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An Analysis of Gendered Employment in the Portuguese Tourism Sector

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An Analysis of Gendered Employment in the Portuguese Tourism Sector

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Tourism is crucial for the Portuguese economy. But what are the numbers behind tourism employment in Portugal? This article analyzes employment in two tourism characteristic activities, namely accommodation services and travel agencies and tour operators. A matched employer-employee data set is used. Despite having higher levels of education, women are more prevalent in low qualified jobs, while men are more likely to hold executive and management positions. Moreover, women’s pay is consistently lower. It is also concluded that the accommodation sector and the travel sector have very distinct characteristics. It is suggested that future studies analyze the sectors in a disaggregated way.

KEYWORDS gender, tourism employment, Portugal, accommodation, travel agencies
INTRODUCTION

Women’s participation in the public sphere has increased in the last decades, namely in higher education and employment (Jacobs, 1996; Marques, n. d.). Whereas economic survival is one of the reasons that lead women to enter the labor market, for many women, a job is also a means of attaining a social identity, being socially recognized for their competences, increasing their autonomy and bargaining power within a relationship, and pursuing a new lifestyle (Torres, 2009).

However, this emancipation was originally more due to women’s engagement in the production sphere than to the recognition of equal rights at work, where women continued to be regarded as a source of “reserve manpower” (Ferreira, 2007). Despite the recognition of equality between men and women before the law, at least in developed countries, several gender inequality issues remain, both in the public and in the private sphere.

Employment is one of the areas in which these gender inequalities are more visible. Women’s involvement in employment has not yet been met by corresponding changes in the global system, in the way labor is organized or in terms of a proportional participation of men in domestic duties (Dantas, 2004). A number of studies have analyzed how women are more likely to deal with higher unemployment rates, more precariousness, or lower salaries (Casaca, 2010; V. Ferreira, 2010). In contrast, they are less likely to reach higher hierarchical positions (Anker, 1998; Charles, 2003; Purcell, 1997). The labor market is segregated into male- and female-dominated areas (Campos-Soria, Marchante-Mera, & Ropero-García, 2011; Charles, 2003), which mirror men and women’s supposedly “essential” and “natural” abilities.

The tourism sector is one of the sectors that tend to have a feminized workforce. Tourism is regarded as one of the most promising economic activities in the Portuguese context, particularly in a time of social and economic crisis. But what are the conditions of the employment generated in the field? Do they reinforce or challenge gender inequalities? The purpose of this research was to analyze the conditions of employment generated in the tourism field in Portugal and the gendered patterns of employment that emerge. The tourism subsectors that will be investigated are accommodation services and travel agencies and tour operators. In order to achieve the overall goal of the study, the following specific research objectives will be explored:

1. Analyze the structure of accommodation and travel businesses and establishments;
2. Broadly characterize the workforce of these sectors, both in terms of age and nationality;
3. Examine the proportion of male and female employers in each of the sectors under analysis;
4. Investigate the security of employment contracts for women and men employed in these sectors;
5. Compare the distribution of working hours among men and women;
6. Analyze the levels of education attained by male and female workers in accommodation and travel businesses, as well as in the economy as a whole;
7. Explore gender occupational segregation in these sectors;
8. Analyze the gender pay gap.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Women, Men and the Lingering Inequalities in Employment

Women and men are recognized as equal before the law in most developed countries. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in 1948, was the first transformation towards effective equality between men and women (Rato et al., 2005b). In Portugal, it was only first recognized in the Constitution of 1976 (Rato et al., 2005a).

Despite equal rights in law, inequalities in employment remain. Women tend to have lower employment rates (Casaca, 2010; ILO, 2009) and higher unemployment rates (Eurostat, 2010; Ferreira, 2007). They are also more represented in involuntary part-time work (Casaca, 2010; Hemmati, 2000; Smith, 2009). Women are also more likely to be in precarious jobs and to earn lower salaries (Donlevy & Silvera, 2007; Ferreira, 2010; Parrett, n. d.; Sinclair, 1997).

Moreover, the labor market is segregated along gender lines. Women and men tend to be concentrated in “typically female” and “typically male” sectors, respectively. This phenomenon is referred to as horizontal segregation. While men are more likely to reach top positions, women tend to fill hierarchically lower positions, due to the “glass ceiling” effect (Anker, 1998; Charles, 2003; Guerreiro & Pereira, 2006; Gustafson, 2006; Hemmati, 2000; O’Leary & Deegan, 2005; Parrett, n. d.; Ranftl, 2006; Zhong & Couch, 2007). This is referred to as vertical segregation, and the “glass ceiling” metaphor is frequently used to refer to women’s poor representation in higher-level positions. It refers to invisible barriers that qualified individuals (e.g., women, ethnic minorities) are faced with, which hamper their progression to higher-level positions (Cotter, Hermsen, Ovadia, & Vanneman, 2001; Esteban, 2004; Zhong & Couch, 2007). In fact, even female executives are more likely than their male counterparts to hold staff positions rather than the line positions which lead to senior level positions (Catalyst, 2007; Galinsky et al., 2003).

Working in Paradise?

