

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

## Gender, tourism &amp; entrepreneurship: A critical review

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## ABSTRACT

Dominant accounts of tourism entrepreneurship position successful entrepreneurial performance as masculine and economically informed; undervaluing gendered difference in approaches to entrepreneurship. When varying approaches are held in focus, women are positioned as 'less than', and in need of training and support. In reviewing the gender, tourism and entrepreneurship literature this paper draws attention to the marginal, yet decisive contributions of feminist postcolonial, political economy and poststructuralist approaches. Such approaches assist in questioning the implicit economic and masculine bias in the literature. Dominant definitions and evaluations of entrepreneurship need to be questioned, so as to challenge Global North conceptualizations of empowerment and success. Scholars ought to diversify the locations of research on entrepreneurship and gender, and engage more with policy critiques.

## Introduction

Tourism has long been perceived as a fertile field for entrepreneurial initiatives (Li, 2008; Nikraftar & Hosseini, 2016) due to a predominance of small firms and relatively low entry barriers (Shaw & Williams, 1998; Williams, Shaw, & Greenwood, 1989). These same factors have repeatedly led to tourism entrepreneurship being premised on its potential to empower women (Hanson, 2009; Martinez Caparros, 2018; Vujko et al., 2019) and it has been identified as providing opportunities specifically for women entrepreneurs (Haugen & Vik, 2008). The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) (2019), for example, claims that tourism can empower women through income-generating opportunities in small and larger-scale tourism firms.

Martinez Caparros (2018) cautions that whilst tourism is often depicted as an economic sector that holds potential to empower women due to its diverse, dynamic and flexible nature (Peeters & Ateljevic, 2009), it remains a highly gendered activity that reinforces traditional gendered performances by offering temporary and part-time employment in traditionally gendered skills. This consequentially bolsters unequal divisions of labour. In seeking to 'empower' women, Martinez Caparros (2018) warns much discourse has focused on income generation – assuming that, empowerment equates to obtaining any form of economic income with limited attention to the context through which 'empowerment' occurs. Similarly, Cole (2018), has recently cautioned that rhetoric positioning tourism as empowering for women is consistently overstated and has thus called for the need to reframe conceptualisation of tourism entrepreneurship for women beyond its artificial economic, masculinist framings. In doing so, Cole (2018) argues that this

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would facilitate better understanding of the individual ways entrepreneurs actually make sense of the opportunities and limitations of entrepreneurship beyond normative globalised, capitalist scripts.

More broadly, whilst the promise and potential contribution of tourism entrepreneurship is perceived to be strong, feminist theoretical critiques that seek to question the subordinate positioning of women entrepreneurs in comparison to men, emerging from the broader entrepreneurial scholarship, have not been well integrated into tourism research. Within this broader entrepreneurship literature it has been identified that a gendered bias persists within entrepreneurial discourse whereby the category of 'women entrepreneurs' is viewed as secondary and positioned as 'lacking', in comparison to 'men entrepreneurs' (Ahl, 2006; Ahl & Marlow, 2012). This hierarchical gendered structure has resulted in a series of research and policy agendas, which seek to rectify this perceived failure of women to enact innovation and wealth creation through entrepreneurship (Ahl & Marlow, 2012).

Whilst feminist critiques cautioning against this perceived 'lack' are now well rehearsed within the pages of entrepreneurial scholarship (cf. Henry, Foss, & Ahl, 2016; Martinez Dy & Marlow, 2017; Swail & Marlow, 2018), in the specific field of tourism entrepreneurship many scholars continue to understand entrepreneurship as a subject position in which men outperform women (cf. Boley, Ayscue, Maruyama, & Woosnam, 2017; Peeters & Ateljevic, 2009; Vujko et al., 2019). By implication, women thus require support to ensure the empowering potential of entrepreneurship is realised. Consequently, valuable discussion within tourism entrepreneurship scholarship has appeared to lack problematisation of the underlying premises pertaining to gender whilst at the same time, highlighting the empowering potential of entrepreneurship specifically for women.

Recognising this contradiction and the limited theoretical attention granted to tourism entrepreneurship, the paper reviews the literature on gender, tourism and entrepreneurship, determining the effects of the siloed positioning of feminist approaches. We argue that current research have resulted in limited questioning of the extent to which normative gendered discourses and performances prevail, influencing both academic and policy conceptualisations, as well as the ontological experiences of entrepreneurs within the tourism industry. Such marginalisation of feminist theory limits the effectiveness of measures implemented to assist tourism entrepreneurship. Hence, the paper presents a roadmap for the engagement of feminist theory not only as an alternative to, but also *within* broader approaches to tourism entrepreneurship, thereby attempting to shift feminist debates more firmly from the margins to the centre of discussion. In doing so, we hope to contribute to conceptualisation of gender within tourism entrepreneurship, so as to better align policy and governance measures with the barriers experienced by entrepreneurs; rendering a contribution to tourism entrepreneurship policy debates. Whilst this is not the first paper to review the field of entrepreneurship in the tourism industry (Carmichael & Morrison, 2011; Li, 2008; Solvoll, Alsos, & Bulanova, 2015), we aim to emphasise the importance of attending to gender issues within tourism entrepreneurship.

To that end, the paper begins by outlining the feminist debates which inform our work around poststructuralist, political economy and postcolonial theories in tourism and entrepreneurship research. We turn next to establishing the value of conducting a systematic literature review to critically examine gender, tourism and entrepreneurship scholarship. Thereafter, we map the field of research to evaluate the potentials and limitations of current conceptualisations of 'women entrepreneurs' within the literature. In the final section we consider how feminist theory can challenge the normative gendered conceptualisation of entrepreneurs.

## A feminist critique of tourism entrepreneurship

Consideration to the ways feminist approaches might be more strongly incorporated into tourism scholarship is critical because despite being introduced three decades ago and despite having increased over time, feminist perspectives have struggled to advance from the margins (Pritchard, 2018), whilst feminist scholars working within this area of research have been found to lack a dynamic and networked community (Figueroa-Domecq, Pritchard, Segovia-Pérez, Morgan, & Villacé-Molinero, 2015; Jeffrey, 2017). To assist in examining the construction of a gender, tourism and entrepreneurship discourse, we draw on three from several possible areas of feminist inquiry, to balance comparative perspectives and discursive depth within the confines of a single article; poststructuralism, political economy and post-colonialism.

