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# **THE SIGNIFICANCE OF TOURISM AS AN EMPLOYMENT GENERATOR OF FEMALE LABOUR FORCE**

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### ***Abstract***

*In this paper, authors emphasizes on the importance of tourism industry in generating female employment. Tourism work is particularly attractive to women and help variety of them (young, single, mothers, divorced or older one) in creating decent employment. The research results of women's employment in tourist industry in EU-27 show that its share in tourist accommodation sector in 2007 was at 60%. The research case study examination in employment practises affecting women's work in hospitality industry in selected countries show that the differences in employment practises and attitudes affecting women's work in the hospitality industry are deeply influenced by the legislative approaches and cultural differences in each country. Tourism employment gives women ability to balance work and family life. The authors conclude that women in tourist industry have only limited access to middle and high-level managerial position in Italy, UK (special case - Greenwich), and Zadarska County, but this is not the case in Bulgaria.*

***Key words: tourism, employment, women, occupation, EU***

## INTRODUCTION

The service sector is seen as increasingly important for most of the economies in many ways. In the same time, tourism is recognized as a many-sided and rapidly expanding economic activity relying predominantly on the service sector and labour force. In recent years, the tourism sector has been a fast growing economic activity in many countries. It creates added value and employment in receiving countries and can contribute to better knowledge or image of a country. Due to its formation, tourism as a highly fragmented economic activity, offers a variety of direct and indirect employment opportunities in almost all sectors of the national economy. From that stand point, tourism offers employment opportunities for a wide range of population. Tourism jobs are among the most attractive available to both men and women – both in terms of salary and job satisfaction.

The main objective of this research is to determine the tourism employment trends in selected European countries emphasizing the role and position of the female labour force that dominates within the gender structure of the overall workforce in tourism. The paper focuses on the role of tourism in generating female employment. The intention of this paper is to spread a better understanding of the position and opportunities of the women's employment in tourism.

The country case studies of the research establish what kinds of work women are doing in the hotel industry and are there any barriers to their full integration in the labour market. In order to explore the dynamics of the gendered labour market, the distribution of women's employment in hospitality, the types of job or occupation they do, and do not do, are considered.

Previous objectives and questions also produce four main hypothesis of the research:

- *A gender differences in tourism employment do exist.*
- *Tourism is labour intensive economic activity employing predominantly female labour force.*
- *Tourism is an ideal job creator for women who need to accommodate paid work around their traditional gender related roles and responsibilities.*
- *Dominated female labour force in tourism industry remains under-represented in middle and high-level management.*

The structure of the paper is as follows. The first section of the paper sets out some methodological issues and problem definition. Theoretical background is outlined in second part. It concentrates on women's employment position in economy before and after transition, their opportunities for employment in tourism and some stylized facts about women's employment in

tourism industry. Third section of the paper examines latest women's employment characteristics in tourist accommodation sector in selected European countries and women's position in tourism labour market considering their dual role in employment and family. Through country case studies research results show which occupations of tourism industry could be seen as an employment generator of female labour force and discusses policy implications consistent with the results. The last section sets out the most important conclusions of the paper.

## 1. METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES AND PROBLEM DEFINITION

It is necessary, initially, to construct appropriate definitions for both "tourism" and "tourism employment". Discussion of the characteristics of tourism employment is problematic, given the complexity of what may be defined as "tourism" and the organizations which support it (Jordan, 1997, 526). Lanfont, provides a useful definition of tourism which takes account of these issues:

... "it is a combination of services (accommodation, catering, and transport), culture, particular geographical features, which provides different activity spaces and other intangibles such as hospitality (Lanfont, 1980, 21)".

This view of tourism emphasizes the breadth and complexity of tourism, and allows for the inclusion of social characteristics, such as gender and race.

One common definition focuses on tourism as an economic activity, which generates expenditure (Johnson & Thomas, 1990, 36). This approach has been adopted also by Burkart and Medlik who examine tourism as:

... "temporary short term movement of people to destinations outside the places where they normally live and work and their activities during their stay at these destinations".

Their definition highlights two key components of tourism: travel to and from destination, and the temporary stay and activities at that destination. Another point of view takes all supporting industries and service providers. Such a "supply side" view, defines tourism as:

... "the aggregate of all businesses directly providing goods and services to facilitate business, pleasure and leisure activities away from the home environment" (Johnson & Thomas, 1990, 37).

The problems inherent in identifying "tourism" as a concept are reflected in attempts to define "tourism employment". If the measurement of tourism as a tangible product is difficult, then identification of exactly what constitutes tourism employment is bound to be problematic. Employment within tourism varies considerably, encompassing everything from direct employment in travel agencies, tour operators, food service and accommodation, to indirect employment in souvenir production and retail (Jordan, 1997, 526).

Measuring tourism employment is particularly complex because tourism is not an industry in the traditional sense of the word. In order to reduce confusion and avoid misunderstanding the core issue of tourism, the World Tourism Organization (WTO) has developed a classification methodology entitled the Standard International Classification of Tourism Activities (SICTA), which sorts businesses in tourism after their principal activity. Within SICTA classification, tourism-related occupations can be easily identified in such as hotels and motels, camping sites, hostels, health-oriented accommodation facilities, restaurants, bars, fast food, night clubs, taxi services, airline and car rental companies, travel agencies, amusement parks, etc. (WTO, 1997, 344-355).

