

1 Introduction: Gender Equality and Tourism – Beyond Empowerment

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The Origins of This Book

The ideas fuelling the creation of this book arose from submissions to a conference organized by Equality in Tourism (<http://equalityintourism.org>), an organization dedicated to ensuring women always have a voice in global tourism, and Yeşil Valiz (<http://yesilvaliz.org>), which was to be held in Turkey in 2016. Sadly, the conference had to be abandoned due to the violent political events that took place at the time – reminding us just how fickle the tourism endeavour is! However, from the ashes, the abstracts, together with an engagement with some of our associates at Equality in Tourism, became discussions, and the book was born.

Drawing on the theme of gender equality in tourism, this book aims to identify the main obstacles to women's advancement in the tourism industry, and to discover and share successful strategies to overcome them, drawing on case studies from all over the world. All the authors contributing to this book are proudly feminist and, with the exception of Chapter 3, have used qualitative methods to give depth and feeling to the women's stories they present. All of us have used positionality and reflexivity to reflect our engagement with subjectivity. Many of

the authors are not writing in their first language and this book has the privilege of bringing Spanish-speaking and Latin American scholarship to the English-speaking world. Interlaced between the chapters are stories from women who work in tourism.

Why Gender Equality?

Gender is a system of cultural identities and social relationships between females and males (Swain, 1995), characterized by unequal power and norms that determine an unequal distribution of resources, work, decision making, political power, and the entitlement of rights and obligations in both the private and public spheres (Thierry, 2007). The study of gender as a pertinent issue within tourism began receiving academic interest and systematic investigation in the 1990s (Swain, 1995; Figueroa-Domecq *et al.*, 2015). Although on the agenda for 30 years, women continue to face injustice, and it remains the case that while women make up between 60 and 70% of the labour force (Baum, 2013), they are far more likely than men to be found in lower-paid, unskilled jobs. Women face discrimination, occupational segregation, are undervalued, stereotyped

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and not promoted, given less training than men and struggle more with work–life balance (Wong and Ko, 2009). They tend to have unskilled or semi-skilled work in the most vulnerable jobs, where they are more likely to experience poor working conditions, inequality of opportunity and treatment, violence, exploitation, stress and sexual harassment (Baum, 2013). In a sample of 78 tourism companies, women only made up 15.8% of board members, and over 20% of tourism companies had no women on their boards (Equality in Tourism, 2013). Furthermore, the tourism industry draws on and reinforces gender inequalities through its reliance on the ‘embodied attributes of the worker, and his/her ability to perform emotional labor’ (Webster, 2010, p. 188).

Empowerment and Beyond

Institutional responses suggest that women can be empowered by tourism. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) ‘tourism can empower women in multiple ways, particularly through the provision of jobs and through income-generating opportunities in small and larger-scale tourism ... enterprises’. And ‘...tourism can be a tool for women to unlock their potential ... and thus contribute to the UNSDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls’ (UNWTO, 2015). However, the rhetoric is frequently overstated and the global hegemonic masculinity that gives agency to capitalism (Swain, 2002) frequently results in a lack of control and powerlessness. This book’s critical analysis of women in tourism from different stakeholder perspectives, from international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), national governments and managers, as well as workers in a variety of fields producing tourism, explores the continuing power imbalances and injustices women experience and sheds some light on how to overcome them.

While using the framework of empowerment this book takes a critical view of how empowerment is understood and, while building on ‘the nascent research line

that examines gender-tourism-empowerment’ (Panta and Thapa, 2018, p. 22), it points to why empowerment, as it has been hijacked by the neoliberal agenda, is missing the point. Empowerment as so frequently conceptualized deals only with productive and not reproductive labour, and fails to address the structural inequalities that lie at the base of societies built on patriarchal symbolic and normative codes. Entrenched gender discrimination practices of patriarchal cultures and structures that are internalized and socialized are constantly replicated. Transformation for women will only happen when the structural inequalities in society are laid bare and overcome.

The following sections of this introduction are structured to first introduce the reader to the development and empowerment literature, before moving on to review studies of tourism and empowerment. In the third section some critical reflections are explored.

