CHAPTER 5

Workforce Diversity in Ports: The Global and the LAC Perspectives

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Introduction

North American ports typically function as "landlords" where the port authority owns the infrastructure (wharves, roadways, utilities, and warehouses) and leases waterfront land to private terminal operators (supplying mobile cargo-handling equipment and cranes). Recruiting, training,

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and dispatching port workers lie in the hands of private employer associations, such as the terminal operator or the MEA. In the past, and in some cases presently, port workers were hired for shifts on a casual basis, depending on the cargo-handling work required. In other ports, often those providing a guaranteed annual income, port workers are dispatched to various shifts on a rotating basis to spread available work equitably.

As port reform continues in Latin and Central America and the Caribbean, more and more ports are shifting to the "landlord" model. As in the North American context, this shift means individual private terminal operators have enhanced abilities to recruit and train their port workers. Increasingly, this includes females. For example, David Penedo from Honduras' Puerto Cortes states: "The port environment has changed, today it is a labor option for women. Here we value and respect everyone equally. Women in Operadora Portuaria Centroamericana (OPC) have found an organization of which they are an important part" (OPC, 2018).

The port industry is unique. The demand for cargo-handling work reflects the often-irregular pattern of shipping leading to uncertain casual employment. Dock work has historically been described as: "Hard, dirty, unpleasant and dangerous … the awkwardness and variability of working conditions with the desire to make the job pay, has led to almost constant bargaining on the job" (Adams, 1971). In the past, the insecurity of casual port workers resulted in fierce resistance to introducing new, more efficient cargo-handling mechanization, such as containerization. Today's port workers evolved from a long-standing tradition of hard physical work, difficult management-labor relations and an emphasis on job security (Ircha & Garey, 1992).

The dramatic containerization revolution in the late twentieth century led to the need for technically skilled port workers, early retirement for many older employees, and changes in working conditions, including the provision of guaranteed annual incomes to offset some of the vagaries of shipping (Levinson, 2008). Unlike in the past, today's port workers need technical and computing skills to handle increasingly sophisticated, digitally based cargo-handling equipment and mechanized systems. Shifting from yesterday's hard physical labor where male muscle-power dominated to today's more sophisticated mechanized terminal operations opens opportunities for less "brawn" and more "brain" power. This means women are no longer restricted to handling administrative chores in ports but are now able to apply their skills and abilities in all sectors of port operations.

Attracting women to work in Caribbean ports is particularly challenging. Despite the crucial importance of the maritime sector to these island nations, women only form a small percentage of port workers. As pointed out by Claudia Grant and Vivette Grant, "Because of their essential contributions to household welfare, women are the key to poverty reduction in developing countries." This is particularly relevant as female-headed households amount to as much as 50% of households in the Caribbean (Grant & Grant, 2015). Thus, it is essential that women be empowered to contribute in all sectors of the economy, including ports and shipping. Similar challenges occur in other Latin and Central American countries where the "inclusion of women in port work represents a great advance and greater opportunities for them because it diversifies their knowledge, experience and increases their income" (OPC, 2018).

Recognizing the importance of women in developing country economies led the International Maritime Organizations' (IMO) Women in Development program (WID) to encourage the integration of women in the maritime sector. The WID improved access to training and employment, increased women in senior management, and promoted female economic self-reliance. It emphasized capacity building and provided gender-specific post-graduate fellowships at the World Maritime University in Malmö, Sweden and the International Maritime Law Institute in Malta. By 2014, more than 650 women had received WID sponsored degrees from these institutions, including over 100 from the Caribbean (Grant & Grant, 2015). Since its establishment in 1983, the World Maritime University graduated 4919 students, of which 1029 were women (21%) (WMU, 2019). The United Nations is focused on gender equity. As former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan claimed, "gender equality is more than a goal in itself. It is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development, and building good governance" (IMO, 2013).

This chapter examines the growing role of women in modern ports and the challenges they face in recruitment and retention, along with steps to enhance their port-related employment opportunities. The chapter begins with a discussion of the challenges facing women in male-dominated occupations, including ports. This is followed by a review of the approach taken by the MEA to diversify their ports' workforces. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the steps needed to further attract women into the ports industry in general, and in Latin America and the Caribbean in particular.

Challenges Women Face in Working in Ports

For millennia, women have been barred from entering many occupations. These male-dominated activities reflect traditional societal mores and ancient legal codes restricting women's activities and rights. For example, in the Roman era, the male head of the household held *pater potestas*—the power of life and death over all family members (Rodgers, 2012). Effectively, women belonged to the male head of the household and were "transferred" from father to husband on marriage. Despite this constraint, as pointed out by Mary Beard, "Roman women in general had much greater independence than women in most parts of the classical Greek or Near Eastern world, limited as it must seem in modern terms" (Beard, 2015).

