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GENDER INEQUALITIES IN THE TOURISM LABOUR MARKET

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Marta Salvador Almela

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Hotel receptionist. Photography by: ILO Asia-Pacific. Creative commons licence 2.0.

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INTRODUCTION

The clustering of the feminisation and precariousness concepts entails diverse manifestations of gender inequality that have been not profoundly explored. However, they have repeatedly appeared in the study of the tourism market labour. At the same time, it is necessary to consider the difficulty of defining the tourism phenomenon and, therefore, the generated workplaces in this industry, which are generally classified as direct or indirect. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2017), the tourism labour is generated in the hospitality, food and beverage, entertainment, travel management and tourist attraction sectors. However, the transport sector is also incorporated in the following report, although it is not recognised in the last definition. Therefore, from a broad and critical perspective, the tourism labour market is analysed, taking into account one of its inherent characteristics nowadays: **the high feminisation**. Therefore, gender is the core idea of this report, a variable through which knowledge gaps are detected.

The woman, main character of the present gender inequalities in the tourism sector, has been associated with the construction of a feminine identity to whom care tasks, understood as the responsibilities of maintaining the home, caring for children and dependents, and so on, are assigned. Besides, the unequal division of domestic responsibilities between men and women and the lack of social assistance, which facilitates the understanding of gender discrimination, should also be considered (Moreno and Cañada, 2018).

However, to globally analyse this phenomenon, it is necessary to apply the **approach of intersectionality**. This concept, created by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991), allows understanding how different axes of oppression intertwine to form unique forms of oppression. In this sense, in the study of gender inequalities, it is necessary to incorporate aspects such as race, migratory status, social and geographical context, age, level of education, sexual orientation, gender identity, and capabilities, among others. The union of the axes of gender, race and migratory status, for example, naturalises migrant women in specific jobs, such as cleaning and cooking tasks. On the other hand, gender-based age is only studied in the case of young workers, such as hostesses, while there is no data on how this aspect influences older workers.

From an intersectional approach, the question of 'who is missing?' is formulated.

In this sense, from an intersectional approach, the question of 'who is missing?' is formulated. To answer this question, feminism applied in the investigation of tourism challenges the studies to incorporate those voices and experiences that have not been considered. Kalargyrou and Costen (2017) **state a large knowledge gap about people working in the tourism industry with disabilities**,

INTRODUCTION

as their needs are not taken into account. Similarly, **the LGBTIQ community is under-represented in tourism labour market studies**, although current research shows future lines of investigation.

In addition to intersectionality, it is also necessary to understand which social dynamics are not reflected in the current state of knowledge. Therefore, it is imperative to gather research from various sources of information beyond scientific production, such as reports and studies from institutions, agencies, unions or non-governmental organisations, known as 'grey literature'. The difficulties in researching the tourism labour market regarding access to data or even its non-existence should be recognised. It is a sector with a high level of privatisation and fragmentation. Simultaneously, particular cases have been explored that do not allow us to generalise about certain phenomena occurring in the industry. Due to these difficulties, research on the tourism labour market has focused mainly on hospitality and food and beverage services field, with an over-analysis of housekeepers (Baum, 2013). As the most discussed topics, much of the research concerning **the tourism labour market and gender has been reduced to**

the glass ceiling problems and the wage gap. This fact causes the view on gender inequalities in the tourism industry to be severely skewed.

This report aims to state the issue of the tourism labour market from a gender perspective through a critical viewpoint.

Therefore, taking into account the current state of knowledge and the intersectionality framework, this report aims to state the issue on the tourism labour market with a gender perspective through a critical viewpoint. Thus, the present paper is positioned as a first approximation of scientific knowledge to this field with case studies that exemplify the

different contexts. More specifically, this research includes 15 manifestations of gender inequality based on the previous work of Ernest Cañada (Moreno and Cañada, 2018; Cañada, 2019a).

INEQUALITIES FOR GENDER REASONS

1. DOUBLE PRESENCE

In general, women worldwide have been subjected to several traditional gender-based roles that place them responsible for taking care of household chores, childcare, the elderly and the family. The last tasks are not recognised with an economic remuneration. This aspect places an obstacle in women's professional careers, known as double presence, which is understood as **the need to respond to the demands of paid work and domestic-family work synchronously** (Moreno et al., 2010).

The need to respond to these responsibilities can lead to many effects on the workers' personal lives. The volume of time and effort devoted to household chores and paid work leaves them with **few resources for leisure, rest and personal dedication**. Moreover, employees' health can be at risk due to this workload, affecting their mental health and vitality, causing cognitive and behavioural symptoms of stress (ISTAS, 2002; Ruiz-López et al., 2017) (see section [12](#)).

As women have been introduced to working life, stereotypes have categorised them within the same reproductive tasks that they have traditionally performed at home (cooking, cleaning, caring for people and assistance, among others). Often these types of jobs, in many cases of an informal nature, are the only ones they can access and become the only possible means to earn income. Access to the labour market can mean women's economic independence, helping their social well-being, and improving their family's quality of life or even their survival, especially in developing territories.

This reality is deeply reflected in community-based rural tourism, [volunteer tourism](#) or family business initiatives (see section [15](#)), as in many cases, women extend their daily home care work to offer a service to visitors (Duffy et al., 2012; Xheneti, Karki and Madden, 2018). As is common in many cultures and territories, the family men do not support these tasks, although they are not only within the family. For this reason, **women often suffer from stressful situations due to the workload they are subjected to** (Xheneti, Karki, and Madden, 2018).

The association of domestic responsibilities with women does not only exist within the challenges of reconciling with their working life or those of naturalising their classification in different tasks and professions. It also has a great weight in aspects such as recruitment (see section [4](#)), the salary received (see section [3](#)) or the ability to move hierarchically within the business scale (see sections [6](#) and [7](#)).

2. JOB SEGMENTATION BY GENDER AND RACE

The workforce's composition is organised according to its division by gender, with activities to which feminine or masculine values are attributed. Therefore, **social inequality** is naturalised and perceived as normalised discrimination. Tourism work is associated with precarious working conditions, flexible contracts, long and irregular working hours and exploitation practices. These conditions tend to fall on immigrant labour, especially women (Rydzik and Anitha, 2019). In the tourism industry, women occupy positions of low categories and wages. Besides, those of immigrant origins are at a disadvantage due to lack of familiarity with work, limited personal networks and unrecognised qualifications (Dyer et al., 2010). In both cases, the difficulty to vertically progress in work is immense, both due to the glass ceiling and the sticky floor (see sections [6](#) and [7](#)).

The feminisation of tourism work, and more specifically in its intersection with race, implies that women's tasks in the labour market are an extension of care tasks, that is, of domestic work. That is why women work as housekeepers, tourist accommodation cleaners, hotel receptionists, or travel agents, among others; jobs that require special attention to cleanliness, personal treatment, and planning. On the other hand, certain tourism jobs are masculinised, both for historical and physical reasons, making it difficult for women to access them, as is the case with aeroplane pilots or the bellboy figure. This dynamic is also present in the few representations of women in tourism and technology positions (Figuerola-Domecq et al., 2020).



Cook. Photography by: ILO/J. Alling 2015. Creative commons licence 3.0.

2. JOB SEGMENTATION OF REASON BY GENDER AND RACE

Firms use migration status in a gender-like manner as a basis for discrimination and segmentation in the labour market (Dyer, McDowell, and Batnitzky, 2010). **The workforce is distributed considering the country of origin**, so that women from impoverished countries are selected for clearly differentiated tasks according to gender and race. Migration status is crossed by other categories such as ethnicity, gender, class, and age to organise job opportunities in the labour market, generating more or less ‘appropriate’ workers according to each type of job. Therefore, the staff distribution in a hotel is differentiated depending on how the work has been conceived in each department and the images built through the naturalisation of skills and certain nationality stereotypes (Dyer, McDowell, and Batnitzky, 2010).

Migration status is crossed by other categories such as ethnicity, gender, class, and age to organise job opportunities in the labour market, generating more or less ‘appropriate’ workers according to each type of job.