Development and Empowerment

Empowerment is a relatively broad concept lacking a single clear definition (Trommlerova *et al.*, 2015); it has experienced growing importance and become one of the most elastic buzzwords in the international development lexicon (Cornwall, 2016) with over 29 definitions (Ibrahim and Alkire, 2007). ‘Empowerment has become a very popular concept across various fields of study particularly those dealing with development and politics. Its use in both scholarly and practice literature has been so wide that many authors no longer care to define it in terms of how they use it. It is as if the meaning is clear and without dispute, yet it is a highly loaded concept’ (Lenao and Busupi, 2016, p. 54). However, ‘women’s empowerment’ remains a central objective of international development (Mosedale, 2014). While its use started in the 1980s and 1990s as a radical approach concerned with transforming power relations in favour of women’s rights and greater equality between women and men (Cornwall, 2016) it runs the risk of becoming an empty-shell mantra for governments,

INGOs and NGOs. Empowerment was about transforming gendered inequality, but has come to mean providing income for women (or perhaps even to increase the labour force and provide businesses with cheap employees to exploit).

Accepting the term has a longer history (Batliwala, 2010). Scholars commonly use one of two models that explore aspects of empowerment. Friedmann (1992) put forward three kinds: psychological, social and political, whereas Rowlands (1997) used ‘power to’ (‘generative or productive power’), ‘power with’ (collective power of a group) and ‘power within’ (strength based on self-acceptance and consciousness). While each of these might be seen as a distinct exercise of agency (Trommlerova *et al.*, 2015), I explain empowerment with three As:

- Agency – the ability to make things happen, the capacity to initiate action.
- Autonomy – the ability to make choices, self-governance, to decide for oneself and being able to have a role in public life.
- Authority – to be respected, listened to and be looked up to.

Common to all three conceptualizations is that empowerment is a process. ‘Empowerment relates to processes of change. In particular, it refers to the processes by which those who have been denied the capacity for choice gain this capacity’ (Kabeer, 2017, p. 650) and we are talking here about meaningful or strategic choices.

Women’s lack of agency comes from entrenched gender discrimination practices of the patriarchal cultures and structures in society that are acculturated and socialized (Munar *et al.*, 2015). As gender operates through the unquestioned acceptance of power, many women are not aware of the possibilities of equality; they accept their subordinate position as the only option. Cultural norms surrounding gender roles frequently deny that inequalities exist or that such inequalities are unjust. Norms are internalized and responses are automatic and habituated, maintaining and reproducing patriarchy. Systemic, and unconscious for the majority, inequality is pervasive and reinforced throughout societies, and begins

very early as demonstrated in this video (<https://www.facebook.com/BBCStories/videos/10155357926475659>). It is reproduced through education systems including in the Western ‘developed’ world, as can be seen in these videos: (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z1Jbd4-fPOE>; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6syQC4rc_W0); and continues through to the top of tourism businesses as discussed here (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ibjEVtseGbU>).

While I cannot do justice to all the discussion on empowerment in the development literature, a number of debates are pertinent to the arguments germane to a critical analysis of tourism gender and empowerment. These debates are overlapping and interconnected, so, for ease of discussion, I have separated them into four broad themes here:

1 Drivers or determinants of empowerment

A number of studies have looked at what empowers, what are the drivers or determinants? For example, Trommlerova and colleagues’ (2015) study in The Gambia concluded that age, health and marital status correlated with empowerment. According to Syed (2010) such correlations that have been identified are specific and limited. Deeper studies have far more nuanced conclusions. For example, Kabeer explored the economic pathways to empowerment in Bangladesh. She concluded ‘paid work outside the home, ... may have brought greater voice and influence in family and, for some forms of work, reduced domestic violence, but it also subjected women to more physically demanding and personally demeaning forms of work and greater difficulties in reconciling their domestic and earning responsibilities’ (Kabeer, 2017, p. 661).

2 Conceptualization and measuring empowerment

Although evidence suggests there is no one-size-fits-all recipe for empowerment

(Cornwall, 2016), attempts have been made to measure it, for example, the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Gender Empowerment Measure. However, as Syed (2010) discusses, these measures have inherent biases. First, the capitalist bias – they only measure productive labour. With a narrow focus on those incorporated into paid work, the quality of the work, the double burdens associated with that work and the ignorance of the importance of re-productive labour are not considered, but are significant (and will be discussed in further detail in relation to gender and tourism). Syed also alerted us both to an elite bias in the metric, for example, female members of parliament are counted but not females on local councils, and a secular bias, as religious choices and commitments were not taken into account.

