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Chambers, Donna; Munar, Ana Maria; Khoo-Lattimore, Catheryn; Biran, Avital

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Donna Chambers, Ana Maria Munar, Catheryn Khoo-Lattimore, and Avital Biran

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This article is part of the special issue “Gender and the Tourism Academy” edited by Ana María Munar, Donna Chambers, Catheryn Khoo-Lattimore and Avital Biran and published in “Anatolia”.

Interrogating gender and the tourism academy through epistemological lens

Donna Chambers, University of Sunderland, UK

Ana María Munar, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark

Catheryn Khoo-Lattimore, Griffith University, Australia

Avital Biran, University of Bournemouth, UK

Abstract

This introductory essay argues for the adoption of feminist epistemologies to unpack the role, nature and effects of gender (in) equality in our tourism academy. Our focus on tourism academia recognizes the importance of tourism to social life and the crucial role that tourism academics play in knowledge production. We therefore argue for a shift in the focus of extant gender research in tourism away from tourism as a phenomenon to ourselves as tourism academics. We provide an overview of the five papers in this special issue which explore the gendered nature of our academy in diverse contexts, ending with a call for greater self-reflexivity to achieve a more just and equitable tourism academy, thus benefitting both women and men.

Keywords: tourism academy; self-reflexivity; feminism; feminist epistemologies.

Visionary feminism is a wise and loving politics. It is rooted in the love of male and female being, refusing to privilege one over the other. The soul of feminist politics is the commitment to ending patriarchal domination of women and men, girls and boys. Love cannot exist in any relationship that is based on domination and coercion. Males cannot love themselves in patriarchal culture if their very self- definition relies on submission to patriarchal rules...A genuine feminist politics always brings us from bondage to freedom, from lovelessness to loving (bell hooks, 2004, 123-124).

Setting the stage

This powerful and insightful quote from bell hooks¹, one of the most celebrated feminist writers and theorists is fundamental to the ethos which has inspired this special issue of

¹ Black American scholar Gloria Jean Watkins assumed the pseudonym bell hooks which was the name of her great-grandmother. Her name is normally written in lower case letters in all her publications as a political

Anatolia on gender and the tourism academy. In this quote, hooks articulates an ethics of love which she believed to be crucial to the discourse and praxis of feminism. Indeed, it was hooks who claimed in one of her seminal texts, first published at the turn of the 21st century, that “feminism is for everybody” (hooks, [2000] 2015). We go further to say that feminism is for everybody who believes in the power of love (expressed both as an emotion and as activism) to free societies from hegemonizing patriarchal epistemologies, institutional structures and policies which have proven detrimental to both women and men. Following hooks, and with feminist theorizing often being fundamental to the general field of “gender studies” (Aitchison, 2005; Hall, Swain & Kinnaird, 2003), this special issue draws significant insights from feminist epistemologies in seeking to interrogate gender (in)equality in tourism academia. Our focus on tourism academia recognizes the central role of tourism to socio-cultural and economic life in many countries across the globe, and the continued underrepresentation of women in positions of leadership in this sector (Munar et al, 2015). To date there is a dearth of scholarly literature which seeks to unpack gender (in)equality in the tourism academy although such explorations have long been conducted in other disciplines and fields of study (Pritchard & Morgan, 2017).

In 2017, Elsevier published a report on gender in the global research landscape which used bibliometric analyses and methodologies (drawn from the Scopus abstract and citation database) to compare gender research in 27 subject areas, across 12 countries and regions over the two decades between 1996-2015. Over 62 million documents across the physical, health, life and social sciences were analysed. Several findings emerged from this study including that gender research is growing both in terms of size and in terms of complexity and more papers are being published on topics such as feminism, gender stereotyping and gender classification and identification. Interestingly, an observation from this study is the relatively fast pace of growth of gender research which has outstripped the rate of growth of scholarly literature as a whole over the same time period. In keeping with this increase, the last decade has seen a rise also in research studies that specifically address the question of gender and representation in science and in higher education (Bornmann, Mutz, & Daniel, 2007; European Commission, 2014; Morley, 2013; Strid & Husu, 2013; UNESCO, 2012; van den Brink & Benschop, 2012; Watson & Hjorth, 2015). We posit that this growth in gender research including research about the gendered nature of higher education points to the persistence of patriarchy within our societies despite what has appeared to be progress towards gender equality (though this progress has certainly been uneven across the globe).

