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## Doing Farm Tourism: The Intertwining Practices of Gender and Work

**T**his article deals with the interrelation between gender and tourism in work on family farms. For farmers, engaging in farm tourism implies a change that not only demands new skills and competences but also may influence the conditions under which gender relationships, power, and identities are enacted.

The family farm, which is still a basic unit of agricultural production in Western countries, is a form of work organization that is household based and in which work and power are shared between husband and wife. The gender aspects of family farming have been extensively researched the last twenty years (see Brandth 2002; Little and Panelli 2003). Studies have documented the substantial amount of work undertaken by women as well as their secondary status in the industry and, thus, the construction of farming as a masculine enterprise. Agrarian ideology, which values the so-called masculine over what is understood as feminine, has defined women as the other, and women's work has been regarded as secondary to the production on the farm.<sup>1</sup> Most primary production in agriculture requires outdoor work, and outdoor work is coded masculine and given status in this rural context, while indoor work is coded feminine and given less status (Pini 2004a). Moreover, men have been regarded as the managers of farms, and paternalism as a managerial form has been found to characterize the power relations and daily lives of farming families as well as agricultural organizations (Pini 2004b; Bennett 2006).

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<sup>1</sup> See Sachs (1983), Alston (1995), Haugen (1998), O'Hara (1998), and Shortall (1999).

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In our research on gender and agriculture we have been interested in the consequences of structural changes in the industry for women's and men's identities (Brandth and Haugen 1998, 2005b). Trends toward more differentiated positions for women and men have been documented in relation to diversification of agricultural roles (Evans and Ilbery 1996; Bryant 1999). In forestry, for instance, women are no longer defined only as spouses, daughters, and farmhands but as actors in their own right. They are not excluded from forestry, which is a traditionally male arena, but they are still expected to perform according to gendered rural norms (Brandth and Haugen 1998). Men may also assume new types of work tasks within the industry, something that may lead to struggles around identity. Nevertheless, conventional rural masculinity is rarely dismantled.

With regard to possible movements toward greater gender equality, studies report both stability and change (Brandth 1994; O'Hara 1998; Bryant 2003). Women have assumed new positions and engaged in new practices, but power relations have remained much the same, and women's work continues to hold low status in accordance with the discourses and ideologies of appropriate gender behavior in family farming.<sup>2</sup> No matter what women do, their discursive placement as the farmer's wife is dominant and overshadows other definitions of woman. Women may operate machinery, own the land, work off the farm, be entrepreneurs or managers/administrators, and participate in agripolitics but nevertheless be defined according to the hegemonic discourse of family farming (Brandth 2002). The material and the symbolic are asymmetrical, and the gender norms seem to be very persistent.

In this article we are interested in exploring possible trends in rural relations toward greater gender equality. Tourism is a transformative cultural force in many ways. In particular, we focus on the household-level changes that individual farmers may experience after transforming their enterprise from primary production to a service business. We might expect to find changes for several reasons: On the one hand, tourism is service work with characteristics of emotional work. It implies new tasks for farming men and women, demanding new qualifications, and it is work in which the outdoor/indoor dichotomy may be less salient than it is in primary production. On the other hand, it is still carried out on the farm site as a family enterprise with the (previous) farming couple as "partners in production" (O'Hara 1998). Furthermore, the pervasive unit of the family farm is still patriarchal. Our concern is to explore whether and how gender relations and practices in family farming become less differentiated

<sup>2</sup> See Bolsø (1994), Haugen (1998), Liepins (1998), and Silvasti (2003).

and less hierarchical when the family business is based on farm tourism. There has been relatively little research on the gendered consequences of farm tourism.

### **Farm tourism and gender**

Research on farm tourism reveals various implications for women's and men's positions. Many studies have shown the similarity between women's work in farming and farm tourism. Preparing and serving food, cleaning, and making beds are tasks very similar to domestic work. Since women integrate tourist work into their domestic work, the tourist enterprise may maintain or even reinforce the traditional division of work by gender (Garcia-Ramon, Cánoves, and Valdovinos 1995). Research has pointed out that women rarely define their work with visitors as an occupation; rather, they see it as making household services available to strangers (Hjalager 1996, 108). Nicholas Evans and Brian Ilbery (1996), who are concerned with farm pluriactivity and the effects on gender positions, have found that accommodating guests on the farm did little to improve the status of women in the farm business. That tourism has not changed the division of labor in the farm household is also reported by Gemma Cánoves et al. (2004), who document a gendered specialization of activities depending on whether the tasks are performed outside or inside the house. As in farming, men manage outdoor activities with the tourists, while women are in charge when it comes to work that takes place indoors.