3 A shift from power

In the early formulations of empowerment, economics did not feature. '... all efforts to conceptualise the term ... clearly stressed ... a socio-political process, that the critical operating concept within empowerment was power' (Batliwala, 2010, p. 124). Over time, 'it has been "mainstreamed" in a manner that has virtually robbed it of its original meaning and strategic value' (Batliwala, 2010, p. 126). The UN's sustainable development goal (SDG) on why gender equality matters (UN, 2016) states: 'Women's and girls' empowerment is essential to expand economic growth and promote social development. The full participation of women in labour forces would add percentage points to most national growth rates – double digits in many cases'. This is a clear example of how the power has been removed from empowerment. As Cornwall (2016) discusses, 'it is commonplace for contemporary "empowerment" initiatives to begin and end with increasing women's access to resources. The underpinning assumption of this being that once women have access to economic resources, they will be able to make changes in other areas of their lives' (Cornwall, 2016, p. 356). This may or may not happen. Earning

money does not necessarily lead to increased equality or overcoming injustice.

4 Issues of context

(i) Universalist versus context specific: As Swain (2016) discusses, there is a forever unresolved dialectic between the particular and the universal. The tensions between universal and specific ideals and between universal rights such as freedom from violence and the need for cultural diversity, for example, a woman's choice to wear a veil, remains unresolved (Moghissi, 2002). (ii) Levels of analysis: As Syed (2010) discusses, factors at a number of levels affect empowerment. At the macro level empowerment is affected by political and legal frameworks; at the meso-organizational level by business and institutional arrangements; and at the micro-individual level by a host of intersecting variables such as race, age, ethnicity and ability. Oxfam (2017) has released a composite index for measuring empowerment based on a framework that recognizes three levels where change can take place: personal, relational and environmental. Changes at a personal level refer to changes taking place within the person – changes in how the person sees herself. Changes at the relational level refer to changes in the relationships and power relations within the woman's surrounding network. This includes, for example, changes within the household, the community, markets and local authorities. Finally, changes at environmental level take place in the broader context such as social norms, attitudes and the beliefs of wider society; as well as formal changes in the political and legislative framework.

There is agreement that context is critical and what empowers one woman might not empower another: there are no one-size-fits-all recipes for empowerment. And empowering experiences in one area of a woman's life do not automatically translate into greater capacity to exercise agency and transform power relations in another part of her life. While a number of authors have emphasized dignity and self-esteem/pride

and self-worth as central to empowerment (Rowlands, 1997; Scheyvens and Lagisa, 1998), this is at the micro-individual level and does not challenge systemic inequality or structures of patriarchy necessary for transformative change. Batliwala suggested ‘the goals of women’s empowerment are to challenge patriarchal ideology; to transform the structures and institutions that reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and social inequality’ (Batliwala, 1994, p. 130). As Cornwall (2016) explains, empowerment is fundamentally about changing power relations, and involves building critical consciousness of inequalities and injustice to generate the impetus to act together to change society.

Gender Equality, Tourism Development and Empowerment

We have Regina Scheyvens’ (1999) paper to thank for bringing ideas of empowerment to the tourism academy. A few articles (Di Castri, 2004; Cole, 2006; 2007; Pleno, 2006) and Sofield’s (2003) book followed in the first decade of the century, but the topic has received considerable attention in the past few years. While nearly all authors have used Scheyvens’ (1999) four-part model of economic, psychological, social and political empowerment, there have been two recent additions. Ramos and Prideaux considered the need to add environmental empowerment, explained as ‘the community’s ability to gain power to protect and preserve the surrounding ecosystem’ (Ramos and Prideaux, 2014, p. 465), while Heimtum and Morgan (2012) included political, personal, cultural and spiritual empowerment, without explaining what each meant. Exceptions to the use of Scheyvens’ framework have included Walter (2011) and Trans and Walter (2014), who used Longwe’s (2002) framework that examines empowerment through welfare, access, conscientization, participation and control. Any divisions of empowerment are difficult as it is multifaceted and experienced in different ways by different women and at different levels.

Some tourism scholars have attempted to measure community empowerment through tourism. Boley and McGehee (2014) developed the residents’ empowerment through the Resident Empowerment through Tourism Scale (RETS), and Boley *et al.* (2015) tested its cross-cultural application in Japan. A further paper (Boley *et al.*, 2017) used data from the two previous studies to explore gender differences. They found that in Virginia, USA, women felt more empowered by tourism, whereas in Japan no gender differences were reported. Strzelecka (2017) demonstrated that residents’ emotional bonds with places and nature influence some dimensions of psychological and social empowerment. Ramos and Prideaux (2014) used mixed methods, including Likert scale questions, to develop a wheel of empowerment scale, to explore empowerment among a Mayan community in Mexico. While the highest scores were for psychological empowerment, overall the research suggested tourism was not empowering the community. Tensions between the generations led to low social empowerment and even lower political empowerment. However, gender differences were not explored.

