Power and Empowerment: How Asian Solo Female Travellers Perceive and Negotiate Risks

Abstract

In response to the emergence of the solo female travel market in Asia, this study explores how Asian women perceive and negotiate the risks of travelling alone and the meanings of these processes. The lived experiences of 35 solo female travellers from 10 East and Southeast Asian countries were analysed using constructivist grounded theory. The findings reveal that Asian solo female travellers were concerned about gendered (e.g. sexual assault and street harassment) and racialised (e.g. discrimination and social disapproval) risks, which imply the unequal power relations underpinning the gendered and racialised tourism space. The findings also reveal evidence where gender intersects with race in amplifying and constructing Asian women's perception of risk. The study demonstrates how Asian solo female travellers gained empowerment and experienced self-transformations through negotiating the risks and further reveals how these individual transformations may extend to social transformations at a micro level in an Asian context.

Keywords: Asian; gender; solo travel; risk perception; power; intersectionality

1. Introduction

Recent advances in gender equality have greatly improved women's employment in both developed and developing countries. With their increased economic independence, women now have greater opportunities to, and choices about, travel. A growing number of women have begun to embrace this newly gained autonomy and independently travel in search of freedom, independence, and empowerment (Elliot, 2015; Jordan & Gibson, 2005). A survey by TripAdvisor reveals that 91% of women in Germany and France and 81% of women in Australia are interested in travelling alone (ETB Travel News, 2015). This trend is also evident in Southeast Asia with 79% of women planning to travel alone and in 2015, 48% of Southeast Asian women had actually taken a solo holiday, an increase from 36% in 2014 (Elliot, 2015; The Star, 2015). While the exact figures are not available, industry reports have pointed to the growing market of Asian solo female travellers (Amadeus, 2013; Pacific Asia Travel Association, 2016). In contrast to the emerging trend, only a handful of tourism studies have been published on solo female travel (Chiang & Jogaratnam, 2006; Jordan & Gibson, 2005; McNamara & Prideaux, 2010; Wilson & Little, 2005, 2008). Because most of these studies have focused on a western perspective, little is known about the experience of solo female travellers from Asia.

In response to the dearth of research in this area, this study investigates the solo travel behaviour of Asian women and, specifically, the risk perception of Asian solo female travellers. When travelling alone in the tourism space that privileges (white) men's travel experience (Pritchard & Morgan, 2000), women are exposed to gendered risks, such as sexual harassment and unwanted attention (Jordan & Gibson, 2005; Wilson & Little, 2008). Some scholars suggest that the effect of risk can be amplified in Asian women because of the different cultural values underlying the social expectations of what it is to be a respectable woman in an Asian society (Muzaini, 2006; Teo & Leong, 2006). Several industry reports also indicate that safety is a top priority for Asian female travellers (Pacific Asia Travel Association, 2016; The Star, 2015). While the risk associated with solo female travel has been frequently mentioned, few studies have conceptualised risk as an independent subject of investigation, and even fewer have investigated risk perception from gender and non-western perspectives. Therefore, this study contributes to this knowledge gap in the area of solo travel by providing an in-depth understanding of the risk perception of Asian solo female travellers.

1 In summary, this study seeks to explore how Asian women perceive and
2 negotiate the risk of travelling alone and whether their resistance to risks and the
3 underlying power relations will lead to empowerment. The outcomes of this study are
4 expected to advance existing knowledge of the solo female travel market, an
5 increasingly significant yet under-researched area. By taking into account gender and
6 racial identities and their mutually constitutive relations, the study contributes an
7 intersectionality perspective to tourism research, a field that has been criticised for
8 being androcentric (Figuerola-Domecq, Pritchard, Segovia-Pérez, Morgan, & Villacé-
9 Molinero, 2015) and western-centric (Winter, 2009). Furthermore, this study expands
10 the understanding of risk, a prevalent notion in contemporary society, by deconstructing
11 it from gender, culture and power perspectives.

12 13 **2. Situating the Research**

14 ***2.1 Travelling alone in the gendered and racialised space***

15 Tourism space is “a powerful cultural arena and process that both shapes and is shaped
16 by gendered (re)presentations of places, people, nations and cultures” (Aitchison, 2001,
17 p. 134). Nevertheless, existing tourism space has been predominantly shaped by the
18 experiences of male tourists from the developed western countries, which renders it a
19 gendered and racialised industry and space (Aitchison, 2001; Pritchard & Morgan,
20 2000; Vandegrift, 2008; Winter, 2009). This is not surprising because the knowledge
21 construction of tourism has evolved around a western-centric viewpoint that often
22 overemphasises the western beginnings of contemporary tourism which traces back to
23 the elite excursions of European travellers who were predominantly white upper-class
24 males (Chambers, 2010). This perception has overlooked the presence of non-western
25 travellers and travel practices. With the rise of the female and other emerging markets in
26 the past few decades, several tourism scholars have begun to critique the colonial and
27 patriarchal legacy in the field and call for different approaches, such as postcolonial and
28 intersectionality approaches to the understanding of contemporary tourism practices
29 (Aitchison, 2001; Winter, 2009). Responding to this call, this study offers an alternative
30 interpretation through the experiences of Asian solo female travellers. In particular, this
31 study asks if tourism space is gendered and racialised, will Asian women encounter a
32 different experience when travelling alone in such a space? While existing literature
33 does not provide a definitive answer to this question due to the absence of research
34 concerning Asian solo female travellers, prior studies on western solo female travellers
35 and Asian backpackers have offered some important insights.

1 From a gender viewpoint, existing literature has demonstrated how travelling
2 alone provides women with a space away from home where they can explore and reflect
3 on the self, which may eventually lead to transformative and empowering experiences
4 (Jordan & Gibson, 2005; Wilson & Harris, 2006). In particular, solo travel is regarded
5 as one way of expressing women's agency because travelling alone was considered
6 inappropriate for women in the past, and this disapproval still lingers, although to a
7 lesser extent in contemporary society (Jordan & Gibson, 2005; Wilson & Little, 2005).
8 While this liminal space emancipates women from the social expectations and
9 responsibilities of their home society, this space is not entirely free from social
10 constraints because women are still bounded by the gender norms and power relations
11 in the host society (Bui, Wilkins, & Lee, 2014; Heimtun, 2011). As documented in prior
12 research, women's bodies and their solo presence often invite uncomfortable attention
13 and sexual advances, which expose them to the risk of sexual harassment when
14 travelling alone (Jordan & Aitchison, 2008). The social disapproval imposed on women
15 traveling alone and the resulting social constraints in the forms of sexual risk point to
16 the gendered double standards that prevail in the contemporary tourism space and
17 practices, which have continued to privilege men's pleasure and experiences
18 (Berdychevsky & Gibson, 2015a; Pritchard & Morgan, 2000). This situation is
19 exacerbated when gender intersects with race.

20
21 Past studies have reported an amplified effect on Asian female backpackers
22 because of their gender and cultural background (Teo & Leong, 2006). Comparable to
23 many other travel practices, backpacking, a subset of independent travel that is closely
24 related to the interest of this study, is widely portrayed as a tourism practice with a
25 western origin in which travellers (mostly men at its inception) from the developed
26 West travel to the less developed South and East, including Asia in search of exotic,
27 adventurous, and life-changing experiences (Bui, Wilkins, & Lee, 2013; Noy, 2004;
28 Teo & Leong, 2006). Although a number of recent studies have investigated the
29 experiences of non-western backpackers (Berdychevsky, Poria, & Uriely, 2010; Chen,
30 Bao, & Huang, 2014; Chen, Yu, Chang, & Hsieh, 2014; Ong & du Cros, 2012), few
31 studies have critically examined the flipped host-guest relationships (e.g., Asian
32 backpackers travelling to the West or within Asia) and the meanings of backpacking
33 from Asian perspectives. One of the exceptions is Bui et al. (2013) who found that for
34 Asian backpackers, backpacking continues to be perceived as a westernised practice
35 dominated by "imagined" western values such as independence and freedom. While

little is known about the experience of Asian female backpackers, earlier studies (Muzaini, 2006; Teo & Leong, 2006) reported that Asian female backpackers had been mistaken as local sex workers when travelling in some Asian countries where sex tourism prevails. These studies suggest that Asian female backpackers fail to fit into the typical image of backpackers, who are supposedly white and male, though this image is changing. Their findings not only exemplify gendered double standards but also racial double standards that exist in the contemporary tourism space. The resultant double *othering*, where Asian women are marginalized because of their gender and also because of their Asian identity, can contribute to the risk perception of Asian female backpackers. In summary, existing research has inferred a distinctive set of risks in the independent travel experiences of women and in particular, Asian women. This study seeks to expand on this understanding by conceptualising risk as an independent subject of investigation.

2.2 Risk and power

While risk is commonly mentioned in everyday life and research, its definition is often taken for granted and left undefined (Lupton, 2013; Williams & Baláž, 2015). In colloquial usage, risk refers to a threat or negative outcome in general (Green, Mitchell, & Bunton, 2000; Lupton, 2013). In research, there are at least three epistemological positions to risk: naïve realism, critical realism, and relativism (Lupton, 2013). Most tourism research has adopted a realist (naïve or critical) viewpoint in which risk is understood as an objective and measurable threat. In particular, a majority of the risk studies in tourism have favoured a quantitative approach (see Korstanje, 2011), and while these studies have provided insightful statistics, limited in-depth discussion has occurred that links the findings with the social world or that deepens the understanding of the concept of risk itself (Williams & Baláž, 2015). For instance, Yang and Nair's (2015) review of risk literature in tourism shows that culture and gender are two of the most researched antecedents of risk. While the statistical differences in gender and cultural orientations in relation to tourist risk perception have been commonly reported in prior quantitative studies (Lepp & Gibson, 2003; Reisinger & Crotts, 2009), few have provided insightful or comprehensive explanations of the relationships between risk, gender, and/or culture. A recent review by Yang, Khoo-Lattimore and Arcodia (2017) has substantiated a similar finding in which nearly 80% of risk and gender studies in tourism have employed a quantitative approach with few exceptions (see for examples Berdychevsky & Gibson, 2015a, 2015b; Elsrud, 2001; Myers, 2010).