These ancient restrictions against women in many occupations underlie modern myths about women working in masculine environments. Henry Etzkowitz, Kemelgor, and Uzzi suggest, "The sexual separation of labor, the association of certain occupational specialties with one gender or the other strongly persists in most societies" (Etzkowitz et al., 2000). In fact, before the modern era, male-dominated occupations were seen as physical, hard and dangerous and deemed inappropriate for "respectable" women (Bix, 2006).

Male dominance in the ports sector reflects a long tradition of hard and demanding labor that involved lifting and carrying heavy goods from ship to shore to warehouse. The work was difficult, dangerous, and demanding. One learned on the job, requiring a strong camaraderie among workers. Obviously, in this physically demanding male world, there was little room for women.

Women in Ports

Today, technology and mechanization have reduced many of the challenging physical requirements of port work. However, long-ingrained attitudes have not necessarily changed. As pointed out in *Lloyd's List*, "… there is nothing special about ships and shipping [and ports] which should make it male-dominated, except habit" (*Lloyd's List*, 2008). Caroline Arias, a bulk supervisor in Chile's Puerto Coronel argues: "The port area is often represented as hostile and distant to women, since historically

it has been managed by men. However, the social and cultural transformations of recent years have had their echo in ports, incorporating – even gradually – women in their ranks" (Siebert, 2019).

Ports and the maritime sector need to welcome women into their organizations. Recently, the European Sea Ports Organization (ESPO) participated in the launch of a "Women in Transport" web portal "to improve the working conditions for women in the transport sector and to change the culture" (ESPO, 2017). This step reflects the IMO's WID approach in partnering with the International Association of Women in Maritime Transport and Trade (WISTA International). WISTA's mission "is to attract and support women, at the management level, in maritime, commercial and logistics sectors" (IMO, 2019).

Women are considered an underutilized source of labor for ports, yet also representing part of the solution for meeting anticipated skilled labor shortages in the maritime sector. Further, considerable anecdotal evidence describes the benefits of women working in ports. As Jan Horeck points out, recruitment advertising for some automobile terminals reflects a preference for women applicants as "women are considered to be more careful and obey the rules and drive and park the cars with upmost [*sic*] accuracy which is very important when handling vehicles onboard and in terminals" (Horeck, 2008). Others echoed this perception of women as careful equipment operators. A port trainer in Hamburg claimed females are more careful drivers leading to fewer accidents and lower maintenance requirements (Arlt, 2011). Similarly, the Port of Montréal's maintenance staff appreciate the care female drivers take with their equipment (Morency, 2017). An employer of women seafarers noted, "They're more alert. I hate to say they're more intelligent because I don't make intelligence tests with them [but] they're more engaged you know" (Thomas, 2004).

Similar to other male-dominated occupational sectors, the percentage of women currently working in ports is relatively small. The MEA currently has about 10% women among its Montréal port workers with less representation in its other, smaller ports. However, in the past year, women accounted for 27% of Montréal's 75 new hires. The British Columbia Maritime Employers Association (BCMEA) employing all port workers on Canada's West Coast has about a seven percent female cohort. On the East Coast, the Halifax Employers Association (HEA) has six percent female port workers (Lazarus, 2017).

Beyond Canada, other ports fare better in their ability to recruit and retain women port workers. The Port of Hamburg has about 15% women. In its recent recruitment in Hamburg, women accounted for 26% of the 97 new employees (HHLA, 2018). In the Port of Valencia, female workers comprise 14%. Swedish terminals have seven to ten percent female port workers. In New York/New Jersey's 2015 recruitment drive, 51% were military veterans of whom 20% were female. This recruitment resulted in New York/New Jersey terminals having nine percent female port workers (Bedard, Morency, Daoust, & Ircha, 2015).

In Latin and Central America and the Caribbean, ports are quickly matching—and in some cases exceeding—developed country ports in their inclusion of women. For example, the Dominican Port Authority boasts of having the highest percentage of women employees of all Latin and Central American and Caribbean ports, with 42% women working in port operations and administration (DPA, 2018). The Panama Canal Authority follows with 25% female participation in all aspects of the Canal expansion (Prieto, 2014). Mullaje Central terminal in San Antonio Chile has 20% of women in many port roles (Siebert, 2019). In Panama, the Manzanillo International Terminal has increased the proportion of women in port operations to 15% (Prieto, 2014). The Port of Buenos Aires, in Argentina, has seven percent of women workers in the Rio de la Plata terminals (Potocar, 2017).