There are three reasons for utilising these specific areas of feminist inquiry. First, following systematic analysis of the articles analysed, feminist theory was found to be limited; however, where it was utilised within the gender, tourism and entrepreneurship scholarship, poststructuralism, political economy and post-colonialism were identified as the three most frequent approaches. Second, these three frameworks have previously been identified as useful in generating feminist contributions within tourism management (cf. Aitchison, 2001; Boley et al., 2017). Third, following Aitchison (2001), we recognise the value in moving past strict alignment with singular feminist approaches, in attempting to generate a feminist discourse within tourism management. In utilising the three frameworks, we aim to bring attention to how feminist frameworks intersect and work together to generate in-depth insights into tourism and gender intersections that cannot be achieved through engagement with any one singular approach.

What unites poststructuralism, political economy and post-colonialism is their identification that gender is a social ascription performed by all humans within specific social contexts, in ways that devalue femininity; and thus, by inference, devalues women (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Whilst there are strong areas of alignment, each framework also renders a distinctive contribution to thinking through critical conceptualisations of gender.

Poststructuralist thinking, for instance, has been crucial in making sense of and critiquing the essentialist positioning of gender and the consequential subordinate location of women relative to men. Whilst there is no unifying understanding of poststructuralist thinking, in broad terms this approach implies focusing on the instability of meaning, whereby caution is given to accounts which seek to fix ideas (that is, construct truths) within particular categories (Derrida, 1978). Such an approach seeks to respond directly to structuralist thinking that aims to reveal defining structures within society, language and the mind – and thus construct essentialised ideas regarding what it is to be an entrepreneur. Poststructuralists' consider that structuralist accounts that seek to fix typological

categories (such as, ‘women entrepreneurs’) lack insights into the complex, everyday ways that subjectivities are performed, and which cannot be captured through categorisation.

Poststructuralist approaches are especially concerned with the hierarchical relationship of binary oppositions (Bondi & Domosh, 1992). Entrepreneurship literature, for example, emerged through a concern with understanding what defines an entrepreneur (e.g. Brush, De Bruin, & Welter, 2009; Carmichael & Morrison, 2011). Early scholarship taking place within Global North contexts turned to the visible experiences of entrepreneurship which tended to be those of ‘white Western men’, publicly claiming the subject position of ‘entrepreneur’ (Ahl & Marlow, 2012; Bourne, 2010). A predetermined, yet constructed notion of entrepreneurial success thus exists within the literature based on this early scholarship, which ensures that diverging entrepreneurial performances become positioned as being other than, or inferior to, this predetermined construction (Ahl & Marlow, 2012). In response, poststructuralist ideas will be used in this review to question the utilisation of gender as a variable as well as the way, and by whom, ‘successful’ entrepreneurship is defined.

Building further on the foundations of poststructuralism, post-colonial approaches bring attention to the continued legacies of colonialism influencing social and political relations between the Global North and Global South (McEwan, 2009). Such legacies continue to structure contemporary inequitable relations and influence the production of knowledge within academia, shifting the focus beyond gender to consider the politics of intersectional differences (Grenshaw, 1991). This renders comparisons between the institutional locations of academics, fieldwork, respondents’ identities and the types of methods utilised to represent the voice of respondents. Postcolonialism is here useful in moving beyond a focus on gender but, at the same time, within the context of this manuscript focus remains on gender because we are seeking to question determined discourses espousing the empowering potential of entrepreneurship.

This leads us to our final approach, feminist political economy, which has been used to make sense of contemporary entrepreneurship, whereby entrepreneurship is often understood as a way for individuals to respond to market and state vulnerabilities within a neoliberal context (Ahl & Marlow, 2019). Feminist political economy approaches question the notion that all individuals are perceived to possess the potential to generate independent economic success through entrepreneurial activity, irrespective of geographical or social context. Inclusiveness is key here, with neoliberal entrepreneurial discourse portraying the notion that *any* individual possesses the potential to generate entrepreneurial success – so long as they acquire the narrowly conceptualised, essentialised prescribed skill set (for example, networking skills) (Ahl & Marlow, 2012). Those who do not acquire such outcomes are held responsible for alleged shortcomings, an individualised focus that overlooks the structures through which experience is determined (Ahl & Marlow, 2019). Clearly this is a highly problematic presumption, when considering the complexity of contexts, and their social and political structures, within which entrepreneurship is performed (Ahl & Marlow, 2019). These neoliberal assumptions are evident in the agendas of a number of organizations promoting the potential of tourism entrepreneurship in response to its perceived low entry barriers and the predominance of small firms: for example, the World Bank’s ‘Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative’ and UNWTO’s Women in ‘Tourism Empowerment Programme’.

Feminist political economy approaches raise concerns about notions of inclusivity, given that it is oftentimes men who dominate as high-profile entrepreneurial role models. At the same time, the narratives and challenges of entrepreneurs who are not economically successful become equated as ‘less than’. Informing our analysis, a feminist political economy approach thus aims to attend to the dominance of economic narratives within the analysed articles; specifically, the association of success with higher income levels and the predetermined empowering potential of individualised entrepreneurship. Political economy approaches will further be used to question entrepreneurship as a primary route to women’s independence (Ahl & Marlow, 2019; Cole, 2018). They also attend to the ways scholarship holds focus with individualised skills and empowerment, rather than with the structures of governance and policy that generate existing gender inequalities (Ahl & Marlow, 2019).