Tourists choose to visit a farm site for many reasons, such as for its image, scenery, and tranquillity (Busby and Rendle 2000) or for adventures and individual experiences, which have become increasingly important for tourists. As part of the tourist experience, hosts are also key attractions (Tucker 2003), and this may apply to farm-based tourism as well. Being associated with farming, women and men in farm tourism obtain legitimacy as experts and authentic representations of traditional rural living and local heritage. As Philip L. Pearce and Gianna M. Moscardo (1986) have pointed out, it is authentic people who are the focus of tourists' concerns, and the visitors often expect the hosts to represent idealized concepts of a rural lifestyle (Nilsson 2002). Even though a farm-based tourism enterprise offers new types of work for women and men, its connection to farming and rural conventions might still influence how gender is done.

The resemblance between the tourist services offered on farms and women's work in the farm family may also be a market advantage because the product offered is household comforts. The attractiveness of such a

product, which includes relational and emotional work, is illustrated in Despina Nazou's (2005) study on Greece. The women in her study were eager to extend qualities of the home to the tourist market, and their main product, which was a pleasant family atmosphere, was very popular. This is an example of how the traditional domestic work of women may be given a new meaning when commoditized. It allows women to feel more integrated into the outside world when socializing with guests, and it permits them to have some income without taking employment outside the farm (Garcia-Ramon, Cánoves, and Valdovinos 1995).

There are also studies that show more significant changes. For instance, as in off-farm work, the positions of women in farm tourism are ranked higher than those in farming, which may increase women's power within the family (Nilsson 2002; Førde 2004). It is interesting to note that women's struggle for occupational status on the farm may be an important factor in the growth of new businesses as the income farm tourism generates motivates an increase in their economic freedom and status. Several studies indicate that women are more inclined and motivated to start farm tourism than their male counterparts (Neate 1987; Jennings and Stehlik 2000; McGehee, Kim, and Jennings 2007) and that as a result they may assume central positions in the sector (Nilsson 2002). Consequently, the husband and wife are brought closer to an equal status within the enterprise. Through creating new activities and products on the farm by means of hosting guests, women may challenge the dominant gender discourses within agriculture and contribute to the survival of the farm and to the renewal of the industry (Førde 2004).

However, there is also reason to expect a continuation of traditional rural gender practices. The reason is that farm tourism is still based on the heterosexual couple as a unit of production and that its location on the farm means a continuation of tradition as part of its attractiveness to tourists. Moreover, many services being offered in farm tourism draw on farm women's identities as good farm/rural women.

Hosting tourists and producing conventional farm goods, nevertheless, are two different types of work. Service work and the production of intangible experiences in interaction with visitors represent new challenges for farmers, and they raise interesting questions about how farm tourism creates possibilities for change toward greater gender equality.

Studies have found that many farmers who have started tourism as an additional source of income gradually divorce themselves from agricultural activities (Busby and Rendle 2000). This occurs, they claim, when tourism revenue exceeds that earned through agriculture. When farming becomes less important and the new business increases in importance, new relations

and renegotiations of gender positions and identities may emerge. This article focuses on farms that have made this change from agriculture to tourism and the intertwining practices of gender and work.

### **Doing and undoing gender**

The study of gender has increasingly focused on the dynamics of femininity and masculinity rather than on gender as the expression of some kind of essential nature. There are two bodies of work conceptualizing the construction of gender as “doing.” One is ethnomethodological, developed by Candace West and Don Zimmerman (1987), and has become popular in sociological gender studies. Here, individuals are no longer just men and women but become men and women through certain kinds of doings, such as interactions, bodily displays, and work practices.

A core feature of the doing gender approach is its emphasis on the particular context or institutional norms that provide a repertoire of practices and help determine what appropriate gender conduct is. What is considered appropriate changes over time and varies with location and context. In this way, West and Zimmerman conceive of gender as a characteristic of social situations. One may do gender in ways that support or challenge existing norms and practices in a particular situation. To challenge or fail to live up to normative gender expectations is to risk being judged less feminine or masculine but also carries potential for change and transgression of the gender order.

