Traditional family ideology and women managers in tourism

Ideologia familiar tradicional e mulheres gestoras na área do turismo

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Abstract | This study analyzes the influence of the family context and the traditional family ideology on women managers' construction as mothers and as economically active beings in the Portuguese tourism sector. Twenty-four female Portuguese senior managers in hotels and travel businesses were interviewed. Some women acknowledged the existence of a 'motherhood penalty'. Still, most wanted to have both a family and a career. Practically all interviewees combined several childcare solutions. Despite these arrangements, many experienced work-family conflicts. The study indicates both signals of advancements in gender equality and deep inequalities in a Portuguese context.

Keywords | Women managers, tourism, work-family balance

Resumo | Este estudo analisa a influência do contexto familiar e da ideologia familiar tradicional na construção de mulheres gestoras enquanto mães e indivíduos economicamente ativos no setor do turismo em Portugal. Foram entrevistadas 24 mulheres com cargos de topos na hotelaria e indústria de viagens. Apesar de algumas mulheres reconheceram a existência de penalizações devido à maternidade, a maior parte deseja tanto a maternidade como uma carreira. Quase todas as entrevistadas recorrem a diversas estratégias para a conciliação trabalho-família. Porém, a maior parte experiencia conflitos nesta conciliação. Concluindo, o estudo revela tanto sinais de avanços na área da igualdade de género, como sinais de profundas desigualdades.

Palavras-chave | Mulheres gestoras, turismo, conciliação trabalho-família

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1. Introduction

Women increasingly participate in employment, but they are still underrepresented in senior management (Catalyst, 2019), and earn less than men on average (Guimarães & Silva, 2016). Despite women's increasing levels of education and participation in employment, they are still overburdened with household tasks and caretaking (Perista et al., 2016). Accumulating working hours in paid and unpaid work leads to a heavy workload, imbalanced lives, and high stress levels (Crompton et al., 2007). This overburdening of women hinders gender equality in employment (Pfau-Effinger, 2002). Consequences of such inequalities are the gender pay gap (Guimarães & Silva, 2016), women's prevalence in part-time work (Casaca, 2010), labor segregation (Scott et al., 2010), and the underrepresentation of women in senior management (Catalyst, 2019).

Some previous studies have pointed out the existence of a 'motherhood penalty' for women. This 'motherhood penalty' is a term used to describe systematic disadvantages encountered by mothers in the labor market in relation to childless women. These studies reveal that mothers have been penalized on several measures, including wage (Budig & England, 2001), perceived competence (Cuddy et al. 2004), hiring, or recommended salary (Correll et al., 2007). In contrast, men do not seem to be penalized for being a parent (Correll et al., 2007). According to Correll et al. (2007), the 'motherhood penalty' arises from a perceived tension between cultural understandings of the motherhood role and cultural understandings of the 'ideal worker' role. This perceived tension seems to lead to expectations of mothers as being less competent or committed to their jobs, leading to discriminatory evaluations at work (Correll et al., 2007).

In the Portuguese context, despite women's high involvement in paid work and the prevalence of a dual-earner model, the dominant family ideology still entails the idea of women as holding the main responsibility for children and caretaking (Ramos et al., 2016). Besides, a wide gender pay gap remains (Casaca & Perista, 2017). Such inequalities are not less visible in sectors where women prevail in the workforce, such as tourism (Carvalho et al., 2014; Carvalho, 2017; Costa et al., 2015). In tourism, the tradition of 24-hour, seven-day week service to the customer is entrenched (Mooney & Ryan, 2009), which further complicates work-family balance for tourism workers.

Hence, the following research question was put forward: How can the family context and the dominant family ideology in the Portuguese context influence women tourism managers' construction as mothers and as economically active beings? Four specific research objectives were set: to unveil how perceptions of a 'motherhood penalty' influence women's career and family decisions; to investigate the strategies used by women to attain work-family balance; to analyze how women perceive their work-family balance; and to understand how typical gender roles are challenged in women's marriages and non-marital partnerships.