Therefore, tourism employment can be categorized at three separate levels depending on involvement into tourism supply-side. Apart from *direct employment* that implies direct contact with tourists like front offices in hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, tourism information offices, aircrafts or shopping outlets, tourism also supports *indirect employment* in activities like restaurant suppliers, construction companies that build and maintain tourist facilities as well as necessary infrastructure, aircraft manufacturers, various handicrafts producers, marketing agencies, accounting services, which are more or less dependent on the companies providing direct employment for their revenues. Beside previous two levels, theory distinguish also *induced employment* (or ancillary employment), which means that a general development of tourism at specific destination will stimulate growth of employment in other areas, such as schools, municipal authorities, medical institutions, police and security officers, etc. (WTO, 1998, 87; Keyser, 2002, 291). Due to a large diversity in jobs generated by tourism, most of the scientific researches done in the field of human resources in tourism primarily focused on the lodging industry, or more precisely, on the hotel and restaurant industry, which provided reliable and consistent statistical background (Obadić, Kesar, 2004, 493).

## 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND RECENT TRENDS

Tourism is basically a service industry and human resources are of essential significance to the success of a tourism destination. For every country, tourism is very important economic activity because it generates employment. Multi-skilling and flexible working makes tourism employment attractive to people of all skills levels, and to those seeking a wide range of non-standard working patterns. Tourism also provides workers an opportunity to travel abroad and to learn foreign languages.

Prior to consideration of some stylized facts about women's employment in tourism industry, it is useful to examine general working conditions for women in economy. Namely, it is worldwide known that employment across a wide spectrum of industries is segregated by sex. The jobs that women do are different

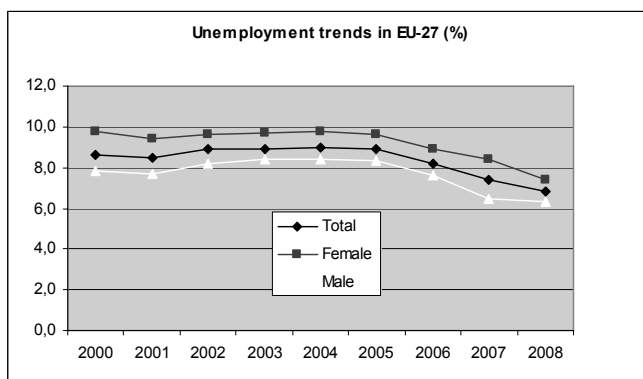
from those done by men (horizontal segregation) and women work at lower levels than men in the occupational hierarchy (vertical segregation) (Jordan, 1997, 526). In continuance the paper analyses women's employment position and attitudes in economy before and after transition.

## **2.1. Position of women's employment in economy before and after transition**

Speaking nowadays about women's employment in ex-socialist countries few main questions arise. What has happened to women's employment in Central and Eastern Europe? Have women solely become housewives and unemployed? Or have they retained their positions at work? Most commonly, researchers and politicians have emphasised that women have become the losers of the transition, that societies became more traditional and unequal, that childcare disappeared etc. (Motiejunaite, 2008, 1). Economic transformation in Central and Eastern Europe has had disproportionately negative consequences for women. Socialist countries were pioneers in introducing legal equality between men and women and promoting equal access to education. Full male and female employment was tied to a universal social security system in which every woman was entitled to paid maternity leave and every child to widely available and affordable child-care.

The collapse of Communism in 1989 saw a revitalization of patriarchal values. Women's equality and paid employment outside the home came to symbolize the "irregularity" of the previous regime. At the same time, women grew tired of their triple burden of work, family and social activism, and withdraw from the labour force in an ironic demonstration of their freedom. The idea that women were secondary earners in the family emerged exactly at the time that the economic poverty of transformation made women's financial contributions to household income more important than ever before (Ghodsee, 2003, 466).

After 1989, women became a majority of the unemployed, as public sector jobs disappeared. Those women who chose to remain employed faced a number of new challenges. Laws that once helped women combine their productive and reproductive roles (maternity leave, kindergartens, childcare allowances) now meant that women were viewed as more expensive and less reliable workers than men. The appearance of liberal labour markets also resulted in severe discrimination against women in the private sector (Ghodsee, 2003, 465). When labour demand decreases, employers get rid of the less valuable workers, i.e. usually women, first. Combining employer's preferences, women's support for traditional roles and the strong "motherhood-oriented" public dialogue, the decrease in women's labour force participation after 1990 seemed inevitable (Motiejunaite, 2008, 3). Consequently, women become one of the most disadvantaged groups in the labour market and still make majority of the registered unemployed by gender segregation (see Figure 1).



Source: Eurostat Database.

Figure 1. Unemployment rates in EU-27 by gender, 2000-2008

Therefore, supporting economic sectors that employ large percentages of women, such as service sector, will help improve the relative economic well-being of women. Namely, in the state socialist economy, service sector positions were less prestigious than those in production and were thus dominated by women. In the market economy, work experience in the expanding service sector became an advantage for many women, while many men had to struggle for jobs in the declining industrial or agricultural sectors. Thus women workers predominate in "female" occupations, such as secretarial, administrative and catering work, and the caring professions, such as teaching and nursing, but are still under-represented in the management structures of these sectors (Witz, Savage, 1992).