A concrete example of segregation by ethnicity, race and gender is found in tourist cruises. Data shows that 80% of cruise workers are men because these tasks are perceived as physically demanding (Wu, 2005). For this reason, before and during staff selection processes, this inequality is naturalised with men applying for more physical exertion

tasks and women seeking customer-service-oriented jobs (Bolt and Lashley, 2015). The hierarchy in the organisation of work responds to criteria that normalise discrimination based on staff origin. Workers in the United States and Western Europe hold managerial positions; while workers of the same nationalities and, in fewer cases, Eastern Europe, are in positions such as receptionists, guest relations, casinos, entertainers and room service managers. Likewise, jobs in restaurants and cabin work are developed by men from Latin America, Southeast Asia and, to a lesser extent, women from Southeast Asia. This hierarchical position tends to feminise men from Southeast Asia, making comparisons with men in the Global North, considered ‘manlier’. Similarly, it is estimated that women working on cruises must have certain physical attributes considered attractive, an innate ability for care and service, extreme attention to detail, and skills to entertain others (Chin, 2008).

Another example is the food and beverage sector, where employment conditions are generally precarious for all workers. However, there are also specific segmentation patterns by which white people mainly occupy the most visible jobs, especially in restaurants’ reception. Simultaneously, women and people discriminated by race work in the kitchen, preparing food and washing dishes. In turn, **these hierarchies produce differences in wages, social benefits, training and progress opportunities, and in working conditions**. For example, most immigrant workers rarely have access to a promotion, so they are trapped in the same job category. Therefore, jobs are not assigned as much by skill and experience, as by racial, gender, and migratory status differences (Schneider, 2012).

3. WAGE DISCRIMINATION

In general, the tourism sector has a low average wage for a large part of the workforce, while being subjected to harsh working conditions. These effects are intensified within a context of gender discrimination, understood as a **devaluation of feminised work that is reflected in wages**. These are usually lower and in some cases notoriously inferior to those jobs of similar categories that are generally performed by men.

Ons-Cappa, García-Pozo, and Sánchez-Ollero (2017) review the sociological and cultural factors that affect this wage gap, supposedly stemming from discrimination based on the potential productivity of men and women. Among these factors, there is less work experience of the female group, enhanced by the responsibilities of caring for the home and family associated with women. The idea that employers prefer to hire people who are more likely to stay longer, that is, men, is also discussed, as they are generally not tied to the need to reconcile their work with domestic responsibilities or with care tasks.

Another factor that affects gender pay gap comes from the very nature of contracts.

In many cases, men are understood to be the ones who have to provide financially for their families, while women work to supplement their husband's salary, which is socially conceived as a priority (González, 2004).

Another factor that affects wage differences between men and women comes from the very nature of contracts. Without considering its general seasonal nature in the tourism sector, there is a **majority presence of part-time**



Housemaid. Photography by: Ana Núñez.

3.
WAGE
DISCRIMINATION

contracts among women (see section 4). For a long time, this has been considered an advantage to reconcile their time at work with the tasks of caring for children or dependent people, despite this affecting the total remuneration obtained. The Annual Survey of Wage Structure, carried out by the Spanish National Institute of Statistics, allows for the observation of this phenomenon through data obtained from female hospitality workers, showing how their wages have been lower than men in the same sector between 2008 and 2016 (Martínez and Martínez-Gayo, 2019).

Several examples of this affectation can be found mostly in the hotel sector, with a significant focus on maids or housekeepers for tourist use. A [specific case was experienced at the end of 2017 at the Hotel Best Tenerife](#), in the south of Tenerife, where the housekeepers (92% women) received a productivity bonus of 139€, while the housekeepers (85% men) received 640,67€, despite both positions being in the same professional agreement and having the same base salary.

Manuel Rivera (2018) presents another example through his rural tourism study in Andalusia, focusing on accommodation and other sectors' establishments. Rivera notes that men earn an average salary of 23% higher than all women, which is surprising given that there is a significant majority of women with a higher education level than their male counterparts.

When facing this reality, there have been several struggles for equal pay, as is the case presented by Pepi García Lupiáñez in *Las que limpian los Hoteles* (Cañada, 2015), a worker within the hospitality sector closely linked to trade union struggles. One of Pepi García's highlights took place in Málaga. She and her colleagues organised an assembly to check the difference in remuneration between workers in her department or others in similar categories. This process could be carried out using the TC2, which is the official contribution documents currently called *Nominal List of Workers* which includes all the information on the affiliations, terminations and contribution bases of the workers of the company that has been registered during that month and informs who is entitled to bonuses and/or deductions. Housekeepers got a 100€ a month increase in their salaries. This and other demands highlight the need to move towards equal pay for men and women in the tourism sector.

4. ATYPICAL RECRUITMENT

Atypical recruitment, which includes **temporary, part-time contracts and outsourcing**, is a set of formulas that seek to adjust workers' availability to the company's needs, based on a highly fluctuating demand. Walsh (1991, cited in Purcell, 1997) points out that women do most part-time, temporary, and informal work in the hospitality industry, so it can be argued that atypical hiring is a gender inequality in the tourism labour market.

4.
ATYPICAL
RECRUITMENT

Congresses and events hostesses are a group subjected to high job flexibility and feminisation.

The purpose of part-time hiring is to make work more flexible, to adapt to market needs and to reduce costs for companies (Puech, 2007, cited in Cañada, Julià and Benach, 2019). The reasons why women represent most part-time contracts are varied, although generally, they are **due to the need to reconcile work life with other responsibilities such as caring tasks**. Another group with a high percentage of this type of contract is students, who work part-time due to the ease of combining the job with studies. This is the case of congresses and events hostesses, a group subjected to high job flexibility and feminisation. Another example is the guides on tourist buses, which are hired part-time, as the company argues that services operate only during the day, making it challenging to organise two shifts of eight hours each. To adjust the contracted hours and not have to pay overtime or avoid having staff hired without sufficient demand, the company combines a part-time contract with the use of additional hours. The working hours' fluctuation causes discomfort for the workers (Cañada, Julià and Benach, 2019).

As stated in the scientific literature (Albarracín, 2010; Axelsson, 2015; Bird, 2002; Campbell, 2016; cited in Cañada, Julià and Benach, 2019), temporary contracts are higher in women, immigrants, under-35-year-olds and companies that have more than 51 people on staff. Companies use temporary contracts to reduce wage and labour costs, often through temporary work companies. These contracts' consequences for working people are diverse: **intensification of work, lower wages, and/or restricted access to social benefits such as sick leave or paid leave** (Evans, 2007, cited in Cañada, Julià and Benach, 2019).

On the other hand, outsourcing has been a phenomenon that has affected many workers in the tourism sector. It is defined as obtaining services or products from an external company which were traditionally carried out internally (Dolgui and Proth, 2013). In recent years, many hoteliers have opted for this strategy to reduce fixed costs, introduce new technologies by specialised companies, diversify their offer by incorporating external services and improve quality to focus on the key business activities (Espino-Rodríguez and Ramírez-Fierro, 2017). Outsourcing in hotels began with ancillary services, such as maintenance, IT, security, gardening and laundry, without affecting core activities. Subsequently, it has been extended to the housekeeping department, as a higher profit margin can be obtained because it is one of the most numerous. This department's high feminisation is a crucial factor in understanding why it has received more outsourcing, as historically men have led the unions, the demands and the negotiations (see section 12). **The housekeeping department's consideration as a feminised sector has placed it in the background**, although outsourcing has been progressively imposed in other departments (Cañada, 2016).

Often, the way outsourcing is implemented has led to the dismissal of workers via termination proceedings, as well as their subsequent illegal transfer. Illegal transfer consists of outsourcing only part of a department's workers instead of the entire staff, as established by law. It is, outsourcing the housekeepers but not the housekeeper's

4. ATYPICAL RECRUITMENT

The outsourcing model has had many consequences for a workgroup that was already precarious.

position, to continue to control the housekeeper manager's work directly. On the other hand, newly created hotels incorporate the outsourcing of housekeeping service from the beginning. Thus, this model has had many consequences for a workgroup that was already precarious. Firstly, many workers describe it as a traumatic process that has degraded their work and living conditions. Secondly, this group has suffered the loss of the job category and has received salary reductions. Thirdly, housekeepers are overworked with the outsourcing of laundries, prior to that of the housekeeping department, and extended to most hotels. Fourthly, the uncertainty in working hours and schedules, although specified by contract, creates insecurity for workers when planning, as well as not knowing the actual duration of their contract. Fifthly, there has been a segmentation, division and increase in competition between hotel employees with contractual conditions over those who are subcontracted. Sixthly, the health problems of housekeepers, both physical and mental, have also been exacerbated. Finally, outsourcing has also led to a reduction in the capacity to represent and defend collective interests (Cañada, 2016, 2018).



