

Through the gender looking-glass: Brazilian tourism entrepreneurs

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to investigate the ways in which gender influences entrepreneurial motivations and barriers in the Brazilian tourism sector. As an economic process, tourism entrepreneurship is widely spread in Brazil, with tourism development programs promoting it as a strategy to empower women, however limited research exists on how gender roles influence entrepreneurial ideals. This nationwide study aims to provide a contemporary insight into how tourism entrepreneurs in Brazil are situated within current entrepreneurship theorizing by questioning the complexity caused as gender roles influence entrepreneurial conceptualizations of what constitute motivations and barriers.

Design/methodology/approach – This study uses online questionnaires aimed, for the first time, at a large variety of tourism sub-sectors in Brazil. Having nation-wide scope, the questionnaires produce knowledge on what motivates and what constrains Brazilian tourism entrepreneurs through a gender lens. Quantitative analysis using SPSS statistical software tests the statistical significance of results and is complemented by the integration of feminist economic theories into the analytical framework.

Findings – The current study's findings highlight the invisibility of gender's workings, as the majority of participants did not conceive gender as playing a role in their entrepreneurial experience. Entrepreneurial motivations and barriers show a departure from past literature, such as the fact that similar numbers of male and female tourism entrepreneurs perceive networking as a significant entrepreneurial barrier. This and other interesting findings prompt for alternative conceptualizations of discourses surrounding women's involvement in tourism entrepreneurship.

Originality/value – This study consists of an original contribution to knowledge on tourism entrepreneurship in Brazil as this is the first time an empirical study has been made on a nation-wide scale regarding the role of gender in Brazilian tourism entrepreneurs' motivations and constraints.

Keywords Gender theory, Tourism, Motivations, Womens entrepreneurship, Barriers, Feminist economics

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Tourism has high concentrations of entrepreneurs, with small and medium-sized enterprises being a key distinguishing feature of the tourism industry (Morrison *et al.*, 2010). This makes the study of tourism entrepreneurs' profile useful in creating a more realistic picture of contemporary tourism. Looking at the ways in which gender permeates entrepreneurs' motivations to enter entrepreneurship and the constraints they face during entrepreneurship are essential to properly inform tourism development policies that encourage tourism entrepreneurship. By analyzing how women in Brazil



experience tourism entrepreneurship, this research addresses gender roles and tourism entrepreneurship in the Latin American context.

Feminist economists frequently use the concept of “gender norms” to critique gender divisions of labour which characterize modern economies (Pearse and Connell, 2015). Gender norms are structures of collective constraint that impinge on economic processes by being the differential rules of conduct for men and women and between women and men. Despite wide-spread gender inequalities in wealth and labour, mainstream economics marginalizes gender analyses, as neoclassical economic theory is based on a model of “rational economic man”, separate from relationships. However, gender plays a significant role within tourism as women are often encouraged to enter tourism employment because of its flexibility and its “suitability” for women to combine work and family. But in effect, the nature of tourism that allows women to combine work and family, means that gender norms surrounding feminine subjectivities of care are left unchallenged (Cohen, 2001, 1995).

Entrepreneurship is considered as suited to women as it is seen to allow them flexibility in organizing their work schedule around their caring responsibilities. Women are in fact one of the fastest growing entrepreneurial populations, an expansion that is fuelled by various tourism development projects offering incentives to encourage women to become productive in the neoclassical economic sense (Brush *et al.*, 2009). The tourism sector attracts large numbers of women to work in tourism, with women making up 55.5 per cent of workers within tourism globally (Baum, 2013). The high number of women in tourism is linked to the low entry requirements, for example, for women returning to work after raising a family and to cultural reasons such as employment in housekeeping, laundry, cooking and guest services.

The tourism industry consists largely of medium enterprises (SMEs), which highlights the importance of considering entrepreneurship theorizing within tourism. Tourism employment is characterized by low entry requirements which are attractive to women, because women historically have had fewer opportunities than men to gain employment-related skills (Costa *et al.*, 2012a). Despite increasing number of women becoming educated, for example, in Brazil, for every 129 women in tertiary education, there are only 100 men (UNESCO, 2015), the barriers that women face after they leave education and want to move up the career ladder are significant and often translate into women occupying lower status positions than men.

As women often have primary responsibility for caring activities, part-time and seasonal employment characteristics of tourism work allow women to work on a non-permanent basis, which means that they can combine caring and working activities. Although seasonal tourism work is often very demanding, with long unsociable hours, during the tourism season, female entrepreneurs negotiate household activities with their spouses and other caring relatives. As the negotiation is only seasonal, other family members accept this temporary change in distribution of household activities, as found in recent research on female handicraft entrepreneurs in Crete (Bakas, 2015).

However, examining traditional definitions and theories of entrepreneurship reveals a male-dominated bias (Green and Cohen, 1995), which is reflected in the prevailing historical discourse that “to think entrepreneur, was to think male” (Marlow *et al.*, 2009, p. 139). Indeed, academia also reproduces connection between masculinity and entrepreneurship. This is seen in social studies of female entrepreneurs that “implicitly

reproduce male experience as a preferred normative value” (Bruni *et al.*, 2004, p. 256). Hence, female notions regarding what constitutes entrepreneurship are neglected or seen as different from the norm (Ateljevic, 2009). Using feminist economics to question and examine the masculinist values that are deeply embedded within entrepreneurship theory, this study draws conclusions regarding how the male norms within entrepreneurial discourse influence women’s entrepreneurial motivations and barriers.

As many factors underlie the decision of becoming self-employed (Verheul *et al.*, 2006), to fully understand the dynamics of female entrepreneurship and women’s contribution to economic growth and development, analysis at the country level is necessary. There is a wide body of literature on entrepreneurship and female entrepreneurship, but there is still limited research on the role played by female entrepreneurs in the Latin American context (Weeks and Seiler, 2001). There is even less evidence regarding entrepreneurship in the tourism sector in Brazil, despite Brazil being ranked among the countries with the highest entrepreneurial activity (Smith-Hunter and Leone, 2010).

Investigating how gender influences entrepreneurial motivations is significant as women are subjected to different cultural norms to men, hence have different needs in a tourism development context. This study uses questionnaires to find out what Brazilian tourism entrepreneurs perceive as barriers and motivations to entrepreneurship and uses a gender analysis to explore the ways in which gender permeates these motivations and barriers. Hence, this study aims to critique traditional definitions of entrepreneurship through the gender analysis of what tourism entrepreneurs perceive as barriers and motivations to their entrepreneurial engagement in the Brazilian context.