## Method

The systematic review resulted in the inclusion of 127 articles. To ensure a transparent and efficient process, the followed steps (Figueroa-Domecq et al., 2015; Koseoglu, Rahimi, Okumus, & Liu, 2016; Palomo, Figueroa-Domecq, & Laguna, 2017) comprised:

- **Database selection:** Scopus and the ISI Web of Knowledge (WoK) were used, in recognition of their position as the leading international databases for tourism publications (Hall, 2011; Figueroa-Domecq et al., 2015). To fully represent the research area, Research Gate was further included (Yu, Wu, Alhalabi, Kao, & Wu, 2016).
- **Inclusion criteria** (Baum, Kralj, Robinson, & Solnet, 2016): This process tries to ensure the presence of all relevant references. Based on an initial query, which identified 25 contributions, the following KEYWORDS were selected: GENDER, WOMEN, TOURISM, ENTREPR\*; important to highlight that in SCOPUS and WoK all articles regardless of their language require title, keywords and abstract in English (e.g. Kaliyaperumal, 2015; Salmeron-Manzano & Manzano-Agugliaro, 2017). The following query was launched in November 2018 and completed in May 2019: (TITLE-ABS-KEY (entrep\* OR enterp\*)) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (tourism) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (gender OR women). A total of 203 contributions were identified in Scopus, WoK and Research Gate (see Fig. 1). These contributions were screened, through their title and abstract, to avoid duplication or non-relevance; 61 papers were excluded. The inclusion in this initial query not only of journal papers but also of books, book chapters and conference papers tries to ensure the openness of this study to different types of research publications (Oviedo-García, 2016), and avoid the consequence of journal gate keepers in tourism research (Rodríguez-Sánchez, Makkonen, & Williams, 2019). There were no language limitations but most of the articles were in English (95.9%), followed far behind by Spanish (3.3%) and French (0.8%),

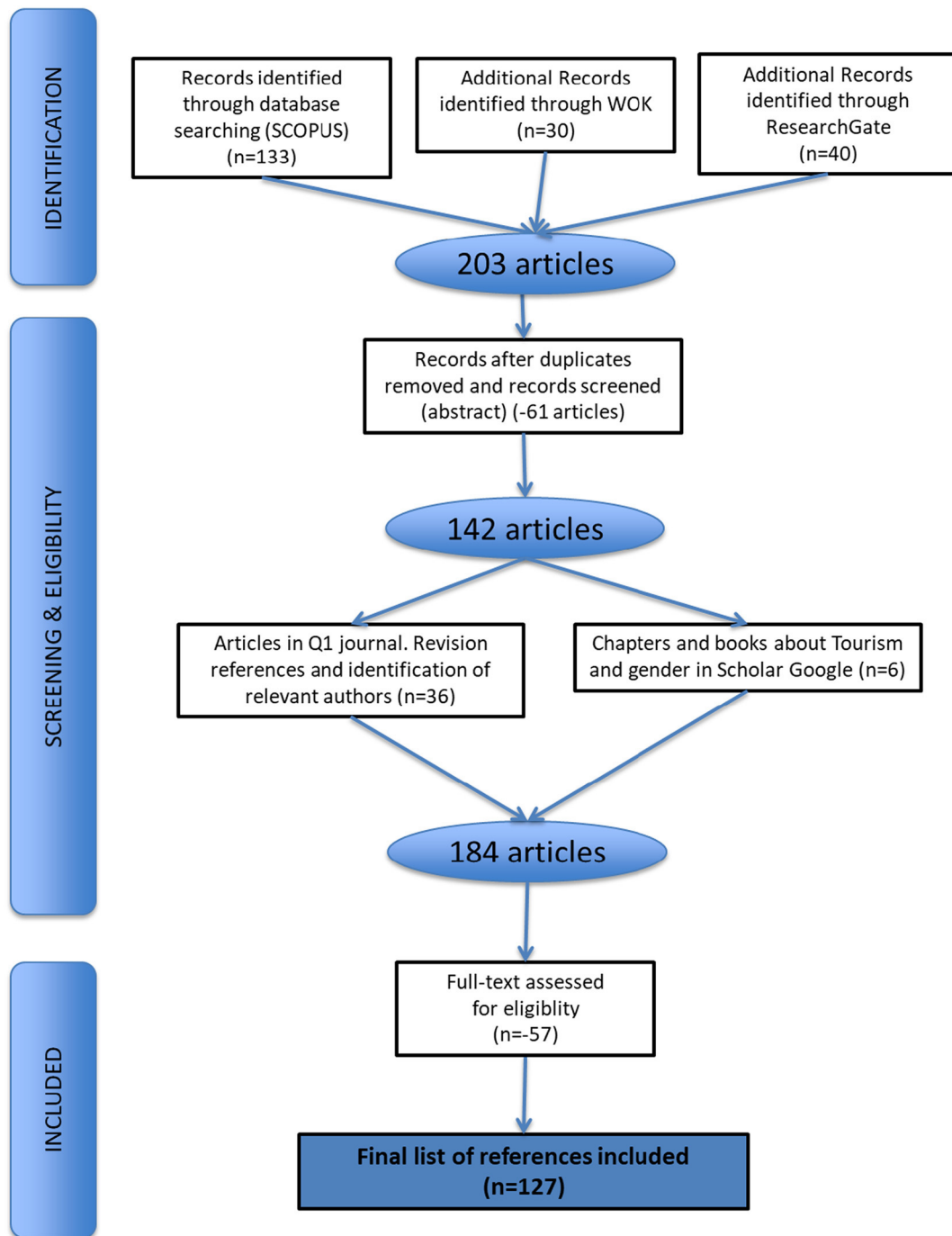


Fig. 1. N° of articles flow diagram.

Source: authors based on Moher et al., 2015.

To sidestep the limitations associated with the selected databases, two further inclusion criteria were added. First, the 15 most important journals in Scopus and WOK were selected, in order to select the articles published in these journals. Through a narrative approach the bibliography of the previously identified articles was reviewed and any relevant articles for this study were included. Additionally, using bibliographical software, key authors in the field were identified, according to the number of relevant publications in the existing citation database. The citation search was undertaken for each of these authors, cross-referencing systematic elements of the review. An initial set of 95 articles were identified, that after screening were reduced to 36 articles. Secondly, recently published books might not be included, since books follow different indexing systems, depending on the editorial (Torres-Salinas,

Robinson-García, Cabezas-Clavijo, & Jiménez-Contreras, 2014) and, within books, new identification and accessibility issues arise between monographs, edited volumes and book chapters (Leydesdorff & Felt, 2012). Moreover, presence in online catalogues is not homogeneous among editors around the world, and Google Books become the best available source of information (Kousha, Thelwall, & Rezaie, 2011), though it is difficult to manage due to the limitations in defining search options. To ensure the inclusion of all relevant books, chapters, conference papers and articles, and considering the most relevant languages in the corpus (English, Spanish and French), an extensive search was performed in Google Scholar, since 2014, with more general selected keywords (Gender, Women and Tourism). The first 600 references were revised for each language, though after the first 200 the relevance of the search (include Gender, Women and Tourism) decreased considerably. Initially 16 potential books or chapters not previously included were identified, that after screening were reduced to 5 chapters (from 4 books) and 1 book, all of them in English and published in 2017 and 2018; the performed systematic review did not exclude any languages, though it is acknowledged that there is a clear bias towards English.