Event hostesses. Photography by: bleublogger. Creative commons licence 2.0.

5. INFORMAL WORK

Informal work is made up of all those businesses that are not incorporated as legal entities, regardless of who owns them, which can be a single person or more than one, whether from the same family or not. They tend to operate at a low level of organisation, on a small scale and with little or no division between labour and capital as production factors (ILO, 2018).

It is estimated that two billion people in the world, or 61% of the world's working population, earn their wages from the informal economy (ILO, 2018). In general, informal work employs more men than women, 63% and 58,1% respectively, either in the Global South or North and in rural or urban contexts. However, in countries with a lower average income, it is noteworthy that informal work employs more women than men. The scientific literature explains that **most informal workers do not choose this form of work, but engage in it due to a lack of alternatives** (Bonnet, Vanek, and Chen, 2019).

In the specific case of the tourism sector, its unconventional and fragmented nature favours the emergence of informal work (Aykaç, 2010, cited in Moreno and Cañada, 2018), especially in consolidated tourist destinations and the high season (Ricaurte-Quijano and Espinoza, 2017). Therefore, the gender perspective must be applied in this area for three fundamental reasons. Firstly, most studies in tourism and gender do not include unstructured workers or unpaid family workers. Secondly, there are economic shortcomings and difficulties in developing skills and making decisions resulting from the direct relationship between being a woman and working in the informal sector. Thirdly, the majority of women work invisibly in the informal sector from home or as street vendors. Thus, tourism is positioned as a sector where there is a greater concentration of women in informal activities (Moreno and Cañada, 2018).

Informal workers face **greater poverty and vulnerability** than employees with formal employment (Bonnet, Vanek, and Chen, 2019), such as lack of social security coverage, social benefits, or fair income (Leguizamón, 2016, cited in Moreno and Cañada, 2018). Non-pre-established working hours are also detected, which therefore lead to non-fixed wages. Vulnerability in tourism is observed in two aspects: the visible, with informal works based on street trade in contact with the traveller; and the invisible, with domestic activities inside hotels, restaurants, adventure activities or in accommodation (Gómez, 2019).

An example of informal work in the tourism sector is found in **street vendors**. In general, these workers do not have permission to carry out their activity, so they may suffer police harassment, be forced to pay bribes to work, have their property confiscated, and be expelled from the places where they carry out their work with even police brutality and arrests. In addition to the personal insecurity they suffer, there are consequences of being in constant contact with the pollution of vehicular traffic and inclement weather, which can be incredibly detrimental to the children who accompany them. Moreover, they often do not have space to store their products, leading to their loss or load the goods from beginning to end of each day (Wintour and Garzaro, 2013).

5.
INFORMAL WORK

A specific case study is that of workers in Baja California Sur, a Sun and Beach tourist destination located in Mexico. The tourism growth in this area was accompanied by a migratory phenomenon where women found an opportunity for economic integration, although the income they receive is not stable or fixed. Likewise, the lack of legal recognition of their work leads to the tax or police authorities' exploitation. Situations of self-exploitation also occur, due to the long days in unfavourable conditions (Gámez, Wilson and Ivanova, 2010). In another geographical context, street vendors in Hanoi (Vietnam) express how harsh working conditions and long working hours seriously impairs their health and prevents them from doing their job. Not being able to carry so many weights or having difficulty travelling long distances from their residence to the tourist area leads to lower sales and less revenue (Truong, 2018).

The lack of legal recognition of their work leads to the tax or police authorities' exploitation.

The informal work of mobile workers is analysed from two different points of view: the empowerment of women manifested through having a voice of their own within their length and social circle (Trupp and Sunanta, 2017); or understanding that this situation of informality conditions them to have a stable future and causes marginalisation of social security (Ricarte-Quijano and Espinoza, 2017).

6. GLASS CEILING

The term glass ceiling emerges during the 1970s in the United States to describe **the artificial and invisible barriers created by behavioural and organisational prejudices that prevent women from occupying managerial positions** (Wirth, 2001). That is, they are the obstacles that women with qualifications and the adequate personal and professional capacities face to access higher managerial and responsibility positions (Huete, Brotons and Sigüenza, 2016).

One of the reasons women see their promotion to managerial positions hindered is that said positions require a stronger compromise and demand that are considered hardly compatible with their domestic responsibilities. Moreover, even in women reaching managerial positions, they wield their professional and personal capacities in a masculinised labour environment (Moreno and Cañada, 2018). At the same time, their leadership is associated to values close to the traditional gender stereotype, such as relational thought, collaboration, inclusive communication, emotion, empathy, and the multitasking capacity (Medina, 2019).

According to Agut and Martín (2007), to reach these high-responsibility jobs, it is essential to have opportunities to develop a professional career or work experiences that will prepare professionals for future challenges. The indicated period is considered to be between 30 and 40 years, coinciding with the stage where there is a more intensive

6. GLASS CEILING

dedication to children's care. For this reason, the existence of **organisational culture is detected where masculine values persist and the lack of a labour policy that favours the conciliation of work and family life**. Thus, many women have to deal with male workspaces with night schedules, parties or long days incompatible with traditional mother and wife roles. Even those women without family responsibilities are seen as 'potential mothers' and therefore may be offered fewer training opportunities to progress in their careers.

The report *Sun, Sand and Ceilings: Women in the Boardroom in The Tourism Industry*, by Equality in Tourism (2013), exposes that tourism industry workers in the United Kingdom are not represented in the executive sphere in the major tourism companies in the world, despite constituting most of the tourism work. Out of a total of 78 surveys submitted, only 15,8% of directive boards have a woman holding a board member position. For example, at TUI Travel, one of the world's largest tour operators, women make up 59% of the workforce, but only 13,3% are developing management work. Therefore, it can be concluded that the tourism industry is failing to promote women workers in senior management and decision-making positions (Moreno and Cañada, 2018).

Concerning the Spanish hotel sector, the situation is similar. According to data from 2013, direction and management jobs are occupied mostly by men, concretely in 67,2% compared to 32,68% of women directors and managers. In contrast, when analysing intermediate positions, the distribution by gender is more balanced, with 52,73% being



Woman working. Photography by: Nenad Stojkovic. Creative commons licence 2.0.

6. GLASS CEILING

occupied by women and 47,27% by men. In contrast, employment in the lowest positions in the labour hierarchy, such as cleaning staff, women account for approximately 90% of the workforce (Huet, Brotons, and Sigüenza, 2016).

Following the Spanish framework analysis, the study 'The glass ceiling in the hotel industry of Tenerife (Canary Islands): women's access to leadership in the sector', by Garcia, Galante and Poveda (2018), reflects the situation of women in hotels in Tenerife. Results reflect the **lack of equal representation between men and women in positions of medium and maximum responsibility**. Although there are 35% women managers and 37% who hold second-level positions, access to these positions is also characterised by department horizontal segmentation. In departments with more women in the workforce, leadership is shared between both genders, while where the workforce is predominantly male, and leadership is entirely male. Although women do not appear as heads of kitchens, restaurants or bars, 50% of female directors are in reception and public relations departments. The study points out that both the stars and the hotels' size are closely related to women's presence in leadership positions, as larger and higher-class hotels have fewer women ahead of the company. In fact, only 13% of women appear in positions of responsibility in 5-star hotels.

Finally, it should also be noted that in tourism academia, data once again corroborates the existence of such invisible barriers. Pritchard and Morgan (2017) analysed 189 tourism magazines, where it was found that among the 20 most popular, men held 75% of high-responsibility positions. Beyond the numerical representation of women and men, gender perspective applied to the production of knowledge involves contributions in various aspects, such as [incorporating voices and identities that have been invisibilised and removed from academia](#).