2. Background

Many development programs, such as the ones implemented by the World Bank, specifically target women encouraging them to engage with entrepreneurship to fulfil their objectives of increasing economic growth (Griffin, 2010; Ferguson, 2011). However, although women are often encouraged to partake in economic growth initiatives, gender roles connecting femininity with caring means that they continue to be also held responsible for all household labour (Momsen, 2004). Women are often depended upon as primary carers and being entrepreneurs, an extra labour requirement that men rarely have responsibility for (Folbre, 2012). This extra labour comprises a significant amount of labour time, as “marginal” economic practices such as household activities actually account for more hours worked than “productive” (e.g. entrepreneurship) sector activities (Gibson-Graham, 2008, p. 617).

Although globally, men also complete household tasks, gender roles continue to connect responsibility for completing social reproduction with femininity. This creates dissonance between the economic roles (at work and in the household) that women are expected to fulfil and in turn influences how women engage in tourism entrepreneurship (Bakas, 2014). Hence, in this section, the main bodies of literature speaking to the ways in which gender influences women’s involvement in tourism entrepreneurship are explored.

2.1 Gender and tourism development

Development is defined as a “planned project by which resources, techniques and expertise are brought together” (Kabeer, 1994, p. 69) to increase economic growth. It should not only aim to achieve economic growth but also positive social change with an increase in well-being for the people involved (Pearson, 2000).

Tourism is increasingly conceptualized as a legitimate arena to apply development programmes aimed at gender equality, which is indicated by the wealth of funding for tourism projects around the world (Ferguson, 2007). However, development is not a “neutral and benign process” (Ferguson, 2011, p. 240) and in contrast to its promotion as gender-blind, it often contains an explicitly gendered dimension in that women are perceived as “inextricably linked” to the family.

Although women do become involved in paid work because of tourism development, gendered dynamics often prevent tourism entrepreneurship being as beneficial to them as it is to men, as seen in the case of Turkish female entrepreneurs in Göreme, who are limited by gender roles connecting femininity to home-based roles (Tucker, 2007). This is partly because the discourse surrounding entrepreneurship is masculinized and so female entrepreneurs find it difficult to conform to “ideal entrepreneur” standards (Ahl and Marlow, 2012). This is reflected in the way that women conceptualize barriers to entering entrepreneurship and also in what motivates them to engage in entrepreneurship.

Hence, gender roles influence women’s involvement in entrepreneurship. “Gender” encapsulates all the cultural markers a society uses to account for biological difference; however, gender’s meaning goes beyond this. It is not exactly something that someone is or something that a person has, it is the mechanism by which notions of what constitutes masculine and feminine are produced and normalized. As such, gender orders social dynamics and pervades all aspects of economic and personal life by being the product of sex-related and socially accepted behaviours, which have become internalized as a natural way of being (Beauvoir *et al.*, 2000; Fenstermaker and West, 2013).

However, as all women do not have shared realities, there is a need to conceptualize gender as a fluid entity influenced by cultural, religious and politico-economic conditions (Singh, 2007). Boonabaana and Tucker, 2011; Kabeer, 1999) caution that as many development programmes are modelled on Western ideas of what constitutes “empowerment”, the *long-term* implications for changes based on the values of outsiders may be catastrophic for communities with very different values. Although much research has been completed in the European context, less has been done in the Latin American context.

2.2 Female entrepreneurship in Brazil

Brazil is the world’s fifth largest country in population, with 200.4 million inhabitants, and the world’s seventh largest economy with a gross domestic product (GDP) of US\$ 2.246 trillion in 2013 (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, 2014). The total contribution of the Brazilian tourism sector to GDP in 2013 was 9.2 per cent of GDP, and it was forecasted to rise by 5.2 per cent in 2014 and by 4.1 per cent in 2024. Mega events, such as the FIFA World Cup (2014) and the Summer Olympics (2016) are expected to play an important role in Brazilian tourism’s growth rate (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2014).

Female participation in the labour market in Brazil has increased significantly in the past 50 years, rising from 13 per cent of the labour force in the 1940s to 42 per cent in the 1990s (Smith-Hunter and Leone, 2010), illustrating the increasingly significant role of women in productive labour which was fuelled by increasing insecurity of men's work and cuts to social services. Since the 1980s, government organizations, NGOs, The World Bank and the EU have encouraged female engagement in entrepreneurship as a poverty reduction strategy in Brazil, for example, the Northeast tourism development Program in 1994 which cost \$400m and was sponsored by the Inter-American Development Bank (Casellas and Holcomb, 2001).

Services are one of the main economic activities in Brazil, accounting for more than 1,070,000 enterprises, mostly small and medium-sized (IBGE, 2014a). The tourism industry in Brazil, in particular, has been growing significantly for the past years, with many areas (e.g. accommodation, food and beverages, transports and entertainment) receiving considerable investment from both the public and the private sectors. According to the *World Bank Economy Rankings (2015)*, measuring the "ease of doing business", Brazil occupies the ninth position within the Latin America and Caribbean region. This high classification means that the regulatory environment is more conducive to starting and operating a business. Looking more specifically at the indicator of "ease of starting a business", Brazil moves up to 6th place, albeit drastically dropping to the 15th place when the "ease of getting credit" is analyzed.

Data from 2012 show that in Brazil, for the first time, women represented 58.5 per cent of the workforce (more than 619,000 salaried workers) (IBGE, 2014b). This is significant as it means that gender roles connecting femininity to primary caring roles are altering. As more women enter the workforce, more gender role negotiations surrounding responsibility for social reproduction occur, which transfer into economic roles, with the result of more women engaging in entrepreneurship. Although tourism contributes 9.2 per cent to GDP in Brazil and an increasing number of women engage in tourism labour as entrepreneurs, there is a lack of literature on how gender roles influence female tourism entrepreneurship in Brazil (*World Travel and Tourism Council, 2014*).

2.3 Motivations to start a new business

The longest standing conceptualization of entrepreneurial motivations classifies them into opportunity and necessity motivations (Stephan *et al.*, 2015). Necessity motivations are also called "push" factors and describe the situation when one starts engaging in entrepreneurship because of the loss of a job and the lack of alternatives. Opportunity motivations, also referred to as "pull" factors, describe the situation when people engage in entrepreneurship because they seize market opportunities and for profit-making.