- **Exclusion criteria:** in order to ensure the relevance of the selected contributions, an evaluation phase was performed, which focused on an in-depth analysis of each contribution. To ensure a systematic review, two researchers collaborated in the evaluation. After implementing the exclusion criteria, 57 documents were identified as non-relevant for the study.
- **Variables analysis selection:** Since the main objective of this analysis is to evaluate scientific production, in alignment with several other authors (e.g. Bordons, Morillo, Fernández, & Gómez, 2003; Figueroa-Domecq et al., 2015; Koseoglu et al., 2016), the following variables are assessed in each article: year of publication; number of authors, gender and name of the authors, name and country of the institutional affiliation; topic covered; language; methodology and geographical location of the fieldwork. A further analysis of feminist epistemologies completed the study.
- **Results and presentation:** A thematic framework was developed to describe the inter-relationships between the themes. Specifically, the framework “Gender as a Social Structure in the Hospitality Industry” (Segovia-Pérez, Figueroa-Domecq, Fuentes-Moraleda, & Muñoz-Mazón, 2019) was found to be useful in understanding the theme of women, entrepreneurship and tourism whereby we focussed on three levels: 1) The INDIVIDUAL LEVEL included: latent and nascent entrepreneurship; personality traits; resilience; women's level of participation / type of organizations created by women/ business success; motivations; 2) The INTERACTIONAL/INTERSECTIONAL incorporated: stereotyping and roles; work-life balance; networking and cooperatives; leadership styles, management styles, and decision making; socio-economic barriers to women's entrepreneurship; development and sustainability; 3) The INSTITUTIONAL encompassed: policy-making level at a local, regional, national or international programs to support women's entrepreneurship, and training activities developed by institutions.

## Mapping the field of women, entrepreneurship and tourism

Gendered distinctions in tourism entrepreneurship were evident in all the reviewed articles but there were considerable differences in their approaches and conceptualisations. Following Yang, Khoo-Lattimore, and Arcodia's (2017) gender relevance classification, contrasts were evident between articles prioritising an analysis of women (48%), over women and men (22.8%), and several articles that considered gender as just one dimension within a broader investigation (29.1%); whilst no articles examined the experiences of individuals who enact gender as other than man or woman. Tourist studies and tourism management journals (39.4% of

**Table 1**

Number of articles per journal.

Source: authors.

| Academic journal or book <sup>a</sup>                                 | Num. articles | % of total articles |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| Annals of Tourism Research                                            | 9             | 7.10%               |
| Journal of Sustainable Tourism                                        | 6             | 4.70%               |
| Tourism Management                                                    | 5             | 3.90%               |
| Commercial homes in tourism: An international perspective (book)      | 3             | 2.40%               |
| International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship                  |               |                     |
| International Journal of Tourism Research                             |               |                     |
| Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management                         |               |                     |
| Gender equality and tourism: Beyond Empowerment (book)                |               |                     |
| Current Issues in Tourism                                             | 2             | 1.60%               |
| Ethnic and Racial Studies                                             |               |                     |
| Gender, work and tourism                                              |               |                     |
| International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business          |               |                     |
| International Journal of Hospitality Management                       |               |                     |
| Journal of Ecotourism                                                 |               |                     |
| Journal of Rural Cooperation                                          |               |                     |
| Sustainable tourism and the millennium development goals (book)       |               |                     |
| Tourism                                                               |               |                     |
| Women producers and consumers of tourism in developing regions (book) |               |                     |
| Women's Studies International Forum                                   |               |                     |

<sup>a</sup> Journals or books with only one article excluded.



the articles are published in these journals) were dominant, with fewer publications evident in the touristic dimensions of gender (7.1%) and entrepreneurship (14.2%) from the mainstream management and gender studies journals (Table 1); important to note that 18.1% of the references are articles from books.

To assist in making sense of how gender was understood, we broadly followed Segovia-Pérez et al. (2019) three tiered framework (Individual, Interactional/intersectional and Institutional), outlined in their examination of 'Gender as a Social Structure in the Hospitality Industry'. The Individual level referring to the 'Gendered Categorisation of Touristic Entrepreneurial Identities', the Interactional is conceptualised as, 'Space, Region, and Culture', whilst the Institutional relates to, 'Policy and Governance'. Whilst any framework instils artificial essentialism with many articles working across multiple themes, 49 articles (38.6%) were found to relate strongly to the theme of 'Gendered Categorisation of Touristic Entrepreneurial Identities', 65 articles (51.2%) to the second theme of 'Space, Region and Culture', whilst 36 (28.3%) focused on 'Policy and Governance'. Only four articles considered all three themes (Kimbu & Ngoasong, 2016; Moswete & Lacey, 2015; Ngoasong & Kimbu, 2019; Peeters & Ateljevic, 2009), indicating potential theoretical and/or methodological fragmentation.

Clear interest in qualitative methods (47.2%) was found, followed by quantitative methods (29.9%), with less frequent representation of mixed methods (10.2%) and purely theoretical articles (11%). Crucially, these results stand in opposition to the findings of Henry et al. (2016), who identified an overwhelming utilisation of large-scale, quantitative methods, that sought to draw generalized conclusions between men and women across varying entrepreneurial sectors. Conversely, our findings suggest a dominance of research attentive to the individualised, lived experiences of entrepreneurs. However, as we show, whilst qualitative articles were frequent, engagement within critical theory was limited and disjointed. This suggests potential for greater engagement with theory, as well as enhanced dialogue across the qualitative and quantitative divide.