7. STICKY FLOOR

Sticky floor is defined as 'an expression used as a metaphor to denote a discriminatory employment pattern that keeps mainly working women at the lowest levels of the occupational pyramid, **with scarce mobility and invisible barriers to their professional improvement**' (Carrasquer and do Amaral, 2019). The sticky floor concept is strongly linked to that of the glass ceiling, although, instead of representing the difficulty in ascending to certain higher positions, these are non-existent or highly unlikely to occupy due to the very nature of the job, preventing their professional advancement and the improvement of their skills, abilities and working conditions (Carrasquer and do Amaral, 2019). This phenomenon occurs not only due to the masculinised imposition of most managerial or senior positions in the hierarchy, but also since many of the feminised jobs have a very short professional scale or the evolution occurs in infrequent occasions. Mooney (2018) defines it from a perspective in which

7. STICKY FLOOR

women, and therefore their jobs, are associated with 'dirty work' or considering that women are not suitable for managerial positions. This aspect holds them back within those lower categories.

The report 'The sticky ground of women in Barcelona' (2019) presents gender, age, level of education, and being a migrant as crucial factors in influencing a person's career path. More than half (concretely 52,5%) are professionally subjected to this phenomenon in the case of women, while only 7,8% show upward mobility trajectories. These figures are mainly more optimistic when looking at men's reality, who more often develop a career without sticky floor effects (Carrasquer and do Amaral, 2019; Ruiz-López et al., 2018).

A majority of female presence in the accommodation or catering services sectors, especially among housekeepers, cleaners of tourist houses or kitchen staff, **show limited possibilities for promotion**, thus placing them in a state of stagnation (Martínez and Martínez-Gayo, 2019). Spencer (2019) analyses this reality through a study of hotels in the metropolitan area of Kingston, Jamaica. The women interviewed claim to occupy positions where mobility between jobs is not easy, such as receptionist or housekeeper, while men find themselves in situations where vertical promotion is easier.

The challenges in meeting women's long-term physical and psychological needs in feminised jobs are highlighted.

Besides, men and women present differences in their intentions to establish their long-term careers in the industry. Partly, the challenges in meeting women's long-term physical and psychological needs in feminised jobs are highlighted.

The phenomenon of the sticky ground also occurs in the **cruise sector**. Wu (2005) shows an example from a study in the harbours of Barcelona, Amsterdam and Southampton, where women work mainly in customer service, in the deck or the bar. Also, marines are hired mainly in medium positions, and their presence in low positions is also higher than that of men. On the other hand, sailors enjoy a position 25% higher than their peers, without adding senior positions, in which women occupy only 13%. This study suggests that women workers have less access to promotion opportunities in the cruise industry.

8. IMPOSITION OF PHYSICAL STANDARDS

This section highlights gender inequalities in the selection criteria for certain jobs in the tourism sector. Although they have no relation to the tasks' requirements, these biases are tied to beauty canons. Historically, **beauty standards have been set according to Western canons**. Therefore, aspects such as white skin, long hair, youth or being thin are positively considered, among many other requirements (Frederick et al., 2015). Equipping the sector with a particular image has also been a critical point in attracting

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workers. For this reason, young workers are often hired with the aim of perpetuating a glamorous image of the sector; thus beauty and youth become indispensable requirements for recruitment (Jordan, 1997 cited in Moreno and Cañada, 2018).

Within the tourism sector, hostesses are one of the groups that suffer most from these impositions. Companies require stewardesses to dress 'attractively' and look good, that is, to be thin, young, and 'pretty' (Fuller, 2012). Having physical attractiveness or not having it can have different implications as in the hostesses where **women aesthetically considered attractive have more advantages** (Padilla, 2001). The same logic of distribution within the workplace is also in force in nightclubs and discotheques, where employees who comply with the established canon of beauty are located in spaces closer to customers, such as the VIP areas of the venues, with a **high sexualisation** of their presence and work; while those who do not meet these standards perform other jobs.

One of the best-known events worldwide, [the Mobile World Congress \(MWC\), has been criticised for reproducing these gender inequalities](#). Workers and unions have complained that some of the requirements to work in the congress's VIP areas are to have a size between 36 and 38 and be at least 1,70 meters tall. There are differences in pay in terms of height, although the job is the same. In both cases, the requirements are to have the right presence and a high language skills level. This is how a worker with a height of 1,70 meters or more can charge 7,20€ gross per hour and another with less height charges 6,20€ gross per hour. Besides, this work is mostly done by students, who manage to gain extra money quickly by working at the congress, restaurants or night parties. [In these post-Mobile celebrations, sexist dynamics are also reproduced](#),

Flight attendants must conform to specific standards of weight, figure, complexion, straight teeth, and facial regularity.

as congressmen use the hostesses to take photos with them at the photocall, a job for which they have been hired, and even receive sexual innuendos from the guests.

[Flight attendants are another group that has been conditioned by their physique in order to be able to carry out their work](#). As Hochschild

explained in 1983, flight attendants must conform to specific standards of weight, figure, complexion, straight teeth, and facial regularity. It is currently mandatory for women cabin crew to wear a makeup base, mascara, lipstick, and nails perfectly cared for and coloured in discreet tones. Moreover, hair must be collected in a ponytail or a bun, without considering that this type of hairdo can harm afro hair. In many companies, the uniform protocol during the flight indicates that women must wear low heels (3 to 5 cm) and to embark, disembark and walk through the terminal a high heel (5 to 10 cm). Men are also forced to follow specific standards, such as shaving if they have a thick beard and wearing a flawless manicure.

Physical appearance is considered so important that airlines, such as Emirates or Qatar Airways, ask for a full body photo on the resume to access an interview with the company. [2017 was the first time a judge had partially ruled in favour of two flight attendants from the Russian company Aeroflot](#). The two workers had sued the company

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for suffering salary discrimination due to being over 40 years old and over the size 42. Similarly, the company had relegated these two flight attendants to domestic flights, which were shorter and took place during a worse timetable.

Another example is found in large sporting events, which attract a large number of visitors. Many hostesses have denounced both the requirements and the working conditions to which they were subjected. This is the case of the women who worked at the Comte Godó Tennis Tournament in Barcelona, who were [forced to work in miniskirts and without coats at three degrees Celsius during the tournament](#). Other sporting events have decided to remove the image hostesses' figure, understanding that their work objectified them and showed them as a decorative element. Examples are the cyclist competition [Tour of Catalonia](#), which in 2017 banned hostesses' appearance at the awards ceremony, and [Formula 1](#), which at the beginning of the 2018 season also decided to remove the so-called 'grid girls'.



Flight-attendant. Photography by: Delta News Hub. Creative commons licence 2.0.

9. SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment is a form of discrimination, defined as **unwanted sexual innuendos, requests for sexual favours, and other physical or verbal conduct of a sexual nature**. Sexual harassment tends to occur when, through the submission or rejection of such conduct, cases such as the following occur, either implicitly or explicitly: affectation in terms of safety and professional promotion; psychological and emotional harm that may interfere with work or personal well-being, such as stress or impairment of self-esteem; creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment (Theocharous and Philaretou, 2009).

The consequences of harassment can occur both at work and in psychological and physical health (Cho, 2002). At the same time, they can be short-term or long-term and also affect the environment of the person who has suffered from it (Theocharous and Philaretou, 2009). This same research states that women and men can face sexual harassment by people of the same gender or the opposite; whether they are workers, customers or suppliers. However, in the study *The Glass Floor* (ROC and Forward Together, 2014), it is observed that 60% of trans workers, 50% of cisgender female workers and 47% of cisgender male workers claim to have suffered sexual harassment, while 40% of trans workers, 30% of cisgender women and 22% of cisgender men state that inappropriate physical contact is common during their working days.

The tourism industry can facilitate sexual harassment with characteristics such as high social contact at work, long working hours, and direct contact with clients, among others (Cho, 2002). These working conditions, added to the quality treatment that must be offered to the tourist, can favour exploitation situations, sexual harassment being one of them (Dyer, 2010, cited in Moreno and Cañada, 2018). Cho (2002) states that **sexual harassment is verbal** through insulting sexual comments, pretense of jokes or arguments in the vast majority of cases. To a lesser extent and in descending order, harassment can also take a physical form (with unwanted sexual contact), visual (with comments or gestures about appearance), in services (such as being forced to dance) and having to see sexual photographs or drawings.