Past literature on entrepreneurship in Brazil has focused on these binaries, reporting how opportunity-motivated entrepreneurship has dominated since 2003, with 70 per cent of female entrepreneurs being classified as opportunity entrepreneurs and 30 per cent as necessity entrepreneurs (Kelley *et al.*, 2013; Macedo *et al.*, 2014). Usually, however, it is a combination of necessity and opportunity motivations that encourage people to become entrepreneurs. Although it is useful to use the necessity-opportunity differentiation as a starting point, separating motivations in this dualistic manner serves to oversimplify entrepreneurial motivation (Stephan *et al.*, 2015).

The high dominance of female entrepreneurs who flexibly combine work with childcare constitute what Jayawarna *et al.* (2013, p. 47) term the “convenience entrepreneurs” vs the predominance of men in the “economically-driven entrepreneurs” group. This difference highlights how gender roles influence entrepreneurial motivations. “Convenience” entrepreneurs strive to achieve a work-family balance through their entrepreneurial involvement, whereas “economically driven” entrepreneurs are less driven by goals of work-family balance achievement. The fact that more female entrepreneurs are “convenience” entrepreneurs also demonstrates how gender roles influence entrepreneurial motivations as women are often motivated to become entrepreneurs to contribute to the family income whilst continuing to take primary carer responsibility. The evolution of the term “Mumpreneurs” (Ekinsmyth, 2011, p. 104) to describe mothers who also “do” entrepreneurship as a secondary occupation to their main task of mothering illustrates how embedded within society the disassociation between motherhood and economic activity is. Although a new term evolved to describe women who combine motherhood with entrepreneurship as “mumpreneurs”, no special phrase was coined for fathers who are entrepreneurs as their involvement in economic activities is taken for granted. However, complexity characterizes the dichotomous categorization of motivations according to gender, as two-thirds of the male-dominated, “economically driven entrepreneurs” in Jayawarna *et al.’s* (2013) study also limit their work hours because they have childcare responsibilities. Hence, the normalization of “unbounded” masculinity upon which notions of entrepreneurship theory rest is brought into focus (Ahl, 2006).

With regards to the type of motivations entrepreneurs have, these are very diverse. Kirkwood (2009) identified four key drivers of entrepreneurial activity in scholarly literature:

- (1) a desire for independence;
- (2) monetary motivations;
- (3) work-related motivations (e.g. unemployment and redundancy or lack of career prospects); and
- (4) family-related motivations.

Elsewhere, more drivers are identified, such as personal development; improved social status; opportunity to innovate; emulation of role models; and contribution to community welfare (Jayawarna *et al.*, 2013). Regarding Brazilian entrepreneurs’ motivations to become an entrepreneur, a recent study finds that 50 per cent of them believe they have the required skills, knowledge and experience to start a new business, irrespective of sex (Macedo *et al.*, 2014). However, there is limited in-depth research on what motivates female entrepreneurs in Brazil specifically to enter tourism entrepreneurship and if there is any difference between male and female entrepreneurial motivations in Brazil.

2.4 Gendered constraints to entering entrepreneurship

Although various structural and social motivations exist for entering entrepreneurship, there are a number of constraints or barriers to setting-up one’s own business, which should be taken into consideration when creating depictions of the tourism entrepreneurial reality.

de Bruin *et al.* (2007, p. 330) found that entry into entrepreneurship is shaped by “self-perceptions”, which can also be termed as emotional or cognitive factors. The individual entrepreneur’s self-confidence levels stem from the entrepreneur’s self-perception and are heavily influenced by gender roles, as what a man or a woman “can” or “cannot” do are socially ascribed (Butler, 2004). As Langowitz and Minniti (2007, p. 357) comment:

[...] perception explains an important portion of the difference in entrepreneurial propensity across genders since men tend to perceive themselves in a more optimistic light and, as a result, have stronger incentives to start new businesses.

The gender differences in perception talk to the ways in which gender roles have become so embedded within people, that they permeate the way entrepreneurs conduct themselves (Hughes *et al.*, 2012). For example, men perceive themselves in a more optimistic light as entrepreneurs, because of the masculine discourse surrounding entrepreneurship, which makes them feel more comfortable in entrepreneurial roles than women do.

Indeed, although some constraints are common to both men and women, the latter seem to be more disadvantaged. Some of the constraints women in particular face when wanting to become entrepreneurs are a non-conducive social, legal and policy environment for women to do business in; long hours spent on unpaid work (taking care of families, engaging in subsistence agriculture); and a lack of business knowledge (Otobe, 2014).

There are structural aspects that influence the optimism men feel within entrepreneurship, such as male-favourable financing products (e.g. loans), labour laws and public policies (Fine and Milonakis, 2009). The dominance of masculinity within institutions often acts to invisibly exclude women from gaining funding through institutional gender regimes. Indeed, several studies claim that women experience additional disadvantages, compared to men, when seeking finance for entrepreneurial activity (Greene *et al.*, 2001; Marlow and Patton, 2005; Mijid and Bernasek, 2013; OECD, 2008).

This is also one of the reasons why development programmes target women specifically in their funding programs, for example, the microcredit initiatives developed to help female entrepreneurs in India (Lingam, 2008). However, these microcredit funding programmes can also be influenced by wider gender roles as illustrated in a study in Pakistan where only 27 per cent of female recipients of microloans actually decided how to use the loan themselves (Mahmood, 2011). Despite this, Marlow and Patton (2005) point out that there are conflicting opinions regarding the existence of gender bias in financing women, mainly because such discrimination is difficult to be empirically verified.

However, some female entrepreneurs are less concerned about discrimination in financing than they are about maintaining a work-family balance. In Brazil, female business owners in the South and Northeastern regions (Machado *et al.*, 2003; Gomes *et al.*, 2005) do not perceive lack of access to financial resources as a very significant constraint, it coming second in rank to the difficulty of reconciling family and work lives. As women are expected to carry the burden of a double – or triple – working day, many Brazilian women see this as a challenge (Jonathan, 2011).

Other gendered challenges that female entrepreneurs face are related to perceptions regarding their abilities as entrepreneurs. For example, risk aversion, which is often perceived as a feminine trait, may act as a constraint to women's entrepreneurial activities. However, although risk aversion is blamed for female entrepreneurs ceasing entrepreneurial activity, it does not prohibit them from taking the initial plunge of starting a business. As Fossen (2012, p. 1795) says: "Women's higher estimated risk aversion explains the largest part of their higher exit rate but only a small portion of their lower entry rate". This creates a paradox, as risk-taking is often higher at the beginning of a business venture.