Women continue to make inroads to seaports around the world. In early 2018, media headlines declared, "Women finally break gender barrier at Algeciras port: Europe's last port with no female stevedores hires its first women." The port claimed several women passed the hiring exam for some 460 stevedoring jobs, while the press reported 25–65 women were successful (*Costa News*, 2018). In a similar vein, last year, Argentina's Puerto Rosario celebrated the arrival of its first seven female stevedores (Puerto Rosario, 2018), while recently, Ecuador's Puerto Posorja welcomed the country's first three female port equipment operators (Murillo, 2019).

Barriers to Women in Ports

If women are beneficial for ports, then why are so few of them work in the ports sector? Such under-representation is common among other masculine occupations. For example, an earlier study of women firefighters in the USA found they represented 3.7% of the workforce when they should

comprise at least 17% (Hulett, Bendick, Thomas, & Moccio, 2008; Griffith, Schulz, Wakeham, & Schultz, 2016). Many barriers or obstacles are making port employment unattractive to women including union seniority rules, gender stereotyping, ports' masculine culture and image, work-life balance challenges, credibility gaps, ineffective recruitment, orientation and training, lack of female facilities, and inappropriate safety gear. Some of these barriers are even more prominent in the Latin American and Caribbean ports, magnified by cultural values and historical precedents. These barriers once identified and addressed make the port working environment more appealing for women.

Port Union Seniority

Port labor unions traditionally use seniority for member progress through hierarchical job categories. Typically, this means recruits are assigned to the lowest and often most physically demanding tasks. In ports, recruits usually spend several years as basic labor serving as "lashers." In container terminals, lashing involves manually installing long (2.5–5 m), heavy (up to 24 kg) bars to cross-stabilize containers onboard ships to prevent their movement at sea. Depending on the terminal, lashing can also involve wrestling heavy chains and winches to tie down trailers on roll-on-roll-off vessels, tying large bulk bags to spreaders, lifting and connecting large pipes to transfer liquids to and from ships, opening and closing ship hatches, cleaning holds, and lifting and securing various cargo—all physically demanding tasks.

However, it is illogical to require port workers to serve an apprenticeship as a lasher before being trained and deployed as an equipment operator. Lashing has no clear connection to operating modern cargo-handling equipment. Thus, there is a clear need to shift from traditional seniority to a merit system based on demonstrated skills and aptitude. Recruitment and training should focus on different categories of port workers, from lashers to equipment operators to computer specialists. Differentiating new port worker recruits for specified categories would allow capable and skilled men and women to add more value to terminal operations beyond basic lashing labor.

Although the concept of replacing seniority with skills and abilities as a means to place recruits, as radical as it sounds, it is not without precedent. Several years ago, the Port of Auckland (POAL) in New Zealand evaluated its recruitment process to determine why so few women worked in the port. They found that port workers were required to serve five to

eight years as a "lasher" before becoming eligible for promotion to a straddle carrier driver and subsequently a crane driver. "We looked at it from the view of did you have to be a lasher to be a good straddle driver? The answer is clearly no. One involves brute strength, the other driving skills. We started looking at recruiting based on skill rather than longevity and hiring people directly as straddle and crane drivers." Eighteen months after changing their recruitment practices, POAL employed 23 women. The Port found women's "performance was often better than the males and their health and safety record was better." They seemed to have natural aptitudes around height perception and counter swing required for crane operations (Felixstowe Docker, 2014). The Port's General Manager of People, Systems, and Technology, Diane Edwards claimed:

> Women instantly made an impact at the front line. They started to outdo men in productivity figures, sometimes as much as 14%. They were more committed, safer and faster. As more women joined the workforce it was proved that this was not a fluke. It was not because they had more skill – the difference was down to attitude. Reluctant to be 'beaten by a woman' we then saw productivity figures also begin to rise among the men with a consequent rise in overall productivity. (MacIntyre, 2017)

Will American and Caribbean ports move toward more modern, merit, and aptitude-based recruitment? Doing so challenges current collective agreements. Other industrial sectors have modernized their labor-management relations by replacing seniority with merit-based progression—yet it remains unclear if port workers' labor unions and maritime employers will follow.

Gender Stereotyping

Both ancient and traditional views of suitable occupations for women and men continue to plague many cultures and societies. Julie Prescott and Jan Bogg argue, "social-psychological factors contribute to gender segregation in male-dominated occupations" (Prescott & Bogg, 2013). These factors include the belief in one's abilities and competencies, anticipated roles, and fit within occupations. Parents, media, school, and other social factors are often the main influences for young people in their career choices. Often, this leads girls to underestimate their abilities in math and sciences while encouraging boys to overestimate them (Frize, 2009). Similarly—in the maritime sector—research has found that female maritime

officers underrating their leadership skills while their male counterparts overrated theirs (Delgado Ortega, Øvergård, & Henden, 2014). Thus, a lack of self-esteem may deter women from seeking employment in male-dominated ports.