2. Literature review

2.1. The gendered division of work

Nowadays, new living arrangements and forms of family life have emerged. Marriage is now less dominant in the life of women than before, as many women remain single. Women also marry later, have children later and, in many countries, the number of children has declined (Sobotka & Beaujouan, 2017). These patterns increase side by side with women's growing participation in education and employment However, many women have become mothers by the age of 30 and are faced with the challenge of conciliating multiple roles (Scott et al,. 2010). Even though men and

women have equal rights, it is usually expected from women that they accommodate care-related commitments (Wilton & Purcell, 2010). Recent studies have revealed that those women maintain a steady majority of parenting time at all stages of childcare (Buchanan et al., 2016).

Some studies report that husbands' careers are prioritised and thus men are the main income earners, whereas women bear most of the responsibilities for the household and the family, even when they are also highly qualified (Wilton & Purcell, 2010). Wilton and Purcell (2010) underlined that women's greater likelihood to prioritise work-family conciliation and non-pecuniary job benefits over salary could partly explain the persistence of the gender pay gap and of gendered career attitudes. Nonetheless, these adjustments to accommodate non-work commitments are not necessarily at the expense of desire for career progression (Wilton & Purcell, 2010). Such arguments ignore wider structures in society and organizational procedures which limit women's career advancement.

Acker (1998) argued that women's subordination is a result of the conceptualization of paid work in organizations as 'work' and unpaid family work as 'non-work'. According to this perspective, women's work remains less visible and undervalued (Collinson & Hearn, 2005). Therefore, family ideology not only differentiates individuals, but also legitimates inequalities of power and authority (Bernardes, 1985). This separation of production and reproduction disseminates images of masculinity and femininity that perpetuate gender divisions, including inequalities in organizations (Acker, 2012). This idea of men as 'breadwinners' and women as mothers or caretakers contributes to the creation of different expectations towards men and women at work. Workers more committed to paid employment and without obligations outside of it are considered 'naturally' more apt for positions of responsibility and authority, while those who cannot give their undivided commitment to the organization are assigned positions in lower

ranks (Acker, 1990).

Women suffer from a 'female disadvantage' (Eagly & Carli, 2007), since their primary responsibility for family life is regarded as incompatible with career progression and leadership. Other authors also highlighted the existence of a motherhood penalty (Budig & England; Correll et al., 2007; Cuddy et al. 2004). According to Hoobler, Wayne, and Lemmon (2009), women are less likely to be perceived as good 'fits' and high performers, particularly when managers sense family-work conflict. In contrast, men have a 'marriage premium' (Cheung & Halpern 2010, p.183), which refers to the economic advantage that fathers enjoy in the workplace.

Hoobler, Hu, and Wilson (2010) claimed that the expectations of the 'ideal worker' and the 'ideal parent/ caregiver' are incompatible because time and energy are limited. Workers who put work before family commitments are rewarded in terms of salaries and promotions, but they also tend to have lower career satisfaction and lower performance.

Welfare policies, e.g. parental leave, give women, and also men, the time to respond to the demands of parenthood without the severe penalties that they would otherwise endure. However, these do not erase the fundamental incompatibility between paid work organizations and the other areas of life. Time demand incompatibilities inevitably disrupt organizational activities, or family life, or other areas of life. Measures to accommodate family needs unavoidably disturb the flow of work in organizations and cause difficulties for managers and co-workers, but the rhythm of work activities cannot change because it is essential for the organization not to disrupt the 'webs of inter-organizational practices' (Acker, 1998, p. 199).

For Drew (2002), if women continue to take full responsibility for the reconciliation of paid work and household labor there can be no gender equality, either at home or at work. There is a massive asymmetry in the speed of gender role change (Esping-Andersen, 2005). Female biogra-

phies have been masculinized, with women's increasing educational attainment, lifelong attachment to work, postponed marriage and family formation, while no parallel feminization of male biographies can be observed. This asymmetry in gender role change could partly explain why some aspects of gender equality have changed so much, while others remain practically untouched. For Esping-Andersen, a new equilibrium will require a parallel feminization of men's life paths, e.g. by having career breaks. This would neutralize employers' gender-asymmetric expectations and weaken gender-specific discrimination in labor. Besides, according to Tamm (2019, p. 184), "even short periods of fathers' parental leave may have long-lasting effects on fathers' involvement in childcare and housework." Patnaik (2019) also supports the importance of paternal leaves for gender equality.

