

# The importance of investigating the **role of gender** in **tourism's resilience** to an **economic crisis**

FIONA BAKAS \* [ [fiona.bakas@otago.ac.nz](mailto:fiona.bakas@otago.ac.nz) ]

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Resilience, defined as the ability of a system to recover from a shock or disturbance (Martin, 2012), is a subject that is receiving increased attention within tourism (Cochrane, 2010), albeit in the context of tourism's resilience to climatic and environmental processes such as natural disasters (Biggs, Hall & Stoeckl, 2012; Muskat, Nakanishi & Blackman, 2012). In this paper, I introduce the concept of how tourism can be resilient to major negative economic events such as the Greek economic crisis, through female tourism entrepreneurship, and I investigate the role gender plays in creating this resilience. Based on research carried out in Greece over the period June to December 2012 during a macroeconomic crisis, I use semi-structured interviewing and participant observation to find out about handicraft tourism entrepreneurs from a gender and economics angle. I then use thematic analysis to analyse the information arising from interactions with twenty male and female participants. This information is used to investigate tourism's economic resilience by looking at the relationship of handicraft tourism entrepreneurship to gender roles and relations. Social reproduction, which is the activities completed on a daily and intergenerational basis to maintain human life, provides a nuanced lens on the political and economic elements influencing female tourism entrepreneurship. Using feminist economics to critically review current entrepreneurship theorising, this paper suggests the use of the concept of social provisioning (Power, 2013) to address contemporary economic theorising's transition towards economic practices based on an ethics of care and gender justice rather than the neoclassical economic focus of economic decisions being guided by choice under scarcity (Harcourt, 2013). Focusing on social provisioning economic activities, I reveal how women's dual roles as carers and entrepreneurs provide them with an inherent resilience to systemic shocks as they are more used to dealing with 'crisis' both within the family and when juggling family and work commitments. In addition, within the current study I observe that collective female entrepreneurship structures such as women's cooperatives, unlike other entrepreneurs, are averse to incurring monetary debt (Karamessini & Rubery, 2013), hence adding another tier of resilience, that of structural resilience to debt. These findings indicate how feminine caring positions and non-adherence to 'classical' entrepreneurial characteristics such as risk-taking may increase resilience in times of economic crisis, suggesting that feminine practices may produce an 'antidote' to some of the negative effects of the economic crisis.

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\* PhD Candidate at the Tourism Department, Otago University (New Zealand).

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