Critical Views on Tourism Employment and Gender

Tourism is usually considered a feminine sector. Not only does its workforce tend to be feminized in many countries (Costa, Carvalho, & Breda, 2011;
I. Carvalho et al. NDP Gender Equality Unit, 2003; Parrett, n. d.), but most of its jobs require behaviors traditionally seen as feminine, such as caring and nurturing for others. Therefore, there is an optimistic vision of tourism which regards it as a promoter of women’s participation in the labor market (Yukari & Kato, 2008). However, male-coded value systems are deeply engrained in the industry, such as overwork, visibility, or occupational achievement (Blomme, van Rheede, & Tromp, 2010). Therefore, a feminist vision of the tourism sector would refrain from effusively celebrating tourism as the “quick fix” for employment problems without a previous analysis of the working conditions of the sector (Jordan, 1997; Kinnaird & Hall, 1996; Yukari & Kato, 2008).

In some geographical areas and subsectors, tourism employment is attractive because it has a high-status working environment and offers competitive pay. However, these working conditions are not the rule (Baum, 1995, as cited in Nickson, 2007). In fact, working in a place considered a paradise by outsiders might not be as idyllic as it seems.

The tourism sector has been pointed out as an important factor for the development of many countries, such as Portugal, where tourism contributes to 15.9% of the Portuguese Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and is responsible for 18.5% of the employment created, if direct and indirect effects via the supply chain of travel and tourism spending are taken into account (WTTC, 2013). However, the employment created and its conditions should be critically analyzed.

Firstly, workers tend to have low levels of education (Purcell, 1997; Santos & Varejão, 2007). According to Yukari and Kato (2008), the restaurant and accommodation sectors are among those in which women have the lowest levels of education in the overall economy. Secondly, occupations tend to be unskilled and feminized (Nickson, 2007; Yukari & Kato, 2008). Thirdly, salaries are relatively low, particularly for unskilled workers (Nickson, 2007; Yukari & Kato, 2008). Fourthly, working in the tourism field often requires working outside “normal” working hours or implies shift work, which usually poses further problems to workers with children who have to balance their work and family lives (Costa et al., 2011; Nickson, 2007; O’Leary & Deegan, 2005; Parrett, n. d.). Moreover, employment contracts are often short term, informal, or nonexistent (Parrett, n. d.). Finally, tourism jobs are demanding but tend to have poor working conditions, and “ad-hocism” prevails (Nickson, 2007).

TOURISM EMPLOYMENT AND HORIZONTAL SEGREGATION

Several studies mention how segregated the tourism labor market is in a number of countries, such as Australia (Knox, 2008), Portugal (Costa et al., 2011; Santos & Varejão, 2007), Spain (Campos-Soria et al., 2011) and even Sweden (Wahl & Holgersson, 2003). Burrell, Manfredi, Rollin, Price, and
Stead (1997) carried out a cross-national study in order to compare women’s employment patterns in hospitality in four different countries: France, Spain, Italy, and the United Kingdom. The authors found out that employment is segregated along gender lines. While cleaning and reception in hotels are female-dominated jobs, bar jobs are mostly performed by men, except in Italy, where they are more gender-mixed. There is not a clear pattern among countries concerning the distribution of women and men in the kitchen, but men are more likely to be cooking while women do the cleaning or washing up. Men prevail in management and supervision in all the countries under analysis except the United Kingdom, which could be a result of women’s prevalence in hospitality management degrees.

Campos-Soria et al. (2011) analyzed patterns of occupational segregation by gender in the hospitality industry in Andalusia, Spain. They found out that women prevail in cleaning and customer service jobs, as well as in jobs with less responsibility in the area of administration, while men prevail in maintenance and high-responsibility jobs, namely in administration and the kitchen. Occupational segregation is more common among older workers and in bigger establishments, as well as among part-time and seasonal workers. In contrast, occupational segregation decreases with the level of education and among workers with training contracts. The authors also concluded that whereas horizontal and vertical segregation are similar in restaurants, horizontal segregation is more noticeable than vertical segregation in hotels. Vertical segregation declines with the size of the establishment, while horizontal segregation increases.

Yukari and Kato (2008) analyzed the Brazilian tourism labor market and concluded that the hotel and travel agency sectors are not significantly feminized, since the proportion of female workers is only slightly higher than that of men. However, women tend to fill the least-qualified and worst-paid positions.

**TOURISM EMPLOYMENT AND VERTICAL SEGREGATION**

Vertical segregation and the “glass ceiling” in the tourism sector were also analyzed by several scholars. Women are more likely to fill lower-level positions in tourism occupations, which are less skilled and less financially rewarding, while men are over-represented in key managerial positions (Costa et al., 2011; Costa, Carvalho, Caçador, & Breda, 2012; Jordan, 1997; Parrett, n. d.). Some studies report that only a small minority of female managers in tourism are able to reach the top (Parrett, n. d.).

According to Cave and Kilic (2010, p. 288), “in tourism, managers are married to their jobs, they work at least 12 hours a day,” which conflicts with women’s traditional responsibilities. Even those women who reach the top are concentrated in typically female areas such as human resources, retail,
and marketing, while being underrepresented in other departments, such as finance (Jordan, 1997). Thus, the typical “gender pyramid” is present in the tourism sector (Hemmati, 2000). Cave and Kilic (2010) concluded that there is a sharp horizontal and vertical segregation, underpinned by strong sociocultural barriers and traditional gender roles.