Pease and Pringle (2001) observed that, in most egalitarian societies, men have an active role in the private sphere. Recent research has suggested that fathers in Canada may be feeling increased cultural pressure to participate more fully in parenting, and a desire to spend more time with their children (e.g. Buchanan et al., 2020). However, women may resist more participation and sharing by the father (Buchanan et al., 2020; Zuo & Tang, 2000).

Even in developed countries, gender equality in divisions of work is rare and gender norms remain strong (McMunn et al., 2019; Ramos et al., 2016). Even in Sweden, despite all policy support and gender equality in society, women still perform more household work than men do (Evertsson, 2014).

2.2. Portugal

Portugal has one of the highest female employment rates in the European Union (EU), and it is the EU country where motherhood increases the most women's employment (European Com-

mission, 2017). However, while law changes and women's participation in employment were apparently accepted by Portuguese society, the gender ideology that existed before was not questioned, and neither did the gender division of labor at home change (Oliveira et al., 2010).

Women still perform most care-related tasks in Portuguese households, 12 more weekly hours than men, despite their involvement in paid work. Men are still regarded as the one who 'help' (Perista et al., 2016). An 'economic rationality' seems to be the main motor for Portuguese women's integration in the workforce (Sackmann, 2002), rather than a change in mentalities. While women need to work to overcome poverty, there is also an underlying idea of emancipation through economic integration.

Besides, childcare facilities are scarce and family networks are insufficient (Plantenga & Remery, 2009). Coupled with low salaries, this leads to overwork, so that families can afford the outsourcing of childcare. In turn, overwork increases work-life stress and feelings of guilt if parents are unable to cope with this situation (Torres, 2009). Besides, traditional gender roles are ingrained in the Portuguese society to such an extent, that some studies revealed that Portuguese women do not consider the unequal division of tasks with their spouses as unfair. Although the majority did recognize that tasks should be split more evenly, a significant proportion of the respondents supported an asymmetrical division of tasks (Torres, Silva, Monteiro, & Cabrita, 2005). The Portuguese setting is marked by contradictions, hence the relevance of analyzing it.

2.3. Tourism work and work-family balance

Women's representation in the tourism industry has increased, but they are still underrepresented at the top (Costa et al., 2012). The main reasons for women's underrepresentation in

management are 'old-boy' networks (Mooney & Ryan, 2009), lack of mentor support (Boone et al., 2013), work-family conflict (Li & Leung, 2001), hiring practices and gender discrimination (Boone et al. 2013; Li & Leung, 2001), long working hours (Cave & Kilic, 2010), obsolete human resources management strategies and 'organizational inertia' (Jordan, 1997, p. 526).

Costa et al.(2017) concluded that 'availability-related flexibility', i.e. employees' flexibility to work whenever the employer needs them to, is one of the characteristics most desired by recruiters in tourism. However, the demand for availability is one of the greatest obstacles for women managers in tourism (Carvalho et al., 2019). Social reproductive gender roles constrain women's ability to conform to this 'ideal tourism worker' model, thus limiting their career advancement.

3. Methodology

This article analyzes part of the qualitative results of a broader mixed-methods research study on women managers in the Portuguese tourism sector. While the quantitative part was useful to identify the main gendered patterns of inequality in employment (Carvalho et al.,2014; Carvalho, 2017), the qualitative part helped understand the processes that lie behind such inequalities (Carvalho, 2017; Carvalho et al., 2019).

Twenty-four women senior managers in hotels, travel agencies and tour operators were interviewed. Stratified purposeful sampling was achieved based on business size. Although this limits the generalization of results, it provides information-rich cases and captures major variations in the population. Table 1 presents the main characteristics of the sample.