#### *Gendered categorisation of touristic entrepreneurial identities*

Scholarship attempting to understand gendered touristic entrepreneurial identities largely focused on the distinctive characteristics of women entrepreneurs compared to men. Positivist, quantitative approaches were dominant, with articles constructing binary gendered conceptualisations. A majority of the articles (61.2%) were concerned with individual issues in entrepreneurship and sought to examine women's motivations and personality traits, as being clearly different from those of men. Such divergences were understood to influence entrepreneurial outcomes: for example, women being more likely to apply for fewer and smaller loans than men (De la Fuente-Cabrero, Segovia-Perez & Figueroa-Domecq, 2014), being more reluctant to acquire debt (Caliendo, Fossen, & Kritikos, 2009), being more likely to open small businesses (Getz & Carlsen, 2005; Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM), 2017), and tending to reside in the wholesale and retail sectors, whilst avoiding ICT businesses (GEM, 2017).

Whilst quantitative approaches prevailed, eight articles measure the level of participation in entrepreneurship of women compared to men, and only four appear to have representative samples. The latter were conducted in Portugal and Norway, whilst another undertook an international comparative approach. The results show women's limited participation in tourism entrepreneurship, except for one study in which women were shown to be 50% more likely than men to be Hotel and Restaurant entrepreneurs (Ramos-Rodríguez, Medina-Garrido, & Ruiz-Navarro, 2012).

The examination of gendered differences in motivation formed a central dimension of the articles constituting this category. Though motivations focussed on a personal and individual level, family conciliation and feminine subjectivities of caring were found to be characteristic (Bakas, 2017a; Beneria, 2003; Kumar, 2013). Additionally, the external environment in the form of the surrounding economic setting and the community was positioned as especially important for women entrepreneur motivations (Costa, Breda, Bakas, Durao, & Pinho, 2016; Zapalska & Brozik, 2014; Dieguez-Castrillon, Gueimonde-Canto, Sinde-Cantorna, & Blanco-Cerradelo, 2012).

A common feature identified was that women entrepreneurship in tourism have been found to place high importance on community well-being (Bakas, 2017a; Kimbu & Ngoasong, 2016; Tajeddini, Walle, & Denisa, 2017). Women were shown to be seeking an income source they can directly control (Horton, 2009), economic independence (Tajeddini et al., 2017) or enhanced status in their own community (Getz & Carlsen, 2005). Such findings contrast with neoliberal entrepreneurial discourse, which assumes entrepreneurial involvement to be primarily for individual economic gain (Bakas, 2017a).

Gendered trends by industry sector were also evident. Of the articles which analysed a specific sector, all but one examined gendered practices within touristic service roles (accommodation, hospitality or handicrafts). For example, a Norwegian study (Haugen & Vik, 2008) found the percentage of women farmers involved in agricultural production was just 14%, whilst women were far more involved in farm-based service roles: with 95% working in 'food serving' and 74% in the provision of 'lodging accommodation'. The lack of investigation of women's entrepreneurial experiences beyond such final service delivery risks implicitly assuming that women entrepreneurs do not exist outside of service and overlooks potential barriers and opportunities encountered in other tourism sub-sectors.

The systematic analysis indicated the overwhelming dominance of research in the Global North. Following the World Bank Atlas classification system based on Gross National Income (GNI) per capita in US\$ (The World Bank, 2019), only 4.7% of articles focused on Low income (L) countries, with 8.7% on Lower Middle income (LM), 31.5% on Upper Middle income (UM), and 42.5% on High income (H) countries. As highlighted in Table 2, there is a strong concentration of academics in Europe, North America and Oceania; specifically located in Spain (13.3%, 37 from 279 authorships), United States (10.7%), Australia (10%), Greece (9.7%), United Kingdom (9.3%), Portugal (5.4%), Sweden (3.6%), China (3.9%), New Zealand (2.9%). In contrast, there were relatively few academics located in Asia, Africa and Central and South America. A large gap is thus identified between fieldwork location and academic institutional location in Central and South America (-11.1%), Africa (-9.5%) and Asia (-9.7%) suggesting a dominance from the

**Table 2**

Geographical location of universities and fieldwork.

Source: authors.

|                    | Universities (continents) | Fieldwork (continents) | Country research gap – difference (% continent university – % continent fieldwork) |
|--------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Europe             | 49.1%                     | 37.2%                  | 11.9%                                                                              |
| North America      | 13.9%                     | 2.5%                   | 11.4%                                                                              |
| Oceania            | 12.8%                     | 9.9%                   | 2.9%                                                                               |
| Asia               | 14.2%                     | 24%                    | –9.7%                                                                              |
| Africa             | 7.8%                      | 17.4%                  | –9.5%                                                                              |
| Central/South Amer | 2.1%                      | 13.2%                  | –11.1%                                                                             |

Global North in terms of academic location, speaking *for* other regions in these contexts. Whilst Global South academics may be working within Global North institutions, the dominance of academics located within Global North institutions suggests the potential for certain discourses relating to entrepreneurship to hold dominance.

Stark distinctions were further evident in the social construction of women entrepreneurs between the Global North and South. In Sweden, for example, women participants were positioned as ‘adventurous’ and ‘strong’ in their ability to undertake entrepreneurship (Skoglund, 2011). In South Africa, by contrast, women were conceived as economically vulnerable and lacking entrepreneurial orientation (Kwaramba, Lovett, Louw, & Chipumuro, 2012). This was reflected in both the reliance on singular distribution channels and the absence of marketing strategies. The majority of South African women entrepreneurs (74.3%) were also found to have scored low on self and social awareness, self-management and social skills (Kwaramba et al., 2012). Research conducted in countries that were not ‘High Income’, following the World Bank Classification, was also more likely to frame entrepreneurship as necessity-driven and empowering (Moswete & Lacey, 2015; Vujko et al., 2019). Such essentialised constructions within the literature limits potential understanding of how women entrepreneurs’ trouble and reconfigure gendered constructions in non-normative ways.

### Space, region and culture

Qualitative approaches tended to explore the processes through which gender was constructed and contested within specific place-based contexts. This research examined the ways touristic entrepreneurial work offered opportunities to transform gender roles (Cone, 1995; Hanson, 2009). At an interactional level, topics were more sundry, showing the diversity of impacts, relationships and issues around the co-creation of women’s entrepreneurship and tourist destinations. Whilst diverse, the most relevant topics in this category included ‘roles and stereotyping’ (16 papers, 24.6%), the impact of women’s entrepreneurship on development and empowerment (15.4%) with a significant dominance in exploration of entrepreneurial farming practices within Northern Europe.