An increasing number of studies suggest that tourism brings some economic empowerment to some women (Stronza, 2005; Cole, 2006; Pleno, 2006; Tucker and Boonabaana, 2012; Feng, 2013; Tran and Walter, 2014; Moswete and Lacey, 2015; Knight and Cottrell, 2016; Panta and Thapa, 2018; Movono and Dahles, 2017). In fact, only Ramos and Prideaux (2014) found tourism did not bring economic empowerment. This privileging of economic empowerment over other forms of empowerment reflects the shift away from power observed in the development studies literature. As Ferguson (2011) discusses, most tourism development policies and programmes are limited in their conceptualization of women’s empowerment being simply economic and failing to consider its multidimensional, multi-level aspects. However, the value of financial independence should not be underestimated. As Moswete and Lacey describe, in Botswana, ‘female empowerment is expressed in terms of freedom from economic dependency on

men and society,... which afforded the freedom to make choices, purchase land, build homes, pursue additional business interests, provide for their families, educate their children, travel, and engage socially with a wide range of people including foreign tourists' (Moswete and Lacey, 2015, p. 614). Increased earning power not only brings increased status, but also peace of mind, as Tao and Wall (2009) found among Massai women who invest in cattle, which can be sold in times of need.

A large number of the above studies also draw attention to the fact that while women may earn, in some cases a pittance – but essential income – for example, among the Mukono of Uganda (Tucker and Boonabaana, 2012), their tourism work is in addition to their present workload. This double burden, so often ignored in the policy literature that advocates tourism for women's economic empowerment, results from not including domestic and caring services or reproductive labour. The importance of domestic and subsistence agricultural work is ignored. Women's involvement in tourism frequently repeats these same types of jobs but also involves intangible (also unpaid and therefore undervalued) emotional work through hospitality, smiling, and making guests comfortable and safe.

The second most commonly reported form of empowerment is psychological or individual, resulting from increased self-esteem, greater self-confidence and pride. Self-esteem is important, as Pleno explains, 'having high self-esteem is important as it provides courage to try new things and the power to believe in oneself, as well as the capacity to respect others and be respected' (Pleno, 2006, p. 152). The 'power within' in the form of increased confidence and self-esteem frequently came from meeting people outside family networks, speaking with outsiders/tourists or through socializing with other members of ecotourism/community-based tourism groups at meetings or facilitated training sessions (Panta and Thapa, 2018). Self-esteem and confidence are the building blocks for further forms of empowerment. In the case of women in Vatuolalai, from minor economic

empowerment, hotel workers' confidence grew and they opened their own businesses, which over time, with increased respect, led to participation in decision making, and increased autonomy and control over their lives (Movono and Dahles, 2017).

Social empowerment comes from collectivity, 'power with' as Rowlands (1997) called it. It includes pride, normally associated with individuals, but as my (Cole, 2007) study of the Ngadha, in eastern Indonesia, showed the group became proud of their identity, and group identity gave them power. Moswete and Lacey (2015) show how what is psychological empowerment for some is social for others. Social empowerment most frequently relates to community cohesion confirmed or strengthened by tourism (Strzelecka, 2017). The importance of networks for many of the women was a critical element of their empowerment (Tucker and Boonabaana, 2012).

Political empowerment, the core element of empowerment is of course the hardest to achieve. It starts for many women when they gain power to make decisions relating to an ecotourism- or community-based tourism project, for example, in the ecotourism project in Bohol, the Philippines (Pleno, 2006). The women in the ecotourism project in Vietnam discussed by Tran and Walter (2014) increased in self-confidence, became more aware of their status and rights, and became active leaders in the project. However, beyond the project men were still preferred leaders over women and still had control over the distribution of the benefits from the project. Furthermore, despite increased awareness of their rights women still had to put up with, usually alcohol-induced, male violence. One recent study from Fiji reported that through tourism the women disrupted cultural barriers and became 'office bearers in the village council, heads of respective development committees and advisory roles at the provincial level demonstrates that women ... were well placed in positions of authority and control over their affairs and that of the greater community' (Movono and Dahles, 2017, p. 689).