One example of this type of justification is the generalization by some employers that the disproportionately high concentration of women in low-paid, part-time jobs is primarily attributable to women's preference for these patterns of employment. Women, it is argued, seek these jobs in order to accommodate their domestic/family commitments. Women are better in service industry jobs because they have more patience. Customers prefer to deal with females, because they find it easier to talk to them. Women are more relaxed – they don't get as stressed as men (Jordan, 1997, 530). Tourism sector is one of the few successful and expanding sectors in the World, especially after 1990, dominated by women. Therefore, in the continuation of the research stresses main features of women's employment in tourism industry.

## 2.2. Some stylized facts about women's employment in tourism industry

Jobs in tourism were always attractive and highly respected. Job opportunities arising out of the growing tourism industry cover a range of sectors,

including transport and travel, retail, hospitality, accommodation, visitor attractions, and the performing arts. It plays important role in job creation, especially in seasonal women employment. Because an often-cited benefit is the creation of job opportunities, employment in mass tourism has received much attention (Levy, Lerch, 1991; Patullo, 1996; Robson, 2002). Researchers are often critical of the seasonality of such work (Gmelch, 2004, 10), which also tends to offer low-paying, low-skilled opportunities with little chance for advancement.

The Purcell's (1996) analysis of occupational segregation in the hotel industry argues that there are three main elements determining employers to recruit women for particular types of work: labour price, sex and gender. Thus, "women's job" fall predominantly into one of three categories: "contingency-gendered jobs" which happen to be mainly done by women but for which the demand for labour is gender-neutral; "sex-typed jobs", where sexuality or other attributes assumed to be sex-related are explicit or implicit parts of the job specification; and "patriarchally-prescribed jobs" where patriarchal practice determines and prescribes appropriate job position (Purcell, 1996, 18).

Tourism employment is gendered in nature and the problem with this segregated employment is that women's low status within their societies is reinforced and magnified in the mass industry (Jordan, 1997, 528). For example, in Caribbean, most of the top managerial staff was brought in from North America or Europe because they felt that Caribbean's did not have the experience and skills needed to serve in upper-level management. Most managers at the lower end of the hierarchy were men Caribbeans who were trained by the hotels and worked their way into positions such as executive housekeeper and food and beverage manager (Mckenzie Gentry, 2007, 484).

The gender-segregated employment is a common practice in the tourism industry. Numerous respondents in different studies<sup>1</sup> mentioned that age and sex were important factors governing work in tourism. For instance, it is familiar that hotel domestic workers, waitress, and cooks were generally female, while the majority of tour guides, taxi drivers, boat operators, and maintenance workers were male. Furthermore, mass tourism is frequently predestined for maintaining traditional notions about female gender roles by segregating employment such that women's domestic skills and what are believed to be "feminine characteristics" become commodities. Alternative tourism businesses<sup>2</sup> are often individually or family owned and tends to allow for more contact between locals and guests. For example, since it is small-scale, it requires less capital to construct facilities than mass tourism, meaning that people who typically could not afford to start their own businesses have increased opportunities to do so. Often, women use their existing skills to open small-scale businesses like guesthouses and restaurants (Mckenzie Gentry, 2007, 479).

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<sup>1</sup> For example, Cardoso, Ferreira (2000), Jordan (1997), Richter (1994) and others.

<sup>2</sup> Alternative tourism examples include ecotourism, cultural or heritage, adventure, and nature tourism.

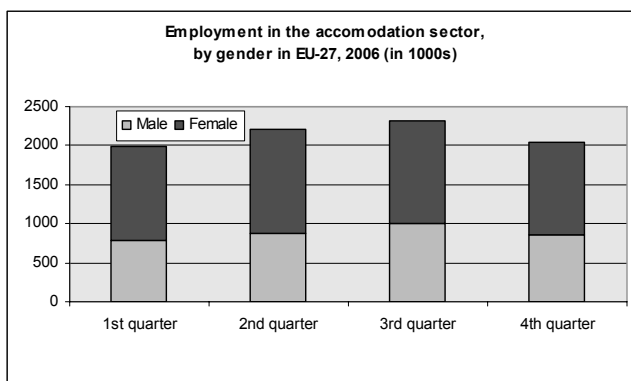
Considering education level, stereotypical expectations regarding that tourism business hire women with little education, are widespread. But, at higher levels, education is more important. However, the fact that this sector required less education than non-tourism sector can be seen as having both a negative and a positive impact. On the one hand, this industry has created opportunities for women who otherwise had little or no employment choice. The alternative sector in particular is famous for allowing women to use stereotypes regarding their work to their advantage. While it is believed that they are well suited for household tasks, many have used these ideas to open their own guest-houses and restaurants. In such way, tourism employment appeared to provide a means through which those women who would normally find themselves entrenched in the "economic-sexual cycle" could support themselves (Mckenzie Gentry, 2007, 490-492).

In the end, it follows that the tourism sector is often criticised for providing only low-wage, seasonal employment, but it should be made clear that if there were to be no tourism many workers, especially women in the economy would be unemployed. It seems that tourism employment, help a variety of women. Young, single mothers, divorced or older one, were able to find employment and some are even able to start their own business.