Several articles identified how entrepreneurship afforded women opportunity to construct alternative identities that diverge substantially from gender norms (Cone, 1995), if only momentarily. Diaz-Carrion’s (2018) research, by way of example, found that whilst entrepreneurship was not driven by a desire to reverse gendered performances, women entrepreneurs often came to realise the normative gendered expectations placed on them, once they began their entrepreneurial journey. Opportunities to trouble such normative distinctions were limited, with women drawing on normative gendered performances to obtain work (Gentry, 2007), whilst often transferring traditional gender roles found within the ‘home’ to the workplace (Bensemam & Hall, 2010; Scott, 1997). Those seeking to challenge normative gender roles often found themselves making social sacrifices, such as divorcing their partner (Diaz-Carrion, 2018). Thus, central to this work is an understanding that entrepreneurship does not necessarily afford radical, alternative subjectivities for women – but rather, on the whole, perpetuates normative gendered constructions regarding what it means to be a woman within particular contexts. Such a critique, however, may be a reflection of the narrow research focus of the entrepreneurial activities undertaken by women in the tourism industry, which highlights the need to examine the experiences of women entrepreneurs in more varied places.

Place was identified as being crucial in this work, with touristic entrepreneurial potential found largely to be related to the gendered structures of specific places (Hanson, 2009). Especially notable was a focus on farm tourism in rural Norway and Sweden (Brandth & Haugen, 2005, 2007, 2010; Busby & Rendle, 2000; Cassel & Pettersson, 2015; Pettersson & Cassel, 2014). Hetero-normative, monogamous long-term relationships were a major focus here, with such relationships being viewed as necessary for the division of labour on the farm (Cassel & Pettersson, 2015). According to Brandth and Haugen (2005), tourism farm work is divided into three categories: administration, accommodation and activities. Women do most of the administrative work, men most of the activities (the core products), whilst both do accommodation work. There is opportunity to undertake alternative farm work, offering the potential to undo and rethink the normative service roles of women, yet such work remains understood through the heterosexual matrix (Brandth & Haugen, 2005, 2007 & 2010). Women perform entrepreneurship and develop the associated objects of entrepreneurship, on an image of rural feminine domesticity. At the same time, they are changing how gender is performed through identifying as entrepreneurs and challenging what constitutes farm work (Pettersson & Cassel, 2014).

Masculinities were also challenged, with men having to negotiate competing normative expectations concerning what it means to be a man. On the one hand, an entrepreneurial ‘spirit’, willingness to take risks, being innovative, business and service oriented and able to relate to (urban) customers are part of the new farming identity, crucial to farm success. Yet, on the other hand, this must be merged with elements of the dominant masculinity in the rural, such as being hard-working and able to master nature (Brandth &

Haugen, 2005). Whilst both women and men aimed to create positive experiences for guests, men were found to have a more ambivalent and instrumental attitude towards emotional work. Women, by contrast, tended to blur boundaries between work and personal life, finding it difficult to prioritize their own needs for rest and relaxation (Brandth & Haugen, 2007). The influence of urban consumers in expecting particular gendered performances that may perpetuate the rural idyll, was barely touched upon within the articles, indicating an area for further study.

Whilst this work has made important contributions to understanding the place-based complexities of gender, such approaches are limited to just fourteen countries, located predominantly within Europe. This narrow focus poses questions about whether these normative gendered performances may be limited to these study sites. Importantly, there is potential scope for research on tourism entrepreneurship beyond the Global North, to capture the diverse facets of gendered entrepreneurship (Steyaert & Katz, 2004). Moreover, the focus within these articles was on the binary identities of men and women – with little consideration of entrepreneurs not aligning with this dichotomous categorisation.

### *Policy and governance*

A small segment of the existing research (28.3%) identified the impact of policy-making and research on women's entrepreneurship. At an institutional level, the topics within this category are largely focused on entrepreneurship policy (78.8% of the articles), with interest, although less evident, in education, and collaboration and empowerment (11.5% and 15.4%, respectively). The enabling powers of neoliberalism and entrepreneurialism, infiltrated through a postfeminist paradigm, are identified in an important sample of articles (12 out of 36 articles (33%)), with policy discourses in alignment with what Ahl and Marlow (2019) define as 'questionable assumptions'. That is, the unquestioned assumption that entrepreneurship leads to women's empowerment. There is also a lack of critique within the policy discussions that seek to challenge traditional gender roles, with certain articles working to perpetuate such normative ideals (Ahl & Marlow, 2019).

As already stated, 33% of the articles evaluating and supporting policies towards women entrepreneurship, view women as what Ahl and Marlow (2019, 20) describe as 'reluctant entrepreneurs who just require guidance to develop more entrepreneurial attitudes'. Results from the systematic review highlight that this discourse directs educational focus towards economics and management (Cudmore, Troshani, & McCoy, 2009; Favre, 2017; Moswete & Lacey, 2015; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2016; Rimmer, 2017), marketing, information and communication technologies, innovation (Favre, 2017; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2016; Rimmer, 2017); empowerment (Panta & Thapa, 2018; Scheyvens, 2000), or sustainable practices (Kusakabe et al., 2015; Lama, 2000). Yet whilst articles advocated training, at the same time, training was often identified as not doing enough, with a general discourse of failure across the analysed projects (Koutsou, Iakovidou, & Gotsinas, 2003). Just a few articles criticise existing policies and propose recommendations (e.g. Ferguson, 2011; Hanson, 2009; Koutsou et al., 2003; Kusakabe et al., 2015; Lindberg et al., 2014).

To make sense of this work, we follow Ahl and Marlow (2019), who suggest that the entrepreneurship literature is influenced by a neoliberal postfeminist paradigm, whereby individuality, self-governance and entrepreneurialism prevails. As such, scholars have tended to remain concerned with how individuals negotiate entrepreneurship. This overlooks the fact that for many entrepreneurs, such as those with poor access to entrepreneurial capitals, time restrictions, caring responsibilities, etc., "entrepreneurship constitutes a precarious and poorly rewarded form of work" (Ahl & Marlow, 2019). What is missing are broader questions around the effectiveness of training, the structural limitations of policy and governance, and the consequential potential assumptions inherent within approaches favouring skills development, collaboration and capacity building. As Amrein (2013, 8) notes, 'training is not enough' because better 'articulation between their [entrepreneurs] professional and family spheres needs to be considered', as does the recognition that women entrepreneurs do not necessarily change their social positioning (Hanson, 2009). Moreover, policy initiatives need to be designed for succession and longevity in ways that allow women entrepreneurs to build networks (Moya, 2013), confidence (Moya, 2013; Russell-Mundine, 2007) and a sense of belonging (Hanson, 2009).