Kattara (2005) reached similar conclusions. This author studied female managers in Egypt and the barriers that prevented them from reaching top management positions. It was concluded that women only account for 13.2% of all hotel managers, and the majority of these women were not in positions that would lead them to reach the top. For these female managers, the barriers they faced in their career progression were the following: Relationships at work (i.e., men are more likely to have strong relationships with higher management); gender stereotyping; cultural conflict; gender discrimination; and work/family conflict. Men are more likely than women to be chosen for line positions, and there is a persisting misconception that women become less productive when they get married. Discrimination has not disappeared from the hospitality sector; thus, it is not possible to claim that the sector is gender neutral, as contended by other authors such as Diaz and Umbreit, (1995), as cited in Kattara (2005).

Purcell (1993) carried out a study on young graduates in Hotel and Catering Management in the United Kingdom and concluded that female graduates are less likely to be regarded as “manager material”. Women are less likely to be recruited, developed and rewarded as professionals and potential senior managers.

TOURISM EMPLOYMENT AND THE GENDER PAY GAP

Previous research also reported a significant difference in the salaries obtained by men and women in the tourism industry. In Brazil, Yukari and Kato (2008) concluded that women’s salaries across several tourism subsectors are systematically equal or lower than men’s. Burgess (2000) concluded that female hospitality financial managers earn less than males do, on average. These differences are in part explainable by the type of hotels in which men and women work, since men are more concentrated in higher status hotels both in terms of size and star rating (Burgess, 2000).

Several authors have tried to ascertain factors other than gender which could explain the systematic pay gap observed between men and women (Muñoz-Bullón, 2009; Santos & Varejão, 2007; Sparrowe & Iverson, 1999; Thrane, 2008). The gender pay gap can be defined as the difference between male and female earnings expressed as a percentage of male earnings. Some of the explanatory variables used in the analysis have been education, work experience, age, type of contract or company size. Most of these studies concluded that these factors alone were insufficient to explain the differences
in salaries, which suggests that part of the gender pay gap is caused by discrimination.

TOURISM—A SECTOR WITH HARD AND GENDERED WORKING CONDITIONS

Further problems that frequently arise in tourism employment are the sexual exploitation of women (UNWTO, 2011) and sexual harassment, which is aggravated by hierarchical structures, the characteristics of frontline workers (i.e., usually young and attractive women), and by the strong emphasis that is put on meeting the needs of customers who often have a reduced sense of responsibility (Poulston, 2008). A study reports that female employees in tourism and hospitality organizations have more pressure from their employers and supervisors to look attractive, and some are even encouraged to flirt in the interaction with customers (Hall, 1993, Adkins, 1995, as cited in Nickson, 2007).

Despite the undervaluation of many of the jobs in the tourism field, they are highly demanding. It is usually required from workers that they transfer their skills between a broad range of tasks or even establishments (Nickson, 2007). Moreover, tourism workers are constantly expected to display certain emotions as part of their job, particularly frontline employees, from whom it is demanded to “constantly be in a positive, joyful and even playful mood” (Burns, 1997, as cited in Nickson, 2007, p. 59). Hochschild coined the term “emotional labor” to refer to this “management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display” (Hochschild, 1983, p. 7).

High demands coupled with poor labor conditions, as well as “short-termism” and “ad-hocism” in human resource management, lead to high levels of labor turnover in the sector (Nickson, 2007). Nickson (2007) and O’Leary and Deegan (2005) report difficulties in the recruitment and retention of employees. The informality of recruitment and promotion methods in the sector is widespread, and employers often fail to recognize it as a problem (Jordan, 1997). Jordan (1997) interviewed several tourism managers and concluded that the majority believed that gender equality was embodied in their companies and that written equal opportunity policies were useless. However, it was precisely in these companies that vertical segregation was more visible (Jordan, 1997).

Due to all the aspects analyzed in this section, it seems that tourism employment is not contributing to lowering gender inequalities and raising the profile of women’s participation in the labor market. Therefore, this article aims to analyze the tourism labor market in Portugal in greater detail, both in accommodation services and in travel agencies and tour operators.

The research hypotheses for this study are the following:

Hypothesis 1: Employment contracts are less stable in the tourism industry than in the economy as a whole.
Hypothesis 2: Working hours are often longer in the tourism sector than in most other economic activities.
Hypothesis 3: Part-time employment is more widespread in the tourism sector than in the economy in general.
Hypothesis 4: In tourism, levels of education tend to be low.
Hypothesis 5: Women are more likely to have higher levels of education than men.
Hypothesis 6: Unskilled jobs are abundant in tourism.
Hypothesis 7: Men hold the majority of director and executive positions
Hypothesis 8: Women’s poor levels of education hinder them from gaining access to occupations of greater responsibility.
Hypothesis 9: Tourism jobs are low paid.
Hypothesis 10: Women earn less than men across several economic sectors.