Certain job positions within the tourism industry, such as receptionists, housekeepers, flight attendants, nightclub waitresses or entertainers are more likely to suffer harassment situations, such as innuendos and sexual demands from customers, as the enthusiasm and kindness inherent in their work make them more vulnerable (Cabezas, 2006). On the other hand, conference and event hostesses may also be victims of sexual harassment by attendees. Some factors that explain this are the high feminisation of these jobs, underestimating the work they develop and, in some cases, being members of an ethnic minority (Moreno and Cañada, 2018). On the other hand, it has been observed that trans workers suffer specific harassment due to their gender identity and other discriminations such as the obligation to wear a uniform and use a toilet that does not correspond to their gender. In a focus group with 18 trans workers

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in the restaurant sector in the United States, it is detailed that they are three times more likely to suffer harassment from those responsible and receive twice as many sexual comments than other workers (ROC United and Forward Together, 2014).

At the same time, hotel establishments have been constructed in a way that enables sexualised interactions between customers and staff, leading to forms of sexual harassment (Guerrier and Adip, 2000, cited in Cañada, 2019b). Hotel rooms can become risky situations for housekeepers, which is why several measures have been put in place to protect them, such as working with the doors of the rooms open and having an alarm to immediately notify any possible aggression (Hunter and Watson, 2006, cited in Cañada, 2019b).

In the case of restaurants, these businesses' dynamics lead to the fine line between social and professional interaction, facilitating sexual harassment towards waitresses. Restaurants do not solely offer food, but rather are positioned as an experience that includes entertainment to customers. Matulewicz's (2015) study concludes that the power dynamics present in restaurants between workers and consumers and between workers and bosses, coupled with the naturalisation of catering as a sexualised space, intensify sexual harassment. Sometimes waitresses **are forced to supplement low wages with tips**, and they feel pressured to tolerate lewd comments and inappropriate behaviour as part of their job, at the risk of not receiving the same tips. In other cases, such as the belly dancers of a Taiwanese nightclub, the workers claim that although they do not usually experience sexual harassment during the workday, in order to prevent certain situations, no woman arrives or leaves alone (Chang and Bairner, 2019).

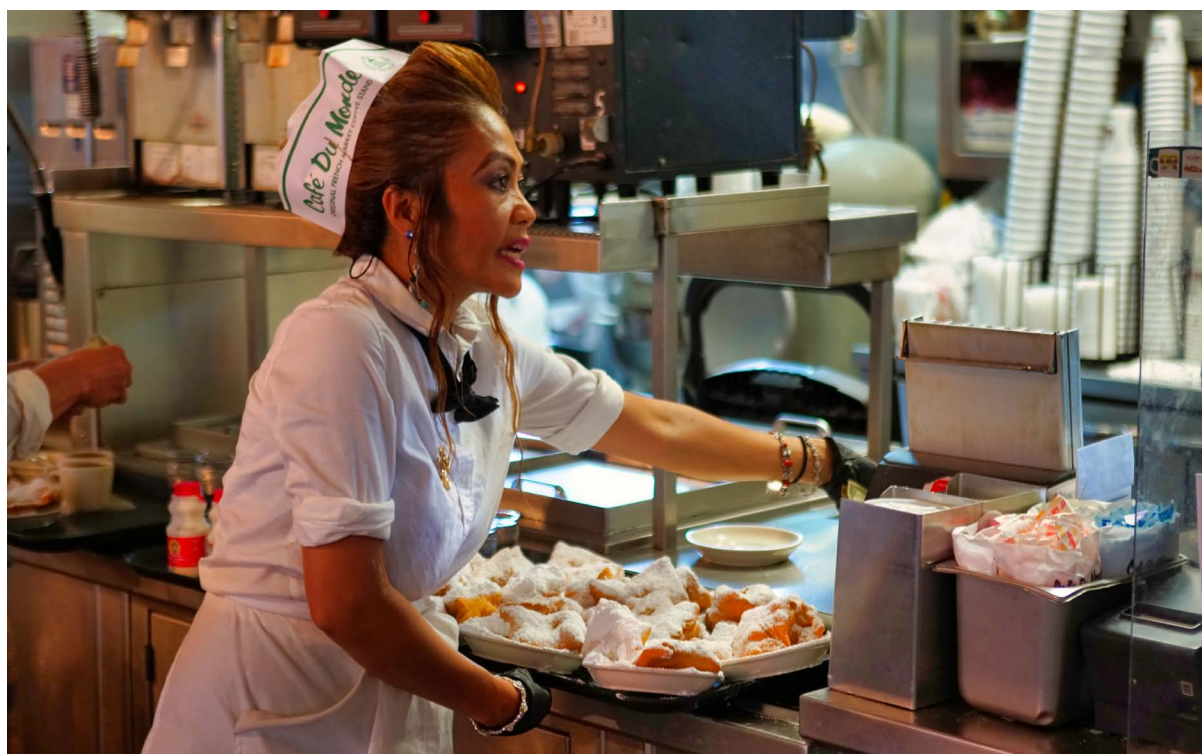
Another group that suffers from sexual harassment, as stated in the study by Cheung, Baum and Hsueh (2017), is that of tour leaders. In the case of these women workers in Taiwan, 60% state that they have suffered sexual harassment during their working hours, contradicting government statistics that place sexual harassment at 1% in men and 6% in women's case. As for the accompanying guides, the premise that the client is always right and the high weight of tips make their salary mostly dependent on the relationship with the clientele, which can lead to situations of sexual harassment. The same study concludes that most perpetrators are men (86%), in descending order, customers, bus drivers and other guides, while most victims are women.

Furthermore, **there are often no protocols to avoid situations of harassment**, and in the event that they are present, many women workers are unaware of them (Weber et al., 2002). In the example of Taiwanese accompanying guides, more than half of the workers express that they are unsure whether the travel agency they are affiliated with has a protocol for sexual harassment. Moreover, 40% of the workers aware that the company has these policies does not know the content. That is why companies must adapt to each job's characteristics, such as, in this case, the fact that the guides work outside the company and may have difficulty in carrying out any complaints (Cheung, Baum, and Hsueh, 2017).

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In general, **sexual harassment within the tourism industry is rarely reported.**

This fact can have several explanations, such as that the workers do not identify these behaviours as harassment, the lack of follow-up of the complaints by the supervisors or the social and/or bureaucratic difficulties that they face in order to be able to move the complaint forward (Theocharous and Philaretou, 2009). Furthermore, in a survey with cabin staff, Tsaur, Hsu and Kung (2020) concluded that workers who start working or have just completed a retraining course show a big difference between what they teach in training and what they encounter in reality. Therefore, sometimes they do not know how to respond to situations of harassment. That is why coping strategies to deal with sexual harassment are usually as follows: finding ways to avoid these situations in the future, self-convincing oneself that it is a common occurrence in the industry, avoiding the harasser or ignoring the situation; or seeking help from family, friends, and co-workers who may not have the tools to help them (Cheung, Baum, and Hsueh, 2017).



Waitress in a restaurant. Photography by: Nixter. Creative commons licence 2.0.

10. SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Sexual exploitation is a widespread and controversial field in tourism studies. The World Health Organization (2020) defines it as the attempt or abuse of a position of vulnerability, power or trust for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, economic, social or political use of the sexual exploitation of another. However, there are often conceptual confusions that affect the production of knowledge. **Sex tourism must be differentiated from its equivalence as trafficking in human beings for the purpose of exploitation.** Simultaneously, it is necessary to discern the trafficking from the migrants, many of them irregular, who cross borders to engage in prostitution. Each dynamic has its particularities, and they cannot be seen as synonyms (Piscitelli, 2019). In the field of tourism studies, sexual exploitation is usually approached from childhood, as it is easier to reach a global consensus that paedophilia is by no means acceptable. However, without going into details, there is no doubt that child sexual exploitation can never be considered a job in the labour market (Moreno, 2019). Such phenomenon is addressed through projects as [The Code](#). This initiative aims to raise awareness, provide tools and support to the tourism industry to prevent the sexual exploitation of children.