Whilst education continues to be the basis of women's empowerment and entrepreneurship in tourism, there is a need to engage with substantial feminist debates to assess what a 'successful' policy or project might be (Ferguson, 2011). Political, cultural and economic environments need to be considered (Lama, 2000; Ferguson, 2011; Russell-Mundine, 2007) and gender roles challenged (Ferguson, 2011; Lama, 2000; Panta and Thapa, 2018; Tucker & Boonabaana, 2012; Tucker, 2007). And women need a voice in policy making and the decisions involved in their own participation in economic and social development (Moswete & Lacey, 2015; Spenceley & Goodwin, 2007).

Finally, whilst a diverse set of locations were examined, most of these (52.1%) focus on the rural. This is particularly significant, given that a further 38% of articles were either theoretical or global. This highlights an absence of research on the gendered experiences of urban based entrepreneurs. It is an important omission, considering the place-based specificity of gendered entrepreneurial activity – as identified in section 4.2. This can, perhaps, be explained by the assumed subordinate positioning of women in the literature, resulting in a tendency for researchers to seek out women entrepreneurs in marginal locations.

### **Feminist epistemologies in tourism and entrepreneurship**

In the assessed articles, only 23.6% (30 from 127 papers) utilised feminist theory. This is not an unusual finding, considering the lack of feminist epistemologies across tourism scholarship (Aitchison, 2005; Chambers, Munar, Khoo-Lattimore, & Biran, 2017; Figueroa-Domecq et al., 2015; Munar, 2017; Pritchard & Morgan, 2017). Importantly, however, as we illustrate in this section, the articles that have utilised feminist approaches have been vital in contributing new understandings of gendered tourism entrepreneurship; albeit their integration of such understandings has remained marginal.



Feminist postcolonial frameworks highlight that most research has been undertaken within European contexts utilising western epistemologies, whilst there is a lack of non-western theoretically informed, empirical work in geographical contexts beyond the Global North (Kabeer, 1999; Tucker & Boonabaana, 2012). We add that work located within the Global South has largely been conducted by scholars located at Western institutions. The geographical background of individual scholars was not analysed. Nevertheless, the concern here is with the potential implementation of Eurocentric perspectives in tourism entrepreneurship studies, informed through the dominance of knowledge production from within Global North institutions, informing 'how gender relations ought to be, rather than based on how they actually are in each particular socio-cultural context' (Tucker and Boonabaana, 2012, 452). Specifically, Kabeer (1999) informed through postcolonial politics, noted the westernised construction of 'empowerment' utilised by Global North academics; cautioning that conceptualisations of 'empowerment' are oftentimes defined by those conducting the research and are informed through pre-existing academic models, rather than through the discourses and performances of those who have been claimed to be empowered (Cole, 2018; Kabeer, 1999; Tucker & Boonabaana, 2012). The result is that participants' discourses and performances become understood through comparison to these pre-existing models through methods that fail to make sense of cultural, social and political specificities. Drawing on western feminist ideals that position 'empowerment' in particular ways, without attending to societal contexts, creates longer-term implications (Tucker & Boonabaana, 2012); such as, potential alienation of entrepreneurs from their familial support networks (Costa et al., 2016).

Feminist poststructuralist ideas have also been used to question the role of western scholars in reproducing hegemonic discourses of empowerment (Bakas, 2017a). The need for caution has been stressed in relation to the underlying, yet often unquestioned, positioning of women entrepreneurs within the literature as economically 'under-performing', which leads to the assumed need for empowerment (Marlow & McAdam, 2013). Explanations, consequentially, arise within the broader literature that suggests women are, for example, less able to accrue economic capital or are less ambitious and competitive (cf. De la Fuente Cabrero, Segovia-Perez, & Figueroa-Domecq, 2014; Kerfoot & Miller, 2010). Conclusions have thus tended to turn to the potential of training and education, with the aim to equip women with the skills to emulate 'successful' masculine entrepreneurial performances (Marlow & McAdam, 2013); in contrast, there has been limited reflection by researchers on the determinants of 'under-performance', how these are measured and how they are perceived by participants.

The need for caution has been signalled for four main reasons. First, such approaches reinforce the subordinate positioning of women, as less ambitious and competent entrepreneurs. Second, they fail to recognise the value in the higher frequency of smaller and more marginal firms developed by women (Marlow & McAdam, 2013). Third, the focus on the perceived limitations of women entrepreneurs presumes that there is something unique about being a woman, which overlooks any potential structural limitations influencing the opportunities afforded to women entrepreneurs within specific place-based contexts (Marlow & McAdam, 2013). And fourth, suggesting women require education and training to be successful entrepreneurs places additional burdens on women entrepreneurs, particularly if they do not themselves seek success in this form (Tucker & Boonabaana, 2012).

Bakas (2017a), drawing on feminist poststructuralist, thus called for tourism entrepreneurship scholarship to question reflexively the gendered assumptions inherent in the framing, implementation and analysis of research projects. Reflexivity is productive in critically questioning the continued use of gender as a variable, whereby prescribed and essentialist notions constituting what a woman entrepreneur is, might be brought into question through focus on non-normative entrepreneurial performances that do not neatly ascribe to a predefined category (Bakas, 2017b; Mottiar, Boluk, & Kline, 2018; Mottiar & Laurincikova, 2009). Academic attention is thus able to turn to entrepreneurial discourses and performances as played out at the scale of the individual, rather than research that seeks to identify women's entrepreneurial under-performance so as to empower, in the hope of impactful research.