Guacolda Vargas, Development and Sustainability Manager at Chile's Puerto de Talcahuano, argues that women workers themselves must have security and confidence in their abilities. She further suggests: "one of the challenges of women in the port sector is to achieve visibility… this requires having confidence and confidence in our ability to analyze and make decisions" (Siebert, 2019).

Furthermore, if parents and school officials only have a vague notion of employment activities in the ports sector, they will not likely encourage women to seek such occupations. In a major British container terminal, human resource officials indicated they had few female applicants from the surrounding community, as local women in this seaside town perceived they had no role in the port. The terminal's female recruits usually came from other non-maritime communities (Bedard et al., 2015). For example, Chile's Consuelo Canaves suggests that the ports' challenge "is how we can generate more women to join the different roles of the ports' operations" (Siebert, 2019).

Ports' Masculine Image

Ports tend to reflect a masculine dominated culture, which can deter female participation. The traditional ports' image of brute strength, challenging outdoor weather, and foul language prevails in many cases. Given this culture, women may perceive ports as hostile environments reflecting potential sexual harassment, lewd jokes, sexist language, and poor intergender behaviors. Judy Wajcman notes, "[ports] have a masculine image, not only because they are dominated by men but because they incorporate symbols, metaphors and values that have male connotations" (Wajcman, 2007). Such symbols and metaphors as the "feminization" of ships and male-oriented language can discourage women from working in ports.

Research has shown that female engineers in male-dominated environments often adopt coping mechanisms such as acting like "one of the boys", accepting gender discrimination as part of the job, and adopting an "anti-women" approach (Prescott & Bogg, 2013). Similar coping mechanisms are likely found in ports where women are a significant minority. However, changing the workplace environment can happen by increasing the presence of women. For example, one terminal operator suggested,

"…the presence of women … actively improves the morale and atmosphere, promoting a more 'normal' environment for the crew…. The whole language changes to the positive… there is 'please' all of a sudden, even between the male community, everything changes" (Thomas, 2004). The MEA, like other port employers such as Argentina's Puerto Rosario, is increasingly recruiting women partly as a means of improving the port's work culture (Puerto Rosario, 2018).

Work-Life Balance

Shift work in ports creates a work-life balance challenge for both men and women workers. As an example of this challenge, the Port of Montréal requires port workers to be available for assignment to shifts 19 days out of 21 workdays. Within the 19 days, they could be dispatched to an eight-hour shift any time of the day or night. Besides, they may be required to be available for shifts in two out of three weekends. Yet, as Susibel Perigault, Manzanillo International Terminal's Training Manager points out, working 24/7 is not difficult. Nurses and doctors can schedule day and night shifts, as do port workers (Prieto, 2014).

Work-life balance can be challenging for women as they often have an additional burden with family responsibilities. Men may work longer hours, as they often have fewer domestic and caring responsibilities. For women, however, putting in longer hours and also spending energies to adapt to the male work climate can suffer higher stress levels, impacting their health and well-being (Prescott & Bogg, 2013). Women who are both career and family-oriented tend to be disadvantaged since avoiding overtime and extra work can be interpreted as being less committed.

Flexibility in scheduling shifts is a significant incentive when attracting women to port jobs. Coupled with the challenge of working longer hours is the need of many women for work schedule flexibility to accommodate family responsibilities. Limited scheduling flexibility and a lack of adequate child (and elderly) care facilities at the workplace can discourage women from working in ports. As a result, some ports use new personnel management technology to provide shift scheduling flexibility over several month's time frame. Female workers also require separate locker room facilities. Furthermore, the lack of proper sanitary facilities, particularly in older terminals, can be a significant aggravation for women port workers.

Credibility

Gaining respect and credibility in the workplace is a challenge for women in male-dominated environments. C. M. Dominguez suggests, "it is not the women's inabilities that prevent their advancement, but rather their male managers or peers' inabilities to deal with someone who is different and may not fit their paradigm" (Dominguez, 1992). Masculine organizations are often based on hierarchical, top-down authority in which a perceived "glass ceiling" prevents women's contributions from being taken seriously and excludes them from informal networks (e.g., the "old boys" club). Addressing this challenge requires "a personal and visible commitment from the men leading these companies … they need to ensure female talent pipelines are created and be prepared to mentor women" (Adamson, 2018). Increasing women in ports at all levels will serve as a learning process to overcome this inherent bias. As pointed out by Brandy Christian, chief executive at the Port of New Orleans, it is becoming common for women to hold maritime leadership positions. "As more women join the industry, gain experience, rise in their professions, and succeed in the C-suite and director levels, gender as a barrier to leadership simply evaporates. Currently, females lead 11 of the American Association of Port Authorities member ports and that number is only going to go up" (MacIntyre, 2017).