Furthermore, prior research tends to construe risk as an exclusively negative outcome that is to be avoided by tourists and eliminated by the industry. Only a few exceptions have explored the positive meanings of risk and risk taking in tourism and in contemporary society through a relativist standpoint (Berdychevsky & Gibson, 2015a; Cater, 2006; Elsrud, 2001, 2005). These studies suggest that risk perception is subjective and context-specific and that the perceived presence of risk can also contribute a sense of excitement to tourist experience in cases such as backpacking travel (Elsrud, 2001, 2005), adventure tourism (Cater, 2006) and women's sexual risk-taking during holidays (Berdychevsky & Gibson, 2015a, 2015b). This study intends to expand on this stream of literature by providing a more comprehensive interpretation of risk grounded in a relativist epistemology.

From a relativist viewpoint, risk is construed as a social construction that is informed by the sociocultural context and its underlying power relations (Foucault, 1978; Gustafson, 1998; Lupton, 2013). There are different types of power, including hard and soft power, and power over in contrast with power to resources and decision-making processes (Wang, Weaver, & Kwek, 2016). Power appears through social interactions in unequal relationships (Dowding, 2006) where the person who holds the greater power exerts influence on the less powerful counterpart, which can result in access or constraint to resources (e.g. access to tourism) and changes in attitude and behaviour (e.g. travel attitude and behaviour) (Deomampo, 2013). In patriarchal societies, males enjoy greater power than females and this unequal power relation may lead to gender differences in risk perception. For instance, female travellers are likely to perceive greater safety risks (including violence, abduction, and sexual harassment) than males (Calafat et al., 2013; Reichel, Fuchs, & Uriely, 2007). Gustafson (1998) explains that the risks of male and sexual violence are a manifestation of the dominance of the hegemonic masculinities over the femininities. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that variations exist because female travellers are not a homogenous group (Khoo-Lattimore & Prayag, 2015). For instance, female independent travellers were found to perceive lesser risk than female mass tourists (Lepp & Gibson, 2003). In addition to tourist roles, the risk perceptions of female travellers are further mediated by cultural background because what is considered as risk in one cultural context may not apply in another (Green & Singleton, 2006). This study argues that the effect of risk may further amplify in Asian women's solo travel experiences because they are not only grappling with gender but also racial power relations underpinning the gendered and

1 racialised tourism space. Nonetheless, the fact that Asian women do travel alone implies
2 that risk can be negotiated and power relations that underpin travel are not immutable.

3 4 **3. Methodology**

5 ***3.1 Constructivist Grounded Theory***

6 A constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014) guided by a social constructivist
7 paradigm and relativist epistemology was employed to elicit the interpretive
8 understandings of risk. Constructivist grounded theory has been recommended as a
9 valuable tool for research concerning power and empowerment, especially in
10 constructing an understanding that is grounded in the lived experiences of the
11 marginalised *others* (Charmaz, 2013; Jordan & Gibson, 2004), such as Asian solo
12 female travellers whose voices are almost absent in the extant literature. In contrast to
13 the traditional grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) that is
14 characterised by a positivist outlook and rigid procedures, the constructivist version
15 takes into account the evolving, interactive, and open-ended nature of human inquiry
16 and emphasises knowledge that is situated and context-specific (Charmaz, 2014). These
17 revised features of grounded theory have rendered the tool instrumental in eliciting
18 subjective and culturally embedded risk perceptions of Asian solo female travellers.

19 20 ***3.2 Defining Asia***

21 It may be unrealistic to speak for the whole of Asia, given the diverse ideologies,
22 cultural values, and gender norms practised across the vast geographical region.
23 Therefore, this study focuses on East and Southeast Asia because the socially
24 constructed identities of Asia are increasingly centred on the eastern region in
25 contemporary geopolitical discourse (Hall, 2009). This understanding of Asia, adapted
26 from Said's (1978) *Orientalism*, parallels the concept of western implied in this study
27 where both entities are considered as socio-cultural imaginations constructed through
28 symbolic, material and Self/Other representations (Ang & Stratton, 1995). The
29 (imagined) West is characterised by social and economic advancement and
30 individualistic value while the (imagined) *others*, of which Asia is included, are
31 associated with opposite or different stage of progress and values (Bui et al., 2013). In
32 particular, the cultural values and ideologies within the East and Southeast region of
33 Asia are assumed to be comparable. While there are other ideologies that play a role in
34 value formation of Asian societies, Confucianism and Islam are the two dominating
35 ideologies underpinning the patriarchal gender norms where women are expected to be

obedient, domesticated, and family-oriented (Schröter, 2013; Tang & Tang, 2001). These social expectations of Asian women provide an important foundation to understanding and interpreting the behaviour and experiences of the participants. Nevertheless, it is important to recognise that with the varying pace of economic growth and social changes (e.g. micro families) happening in Asia through the forces of globalisation, travel practice and gender identity of these Asian participants can be “westernised” or influenced by the dominating western discourse to a different extent (Scholte, 2008).

3.3 The Participants

In total, 35 women from 10 Asian countries/societies (see Table 1) who had travelled alone for leisure purposes were recruited from advertisements posted on Asian online travel forums and social media pages and through referrals from existing participants. Online Skype interviews were used predominantly to reach the participants who live in different Asian countries. As presented in Table 1, two thirds (23) of the participants were in their twenties and 12 participants were above 30 years old. It is not clear if the age profile of the participants reflected the Asian solo female travel market in general as such statistics are not available. An interesting pattern that emerged from the profiles is that a majority of the participants were single, eight were in a relationship and only three were married at the time of interviews. Many participants mentioned that they are likely to stop travelling alone when they are in a serious relationship. Among the three married participants, two women who have young children have indeed stopped travelling alone except for Shani whose children have grown up, which allows her time to be on her own. Anecdotal and theoretical evidence has indicated that relationship expectations can limit women’s travel but empirical confirmations have not been found from Asian solo female travellers. A more detailed investigation into this would be worthwhile. In terms of the solo holiday destination, Asian destinations such as Thailand (13), Malaysia (11) and Singapore (9) were popular among the participants. Nearly half (17) of the participants travelled alone within Asia while the remaining half (18) travelled alone in South Pacific, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Mediterranean and North Africa. The common length of the solo trip was three days to one week (19). Three participants travelled alone for more than a year through working holiday.

Table 1. Profiles of the participants

Nationality	Pseudonym	Age	Marital status	Solo travel destinations	Length of the longest solo holiday	Self-identified solo travel experience	Self-reported image/expectation of women in home society
China	Rui	25	in a relationship	China, Korea	3 months	beginner to intermediate	family oriented
	Jia	26	single	Australia, China, Fiji, New Zealand, Tibet	2 weeks	advanced	strong, changing
	Ting	28	single	Australia, China	3 days	beginner to intermediate	ambivalent (dependent vs independent, weak vs strong)
	Chun	29	single	New Zealand	4 days	first timer	strong
	Yue	29	single	Denmark, Germany, New Zealand	3 days	advanced	family oriented
	Pei	31	single	Australia, France, Malaysia, Singapore, Spain, Turkey	1 month	advanced	family oriented, dependent
Hong Kong	Wen	22	single	Thailand	1 week	first timer	ambivalent (independent vs dependent)
Indonesia	Tracy	23	in a relationship	Iran, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Turkey	1 month	advanced	dependent, weak
	Siti	28	single	Malaysia, Thailand	3 days	advanced	family oriented, dependent, submissive, changing
Japan	Eka	30	married, 1 child	Czech, Denmark, Hungary, Italy, Morocco, Spain	3 days	advanced	family oriented, obedient, changing
	Katsumi	26	single	Australia, Japan, Ireland, New Zealand	2 years	advanced	family oriented, naïve, ambivalent (independent vs obedient)
	Risa	27	in a relationship	France, Germany	5 days	first timer	family oriented, obedient, changing
	Akiko	28	single	Australia, New Zealand, Taiwan	3 weeks	beginner to intermediate	family oriented, obedient, changing
	Yuri	29	in a relationship	Japan, Hawaii, US	1 week	advanced	family oriented, strong
	Sayo	35	married	Cambodia, Thailand	10 days	beginner to intermediate	obedient, gentle
	Choi	23	single	France, Japan, Malaysia, UK	1 month	advanced	dependent, naïve
Korea	Kim	33	single	Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Vietnam, Thailand	4 days	advanced	family oriented, dependent, changing
	Li	25	single	Malaysia	1 week	first timer	family oriented, traditional
Malaysia	Fen	26	single	Malaysia, Thailand	2 years	beginner to intermediate	family oriented