A second approach to gender as doing derives from Judith Butler’s work. In her classic book *Gender Trouble* (1990), Butler presents the idea of gender as a kind of repetitive cultural performance, compelled by compulsory heterosexuality. Gender is defined as always being within a social context and never outside the ideology, where hierarchies are constructed around a presumed binary difference.

In her book *Undoing Gender*, Butler (2004) is concerned with unperforming the hegemonic heterosexual gender order and the binary understanding of masculinity and femininity. Undoing is caught up in the paradoxical tension between the constraints of individual agency and social context. A central question is why gender is perceived as something stable even though it is enacted differently in various situations. One answer is that the performance of gender produces an illusion of a stable essence (Jagger 2008).

Both West and Zimmerman’s concept of doing and Butler’s theory of performativity are similar in that they see gender as an accomplishment that is “locally managed in reference to powerful normative conceptions”

(Moloney and Fenstermaker 2002, 193). Butler draws mainly on post-structural theories. For Butler, subjects are discursively constituted, and her interest is particularly oriented toward the way subjectivities are formed in relation to hegemonic discourses. The processes through which one becomes a subject entail both mastery and submission, and paradoxically, these processes take place simultaneously.

As emphasized, the doing gender approach implies that gender can be deconstructed or undone. In a 2007 article, Francine Deutsch argues that this approach has been used mainly to analyze conventional gender behavior rather than to explain resistance and change. A large share of the practices that do not fit into preexisting gender categories often go unnoticed by the researcher as well, and the theoretical emphasis on normative standards makes it all too easy to explain conformity but not resistance (Deutsch 2007, 109). Deutsch's critique is that the doing gender approach has not been used to examine the possibility of change but to show how women and men continue to act according to gendered norms. Also, in much rural gender research the normative constraints regulating gendered behavior have dominated.

Inspired by this critique, in this article we focus especially on how gender is performed, renegotiated, and undone in various work settings. Doing gender is a social practice, and so is tourism-as-work. Our approach is to embrace gender and tourism work as practices that are intertwined and mutually constructed.

### **Data and sample**

The article is based on a study of five farm tourist businesses. The case studies (interviews and visits) were conducted in spring 2005 and spring 2006.<sup>3</sup> The sample consists of tourist businesses that are between four and fifteen years old, are still in operation, and seem to have succeeded in the market in that they are making a profit. The cases are located in central Norway, and all of them are run by couples. The cases are as follows.

#### ***The mountain farm***

The hosts of the mountain farm are Mary and John, both in their late fifties.<sup>4</sup> The farm, which was originally a sheep farm inherited by Mary,

<sup>3</sup> All interviews were conducted, transcribed, and translated by the authors, and interview transcripts are on file with the authors.

<sup>4</sup> All respondents and farms in this article are identified by pseudonyms.

is located in one of the most scenically beautiful mountain areas in Norway. The couple has been operating the farm for nearly forty years. While they were farming, John also used to work in construction while Mary ran the household. For many years they combined various activities such as farming, carpentering, and hiring out one of the farmhouses to visitors. The tourist activities gradually expanded, and at a certain point, combining farm production with tourism became too difficult and strenuous. They ceased the farm production, leased the farmland to a neighboring farmer, and put all their energy into the tourist business. The mountain farm is known for offering traditional foods based on locally produced meat and self-developed recipes. Mary and John offer day visits with cultural experiences for groups, accommodation for overnight stays, and space for functions (weddings, anniversaries, conferences). They have developed a farm museum that shows the farm's history from way back, and they offer guided tours in the historic landscape combined with meals served outdoors. They employ locals on an hourly basis to help out during busy periods.

#### ***The forest farm***

The forest farm is a small holding situated in a forested landscape surrounded by mountains. The owners, Grete and Daniel, are in their late thirties. They bought the holding some years ago primarily because they wanted to live in the area. The holding had not been in productive use for many years, and the buildings were in great need of renovation when they bought it. Following their dream, Grete and Daniel, with their two children, decided to create their own business based on the resources and the attraction of the holding. Both Grete and Daniel had varied work experience in areas including agriculture, outdoor life activities, tourism, handicrafts, and public services. Grete still holds a part-time job off the farm to contribute extra money to the household and the business. They have remade the farm into a place where people can come to experience the atmosphere of an old, traditional farm. The idea of idyllic peasant farming is recreated as many small animals such as goats, pigs, hens, and ducks wander around the yard. They also offer various activities in the summer and before Christmas such as day visits and activity-based products such as canoeing, horseback riding, sleigh riding, and Christmas decoration workshops. They prepare and serve lunch for visitors but do not provide overnight accommodation. The barn has been restored and turned into a farm shop and also has conference and party facilities for small groups.