Recruiting Challenges

Recruiting women in ports is challenging as the "entry testing criteria" may be subtly skewed toward male candidates. Recruiting for physically demanding occupations often includes physical strength testing in which women are less likely to succeed than men, a phenomenon not limited to the port workplace. For example, in the 1990s, women were eligible to be firefighters in many countries, yet in Ottawa Canada, none were serving. As pointed out by a city councilor "the way we did it at the time is you have to go through all the training and all of the hurdles and you would get a pass-fail. When we were hiring, though, we would call people based on rank." In effect, women met the standards and could be gifted leaders, communicators and problem-solvers, but never were interviewed as men ranked ahead of them in the physical tests. This same city councilor claimed, "They realized that the tests had a bias built into them, towards men" (Reevely, 2018). A similar study reported in *The National Report Study on Women in Firefighting* found the pass rate for women was about half that of men (Hulett et al., 2008).

Although many cities now have female firefighters, the challenge of recruiting more females remains a factor with law enforcement services. For example, the Province of Ontario tests candidates for municipal policing. Unfortunately, at a time when Ottawa's police force is trying to diversify to reflect better the community it serves, many female candidates failed the physical test. About eighty percent of men pass the test compared to 45% of the women. Ottawa's Police Chief claims he and other police chiefs were seeking to identify "any systemic barriers that exist in the process" (Payne, 2018). Essentially, a key issue for ports is whether physical testing remains valid, reliable, and reflects the actual requirements for the different types of jobs.

A Case Study: Recruiting Women for Canadian Ports—MEA

Traditionally, port worker recruitment has been in the hands of longshoremen unions. Union dominated recruitment stems back to the early days of stevedoring and dock labor when it was difficult to find workers willing to endure the challenges of dock work and uncertainty of casual labor. Until recently, this was the case in the Port of Montréal where the port's longshoremen union submitted a list of potential candidates for recruitment to the MEA. The MEA put the proposed candidates through a battery of tests, including dexterity, visual acuity, and physical strength. On passing the tests, candidates were interviewed before being assigned as occasional workers in a reserve pool. Gaining seniority in the reserve pool by working numerous shifts could eventually lead to more permanent status as a union member and a recipient of the MEA's guaranteed annual income.

As federally regulated employers, Canada Port Authorities (CPA) and other maritime employers are required to comply with relevant government labor regulations, including the *Employment Equity Act*. Compliance requires suitable representation within the port's workforce of four designated groups: women, Aboriginal peoples, people with disabilities, and visible minorities. In the past, the longshoremen unions submitted candidate lists that included predominantly white, male relatives, and friends. This traditional approach of union candidate recruitment meant Canadian ports were unable to comply with the Act's requirements. However, in the case of people with disabilities, ports often have a reasonable proportion in their workforce, since union workers injured on the job are provided with reasonable accommodation for continued employment.

As port traffic grew in 2005, the MEA sought to increase the Port of Montréal workforce. They requested a list of suitable candidates from the longshoremen union. However, the submitted list lacked sufficient women and other minority groups. The MEA rejected the initial and subsequent candidate lists, as they did not include members of designated groups. This rejection resulted in a union complaint of unfair labor practices to the Canada Industrial Relations Board (CIRB). The longshoremen union argued that the MEA's selection criteria are far too severe and that the union's approach was not discriminatory, and its members could refer whomever they want, be it friends, neighbors, acquaintances, or family members. The CIRB ruled that for every ten candidates, positions nine and ten had to be designated and retained for women and visible minorities, respectively (CIRB, 2005).

In 2013, the MEA successfully negotiated with the longshoremen union to upgrade the basic requirements for port worker candidates to include high school graduation and a driver's license. Also, the union agreed for the first time in its history to advertise for candidates in major local newspapers (MEA, 2014).

The Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC) audited the MEA in 2008 to determine the port's compliance with the *Employment Equity Act*. This audit led to the development of the MEA's plan to hire targeted numbers of port workers to ensure representation from each of the four designated groups.

In 2014, the MEA requested 100 candidates from the union of which there was to be 25% female and 25% Aboriginals and visible minorities. The submitted candidate lists again did not provide these percentages, and as previously, the MEA rejected them over several rounds. The MEA then advertised for occasional port workers in the local media. Although occasional port workers in the reserve pool were outside the collective agreement, the longshoremen union took considerable exception to this step and challenged the MEA's actions to the CIRB.

