– facilitates an understanding of the gender discrimination women experience in the workplace, in which tourism is no exception (Sigüenza et al., 2013: 183). This argument about the difficulty of combining managerial positions with family responsibilities has frequently been indicated as one of the main barriers to the advancement of women within the labour hierarchy (Doherty & Manfredi, 2001; Jordan, 1997).

At the launch of the **World Report on Women in Tourism** in 2012 (*Spanish version*), held at the International Tourism Fair (ITF) in Spain, the participants (mostly Spanish

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women) did not agree with the view that women were less educated, nor that this is why “they have to do what they have to do”. On the contrary, several participants stated that the obstacle was not a lack of training, but the limited opportunities offered to women and the low social value a trained woman has in the labour market (UNWTO, 2012). An example of the latter is the particular case of Portugal, although women work more hours per month and are better trained, they earn less money than their colleagues in the accommodation sector, travel agencies and tour operators (Carvalho, Costa, Lykke & Torres, 2014).

According to **Fiona Jordan** (1997) *glamorizing* the sector has also been a key point in attracting female workers. For this reason, young workers are often hired to perpetuate a glamorous image of the sector, thus converting youth and beauty into indispensable requirements for recruitment. In Costa Rica, for example, it has been identified that youth and beauty are part of the prerequisite for obtaining jobs that involve higher qualifications and hierarchy (Lara, 2001).

## 5.4. Wage gap

**L. K. Richter** (1995) used the metaphor of a pyramid to describe the structure of employment in tourism, with a predominantly female base of seasonal and part-time jobs, and in which only a minority of women managed to reach senior management positions. The wage gap has two connotations: women earn less money than men for doing the same job and earn less because they work in a job that is not valued. This is the case, for example, of the chambermaids, despite being those who “shine the stars of the hotels” (Cañada, 2015). Although tourism is an industry with a majority of female workers, men generally receive better wages than women due to having a higher representation in jobs that pay better, as well as the fact that being a father or getting married usually implies a salary improvement for men, not so much for women (Thrane, 2008).

### BOX 4

#### Justice recognized for the wage gap in a Canary Islands hotel

Based on a complaint by the Workers' Commissions union, the Canarian Superior Court of Justice declares productivity bonuses null and void due to gender discrimination, from 2012 to 2015 at the Costa Adeje GranHotel S.L.. When occupancy of the hotel exceeded 50%, the bonus received by chambermaids (in their entirety women) stood at 84.69 euros, whilst waiters (75% men) received 288.66 euros, despite being in the same professional category, and kitchen porters, also men in their majority and in a professional category inferior to the chambermaids, received a higher productivity bonus of 117.59 euros.

The Workers' Commissions' complaint considered the bonus for chambermaids to be discriminatory, as the amounts set were not “according to objective conditions, nor to justify differences in amounts between categories of the same group”.

Source: Laura Olías, Eldiario.es, April 23rd, 2018.

The gender-based imaginary salary begins in the classrooms of universities, as was concluded in a study by **Kathleen Iverson** (2000). In this study, it was possible to identify that students studying hospitality already had a preconceived position regarding their “salary opportunities”, with men being the most ambitious (even those who were not such good students), in comparison with their female peers. Undoubtedly, this situation is the starting point that will affect their professional decisions and goals, negotiation and mutual respect in the labour market.

## BOX 5

**Gender wage gap in tourism employment in Spain**

Raquel Huete, Matilde Brotons and M<sup>a</sup> Carmen Sigüenza, beginning with secondary data analysis, the Annual Salary Structure Survey (EAES) and the Labour Force Survey, analysed inequality in employment conditions between men and women in the hotel industry sector in Spain. The results of the analysis show evidence of the salary gap that exists between men and women. Although women account for the majority of the workforce in hotels and are present in all job categories, they mostly occupy the lowest ranking positions. According to the authors, the reason men occupy most of the managerial positions is not due to the level of educational qualification, but because these types of positions require a greater time availability, and employers are reluctant to hire women in this level of responsibility due to the fact that they tend to assume the bulk of family responsibilities, especially in the care of children. Gender conditions the occupational structure within hotels. This produces a vertical division, by which women generally accept jobs with worse wages and working conditions than men, and a horizontal division, according to which women are concentrated in the lowest paid jobs.

Source: Huete et al., 2016: 84.

Having said that, what happens with female tourism workers in decision-making positions? These women are mainly affected by the masculinisation of behaviours and approaches in the workplace, which are strongly influenced by the so-called “glass ceiling”. In the case of Norway, a comparative study conducted by **Ole Skalte** (2007) between the female managers of large tourism companies and those in manufacturing (evidently composed of more men than women), revealed that the former almost always occupied a management position of a lower category, whereas the latter, despite their being fewer in number, work in conditions of greater equality in terms of office, decision-making and salary. It also occurs that, although the tourism industry offers more opportunities for women to become managers, they frequently hold these positions in small companies (Blayney & Blotnick, 2010).