METHODOLOGY

This article partially extends the work of Costa et al. (2011), which analyzed the tourism labor market in accommodation services, the food & beverage subsector, and travel agencies and tour operators using an official sample survey (The Employment Survey). In this article, a different database is used, Quadros de Pessoal, which is provided by the Portuguese Office for Strategy and Studies (Gabinete de Estratégia e Estudos – GEE). Quadros de Pessoal is a compulsory longitudinal matched employer-employee micro-data set covering all business units with at least one wage-earner in the Portuguese economy. Quadros de Pessoal is a much wider dataset than the Employment Survey, since all the existing companies are surveyed. It is thus one of the richest databases, with comprehensive and detailed information that allows for the characterization of the labor market. The main limitation of this database concerns the exclusion of employment in the public sector and non-structured employment (Ferreira, 2010). Nonetheless, this database can provide a much more accurate picture of employment in tourism organizations.

In this article, only two tourism subsectors are studied: Accommodation services (economic activity code 55) and travel agencies and tour operators (economic activity code 79). This study focuses on the characterization of employment in these two sectors and their comparison with the economy as a whole. Since the focus of this article is on gender inequalities in employment, the results obtained for men and women are compared. All the analyses concern the year 2009, which was the most recent year available at the time this study was carried out.

Since the main goal of the study was to analyze the conditions of tourism employment in Portugal, namely its gendered patterns, several specific research objectives were proposed, which contribute to the achievement of the main goal. Each of these objectives was attained through the analysis of one
RESULTS

The data analysis was carried out through cross tabulations and comparison of relative frequencies and means. Pearson’s chi-squared test and Student’s t-test were also used to check for statistically significant differences between men and women (independent variable) regarding some of the dependent variables (e.g., working hours, type of contract, etc.).

Establishments

According to Quadros de Pessoal, there were 349,816 companies in Portugal in 2009, comprising 407,235 business establishments. Of these establishments, 3,853 were accommodation business units, and 1,610 were travel agencies and tour operators. These business establishments are not evenly distributed throughout the country, as can be seen in Table 1.

Even though Algarve, Lisbon, and Madeira are the regions renown for the most intense tourist activity in Portugal, it is in the North and Center regions in which most accommodation establishments are concentrated. However, informal and unregistered accommodation, which is widespread in Algarve (Martins, 2011; Silva & Silva, 2003), is not taken into account in the GEE database. Even travel agencies and tour operators display an uneven geographical distribution, being mostly concentrated in the Lisbon and the North regions.

Most Portuguese companies are comprised of four or less employees. Accommodation services are more likely to employ more workers, in contrast to the remaining sectors analyzed. Businesses in the travel sector tend to be smaller than in accommodation but have slightly more workers than

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region (NUT II)</th>
<th>Accommodation</th>
<th>Travel Agencies and Tour Operators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>891 (23.1%)</td>
<td>451 (28%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center</td>
<td>758 (19.7%)</td>
<td>245 (15.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisbon</td>
<td>677 (17.6%)</td>
<td>559 (34.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alentejo</td>
<td>376 (9.8%)</td>
<td>59 (3.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algarve</td>
<td>723 (18.8%)</td>
<td>159 (9.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azores</td>
<td>176 (4.6%)</td>
<td>49 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madeira</td>
<td>252 (6.5%)</td>
<td>88 (5.5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Source: Elaborated with basis on data retrieved from GEE/MEE (2009).
most companies in the economy as a whole (see Figure 1). Thus, when it is claimed in the literature that tourism businesses tend to be “small” or “familiar” businesses, it is important to define which sector is being talked about, and to bear in mind that small-sized businesses also prevail in the economy as a whole in Portugal.

Personnel

Broad Characterization of the Workforce

Concerning the workforce, men are significantly older than women ($t(53,359.50) = -5.670, p = .000$), except in the accommodation sector, where the reverse trend is observed ($t(47,159.07) = -11.532, p = .000$). In the economy as a whole, the average age for men is 39.6, while for women it is 38.2. In travel agencies and tour operators, the gap is wider: Men are on average 40.3, whereas women are 36.9. In contrast, in the accommodation sector, women are 40.4 years old on average, while men are 39.2.

The vast majority of workers are Portuguese: 95% of women and 94.6% of men. Most non-national workers come from Brazil (1.5%), Ukraine (0.6%), Cape Verde (0.5%), Romania (0.3%), Guinea-Bissau (0.3%) and Angola (0.3%). The proportion of Portuguese workers is similar in travel agencies and tour operators (95.7% of men and 95.5% of women). However, the accommodation sector has a higher proportion of non-national workers, particularly among women (7.8% of the non-Portuguese employees in this sector are male, and 10.3% are female).

Men and Women as Employers

In the previous section, it was concluded that women make up the majority of the tourism workforce. However, most of the employers (i.e., those who
employ other workers) in accommodation services and travel agencies and tour operators are men (57.8% and 63.1%, respectively).

Figure 2 provides a picture of the concentration of employers among men. This imbalance is particularly marked in travel agencies and tour operators (13.9% of men are employers, in contrast to only 5.1% of women).

There is also a greater proportion of employers in travel agencies and tour operators (8.4%) than both in the economy in general (7.3%) and particularly in accommodation (2.9%). This can be explained by the prevalence of small-sized and family-owned businesses in the sector (Buhalis & Peters, 2006).