As a result, the CHRC again audited the MEA and found their employment equity success rates had improved. However, the CHRC believed that further efforts were needed to reflect the representation of designated groups with respect to their availability in the labor market. Table 5.1 shows the percentages and numbers of designated categories of port workers in Montréal in 2013 and 2017.

Based on labor market availability for the designated groups, in 2014, the CHRC set the following targets for the MEA: 21% female; 0.7%

Table 5.1 MEA employment equity (percentages and number of workers)

Designated group	*2013*	*2017*				
	Montréal (%)	*Montréal (%)*	*% 2013–2017*	*Trois-Rivières/Bécancour (%)*	*Hamilton (%)*	*Toronto (%)*
Females	5.9 (68)	10 (117)	72	3.7 (3)	0	4 (1)
Aboriginals	0.5 (6)	0.3 (4)	−33	0	3.4 (2)	0
Visible Min.	3.5 (40)	4.8 (57)	43	0	0	0
Disabled	2.9 (40)	2.5 (30)	−25	0	0	0

Source Human Resources, Maritime Employers Association, Montreal (2017)

Aboriginals; 5.5% persons with disabilities; and 20% visible minorities (Dufresne, 2014).

The longshoremen union's CIRB complaint resulted in both parties achieving an understanding of complying with Canada's *Employment Equity Act*, including seeking to meet targets for women, Aboriginals and visible minorities as set out in the 2014 CHRC letter of commitment. The MEA and union agreed to split the nominations to candidate lists evenly. The MEA would seek to have 25% female and 25% Aboriginals and visible minorities on their candidates list while the union would attempt to provide 20% female and 20% visible minorities in their list (MEA, 2015).

In its other smaller ports, Trois-Rivières/Bécancour, Toronto, and Hamilton, the MEA directly recruits port workers and seeks candidates from the various minority group categories to achieve employment equity.

The MEA's 2014 employment equity plan included working with the longshoremen union to set favorable policies and practices to correct the under-representation of designated groups among the port workers. Also, the MEA took steps to improve the port's image as an attractive working environment for women and other designated groups with a positive public relations campaign, including a widely distributed promotional video and other media materials (Maritime Employers Association, 2018). Further, the MEA safeguarded the accommodations of women and other designated groups in the port by ensuring they were equipped with appropriately sized security and safety gear, locker rooms, and other facilities. In older terminals, walls were installed to divide locker rooms. In newer terminals, separate facilities were designed and built to accommodate the needs of all workers. Similar employment equity compliance steps were

taken by the MEA in its other, smaller ports of Trois-Rivières/Bécancour, Toronto, and Hamilton.

As shown in Table 5.1, by 2017, the MEA succeeded in increasing females working in the Port of Montréal by 72% and the percentage of minorities by 43%. The MEA hired 75 port workers, including 20 women and three persons with declared minority status. Continued recruitment of women and minorities will enable the MEA and the longshoremen union to get closer to the employment equity targets set by the CHRC.

This case illustrates many of the challenges and opportunities that ports in Latin America and the Caribbean may need to face. Compliance steps instituted by government agencies will likely require changes in workplace practices, as discussed in this case. Recruits need to be selected based on skills and aptitude to handle increasingly sophisticated cargo-handling equipment rather than on their ability to undertake heavy lashing and cargo-handling tasks. Moving toward merit-based recruitment policies stands as an effective means to increase the attractiveness of port work for females and minorities.

Making Ports Appealing for Women

Addressing Gender Equity

Gender equity can be defined as "a 'social order' in which men and women share the same opportunities and the same constraints on full participation in both the economic and the domestic realm" (Baylin, 2006). As an example, which represents the reality in many countries, the Canadian government protects women from discrimination by gender, age, and marital status through the *Canadian Human Rights Act* of 1977 and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* of 1982. Further, Canada handles the equality rights of women under the *Employment Equity Act* of 1995 and the *Public Sector Equitable Compensation Act* of 2009.

As federally regulated employers, CPAs and other maritime employers are subject to federal policies and regulations on workplace diversity and gender equity. However, despite the regulatory enforcement, attracting women into Canada's overall workforce has already had a significant impact on GDP per capita. A recent report shows that female employment contributed 33% to Canada's real GDP per capita. The government's success in attracting women into the public sector is readily apparent;

by 2016, women comprised 55.1% of the federal public service compared to 45.6% in 1990 (Payne & Laucius, 2018).