Another problem female entrepreneurs are perceived to face because of gendered norms surrounding women's competence as businesswomen relates to the lack of access to financial resources. Recent research on the ways in which financial institutions chose to finance entrepreneurs shows that capital providers reward masculine business characteristics to the disadvantage of women (Eddleston *et al.*, 2014). Findings from Smith-Hunter and Leone (2010, p. 95) also show that "government [state and federal] regulations related to the startup and operation of their businesses" act as a hindrance to their development. Other studies, such as one conducted in Brazil, show that excessive bureaucracy, high taxes and difficulties in obtaining credit are a concern for many entrepreneurs (Schlemm, 2007 cited in Jonathan, 2011). These examples highlight how gender influences entrepreneurship, as these are issues that influence all entrepreneurs, but female entrepreneurs have an added disadvantage because of masculinized entrepreneurial discourse.

3. Methods

This study is part of a wider research project that was developed in Portugal over the past three years (Carvalho *et al.*, 2014, 2012a, 2012b, 2014, 2013, 2013). One of this project's objectives was to test part of the methodological framework in other countries so that cross-national comparisons could be established and the methods could be tested at an international level. Brazil was chosen to conduct an exploratory study. Brazil was considered as a good case study partly because some of the project team members are Brazilian academics and, hence, facilitated better access to potential participants in the study. Brazil was also chosen because such a study has not been conducted before in Brazil and also because Brazil has very high number of female entrepreneurs. Because of the convenience and affordability of applying an online questionnaire, only a quantitative approach was considered.

The empirical study underlying the present research was based on an online survey applied to Brazilian tourism enterprises registered in CADASTUR – a database of individuals and enterprises that operate within the tourism field administrated by the Brazilian Ministry of Tourism (in cooperation with the official federal tourism bodies). As the registration in CADASTUR is optional for some companies and as some sub-sectors are not accounted for within this database (namely those from the public sector or education institutions)[1], an accurate identification of the overall population is not possible. Given this lack of information on the approximate number of companies operating within the tourism sector in Brazil and the difficulty in obtaining a substantial number of contacts to target specific companies (as the population is too large), a convenience sample was considered to fit the purpose of this exploratory study. Despite the database not covering the totality of tourism entrepreneurs in Brazil, it does provide

a good overview of the industry, covering a variety of tourism subsectors, such as travel agents and tourism-related sports and recreation services, rather than just the hotel and restaurant sectors.

The questionnaire was advertised through the project's website, social networks and personal contacts from Brazilian fellow researchers. National and regional business associations, unions and representatives of the sector were also contacted to disseminate the questionnaire amongst their members. Regarding the target population, the questionnaire targeted male and female tourism managers. The items within the questionnaire were identified from entrepreneurship and gender literature. The measurement instrument was developed within the larger project and intended to analyze the respondent's level of agreement (through Likert scales/items) to each one of the topics. A pre-test was applied to guarantee the validity of the questionnaire. Thus, the nature of the statistical analysis is mainly descriptive. As the multiple Likert questions do not form a scale reliability tests such as Cronbach's coefficient alpha were not applied. Groupings of barriers were made based on previous literature (Navarro *et al.*, 2012).

The survey was carried out from April 2014 to December 2014, and a total of 471 questionnaires were collected. Although this research is part of a wider study on gender and tourism labour, as 75 per cent of the study respondents ($N = 313$) declared themselves as entrepreneurs[2], the significance of investigating the role of gender in tourism entrepreneurship was apparent.

Although the generalization of results to the population is not possible, the sample size allows for consistent findings and the identification of important and statistically significant trends.

Quantitative analysis was used to gain access to a wide range of the population in Brazil and was applied to explore patterns and relationships in the role of gender in participants' motivations to become entrepreneurs and in the barriers/constraints they encountered when trying to create their own businesses. We accept that providing a profile of a "typical" entrepreneur is essentializing (Mirchandani, 1999), as men and women are increasingly perceived as not having shared realities (Kabeer, 1999) Hence, the entrepreneurial motivations and barriers presented in this study are representative of Brazilian tourism entrepreneurs' motivations and barriers within the study's specific context.

The software IBM SPSS (v. 21) was used for the quantitative data analysis. Univariate and bivariate statistical techniques were applied through exploratory and inferential methods, and a 5 per cent level of significance was adopted.

4. Analysis

Findings from the most recent Global Entrepreneurship Monitor report from Brazil (Macedo *et al.*, 2014) suggests that entrepreneurship is not gender-sensitive, with both men and women having the propensity to engage in an entrepreneurial activity in equal numbers (17.2 and 17.4 per cent, respectively). However, when looking at established business owners, entrepreneurial activity is more clearly dominated by men, which shows how cultural, societal and economic factors influence entrepreneurs' profiles (Macedo *et al.*, 2014). In this study's sample, of the total number of entrepreneurs, 59.4 per cent were male and 40.6 per cent were female. This is in line with general trends for

entrepreneurship in Brazil, where there are slightly more male entrepreneurs than female (52.2 vs 47.8 per cent) (Macedo *et al.*, 2014).

4.1 Entrepreneurial motivations

When asked about what motivated them to set up their own business in tourism, the majority of respondents (47.0 per cent) evoked reasons of entrepreneurship involvement helping them to fulfil personal and professional goals. In a wider study of Latin American entrepreneurs, it was also found that personal fulfilment was the main reason underlying the creation of new businesses in Brazil (Smith-Hunter and Leone 2010).

However, slightly lower percentages of male (43.5 per cent) to female (52.0 per cent) entrepreneurs chose “personal/professional fulfilment” as the main reason for entering entrepreneurship. Looking at other studies on female entrepreneurs conducted in Brazil, personal fulfilment features highly on female entrepreneurs’ motivations list. A study of 149 female entrepreneurs in Rio de Janeiro found that personal values, along with the ability to control their businesses without just following orders, were the two main motivations for women entering entrepreneurship (Jonathan, 2011). Southern Brazilian female entrepreneurs who participated in the study by Machado *et al.* (2003) also cited personal fulfilment as a very important motivation factor.

Although overall, when looking at Figure 1, male and female entrepreneurs seem to rank motivations for entering entrepreneurship in a similar manner, there are some motivations which are gender-specific. Looking deeper into the type of motivation can reveal how gender roles and perceptions of entrepreneurship are altering in Brazil, which is still subjected to patriarchal structures (Moghadam, 2005).

The simplest manifestation of gender is the difference between male and female entrepreneurial motivations. Although female entrepreneurs are presented as getting satisfaction by creating work-family synergies, male entrepreneurs are presented as getting satisfaction by obtaining family support at home and minimizing their contribution to create work-family strategies (Eddleston and Powell, 2012). Hence, past literature speaks to women predominating as “convenience” entrepreneurs and men as “economically driven” entrepreneurs.