CONTRACTS

The majority of workers have permanent contracts instead of fixed-term contracts or other contractual arrangements. The gap between women and men is still observable at this level, since men are slightly more likely to have permanent contracts (69.3%) than women (68.4%). This difference is statistically significant ($\chi^2(4) = 999.807, p = .000$).

However, according to the literature analyzed, contracts are less stable in the tourism sector than in the economy as a whole. The tourism sector has also been mentioned in the literature as a generator of casual work and unstable contractual situations, which mostly affect women (Purcell, 1997). Hence, the following hypothesis was analyzed:

**Hypothesis 1**: Contracts are less stable in the tourism industry than in the economy as a whole.

The data concerning the accommodation sector seem to confirm this idea to some extent, since there are fewer workers with permanent contracts than in the economy as a whole (61.6% vs. 69.9%).
However, there seems to be more contractual stability in travel agencies and tour operators, where 73.1% of workers have permanent contracts. In addition, the findings do not support the idea of women having less secure contractual arrangements, since the difference observed between men and women in accommodation is not statistically significant ($\chi^2(2) = 7.514$, $p = .023$) and, in travel agencies and tour operators, women are more likely to have permanent contracts (74.4%) than men (70.6%, $\chi^2(2) = 15.274$, $p = .000$).

Hypothesis 1 is thus not confirmed. Nonetheless, caution is needed in interpreting this data, because informal and non-structured employment is not accounted for in this database. With the growing financial difficulties of organizations and the growing source of “reserve manpower,” it is likely that this sort of precarious employment will grow in the near future, namely the illegal “false green receipts” (i.e., dependent workers who are employed as independent workers in order for the employer to avoid responsibilities with permanent employment).

**WORKING HOURS**

According to Purcell (1997) and Carvalho, Costa, and Breda (2011), the tourism sector demands long working hours, often at night or during the weekend. The results obtained in the previous study (Costa et al., 2011) also support this idea. Therefore, the following research hypothesis was put forward:

**Hypothesis 2:** Working hours are often longer in the tourism sector than in most other economic activities.

While the current data from GEE do not allow for the analysis of the way the workers’ schedule is arranged, it does provide information on the amount of normal monthly working hours. It is indeed verified that in the accommodation sector the average amount of monthly working hours is significantly higher (155.6) than in the economy as a whole (139.7). Working hours in travel agencies tend to be fewer (140.2) than in the accommodation sector and slightly more than in the economy as a whole. Thus Hypothesis 2 is verified.

Another aspect that is frequently verified is that, in general, men work longer hours than women. This tendency is also observed in the Portuguese economy as a whole ($t(3,045,950) = 19.874$, $p = .000$) and also in the accommodation sector ($t(49,642.34) = 5.015$, $p = .000$). However, this tendency is reversed in travel agencies and tour operators, where women work 10 more monthly hours than men on average ($t(5,398,910) = -7.480$, $p = .000$).

However, if paid extra hours are considered, men’s paid extra hours exceed those of women in all the sectors under analysis, particularly in
travel agencies and tour operators, in which men work on average 2.22 paid extra hours, while women only work 0.16.

In many countries, women comprise the majority of part-time workers (Torres, Mendes, & Lapa, 2008). In Portugal, women are also the majority of part-time workers (71.2%). There are thus more part-time workers among women (8.9%) than among men (3%), which is a statistically significant difference ($\chi^2 (1) = 46,493.6, p = .000$). The female participation in part-time labor in Portugal is nonetheless very limited, in comparison with other countries (Eurostat, 2011; Torres et al., 2008).

The tourism sector has been pointed out as relying to a greater extent on part-time work than the economy as a whole. Hence, Hypothesis 3 was put forward:

**Hypothesis 3:** Part-time employment is more widespread in the tourism sector than in the economy in general.

In contrast to what other studies in different contexts have claimed, part-time employment is actually less widespread in the tourism sectors analyzed than in the economy as a whole. In the economy as a whole, 5.7% of the workers are employed part-time, but this percentage is much lower in accommodation services (1.6%) and travel agencies and tour operators (2.7%). Therefore Hypothesis 3 is not confirmed.

In accommodation, men are more likely than women to be in full-time work ($\chi^2 (1) = 16.538, p = .000$), while in travel agencies and tour operators, this difference is not statistically significant ($\chi^2 (1) = 2.326, p = .127$).

**LEVEL OF EDUCATION**

According to the literature review, tourism sector employees in general have low levels of education (Yukari & Kato, 2008). This was the fourth research hypothesis of this study:

**Hypothesis 4:** In tourism, levels of education tend to be low.

According to the data, workers in travel agencies and tour operators tend to have higher levels of education as compared not only to workers in the accommodation sector but also to those in the remaining economic sectors in general. In contrast, the accommodation sector seems to require lower qualifications than most of the remaining economic sectors. Only 10% of its workers have a higher education degree, as compared to 15.5% in the economy as a whole and 34.2% of the workers in travel agencies and tour operators.

While 62.6% of the workers in general only have basic education or no education at all, this percentage is considerably lower in travel agencies and tour operators (22.8%), which means that 77.2% of the workers in this
sector have completed at least secondary education. Therefore Hypothesis 4 is confirmed for the accommodation sector, but not for travel agencies and tour operators, where the workforce is more educated.