Gender Equality in Tourism: Beyond Empowerment

So women's empowerment through tourism is possible but why is it still so rare (or rarely reported)? Why is it given so much lip service by international organizations but so little support through policy and action? Why do women make up the greatest number of workers in tourism, while still doing the majority of reproductive labour, but still have so little control? Hopefully, the chapters in this book will go some way to shedding more light on the critical issue for tourism (and development more broadly). Some considerations that would seem critical include:

- It is fickle, which can have grave impacts on women's efforts, see, for example, Tucker's Chapter 11.
- The Othering, and romanticization of women hosts as expressed in both Chapters 11 and 7, and the glamour associated with some tourism employment, for example, in the airline industry (Baum, 2012), hides lived realities.
- The interlinkages with other sectors mean that the gendered consequences of tourism can be felt through many avenues: water in Labuan Bajo (Cole, 2017); textile production in Tunisia (see Chapter 9); and land in Nicaragua (Moreno, 2017), for example.

1 Tourism is business

As well as being an aspect of international development, tourism is about business. Most of the studies that have examined the gender–tourism–empowerment nexus have been about small-scale developments in Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs). Patriarchal norms, structural inequality, glass ceilings and gender pay gaps exist just as much in tourism as in other industries on a global scale. While the introduction of gender equality measures in the tourism industry is in its infancy, Chapter 4 finds that there is an increasing awareness of the value of such measures being in place. Indeed, Bakas *et al.* find that, even though the implementation of gender equality measures is often perceived as the responsibility of the state, gender roles play a significant part in this process. The finding that women who are top-level managers are more likely to implement gender equality measures than male managers, shows that women are more aware of the need for gender equality measures. Furthermore, it suggests the need to change stereotyped perceptions of gender roles, which is the root of the problem, if real progress in achieving gender equality and empowerment through tourism is to be made. The nature of the tourism business also makes it a special case for a number of reasons:

2 Importance of context

As Feng explains: 'In order to fully understand gender dynamics in tourism, it is important to contextualize such analysis with the particular historical and sociocultural factors in a given locality and against the backdrop of the global economic trend' (Feng, 2013, p. 11). Hazel Tucker's Chapter 11 brings into view a longitudinal, generational focus on women in tourism contexts, exploring Turkish doll-makers' desires to break free from producing souvenirs. Meanwhile, Jeffrey's Chapter 9 explores how colonial history, religion and politics have shaped Tunisian women's identity and equality, with consequences for tourism employment.

3 Local conceptions

Only two studies, Knight and Cottrell (2016) and Panta and Thapa (2018), have explored empowerment from the participants' perspectives. While total equality and equal power may be the end goal, the journey is long and we need to understand where the priorities for local women lie. Barnett and Cole (2017) uncovered how in Tanzania women put freedom from gender-based violence above economic empowerment, equality in the domestic sphere or leadership in their considerations of empowerment. In Chapter 7 Muldoon used a PhotoVoice

methodology to explore the complexity of women's involvement in tourism. The female township residents in South Africa found themselves at once empowered as community entrepreneurs, the passive recipients of tourists' support, and advocates in disrupting tourists' conceptions of African women as victims. In Chapter 8 the meaning of empowerment that the Nepali women attach to their emancipatory journeys is that of being answerable to and for themselves, for their own destiny and in charge of their own purpose in life.

4 Barriers and facilitators

While patriarchal norms lie at the base of women's struggle for agency, autonomy and authority, when it comes to the steps to use tourism as a tool for empowerment there are a number of specific hurdles to overcome. Many of these barriers are well known, such as the lack of information – about tourism (Cole, 2006), business development (Panta and Thapa, 2018) and about women's rights. The lack of start-up capital (Moswete and Lacey, 2015), centralized control (Cole, 2006; Moswete and Lacey, 2015) and lack of land ownership/land rights (Ramos and Prideaux, 2014; Moreno, 2017; Moreno and Tovar, 2015) are important constraints.