Indeed, we can point to several global, national and institutional policies and initiatives which have been introduced to address gender (in)equality. Notable amongst the international initiatives are the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG) which contained eight goals that signatories committed to achieving by 2015. The third MDG was the requirement to “promote gender equality and empower women” (United Nations, 2015). However, The UN, recognizing that the initial MDG goals had not been fully achieved by the stated deadline of 2015, adopted wider goals, known as Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) which this time included 17 goals. In this case, the fifth SDG specifically requested that member countries achieve gender equality and empower women by 2030. In 2014, the UN entity for gender equality and the empowerment of women (UN Women) launched its HeforShe campaign for gender equality. This sought to engage men and boys so that they could also become change agents for the achievement of gender equality, recognizing that

statement as she argues that she does not want her readers to focus on her, but rather on her writings (see Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2007; CBS News, 1999).

gender equality was not just about women. Yet, despite all this research and initiatives, today we still have a situation where no country in the world has managed to fully close the gender gap in health, education, employment or politics (World Economic Forum, 2016). The Global Gender Gap Report (World Economic Forum 2015) states that the annual pay for women only equals the amount men were earning ten years ago and that “while more women than men are enrolling at university in 97 countries, women make up the majority of skilled workers in only 68 countries and the majority of leaders in only four”.

Gender and higher education

In academia, it has been demonstrated that despite rapid changes, gender equality patterns in most higher education institutions remain largely unchanged. A look throughout the studies and statistical reports available indicate that there is an under-representation of women as knowledge leaders in the global academy and that this significant under-representation persists over time and across leadership categories regardless of cultural settings (Husu, 2013). Also, several studies that provide a longitudinal analysis and examine data by age groups reject the hypothesis of a spontaneous movement towards equality (European Commission, 2014). Academic workplace cultures and networks continue to show strong gendered patterns. UNESCO data reported that in 2015 only 28% of researchers worldwide were women (Elsevier, 2017). This is despite the fact that women increasingly equal, or in some countries, outnumber men, in achieving university degrees. Indeed, Cohen and Duberley (2017) in a study which looked at gender equality in research intensive universities in the UK and in Europe, argue that “anyone who sincerely believes that academia is a meritocracy must be either deluded or in denial”. A similar indictment of academia was articulated a couple of decades earlier by Morley & Walsh (1996) who drew on Barnett’s earlier work (1993) to argue that there is a ‘central irony’ in our universities in that:

while higher education claims to be in the business of promoting understanding, critical reflection and reflexive social inquiry, it often lacks an understanding and a critique of itself [...] Currently higher education functions as a structure for reproducing power relations, rather than challenging them (Morley & Walsh, 1996, p.4).

Much of the literature on gender and higher education exists predominantly in Western countries, namely the UK, USA, Northern Europe, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Although some of this literature may be published in languages other than English, there seems to be a lack of publications on this issue in other parts of the world for example in Africa and Asia (Morley, 2005). An exception is work by Amina Mama who examined the gender politics of higher education in Africa and argued that a major colonial legacy for many African countries was that very few women were left with qualifications or sufficient social capital to enter either the formal economy or the universities. She noted that in the African context, “the dominant discourse centred around the production of *manpower*, first for colonial service, and then for the independent African states” (Mama, 2003, p. 106). The majority of Africa’s universities were established post-independence and were therefore central to modernizing projects and the development of national identities. Yet while many women have traditionally welcomed university education and have gained higher education qualifications, the situation with regard to their employment as leaders in the academy is woeful. Not unlike the situation in the West, the majority of women who are employed in higher education institutions are not academics and researchers, but administrative and support service staff. Mama argues that while the situation is not equivalent across the entire

African continent, and while there are difficulties in obtaining reliable and comparable data, it is generally clear that “gender inequalities remain pronounced in African universities [...]the African continent is still faced with some of the world’s worst HE capacity deficits” (Mama, 2003, p. 115). It would appear that gender inequality in higher education is an intractable problem that afflicts all countries across the globe albeit to a lesser or greater extent.