Singapore	Nurul	26	single	Laos, Thailand, Vietnam	17 days	beginner to intermediate	dependent, obedient
	Mei	31	single	Hong Kong, Singapore, Thailand	3 days	beginner to intermediate	dependent
	Ning	32	in a relationship	Bulgaria, France, Laos, Indonesia, Italy, Malaysia, Myanmar, Netherlands, Romania, Thailand, Turkey, Vietnam, UK	3 weeks	advanced	family oriented, gentle, ambivalent (dependent vs independent)
	Aishah	27	in a relationship, 1 child	Thailand	4 days	first timer	dependent, fearful
	Ester	45	divorced	Australia, Cambodia, France, Hong Kong, Korea, Thailand, Spain, Malaysia, UK	3 months	advanced	strong, traditional, naïve
	Shani	49	married, 2 children	Bhutan, Sri Lanka	3 days	beginner to intermediate	family oriented, dependent, obedient, submissive, traditional
Taiwan	Cheryl	23	single	Malaysia, Singapore	1 month	beginner to intermediate	changing
	Qi	26	single	China, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore	5 days	advanced	family oriented, strong
	Zhang	26	single	Australia, Malaysia, Singapore	1 year	beginner to intermediate	traditional, independent, changing
	Yee	44	single	France, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam	1 week	advanced	family oriented, fearful, ambivalent (dependent vs independent)
Thailand	Narisa	31	single	Egypt, France, Pakistan, Singapore, UK	2 weeks	advanced	ambivalent (dependent vs independent)
Vietnam	Aranya	30	single	Laos, Thailand	6 days	advanced	family oriented, naïve
	Binh	21	single	Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam	1 week	beginner to intermediate	family oriented, weak, gentle, changing
	Phi	24	in a relationship	Cambodia, Vietnam,	3 weeks	first timer	family oriented, gentle, ambivalent (weak vs strong)
	Thien	25	in a relationship	Cambodia, Vietnam,	5 days	beginner to intermediate	family oriented, dependent, fearful, changing
	Tam	36	single	Hong Kong, Singapore, Thailand	3 days	beginner to intermediate	family oriented, dependent, fearful

3.4 Data Collection

A photo elicitation interview technique (Cederholm, 2004; Harper, 2002) was incorporated to capture the participants' travel and risk experiences, and the personal meanings and subjective feelings associated with these experiences. There are many different approaches to conduct a photo elicitation interview, ranging from "the simple idea of inserting a photograph into a research interview" (Harper, 2002, p.13) to the sophisticated technique such as the Zaltman metaphor elicitation technique (Khoo-Lattimore & Prideaux, 2013; Zaltman, 1997). In this study, a simple photo elicitation technique was incorporated in which travel photographs were used mainly as a means to build rapport with the participants and to serve as an effective mechanism to trigger memory, which is particularly useful for retrospective interviews (Cederholm, 2004; Warren & Karner, 2010). Upon recruitment, the participants were requested to provide one to three travel photographs that could best represent their solo travel experiences. This process prepared the participants for the interview by encouraging them to reflect on their experiences prior to the meeting. The examples of photographs presented in Figure 1 demonstrate how photos encouraged expressions of solo travel. The interviews began with a storytelling stage where the participants shared the stories of their selected photographs. Based on their narratives, the researcher further probed the concepts that were relevant to the research focus. Some examples of question include: Did you encounter any risk when travelling alone? If the participants said yes, the interviewer continued with, "Tell me more about the risk you encountered during solo holidays." If the participants said no (which did not occur), the interviewer continued with questions related to the perception of women travelling alone in the participants' home society. As the use of images encouraged participants to elaborate further and deeper on their experiences (Warren & Karner, 2010), the research yielded a thick description that consists of 48.3 hours of recordings in total with each interview lasted for 83 minutes on average, which were transcribed into 1024 pages of data.

Figure 1. Examples of photographs

Examples of Photographs	Descriptions Provided by Participants
<p>This was when I took the night train from Ha Noi (Vietnam) to Sapa . . . I was travelling alone with my backpack. A backpack can be your best friend during travel . . . It's not easy for me as well to carry the heavy backpack for almost two weeks . . . Also from the picture you can see that it represents that you want to travel from one place to another place, you need to face all the difficulties alone and you can see that I was looking outside of the train, thinking of what I would be doing next and what the challenge and adventure I need to face after this . . .</p>
<p>That's my first time hitch-hiking but in Vietnam we don't do like this . . . I want to try new thing, you know, something that may be risky, challenging but it helps me to like . . . I want to open my safety zone and I want to see how good people are.</p>
<p>Because I was taking photo from a very high point of view, very high perspective. And it's like you can see . . . have a good overview of the country below. That was in Romania. And I felt that it explains the first time when I . . . maybe not the first time, maybe all the time when I go travelling on my own, it just gives you the feeling like you are ready to embrace the world like, okay, like what more can a world throw on you. Like you can take it. So it's that kind of feeling.</p>

2

3 The participants were given an option to conduct the interview in English,
4 Mandarin or in their own languages through an interpreter. In total, 27 out of 35
5 participants opted to have the interviews in English, five were conducted in Mandarin,
6 and the remaining three (two Japanese and one Vietnamese) were assisted by
7 interpreters. The first researcher who has high proficiency in both English and Chinese
8 conducted, transcribed and translated the interviews. Translation is essentially an
9 interpretive act (van Nes, Abma, Jonsson, & Deeg, 2010) and therefore, the first
10 researcher/interviewer made a conscious effort to clarify and verify her interpretations
11 with the participants during and after the interviews. The three interviews that involved

1 interpreters were used for developing the emerging concepts but were not used for
2 direct quoting.

3 4 **3.5 Data Analysis**

5 To ensure consistency, the data were collected and analysed by the first researcher and
6 cross-checked by the second researcher who was well acquainted with the study and the
7 coding to ensure inter-coder reliability. Data collection and analysis were concurrently
8 carried out using a *constant comparative method* (Charmaz, 2014; Glaser & Strauss,
9 1967). The researcher compared the data with the emerging concepts and collected
10 further information through theoretical sampling, either by referring back to previous
11 participants or conducting new interviews. This iterative process was concluded after 35
12 interviews, when theoretical saturation was achieved or in other words, when the
13 additional interview no longer contributed new concept, property for the emerged
14 concepts or theoretical insight (Charmaz, 2014). The transcribed data was coded line-
15 by-line in *initial coding*, followed by *focused coding*, where significant or recurrent
16 codes were identified to integrate larger segments of data (Charmaz, 2014). Axial
17 coding was embedded in both coding phases where related concepts were organised
18 using NVivo in hierarchical structure (e.g. concepts/parent nodes and subconcepts/child
19 nodes) and in various types of relationships (e.g. causal and association) as they
20 emerged from the data (Charmaz, 2014). Recent versions of grounded theory
21 guidebooks (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2008) have suggested that initial and
22 focused coding are sufficient for many research projects, but this study employed
23 *theoretical coding* to further enhance the abstraction of the analysis. The study followed
24 Charmaz's (2014) version of coding practice where theoretical concepts were used only
25 when the focused coding of the participants' statements indicated so and avoided
26 forcing a predetermined theoretical framework on the data. Table 2 provides example of
27 the three levels of coding.

1

Table 2. Examples of Coding

Interview Excerpt (Nurul)	Initial Coding	Focused Coding	Theoretical Coding
It's still new, this culture of travelling alone for female, especially for Muslim female [sic] still a new thing in our culture.	Seeing women travelling alone as a new thing in her culture	Home society perceiving solo female travel as uncommon	One theoretical concept emerged from this part of the finding is similar to a poststructuralist feminist view of power and empowerment, where individual empowerment can potentially lead to social transformation
. . . it's not common like what it happen with the Western culture, it's common for them to travel when young.	Comparing with Western culture – seeing traveling (alone) as common for Westerners		
But for us I think it's not a common culture. Even when my friend knew that I go [sic] alone they would be like...they don't believe like, "Are you serious? You go alone? Are you crazy?" . . . "Wow you really do the crazy thing going travel alone. You are a female. Honestly, you think it is safe for you?" They will ask that kind of question and things.	Receiving disapproval comments from friends (Solo travel) being seen as "crazy" behaviour Raising concern about female gender and safety	Friends disapproving solo female travel decision	
So I think that's how you try to educate people from the experience that I gained, I would share with my friends on Facebook and so on.	Educating friends by sharing travel experience on Facebook Changing friends' perception	Changing friends' perception	
So from there they will see that it's very interesting and it's not a surprise when my friends approached me and said, I want to <i>follow</i> you. Yeah, so I can encourage other people to do the same thing.	Inspiring friends to travel alone <i>[memo: "follow" in this context refers to doing the same thing instead of travelling with the participant]</i>	Friends' perception changed	

2

3 To safeguard the credibility of this emergent process, the first researcher kept a
4 detailed methodological journal to engage in reflexivity where she critically assessed
5 the influence of her preconceived knowledge, social and cultural background (i.e.
6 Malaysian Chinese and female), and personal experience (e.g. solo travel experience) on
7 the abstraction of theoretical concepts and the interpretation of findings. The
8 background of the chief researcher enabled her to comprehend the experiences of Asian
9 solo female travellers from an emic or insider's viewpoint as well as to interpret these
10 experiences according to their own cultural context. Specifically, to truly reflect the
11 participants' experiences, the findings are presented in their own voices (words).
12 Additional literature was retrospectively engaged based on the findings that emerged in
13 this grounded theory study. Figure 2 presents a conceptual map of the findings.

Figure 2. A Conceptual Map

Note: This conceptual map presents one part of a larger study. Analysis that was not related to the focus of this paper was removed.