Addressing gender equity benefits the ports, their tenants, and stakeholders. By treating women equitably and providing better job opportunities, the port enhances its reputation for fairness—a significant positive feature in the business community. Gender equity increases the chances of hiring the best by increasing the size of the candidate pool—vital in today's increasingly limited, skilled employee market. Equity also improves opportunities for innovations. Women and other minority groups provide diverse points of view reflecting their different experiences and interests, all of which increase the ability of the port and its terminals to innovate and find smart solutions to challenges (Valian, 2006).

Achieving equity in Latin America and the Caribbean requires each port to examine its policies and programs to identify gender-related "blind spots." In many cases, dominant masculine cultures (e.g., machismo) need to evolve into a more open, transparent, and equitable values. Such transformation begins at the top with a strong and visible commitment by the port and terminal's top management—as was the case in the Port of Montréal and Port of Auckland as discussed above. Similar progressive steps are being taken in Latin and Central American and Caribbean ports. For example, Victor Gomez Casanova, Executive Director of the Dominican Port Authority, has "stressed the need to strengthen the role of women within the maritime port sector, particularly because it is an essentially masculine context and with macho standards and trends" (DPA, 2018).

Appropriate gender equality policies and procedures are required for implementation and compliance throughout the port. Human resource procedures are encouraged to reflect transparency, objectivity, and task-oriented in order to overcome gender stereotyping, favoritism, and biases. There is also a need for policies of zero tolerance of harassment to address unacceptable behaviors in the workplace. Appropriate staff training is paramount to support the ports' cultural change. In particular, first-level supervisors require special training to support their day-to-day interaction with port workers. Organizational cultural change takes time. Ports, terminals, and stakeholders have to persevere to make the port attractive workplaces for women and other minority groups.

Family-Friendly Ports

A critical factor in attracting women to the port workplace in Latin America and the Caribbean is changing the ports' image from a masculine to a family-friendly work ethic by recognizing the relevance of family work-life balance for everyone. Family-friendly policies such as fair hiring and promotion practices, networking and mentoring support, ensuring work-life balance, and accommodating childcare needs make ports appealing workplaces for women and other potential recruits.

Recruitment and Training

Without question, the outdoor and physical nature of port work attracts certain types of candidates. Therefore, recruitment strategies should target gyms, active sports players, high schools, and colleges, as places where women who might be interested in applying for port work are more likely to be found. Personal relationships are also important in convincing women to apply for port work. Ports can consider engaging their own employees, retirees, and stakeholders to recruit females and other minority groups (Hulett et al., 2008).

Yet port recruitment policies and procedures must also be examined for latent gender bias, such as unnecessary a high physical strength requirement where it is truly not required, as in the case of equipment operators. Notably, the firefighting sector provides prior training for women candidates so they can build strength before the formal strength tests, therefore improving their success rate. As an example of this approach, "In Milwaukee, where recruits receive 14 weeks' training prior to the exam, females' strength increased an average of 21% and fitness by 29%, and by the end of training, the females combined size, strength, and fitness averaged 96% of their male counterparts" (Hulett et al., 2008).

It may be true that most ports do not have the same lengthy training regime found in the firefighting sector. Thus, they are unable to offer extensive physical training prior to testing. However, the maritime industry could establish suitable training programs for men and women candidates at nearby fitness centers to allow them to build their strength and fitness prior to the port's candidate testing program. The objective is to ensure candidates have and maintain minimum strength standards consistent with the job requirements.

The port's orientation programs and ongoing training curriculum need to be evaluated for potential gender biases. These programs strive to make

candidates feel welcome and create a sense of belonging. Initial orientation should include a discussion of the possible challenges women and other minorities may face in port work and provide them with information on best practices in developing social and interpersonal coping strategies.

Networking

Women in male-dominated organizations often feel isolated and seek camaraderie with other females. Ports should encourage networking opportunities among women and, indeed, among men and other groups to generate mutual support and reduce any sense of isolation and not belonging. The MEA, for instance, set up a female committee within its Health and Safety Committee structure to provide a support network for women port workers. Latin American and Caribbean ports could also benefit from establishing similar networking groups.

In the Caribbean, maritime women have formed a Women in Maritime Association, Caribbean (WiMA) with the support of the IMO's Integration of Women in the Maritime Sector. WiMAs have been established around the world in 152 countries, including Latin and Central America and the Caribbean. WiMA's mission is to foster the development and participation of women in the maritime sector (IMO, 2019).

Mentoring

Coupled with networking is the need to encourage informal mentoring among female port workers—learning "the ropes" in how to succeed in their new and complex working environment. Mentoring goes beyond training to provide insights and ongoing support through the early stages of adapting to the port community, especially having the capability of women mentors. Research has found that mentors have positive influences on their mentees. They tend to be more confident and committed, resulting in a higher retention rate and better career and job satisfaction (Prescott & Bogg, 2013).