Table 1 | Sample

Business size (no. workers)	
0-9	9
10-49	5
50-249	3
>250	7
Situation in employment	
Entrepreneurs	12
Employees	12
Marital status	
Single	4
Cohabitation	4
Married	10
Divorced	6
Children	
Adult children	5
Young children	12
None	5
No, but would like	2
Household composition	
Living alone	7
Living with husband/ partner	5
Living with child(ren)	2
Living with husband/ partner and child(ren)	9
Living with husband/ partner, children and one member from extended family	1

Source: own elaboration

Interviews were semi-structured and in-depth to capture women's experiences from their own perspective. The goal was to seek descriptions of specific situations rather than general opinions, and to go beyond the surface and explore deeper meanings (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Interviews were carried out face-to-face, by phone or Skype. Interviews lasted between 30 minutes and two hours, with most interviews lasting about one hour. Follow-up questions were sent to the interviewees in order to clarify doubts concerning some statements made during the first interview, and to ask a few additional questions. These questions were related with issues that arose after the researcher carried out the first analysis of the whole dataset. Interviews covered several domains, as can be seen in (Carvalho, 2017). NVivo was used to organize the themes for analysis.

Although there are concerns over the loss of intimacy in Skype interviews (Seitz, 2015), Skype interviews can be a viable and useful replacement of face-to-face interviews (Deakin & Wakefield, 2013; Lo Iacono et al., 2016). Instead of being limited to face-to-face accessible interviewees, this way it was possible to have access to a wider range of participants. Seitz (2015) had mentioned greater difficulty to obtain in-depth responses to sensitive questions via Skype. In fact, it was hard to obtain in-depth answers from a few women. However, it is also important to highlight that the interviewees in the present study who revealed the most sensitive information were most frequently those who were interviewed by phone or Skype, rather than interviewed face-to-face.

4. Results

Over the next sections, women's family situation is analyzed, including the interplay between family and career decisions, the adoption of child-

care and household maintenance strategies, and subjective experienced of balancing work and family. Finally, the role of participants' husbands or partners in the family is analyzed, together with women's perceptions about the evolution of the gendered division of household duties and family responsibilities.

4.1. Women's careers and family decisions

Most interviewees had children, particularly young children (Table 1). Although some reported becoming more available after their children grew up, most invested significantly in their careers while they had young children, or right before having children. Women were more likely to first invest in their careers and only then build a family, while continuing to work full-time and further investing in their careers, as in White (1995).

Women with particularly supportive organizational environments were more likely to have children while climbing to the top. They felt that their competencies and skills were recognized, and that their pregnancies would not jeopardize opportunities for further development. One woman, who was promoted while on maternity leave, talked about this issue as follows:

> When my youngest daughter was born, they offered me a promotion, she was three months old. I ended up only enjoying four months of the leave, in the last month I was already working from home. I wasn't penalized for being on maternity leave, quite the contrary.

Although this meant some sacrifice of her family life, she regarded this promotion as an opportunity and as a sign of trust from her company. This quote also seems to suggest that the 'standard' is to be penalized for being on maternity leave. Other studies on the same set of interviews have

revealed this (e.g. Carvalho, 2017).

It is important to analyze whether childlessness was a consequence of women's career ambition and work pressure. Two interviewees were postponing motherhood to advance in their careers, but they still wanted to have children:

> I'm single, I'm 35, I don't have children, but I want to get married and have children [laughs] but [not having children] also allows me to be more available, although (...) I'm not the kind of woman who wants to neglect her family life, not at all, I'm very emotive, I'm very affectionate, emotionally I'm like a woman who is not a business woman.

In this quote, the interviewee seeks to distance herself from the image of the 'business woman', who is described as a different 'species' of woman, in opposition to the 'normal' woman, who is affectionate, more family-oriented, and desires to have children.

Five women were not likely to have children anymore or did not want to have them. Only one of these women clearly stated that it was not because of her involvement with her career that she remained childless. For two of these women, their careers were a crucial factor in their decision to remain childless. One of them 'wanted to believe' that women who aspire to having a career do not need to remain childless any longer. For the other interviewee, remaining childless was not a deliberate decision, but her career ambition did not give her room to get married or have children:

> I didn't choose, but I think that because of my great ambition there was never space for getting married and having a normal life. (...) the demands were so great, the demands that I made on myself, that in the end... (...) well I looked back and

> thought 'no, I'm fine like this', and in fact I think I've only managed to get where I got and to have this career path, because I was not involved, I was totally free to travel.

Both considered they would not have been able to reach their current positions had they had children. Being childless gave them more freedom to travel on business, to move and grab career opportunities, and to have more availability for their careers. Mooney and Ryan (2009) also pointed out that women without children were free to grab opportunities such as promotions that required geographical mobility, whereas women with children considered that this was 'prohibitively difficult' (p. 202).