4. Findings

4.1 Deconstructing Risks: Gendered and Racialised risks

Most participants recognised that travelling alone involves varying degrees of risks. While a few commented that solo travel can be risk free, this opinion is always followed by a condition that women have to take precautions and not do something “stupid” (Ning), which still implies the presence of risk. The most common risks recounted in Asian women’s solo travel experiences included sexual harassment, discrimination, social disapproval, theft, scam, and getting lost. Across these risks, gendered risk (i.e. risks related to participants’ gender identities) and racialised risk (i.e. risks inflicted by participants’ racial identities and cultural backgrounds) emerged as two main themes recurring in all 35 interviews. There are different dimensions within each risk theme and the two risks are interrelated and amplify each other because gender norms and expectations are ingrained in all cultures and social experiences. The details are explained in the following sections.

4.1.1 Gendered Risks

When asked about the risk that concerns them the most, all participants unquestioningly pointed to sexual assault, irrespective of their age, cultural background, and travel destinations. As Phi put it, “*You might get raped.*” Nurul explained, “*If you travel alone [as a] female, you tend to be a subject of sex to people.*” A few participants observed that sexual risk is no longer exclusive to women: “*Because there are many gays [sic] now, so sometimes it's not that easy for men to travel alone too*” (Qi); “*I think it's normal for the boys nowadays too, get raped by some men also [sic]*” (Tracy). But in general, most participants imagined that solo female travellers are more susceptible to gender-related risk compared to their male counterparts.

Women’s perception of gendered risk is reinforced by their experiences with street harassment, including catcalling, uncomfortable gaze, and stalking when travelling alone: “*The guys wolf whistling [sic] you, walking with you down the street, trying to find out your name . . . it is sexual harassment . . . they will never wolf whistle and try to talk to a man*” (Esther); “*We call the leering eyes of men, and I just feel psychologically uncomfortable . . . there's always a potential of being sexually intimidated*” (Shani); “*I am not exaggerating, but every day [during the solo holiday] when I walked on the street, the local men are very strange, especially when I am alone, I was tailed every day*” (Pei). While these accounts show women’s discomfort with gender-based street harassment, not all share the same feeling. Some participants normalised street harassment and considered it as a compliment: “*I think it's normal. I mean, if a single lady going out, of course there are some guys approaching you. If not, maybe you are too ugly*” (Tracy); “*It's a harmless joke . . . that means I look pretty today*” (Yue).

For some participants, the harmless jokes had developed into intimidating situations. None of the participants were raped during their solo holidays but some female travellers were sexually intimidated or groped when travelling in unfamiliar destinations. The latter is not to be misconstrued as “the better alternative” over the former. To fully protect the participants, the pseudonyms are omitted from the narratives. One participant was locked up when visiting an old market in Cairo:

. . . [the vendor said] *yeah we have this and that colour upstairs would you like to go [and have a] look, so I said okay and went upstairs which was quite stupid*

1 *now that I think about it. . . . There was like 10 men blocking the exit door [and*
2 *said], oh yea you have to buy something or we wouldn't let you free. . . . I*
3 *thought if I get raped, I would probably die, so I ended up buying things.*

4 Several participants were groped when using public transportation:

5 *I travelled to Kuala Lumpur . . . the bus was very packed like [canned] sardines.*
6 *He was standing behind me and his dick was up to my ass.*

7
8 *I travelled alone in Krabi. I tried to go back to my hostel and it was already*
9 *night time . . . it looks like a bus but there was only the driver alone. . . . When I*
10 *took that bus, the driver tried to do bad things to me. . . . I think maybe he want*
11 *to ask me to have sex with him. . . . He was like try to touch my hand, touch my*
12 *body, so I said don't do this but he still tried like, "follow me to my house,*
13 *follow me to my house" [sic]. So from that I thought he had a bad intention but*
14 *he did not really push hard so I was also confused whether he was kidding or he*
15 *really meant it.*

16 Other participants have had intimidating experiences with accommodation. For
17 example:

18 *In Sri Lanka, my male [Couchsurfing] host told me that he has another empty*
19 *house. But when we arrived there, the guy actually slept overnight in that house,*
20 *which had two beds. The reason he gave was that he worried I will feel scared*
21 *staying alone. I couldn't sleep for the first night because of worry, and the same*
22 *thing happened the second night. So, I left that host and look for another place.*

23
24 *Some of the boys, they feel like Asian girls are free chicks. . . . So my*
25 *[Couchsurfing] host [in Turkey] offered me this, do you want to have sex with*
26 *me, because he thinks Asian girls like to have sex with western boys [sic].*

27
28 The narratives in the previous section show that sexual risk is experienced in a
29 number of different destinations within and beyond Asia. The objectification of Asian
30 women is evident, especially in Asian destinations where sex tourism prevails. Asian
31 women's local-like appearance often exposes them to the risk of being mistaken as sex
32 workers: "*There are a lot of prostitutes around . . . and for me as a female traveller*
33 *alone, probably I don't want to be there because people would think I'm one of them or*
34 *I would get solicited"* (Li). As shown in Li's account, she would avoid certain places in
35 order to minimise the risk, which indicates that women's travel spaces are constrained

1 by the perceived gendered risk. This situation does not seem to improve when Asian
2 women travel outside of Asia. Some participants revealed that in some western
3 countries, Asian women are stereotyped as “*weaker targets*” and “*free chicks*”. These
4 stereotypes expose Asian solo female travellers not only to gendered, but also racialised
5 risk.

6 7 **4.1.2 Racialised risks**

8 Racialised risks emerged as the second major risk affecting the solo travel experience of
9 Asian women. As Ting commented, “*Asian female travellers do have a certain level of*
10 *risk but I think the bigger part of it was more about discrimination.*” Many participants
11 shared Ting’s view and reported risks and/or actual experiences of being discriminated
12 against because of their Asian appearance. The most common source of discrimination
13 came from the service providers in both Asian and western destinations who according
14 to the participants, seem to favour western travellers: “*I think I am same with them*
15 *[western travellers], but in some places, some owners served us differently*” (Rui).
16 Some participants claimed that they have been treated “*differently*” (Ting) or
17 “*unfriendly*” (Mei), and others felt that they are “*not welcomed*” (Phi). Some travellers
18 also commented on the risk of isolation when living and travelling among other
19 travellers who are predominantly from the West: “*People are not willing to make*
20 *friends with you, people don’t even want to talk to you*” (Jia); “*They just assume that*
21 *maybe you don’t speak English, so nobody will speak to you*” (Ning).

22
23 Apart from the risks of being differently treated and excluded, a few participants
24 had experiences with direct discrimination from local people: “*. . . people throw stuff at*
25 *me and told me to go back to Asia*” (Narisa in UK); “*I was walking alone on the way to*
26 *a park . . . a car just drove next to me and people inside were yelling . . . throwing out*
27 *words about Chinese*” (Chun in New Zealand). It is important to underline that these
28 incidents should not be generalised to the destinations but these were the actual
29 unfortunate incidents experienced by the participants. The participants’ Asian identities,
30 intersecting with their gender have exposed them to a greater risk in general, as Qi
31 lamented: “*Because it seems to be easier to bully Asians but not the westerners . . . If*
32 *you are a female, an Asian female, the person might not take you seriously.*” Qi’s claim
33 implies an image of vulnerable Asian women that was commonly brought up by other
34 participants.

1 In line with this vulnerable image, many Asian solo female travellers faced the
2 risk of disapproval by their home societies. When the participants announced their solo
3 travel decision to their friends and family, the most common response received was:
4 “*Are you crazy?*” (Aishah, Choi, Narisa, Ning, Nurul, Ting, Tracy & Wen) This brief
5 expression aptly points out the perception in many Asian societies that it is
6 inappropriate for women to travel alone. The disapproving response can be explained by
7 the perceived risk associated with solo female travel such as the gendered risks
8 discussed earlier. Aranya recalled, “*For Asians, we have the perception of being a*
9 *female, you should not travel alone due to all the dangers outside.*” Another reason
10 underpinning this disapproval is the social expectations of Asian femininities. As
11 presented in Table 1, women are expected to be family oriented in the participants’
12 home societies. Shani commented, “*As a woman you should be at home, you should be*
13 *looking after the family, and you should not be taking off on your own.*” Eka sharply
14 pointed out, “*It's not common, it's not the way we [Asian women] were raised that you*
15 *should go travel alone.*” As a result, women’s solo travel behaviours are often
16 interpreted unfavourably to the extent that “*A girl travelling alone is perceived as slutty*
17 *and must have some sort of affair*” (Tracy). Despite facing the risk of not being
18 accepted or understood by their friends and family, as Ning phrased it, “*the risk of your*
19 *parents getting so mad of you that they disown you*”, these women still acted on their
20 own will to travel alone, which demonstrates the agency of Asian women.

21 22 **4.2 Reconstructing Risks: Negotiation and Empowerment**

23 The discussion has thus far revealed that nearly all solo female travellers interviewed
24 were aware of the risks of travelling alone but they were apparently not deterred by
25 risks. The following section is organised into two main themes: risk negotiation and
26 empowerment. Risk negotiation covers findings related to how participants response to
27 the perceived risks and the underlying rationales. Empowerment reveals how the
28 participants gain empowerment through negotiating the risks and the outcomes of these
29 empowering experiences.