### **2.3. Recent trends and opportunities of women's employment in tourism industry**

In majority of European countries tourism is characterised by its employment seasonality. Exactly that feature made tourism an attractive opportunity for women who could combine paid employment with family responsibilities and other duties. Part time, casual and seasonal employment allows women to combine these various commitments with paid work outside their homes. Moreover, because many tourism sector jobs require only basic and highly transferable skills, women may move in and out of the sector with relative ease. These important but time-consuming duties are difficult to combine with year-round employment (see Figure 2).





Source: *European Commission (2007a)*.

Figure 2. Tourism employment seasonality

Previous figure show the gender proportion of employment in the tourist accommodation sector<sup>3</sup> in EU-27 during the year 2006. Evident is a large impact of seasonality in all EU member countries<sup>4</sup> and of course employability of women more than 60% during the whole observed year. Therefore, so called "seasonal unemployment" made tourism an attractive opportunity for women who could combine paid employment with family responsibilities (Ghodsee, 2003, 468).

Whilst the complexity and heterogeneity of tourism employment makes generalization problematic, some studies suggest that women have only limited access to well-paid, skilled and managerial positions. Richter, relates tourism employment to a pyramid, with many women located in seasonal and part-time jobs at the lower end, but few reaching the management positions at the top. Research focusing on the hospitality sector has highlighted the specific problems experienced by women in this area, where only 4% of middle/senior managers, and only 1% of top management, are female (Richter, 1994).

It has been suggested that relatively low levels of union membership and a lack of organization amongst women workers has inhibited progress towards equal opportunity for all (Burns, 1993, 86). Leontidou, suggests that traditional gender distinctions have promoted the image of men as travellers and women as hostesses. The social construction has allowed national governments and tourist organizations to describe women in a service role (Leontidou, 1994).

<sup>3</sup> The activities are classified according to NACE Rev. 1, the statistical classification of economic activities. "Hotels and restaurants" refer to division 55 of NACE Rev. 1, "Tourist accommodation sector" refers to only two classes of this division, namely 55.1 (hotels) and 55.2 (other short-stay accommodation). The tourist accommodation sector accounts for more than 25% of employment in the hotels, restaurants and catering sector, and for slightly over 1,1% of the entire labour market in the EU (European Commission, 2008).

<sup>4</sup> The tourism industry is strongly affected by seasonal influences, leading to on average across the EU – 10% more employment in the summer season (European Commission, 2008).

Some studies<sup>5</sup> suggests that women's employment in tourism is both horizontally and vertically segregated, with the majority of female workers located in subordinated posts, receiving lower levels of payment. Horizontally, women and men are placed in different occupations – women are employed as receptionists, waitresses, room attendants, cleaners, travel agency sales persons, etc., while men are employed as barmen, porters, gardeners, maintenance staff, etc. Vertically women are concentrated in the lower levels in occupations with few opportunities for upward mobility while men dominate the key managerial positions (Parrett, 2004, 10). In such way, tourism industry segregates women into areas of employment which commercialize their perceived domestic skills and "feminine" characteristics.

The tourism industry is considered to be oriented towards recruiting young, female workers in order to maintain its glamorous image. Likewise, the perceived glamour of tourism work is thought to be a key factor in attracting women into the workforce. Generally, tourism is seen as being a "female-friendly" industry which is more attractive to women than to men because of the nature of the work involved. This view of tourism employment as positively attractive provides employers with a useful explanation for the number of women working in poorly paid jobs within the industry. Their justification is that women are happy to accept the poor conditions because the work is glamour.

Many of the female employees' perceived tourism to be an industry which is still male-dominated at senior management levels, despite the number of women employed<sup>6</sup>. They do not agree that a climate of equal opportunities already exists (Jordan, 1997, 529). A 2003 report on women's place in the tourism industry commissioned by the UK Tourism Society found that only a small minority of women managers were able to achieve top positions<sup>7</sup>. In Britain, accommodation and food and beverage are the dominant employment sub-sectors within the tourism industry. These sub-sectors are characterised by a female-dominated workforce, nearly three quarters of which is employed part time (Parrett, 2004, 11). The share of part-time women employment in EU-27 in 2006 was 25% (European Commission, 2007a).

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<sup>5</sup> See more in: Richter, L.K. (1995) *Gender and race: neglected variables in tourism research*; in *Change in Tourism: People, Places, Processes* (ed. R. Butler, D. Pearce); Routledge, London.

<sup>6</sup> Whereas, the male managers headed up departments with a number of staff reporting in to them, female managers ran less prestigious departments. Female managers tended to be horizontally segregated into "traditional" female areas such as marketing, reservations and sales. This indicates that company cultures may not be as supportive of women's progression as the policy-makers believe them to be (Jordan, 1997, 531).

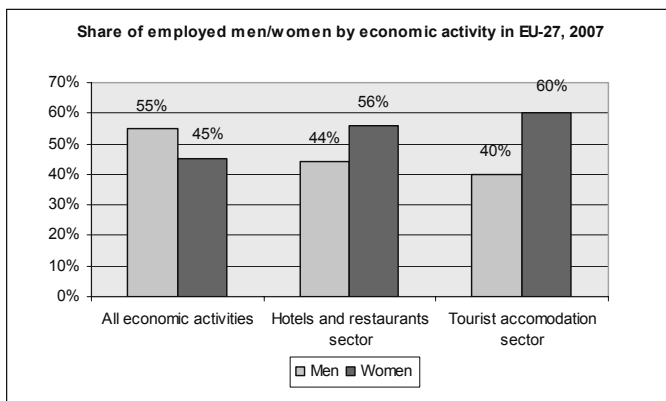
<sup>7</sup> Alonso, A./KPMG (2003) *Breaking through the glass ceiling: Women's place in travel, tourism and leisure*; Research report commissioned by the UK Tourism Society.