As observed by Jacobs (1996), Escária (2006) and Costa et al. (2011), female workers tend to have higher levels of education than their male counterparts. As a result, the following hypothesis was formulated:

Hypothesis 5: Women are more likely to have higher levels of education than men.

This tendency is also observed in the data analyzed, namely in travel agencies and tour operators. In the economy as a whole, 66.6% of men only have basic education or lower. The percentage of women with the equivalent level of education is of 57.6%. In accordance to the earlier findings, women are more represented in secondary education (23.8% of women vs. 19.7% of men) and higher education (17.6% of women vs. 12.5% of men).

The gender gap in the levels of education is not as clear in the accommodation sector, since women are more represented among those with basic education or no formal education (66.3% of women vs. 62.3% of men), while men are more represented among those with secondary education (27.6% of men vs. 22.8% of women). Still, the proportion of female graduates slightly exceeds that of men. In travel agencies women’s tendency to be more educated than men is again observed: 37.2% of men only have basic education or below, as compared to 14.3% of their female counterparts, while there is a larger proportion of women who have secondary (42.6% vs. 39.7% of men) or higher education (41% vs. 21%). Therefore Hypothesis 5 is confirmed in travel agencies and tour operators, but there is no clear pattern in the accommodation sector.

**Occupation and Level of Qualification**

In the economy as a whole, the occupations that are more feminized are service and sales workers (29.6% of women vs. 9.4% of men), administrative and related workers (19.3% of women vs. 9.4% of men) and unskilled workers (15.2% of women vs. 11% of men). The occupations in which men more clearly outnumber women are skilled workers, craftsmen and related (25.7% of men vs. 10% of women), machine operators and assembly workers (13.1% of men vs. 3.8% of women), and executive civil servants, industrial directors, and executives (12.5% of men vs. 6.8% of women).

In accommodation, the most frequent occupation among men is service and sales workers (38.6%), while most women are unskilled workers (44%). In travel agencies and tour operators, most female employees are technicians and associate professionals (69.8%), while most of their male counterparts
are either machine operators and assembly workers (23.5%), or executive civil servants, industrial directors, and executives (22.5%).

According to Santos and Varejão (2007), unskilled jobs in the tourism field are abundant. Hence, the hypothesis below was analyzed:

**Hypothesis 6:** Unskilled jobs are abundant in tourism.

Most employees in the Portuguese economy are qualified workers. However, in the accommodation sector, the vast majority of women have unskilled jobs (44% of women vs. 14.8% of men), mostly as chambermaids or cleaners. Thus, most of the unskilled workforce in accommodation is female (79.6%). These findings are in accordance with those of other authors, as analyzed before (Yukari & Kato, 2008).

However, the proportion of unskilled jobs is very reduced in the travel sector, both as compared to the accommodation sector and to the economy as a whole, since only 1.6% of men and 2.8% of women are unskilled workers. Moreover, 56.8% of the women in this sector are highly qualified. The proportion of highly qualified male workers is more reduced (25.5%). It can be concluded that jobs in the travel sector are more qualified than the average. Hypothesis 6 is thus only verified in the accommodation sector.

According to the literature, men are over-represented in director and executive positions (Costa et al., 2011; Costa et al., 2012; Jordan, 1997; Parrett, n. d.). As a consequence, the following hypothesis was suggested:

**Hypothesis 7:** Men hold the majority of director and executive positions

In the economy as a whole, men are more represented than women among those with director and executive positions (13.1% of men vs. 9.8% of women). The proportion of men in such positions by far exceeds the proportion of female executives and senior managers in the accommodation sector (9.0% vs. 4.4%), but particularly in travel agencies and tour operators (23.5% vs. 11.2%). There is a sharp vertical segregation in both tourism subsectors, and as a result, Hypothesis 7 is confirmed.

Burrell et al. (1997) suggested that it is the fact that women are poorly qualified that hinders them from gaining access to occupations of greater responsibility. Thus, these authors claim that the increase in educational level could reduce segregation. Therefore the following hypothesis was formulated:

**Hypothesis 8:** Women's poor level of education is what hinders them from gaining access to occupations of greater responsibility.

The proportion of women who are unskilled workers in the accommodation sector is overwhelming, but the difference between women and
men in terms of education cannot justify such segregation into unskilled occupations. As to the travel sector, women are more represented among those in highly qualified positions, which reflects the fact that women have higher levels of education. Nonetheless, they are by far less represented in both senior and middle management positions. This is either a result of men being the majority of employers in a sector dominated by micro and small businesses which do not have a structure that allows for career progression, or a result of women being discriminated against. As a consequence, Hypothesis 8 is rejected.

**REMUNERATION**

The literature reviewed suggests that tourism jobs are paid below the average. Hence, the following hypothesis was formulated:

*Hypothesis 9: Tourism jobs are low paid.*

In fact, remuneration in the accommodation sector is lower than in the economy as a whole (€814.59 vs. €867.75). However, the average basic salary in travel agencies and tour operators is above the average (€1,044.02). Some studies have also shown that remuneration in travel agencies and tour operators is above the average (Costa et al., 2011; Yukari & Kato, 2008). Thus, Hypothesis 9 is confirmed in accommodation but not in travel agencies and tour operators.