30 31 **4.2.1 Risk Negotiation**

32 On the surface, it appears that these participants have resisted the risks in order to travel
33 alone. This study, however, reveals a complex process within the presumed resistance.
34 The findings reveal that it is acceptance that enables these women not to be affected by
35 the perceived risks: “*I accept that I might get abused on the way . . . I might get raped. .*

1 . I still [feel] scare . . . You accept that everything might happen [sic]. So, you just go,
2 you don't worry" (Thien). Some participants went further to the extent that they
3 accepted the risk even if it led to death. Eka and Aisha explained, "*If I have to die, I will*
4 *die. . . . You cannot escape from death*" (Eka); "*If you are going to die, you're going to*
5 *die. There's no timing*" (Aishah). While accepting the possible negative outcomes, Ning
6 highlighted, "*It [risk] shouldn't stop women from travelling alone.*"

7
8 Not all participants perceive risk negatively. For instance, Yuri commented, "*If*
9 *there is no risk, it's not so good. It's both positive and negative. Risk provides*
10 *enthusiasm.*" Binh shared a similar view: "*I think taking risk is about a journey, you*
11 *could not get rid of it completely.*" Their accounts suggests that risk is inseparable from
12 the solo travel experience and in some cases, risk is essential in constructing the
13 experience itself. Extending from this understanding of the inevitable risk, several
14 participants concluded that "*risk is everywhere*" (Nural & Akiko). To this point, the
15 participants have established the presence of risk yet accepted it because risk is
16 unavoidable in travel or in contemporary society. Still, why do these women want to
17 take the risk to travel alone? Katsumi explained, "*If I ended up being, I don't know,*
18 *dead or anything, I think it's alright, not alright, but it's worth it, because I really want*
19 *to do it [travel alone].*" Many participants resonated with Katsumi's view and expressed
20 their belief that the gain from travelling alone is greater than the risk: "*Compare with*
21 *the benefits . . . I think the risk is smaller than my spiritual fulfilment*" (Yee). In
22 particular, Li shed light on how risk taking leads to empowerment: "*It's like you feel*
23 *empowered. . . . Taking risk makes me feel stronger as a woman.*"

24 25 **4.2.2 Empowerment**

26 Li's remark about empowerment through risk taking was shared by several participants
27 who also reported a similar feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment: "*You'll feel*
28 *good after you did it [solo travel], because anything that is big or huge or large or*
29 *important comes with risk taking, so in your life you kind of have to take risk to*
30 *accomplish something*" (Katsumi). Two-thirds of the participants underlined the
31 independence and confidence they gained through taking risks and travelling alone: "*A*
32 *lot of problems happened during travelling but you will become more independent*
33 *because nobody is with you, you have to sort out all the things by yourself*" (Jia); "*It*
34 *gives you as a woman, a lot of confidence, a lot of independence away from, you know,*
35 *needing a companion*" (Shani). There is also evidence of self-discovery through this

1 process. Thien reflected, *“Take risk makes me feel interesting, you know, and discover*
2 *my strength, something inside me and when I travel, I can see it.”*

3
4 Some of these discoveries have implications for women’s identity construction.
5 Binh observed, *“It’s like an opportunity for you to discover the potentials inside you,*
6 *and not only men could handle solo travel.”* In line with Binh’s comment, many women
7 reported feeling *“strong”* (Cheryl, Choi, Fen, Katsumi, & Thien) and becoming *“brave”*
8 (Esther, Mei, Phi, Siti, & Zhang). These identities contrast with the typical image of
9 Asian women which the participants described, normally with a belittling tone, as
10 *“dependent”* and *“fearful”* (see Table 1). These comments indicate the *othering* of other
11 Asian women by these solo travellers. This *othering* is further demonstrated in the
12 participants’ self-identification as *“different”*. Aranya revealed, *“I have become rather*
13 *different from the traditional [Thai women].”* This difference ranges from *“don’t feel*
14 *like a typical Asian woman”* (Akiko, Choi, & Mei) to *“I’m more like a westerner”* (Yee)
15 and *“I am brave and westernised”* (Esther). It appears that some participants associated
16 empowerment with non-Asian identities. Specifically, these participants incorporated an
17 *“imagined”* western identity, which they regarded as a representation of bravery and
18 independence, in reflecting and reconstructing their gender identity.

19
20 The transformative experiences are not limited to individual travellers. Many
21 participants observed that their adventures have led to various degrees of changes in
22 perceptions and attitudes among their immediate social circle. For instance, a number of
23 participants claimed that their parents who initially strongly objected to their solo travel
24 decision, have gradually accepted it, or in the participants’ words, *“they’re getting used*
25 *to it”* (Esther, Pei, Shani, & Thien). In Rui’s case, her mother not only accepted but has
26 also become supportive of her travel: *“I went back home and I shared my feelings . . .*
27 *my experience, she can feel like, yeah, I really enjoyed [it]. After that, she’s very*
28 *supportive.”* Several participants actively shared their experiences through travel blogs
29 and social media platforms: *“I try to educate people from the experience that I gained, I*
30 *would share with my friends on Facebook . . . So I can encourage other people to do the*
31 *same thing”* (Nurul); *“It’s a beautiful thing to travel and then be able to come back and*
32 *tell people what you have seen, makes them excited to travel as well”* (Li). Just as many
33 of these participants were inspired by other solo female travellers, their undertakings
34 have encouraged their female friends to consider travelling alone: *“I’ll like to do that”*
35 (Ning); *“I want to follow you”* (Nurul) while others have expressed their admiration: *“I*

wish I could do that” (Akiko, Chun, & Yue). Phi and Tracy shared that they “*feel very proud*” for being able to inspire and empower other women to undertake independent travel.

5. Discussions

5.1 A Multidimensional Gendered Risk

From a gender viewpoint, this study substantiates prior research with regards to the sexual risk that concerns most solo female travellers (Jordan & Aitchison, 2008; Wilson & Little, 2008). Rather than unquestioningly identifying the presence of sexual risk, this study contributes to knowledge by presenting the different viewpoints through a relativist approach to knowledge and illuminating the social and power relations that underpin this risk. For instance, while many participants felt discomfort with street harassment, some participants normalised and considered it as a compliment. These contradictory responses are not uncommon because similar discussions are noted on social media (Deep, 2014). Nevertheless, the flattered response to street harassment reflects a self-objectification of women that is underpinned by social perception (Fairchild & Rudman, 2008). Likewise, the findings also reveal different opinions regarding the perception of women as the only victims of sexual assault, which add another dimension to the gendered double standards in the contemporary tourism space. As reported, some participants perceived that homosexual male travellers can be potential victims when travelling alone in the gendered, or to be specific, masculinised tourism space. These accounts reflect an increasing awareness of the non-heterosexual orientations in Asian societies and further support the understanding that sexual risk is far less an arousal-induced risk but a manifestation of the power and dominance of the hegemonic masculinities over the *others*, which include the feminine and the “less” masculine (Brownmiller, 1975; Sivakumaran, 2005). This finding adds ramifications to existing understanding of risk and gender in tourism where the gender differences in risk are often discussed as a dichotomous concept, neglecting the effect of risk on multiple femininities and masculinities along the gender and sexual orientation spectrums (Mura & Khoo-Lattimore, 2011). Accordingly, future research is encouraged to explore the risk perception of solo travellers with different gender identities and sexual orientations.

5.2 Unveiling the Less Discussed Racialised risk

From a non-western perspective, this study unveils the presence of racialised risk, a rarely discussed concept in the western-centric literature (Winter, 2009). Existing research that has considered culture-related travel risks has mainly focused on cross-cultural concerns, language barriers, exotic food, and religious dogma (Lepp & Gibson, 2003; Maser & Weiermair, 1998; Reisinger & Mavondo, 2005). Limited research has discussed the risk of discrimination with Simpson and Siguaw (2008) as one of the few exceptions, but even in their study, discrimination was rated as the least significant risk. In contrast to the literature, the risk of being stereotyped, treated unfriendly, discriminated against, and receiving social disapproval is evident in the travel experiences of the participants. This finding lends support to the criticism of western domination of contemporary travel practices and discourses (Winter, 2009) and reveals evidence of this domination and its impact on the travel experiences of *others*. Some of the racialised risks could be experienced by Asian male travellers such as direct racial discrimination but the participants feel that being a woman made them more vulnerable as they can be seen as easy targets. While further research is required to examine Asian men's experience with racialised risk, the findings of this study has demonstrated how gender intersects with racial identities in constructing and amplifying Asian women's risk perception.

5.3 Intersecting Gendered and Racialised risks

The discussion has thus far considered risks inflicted by the participants' gender and racial identities independently, but the addition of these two types of risk does not fully reflect the risk experiences of the participants. Rather, the lived experiences of Asian women reveal that their gender and racial identities are enmeshed in each other, resulting in an amplifying effect and new forms of risk. The amplifying or double *othering* effect of risk is exemplified in the participants' experiences of being stereotyped sexually and racially as Asian sex workers, or women who are more willing to have sex with western men, which led to unwanted sexual advances. The risk of social disapproval exemplifies the interactions between gender and racial identities in constructing new forms of risk. As presented in the findings, Asian solo female travellers encountered disapproving responses from their home societies due to the gender norms and expectations, which are informed by the dominating Asian values where women are expected to be family oriented, obedient and dependent. These findings point to the concept of intersectionality, which is a feminist perspective and an

analytical paradigm that considers the interactions and mutually constitutive relations of multiple social identities and the embedded power relations in producing different forms or effects of domination, oppression, inequalities and social changes (Dhamoon, 2011; Gao & Kerstetter, 2016; Shields, 2008). Expanding on Dhamoon's (2011) analytical framework of intersectional research, Table 3 presents an intersectionality analysis of the risk experiences of the participants by examining the interactions between gender and racial identities and the context of power relations in which risk is constructed, perceived and experienced.