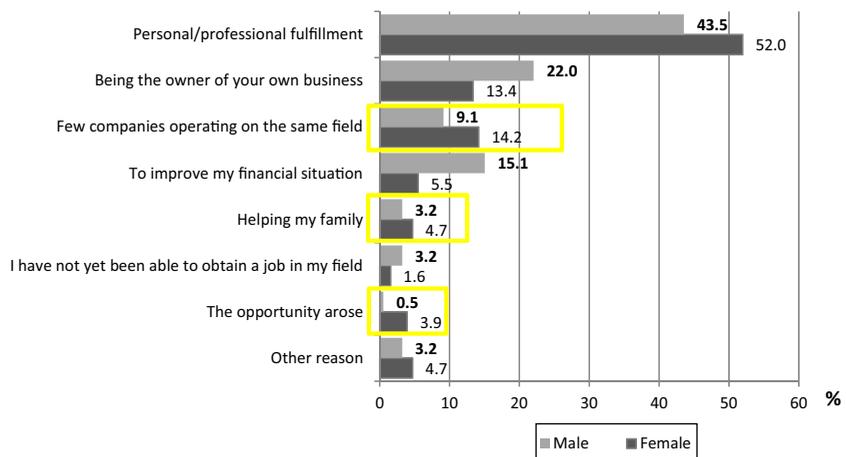


Figure 1.
Motivations to enter entrepreneurship

This permeation of gender into entrepreneurial motivations is also seen in the current study, where 15.1 per cent of male entrepreneurs (and only 5.5 per cent female entrepreneurs) cited the motivation of “improving my financial situation” as the prime reason for opening their business. A high percentage (22.0 per cent) of male entrepreneurs (vs 13.4 per cent female entrepreneurs) also cited “being the owner of your own business” as the prime motivation for engaging in entrepreneurship. Both of these motivations are strongly related to masculine ideals of success, illustrating how the “the heroic independent male” model is still prominent within entrepreneurial discourse (Brush *et al.*, 2009). The ideal of “rational individual”, who operates in isolation from his/her family, is present in much neoclassical economic theorizing, and this influences how entrepreneurs perceive themselves and how they express themselves as entrepreneurs.

Looking at the motivation called “few companies operating in the same field”, this translates into an opportunity-driven reason for engaging in entrepreneurship, as it shows that the entrepreneur has identified a niche in the market and utilized this in their favour. This was a motivation for more women (14.2 per cent) than for men (9.1 per cent). Although it seems that men adhere more closely to the neoclassical entrepreneurial model than women by acting as rational profit-seeking individuals, we find that female entrepreneurs are actually “more” entrepreneurial, as more female than male entrepreneurs cite opportunity recognition as a prime motivation. According to the entrepreneurship theory, “the recognition and development of new opportunities is at the heart of entrepreneurship” (Tang *et al.*, 2012, p. 77). Indeed, an entrepreneur is commonly perceived as “someone who perceives an opportunity and creates an organization to pursue it” (Bygrave, 1997, p. 2).

The gender-biased nature of this opportunity-driven motivation is further confirmed by another category of motivation, the one named “the opportunity arose”, which 3.9 per cent of female entrepreneurs chose in comparison to only 0.5 per cent male entrepreneurs.

Looking at the motivation “helping my family”, more female (4.7 per cent) than male entrepreneurs (3.2 per cent) chose this as their primary motivation for becoming a tourism entrepreneur. This difference in motivation is largely because of gender roles that connect femininity with primary carer position. Past literature shows that female entrepreneurs often cite motivations that reinforce stereotypes of female primary responsibility for caring, such as “having more control on the hours they work” and “accommodating professional goals alongside personal responsibilities” (McGowan *et al.*, 2011, p. 55), whereas for men, motivations are connected to balancing work responsibilities and earning potential, in adherence to gender roles connecting masculinity to primary breadwinning roles (Mattis, 2004). These are two observations from past literature that are also observed in the present study, but not as prominently as would be expected.

Moving from what motivates participants to what demotivates them, the next section analyzes how gender roles influence the barriers Brazilian tourism entrepreneurs consider the most important to their entrepreneurial progress.

4.2 Barriers to tourism entrepreneurship

To determine what barriers tourism entrepreneurs face in Brazil and to analyze the role of gender in these barriers, entrepreneurs were asked to rank the 13 barriers in terms of

importance to them, using a five-point Likert scale. These barriers are depicted in Figure 2, where the relative percentages of male vs female entrepreneurs that consider the barrier to have “quite a lot” and “a great deal” of influence on their entrepreneurial venture’s creation, are represented by bars.

Barriers to entrepreneurship are categorized in Figure 2 here according to what type of barrier they are, i.e. contextual, socio-demographic and cognitive, as described by Navarro *et al.* (2012). This separation of barriers helps identify which barriers are the result of external barriers (contextual), barriers one is “born-into” (socio-demographic) and barriers that are related to one’s character (cognitive).

4.2.1 Contextual barriers. Exploring if contextual factors have a similar effect on both male and female entrepreneurs can provide valuable insight into the ways in which gender permeates entrepreneurship. Looking at Figure 2, the complexity of labour laws is perceived by more male (53.1 per cent) than female (47.9 per cent) participants as significant barriers to entrepreneurship. Difficulty in accessing funding is also perceived as a barrier to entrepreneurship by more male (44.5 per cent) than female (39.1 per cent) participants. Only the barrier concerning the excess and complexity of public policies revealed marginally statistically significant differences ($U = 11,460.000$; $W = 27,391.000$; $p = 0.055$), with 55.1 per cent male participants stating this as a main barrier to entrepreneurship, vs 42.1 per cent of female participants.