In tourism, we note that the topic of gender and specifically women in tourism has received significant attention (see an excellent overview of tourism research on this issue in a recent article by Figueroa-Domecq, et al, 2015). Undoubtedly, there have also been several edited collections on this topic (see for example Chambers & Rakic, forthcoming; Khoo-Lattimore & Wilson, 2017; Pritchard, Morgan, Ateljevic & Harris, 2007; Swain, 1995; Swain & Momsen, 2002). Further, different international academic initiatives provide collaborative platforms to understand and advance gender equality including Equality in Tourism, GenTour, Tourism Education Futures Initiative (TEFI) and Women Academics in Tourism (WAIiT). The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Tourism Working Group recently reported the underrepresentation of women in management in the tourism industry and considered the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Gender Equality Seal (GES) Certification Programme as a mechanism to increase gender equality in the APEC region (Garofano et al, 2017). The statistical report “The Gender Gap in the Tourism Academy” (Munar et al., 2015) demonstrates that women are under-represented in many leadership and gatekeeping positions, and that there is an imbalance in the number and influence of women in comparison to men. This report by Munar et al represents the first such attempt to provide a quantitative mapping of the landscape of gender (in)equality in the international tourism academy using several leadership indicators. The report also alluded to some of the causes for this imbalance as being similar to those propounded in other studies and which coalesce around a somewhat simplistic binary divide between structure (for example institutional and societal biases and discrimination against women – the concepts of “glass ceilings” and “stone floors” are pertinent here) and agency (for example arguments that broadly suggest that it is women who “opt out” or who do not “lean in” – the concept of ‘leaky pipeline’ is pertinent here). However, while alluding to these issues, the report was primarily intended as a mapping exercise and did not therefore delve more deeply into the complex causes of this situation of gender (in)equality in the tourism academy nor did it offer potential interventions.

A subsequent publication by Pritchard & Morgan (2017) also analysed gender and performance in tourism academia and similarly found gender inequality in terms of the editorial boards of 12 leading tourism journals, the tourism professoriate in three countries (UK, Australia and New Zealand) and citation metrics for tourism scholars. This article by Pritchard & Morgan went further than Munar et al’s (2015) report in so far as they devised what they termed a ‘manifesto for action’ for ‘undoing gender’ which included nine initiatives aimed at achieving greater gender equality in the tourism academy by 2021. It might however be suggested here that there have been several similar statements of “policy” ideals by academic institutions and organizations, which we argue here treat with the symptoms of the problem but fail to be effective tools to transform in any significant way gender power relations within our tourism academy. We suggest that such manifestos, while important, still do not address the “institutionalization of hegemonic masculinities in genderized assumptions about for example, merit” (Heward, 1996, p. 16). There is a danger that the ‘statement culture’ of our universities are used as rhetorical exercises, which in the best of cases may help to create awareness and in the worst provide academic leaders with an

appearance of legitimacy and an ethical high ground while allowing gender inequality to continue. They do not treat with how we can disrupt “neo-liberal values of individualism and performativity that dominate senior management cultures” (Grummel, Devine & Lynch, 2009, p. 193) and which disadvantage women. Indeed, much earlier Currie & Kazi (1987, p. 88) had argued that “merely adding women to the academy will not radicalize knowledge as power relations extend beyond the power of men over women.”

Feminist approaches, paradoxes and positionality

The question for this special issue is to understand how gender matters in tourism academia and to examine if the situation reflects the gendered nature of other disciplines and fields of study in higher education. However, we aim to undertake a more reflexive exercise in this special issue - on the one hand we want to move the focus of research from the phenomenon of “tourism” (e.g. the study of women travelers, women entrepreneurs, etc.) towards ourselves - the tourism academy. In other words, we seek to make a contribution to the research agenda on gender in tourism academia. On the other hand, we also wish to do so through the lens of feminist epistemologies as we believe that there are important insights that can be gained from this approach in terms of breaking the stranglehold of hegemonic masculinities within our tourism academy.

Yet we recognize that as feminism also constitutes a system of knowledge and as Morley (1996) suggests, all assertions about knowledge necessarily construct and legitimize domination and power, there are important questions about how feminism can simultaneously claim to deconstruct patriarchy without also reproducing unjust power relations. Further, Fine (1994) expresses some disquiet about “how best to unleash ourselves from our central contradiction – being researchers and being active feminists” (cited in Morley, 1996, p. 128). Indeed, this is a question that is perhaps pertinent for all critical research and scholarship which have emancipatory objectives. Critical scholars believe that research should be transformative although sometimes it begs the question of who or what is to be transformed (Tierney, 1994). We argue here that there is no “best” way to address this contradiction. We challenge the idea that to have political and ideological grounding is opposed to “being” a researcher (i.e. the normative ontology of what a researcher is supposed to be like). In this way, we rely also on an extensive philosophical tradition where researchers are not seen as being neutral agents who can literally mirror social reality, but as situated individuals and engaged citizens who use their critical reflexivity to make sense of the world.