***The coastal farm***

This farm is located by the sea in an area that is much visited by foreign fishing tourists. The hosts are Liza and Paul, both in their early sixties. The farm, which belonged to Paul's family, dates back to the eighteenth century. It was a site for primary production until the late 1990s, when Paul and Liza sold their cattle and leased the land to a neighboring farm. Besides farming, Paul used to hold a job in transport and Liza in teaching. Now they are both fully occupied in the tourist business. They started the tourism business almost accidentally, by offering room and board in their own house. A growing demand led to an expansion, and they built cabins by the sea for tourists interested in fishing. In a later expansion the barn was renovated, and space was made for a restaurant, bar, kitchen, library, seminar rooms, and a shop. In addition, they built a new break-water, a pier, and a boathouse, and expansion of these facilities is still going on. Liza and Paul present their farm as "a place for recreation, seminars, and get-togethers for friends and family." They have made a specialty of serving traditional, local foods, and a museum on the farm attracts visitors with an interest in local cultural heritage. Although most of the work is done by the couple themselves, they hire additional workers locally when it comes to information technology and accounting, and during the busiest seasons they hire extra help.

***The wilderness camp***

This business is composed of two neighboring dairy farms located in a peripheral forest and farm area with mountains, lakes, and rivers in the near vicinity. One of the farms was inherited by Peter and the other one by Martin. Both farms had average areas of productive land but with large outfield forest resources.<sup>5</sup> Looking for additional income, Peter and Martin and their wives started to build a campsite and offer adventures in the wilderness for school classes. As the workload grew, the combination of tourist work and dairy farming became hard to manage. The farmers quit dairy production and let out their farmland to neighboring farmers. Today, the camp requires work to be divided between a manager, tourist host, chef, and jack-of-all-trades. In addition, the families depend on seasonal labor on an hourly basis. Before going full-time into tourism, Peter's wife, Sarah, held part-time work outside the farm but left it for the tourist business. Martin is divorced, and his second wife is not involved in the business. The families offer several products for groups of visitors: at the campsite they serve food made from local raw materials such as moose

<sup>5</sup> The average size of a Norwegian farm is 20.2 hectares.

**Table 1.** Overview of the Cases in the Study

	Farm Couples	Age	Previous Occupation	Year Started
Mountain farm	Mary and John	50s	Mary: farmer and housewife John: farmer and carpenter	1992
Forest farm	Grete and Daniel	30s	Grete: municipal advisor Daniel: farmer and rural business advisor	2001
Coastal farm	Liza and Paul	60s	Liza: farmer and teacher Paul: farmer and truck driver	1990
Wilderness camp	Sarah and Peter	50s	Sarah: farmer and study administrator Peter: farmer	1988
Old heritage farm	Martin	40s	Martin: farmer	2002
	Ann and Thomas	20s	Ann: cook Thomas: cook	

meat, trout, and berries, and they offer overnight accommodation and activities such as fishing, mountain climbing, hiking, canoeing/paddling, cave expeditions, dogsledding, and guided moose hunting during the season.

### ***The old heritage farm***

In this case the younger generation, Ann and Thomas, took over the farm tourism business from Ann's parents relatively recently. Therefore, they consider themselves trainees, with Ann's father as mentor. The farm site consists of several old log houses, and the main attractions are represented by the farm's cultural heritage and location in a scenic landscape. The dairy production ceased some years ago, and today small-scale forestry is the only farm activity. Ann and Thomas are both trained as cooks and have worked in restaurants. Thomas also has experience with administrative work. After taking over, they gradually expanded the business and now offer overnight accommodation in the many small, old houses on the farm and some outdoors activities such as angling and mountain climbing. They also run a café on the premises, in combination with a farm shop selling local foods and handicrafts. An important part of the business is to offer facilities (a reception room and restaurant) for various functions. Drawing on their previous work and professional skills, Ann and Thomas provide homemade food based on traditional cooking but also with elements from international cuisine.