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## 5.5 Sexual harassment at work

Certain characteristics of service work in tourism activities, as well as the type of interaction that occurs with clients, provide a framework in which situations of sexual harassment can have a greater incidence than in other activities

Sexual harassment at work should not be overlooked either. Excessive concern over the client's needs may entail a certain condescending flexibility towards this. Factors such as working hours (day and night), dress code, and a suggestive physical environment are all conducive to unwanted customer attention (Hoel & Einarsen, 2003). That is, the manners in which working conditions are constructed and sustained, as well as the

'quality' treatment of tourists, can leave an open door for exploitative situations - including sexual harassment - to exist under certain conditions (Dyer, 2010). **Helge Hoel** and **Ståle Einarsen** (2003) consider that part of the tourism industry intentionally creates erotic and sexual environments, and consequently their employees expose themselves to being victims of threatening behaviours by clients. They also posit the idea that, in hotels, but also in bars and restaurants, the prevailing ambience is intended to make customers feel they are in a private environment, despite their commercial and public nature, so the ambiguity between private and public norms and behaviours can also contribute to an increased risk of unacceptable behaviour towards female workers.

Far from being a casual circumstance, several studies highlight how certain characteristics of service work in tourism activities, as well as the type of interaction that occurs with clients, provide a framework in which situations of sexual harassment can have a greater incidence than in other activities, or that at least can be an experience that is not unusual during the working life of women in jobs related to tourism.

**Yvonne Guerrier** and **Amel S. Adib** (2000) conducted in-depth interviews with 15 third-year hotel management students at the University of London, 9 women and 6 men, after their having spent a year working in hotels from 2 to 5 stars (in England, the United States, Europe and Southeast Asia), and in different departments (reservations, reception, conferences and banquets, bar and restaurant, sales and marketing, apartments). Of those interviewed, 12 people, mostly women, but also men, described having suffered episodes of sexual harassment. The study concludes that the manner in which these types of establishments are conceived facilitates the occurrence of sexualised interactions between clientele and staff, which may give rise to forms of sexual harassment. Contrary to what one might imagine, the hotel does not assume responsibility for a rational environment based on social norms or acceptable behaviours between clients and staff. Rather, it works as a highly sexualised scenario where the message of satisfaction of the client's needs can suggest to clients that sexual favours might be included. Receptionists and chambermaids are particularly prone to suffering such insinuations and demands from customers. Several factors may contribute to a low level of respect towards these groups that would make them subject to harassment, such as the nature of their work, being tasks performed prominently by women, and in some cases due to being members of an ethnic minority. Similarly,

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according to **Annette Pritchard** and **Nigel J. Morgan** (2000), tourism promotion in certain events reinforces the naturalisation of power relations and sexual inequalities, thus promoting a patriarchal image of tourist destinations. In other words, patriarchal tourist destinations are promoted that endanger health and safety, particularly of women and children.

In turn, a study conducted by **Kaitlyn Matulewicz** (2015) in British Columbia, Canada, among 20 restaurant employees (18 women) provides understanding of how sexual harassment is also conditioned by job insecurity. According to the author, the uncertainty and variability of workers' schedules, tips, and income predominates in restaurants, and therefore gives rise to greater vulnerability and unequal power relations between workers, employers and clients. The legal establishment of low salaries supplemented by tips facilitates sexualised interactions and sexual harassment by clients towards waitresses and hostesses. Also, this interaction framework induces many workers to enter the game of sexist comments and jokes, and even to participate in some way or other in forms of sex work. This dynamic allows the author of this research to identify that, despite having an improvement in the legal framework that allows workers to formally challenge the imposition of unwanted sexual experiences, the existing precarity of work, favoured by the same legal framework, contributes to a work environment that in a normalised fashion facilitates a setting of sexuality that can also lead to harassment.

These two articles have identified that in tourism work a series of structural factors come into play, which are in fact derived from how they have been conceived, the composition of their work force, and their conditions of employment and work, making them more conducive to situations of harassment and sexual abuse than other activities.

But are these situations denounced? According to **Patricia Hunter Powell** and **Diane Watson** (2006), workers frequently do not report senior officials as there are usually no specific protocols for their effect, or for fear of being fired, or simply because the seriousness of the 'issue' is not seen. Hence, the complaint (in those case where it reaches that stage) usually remains on a small scale, in an anecdote, within a small group of company members without advocacy capacity (horizontal alignment). Should it reach higher spheres (vertical alignment), "this problem" is not treated as a priority or is simply omitted because "the customer is always right", an idea that is deeply rooted in the tourism sector.

## 6. INTEGRATING THE GENDER APPROACH INTO TOURISM WORK ANALYSIS

In the tourism sector there are two interpretations of the feminisation of labour: the first considers tourism as a sector that attracts thousands of workers, and the second instead sees a sector that reinforces the pejorative character of labour feminisation, mainly because it slows down the transformation of the masculinised *establishment* of the labour world and of the tourism activity itself. That the majority of women workers in tourism perform jobs that are the same or similar to reproductive or care activities provides relevance to, for example, **Lucy Ferguson's** (2010, 2013) proposal regarding the fact that tourism production and consumption are in limbo between the commodification of reproduction and gender inequalities. Hence, this researcher emphasised the importance of linking tourism with social reproduction, as tourism benefits from the work done in the private and reproductive field:

Tourism, therefore, represents an intersection between paid work in the home and social reproduction or household members, as well as an additional aspect in which social reproduction becomes a spectacle and a marketable attraction in itself. (Ferguson, 2013: 3).