Rather than shift away from empowerment discourse in its entirety, feminist scholars have sought to reconceptualise the concept. By way of example, Cole (2018) has recently called for the need to ensure that empowerment frameworks are constructed from the perspective and context of entrepreneurs, rather than through the more commonly applied conceptualisation of empowerment through neoliberal frameworks, which narrowly define empowerment as achieved through economic income. Shifting beyond its economic prioritisation, other researcher have considered other forms of empowerment, such as, environmental (Ramos & Prideaux, 2014), cultural and spiritual (Heimtun & Morgan, 2012), as well as welfare, access, conscientisation, participation and control. This work highlights the complexity of empowerment, and the need for the concept to be adaptable in relation to economic, social, political and environmental contexts (Diaz-Carrion, 2018; Vizcaino Suarez, 2018). Within such reconceptualization, tourism does hold potential to generate productive and socialising opportunities for women, in ways that challenge and define gendered inequalities (Vizcaino Suarez, 2018). The priority being to ensure that empowerment is defined by individuals – in ways that values difference in conceptualisation, yet simultaneously accounts for structure/agency relations (Martinez Caparros, 2018).

Further contributing to a focus beyond the narrowly defined construction of 'success', feminist political economy approaches have criticised neoclassical perceptions within the literature that position entrepreneurship as necessarily driven by rational, self-interest gain (Ahl & Marlow, 2012; De Bruin, Brush, & Welter, 2007; Hughes, Jennings, Brush, Carter, & Welter, 2012). This work cautions that in prioritising the potential of women's entrepreneurship for its untapped growth, certain research questions become privileged and others ignored (Ahl, 2006). By way of example, non-economic entrepreneurial actions become configured as invisible (Möller, 2012), non-normative (Peeters & Ateljevic, 2009) and, in consequence, largely overlooked in the literature on tourism entrepreneurship (Hanson, 2009); whilst 'valued' entrepreneurial scholarship becomes consumed in measuring and documenting the economic impact of women's entrepreneurship (Hughes et al., 2012). Whilst still relatively marginal, it was noted that a feminist political economy approach brings to tourism entrepreneurship an interest in the contributions of small- (as well as larger-) scale enterprises, which may be driven through something other than rational economic, self-interest gain, as well as an interest in the differential gendered impacts of such neoclassical discourses, policy and governance relating to entrepreneurship (Hanson, 2009). It is thus put forth as a potentially productive approach for future engagement, as we attempt to shift beyond economic prioritisation of

tourism entrepreneurship research.

### Conclusion: towards a future research agenda

Academics' role in informing and reinforcing essentialised entrepreneurial constructions, is crucial in making sense of the limitations relating to gender, entrepreneurship and tourism scholarship. The systematic review shows how, in engaging with women's entrepreneurship in tourism, researchers have prioritised investigation into certain areas (hotels, restaurants, etc.), over others (technology, management etc.), as well as certain macro regions (Global North, rather than Global South), and geographical places (rural, rather than urban), at the expense of diversity. Collectively, these contribute to constructing conceptualisations of women entrepreneurs in ways that do not reflect the diverse and complex experiences of what it is to be a tourist entrepreneur.

Gender is increasingly recognised within the tourism entrepreneurship literature, whilst feminist approaches have rendered important interventions. The critical inquiry of gender and the use of feminist theories, however, remains disjointed and marginal within tourism and entrepreneurship debates. At the same time, most of the tourism and entrepreneurship literature is characterised by a dominance of unreflexive, non-theoretical approaches that construct women entrepreneurs in essentialist, economically unproductive ways. We thus highlight the imperative for the broader body of tourism entrepreneurship scholarship to engage more meaningfully with a reflexive, feminist politics.

The triangulation of the selected feminist theories (poststructuralism, political economy and post-colonialism) contributes to understanding how gender in entrepreneurship is defined as a social ascription within specific economic and social contexts. At the same time, and through their particular critical conceptualization of gender and entrepreneurship, important research gaps are revealed. From a feminist postcolonial perspective, women, entrepreneurship and tourism research might rethink its prioritisation with a Global North focus; whilst, the inclusion of feminist poststructuralist and political economy approaches identify how masculine and neoliberal informed frameworks prevail in comparison to variation in experiences. Research needs to become attuned with the multiple, fluid and unfolding ways both gender and entrepreneurship are performed through the tourism industry in specific places.

Feminist approaches do more than identify the role of gender. Above all, they provide a theoretical lens that questions the settlement of 'truths' which form the foundations of our research. As such, utilisation of feminist approaches shifts focus away from the prevailing positioning of 'women and' essentialist approaches as a mere sub-section of a larger, pre-formed area of inquiry, and enables reconceptualization of entrepreneurship as a form of empowerment. Moreover, 'women entrepreneurs' would thereby become more than a category in opposition to the predefined, dominant norm of 'entrepreneurs'. In this way the experiences of all genders would be brought into question, allowing multiple understandings of identity (beyond men vs women). Such a shift is imperative because the tourism and entrepreneurship literature cannot start to account for the complexity of lived experience until it understands identity as multiple and fluid, rather than a fixed and essentialist variable.

Attending to the lived experiences of women entrepreneurs requires more than a greater engagement with qualitative methods (Henry et al., 2016). As identified in our findings, qualitative methods dominate this literature, and yet fixed, essentialist assumptions remain. As part of increasing utilisation of feminist theory, as well as facilitating critical discussion across tourism entrepreneurship scholarship, we also call for greater engagement with mixed methods approaches (currently accounting for just 9.2% of the identified articles), which unites the strengths of qualitative and quantitative methods.

Finally, we suggest greater focus on research taking place in the Global South, with academics located beyond Europe, North America and the Antipodes, to erode dominance in research undertaken by academics located within the Global North. We surmise that tourism entrepreneurship research ought to examine experiences of women beyond service roles and identify experiences of urban based entrepreneurs. We identify the importance in exploring the ways consumers and their expectations of tourism entrepreneurs construct gendered entrepreneurial performance. Attention is also required with regards to the outcomes of training and workshops – an oft prefaced end-point, with a lack of examination of what comes next, in terms of outcomes. More broadly, inquiry into entrepreneurial policy and governance receives less attention than other areas. This is a surprising and problematic omission, considering the enhanced role entrepreneurship plays in many contemporary neoliberal policy frameworks and the prevailing, narrowly defined assumption that entrepreneurship leads to women's (economic) empowerment.

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