Sexualisation, understood as the act of giving sexual character to someone or something, **is present in the way of transmitting the image of the woman in a tourist destination.** At times, a destination's discourse conveys traditional gender roles, deriving from a patriarchal heritage, where the spaces and roles that both men

The hypersexualised image of women is accompanied by other racist stereotypes that target potential clients so that they want to live an experience of power and domination that is attractive to them.

and women can develop are differentiated. The consequences of establishing these schemes are diverse, such as the perpetuation of certain jobs that can be occupied exclusively by women and where it is assumed that they will need to have a customer service orientation that includes behaviours which would not be required of male workers (Gil et al., 2014; Sun, 2017). Further, the transmission of women's sexualised conception involves framing them in an imaginary limited to their reification. Thus, as in Cuba's case, women are seen as a mere object valued for their beauty, which is read as a stage of conquest (Morgan and Pritchard, 2018). Thus, the woman's image

and, therefore, of the worker, is configured through a stereotyped vision of femininity and otherness. This identification of women with what is exotic reifies them and, at the same time, allows for the generation of income through difference (Fuller, 2012).

In this sense, the hypersexualised image of women is accompanied by other racist stereotypes that target potential clients so that they want to live an experience of power and domination that is attractive to them (Gezinski et al., 2016). It is challenging to estimate the number of people who are sexually exploited in the tourism labour market, as there are jobs where providing sexual services is considered part of the tasks of female workers. In some cases, this may include waitresses, women providing cleaning services, receptionists, bar and nightlife staff, and golf course workers, among others (Vlitas, 2018).

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After all, it is not possible to address sexual exploitation from tourism without mentioning so-called **sex tourism**. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defined sex tourism in 1995 as 'organised trips in the tourism sector or outside the sector, but using its structures and networks with the main intention of establishing commercial sexual relations with the residents of the destination'. In other words, tourism acts as a facilitator of sexual encounters, either between those who visit and those who offer sexual or romantic services, or between those who visit and those in a situation of sexual exploitation. Several reasons may push a tourist to seek sexual pleasure in another region or destination, such as moral conception differing from that of the destination of origin, so that certain practices are not frowned upon; looser legality that facilitates sexual encounters outside the law; the greater purchasing power of the visiting person in the place visited; or the racialisation and exoticism of people who offer sexual services (Vitas, 2018).

The approach to sex tourism has led to different strategies within the tourism labour market and within feminist movements. There are also debates in the tourism academy that aim to address the different agents' role in tourist destinations. Moreno and Cole (2019) highlight the need for tourism companies to create internal policies and procedures to prevent sexual exploitation. On the other hand, Chapuis (2016) raises debates such as the power relations that are reproduced in the use of public space or the patterns of behaviour legitimised through the touristified offer of sex.

11. SOCIAL DEVALUATION AND INVISIBILITY

Devaluation and invisibility are two of the consequences of women's labour participation, in many cases, being focused on tasks considered an extension of domestic work and care. This work is perceived as a feminine attribute and, therefore, when it is transferred to the labour market, it is assumed that it is an easy job and, therefore, it is undervalued (Moreno and Cañada, 2018). Firstly, the invisibility of care work begins by giving extraordinarily little importance to this task. Secondly, these activities are considered to require few skills or abilities and, as a result, it is inferred that the people performing these jobs lack training. Thirdly, these abilities are naturalised by associating them with women. Finally, no fair economic recognition or remuneration is obtained to develop these tasks (López and Medina, 2020).

The most affected groups are housekeepers and cleaners in tourists' houses, despite them playing a pivotal role in developing the activity. Although they represent between 20% and 30% of the staff of Spanish hotels (Cañada, 2015) or 31% of the workforce in tourists' houses, according to data provided by the Association of Tourist

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Apartments of Barcelona (APARTUR), these workers have been undermined by the sector. The invisibility and devaluation of their work are reflected in the salary received as, for instance, a worker can earn 2,50€ per room or less (Cañada, 2015) (see section 3).

Due to the self-organisation of housekeepers, they have now become a more visible job in Spain. **Thanks to an intense social mobilisation process, the housekeepers' workforce has gone from being invisible to starring in crucial moments of the Spanish political debate** (Moreno and Cañada, 2018). The *kellys* associations have managed to create their own image and break with their work's invisibility, claiming their own space. However, working conditions and perceived wages continue to reflect the undervaluation they suffer.

On the other hand, the hostesses of congresses and events, a professional group where women predominate, suffer from underestimating the work done, but not invisibility. However, the visibility granted is based on extremely strict and exclusive stereotypes and canons of beauty that end up sexualising the image of this worker [generating discriminations and categories for physical reasons between the different hostesses](#) (see section 8).



Francisca Mendoza, artisan and Peña Morada chief, Argentina. Photography by: Carla Izcarra.

12. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

The possibility of suffering any damage while working like an illness, disease, or injury, is called occupational risk. Those can be classified in the following categories: environmental risks (physical, chemical, biologic and in the workplace); ergonomic risks (repetitive motions, forced postures, physical effort, musculoskeletal disorders and some workplace characteristics such as illumination, background noise, room temperature, etcetera); psychosocial risks (stress, burnout, assault and violence). As each activity has different risks, it is compulsory to have prevention plans to avoid or minimise them (Vallellano, 2018).

The reasons why **occupational safety and health concern in the tourism industry are inadequate** are: the structure and business size, usually small family-run businesses with patriarchal pillars; an underestimated investment in prevention as most accidents at work are minor; the lack of responsibility towards employees due to outsourcing processes; and also the seasonality and job instability in the tourism sector. However, the prevention of occupational risks related to electrical risks and food hygiene has increased (Comisión Ejecutiva Confederal of UGT, 2006).

As previously mentioned, the organisation of jobs in tourism is gender-based, deciding which tasks are developed by man and which ones by women. Regarding that, women usually work in worse conditions regarding the level of responsibility, promotion opportunities, and salary. Moreover, the double burden that many working women take on has to be considered, as they are responsible for the household work. It is evident that most women have to put more effort into reaching all their demands, a fact that entails more **inequality in work conditions hence more inequality in occupational health** (ISTAS, 2002)

The occupational risks, either physical or psychological, are increased in the housekeeping department due to the intensification of tasks and the lack of workplace security.

The occupational risks, either physical or psychological, are increased in the **housekeeping** department due to the intensification of tasks and the lack of workplace security. Firstly, workers manifest exhaustion and permanent fatigue due to the fast pace at work. This leads to muscular and articular pain because of repetitive movements and bad posture and leg, as well as bruises as a result of being always in a hurry. Knee complaints are also common, as they use them to move beds to avoid bending down all the time, even surgeries are frequent to treat a hernia or carpal tunnel syndrome.

Secondly, housekeepers can suffer from breathing or dermatological problems due to using cleaning chemicals even though the control of which products are being used has increased. In some cases, there is not enough personal protective equipment, or they are ineffective regarding the pace at work. These working conditions, along with the supervisors' maltreatment, imply insomnia that stems from high stress and anxiety levels. As a consequence of tiredness, pain, and stress, self-medication has become a common resource to keep up with their workday (Cañada, 2016). **The particular situation of housekeepers got particularly worse by the lack of occupational disease recognition**, like the ones related to some repetitive hand and arm

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movements. In 2018, after years of housekeepers' requirements, the Ministry of Labour approved the [recognition of carpal tunnel syndrome, bursitis, and 'tennis elbow'](#), as an occupational illness.

Another feminised job category with health risks is **air hostesses**. McNeely et al., (2018) affirm that this workforce presents a higher prevalence of cancer in the reproductive system, like other cancers caused by the continued radiations inside planes. Moreover, it is directly connected with an increase in infertility, miscarriage, premature delivery, and foetus abnormality. At the same time, veteran air hostesses manifest sleep disorders, fatigue, and depression that could trigger chronic fatigue, alcohol abuse to keep up the workday, sinusitis and foot surgeries caused by standing for a long period of time (McNeely et al., 2018), as well as they can suffer from jet lag and venous insufficiency (Rivas, 2008).

On the other hand, **tourist bus guides** from Barcelona, also suffer from occupational health problems inside the bus, as back problems due to the poor condition of the seats and falls because of the constant movement and wet floors in case of rain. Adverse weather conditions, both hot and cold, can also cause occupational health risks. Onboard the bus, psychosocial risks arise, such as anguish and stress, normally derived from tensions with the bus staff or users due to long waiting time, complaints about queue management, enforcement of users to respect the rules, or users losing their ticket. Outside the bus, the main complaint is the difficulty to use the toilet, aggravated during the menstrual period. Since 2015, each guide has its own card to use the toilets



Tour guide. Photography by: Richard (Waterford_Man). Creative commons licence 2.0.