To conclude, the perception of a 'motherhood penalty' led some women to either abdicate or delay motherhood (Budig & England, 2001). This seems to have had positive outcomes in women's careers. However, although some women decided to remain childless, most women wanted to have both a family and a career.

4.2. Childcare and household maintenance strategies

Availability was a crucial work requirement for all interviewees. In order to respond to this requirement, practically all informants combined several child-rearing and household maintenance strategies. The most common pattern was sending their children to kindergarten and relying on grandparents' support. Less than half of the mothers interviewed shared the domestic workload equally with their husbands/partners. Only in a few cases were their husbands more flexible and available when emergency situations with their children arose. This enabled these women to become more available for their careers, e.g. to work overtime or travel on business.

Some women also mentioned occasional support from other relatives or friends, who picked up their children from school when they had to work until later. Slightly more than half had housekeepers, some on a full-time basis. Despite some women's flexible schedules, all of them relied on more than one of these 'strategies'.

One informant highlighted that low salaries are one of the problems in Portugal, and people who have no support from relatives cannot afford a baby-sitter to cover certain periods when schools are closed, or children are sick. In fact, none of the interviewees resource to nannies as a childcare solution.

Women relied on a combination of strategies and factors that enabled their availability. However, it does not mean that they achieved this availability without any sort of conflict. In fact, several interviewees emphasized how both work and family affect each other.

4.3. Subjective experiences of balancing work and family

Although informants assigned greater importance to their families than to their careers, they prioritized their work commitments, not only because their careers were highly demanding, but also due to their families' partial dependence on their breadwinning activities. This may explain why they emphasized work-family conflict more than family-work conflict. Women's feelings concerning the impact of work on family are visible in the verbs they used to describe it: 'spoil', 'ruin', 'destroy', 'stifle' or 'invade' (e.g. 'Work stifles your personal life a lot. And often destroys it'). Certain family situations may have caused stress and conflict, but from women's accounts, there is not much evidence that they have led stress spill over from family to work, while there is significantly more evidence of the opposite. Most work-family conflict concerns these aspects: conflicts during

pregnancy and nursing; lack of time and sacrificing family life; conflicts with (ex-)husbands; or school holiday periods.

Although several interviewees reported positive experiences related with the way pregnancy was handled in their organizations, not all organizations were supportive. A few informants who were employees mentioned discriminatory situations, such as systematic pressure and control after insisting on enjoying one's full maternity leave, or bullying by a male supervisor who tried to harm and 'eliminate' one of these women as a future competitor during her pregnancy. Another woman was pregnant at the time of the interview and she revealed her uncertainty about her position in the company after returning from the period of leave.

As to the informants who were entrepreneurs, most did not enjoy a period of leave at home, detached from work, but kept involved in their businesses while nursing their children, since they found it hard to delegate their responsibilities. The advantage of being entrepreneurs was having greater flexibility and being able to bring their children to the workplace when needed, including for breast-feeding at the office. Most women who worked in family businesses had relatives nearby that supported them and their children.

Work-family conflict was also related with lack of family time. This led women to feel tired, preoccupied, stressed and guilty. Balancing work and family lives was at times exhausting, even for women who claimed being satisfied about their work-family balance. An informant stated that she spent so much time at the hotel that her home was 'a second home', thus evidencing her heavy work requirements.

An interviewee told that 'all the female managers in the hotel chain feel that they have very little time for their families'. It is noteworthy that she only included the perceptions shared by her female counterparts in her narrative of time scarcity. The exclusion of her male counterparts from this narrative may either mean that she did not perceive

men as having this conflict because they were unencumbered by family responsibilities, or that she did not broach this topic with her male colleagues. This hints at the invisibility of male managers' family life in the organization.

Some women felt guilty for not devoting enough time to their families, or for not having been present in particularly important moments in their children's lives, such as school parties, not being with one's daughter when she started her period ('there are all these details that we miss out on in our children's lives, and time doesn't go backwards') or interrupting maternity leave and breast-feeding to stand by the company during the peak season ('It was my choice to do it, although I still beat myself up about that even today').