Table 1 presents an overview of the cases. We selected these cases because the farm owners had made a business transition. Although the

link with farming activities is weak, the traditional farm atmosphere and farm history are important background elements for each of the businesses. The products are based on the farm resources such as the hosts themselves, buildings, the outlying fields, and the qualities of the landscape. In all our cases the husbands and wives were business partners. Of the women we interviewed, three held off-farm jobs, which they quit in order to be involved in tourism, and the fourth still held her off-farm job on a part-time basis (Brandth and Haugen 2007, 384). For those quitting off-farm jobs, it was a return to a family farm business. Both men and women had their roots in farming, but the men were active farmers to a greater degree before the change. The couples' main motivation to start a farm tourism business resulted from their desire to continue working on a farm and to be their own employers, which, in other words, maintained many characteristics of farming.

We conducted formal interviews with a total of ten persons from all five cases: four women and six men. Each interview was conducted on the farm and lasted between two and three hours. Interviews were audiotaped and later fully transcribed. In two cases the husband and wife were interviewed together. We also visited six additional farm tourist businesses as part of the preparatory field work. Informal conversations with the operators of those businesses contributed to our background knowledge.

### **Doing gender, and doing it differently?**

In this section, we analyze the gendering of different work operations central to the farm tourist businesses in our study. To capture the diversity of tourism-as-work and the related dynamics of gender construction, we look into three different categories of work separately: accommodation work, managerial work, and outdoor activities. We are interested in how gender and work as intertwined practices in a tourist setting may challenge conventional rural/agricultural norms in which some work is coded feminine and some masculine.

### ***Catering, cleaning, and caring***

In the gender-segregated labor market of tourism, as in many other sectors, it is well known that women tend to hold the low-paid and seasonal work (Kinnaird and Hall 1994; Sinclair 1997). Accommodation is a type of work that is composed of what Polly Toynebee (2003, 233) has called the three Cs: catering, cleaning, and caring. In our cases this category of work involves activities such as cooking, serving, cleaning, and making

beds. It implies caring for the guests, being available for them, handling their needs, and constructing the perfect scene for them. The most prominent pattern in our cases is that women have the overall responsibility for these tasks but that the couples also share the labor of preparing and cooking meals, waiting on tables, doing dishes, cleaning rooms, and making beds. Daniel explained that on the forest farm “it varies whether it is she or me. It depends on who has the time to spare.” Interestingly, we notice that it is men who tend to define themselves as assistants in this work: John, for instance, stressed that he assisted his wife, who primarily was the one to take care of cooking and serving. Traditionally, in farming it is women who have been defined as “the flexible gender” (Thorsen 1993), helping out and assisting the male farmer (Brandth and Haugen 2007, 387). In these cases we find many examples of men being flexible and helping out. The need for both husband and wife to step in to accommodate the guests indicates that the gender pattern common with farm couples is destabilized and that this opens up possibilities for transgressing conventional gender boundaries.

Although men were involved in cooking and serving in all the cases, in two of the enterprises, the mountain and the heritage farms, the men were the main chefs. On the mountain farm, Mary was originally not interested in starting a restaurant on the farm, as she described to us: “I was very skeptical about his idea to start cooking and serving meals because I have seen how much my mother used to work with cooking. She had long days in the kitchen and very little respite. But John promised that if I agreed, he would do the cooking.” Eventually Mary did agree, and as a result, John took responsibility for developing the restaurant. As we see from the quote, Mary’s understanding of cooking and serving food was rooted in her experiences with women’s work in the kitchen on the farm. In contrast, John had a more professional apprehension of it and a frame of reference that connected the restaurant business to the larger economy. He has enjoyed experimenting with creating local food dishes, and after a short period of time the food became one of the main attractions of the place. One of his dishes in particular has made the place quite well known. Mary has joined in and taken on responsibility for the cold dishes normally served for lunch and also for preparing desserts (see Brandth and Haugen 2007).

In addition to cooking, the cleaning is flexibly shared between husband and wife. At the coastal farm, Liza and Paul rent boats and cabins to foreign fishing tourists. Paul’s primary responsibility is the boats, the marina, and the cabins, which are situated near the sea a short distance from the farm buildings. Liza described how they organize the cleaning: “He

has the main responsibility for the cabins, so even if we sometimes hire people to clean, he normally does it himself. He always does the roughest part of it, takes out the rugs and the garbage and things like that. . . . He does clean, although this is not his favorite task, but he does it if I am busy up there [at the farm site]. He always prefers that I check the finish and make sure everything is okay.” In this case the cleaning was tied to Paul’s area of responsibility, which was the activities by the sea. The quote renders us a little dubious as to how much cleaning he actually does, and we notice the conditions under which he cleans. The implicit negotiation between Paul and Liza shows that he reluctantly does the cleaning, and generally only if she is busy elsewhere. Another interesting aspect is the way they share the responsibility of cleaning. According to Liza, he does the heaviest part of the cleaning and cleans primarily in the marina. This characterization thus protects his masculinity and dignity by linking his cleaning to the masculine area of work in the marina. However, she controls the quality of his work, thereby not risking her reputation by having dirty rooms, for it may be her feminine honor that is at stake.