Table 3. An intersectionality analysis of Asian solo female travellers

Social categories	Gender	Race	Intersection of gender and race
Identities	Female	Asian	Asian female
Processes of differentiation	Gendered double standards, sexualisation	Racialisation, marginalisation	Double <i>othering</i>
Systems of domination	Patriarchy (unequal gendered power relations) and the domination of hegemonic masculinity in tourism	Racism (unequal racial power relations) and western domination of travel practices and discourses	*Not available as the historically constituted structures of domination are fragmented
Risk perception (manifestation of power and oppression)	Gendered risk (e.g. sexual assault and street harassment)	Racialised risk (e.g. discrimination and unfriendly treatment)	Intersection of gendered and racialised, resulting in an amplifying effect (e.g. being stereotyped as more willing to have sex with western men) and new types of risk (e.g. being disapproved by home society)

Gender scholars in leisure and tourism have called for an intersectionality approach to critically analyse and meaningfully interpret the gendered tourist experiences that takes into account multiple social identities (Henderson & Gibson, 2013; Pritchard, 2017). Nevertheless, intersectionality, due to its ambiguity, complexity, and open-ended nature, is difficult to operationalise in research (Henderson & Gibson, 2013; Valentine et al., 2010), and such challenge is reflected in the dearth of empirical research in the tourism field that has considered an intersectional approach, with the exception of Gao and Kerstetter (2016). By examining the interactions of gender and racial identities in constructing the risk experiences of the participants, this study has demonstrated an empirical exemplar of intersectionality research and its practicability in unpacking the complexity of social and power relations in gendered tourist experiences.

Furthermore, the intersectionality analysis shows that female travellers are not homogeneous, and risk is a social and cultural construction. Therefore, an intersectional, culture-sensitive and context-specific approach to female travellers as well as to risk research is warranted so that different voices and experiences can be heard.

5.4 Resistance or Acceptance?

While the presence of risks has been established by the findings, this study has discovered that Asian solo female travellers overcome the perceived risks not by resistance, but by acceptance. This finding expands the poststructural feminist conception of power and agency. As demonstrated in prior research, oppressive power may lead to struggle, resistance, and empowerment (Berdychevsky, Gibson, & Poria, 2013; Jordan & Aitchison, 2008; Jordan & Gibson, 2005). This study adds complexity to this understanding by revealing acceptance as an alternative stage in the process. The submissive expectation of Asian women underpinned by cultural values and gender norms (Schröter, 2013; Tang & Tang, 2001) may shed light on the acceptance attitude of the participants. However, further research is required to corroborate this assumption because other researchers may interpret this finding as another form resistance instead of acceptance. Therefore, future research is encouraged to conduct a discourse analysis on the meanings of words used to express acceptance and resistance in different cultures and to develop a context specific framework of power and empowerment.

5.5 Empowerment: Constructing a Westernised Identity?

The findings attest to prior research with regards to the empowering and transformative experiences gained from solo female travel (Jordan & Gibson, 2005; Wilson & Harris, 2006) and all-female travel (Berdychevsky, Gibson, & Bell, 2013, 2016). There are similarities and subtle differences in terms of the meaning of empowerment between the two forms of female travel. Solo female travellers gain a total sense of autonomy and empowerment by going through the journey alone and not depending on or negotiating with another person (Wilson & Harris, 2006). While women on all-female travel or girlfriend getaway also experience freedom and autonomy, some women gain a sense of empowerment by feeling socially included with a group of women or be empowered by other women in the group (Berdychevsky, Gibson, & Bell, 2013). Both forms of female travel provide women a physical and mental site to resist gender role stereotyping and reconstruct self and gender identity. This study further complements existing knowledge by revealing the complex reconstruction of Asian gender identities through travelling

1 alone. In particular, the participants have become confident, independent and brave
2 through travelling alone, but they have commonly associated these newly gained
3 qualities (strength and independence) with western values. One possible explanation for
4 the “imagined” independent West versus the “imagined” dependent East can be
5 explained by cultural differences whereby individualism is a recognised value in many
6 western societies, while collectivism is an entrenched value in Asia (Reisinger &
7 Mavondo, 2006; Sheridan, 1999). Three questions have thus emerged from this
8 particular finding, which require further investigation: Why are western values more
9 positively recognised? Is this recognition a form of western domination in travel
10 discourse and gender identity construction? More importantly, would the way these
11 Asian solo female travellers construe empowerment have, at the same time,
12 disempowered other Asian women?

14 ***5.6 From Individual Empowerment to Social Transformation***

15 While the reconstruction of the “westernised” gender identities require further
16 conceptualisation, this study contributes to the poststructural feminist view of power
17 and empowerment (Aitchison, 2000) by exemplifying the potential of individual
18 empowerment in steering micro social transformation at a local scale within an Asian
19 context, especially in changing social perceptions of Asian women and solo travel. This
20 is a cyclical process, where the participants were inspired to travel alone by preceding
21 female travellers in the first place and their own travel experiences subsequently led to a
22 greater acceptance (which also means less disapproving risk) of solo female travel
23 within their immediate social circle, which have potential to spiral into a larger scale of
24 social transformations. A longitudinal or follow-up study can be useful to track and
25 illuminate the social transformations.

27 ***5.7 Limitations***

28 The main limitation of this study lies in its capacity to fully establish the differences
29 among the participants who come from 10 Asian countries/societies. Although the
30 number of interviews was determined by theoretical saturation, it is important to
31 recognise that the number of participants representing each Asian country/society was
32 relatively small and the sampling strategy was certainly purposive to identify
33 participants who could “purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem”
34 (Creswell, 2013, p. 156). While the study criticises existing literature for subsuming the
35 travel experiences of Asians into that of westerners, it also risks perpetuating the same

practices by generalising the experiences of Asian solo female travellers. The research could have focused on women from one Asian country but not all female travellers from the same society would share a similar experience either; other factors such as age and income levels may also have an effect on women's travel experiences. Likewise, it is important to acknowledge that the intensity of the perception of these risks varies among participants with different levels of solo travel experiences and sociocultural backgrounds. Similarly, the nature of solo leisure holidays (e.g. city escapes, beach vacations, and backpacking) and the respective tourism and sociocultural context may associate with different types and intensity of risk. To fully establish these differences requires further research and this task is beyond the scope of this study. Future research is encouraged to extend the current study with a focus on eliciting the variations among Asian solo female travellers and on establishing other factors that shape the risk experiences of these travellers.

Furthermore, findings related to sexual risk in this study have generally implied negative experiences or outcomes. While some participants perceived street harassment as a compliment, little is known about the perception of Asian women with regard to sexual risk taking during solo holidays. Future research in this area will contribute to existing literature on women's sexual risk taking in tourism (Berdychevsky & Gibson, 2015a, 2015b; Berdychevsky, Poria, & Uriely, 2013) from an Asian perspective and deepen current understanding of gendered tourist behaviour in a liminoid space (Turner, 1969). Conversely, while tourism studies about western women have received increasing scholarly attention, influential works on western solo female travellers were conducted almost 10 years ago (Jordan & Aitchison, 2008; Jordan & Gibson, 2005; Wilson & Little, 2005, 2008). Western women's perception of and experience with solo travel may have changed in the past decade. An updated investigation of western solo female travellers could be another fruitful research area. Likewise, a cross-cultural comparison of western and Asian female travellers will contribute further insights to this stream of literature.

The interpretations of the travellers' experiences are subjective, context-specific, and value-laden because interpretive qualitative research is a meaning-making process, where the researcher and the participants co-construct the narratives that subsequently make sense through the researcher's interpretive lens (Allen, 2011). In this study, the main researcher practised reflexivity to be conscious and critical of her influence on the

1 interpretations. But as Du Bois (1983) points out, being subjective does not render the
2 research less critical, rigorous or accurate. In fact, all social research is intrinsically
3 value-laden (Neuman, 2011). While the lived experiences of these Asian women are not
4 meant to be generalised, their accounts have contributed important insights to existing
5 knowledge with regards to travel risk and solo travel, especially from gender and culture
6 perspectives.

8 **6. Conclusion**

9 This is the first study to explore the experiences of solo female travellers from a risk
10 and power perspective, and from an Asian viewpoint. This study found that Asian
11 women are challenged by gendered and racialised risks when journeying alone in the
12 tourism space that privileges male and western experiences. Through negotiating risk
13 and its underlying power relations, Asian women gain a sense of empowerment and
14 undergo transformations in their gender identities. This study has also exemplified the
15 potential of individual empowerment in steering micro social transformation, especially
16 in changing social perceptions of Asian women and solo travel. While the findings of
17 this interpretive research may not be generalised, this study has shed light on tourism
18 research and the industry with regards to the rising Asian solo female travel market. For
19 instance, some gendered risks and racialised risks are inflicted by employees working in
20 the accommodation, transportation and food service sectors. This has resulted in a
21 pressing need for the industry as a whole to incorporate a greater gender, racial and
22 cultural sensitivity in training, service delivery and product design, and to recognise the
23 values of the female and non-western markets. In this case, policy makers and tourism
24 education providers play an important role in shifting the tourism paradigm from
25 western-centric, and androcentric, to one of equality.