Therefore, rather than claiming a false “objectivity”, what is important is that those of us who embrace feminism need to be highly self-reflexive about our own positionality. Dubois (1983) created the concept of “passionate scholarship” to capture the highly political underpinnings of feminist research which destabilize the traditional academic premise of research as objective and disembodied. Indeed, Haraway (1991) described these traditional (positivist) perspectives as a “God-trick” as they purported to see everything from nowhere. According to Haraway (1988), ways in which feminist research can seek to address this contradiction is first to ensure that the research is accountable both to the research participants and to feminism itself in the broadest sense. We need to ask whether as feminist tourism researchers we are re-inscribing the research participants (in this case the tourism academy and ourselves as members of this academy) with the same powerlessness that we seek to disrupt. Second, we need to ask ourselves whether we have discussed the micropolitics of the research relationship with our research participants and third, we need to ask ourselves how our study engages with questions of difference within the tourism academy. It appears to us that in the extant (limited) research which seeks to explore gender

(in)equality in the tourism academy there is scarcely any engagement with this kind of feminist scholarship despite this being a key theoretical underpinning of gender research in the wider academy.

Hoskin, Jenson & Blair (2017) describe what is known as the “feminist paradox”. That is, while many persons subscribe to a critical, anti-oppressive political approach to gender, many are hesitant to explicitly adopt a feminist self-identity. They argue that this might be due to an historic fear of using the ‘F’ word due to associated negative connotations and stigmatization of feminists as ‘communists’ and as ‘radical’ and the feminist subject herself as being an “unattractive, humourless, man hating, militant lesbian zealot” (2017, p.4.). But they argue that the situation is changing and this might perhaps be partly due to the adoption of feminist identities by celebrities such as Emma Watson, Beyonce, John Legend, Mark Ruffalo, current Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and former US President Barak Obama. This endorsement of feminism by celebrities has arguably contributed to the “mainstreaming of feminism” (Zeisler, 2016). But Hoskins et al (2017) caution that any such mainstreaming of feminism might lead to the movement becoming:

complicit with the very structures the movement seeks to disengage. Consequently, the gods of feminism have been oversimplified and whitewashed in an attempt to make feminism more palatable for the general public’s consumption. Mainstream representations of “what a feminist looks like” do not have to talk about the importance and uncomfortable intersections of oppression because they continue to benefit from a privilege-based white heteropatriarchal society’ (Hoskin et al, 2017, p. 13).

Clearly, embracing a feminist identity and feminist epistemologies is riddled with intellectual and political challenges, as for example is manifested in the concept of intersectionality which has forced the feminist movement to reconsider the meaning of the “sisterhood” (see for example Collins, 1990, Crenshaw, 1989). In this special issue of *Anatolia*, we therefore recognize that adopting feminist epistemologies involves a high degree of self-reflexivity if we are to use this as an organizing framework for achieving gender equality in our tourism academy. The dearth of feminist theorizing in tourism gender research specifically that which focuses our attention on *ourselves* as tourism academics, is perhaps testimony to these problematics. It is taking this reasoning into consideration that we believe it important to situate ourselves as editors, yet recognizing the inherent risk in any form of categorization (which includes for example sexuality, age, gender, and ethnicity) that lessens the complexity of each human being into narrow reductionist stereotypes. There is no space here to include intricate accounts of our situatedness but we do provide some brief notes on who we are and how our gendered identities are entangled with other social categorizations and constructs:

Ana María Munar: I am Spanish but have lived in Denmark for so many years that my national identity is messy and hybrid; I am an emigrant and speak three languages on a daily basis (Spanish, English, Danish) and Catalan (my other mother tongue) when I am in my beloved Mallorca. I was raised in a Catholic family, and am a critical Christian with a love for many other forms of human spirituality, philosophy and art. I am white and Caucasian, European, but also Latin and Mediterranean; middle aged, married, mother of three children, heterosexual; with no personal disability although I have lived with disability in my closest family. I am middle class and the first woman in my family to obtain higher education and to pursue an academic career.

Donna Chambers: I am a black Caribbean woman of African descent and have lived in various parts of the United Kingdom for the last 17 years. I am a native speaker of Jamaican *patois* and English (both outcomes of Jamaica's history of British colonialism) and have a working knowledge of Spanish. As a black woman in the UK, I am part of a recognized minority group and have always been conscious of, and affected by, the double oppressions occasioned by my "race" and by my gender. I am divorced and I do not have any biological children, the latter by circumstance rather than necessarily by choice. However, I do not see this as a 'lack' as the nomenclature 'childless' would suggest. I have consequently been fascinated by gendered constructions of femininity which I believe to be very much associated with white femininity and with motherhood.

Catheryn Khoo-Lattimore: I am a Malaysian Chinese who speaks English, Malay, Hokkien, Cantonese and a little bit of Mandarin. I always loved Malay and English literatures and as a student, did well in these subjects but was absolutely hopeless in Chinese. As a result, I cannot even read or write Chinese. I am married to a white New Zealander and none of my three children speaks any Chinese or Malay. I do not have a religion but believe in the good of humankind. My own father was a quadriplegic for fourteen years and I have lived through the hell of this as a middle-class family in Malaysia, where open discrimination is practiced and welfare for the sick and disabled is non-existent. I am an emigrant first in New Zealand, and then in Australia and have from time to time, reflected on the difficulty of 'being seen' in the Western world.