Another example of how feminine-coded work may be recoded to assume masculine signification is manifest in John’s account of the first three years of business, when he and Mary could not afford to hire help and had to do all the cleaning themselves: “I said to Mary that I would cut back on my jogging and instead use this time running up and down the stairs. I will do all the cleaning and make the beds, and it will give me the same amount of exercise, I said.” John thus defined the cleaning job as exercise, and Mary thought she got a good deal. In both these cases the men do feminine-coded work when it is considered necessary. In John and Mary’s case the economy improved after a few years, and they now hire local women to do the rooms. Thus, cleaning tasks continue to be gender-segregated work.

Concerning their everyday work as tourist hosts, both women and men attach importance to taking good care of the guests: “When it comes to the guests, we share most of it,” Daniel on the forest farm explained. It seems that both men and women do their utmost to satisfy customers. “From the very first telephone conversation with potential guests it is important to make them feel welcome to this place,” Mary explained. The couples also express a shared understanding that guests have to be met in a friendly way and made to feel significant. As Martin at the wilderness camp stated, “You are responsible for the well-being of the guests—to make sure that they enjoy themselves. You must dance attendance on the customers. It is necessary in order to succeed in this business. The guests who come here must feel appreciated and receive good ser-

vice.” Taking care of the guests and giving good service reflect a care orientation that is most commonly associated with women, but in the service sector it is an inherent part of the work. Hosting tourists means having to deal with others’ unacquaintedness, provide safety and support, improvise, and build positive experiences and relationships. From the data we see that both husband and wife are involved in caring for visitors, doing their utmost to meet their needs and expectations. This might be an example of how the gendering of work is becoming less distinct, but it may also be that there are differences in the ways men and women go about it, performing good service according to gendered scripts. In contrast to Mary, who hardly rests when there are guests on the farm, John seems more inclined to set limits and be clear that he has the power and control.

There are tasks in which the gendering is very distinct: men are responsible for construction and maintenance work, often done in the winter, while women do the various interior decorations, choosing colors and designs, and setting tables. The women praise their husbands for being good handymen, and the men praise their wives for their ability to make things look nice and for handling the visitors well. This shows how they understand the expectations and norms for performing gender and comply with them.

The guests also express normative expectations and hegemonic discourses of gendering, which represents a constraint when it comes to doing gender in a way that breaks with the conventional. As is pointed out in Berit Brandth and Marit S. Haugen (2007, 389–90), guests may, for instance, anticipate good old rural hospitality, something that is connected to women’s traditional role on farms. Thus, the interactions between hosts and guests may be constructed in accordance with expectations based on traditional country stereotypes: the idealized farmer and his wife.<sup>6</sup> One example of these expectations is Liza’s way of taking care of her guests. She explained that she always prepared large portions in order to meet expectations of large country helpings. She felt that anything else would harm her reputation. So, although she was a teacher by education, an entrepreneur, and a manager of the family tourist business, she tried to live up to norms of traditional rural femininity as well. The question here is what to emphasize when it comes to doing gender: her position of influence and power that stems from the new work or her lack of resistance

<sup>6</sup> These expectations find parallels in the well-known British television series *The Darling Buds of May*, which was popular in Norway some years ago. It portrayed life with a rural family in which there was always humor, plenty of food, and time for a chat.

to traditional rural norms of appropriate behavior for women. The paradox is that the latter may be very important when it comes to the selling of rural/farm tourism as the tourists buy a rural idyll built on conventional ideas of gender performance.

At first it may seem surprising that the men did not express more uneasiness or constraints about participating in catering, cleaning, and caring. The reason may be that when they do these tasks, they do work that to them seems to have assumed a different meaning than if it were done as regular housework. Although the business is household based, it seems that the men doing the three Cs do not experience it as a devaluation of their masculine status and power.