Work-Life Balance

Work-life balance is relevant to both men and women port workers, and an essential element for a healthy work-life balance is workload flexibility. In the ports sector, this implies having choices in shift allocation. In interviews with European and American container terminals, senior managers discussed establishing personalized schedules for port workers reflecting family and other needs. With proper technology and programming for

scheduling and dispatching, the concept of personalized shifts becomes easier to contemplate.

Personalized scheduling over a quarterly basis (in a fair and equitable manner) would be beneficial in recruiting women port workers. In a similar manner, such personalized scheduling can address the concerns of younger port workers, who also seek more flexibility in their work routine (Ircha, 2012). The Port of Auckland has instituted flexible working hours for shift workers with the goal of making the Port "a more friendly workplace for parents with young families" (Felixstowe Docker, 2014).

Some ports already provide shift flexibility through their dispatch methods that serve as examples for others. On Canada's West Coast, the BCMEA uses a lottery system to dispatch port workers from a hiring hall. Port jobs are assigned by seniority and depend on demand. A benefit of having to appear at the hiring hall physically is flexibility. As one Vancouver female port worker put it, "Because we work out of a hall, we have the freedom of not going to work; we can work when we want" (Lazarus, 2017). Yet in ports with a guaranteed annual income program and its requirement of assigned shifts, flexibility in scheduling is more challenging.

Work-life balance is also a health and safety concern. The MEA studies found that many port employers try to assist work-life balance by regulating the amount of overtime available for each employee. Besides improving their family life, managing overtime leads to improved concentration during equipment operations and fewer accidents (Bedard et al., 2015).

Child and Elderly Care Services

Women and men often have two critical caring phases in their lifetimes: child-rearing and dealing with elderly parents and relatives. It is hard to balance a port's shift requirements with family caring concerns. Here, ports need to seriously consider the benefits of ensuring female and male port workers have access to suitable child and elderly care facilities. If possible, these facilities should be available 24/7, reflecting the port's shift work requirements. However, due diligence is required before establishing a facility. For example, when Loto-Québec established a 24-hour childcare service, they found parents reluctant to leave their children in the facility overnight. They preferred to have their children cared for by a family member. Thus, a limited day and evening child and elderly care service may be more suitable for ports. In another example, recently, Argentina's Puerto Valparaiso took on the challenge of seeking legal support to

establish nurseries in the port to help integrate working mothers (Puerto Valparaiso, 2016).

Regardless, providing suitable accommodation for port workers' family needs is the key to making the port environment more appealing to women, minorities, and a broader base of potential employees.

Harassment Policies

Women and other minority groups also face harassment in masculine working environments. In many governments, including many of those in Latin America and the Caribbean, employers by law must have harassment prevention policies and investigation procedures to comply with the local labor laws. Such employer policies and procedures must be fair, ensure they do not victimize the complainant and provide suitable checks and balances to validate complaints and accusations. Of particular interest here are methodologies where valid harassment complaints can go beyond the place of employment, in case the place of employment is unresponsive to the law.

Enhancing the Port's Image

Taking clear and tangible steps to establish seaports as a family-friendly, safe, and appealing for women are necessary changes in attracting female port workers. In the Port of Auckland case, Diane Edwards claimed the steps they took to change the culture paid off with record port profits: "I think we've established a culture where we reward for good ideas, encourage participation and reward good work; a culture where people want to achieve" (Felixstowe Docker, 2014).

Ports need to address their previous "brute force" image by:

- hosting school class visits to see modern cargo-handling operations,
- establishing community-port days to encourage public visits to port facilities as being done annually at the Port of Montréal and many other Canadian ports,
- developing and distributing videos and other public relations media to educate the public on modern port operations and their importance to the country's economic and trade development, and
- monitoring and using social media to boost the port's image.

Conclusion

It is essential that ports throughout Latin America and the Caribbean take a proactive stance in recruiting women and other minority groups to ensure diversity in their work environment. Such recruitment broadens the pool of potential candidates for port work, ensuring the best and the brightest are selected. Many other countries have already noted the benefits of attracting women and other minorities by reducing overt sexism, harassment, and poor working relations as well as by improving equipment operations, including reduced accidents and maintenance requirements, and searching for new ideas and innovative solutions to port and terminal challenges.

Achieving a renewed, modern ports culture requires concrete steps from the top down in ports and terminals. Appropriate policies and procedures need to be in place along with suitable training for all port employees, and in particular, first-level supervisors. Many ports have sought to attract female and minority candidates for port positions. However, further steps may be needed to achieve higher levels of female and minority group representation within this traditionally masculine work environment.

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