In general, the average basic salary is highest in Lisbon (€1,094.29) and Madeira (€830.17), and lowest in Alentejo (€757.68) and the Center (€751.87). If regular, irregular and extraordinary payments are taken into account, a similar pattern can be observed. In the tourism sector, Lisbon is the area where employees receive the highest salaries.

Some studies contend that women have lower salaries than men (Santos & Varejão, 2007; Thrane, 2008). Therefore the following hypothesis was analyzed:

*Hypothesis 10: Women earn less than men across several economic sectors.*

In the economy as a whole, women earn on average 17.8% less than men (M = €940.76; W = €773.50). While in accommodation this gap is even wider (25.6%; M = €951.04; W = €707.64), it is narrower in travel agencies and tour operators (13.2%, M = €1,142.17; W = €990.95). One of the reasons for the narrower gap in this sector might be that women in this sector are significantly more qualified than men, as already analyzed. However, bearing in mind that women are more qualified and educated, it is nonetheless remarkable that men earn much higher salaries. This pay gap between men and women is even wider if regular, irregular, and extraordinary payments...
are taken into account. Consequently, Hypothesis 10 is confirmed in the present study, since there is a marked gender pay gap, and women earn less on average across all the sectors analyzed.

In all the sectors analyzed, it is among senior executives that the gap between the salaries earned by men and women is widest: 28.5% in the economy as a whole, 29.1% in accommodation, and 33% in travel agencies. The second level of qualification with the widest pay gap is middle management (economy as a whole, 15.7%; accommodation, 20%; travel agencies and tour operators, 14.7%).

Within the accommodation sector, hotel employees have higher salaries (€824.82) than employees in other types of accommodation, whose remuneration is approximately €200 lower. However, it is also in hotels that the gender pay gap is widest within the accommodation sector (25.8%).

A detailed analysis of the workers’ salaries shows that salaries rise with an increase in the level of education, and so does the gender pay gap, which is widest among graduates (above 30%) and postgraduates (around 27%). A similar trend is observed among accommodation workers, since female graduates earn about 41% less than their male counterparts. In travel agencies and tour operators, it is among workers with a degree (Licenciatura) that the gender pay gap is widest (38.2%). In all these sectors, the gender pay gap is less marked among postgraduates than among graduates, which was also observed in other studies (Costa, Caçador, Carvalho, Breda, & Costa, 2013). However, it is still very significant.

Workers with basic and secondary education have higher salaries in travel agencies and tour operators than in accommodation or in the economy as a whole. However, graduates have higher salaries in the economy as a whole than in the tourism subsectors analyzed. This provides some support to the claim that higher education degrees are not particularly valued in the tourism industry (Costa et al., 2012; Petrova & Mason, 2004).

Unlike what the literature suggests, the travel sector seems to be comparatively better paid than most other economic activities in Portugal. However, the same cannot be said about the accommodation sector. Moreover, the gender pay gap in accommodation seems to be even wider than in the economy as a whole.

**DISCUSSION**

This article aimed to analyze gender inequalities in tourism employment in Portugal, namely by examining and comparing two different economic activities (i.e., accommodation services and travel agencies and tour operators). The specific objectives presented in the introduction are answered in the following paragraphs.

Some of the research objectives were the analysis of the structure of accommodation and travel businesses and establishments, as well as a broad
characterization of the workforce of these sectors, in terms of age, nationality, and sex segregation. Accommodation businesses are larger than average, while travel agencies are smaller in terms of number of employees. Accommodation has more non-Portuguese workers than the other sectors under analysis. There are more men than women among the employers in all these sectors, but particularly in travel agencies and tour operators.

Another aim of this research was to investigate the security of employment contracts for women and men employed in these sectors. They seem to be less stable in accommodation than in the economy as a whole, but the opposite is verified in travel agencies and tour operators, in which there is a greater percentage of employees with permanent contracts, particularly among women. However, information about undeclared and informal employment is not available.

The tourism sector is also said to require more working hours than most of the remaining economic activities. This is clearly the case in accommodation services. Regarding the travel sector, this pattern is not clear. One of the aims of the investigation was to compare the distribution of working hours among men and women. It was remarkable that women work more monthly hours than men in the travel sector, which is not usually the norm in most economic activities.

In contrast to what other studies in different contexts have claimed, part-time employment is less widespread in the tourism sectors analyzed than in the economy as a whole. While men are more represented than women among full-time workers in accommodation, this difference is not statistically significant regarding men and women who work in the travel sector.

Another objective of this study was to analyze the levels of education attained by male and female workers in accommodation and travel businesses, as well as in the economy as a whole. While in accommodation there is no clear pattern as to whether women are more or less educated than men, in the economy as a whole, and particularly in travel agencies and tour operators, women are much more educated than men. The level of education of accommodation employees in general is below the average, while travel agencies and tour operator employees are more educated in comparison to those in the economy as a whole.