Avital Biran: I am an Israeli who has lived in the Netherlands and in the UK for a total of about 13 years. I speak Hebrew, English and a rusty Dutch. I am the mixed offspring of a father of Ukrainian and Latvian origin and a mother of Iraqi descent - of those who dreamed of building the state of Israel and those missing their homeland. As a matter of principle, my grandparents never spoke to their children (my parents) in any other language than Hebrew. As a matter of principle, I raise my daughter as multilingual with Hebrew, French (from her father's side) and English. I am an atheist and I am Jewish, particularly on Holocaust memorial days. On these days, I am like every other discriminated and persecuted minority. Becoming a parent recently allowed me to reflect on the difficulties experienced by women, men and children within the gendered framework of modern Western society,

It is evident from these short autobiographical notes that while there are many differences between us, there are also many similarities including that we are all women tourism academics, we are all immigrants and we all share a love for humankind which is the key inspiration for the production of this special issue. Importantly, we are all feminists and this special issue represents an attempt to apply feminist epistemological lens to understanding gender in our tourism academy.

About the papers

The first paper in this special issue by Ana Maria Munar titled "To be a feminist in (tourism) academia" seeks to partially address the previously mentioned lacuna in gender research in and of the tourism academy. In her contribution, Munar explores the meaning of feminism within tourism academia. Using the novel method of vignette as an autoethnographic tool, she creates three fictional female characters to elucidate three different feminist identities

which correspond to the three main ‘waves’ of feminism – liberal, radical/socialist and postmodern. Munar’s contribution is highly reflexive as she grapples with her own feminist identity within the context of these three vignettes, charting her own epistemological and ethical journey through what it means to be a feminist in the tourism academy. The purpose of this reflexive account is both personal and political – it is personal as Munar seeks to understand her own ‘feminist credentials’ which might allow her to live ‘better’ with herself and with others in the world. It is political as the feminist identity she embraces is inextricably related to the type of activism that she is involved in. Munar concludes by recognizing the difficulties inherent in defining feminism and in determining her own ‘brand’ of feminism which she declares to be a mixture of the three (the liberal, the radical and the postmodern). Crucially, Munar contends that tourism academia needs to adopt feminist scholarship in order to address gender (in)equality in the academy and important initiatives in this regard include consciousness raising about our implicit gender biases, self-reflexivity and the actual implementation of emancipatory policies.

The second paper by Heather Jeffrey also adopts an explicit feminist perspective as she narrates the way in which she has sought to “gender” the tourism curriculum as a young, pre-career tourism academic. Jeffrey argues in her paper that a ‘feminist project is needed to transform the way women and men are conceived of within the tourism industry’ (Jeffrey, this volume). Like Munar, Jeffrey is highly self-reflexive but uses a different method known as meditative thinking or meditation as a tool, not so much for enhanced self-awareness but for transformative practice in the “gendering of the tourism curriculum from a feminist perspective” (Jeffrey, this volume). Using this novel meditative approach, Jeffrey thus seeks to link gender research and tourism education, two issues which have been scarcely combined in tourism studies. Indeed, Jeffrey perceives the teaching of gender to tourism students as an important way of promoting gender equality and female empowerment in tourism. But she recognizes that there are several barriers to gendering the tourism curriculum which include the proliferation of casual contracts which leads to an atmosphere of fear amongst those employed on these contracts to introduce new materials; the strength of “post feminism” in which it is believed that gender inequality is no longer an issue; the diversity of students and the need for caution in seeking to impose Western feminist viewpoints for example to students from non-Western contexts; and the managerialism of higher education which sees students as “consumers” with a concomitant focus on student evaluations as a key performance indicator. Jeffrey discusses two methods which she used to gender the tourism curriculum – gender mainstreaming and gender specializing. The former infuses gender throughout a module even where the subjects discussed might seem unrelated to gender while the latter refers to developing distinctive gender related modules or the inclusion of specific sessions on gender within a module. Through reflecting on her own experience of using both in her teaching, Jeffrey concludes that gender specializing worked better within the context of her teaching albeit that both might be required for the transformation of the tourism curriculum towards more gender awareness.