In the current study’s sample, only slightly more men than women marked these contextual barriers as significant to their progress, which is interesting as several studies claim that women, compared to men, experience additional disadvantages when seeking finance for entrepreneurial activity; and when dealing with public policies (Greene *et al.*, 2001; Marlow and Patton, 2005; Mijid and Bernasek, 2013; OECD, 2008). This is particularly true within countries where highly patriarchal regimes apply

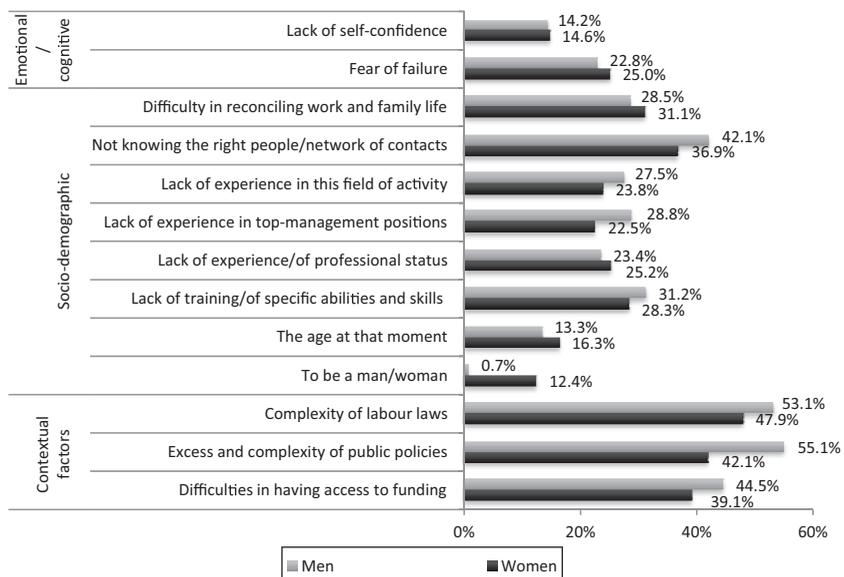


Figure 2.
Barriers to
entrepreneurship
(male vs female
entrepreneurs)

(Demirgüç-Kunt *et al.*, 2013; Heilbrunn *et al.*, 2014). Indeed, women are often discriminated against by policies and banking institutions that do not take into consideration women's disadvantaged position with regards to ownership and income (Marlow and Patton, 2005). However, the present study shows that similar numbers of male and female entrepreneurs perceive the complicity of labour laws and lack of access to funding as the most important barriers to entrepreneurship. These are very interesting findings as they go against most past literature which situates female entrepreneurs as perceiving different barriers to male entrepreneurs.

The similar percentages of female to male entrepreneurs who perceive contextual factors as significant barriers to entrepreneurship, despite it being women who are the most affected by this type of barrier, can be explained because women adhere to masculine interpretations of entrepreneurship, which focus on financial performance. Past literature shows how women avoid being identified as different from the entrepreneurial masculine norm by exhibiting an affiliation to masculine entrepreneurial discourse (Lewis, 2006).

Indeed, current entrepreneurial discourse has been criticized for positioning women as "lacking or incomplete men" (Ahl and Marlow, 2012, p.543). Women are encouraged to act as honorary men, without however taking into account the way in which contextual factors often prevent them from doing so, such as unfavourable treatment when wanting to take out a bank loan (Fine and Milonakis, 2009). The proliferation of microcredit initiatives directed at women, specifically, also illustrates that women have problems in gaining access to funding (Brana, 2013). Furthermore, despite laws existing that allow women the same rights under labour laws and public policy, the issue underlying *access* to utilize these rights is an essential factor to consider, as femininity is still primarily connected to caring, rather than economic proactivity.

This means that female entrepreneurs continue to prioritize nurturing family relationships at the expense of having as many educational and employment experiences prior to entrepreneurial activity and engaging "fully" in entrepreneurial activity. This also translates into female entrepreneurs being perceived as "underperforming" (Marlow and McAdam, 2013). Indeed, economic growth itself and the measurement thereof is gendered, as it is based on economic activity being defined as the production of goods and services that can be bought and sold in the market but explicitly excludes domestic labour inputted to reproduce the "economically active" on a daily and intergenerational basis (Kabeer, 2015).

The analysis of what male and female Brazilian tourism entrepreneurs perceive as contextual barriers makes an interesting finding. This is that female tourism entrepreneurs perceive *similar* contextual barriers as male entrepreneurs, rather than different barrier, as would be expected based on previous literature. Although this may be an attempt of female entrepreneurs to adhere to entrepreneurial discourse by drawing on masculine entrepreneurial perceptions of what constitutes a barrier, it could also be an indication that gender roles are changing and so are entrepreneurial roles.

4.2.2 Socio-demographic barriers. There are various socio-demographic factors that are perceived as barriers to entrepreneurship in the present study, ranging from gender to networking possibilities. The most significant socio-demographic barriers identified by participants were:

- networking (42.1 per cent men, 36.9 per cent women);
- difficulty in reconciling work and family life (28.5 per cent men, 31.1 per cent women); and
- lack of training (31.2 per cent men, 28.3 per cent women).

Lack of efficient networking was the major socio-demographic barrier that male (42.1 per cent) and female (36.9 per cent) entrepreneurs in this study felt affected them. As knowledge is the most important strategic asset for organizations in the twenty-first century, “networks and networking are fundamental to the knowledge development and sharing processes” (Durbin, 2011, p. 101). According to Forret and Dougherty (2004, p. 430), certain networking behaviours enhance career outcomes. However, these networking behaviours that are enacted as part of an entrepreneur’s career-enhancing strategy have different returns depending on the entrepreneur’s gender.

There is much literature on how networking is a gendered affair, especially informal networking, where the informal nature of these networks makes it difficult to fight discrimination, as organizations are not legally responsible for these informal work ties. The consequences of not being included in informal networking which often takes place after work is significant, as this is when business bonds are formed. Social capital theory suggests that networking can influence the success of entrepreneurial ventures, because networking allows owners to tap into resources external to their firm (Florin *et al.*, 2003). However, if women are excluded from informal male networks, they are viewed as being “poor in social capital” (Durbin, 2011, p. 99). However, recent research finds that there is no significant difference in the frequency with which male and female entrepreneurs utilize networks and the type of networks (formal/informal) they make, although female owners do appear to make significantly more use of family and friends (Watson, 2012).

Our findings reflect current trends supporting the importance of networking within entrepreneurship, with equal percentages of entrepreneurs perceiving lack of networking opportunities as significant in company success. However, the lack of recognition of informal networks as a type of “valid” network by entrepreneurs in this study could be a factor influencing our results. The lack of recognition of informal networks by male entrepreneurs, who are able to form more informal networks because of their reduced childcare responsibilities which makes them available for after-work drinks and socializing when the majority of informal networking occurs, may account for the similar numbers of male and female tourism entrepreneurs perceiving networking as a socio-demographic barrier to entrepreneurship. Further research, using a qualitative approach such as interviews, could help clarify this point.

The second most important socio-demographic barrier to entrepreneurship according to this study’s participants is maintaining a work-life balance. What is particularly interesting is that there is little variation in the numbers of male (28.5 per cent) and female (31.1 per cent) entrepreneurs who perceive maintaining a work-family balance as significant to their entrepreneurial experience. Maintaining a work-family balance is commonly perceived as a feminized barrier to entrepreneurship (McGowan *et al.*, 2011). Brazilian female business owners interviewed in the studies performed by Machado *et al.* (2003) and Gomes *et al.* (2005), in Brazil, stated that the difficulty of reconciling family and work lives was their primary concern. Situating this finding in the politico-economic context of Brazil, where self-employed people are not

entitled to family benefits which provide funding for children, means that entrepreneurs have less state assistance with maintaining a work-family balance (ILO, 2015).