### 3. RESEARCH RESULTS

The research analysis consists of two main parts. The first part compares the women's employment proportion in all economic activities and in tourist industry, and their working conditions compared to their men counterparts. The analysis is emphasizes on EU-27 countries. The second part of the research comprise case study examination in employment practises affecting women's work in hospitality industry in Italy, UK (special case - Greenwich), Bulgaria and Zadarska County.

#### 3.1. Women's employment characteristics in tourist accommodation sector in selected European countries

In 2007, 45% of the persons employed in the all economic activities in EU-27 were women. The share varied greatly between the Member States, ranging from 32% in Malta to 50% in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. However, in the hotels and restaurants sector<sup>8</sup> there were more women then men employed, as the tourist accommodation sector is a major employer of women. The share of women employment stands at 56% in the EU-27. The relative size of the female work force was higher in hotels and restaurants sector than in the overall economy in all member States, except for Malta (see Figure 1).



Source: European Commission (2008).

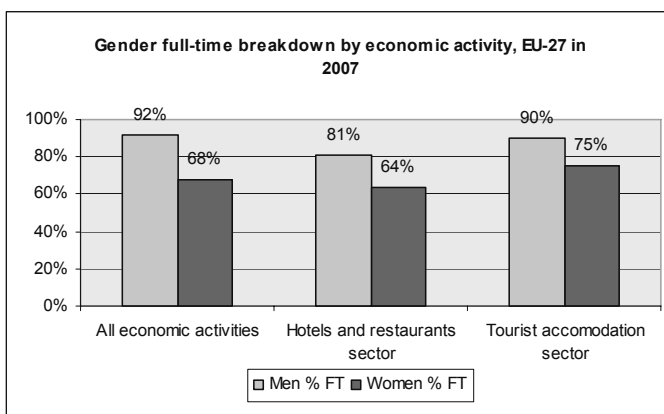
Figure 3. Persons employed by economic activity and gender in EU-27, 2007

In the tourist accommodation sector, which includes hotels and other short-stay accommodation, the share of women was even higher, at 60% in 2007. The differences between EU countries exist. Among the EU-27 countries, the highest share of female employment in the tourist accommodation industry is

<sup>8</sup> Hotels and restaurants refer to NACE Section H.

present in Romania (72%), Norway (71%), Poland (70%), Finland (70%) and Germany (69%). Malta (38%), Greece (44%) and Italy (49%) are the only countries where women do not take the majority of the jobs in the tourist accommodation sector (European Commission, 2008).

The share of full-time employment in the tourist accommodation sector is not much different from the share in the EU-27 economy as a whole. About four out of every five persons are employed on a full-time basis. The proportion of women working full-time is much higher in the accommodation sector (75%) than in the rest of the economy (68%) or, more specifically, than in the hotels and restaurants sector as a whole (64%), (see figure 4).



Source: European Commission (2008).

Figure 4. Gender full-time/part-time breakdown by economic activity

Among men working in tourist accommodation sector, 90% have a full-time contract, which is slightly less than the overall average for men (92%). Only in the Nordic countries – Denmark (50% versus 36%), Sweden (51% v. 42%) and Finland (27% v. 19%) – are significantly more women working part-time in the tourist accommodation sector than in the economy as a whole. On the other hand, a significantly higher proportion of women are working full-time than in the economy in general in Austria (69% versus 59%) and Portugal (96% v. 83%).

In both the tourist accommodation sector and in the labour market as a whole, slightly less than 20% of persons employed works on a part-time basis, 19% and 18% respectively. In both cases, women account for around 80% of these part-time jobs. Out of 100 persons employed in the EU, 4 are part-time working men while 14 are part-time working women. For the tourist accommodation sector this is 4 and 15 respectively (European Commission, 2008).

Although part-time working conditions are mostly unreliable especially in time of economic recession they provide women with some other advantages.

For example, such working conditions give women ability to balance work and family life and accommodate the care of children and other dependents. This flexibility is the most important factor which determines job satisfaction. Many women accept the bulk of caring responsibilities for children and other dependents making it more difficult for women to achieve a good work-life balance. Therefore, the next case study analysis is particularly focused on women's ability to balance work and family life and their employer's role in attempt.

### 3.2. Case study analyses

The women's employment position is specially analysed in regions with highest tourism intensity, i.e. the number of tourist bed places or the number of tourist nights in a region in comparison with its population. Namely, all of these regions have unemployment rates which are much lower than the countries average, exception is Zadarska County<sup>9</sup>. In the further study, the cases of women employment position in Italy, United Kingdom (special case - Greenwich), Bulgaria, and Zadarska County are examined.