The third paper by Richard Ek and Mia Larson shifts the focus from women in our tourism academy to what they describe as the “alpha male”. Through their focus on the male subject, they implicitly but cogently remind us of the fact that gender is not exclusively about women but is about the relationship between men and women. Explorations of masculinity (through in this case the prism of the “alpha male”) are therefore important to understandings of gender (in)equality. Yet, apart from a few studies in tourism which focus on masculinities (see for example Lim & Mura, 2016; Rawat & Khoo-Lattimore, 2016; Thurnell Read and Casey, 2014) there is scarcely any discussion of this issue within the context of the gendered

tourism academy. This paper by Ek and Larson shines the spotlight on the ‘alpha male’ within the tourism academy and how his career achievements are described, characterized and represented in individual celebratory portraits found in journals, notably *Anatolia*, in the period between 2013-2016. The paper is theoretically and philosophically informed by Stephen Peppers’ conceptualization of four root metaphors and world hypothesis, reflecting an understanding of the power of language to our understanding of the nature of reality (ontology) and how we might come to know the “real” (epistemology).

Ek and Larson use a mixed methods approach (quantitative methods to map the gender distributions and affiliations of the portraits, qualitative methods to perform close readings of each portrait) to reveal a number of key findings. First, through the quantitative analysis they show that the majority of these celebratory portraits are not only of male tourism academics but predominantly males of Euro/Anglo centric origin. Second, the vast majority of the celebratory portraits are written by men. Women and men from non-Western countries are therefore vastly underrepresented both in terms of portraits and as authors of portraits. Third, through the qualitative analysis they elucidate how each of the four root metaphors is related to the representation of these alpha male tourism scholars and they find strong parallels particularly with three of these– the root metaphor of formism where the alpha male is portrayed as an “extraordinary pioneer”; the root metaphor of organicism which represents the alpha male as a “guiding mentor”; and the root metaphor of mechanism, which characterizes the alpha male as a “key conductor” who is responsible for initiating innovative tourism research. Ek and Larson argue that these representations are only partial and do not reflect the way in which the success of academic careers are dependent on a system of networks. Celebratory articles on individual academics frequently function to elide the political realities of these networks that often exclude intersectional categorizations based on gender, class and ethnicity.

A key conclusion made by Ek and Larson is that “even though these celebratory texts may signal a feeling of familiarity with slight nostalgic aura, the consequences are the production of a sanitised story about the tourism academy tribe that does not convey any of the processes leading to the gender gap in the tourism academy”. Rather, they suggest, these celebratory representations of the alpha male serve to reinforce this gender gap. Feminist scholars such as Grummel, Devine & Lynch (2009) have demonstrated how the new managerialism which is increasingly at the heart of higher education builds on the “long history of gendered liberal political thinking that underestimates the role of dependency and interdependency in human relations” (2009, p.195). The alpha male who is represented in these celebratory pieces in *Anatolia* therefore serves to reinforce gendered understandings of academic achievement which often bracket out the role of “informal care and love relations” (Grummel, Devine & Lynch, 2009, p. 196) that make significant contributions to these achievements but which do not fit within the context of heteronormative representations of (tourism) academic success.

We previously mentioned that there is an increasing literature which seeks to examine gender in tourism and specifically in tourism academia but many of the latter focus on developed countries in the West. There is a paucity of research which examines the situation of gender (in)equality in (tourism) academia in developing countries and in non-Western contexts. The following two papers in this volume seek to address this elision. The first paper takes us to China where Honggang Xu, Tian Ye and Ke Wang explore women’s awareness of gender issues in Chinese tourism academia. Awareness of gender imbalances and inequalities occasioned by sexism has been deemed as “gender consciousness” and bell hooks has claimed that “as all advocates of feminist politics know, most people do not

understand sexism or if they do they think it is not a problem” (2015, p. 1). Further, it has been suggested that many Asian women, despite being university educated, continue to “internalise negative gender norms and passively accept oppressive social practices” (Morley, 2005, p. 213). This appears to be the case in this study by Xu, Ye and Wang on women’s awareness of gender issues in Chinese tourism academia. They indicate that in China there are more female academics than males and, similar to other countries in the world, the presence of women in senior management and senior academic positions is significantly less than men. The situation in tourism academia in China is unknown but it would be safe to say that this will no doubt reflect the situation in wider higher education. In this paper Xu, Ye and Wang trace the evolution of gender relationships in China from the beginning of the 20th century and into the 21st century demonstrating how these were very much linked to the political and economic evolution of China.