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installed by Transports Metropolitans de Barcelona (TMB) even though there is not much time and the bus cannot stop off route, causing general malaise. In the long-term, these difficulties may cause cystitis (Cañada, Julià and Benach, 2019).

Concerning **tour guides**, the most common risks are related to adverse weather conditions as they work outdoors, they also usually suffer from loss of voice and tiredness of standing. In terms of psychosocial risks, they expound mental fatigue caused by difficult mobility and environmental noise, as well as conflicts or uncomfortable situations with people against overcrowding. When not authorised tour guides are involved, these tensions worsen as they get insulted or rebuked by other authorised tour guides (Cañada, Julià and Benach, 2019).

Another group that suffers from different occupational health risks is the **restaurant staff**. In this sector, chefs manifest health problems caused by the use of toxic products and the continued exposure to fumes (Cañada, Julià and Benach, 2019) while waitresses experience prolonged standing, physical strain, fast movement, or lack of resting time during work hours (Laperriere, 2017, cited in Cañada, Julià and Benach, 2019).

13. INSUFFICIENT ATTENTION ON UNION AGENDAS

The union representation in Spain is mainly masculine, 59,9% in 2015, although the female representation increased from 21,4% in 2003 to 34.5% in 2015 (Jódar et al., 2018). This increase of feminine representation in the union activity is due to their incorporation into the labour market these last decades. Even so, having greater representation does not necessarily mean that gender issues are taken into account or included in the union activity (Aspiazu, 2012).

Regarding union presence in the hotel sector, taking Barcelona city as an example, there is no published data available. However, low union presence is detected, particularly in new hotels where outsourcing processes affected their organisational capacity. Therefore, outsourcing processes and a lack of permanent contracts make setting up union activity harder (Cañada, Julià and Benach, 2019).

A study published by Bonaccorsi and Carrario (2012) shows that there is a difference between the woman affiliation number and their internal representation in trade unions. It confirms that there is no reciprocal relationship between these two aspects as **the affiliation is greater than the representation of women in unions**. It is believed that this is caused by a lack of trust from male leaders in terms of leading proposals and deciding new alignments within union structures. Another barrier could be the trade union organisation itself as leadership, organisational culture, and union activity still reflect masculinised values creating an obstacle to female participation (Bermúdez and Roca, 2019). Besides, another impediment for women to actively participate in union

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activities is the unequal distribution of household chores and caring for family members. This is the reason why they talk about a triple workday and the inability to coordinate union membership with family and work-life (Bermúdez and Roca, 2019). These aspects provoke an intense discomfort that could lead to disaffection or self-organisation processes as the various *kellys* associations.

In conclusion, Beneyto et al., (2016) indicate that nowadays, Spanish unions have a wider representation regarding gender, class, and education level. Even so, some outstanding issues remain, such as the absence of affiliation among small businesses, young people, and employees with non-standard contracts or precarious work conditions (Jódar et al., 2016). Historically, hospitality trade union leadership has underrepresented minority groups and has been mainly masculine (Underthun and Christoffer, 2018).

Hostesses are an excellent example of underrepresentation in trade unions as they fulfil the characteristics mentioned before: non-standard contracts and young. Furthermore, these are transitional jobs characterised by **liminality**, a concept used to explain an uncertain work stage that represents the length of time a person is looking for their vocation. Liminality can affect solidarity at work; this is a group reasonably satisfied with its short-term employment situation and chooses to remain on the side-lines of labour organisations (Underthun and Christoffer, 2018).

14. FAMILY AND SOCIAL OPPOSITION TO ACCESS THE LABOUR MARKET

As can be appreciated in the previous sections, women, beyond suffering the consequences of an unfavourable work context, have different obstacles and limitations inside the labour market and even before getting into it. One entry barrier is the family and social opposition to get a job.

Xheneti, Thapa and Madden (2018) expound in their study how women deal with family and work requirements in developing countries, in this particular case, how they do it in Nepal. One of their most remarkable results, which is transferable to other contexts, is that women are highly dependent on their husbands and their in-laws because traditionally, the responsibility of generating income fell on men. It is assumed that women had to contribute to the household economy; they could only get those jobs previously accepted by their husbands. Moreover, women also face a lack of social support as their **family members demand them to reproduce the traditional role of mother** and take care of its associated tasks (Huete, Brotons and Sigüenza, 2016).

Due to being afraid of losing power over their wives, domestic violence cases have arisen.

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In particular, married women entering the labour market either undertaking their project or becoming employees of the tourism sector, can suffer from stress or have conflicts at home, especially with their husbands (Getz, Carlsen and Morrison, 2004) triggering marital problems as men have the [sense of losing control of their wives' lives](#). Another reaction caused by women starting their careers is the rejection some men have suffered by relatives, being accused of not being 'manly enough' having their masculinity questioned (Duffy et al., 2012). Secondly, due to being afraid of losing power over their wives, domestic violence cases have arisen. Moreover, they consider that women are abandoning their family circle role (Getz, Carlsen and Morrison, 2004).

15. FAMILY BUSINESSES THAT INCREASE WORKLOADS

As can be seen throughout this report, gender division of labour, either in public or private spaces, has always happened (Rodríguez-Modroño, Gálvez-Muñoz and Agenjo-Calderón, 2015). Owing to the gender division of work, the tasks that women develop in family businesses are invisibilised, unrecognised, and unpaid. Dedeoglu (2004) develops this idea mentioning that the invisibilisation is because of social acceptability, as they are seen as good wives and devoted mothers in charge of helping the family. Therefore, seeing them as **'good women', instead of employees**, causes a limited achievement of empowerment through work.

A fragmented industry, such as tourism, has several family-owned businesses. However, most studies about tourism and gender do not take into account informal or unpaid workers (Ordoñez, 2001, cited in Moreno and Cañada, 2018). According to the author, 70% of family workers in the tourism sector are women, whereas in other industries they represent a 56%. As the *Global Report on Women in Tourism* (OMT and UN Women, 2010) confirms, women in the family business make a significant proportion of unpaid work.

The feminisation of family businesses can increase women's workloads caused by men not assuming family responsibilities on the same conditions. This inequality can sometimes be easily detected in **community-based tourism** as the visitor gets closer to family life. For example, when tourists stay in the family house, they are provided with accommodation, meals, and intangible assets such as kindness, attention, warmth, etcetera; tasks that are mostly developed by women and habitually invisibilised. Moreover, women are usually in charge of fetching water, another invisibilised task, to meet the basic needs of both family and guests (Cole and Ferguson, 2015).

As Cañada (2019c) declares, it is crucial to analyse family community-based tourism businesses from two not necessarily contradictory points of view. In the first place, some women have empowered themselves through family businesses by accessing the labour market, which has brought changes in gender roles, such as women developing jobs traditionally considered manly and men doing feminine tasks to improve the family

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businesses. At the same time, women have been able to generate their own income and increase their social participation in the community. Secondly, when analysing family businesses, **it is crucial to consider the responsibilities women can assume** and not only count their position since feminised and masculinised tasks are naturalised due to gender roles.

The gender division of tasks can also be detected in rural contexts businesses where men are in charge of the administrative management, home maintenance, and building a relationship with the client, which increases social recognition. On the contrary, women are invisibilised, as their tasks are not significantly distinguishable from housework. They are in charge of cooking, cleaning, setting up the room, and preparing food orders (Morales, Hernández and Díaz, 2018).



Women engaged in Street vending. Photography by: UN Women/Ryan Brown. Creative commons licence 2.0.

RESEARCH AGENDA

The research agenda presented below is a collection of new possible future research lines to fill out the knowledge gap detected while analysing gender inequality in the tourism labour market. To widen the current knowledge, the following table has been developed and divided into three columns: field of research, that is, the reality analysed, knowledge gap, and lines of future research.

Table 1.