The pattern of female employment in Italy and UK in all sectors (and especially in tourist one) is dramatically different because these two countries present strong contrasts in terms of government policy<sup>10</sup> and its potential impact on women's employment. Because of motherhood and childbearing in both countries women's work is also mainly concentrated into service industry. The areas chosen in the survey in the UK were Manchester and Blackpool, and in Italy, Genova and resorts on the Ligurian Riviera<sup>11</sup>.

In both countries jobs in the bar and restaurant area were contingently gendered, with employers seeking cheap labour of either sex. In the UK, for example, there was some evidence that men had more opportunities than women for making money in the restaurant and the women in the bistro (cheap and cheerful). Housekeeping jobs were universally seen as suitable only for women with employers making comments such as "women's idea of cleanliness is better" and "women are absolutely essential for cleaning. The man does not have the necessary experience". The occupational area where women were most clearly excluded in the UK was the kitchen and it was common not to find single woman employed there. Contrary, in Italy, although the kitchen was mainly a male area,

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<sup>9</sup> In 2007 unemployment rate in Zadarska County was 17,6% and the average unemployment rate in Croatia was 13,9%.

<sup>10</sup> Maternity rights are an area of striking contrast between Italy and the UK as their respective legislation reveals profound cultural differences and approaches towards the relationship between motherhood and paid employment. The Italian legislation is informed by the notion that maternity is a social value. The UK legislation considers that maternity and child-rearing are mainly a private matter (Doherty, Manfredi, 2001, 63).

<sup>11</sup> Doherty and Manfredi, manage to interview employers and employees in 17 hotels in Italy and 13 in the UK (Doherty, Manfredi, 2001, 66).

women were often found as assistant cooks. In small family hotels cooking was often done by women relatives, mothers, assisting spouses, etc. The main area where women were excluded in Italy was in night work due to safety and social barriers (Doherty, Manfredi, 2001, 67).

One of the biggest and most important differences between the two countries was in women's representation in management and supervisory roles. In the UK women accounted for the majority of such posts, though they were mainly to be found in areas where they were already well represented at the occupational level, that is in reception, housekeeping, personnel, conferences and as financial controllers. Male management posts tend to be as general managers, deputy general managers, head chefs, chief engineers, restaurants managers and food and beverage managers. These are all areas where the pay is traditionally better than in typically female areas. By comparison, women were considerably under-represented at managerial level in Italy (Doherty, Manfredi, 2001, 67).

Overall, the main barrier to women's progression to senior management in both countries was seen as the difficulty in combining this type of work with family responsibilities. Several employees in the UK noted that career success came at a high price since virtually none of the senior women had children, and many were single or divorced (Doherty, Manfredi, 2001, 68). Even though that is not the case in Italy, in the UK we can also find cases which show that tourism is an ideal job creator for women. The Greenwich Experience is a special case in UK which shows (although on sample of only 51 women) that flexibility of tourism sector helps them balance work and family life.

**Box 1: Flexibility and work-life balance – Greenwich Experience case**

The research report examines the employment situation of 51 women employed in tourism sector in Greenwich. The women interviewed for this study stressed that tourism sector employment attracted them because it offers working patterns – part time, casual, temporary and seasonal – that are perceived to fit well with family life. All of the 25 mothers agreed that their tourism sector employers were accommodating of their childcare needs and had offered them varying degrees of flexibility to help them balance work and family life. For many, the option of flexible working on reduced hours allowed them to avoid the social isolation of full time motherhood, maintain a presence in the workplace and a foot on the career ladder. Several mothers had difficulty with previous employers – mostly outside of the tourism sector – who were inflexible and unsympathetic to their childcare needs. These women were especially appreciative of the flexibility offered by their current employers (Parrett, 2004).

Economic transition in post-socialist countries reduced the social, economic and political opportunities for women because women lacked power in the new quasicapitalist markets. In Bulgaria, while economic transformation adversely affected the whole nation, women carried the greatest weight of sudden marketization. Bulgarian case emphasizes that state assisting economic sectors employing large percentage of women (especially in managerial positions) at

comparatively high wages will help improve the relative economic well-being of women. Although the gender consequences of these policies were probably not taken into account when they were designed, state support for tourism has ultimately preserved and created many good jobs for women. The regulation changes and privatization finished in the late 1990-ties have made tourism one of the easiest sectors in Bulgaria to do business (Ghodsee, 2003, 466-471).

As stressed earlier, the tourism sector is often criticised for providing only low-wage, but that is not the case for Bulgaria. Wages and working conditions in tourism in Bulgaria are among the best in the country. A survey<sup>12</sup> of 787 Bulgarian workers employed in international tourism between October 1999 and August 2000 finds that more than 60 per cent of tourism employees are women, and women occupy more than 65 per cent of senior and managerial positions in the tourist industry. Women dominate middle and the high-level management positions. The evidence suggests that women have benefited from privatization slightly more than men. Most of women claimed that privatization had given them more opportunities for professional advancement and better wages. Moreover, 73,5% of university graduates working in tourism are women. This is particularly important because the Law on Tourism requires all hotel managers to have a university education. This gives women a significant advantage in the sector. It also protects them in managerial positions from being replaced by less educated men with connections (Ghodsee, 2003, 473-479).