They suggest that women played a passive role in women’s movements which were mostly led by men in line with anti-imperialist, anti-colonial and wider socialist debates, and later on, marketization narratives. Using qualitative interviews with 30 “young” female academics including doctoral students (the women were all under the age of 43 years), they found that these women had low, medium or high gender consciousness. However, overall there was a “relatively low [gender]awareness due to the influence of social norms and cultural values” (Xu, Ye and Wang, this volume). Indeed, cultural influences such as Confucian ethics (which sees women’s key role as existing within the private or domestic sphere as “virtuous wives” and “good mothers” with that of men being in the public sphere) were found to still have a strong influence on these women’s gender consciousness. This lack of gender awareness existed despite the high levels of education of these women and points to the strong role of culture in perpetuating gender (in)equality. While this paper does not explicitly mention the adoption of a feminist epistemology, the nature and purpose of the study and its conclusions are consistent with feminism. Specifically, they claim that their research “can bring visibility to, and raise social concerns on wider gender imbalances as well as help women better understand their situations through self-reflection” (Xu, Ye and Wang, this volume).

The final research paper in this volume is by Johanna Basurto-Barcia and Carla Ricaurte-Quijano who undertake an explicitly “gender aware” analysis of gender (in)equalities in university teaching and research in Guayaquil and surrounding areas in Ecuador, thus adding to the dearth of knowledge about women in tourism academia in developing country contexts. Similar to Ek and Larson’s paper in this volume, they used mixed methods -quantitative methods to map the gender balance of teaching, research and leadership positions in tourism academia and qualitative research with nine female lecturers across four higher education institutions in the region in order to ascertain these women’s access to academic jobs and leadership positions, sexism and discrimination, gender stereotypes and career progression from the point of view of the women themselves. The results of the quantitative study are that while more women than men are employed in teaching and research positions, the number of women employed is far below the number of female tourism students. This finding appears to add credence to the “leaky pipeline” argument in feminist literature. What is interesting from this study though is that the women interviewed did not, on the whole, perceive that there were any structural barriers to their employment in research and teaching as they felt that academia was a meritocracy. On the contrary, the women interviewed felt that any barriers resulted from individual agency – for example mothers and wives sacrificing their careers in favor of harmony between their personal and professional lives. This finding contributes to a line of gender research which documents the impact of love and family relationships and responsibilities in women’s career

ambitions and choices (Bursztyn, Fujiwara, & Pallais, 2017; Wolfinger, Mason, & Goulden, 2009).

While research participants expressed ignorance of discrimination in the workplace however, the researchers were able to discern discrimination in examples that were provided by the women about workplace practices which seemed to point to low gender awareness similar to the finding in the previous paper by Xu, Ye and Wang. Indeed, Basurto-Barcia and Ricaurte-Quijano suggest that ‘discrimination is subtle and gender stereotypes are deeply ingrained’ such that “participants are either unaware of them or prefer not to complain’ as complaining might place these women in an uncomfortable situation. The findings also revealed that there is a deeply held social perception that tourism is a career for women as it is an ‘easier option’.” This latter finding points to what is known as occupational sex segregation which it is argued has “declined surprisingly little” (Bradley, 2000) over the last few decades. Occupational sex segregation is a result of sex segregation in choices between men and women when it comes to university degree options with women more likely to graduate with degrees from the social sciences, humanities, arts, education and law and men more likely to graduate with degrees from natural sciences, mathematics and engineering. A number of studies have looked into the complex relationship between gender, prestige and pay (Levanon, Paula England and Allison, 2009). What this research shows is that the pay gap is not as simple as women selecting lower-paying jobs. Instead, certain jobs pay less because women take them. This is what researchers call the “devaluation” dominant view; as more women enter a field, pay tends to drop. There are several programs across the world that seek to improve women’s enrollment in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) (such as for example the Athena Swan program in the UK) which lead to higher paying jobs and while there has been some success achieved through these initiatives, the gender gap persists. Bradley thus concludes that “gender (as a historically specific cultural construction) operates on the chooser, the choice and the implications of choice. It is the embedded nature of these choices that transforms gender difference into gender inequality” (2000, p. 12). The situation seems to be no different in developing countries like Ecuador.

A partial conclusion...

All five contributions to this special issue have made novel contributions to tourism research which we hope will further the discussions of gender in and of our tourism academy. Research on gender and the tourism academy is important as higher education is central to the development of our societies and the underrepresentation of women in positions of authority have serious consequences for issues of “equality, social justice and participation in public life” (Morley and Walsh, 1996, p4). However, the continued marketization of higher education and the concomitant emphasis on managerialism, regulation and measurement (using key performance indicators) results in the standardization or more cogently, the *normalization* of patriarchal notions of what success looks like in our tourism academy. Feminist theorizing enables us to seek to challenge these patriarchal notions of success which have traditionally, and continue to disadvantage women, in our tourism academy.