Women in Brazil complete more hours of domestic work than men, with women putting in 27 h a week and men less than 10 h a week, indicating how maintaining a work-family balance is more difficult for women because of the sheer amount of more domestic labour they input in addition to their job (Guimaraes, 2013). However, although ILO data show that in Brazil, in 2009, roughly twice as many women completed household tasks as men, there is little research on this subject as completing household work is perceived as being “economically inactive” by the ILO and hence not officially measured. The observation that in the present study male entrepreneurs are just as concerned about maintaining a work-family balance as women are suggests that new definitions of entrepreneurship are being forged of an “ideal entrepreneur” as being one that works and takes care of his/her family.

The present study also suggests that male entrepreneurs are incorporating familial care roles into entrepreneurial discourse. Despite men in Brazil still completing about 10.0 h of housework, that is half that performed by women (IBGE, 2015), it is important to note that over the past decades, societal patterns in Brazil have changed from a male breadwinner model to dual-earner families and a number of alternatives to the family model have emerged (Jablonski, 2010). According to IBGE’s Social Indicators Summary (SIS, 2015[3]), in 2004, 46.1 per cent men claimed to share household and family responsibilities with their spouses, but in 2014, that rose to 51.3 per cent of men.

4.2.3 Cognitive barriers. Looking at the cognitive factors that are perceived as barriers to entrepreneurship, these refer to character traits such as confidence and fear of failure. In the present sample, both male and female entrepreneurs ranked cognitive barriers as of low importance. Fear of failure was a significant barrier for about the same percentage of men (22.8 per cent) as for women (25.0 per cent), and lack of self-confidence was a significant barrier for about the same percentage of women (14.6 per cent) and men (14.2 per cent), with no statistically significant differences observed. This finding is interesting as much literature points towards cognitive factors influencing female entrepreneurs’ performance more than male entrepreneurs’ performance. For example, de Bruin *et al.* (2007, p. 330) note that female entrepreneurs doubt their skills by observing “that they may not have the right opportunities and know-how to start or grow their own businesses”. However, in the present study, no association between cognitive barriers and gender is found.

Another cognitive factor, that of risk-taking, is closely related to self-confidence levels and reduced fear of failure and is perceived to influence entrepreneurial success, despite fluctuating opinions on its essentiality (Brindley, 2005). Although female entrepreneurs are perceived as risk-averse, our findings that female entrepreneurs perceive cognitive factors as a minor barrier to entrepreneurship illustrate how despite cognitive barriers being perceived as a significant impediment to female entrepreneurial involvement (Shinnar *et al.*, 2012), there is space for further investigation. Indeed, most recently, Nelson (2015) critiques the notion of risk-aversion being a feminine trait, as perceived within past literature. Nelson (2015) also finds that women and men with the same level of education show similar levels of risk aversion and that risk aversion is a function of age, income, wealth marital status and race rather than gender. Langowitz and Minniti (2007, p. 358) also state that “although risk tolerance plays some role in

gender differences, the main difference is in the way in which men and women perceive themselves and their environment”.

4.2.4 *Gender as a barrier*. Although ranked as the least relevant socio-demographic barrier to entrepreneurship, gender (being a man/woman), unveiled the highest disagreement among female and male entrepreneurs. Although 12.4 per cent of women assign quite or a great deal of influence to this factor, only 0.75 per cent of men share the same opinion. In fact, gender was the only socio-demographic factor with statistically significant differences ($U = 5,507.000$; $W = 15,803.000$; $p < 0.001$) between female and male entrepreneurs' perceptions of what constitutes an entrepreneurial barrier.

It is also interesting that most entrepreneurs (79.0 per cent) in this study do not perceive gender as a barrier to entrepreneurship. This is not surprising, as gender is so deeply embedded within economic structures and society that it is often invisible. Lewis (2006, p. 455) indeed comments how “the invisibility of the masculinity embedded in entrepreneurial activities is such, that ‘entrepreneur’ and ‘male’ have tended to become interchangeable terms”. This invisible connection between men and the normative means that the attributes and standards of this group are presented as a universal norm against which women are judged and evaluated, influencing how women perceive themselves as entrepreneurs.

The present study's findings that female entrepreneurs in Brazil are more aware of gender's role in entrepreneurship than male entrepreneurs suggest that women are more aware of the ways in which masculine-biased policies and economic structures act to discriminate against them, as they are the recipients of such discrimination. Women are classified as deficient entrepreneurs as they fail to perform as well as men in terms of growth, turnovers and profit. However, Marlow and McAdam (2013) critique the idea that female entrepreneurs underperform, introducing the novel concept that female entrepreneurs are simply performing *differently* because they have other priorities (e.g. family care). Hence, the invisible male norm within entrepreneurial discourse that all entrepreneurs are led solely by a thirst for profit is revealed by proving that some entrepreneurs *choose* to be less profitable, rather than being *unable* to be more profitable. Male entrepreneurs do not view gender as a barrier, because within the male-world we live in, they simply do not feel gender discrimination as strongly as women.

5. Conclusion

Past literature shows that tourism development draws on gendered inequalities to provide a supply of highly flexibilized and low-paid, largely female workers (Ferguson, 2011) concentrated in retail, hospitality and cleaning (Sinclair, 1997). Although tourism development can help empower women, the benefits of feminized work being paid for via tourism entrepreneurship is reduced by a tourism economy that does not provide an infrastructure to support working mothers (Vandegrift, 2008). This leads to a questioning of how entrepreneurial involvement is influenced by gender.

The current research challenges the dominant masculinity that informs understandings of entrepreneurship. Drawing on alternative entrepreneurial discourse informed by feminist thought, the ways in which gender roles influence tourism entrepreneurship roles in Brazil are analyzed.

Female tourism entrepreneurs in this study present themselves as more innovative than male entrepreneurs, identifying a niche or opportunity in the market and taking advantage of it. Opportunity recognition and utilization is an action which forms the

basis of entrepreneurial theory (Casson, 1982). Our results show a departure from past literature that situates female entrepreneurs as being strongly motivated to enter entrepreneurship to help their family financially and to accommodate caring responsibilities, rather than because they identified a niche in the market and took advantage of it (McGowan *et al.*, 2011). Female entrepreneurs present themselves as simultaneously adhering and rejecting entrepreneurial discourse through their motivations for entering entrepreneurship.