The analysis of gender occupational segregation in these sectors was also one of the purposes of the study. It was verified that almost half of the female workers in the accommodations sector have unskilled jobs. The proportion of unskilled jobs in the travel sector is much more reduced, both as compared to the accommodation sector and to the economy as a whole. In fact, jobs in the travel sector are more qualified than the average. In contrast, the proportion of male executives and directors by far exceeds the proportion of female executives and directors in all the sectors analyzed, but particularly in travel agencies and tour operators. This is either a result
of men being the majority of employers in a sector dominated by micro and small businesses which do not have a structure that allows for career progression, or a result of women being discriminated against.

Salaries in the accommodation sector are below the average for the overall economy. However, salaries in travel agencies and tour operators are above the average. The analysis of the gender pay gap was also at the core of this study. Women earn significantly less than men across all the sectors under analysis. While the pay gap is widest in the accommodation sector, it is narrower in travel agencies and tour operators. Nonetheless it should be borne in mind that women in this sector not only work more monthly hours than men, but also that they are considerably more educated. The gender pay gap increases with education and is widest among graduates in all the sectors analyzed. The gender pay gap is comparatively narrower among postgraduates, but it is still very significant.

CONCLUSIONS

Concerning gender issues, it is remarkable that women are consistently paid lower salaries across all sectors, regardless of their level of education or qualification. Their lower representation in decision-making positions (i.e., as managers or executives) is also remarkable. Graduates are also paid below the average in the tourism sectors analyzed, which seems to suggest that this workforce is undervalued in the sector. These results confirm the importance of not regarding the tourism sector as a “fix-all” approach for the whole employment sector, specifically when it concerns the integration of women in the labor market.

The accommodation sector seems to reinforce traditional gender roles by shunting women to unskilled occupations, mainly as chambermaids or cleaners. Although conditions in the travel industry seem to be comparatively better, educational attainment also seems to be poorly recognized. Moreover, the existing disparities concerning power positions and salaries cast doubts on the sector’s ability to challenge gender inequalities. Therefore, gender discrimination seems to be an issue in both the sectors analyzed, but further studies are needed in order to analyze this question in greater detail.

In the future, the differences between the accommodation and travel sectors should be explored in greater detail. It is also important to explore differences within each sector, namely according to the company size. The travel sector has characteristics that differ from those typical of tourism and hospitality businesses. If the analysis of employment in the tourism sector subsumes several different economic activities without distinguishing between them, then it is likely that the results obtained will reflect the reality of the larger sectors, namely accommodation and particularly food & beverage, rather than the reality of smaller sectors such as travel agencies.
and tour operators. In such studies the data concerning employment in travel agencies and tour operators is subsumed under the “tourism” label, and any conclusions applying to the bigger sectors are wrong if extended to the smaller travel sector.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE INDUSTRY

Tourism is a labor intensive sector which nonetheless seems to undervalue its workforce. This is a contradiction that undermines the growth potential of the sector in Portugal. This situation is likely to be exacerbated in the future due to the current economic downward trend, the liberalization of the labor market and the growth of the “reserve manpower.” It is crucial to reverse this trend by valuing labor and striving for gender equality, not only at the industry level, but also at the level of the whole economy.

Women have great potential in the tourism sector. Not only are they the majority of tourism workers, but they are also better educated than their male counterparts. They are much needed for the development of the tourism industry. It is necessary to overcome structures that hamper women's progression, such as gendered organizational cultures and structures or lingering prejudice.

There is some empirical evidence supporting the idea that gender equality and business growth support each other. For instance, companies with strong equal opportunity policies were found to outperform Standard and Poor’s 500 stock market average over a period of five years (Hearn, 2010). Other studies have pointed out the importance of having a critical mass of women in organizations in order to achieve organizational change, since having certain numbers of women at the management level can break the cycle of homosocial reproduction and cultural cloning (Desvaux, Devillard-Hoellinger, & Baumgarten, 2007; Hearn, 2010; Kotiranta, Kovalainen, & Rouvinen, 2007; Wahl, 1992(2003); Morrison, White & Van Velsor, 1987 as cited in Wahl, 1998).

Gender equality policies are thought to benefit organizations in a number of ways. Some organizations regard gender equality as a “dual agenda,” since its policies are expected to contribute to reduce the labour turnover and thus the cost of recruiting and training new professionals. The company hopes to be perceived as gender equal or family-friendly in order to attract new talent (Catanzaro, Moore, & Marshall, 2010; Guerreiro & Pereira, 2006; Jordan, 1997). Catanzaro et al. (2010) concluded indeed that the majority of job applicants they studied, both men and women, would be more interested in a company culture supportive of a better work–life balance, than in a company which offered higher salaries but no such benefits.
The point of this article is not to suggest that the implementation of gender equality policies should be subsumed to profit or business growth instead of gender equality. However, even if it is competitiveness instead of gender equality that is at the core of such organizational policies, it at least increases the focus on gender equality—citing Lombardo and Meier (2007)—"if only because gender equality is seen as necessary to achieve success in these fields" (p. 58).

The tourism industry in Portugal seems to have a long way to go until it can be considered a truly “women-friendly” industry. It is important to raise the awareness of the stakeholders in this field, so that the culture and structure of organizations can gradually change and become gender equal.

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