Some women reported how their careers have implied sacrifices in their family lives, and defined success upon the idea of sacrifice:

> We build our own success with our dedication, effort, availability, our sacrifices, most of all our family sacrifices, so many. I think this is success.

Some of these women had mixed feelings towards these sacrifices. They expressed some regret for not having been more present, but also received some peace of mind due to their children having turned out well. Therefore, they regarded these sacrifices as worthy, which in a way calmed down their guilt feelings.

Conflicts with the (ex-)husband were another frequent theme. Most women who mentioned this theme were divorced. These conflicts were related with their (ex)husbands' jealousy, unwillingness to share tasks at home or lack of acceptance of their career involvement.

Several women identified the peak season and school holiday periods as moments of disharmony. Holidays, particularly summer holidays, correspond to the periods of most intense activity in tourism. It was nearly impossible for most of these women to schedule holidays with their families during these periods. Hence, alternative childcare solutions had to be arranged. This is an obstacle typically faced by tourism workers at all hierarchical levels.

In contrast, positive feelings reported by women were mostly related with 'having things under control', and refusing the 'burden of guilt':

> If you want to have children, make sure you don't feel guilty, my daughters are two happy children... this gives me the stability to focus on my work.

> You can't be a helicopter mom. Be confident, have self-esteem and be positive. Only this way can women get rid of the burden that the whole of society tends to place on them.

Women emphasized the importance of having flexibility at work and of family support structures. An interviewee highlighted the importance of feeling that her family life is not completely 'at the mercy' of her professional life. She finds it positive that she has some flexibility to manage her time.

Informants also highlighted the importance of feeling that their family understands the importance of their careers. Despite her busy professional life, an interviewee mentioned that it fulfils her and, therefore, she arrives home 'happy' and 'does not get cranky with the kids'. This way, she reframed work as an ally instead of enemy of the family, and thus reports satisfaction in both domains, as in Cheung and Halpern (2010).

4.4. Gender roles at home

More than half of the participants lived with their husband/partner. In the sample of women analyzed, only two were married to men in more demanding positions. It was more likely that either both partners had similarly demanding jobs,

or that men's jobs offered more flexibility or were less career-oriented than women. This contradicts previous literature (e.g. Hearn et al., 2008).

Almost half of the interviewees had husbands/partners that either did a fair share of household tasks or even took on more family responsibilities, particularly during family emergencies. These are examples of 'companionate' marriages and partnerships (Hearn et al., 2008), where there are balanced gender power relations and partners are mutually supportive. This enabled women to become more available for their careers:

> My husband regards my career as an important part of my identity. And he regards his role as a father in the same light as I regard my role as a mother.

> It is usually said that 'behind a great man there's always a great woman', but behind me there's a great man, my husband, who's someone that really gave me all the support with my daughter (...) when I'm away, I always count on my husband, who takes on both the father and the mother role, he has to drop her off and pick her up from school, dress her, give her a shower, organize her schoolbag, see if her homework is done.

According to the first interviewee, she would not have been able to accept her last promotion had her husband not supported her. Interviewees whose husbands were significantly engaged at home praised them profusely for that. This can also be seen in the second quote. Still, in the second case, this involvement is described as 'giving me all the support with my daughter', which indicates that, despite his engagement, she is the one who takes the lead in household and child-rearing matters.

In most cases, men's greater flexibility or lower work demands did not necessarily translate into a balanced division of tasks at home:

> We [women] are going to be labelled as cleaners for the rest of our lives. It's never going to be the man...

However, the unequal division of tasks was not always a source of conflict, since some women resigned themselves to doing most of the work. It is noteworthy how some women simultaneously criticized and subscribed to traditional family discourses, which emphasize women's primary role as a mother. This is visible in the following excerpts, among many others: 'If [a woman] wants a career she has to organize herself'; 'Women need time management' or 'Women still have a handicap'.

There were two cases of husbands having less demanding jobs but opposing their wives' careers. Li and Leung (2001) also observed how challenging it can be to deal with the ego of a spouse. These conflicts led to divorce:

> Men can't stand it when a woman works in a position above theirs. It's very hard for them to accept this.