27 **7. References**

- 28 Aitchison, C. (2000). Poststructural feminist theories of representing Others: A response
29 to the 'crisis' in leisure studies' discourse. *Leisure Studies*, 19(3), 127-144. doi:
30 10.1080/02614360050023044
- 31 Aitchison, C. (2001). Theorizing other discourses of tourism, gender and culture: Can
32 the subaltern speak (in tourism)? *Tourist Studies*, 1(2), 133-147. doi:
33 10.1177/146879760100100202

- Allen, M. (2011). Violence and voice: Using a feminist constructivist grounded theory to explore women's resistance to abuse. *Qualitative Research*, 11(1), 23-45. doi: 10.1177/1468794110384452
- Amadeus. (2013). *Shaping the future of travel in Asia Pacific: The big four travel effects*. Retrieved from www.apacwhitepapers.amadeus.com
- Ang, I., & Stratton, J. (1995). Straddling East and West: Singapore's paradoxical search for a national identity. In S. Perera (Ed.), *Asian and Pacific Inscriptions*. Melbourne, Australia: Meridian Books.
- Berdychevsky, L., Gibson, H., & Poria, Y. (2013). Women's sexual behavior in tourism: Loosening the bridle. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 42, 65-85. doi: 10.1016/j.annals.2013.01.006
- Berdychevsky, L., & Gibson, H. J. (2015a). Phenomenology of young women's sexual risk-taking in tourism. *Tourism Management*, 46, 299-310. doi: 10.1016/j.tourman.2014.07.008
- Berdychevsky, L., & Gibson, H. J. (2015b). Sex and risk in young women's tourist experiences: Context, likelihood, and consequences. *Tourism Management*, 51, 78-90. doi: 10.1016/j.tourman.2015.04.009
- Berdychevsky, L., Gibson, H. J., & Bell, H. L. (2013). Girlfriend getaways and women's well-being. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 45(5), 602-623.
- Berdychevsky, L., Gibson, H. J., & Bell, H. L. (2016). "Girlfriend getaway" as a contested term: Discourse analysis. *Tourism Management*, 55, 106-122. doi: 10.1016/j.tourman.2016.02.001
- Berdychevsky, L., Poria, Y., & Uriely, N. (2010). Casual sex and the backpacking experience: The case of Israeli women. In N. Carr & Y. Poria (Eds.), *Sex and the sexual during people's leisure and tourism experiences* (pp. 105-118). Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

- 1 Berdychevsky, L., Poria, Y., & Uriely, N. (2013). Sexual behavior in women's tourist
2 experiences: Motivations, behaviors, and meanings. *Tourism Management*, 35,
3 144-155. doi: 10.1016/j.tourman.2012.06.011
- 4 Brownmiller, S. (1975). *Against our will: Men, women and rape*. New York, NY:
5 Ballantine.
- 6 Bui, H. T., Wilkins, H., & Lee, Y.-S. (2014). Liminal experience of East Asian
7 backpackers. *Tourist Studies*, 14(2), 126-143. doi: 10.1177/1468797614532179
- 8 Bui, H. T., Wilkins, H. C., & Lee, Y.-S. (2013). The 'imagined West' of young
9 independent travellers from Asia. *Annals of Leisure Research*, 16(2), 130-148.
10 doi: 10.1080/11745398.2013.791227
- 11 Calafat, A., Hughes, K., Blay, N., Bellis, M. A., Mendes, F., Juan, M., . . . Duch, M. A.
12 (2013). Sexual harassment among young tourists visiting mediterranean resorts.
13 *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 42(4), 603-613. doi: 10.1007/s10508-012-9979-6
- 14 Cater, C. I. (2006). Playing with risk? Participant perceptions of risk and management
15 implications in adventure tourism. *Tourism Management*, 27(2), 317-325. doi:
16 10.1016/j.tourman.2004.10.005
- 17 Cederholm, E. A. (2004). The use of photo-elicitation in tourism research – Framing the
18 backpacker experience. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 4(3),
19 225-241. doi: 10.1080/15022250410003870
- 20 Chambers, E. (2010). *Native tours: The anthropology of travel and tourism* (2nd ed.).
21 Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.
- 22 Charmaz, K. (2013). Grounded theory methods in social justice research. In N. K.
23 Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Strategies of qualitative inquiry* (pp. 291-336).
24 Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- 25 Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory*. London, UK: SAGE.

- 1 Chen, G., Bao, J., & Huang, S. (2014). Segmenting Chinese Backpackers by Travel
2 Motivations. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 16(4), 355-367. doi:
3 10.1002/jtr.1928
- 4 Chen, K.-H., Yu, P., Chang, F.-H., & Hsieh, C.-L. (2014). Factors Influencing
5 Taiwanese Backpackers' Learning Travel: The Role of Personality Traits and
6 Wellness Lifestyles. *Tourism analysis*, 19(2), 199-212. doi:
7 10.3727/108354214X13963557455720
- 8 Chiang, C.-Y., & Jogaratnam, G. (2006). Why do women travel solo for purposes of
9 leisure? *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 12(1), 59-70. doi:
10 10.1177/1356766706059041
- 11 Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and*
12 *procedures for developing grounded theory*. (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA:
13 SAGE.
- 14 Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five*
15 *approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- 16 Deep, S. (2014, August 21). I can't believe I'm writing this: Street harassment is not a
17 compliment. *The Huffington Post*. Retrieved from
18 [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/shannon-deep-/street-harassment-is-not-a-](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/shannon-deep-/street-harassment-is-not-a-compliment_b_5697112.html)
19 [compliment_b_5697112.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/shannon-deep-/street-harassment-is-not-a-compliment_b_5697112.html)
- 20 Deomampo, D. (2013). Gendered geographies of reproductive tourism. *Gender &*
21 *Society*, 27(4), 514-537. doi: 10.1177/0891243213486832
- 22 Dhamoon, R. K. (2010). Considerations on Mainstreaming Intersectionality. *Political*
23 *Research Quarterly*, 64(1), 230-243. doi: 10.1177/1065912910379227
- 24 Dowding, K. (2006). Three-dimensional power: A discussion of Steven Lukes' power:
25 A radical view. *Political Studies Review*, 4(2), 136-145. doi: 10.1111/j.1478-
26 9299.2006.000100.x

- 1 Du Bois, B. (1983). Passionate scholarship: Notes on values, knowing and method in
2 feminist social sciences. In G. Bowles & R. D. Klein (Eds.), *Theories of*
3 *women's studies* (pp. 105-117). London, UK: Routledge.
- 4 Elliot, M. (2015, March 5). Solo female travel on the rise in Southeast Asia. *Travel*
5 *Daily Media*. Retrieved from [http://www.traveldailymedia.com/218965/solo-](http://www.traveldailymedia.com/218965/solo-female-travel-on-the-rise-in-southeast-asia/)
6 [female-travel-on-the-rise-in-southeast-asia/](http://www.traveldailymedia.com/218965/solo-female-travel-on-the-rise-in-southeast-asia/)
- 7 Elsrud, T. (2001). Risk creation in traveling: Backpacker adventure narration. *Annals of*
8 *Tourism Research*, 28(3), 597-617. doi: 10.1016/S0160-7383(00)00061-X
- 9 Elsrud, T. (2005). Recapturing the adventuress: Narratives on identity and gendered
10 positioning in backpacking. *Tourism Review International*, 9(2), 123-137. doi:
11 10.3727/154427205774791654
- 12 ETB Travel News. (2015, March 9). TripAdvisor see rise in solo female travel.
13 Retrieved from [http://australia.etbtravelnews.global/245237/tripadvisor-see-rise-](http://australia.etbtravelnews.global/245237/tripadvisor-see-rise-solo-female-travel/)
14 [solo-female-travel/](http://australia.etbtravelnews.global/245237/tripadvisor-see-rise-solo-female-travel/)
- 15 Fairchild, K., & Rudman, L. A. (2008). Everyday stranger harassment and women's
16 objectification. *Social Justice Research*, 21(3), 338-357. doi: 10.1007/s11211-
17 008-0073-0
- 18 Figueroa-Domecq, C., Pritchard, A., Segovia-Pérez, M., Morgan, N., & Villacé-
19 Molinero, T. (2015). Tourism gender research: A critical accounting. *Annals of*
20 *Tourism Research*, 52(0), 87-103. doi: 10.1016/j.annals.2015.02.001
- 21 Foucault, M. (1978). *The history of sexuality: Volume 1: An introduction*. New York,
22 NY: Vintage Books.
- 23 Gao, J., & Kerstetter, D. L. (2016). Using an intersectionality perspective to uncover
24 older Chinese female's perceived travel constraints and negotiation strategies.
25 *Tourism Management*, 57, 128-138. doi: 10.1016/j.tourman.2016.06.001

- 1 Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for*
2 *qualitative research*. Chicago, IL: Aldine.
- 3 Green, E., Mitchell, W., & Bunton, R. (2000). Contextualizing Risk and Danger: An
4 Analysis of Young People's Perceptions of Risk. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 3(2),
5 109-126. doi: 10.1080/713684369
- 6 Green, E., & Singleton, C. (2006). Risky bodies at leisure: Young women negotiating
7 space and place. *Sociology*, 40(5), 853-871. doi: 10.1177/0038038506067510
- 8 Gustafson, P. E. (1998). Gender differences in risk perception: Theoretical and
9 methodological perspectives. *Risk Analysis*, 18(6), 805-811. doi:
10 10.1111/j.1539-6924.1998.tb01123.x
- 11 Hall, C. M. (2009). 'A long and still-unfinished story?' Constructing and defining Asian
12 regionalisms. In T. Winter, P. Teo & T. C. Chang (Eds.), *Asia on tour:*
13 *Exploring the rise of Asian tourism* (pp. 21-33). Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
- 14 Harper, D. (2002). Talking about pictures: A case for photo elicitation. *Visual Studies*,
15 17(1), 13-26. doi: 10.1080/14725860220137345
- 16 Heimtun, B. (2011). The friend, the loner and the independent traveller: Norwegian
17 midlife single women's social identities when on holiday. *Gender, Place &*
18 *Culture*, 19(1), 83-101. doi: 10.1080/0966369X.2011.617881
- 19 Henderson, K. A., & Gibson, H. J. (2013). An integrative review of women, gender, and
20 leisure: Increasing complexities. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 45(2), 115-135.
- 21 Jordan, F., & Aitchison, C. (2008). Tourism and the sexualisation of the gaze: Solo
22 female tourists' experiences of gendered power, surveillance and embodiment.
23 *Leisure Studies*, 27(3), 329-349. doi: 10.1080/02614360802125080
- 24 Jordan, F., & Gibson, H. (2004). Let your data do the talking: Researching the solo
25 travel experiences of British and American women. In J. Phillimore & L.