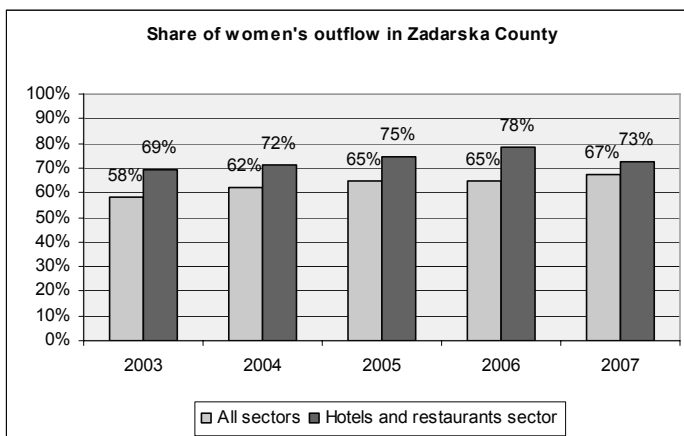
The analysis of female employment in tourism sector in Croatia is conducted in Zadarska County as one of the most growing county in last few years. The number of new employed (outflow) every year in Zadarska County in all economic activities was increasing from 1999 until 2002 when it achieved the highest number of new employed (around 6459)<sup>13</sup>. From than on, yearly outflow was stable and reached on average around 4630 new employed every year. The number of outflow in Hotels and restaurants sector – sector "H" according to the NKD<sup>14</sup>, steadily increased from 2003 onwards reaching on average 950 new employed yearly. The gender segregation is particularly present in hotels and restaurants sector as in all other previous observed economies (see Figure 5).

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<sup>12</sup> The surveys were distributed in Sofia, and in the four of Bulgaria's largest resorts (two winter resorts – Borovets and Pamporovo and two summer resorts – Albena and Golden Sands), (Ghodsee, 2003, 473).

<sup>13</sup> See more detailed in Marić, I. (2009) *Utvrđivanje postojanja strukturne nezaposlenosti u Zadarskoj županiji*, Ekonomski fakultet – Zagreb.

<sup>14</sup> NKD – National classification of economic activities.



*Source: calculated by authors according to HZZ (2008).*

Figure 5. Share of women's outflow in total outflow in all sectors and in sector "H" in Zadarska County, 2003-2007

The number of new employed (outflow) women was increasing in all sectors of economy including sector "H", in observed period. The proportion of women outflow in all sectors was on average around 63% yearly and in tourism sector a share of women outflow in 2006 reached almost 80% of total outflow. This confirms that tourism sector is women employment generator in Zadarska County. The majority of new employed are room cleaners and waitresses.

As an example, the research analysis the structure of labour force employment in sector "H" in companies "Zadar Hotels" – Hotel "Kolovare", and "Turisthotel" in February 2009. The mayor difference between two of them is their seasonal character. The Hotel "Kolovare" employs 75 workers; among them 76% are women. The hotel works throw the whole year and almost does not employ seasonal labour force (only 4 seasonal workers were employed during last eleven years). All other employees work full time and there is no possibility of part-time arrangements. President of the company is man. Women are present at middle management positions more than expected. They are directors of marketing and sales, accounting and human resource office, but still men predominate at middle management positions. Only women are employed at the lower occupation positions as room cleaners, waitresses, cooks or workers in laundry.

The "Turisthotel" has 164 employees and 74 of them are women. As the hotel does not work throw the whole year it employs 60% more seasonal workers during the summer. Again, president of the company is man. At the middle management position only one woman is employed as head of department for accounting. Women are also present at lower management positions as chief of reception desk and technical service. In majority of cases women are mainly to be



found in all areas where the pay is traditionally less. Majority of such posts tend to be as housekeeping, room cleaners, waitresses, cooks or workers in laundry. In both hotels, all the women have the right to use maternity leave as all workers in other economic activities, according to Croatian legislation. Like in Italian legislation, maternity is a social value, so women can combine their productive and reproductive roles.

### 3.3. Discussion and policy implications

State support for certain economic sectors employing large percentage of women can help improve the relative economic welfare of women. Such positive state example, in generating female employment is present in Bulgarian tourism sector. Namely, tourism is a good alternative for both developing and transition countries which can incorporate sustainable forms of tourism development into a diversified domestic economy. Tourism industry creates jobs that allow many more opportunities for the establishment of local small and medium enterprises. Such advantage gives increased chances to women who use their existing skills to open small-scale business.

The research analysis confirms all four main research hypotheses.

- *Tourism is labour intensive economic activity employing predominantly female labour force.*
  - The analysis proves that in 19 from EU-27 observed countries tourism industry employs dominantly female labour force.
- *A gender differences in tourism employment do exist.*
  - The analysis shows that these differences do exist in hotels and restaurants and in tourism accommodation sector in all countries of EU.
- *Tourism is an ideal job creator for women who need to accommodate paid work around their traditional gender related roles and responsibilities.*
  - Tourism employment gives women ability to balance work and family life and accommodate the care of children and other dependents. This is confirmed for Italy, Bulgaria and Zadarska County, but not for UK. The Greenwich Experience is a special case in UK which shows (although on sample of only 51 women) that flexibility of tourism sector helps them balance work and family life.
- *Dominated female labour force in tourism industry remains under-represented in middle and high-level management.*

- The hypothesis that women have only limited access to middle and high-level managerial position is valid in Italy, UK and Zadarska County, but could not be verify in Bulgaria.