**Lucy Ferguson** (2007) also states that although tourism (especially on a small scale) pursues the well being of households and families through the development of tourism initiatives, there are still scant examples of policies that tackle the manner

There are still scant examples of policies that tackle the manner in which reproductive work has been affected by the development of tourism, or how tourism has affected gender relations within the family.

in which reproductive work has been affected by the development of tourism, or how tourism has affected gender relations within the family. If the jobs in tourism performed under the concept of domestic work at least gained greater recognition, a thorough study from the gender perspective was done, and they received better economic and symbolic compensation, the debate could

be addressed in other terms; unfortunately, the fact is that the situation is far from being that way. Employment in tourism has a gender impact and, if not dealt with, will continue the reinforcement and increase of labour segregation, and the low status of women (Jordan, 1997).

## 6. INTEGRATING THE GENDER APPROACH INTO TOURISM WORK ANALYSIS

For the feminisation of the sector to lead symbolically and materially to a positive scenario, it is necessary to improve the status of women. In addition to knowing how many women workers exist in determined jobs, this consists of conducting a qualitative analysis of certain patterns of conduct and behaviour to re-evaluate the work done by women in tourism and feminised tourism work sectors, among others: the cleaning of rooms and common areas of accommodation industries; the kitchen (despite having few female heads of kitchen); customer service, especially in reception, and flight attendants. Organisational dynamics reproduce power relations that place the masculine gender in spheres of domination and the feminine gender in situations of subordination. The main difficulties for women are not only in their labour insertion or in their promotion, but also in demonstrating that even in organisations that promote meritocracy, there is a bias that favours the male gender and harms the female gender (Pastor, 2009). Therefore, the reading that should be made of tourism as a promoter of employment for women would be the following: tourism is not good for women just because there are many women working in it, this is merely an indicator that it should be studied from the gender perspective. Tourism would be good for women only if it ensured optimal working conditions within the framework of the principles of decent work from a gender perspective. Creating decent tourism employment based on gender analysis of the labour market has a positive effect on the development of specific actions that favour the participation and representation of women and men at any professional level of tourism.



Accra, Ghana. Jonathan Torgovnik, Getty Images Reportage

# 7.

## CONCLUSIONS

The aspiration towards decent work in the field of tourism, key to its sustainability, must be developed from a responsible tourism movement with the capacity and political will to incorporate a gender perspective. To the extent that tourism work is characterized by a strong feminisation of its workforce, providing a gender perspective is essential. Tourism generates significant levels of employment among women, especially in activities linked to or associated with certain reproductive tasks culturally associated with female roles.

Similarly, and far from certain praiseworthy approaches, the prominent presence of women does not necessarily in itself imply an improvement in their living conditions. The feminisation of tourism work, in fact, has led to high levels of job insecurity. Part-time or temporary recruitment, extolled as a possibility for women who must assume certain care and reproductive responsibilities to find a paid job, actually perpetuates existing inequality. Moreover, the tourism industry benefits from the naturalisation of existing inequality in order to have cheaper and more flexible labour. Similarly, the consolidation of this type of discrimination results in the existence of occupation policies that make invisible or do not sufficiently take into account the needs and priorities of these workers. In turn, this situation hinders women from assuming positions with higher levels of responsibility within the hierarchical corporate ladder of a company.

The feminisation of tourism work is partly the result of certain business strategies to reduce labour costs. The recruitment of women, immigrants from lower income countries, or people who do not consider a professional career within these activities (students or tourists, for example) operates as a mechanism to lower labour costs. In the case of women, they can be hired in certain tourist activities that are poorly paid and undervalued because their tasks can be conceived as an extension of domestic work and care, in itself devalued by the dominant patriarchal culture.

Certain tourism discourses on the possibilities of women's economic empowerment through employment and income generation do not sufficiently take into account the implications of this feminisation. The feminisation of tourism work, in fact, refers to the gender inequalities that affect and are affected by tourism employment, since these are not exclusive consequences of the poverty that, in this case, women suffer; this is also the result of the precarious "tourism responsibility" analysed previously from a gender perspective. In the long run all of this, in every way, strengthens the precarity of tourism work. In order to transform the existing



## 7. CONCLUSIONS

situation, it is not enough to generate income, but also requires an analysis of the causes of this situation and actions that truly contribute to changes in the relations of inequality.

Sustainability in tourism cannot be conceived of without decent work, but it must inevitably commit itself decisively to transgress the situations of discrimination and inequality existing for reasons of gender. Therefore, the lack of a gender perspective in issues such as business policies, training curricula, social research, tourism and employment policies, treatment of information or union action, contributes to perpetuate these situations of discrimination and inequality. The gender perspective is fundamental in the analysis of tourism employment, mainly because it allows us to identify, visualise and analyse those elements stemming from tourism work that create gender inequalities.



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