Goodson (Eds.), *Qualitative research in tourism: Ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies* (pp. 215-235). London, UK: Routledge.

Jordan, F., & Gibson, H. (2005). "We're not stupid...But we'll not stay home either": Experiences of solo women travelers. *Tourism Review International*, 9(2), 195-211. doi: 10.3727/154427205774791663

Khoo-Lattimore, C., & Prayag, G. (2015). The girlfriend getaway market: Segmenting accommodation and service preferences. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 45, 99-108. doi: 10.1016/j.ijhm.2014.12.003

Khoo-Lattimore, C., & Prideaux, B. (2013). ZMET: a psychological approach to understanding unsustainable tourism mobility. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 1-13. doi: 10.1080/09669582.2013.815765

Korstanje, M. E. (2011). The fear of traveling: A new perspective for tourism and hospitality. *Anatolia*, 22(2), 222-233. doi: 10.1080/13032917.2011.597935

Lepp, A., & Gibson, H. (2003). Tourist roles, perceived risk and international tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 30(3), 606-624. doi: 10.1016/S0160-7383(03)00024-0

Lupton, D. (2013). *Risk* (2nd ed.). Abingdon, UK: Routledge.

Maser, B., & Weiermair, K. (1998). Travel decision-making: from the vantage point of perceived risk and information preferences. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 7(4), 107-121. doi: 10.1300/J073v07n04_06

McNamara, K. E., & Prideaux, B. (2010). A Typology of Solo Independent Women Travellers. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 12(3), 253-264. doi: 10.1002/jtr.751

Mura, P., & Khoo-Lattimore, C. (2011). Young tourists, gender and fear on holiday. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 15(8), 707-724. doi: 10.1080/13683500.2011.628013

- Muzaini, H. (2006). Backpacking Southeast Asia: Strategies of “looking local”. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 33(1), 144-161. doi: 10.1016/j.annals.2005.07.004
- Myers, L. (2010). Women travellers' adventure tourism experiences in New Zealand. *Annals of Leisure Research*, 13(1/2), 16-142.
- Neuman, W. L. (2011). *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education.
- Noy, C. (2004). This trip really changed me: Backpackers' narratives of self-change. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 31(1), 78-102. doi: 10.1016/j.annals.2003.08.004
- Ong, C.-E., & du Cros, H. (2012). The Post-Mao gazes: Chinese Backpackers in Macau. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 39(2), 735-754. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2011.08.004>
- Pacific Asia Travel Association. (2016, March 9). *TripAdvisor: Asian women are in the driver's seat with travel decision making*. Retrieved from <https://www.pata.org/asian-women-are-in-the-drivers-seat-with-travel-decision-making/>
- Pritchard, A. (2017). Predicting the next decade of tourism gender research. *Tourism Management Perspectives*. doi: 10.1016/j.tmp.2017.11.014
- Pritchard, A., & Morgan, N. J. (2000). Privileging the male gaze: Gendered tourism landscapes. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 27(4), 884-905. doi: 10.1016/S0160-7383(99)00113-9
- Reichel, A., Fuchs, G., & Uriely, N. (2007). Perceived risk and the non-institutionalized tourist role: The case of Israeli student ex-backpackers. *Journal of Travel Research*, 46(2), 217-226. doi: 10.1177/0047287507299580
- Reisinger, Y., & Crofts, J. C. (2009). The influence of gender on travel risk perceptions, safety, and travel intentions. *Tourism analysis*, 14(6), 793-807. doi: 10.3727/108354210X12645141401269

- 1 Reisinger, Y., & Mavondo, F. (2005). Travel anxiety and intentions to travel
2 internationally: implications of travel risk perception. *Journal of Travel*
3 *Research*, 43(3), 212-225. doi: 10.1177/0047287504272017
- 4 Reisinger, Y., & Mavondo, F. (2006). Cultural differences in travel risk perception.
5 *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 20(1), 13-31. doi:
6 10.1300/J073v20n01_02
- 7 Said, E. (1978). *Orientalism*. London: Routledge.
- 8 Scholte, J. A. (2008). Defining Globalisation. *World Economy*, 31(11), 1471-1502. doi:
9 10.1111/j.1467-9701.2007.01019.x
- 10 Schröter, S. (Ed.). (2013). *Gender and Islam in Southeast Asia: Women's rights*
11 *movements, religious resurgence and local traditions*. Leiden, Netherlands:
12 Brill.
- 13 Sheridan, G. (1999). *Asian values western dreams*. St Leonards, Australia: Allen &
14 Unwin.
- 15 Shields, S. A. (2008). Gender: An Intersectionality Perspective. *Sex Roles*, 59(5), 301-
16 311. doi: 10.1007/s11199-008-9501-8
- 17 Simpson, P. M., & Siguaw, J. A. (2008). Perceived travel risks: The traveller
18 perspective and manageability. *International Journal of Tourism Research*,
19 10(4), 315-327. doi: 10.1002/jtr.664
- 20 Sivakumaran, S. (2005). Male/male rape and the "taint" of homosexuality. *Human*
21 *Rights Quarterly*, 27(4), 1274-1306. doi: 10.1353/hrq.2005.0053
- 22 Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and*
23 *procedures for developing grounded theory* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA:
24 SAGE.

- 1 Tang, T. N., & Tang, C. S. (2001). Gender role internalization, multiple roles, and
2 Chinese women's mental health. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 25(3), 181-
3 196. doi: 10.1111/1471-6402.00020
- 4 Teo, P., & Leong, S. (2006). A postcolonial analysis of backpacking. *Annals of Tourism*
5 *Research*, 33(1), 109-131. doi: 10.1016/j.annals.2005.05.001
- 6 The Star. (2015, March 10). TripAdvisor survey on solo travel for women. *The Star*.
7 Retrieved from
8 [http://www.thestar.com.my/travel/malaysia/2015/03/10/tripadvisor-survey-on-](http://www.thestar.com.my/travel/malaysia/2015/03/10/tripadvisor-survey-on-solo-travel-for-women/)
9 [solo-travel-for-women/](http://www.thestar.com.my/travel/malaysia/2015/03/10/tripadvisor-survey-on-solo-travel-for-women/)
- 10 Turner, V. W. (1969). *The ritual process: Structure and anti-structure*. London, UK:
11 Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- 12 van Nes, F., Abma, T., Jonsson, H., & Deeg, D. (2010). Language differences in
13 qualitative research: is meaning lost in translation? *European Journal of Ageing*,
14 7(4), 313-316. doi: 10.1007/s10433-010-0168-y
- 15 Valentine, G., Vanderbeck, R. M., Andersson, J., Sadgrove, J., & Ward, K. (2010).
16 Emplacements: The Event as a Prism for Exploring Intersectionality; a Case
17 Study of the Lambeth Conference. *Sociology*, 44(5), 925-943. doi:
18 10.1177/0038038510375744
- 19 Vandegrift, D. (2008). "This isn't paradise—I work here": Global restructuring, the
20 tourism industry, and women workers in Caribbean Costa Rica. *Gender &*
21 *Society*, 22(6), 778-798. doi: 10.1177/0891243208324999
- 22 Wang, Y., Weaver, D. B., & Kwek, A. (2016). Beyond the Mass Tourism
23 Stereotype: Power and Empowerment in Chinese Tour Packages. *Journal of*
24 *Travel Research*, 55(6), 724-737. doi: 10.1177/0047287515592971
- 25 Warren, C. A. B., & Karner, T. X. (2010). *Discovering qualitative methods: Field*
26 *research, interviews, and analysis*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

- Williams, A. M., & Baláž, V. (2015). Tourism risk and uncertainty: Theoretical reflections. *Journal of Travel Research*, 54(3), 271-287. doi: 10.1177/0047287514523334
- Wilson, E., & Harris, C. (2006). Meaningful travel: Women, independent travel and the search for self and meaning. *Tourism*, 54(2), 161-172.
- Wilson, E., & Little, D. E. (2005). A 'relative escape'? The impact of constraints on women who travel solo. *Tourism Review International*, 9(2), 155-175. doi: 10.3727/154427205774791672
- Wilson, E., & Little, D. E. (2008). The solo female travel experience: Exploring the 'geography of women's fear'. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 11(2), 167-186. doi: 10.2167/cit342.0
- Winter, T. (2009). Asian tourism and the retreat of anglo-western centrism in tourism theory. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 12(1), 21-31. doi: 10.1080/13683500802220695
- Yang, E. C. L., Khoo-Lattimore, C., & Arcodia, C. (2017). A systematic literature review of risk and gender research in tourism. *Tourism Management*, 58, 89-100. doi: 10.1016/j.tourman.2016.10.011
- Yang, E. C. L., & Nair, V. (2015). Tourism at risk: A review of risk and perceived risk in tourism. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Innovation in Hospitality and Tourism*, 3(2), 1-21. doi: 10.7603/s40930-014-0013-z
- Zaltman, G. (1997). Rethinking market research: Putting people back in. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 34(4), 424-437.