Looking at male entrepreneurs' motivations, a high percentage of male entrepreneurs cited their prime motivation for engaging in entrepreneurship as being the ability to be their own boss and for enhanced financial gain prospects. Both of these motivations are strongly related to an ideal within entrepreneurial discourse (Brush *et al.*, 2009) based on "the heroic independent male". This is linked to the ideal of "rational individual" who operates in isolation from his/her family, present in much neoclassical economic theorising. Hence, our results indicate that masculine conceptualizations of entrepreneurship are prevalent within Brazilian tourism entrepreneurship discourse. However, complexity arises regarding entrepreneurial gender roles, as similar numbers of male and female entrepreneurs are motivated to engage in entrepreneurship for the sake of their family. Indeed, personal fulfilment is a motivation for more women (52.0 per cent) than men (43.5 per cent), illustrating how gender norms surrounding women's connection to the family at the expense of their personal gain are dissolving and entering entrepreneurial discourse.

New definitions of entrepreneurship are being forged, with male entrepreneurs also incorporating familial care roles into entrepreneurial discourse. Although there is a slight difference between numbers of male and female entrepreneurs motivated to engage in entrepreneurship for the sake of their family, this is not a statistically significant difference. Although a study of Brazilian female entrepreneurs around the São Paulo area found that "family responsibilities" were ranked as the third most important motivation for female entrepreneurs (Smith-Hunter and Leone, 2010), in the present study, family-related motivation was the fifth most important motivation for Brazilian tourism entrepreneurs. This indicates how in the past decade it has become more socially acceptable for men to complete household tasks, especially childcare. Comprehensive studies conducted with thousands of participants in many Brazilian States show that there is greater male participation with regards to childcare specifically (Araújo and Scalon, 2005; Bruschini, 2007; Jablonski, 2010). This change in attitudes is sustained by the emergence of new life ideologies aligned to visions of more egalitarian gender roles.

Hence, in Brazil, we are witnessing a change in gender roles, which also translate into entrepreneurial roles, with a higher concern among male entrepreneurs in the present study to maintain a work-family balance. This observation highlights the emergence of new interpretations of entrepreneurship, departing from the neoclassical economics conceptualization of entrepreneurship being an economic activity aimed at financial gain situated outside the familial sphere.

Cognitive barriers are often perceived of as being linked to gender. However, in this study, fear of failure, risk-taking and lack of self-confidence were significant barriers for similar percentages of men and women. This finding is interesting as much literature points towards cognitive factors influencing female entrepreneurs' performance more than male entrepreneurs' performance. The current study highlights that cognitive

barriers are not gender-specific. Indeed, the connection between biological sex and cognitive abilities evident in past entrepreneurial literature has been highly critiqued by feminist psychologists (Halpern, 2013; Eagly and Wood, 2011). Nelson (2015) critiques the very idea that risk-taking behaviour is gendered, adding complexity to the existing explanations of why women face more barriers to entrepreneurial progression than men and opening space for more nuanced investigations of the role of gender in entrepreneurial discourse. The present study opens space for discussion around dispelling the myth that female entrepreneurs are at a disadvantage because of their “innate” lack of confidence and fear of failure.

The continuing gender pay gap and occupational segregation are evidence of how the feminine economic space continues to be devalued and how business performance is assessed using criteria that reflect male norms (Skalpe, 2007). Indeed, trying to reconcile family and work time is especially difficult for women who engage in entrepreneurship within tourism, as idiomorphic challenges exist because of tourism’s seasonality, long hours and intensity. Despite this, female tourism entrepreneurs in this study cite contextual factors as the most pertinent barriers to entrepreneurship. Indeed, the finding that both male and female entrepreneurs perceive the same barriers as affecting them the most, such as complexity of public policies and labour laws and difficulty in accessing funding, is important. This finding departs from past literature that situates female entrepreneurs operating within a patriarchal society as being at more of a disadvantage than men regarding contextual barriers. This finding may be illustrative of contemporary changes in gender and entrepreneurial roles in Brazil, which would be interesting to be researched further in a future study.

Drawing on past literature, one explanation for this study’s findings is that female entrepreneurs are adhering to a new type of ideal, that of the “rational economic woman” (Rankin, 2001, p.18). They do this by taking the utility maximizing rational economic man and adding on essentialized feminine sensibilities such as concern for family. Elias (2013) critiques how micro-entrepreneurs are particularly exposed to the attainment of this ideal, as tourism development programmes promote entrepreneurship as a perfect win-win situation of combining family and work. However, further rigor could be added to the study of Brazilian tourism entrepreneurs’ motivations and barriers by using qualitative methods to draw out the nuances regarding entrepreneurs’ perceptions of what constitutes a barrier and a motivation. For example, focusing on if entrepreneurs perceive informal networking to be a “legitimate” type of entrepreneurial networking could provide an interesting insight into the gendered ways in which entrepreneurial networking operates. This type of research could explain why similar numbers of male and female entrepreneurs in this study perceive networking to be a significant barrier, although past literature points to this being a feminine barrier.

The statistically significant observation that most entrepreneurs (79.0 per cent) in this study do not perceive gender as a barrier to entrepreneurship is indicative of gender’s invisibility within politico-economic and socio-cultural structures influencing entrepreneurs. Despite this, the study finds that women are more aware than men of gender’s role in entrepreneurship. This confirms that gendered barriers largely influence women and illustrates that much can be done to deal with the problem of gender equality within tourism. However, the first step to solving a problem is actually recognizing that you have one, which is where this paper makes a contribution to the progress of entrepreneurship theorizing.

Notes

1. The registration in the CADASTUR system is mandatory for accommodation, travel agencies, land and water passenger transport, organization of events, theme parks, camping sites and tour guides and optional for food and beverage-serving activities, exhibition, meeting and congress centres, water parks, nautical and recreational fishing-related facilities and infrastructures, entertainment facilities and infrastructures, events-related facilities and infrastructures, rental services (of land and water vehicles) and specialised services for different segments. Organisations from the public sector and other private companies (e.g. airlines) are not accounted in this system, although museums are registered in a different platform: the National Museum Registration System.
2. 75 per cent respondents answered that that their occupation was the “result of creating [their] own company/business” (segment of question from the questionnaire).
3. IBGE – Brazilian institute of Geography and Statistics: Synthesis of 2015 social indicators with data for 2014) based on PNAD – National Household Sample Survey 2004/2014.

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