Several informants believed that there has been an evolution in mentalities, and that men are starting to get more involved in household and care-related tasks, although full equality has not been achieved yet. Some women identified these tendencies in relation to their own husbands/partners, but most women who mentioned this theme were older, and they noticed these differences in the younger generations. Although there has been an evolution, it is not a revolution. Incipient expectations of men's greater involvement in family life still do not seem to be comparable to the expectations held for women – modern men are expected to 'help' or do some tasks at home, and an equal share of tasks is still not regarded as the norm, but as an exceptional reason for praise, even when men are less career-oriented than their wives or have less demanding jobs. Research participants whose husbands are significantly engaged at home

praise them profusely for that. Therefore, the idea of men's greater involvement in family life seems to more of an exception than the rule.

5. Conclusion

This study sought to answer this research question: 'How can the family context and the dominant family ideology in the Portuguese context influence women tourism managers' construction as mothers and as economically active beings?'. Firstly, it was analyzed how the perception of a 'motherhood penalty' influenced women's career and family decisions. Some women were aware of the existence of a 'motherhood penalty' and decided to abdicate motherhood or postpone it until they reached certain professional goals to minimize the impact of motherhood on career, as in Budig and England (2001). Still, most women wanted to have both a family and a career. The most common pattern was for women to firstly postpone motherhood and strongly invest in their careers, and only then raise a family, while continuing to work full-time and investing in their careers.

Practically all interviewees who were mothers were able to accomplish their career goals while having a family because they combined several childcare and household maintenance solutions, such as childcare services, support from relatives or housekeepers. Some were in 'companionate marriages' or partnerships (Hearn et al., 2008). Most of these women had some level of privilege, either in terms of material conditions or in terms of family support. Yet, none reported nannies as a childcare solution, which contrasts with the situation observed in other countries, such as Brazil (Salvador, 2012).

For the interviewees, who portrayed themselves as highly responsible and professional, work-family conflict is much more frequent than family-work conflict, as in Broadbridge (2009). This sparked

feelings of guilt for sacrificing their families. 'Sacrifice' and 'guilt' are the outcome of pressures from contrasting discourses that coexist in our society: on the one hand, discourses about women's emancipation, as well as professionalism, capitalism, individualist ambition; on the other hand, the discourse about the mother's role, and the traditional family ideology. In a sector as demanding in terms of availability such as the tourism sector, conflicting demands may be intensified. Nevertheless, some women rejected the 'burden of guilt'.

Almost half of the interviewees were in 'companionate marriages' or partnerships (Hearn et al., 2008). Challenging the gender order at home helps to challenge gender order at work, since the greater involvement of men at home enables women to become more unencumbered in developing their careers. However, it was still an exceptional reason for praise when men participated at home, even when they were less career-oriented than their wives. The expectation of men's involvement in family life is not comparable to the expectation that is held in relation to women. Deutsch et al. (2006) also reported that fathers received more praise than mothers for involvement in parenting, which reflects inequity between fathers and mothers. Even in 'companionate marriages' and partnerships, men's greater involvement with the family was more a result of the flexibility provided by their jobs than the result of an adjustment to their wives' career demands, as in Wilton and Purcell (2010).

Particularly older informants noticed an evolution in men's involvement in the household in younger generations. Nonetheless, traditional masculinities and machismo are still deeply imbedded in Portuguese households (Torres et al., 2005). This was visible in some husbands' unwillingness to participate in household tasks and interviewees' dismissive attitude of their husbands' lesser involvement. Torres et al. (2005) concluded that Portuguese women, despite performing most household tasks, did not consider this situation un-

fair, and a significant proportion still supported an asymmetrical division of tasks.

Machismo was criticized by the interviewees, but also deeply ingrained in their discourses. Some argued that women must struggle to accommodate the 'double burden' if they want a career, but that some women simply 'choose' not to have one. However, is the decision to have less career-oriented jobs always a matter of genuine choice, or a consequence of gendered circumstances and expectations? For Mooney et al. (2009), this kind of behavior is not a matter of 'genuine choice'. The idea of 'genuine choice' ignores the existence of organizational and societal barriers that constrain women's options.

In participants' discourse about the family, it is visible how gendered divisions at home and at work are mutually reinforcing. The traditional family ideology does not have watertight boundaries inside the home, but flows into other spheres of society, influencing ideals of masculinity and femininity, as well as divisions of labor at home and in the organization.

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