Current knowledge of manifestations of gender inequality in the tourism labour market

Knowledge gap	Lines of future research
Epistemology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I) What are the current analysis framework and study prospects in the tourism labour market? II) How are gender dimensions in tourism work studies used? III) Which intersecting axes of oppression are taken into account when analysing the tourism labour market? IV) Which intersecting axes of oppression should be taken into account in future research of the tourism labour market? V) What is the relationship between the feminisation of work and precariousness? VI) Which methods can be applied to increase women's participation in tourism research without compromising their work or privacy? VII) How new technologies (anonymous surveys, contact-making with people from all over the world, etcetera) can help collect this information?
Case studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I) Which is the labour reality of more concrete labour situations? II) What makes a job invisible? III) Which current dynamics are associated with case studies and why is it happening? IV) How gender inequality is revealed in the tourism sector apart from the hotel sphere?
Scarcity of topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I) Which jobs are not being studied? II) Which manifestations of gender inequality do not appear in the current literature? III) Which political process to bridge the gap is not reflected in scientific or grey literature? IV) What is the level of awareness that tourists have of gender inequalities in the tourism labour market?

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Table 2.
Manifestations of gender inequality in the tourism labour market.

Knowledge gap	Lines of future research
Double presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I) How do the private and professional spheres affect each other depending on the geographical context II) How can tourism help to break out with gender-based division of household tasks? III) Taking the family accommodation business in rural areas as an example, can generational change and new relationship forms influence this double burden?
Job segmentation by gender and race	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I) How does the racial axe affect the tourism sector workers? II) How decisive can race be in a work selection process in the tourism sector? III) Which is the affectation of migration statuses on the workers?
Wage discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I) In which professions of the tourism industry -apart from hotel employees- does the gender pay gap exist? II) What is the relationship between the sticky floor and the gender pay gap? III) How does the double burden affect the gender pay gap? IV) What is the relationship between double burden and atypical employment?
Atypical recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I) Which atypical employment characteristics are determined by the tourism sector's functioning and which by gender discrimination? II) What is the relationship between atypical employment arrangements and women's domestic burden? How can it affect their salaries?
Informal work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I) Which research methodologies can be used to collect accurate data about informal employment in tourism? II) What is the relationship between tourism and the informal sector? III) How can this situation change? How do we move from the informal to the formal sector?
Glass ceiling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I) What is the relationship between traditional leadership styles and the glass ceiling? II) How does the glass ceiling influence women in getting a middle manager or senior position? III) Apart from the hotel context, which other tourism sectors stand out for having this barrier?
Sticky floor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I) How can we recognise and differentiate the glass ceiling from the sticky floor? II) What is the relationship between the sticky floor and short career ladders? III) How these short career ladders and sticky floor affect women's future perspectives?

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Imposition of physical standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I) What are the psychological and emotional effects on a worker caused by the prescriptive beauty norms? II) What is the scope of the imposition of beauty standards (racism, disability discrimination, non-normative bodies, etcetera)? III) Which inequalities show up due to the worker's uniforms (including makeup, accessories, or footwear)? IV) Do beauty norms for women working in the tourism industry affect the job hierarchy?
Sexual harassment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I) What kind of study methodologies can be used to find testimonies that want to share their experiences? II) Which are the common characteristics of jobs with a higher incidence of sexual harassment? III) How does high alcohol consumption influence sexual harassment? IV) Which protocols have to be established to prevent sexual harassment in the tourism sector?
Sexual exploitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I) In which jobs that not related to sexual services can sexual exploitation happen? II) What are the specific aspects of tourism that favour sexual exploitation? III) Which mechanisms for preventing sexual exploitation can be applied in the tourism industry?
Social devaluation and invisibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I) Why some jobs are invisibilised? II) Can the social recognition of some jobs increase by making household work visible? III) What is the employment situation of the trade fair and congress hostess? IV) Except for the <i>kellys'</i> movement, what other social movements reach to finish with invisibilisation and social devaluation?
Occupational health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I) Which occupational illnesses are not recognised yet in the tourism labour market? II) Which precautionary measures are necessary for the tourism labour market? III) What are the mental health consequences of sexual objectification of women working in the tourism industry? IV) How can gender-based dress code differences affect the employees' health?
Insufficient attention on union agendas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I) How can the unionisation of under-represented groups increase? II) How can gender dynamics and gender discrimination affect the trade union organisation? III) What other topics are linked to gender inequality in the trade's union agenda? IV) How do workers organise themselves in less unionised professions?
Family and social opposition to access the labour market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I) Which social and family barriers do women face, according to their geographical context, when they want to enter the tourism labour market? II) Which social and family barriers do women face when accessing tourism training and studies?
Family businesses that increase workloads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I) What are the consequences in terms of occupational health for women working in family businesses? II) How can we put an end to the invisibilisation of women working in family businesses?

CONCLUSIONS

Fifteen forms of gender discrimination in the tourism labour market have been detected in this report, which are, by order of appearance: double presence, job segmentation of reason by gender and race, wage discrimination, atypical recruitment, informal work, glass ceiling, sticky floor, imposition of physical standards, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, social devaluation and invisibility, occupational health, Insufficient attention on union agendas, family and social opposition to access the labour market, and family businesses that increase workloads.

First of all, it is necessary to reconsider the definition of tourism employment by the International Labour Organization (2017) because many jobs that belong to the tourism sector are not considered. Besides, there is a deficiency in studies outside the hotel sector, excluding many workers. For example, there is a gap of case studies about the transport sector (taxi, transfers or bus drivers, ground attendants in harbours and airports, women working in the railway sector, among others), tour guides and informants, tourist entertainers, hotel or resort masseurs, travel agents, tourist apartments cleaners, people working in the cultural sector, hostesses or nightlife workers, among others.

In the second place, this report has pointed that inequalities and gender-based barriers persist in the tourism labour market, both to access the sector and once the position has been occupied. Therefore, the **institutional and internal business mechanisms to overcome barriers against gender equalities are deficient**. Besides, the objectification and sexualization of the woman's image in the tourism sector has been exploited, both as workers and/or to promote a concrete image of some tourist destinations.

Thirdly, **positions developed by women in the tourism sector have been considered, on many occasions, as an extension of household work**, triggering some of the discriminations, such as work overload consequences in workers' mental health, invisibilisation and devaluation of their work, and low salaries. This leads to the precariousness of a highly feminised work, making evident the correlation of these two phenomena.

Regarding the research agenda and the new possible future research lines, the gaps in gender literature and gender perspective studies in the tourism labour market are considered. On this matter, future research lines can be divided into two phases. Firstly, describing the general framework to understand how, who, when, where, and what to determine why and establish prevention mechanisms and action protocols. It is also necessary to do more case studies and analyse different experiences to transform situations of inequality through their understanding. Secondly, special

CONCLUSIONS

attention must be paid to moralistic views looking to victimise people affected by any sexual harassment. Often, this look can lead to losing the focus on other more recurrent and complex difficulties.

A political and social effort to eradicate invisibilisation and impunity of the mentioned discriminations is required. Simultaneously, it is necessary to show the examples of working women who have started demanding processes and to explain how they organised, the personal and work implications, as well as the successes and difficulties, among others. Therefore, it is important to explain from the academy or any other space these processes and their social activism to collaborate with their effort of getting out from anonymity.

Besides, the global **COVID-19** pandemic is determining and conditioning the future of the tourism sector and, as a consequence, its studies. Currently, the health crisis has become an economic and social crisis whose consequences at an international level that we cannot yet predict. For this reason, it is essential to, [pay special attention to the working women of the tourism sector](#), due to the seriousness of the situation and the possible worsening of this scenario. In other words, **the labour tourism market is in danger and precariousness is increasing, affecting women, especially those from certain vulnerable groups**. It is precisely at this time of change and uncertainty that gender studies become the key to analyse the current situation and project future action lines.

Gender inequality in the tourism labour market shows how this industry is built following the inequality pattern in the current society. Similarly, focusing on data that considers gender just as a demographic variable does not enable to see a more complex reality. For this reason, **gender studies can be useful to provide a framework to study, analyse and understand the tourism sector**, in such a way inequalities can be associated with the structural and global dynamics that cause them. Consequently, **incorporating intersectional gender analysis into research** could, firstly, reveal professional and personal experiences that are not being taken into account, and secondly, relate them with patriarchy, racism, and classism. Finally, it is imperative to value all those individual and daily collective efforts to confront gender inequalities and fight to make them disappear and to achieve an increasingly necessary global change.



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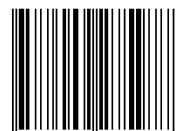


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