Additionally, it allows us to recognize that change is not just about adding women to key leadership positions in our academy (although this is extremely important), but is also about questioning and transforming the entire epistemological foundations on which academic careers are based. It is about changing the notion of what a successful tourism academic career should look like and what a successful tourism academy is. In order to do

this, we in tourism need to operate in collaboration with other disciplines and fields of study, across institutions and organizations within and outside of our local, national and regional contexts. We need to avoid operating in intellectual “tribes and territories” (Becher, 1989), as acting in isolation will lead to the continued failure of initiatives to disrupt hegemonic hetero-patriarchy within our tourism academy and within academia in general. Without this coalition for fundamental change, we will continue to treat with symptoms rather than cause, to paper over the cracks. We need academics to act as social entrepreneurs inside our own institutions and across the global academy, to develop and implement initiatives for change.

What we need is transformation of our tourism academy which is a huge challenge, but the cost of doing nothing or continuing with business as usual will have even more serious consequences. Admittedly, one of the key challenges we face in this emancipatory project is not to come across as evangelical, as supporting a simplistic binary of victim/rescuer, of believing that we “can access the ‘truth’ of [all] women’s experiences”. This in itself would be “reminiscent of the Enlightenment project” (Morley, 1996, p.139) which has led to gender inequality across all spheres of social life including tourism academia, and which we are actively seeking to disrupt. At the same time, the other key challenge is not to remain passive, de-politicized or to lose our capacity for collective action out of fear of being accused of victimhood or evangelization. We need to be very careful in tourism academia, to be deeply self-reflexive, so that we do not unwittingly support essentialized notions of gender where we homogenize women and men and reassert a binary divide that, according to Leathwood and Read (2009, p. 24) “rests on traditional constructions of heterosexual femininity and masculinity.” We need to do all of these while making sure that we take the necessary steps towards a more just and equal academic world. We only hope that more in the academy will join us in doing so.

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About the authors

Donna Chambers is Professor of Tourism at the University of Sunderland, UK. She is Research Lead for the Department of Tourism, Hospitality and Events and is also Chair of her Faculty Equality, Diversity and Social Responsibility Committee. She is a lay member of the Central University Research Ethics Committee at Oxford University, UK. Donna's research focuses on how we represent peoples and places primarily through cultural/heritage tourism, the link between heritage and national identity, postcolonial and decolonial epistemologies, visuality in tourism, and in critical and innovative approaches to tourism research and scholarship. She has published several peer reviewed journal articles, book chapters and edited texts which reflect these research interests. She has also delivered numerous conference presentations and keynote addresses in these areas. Donna also serves as a *Resource Editor for Annals of Tourism Research*, is a *Board member of the Leisure Studies journal* and is a regular reviewer for these and other tourism journals including *Tourism Management, Hospitality & Society* and *Tourist Studies*. She is a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy and the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG). In her personal life Donna is an active campaigner against injustice and discriminatory practices as a member of the UK Labour Party and in her formal role in the University and College Union (UCU), the largest trade union for higher and further education in the UK.

Ana María Munar is Associate Professor at Copenhagen Business School, Denmark. With research interests in digital technologies, epistemology, higher education, and gender, her latest publications focus on postdisciplinarity, social media and gender in academia. Over the years, Ana has served on several national and international boards and networks. Nowadays, she holds positions at the Diversity and Inclusion Council at Copenhagen Business School, the Critical Tourism Studies Network, Women Academics in Tourism and several tourism journals. She is engaged in curriculum and education development, and coordinates the tourism and hospitality concentration at the Bachelor of Service Management and Business Administration. Ana has delivered numerous conference presentations and keynote addresses in her research areas.

Catheryn Khoo-Lattimore is a Senior Lecturer at Griffith University, Australia. Catheryn's current research interest is on tourist and guest behaviour, with a passionate focus on women, families and young children. She is also particularly interested in understanding these segments from an Asian perspective, and how their travel experience and behaviours differ cross-culturally. As a result, Catheryn has co-published two books: *Asian Genders in Tourism and Women and Travel: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*.

Dr Avital Biran is a Senior Lecturer at Bournemouth University, UK. Her research interests revolve around issues of consumer behaviour and experience in tourism and leisure, particularly in the context of heritage and dark tourism, where she has published extensively. Her work focuses on the conceptual and empirical understanding of these notions and their inter-relationship, heritage interpretation and the role of dark sites in destination recovery. Currently, she is developing her interest in social responsibility in management, specifically

in relation to conflict reconciliation through tourism, disability and accessibility, and gender related issues in tourism consumption, supply and higher education.