Country experiences show that, despite the European Union's attempts<sup>15</sup> at convergence through the mechanism of legislation, different countries will understand and implement such legislation in very different ways. Therefore, policy implication doubts that employment practices in Italy and the UK will change very dramatically in the near future and it is likely that women's roles will remain undervalued in both countries for some time yet.

If benefits for women and their management position in tourism industry want to be maximized, tourism development project must be planned with careful consideration. They should include programs offering formal training for women so that they will have the skills necessary to obtain management positions. In hospitality employment, women in management have to be very diplomatic and though to succeed, subject to more pressure than most female managers to tread the delicate line between personal and occupational identity, managing their sex, gender and authority roles.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

For every country, tourism is very important economic activity because it generates employment. Jobs in tourism were always attractive and highly respected. The glamorous image of tourism work is considered to be particularly attractive to women, possibly compensating for relatively poor payment and limited opportunities. Women are more likely to accept the low pay and conditions than men. It is argued that women seek these jobs in order to accommodate easily their family commitments.

The analysis proves that the tourism sector is often criticised for providing only low-wage, seasonal employment, but it has to be obvious that if there were no tourism many workers especially women in economy would be unemployed. Because many tourism sector jobs require only basic and highly transferable skills, women may move in and out of the sector with relative ease. In such way, tourism industry helps variety of women (young, single mothers, divorced or older one) in creating decent employment.

The research results of women's employment in tourist industry in EU-27 show that its share in tourist accommodation sector in 2007 was at 60%. The differences between countries exist. The highest share of female employment in

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<sup>15</sup> The implementation of *EU Directive on Parental Leave* has offered the opportunity to EU governments to promote through their national legislation a more equal division of gender roles. See more detailed at: *The EU parental leave agreement and Directive: implications for national law and practice*;  
<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/1998/01/study/tn9801201s.htm>.

the tourist accommodation industry is present in Romania (72%), Norway (71%), Poland (70%), Finland (70%), and Germany (69%). The proportion of women working full-time is much higher in the accommodation sector (75%) than in the rest of the economy (68%) or, more specifically, than in the hotels and restaurants sector as a whole (64%). Considering, part-time jobs, women account for around 80% of these. Although part-time working conditions are mostly unreliable especially in time of economic recession they provide women with some other advantages. For example, such working conditions give women ability to balance work and family life and accommodate the care of children and other dependents. This flexibility is the most important factor which generates female employment in tourism industry.

The case study examination show that the differences in employment practises and attitudes affecting women's work in the hospitality industry are deeply influenced by the legislative approaches and cultures of each country. Italy appears to have a much stronger legal framework to support women's participation in the labour market and better childcare services to help them combine their dual role. However, job opportunities for women are still limited. In the UK although fast economic transformation has increased job opportunities for women through a greater demand for flexible work, their increased participation in the labour market has not been supported by strong legislation to prevent their exploitation. In both countries, women have only limited access to middle and high-level managerial positions. Bulgarian case emphasizes that state support for women's employment in tourism sector (especially in managerial positions) helps improving the relative economic well-being of women. Women dominate middle and the high-level management positions in tourism, so evidence suggests that women have benefited from privatization slightly more than men.

The analysis provided in Zadarska County in Croatia, in the period 2002-2007 shows that for example, the proportion of women outflow in tourism sector in 2006 reached almost 80% of total outflow. This confirms that tourism sector is women employment generator in Zadarska County. All the women employed in tourism sector have the right to use maternity leave according to Croatian legislation. A survey of two tourist complexes in Zadarska County shows that men have top-management positions. Women are present at middle management positions more than expected in one hotel. They are directors of marketing and sales, accounting and human resource office, but still men predominate at middle management positions. Only women are employed at the lowest occupation positions as room cleaners, housekeeping, waitresses, cooks or workers in laundry.

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**ZNAČAJ TURIZMA KAO GENERATORA  
ZAPOŠLJAVANJA ŽENSKE RADNE SNAGE*****Sažetak***

*Autorice u radu ističu značaj turističke industrije u kreiranju zapošljavanja žena. Rad u turizmu je posebno atraktivan ženama te pomaže mnogima (mladima, neoženjenima, majkama, razvedenima ili starijima) u stvaranju doličnog zaposlenja. Rezultati istraživanja o zapošljavanju žena u turističkoj industriji na području EU-27 pokazuju kako je njihov udio u sektoru turističkog smještaja u 2007. godini činio 60%. Istraživanje studije slučajeva na području zapošljavanja žena u hotelskoj industriji u odabranoj skupini zemalja pokazuje kako su razlike u postupcima zapošljavanja i stavovima u pogledu ženskog rada u hotelskoj industriji pod snažnim utjecajem zakonske regulative i kulturnih razlika svake pojedine zemlje. Zapošljavanje u turizmu omogućuje ženama da balansiraju između posla i obiteljskih obveza. Autorice zaključuju kako žene u turističkoj industriji imaju samo ograničen pristup srednjim i visokim managerskim pozicijama u Italiji, UK (specijalni slučaj – Greenwich), i Zadarskoj županiji što nije slučaj u Bugarskoj.*

***Ključne riječi: turizam, zaposlenost, žene, zanimanje, EU***

***JEL classification: L83, J21***