We also know that NGOs and local organizations have been critical in kickstarting women's empowerment, providing training, and forums to socialize and develop self-confidence. Policy and strategies at global and national levels can act to either facilitate or not women's empowerment through tourism. As Moreno Alarcón (Chapter 3) discusses, the development of a tourism action plan on gender and tourism needs to be done from a feminist perspective. A strategy and mindset to mainstream a gender perspective and, as a consequence, to reduce gender inequalities is required rather than investing in women's projects per se. Giota's story (p. 12) from Greece, and Vizcaino Suárez's chapter from Mexico (Chapter 5) both underline the cultural and institutional barriers to women's empowerment through tourism. Certainly, 'Women need to be more meaningfully involved in the formulation, implementation and review of tourism policy'

(Moswete and Lacey, 2015, p. 615). However, many women not only overcome the lack of support mechanisms, but, despite their poverty, support their communities and empower other women themselves, as the Nepali women in Chapter 8 demonstrate. One of the greatest barriers is the 'shadow of sexual assault' as discussed by Martínez Caparrós, in Chapter 6. Changing the patriarchal norms that blame women for the violation of women's safety and force women to take responsibility not to put themselves in danger is critical to achieving gender equality.

5 Empowerment is a slow process

Empowerment is not a static phenomenon, it is a dynamic process that requires gradual, multiple and often seemingly contradictory processes of negotiation (Tucker and Boonabaana, 2012). In many cases, the journey is not direct but requires small iterative steps. It requires shifts in culture of gender norms, roles and existing inequalities. Tourism creates spaces for negotiating power, as Vizcaino Suárez discusses in Chapter 5, subtle negotiations have taken place to redefine work, gender and identity for individuals, but changes at the community level have occurred at a much slower pace. As Díaz-Carrión shows in Chapter 10 entrepreneurship in tourism can build social capital through increased financial security, improved networks, increased self-confidence and overcoming social isolation, but it is not a linear process. Cultural change doesn't happen overnight but, given that there have been over 20 years of gender and tourism studies highlighting the issues, many could ask why, for many women, there has been so little change.

6 Women outside tourism

Nearly all the studies about gender equality and women's empowerment explore the experiences of the women involved in tourism but this is necessarily only a subsection of the community and we know tourism can affect women in the same destination variously (Swain, 1995). Studies have largely

neglected those not involved in tourism. Cole's (2017) study shows how while tourism in Labuan Bajo, Indonesia, may empower a tiny minority of women and improve their gender relations in private, the consequences of tourism development are challenging the human rights of the majority. The study explores how the intersectionality with other factors including ethnicity, socio-economic status and life stage had important bearings on women's experiences of tourism. As Knight and Cottrell (2016) found, the empowerment of some led to a loss of dignity, freedom and well-being of others. Movono and Dahles (2017) refer to the 'consequences of empowerment' and point out that the empowerment of women has led to wider effects, including more drinking by the men. Tran and Walter (2014) had similar findings. As Moreno Alarcón discusses in Chapter 3, the focus of gender equality needs to go beyond the women who work in tourism. Only then can tourism be an ally – theoretically and practically – to help end gender inequality and the disempowerment of women.

7 In relation to men

If women's empowerment is about gender equality, it is necessarily relational to men. However, as Feng (2013) discusses, changed gender norms or flexibility in the gendered division of labour, improved roles or changed status need to be situated in the interactive relations between men and women. Women can appear more autonomous when compared to themselves previously through having cash income from tourism, but she points out that women undertook 'men's work', but men did not engage in 'women's work', and that the role of sacrifice for 'ideal households' fell on women rather than on men. In several chapters, the problem of the double burden is

emphasized. As discussed in Chapter 5, in Metepec, Mexico, the burden of care and domestic work still falls on women, despite their tourism employment (Vizcaino Suárez). As discussed by Martínez Caparrós in Chapter 6, self-confident Ladakhi women, who are proud of their ability to overcome gender norms in the public sphere, do not challenge deeply institutionalized roles of cooking and childcare, and undertake this on top of their tourism work. While changes in social reproduction as a result of tourism have been discussed in the literature (Ferguson, 2010), for the majority of women it seems that the gender stereotypes are stubborn, change is slow, subtle and being constantly negotiated.

Absent from this book are the male stories. While acknowledging a fuller understanding of masculinities is required, and that gender equality is about changing men's roles as well as women's, there has not been the space to include their perspective here. The chapters and stories that make up this book explore women's stories of empowerment beyond the hijacked neoliberal conceptualizations of economic improvement, to highlight the structural inequalities that prevent true gender equality. Institutional patriarchy within international as well as national government and local structures provides policy barriers that women struggle against. The artificial divide between paid productive labour and unpaid reproductive labour and the lack of value given to care work are recurrent themes and significant obstacles to achieving gender equality. The collection points to the slow and small changes that women are making and how women are using the transformations tourism brings to their advantage. This book is a collection of stories of how women, despite prejudice and stereotypes, are gaining agency and autonomy by using tourism to shift gender relations.

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