***Women as managers: Confronting the norms of “real” rural work***

Management resides in the symbolic domain of the male, and as David Collinson and Jeff Hearn note, “in most organizations, most managers are men” (1994, 2). A plethora of research has documented the interconnections between management and masculinities, and agriculture is no exception, as Barbara Pini’s work has strongly demonstrated (2004b, 2005). In leadership positions women have been regarded as the other.

Therefore, it is interesting that we find women as responsible managers in these businesses. John on the mountain farm stated that “she [Mary] is manager and financial director. I think that’s fine. She manages the business and pays the bills and she is the bookkeeper and has the financial overview. I am more like a hired hand.” At the wilderness camp, Peter stated that his wife Sarah is “a genius with administration,” and on the forest farm, Daniel insisted on being called farmhand while defining Grete as the manager.

Management and administration are multifaceted work, which involve getting people together to accomplish the work activities. One important part of this process is to supervise and delegate work to hired people and other family members. It implies having an overview of details and knowing what needs to be done. It also involves dealing with potential customers, taking orders, and purchasing as well as having knowledge of finances and representing the business to the outside world in various ways.

Liza on the coastal farm had previously held a seat on the town council, something that was of great advantage when it came to handling applications for permission to expand and put up new buildings on the farm site. She described an instance in which consideration of the farm’s application was delayed, and further delays would have resulted in very negative economic consequences for the business. To speed things up,

she handled the politicians, the bureaucracy, and the authorities in the town as well as at the county level directly. When building started, Liza was the one to deal with the architect and the builders.

At the mountain farm, Mary told us how her new position as manager has been important to her self-development. Earlier she had been very reserved and afraid to speak in front of any audiences. When the tourist buses entered the farmyard, she kept herself in the background and left it to her husband to greet them. Not any longer: now she enters the bus to welcome visitors and give them information about the farm and what to expect from their stay. She has achieved greater confidence in her front-stage role. Being the head of the business makes it necessary to live up to norms of what a manager normally does. Such norms are communicated in interactions with external institutions, the guests, and persons they employ.

Business administrative work has important relational implications, not least concerning representation of the business and participation in external networks and forums. As managers of the tourist farm businesses, the women in the five cases presented here participate in conferences and meetings with partners in similar businesses, and they have to relate to public authorities and financial institutions of various kinds. Having to deal with such institutions gives women a more public role. They become active beyond the farm gate. Managerial work is thus not just indoor, backstage work.

Although management is acknowledged as a more prestigious position for women, it is intertwined with at least two norms of gender-appropriate work in rural areas. One concerns the fact that women's work, when conducted in the home, is readily conceived of as family work and thus disparaged. As Pini (2004a) has stated, work undertaken in the home rather than in the field is defined as work for women. It is seen as merely an extension of other roles associated with women.

In family farm tourism, as in farming, there is a diffuse division between home and workplace, leisure time and working hours. As long as women are available around the house, this separation remains blurred, and the women have to find strategies to make their professional work visible and more manageable.

Sarah told us that after quitting her off-farm job to pursue a career at the wilderness camp, she had her office in their private house. Consequently, local people came to define her as "just a homemaker," she said, always available whenever anyone needed help. Moreover, she found it difficult to separate office work and domestic work and kept doing housework in between office work and vice versa. Her strategy to retain pro-

fessionalism was to move her office to a section of the barn that was rebuilt for this purpose. To have an office that physically and symbolically separates the domestic from the professional work is something that we regard as a strategy for transgressing gendered boundaries.

The other norm concerns the definition of what is considered real work in rural areas, a conception that is clearly gendered. Much administrative work takes place in an office. Both men and women in the study tended to call managerial work “office work,” as we have seen from Sarah’s statement above and also from the following quote from her husband: “I do not want to enter the women’s premises. I have tried to take telephone calls, but that does not work. So I try to avoid doing office work and various other things like decorating, setting tables, etc. . . . the finish, so to speak. My job is to cook and to do maintenance work, things like that.” He does not necessarily see Sarah’s management as an upward movement and plays it down by referring to the symbolic meaning of the space within which it is carried out—the office, the indoors. Traditionally, in comparison with outdoor, physical work, office work has not come to hold the status of real work in a rural/farming context. It is often linked to the urban, against which rural identities are contrasted and defined (Brandth and Haugen 2005a).

Moreover, there is a downside to managerial tasks for women. One of them is represented by the telephone. Customers normally contact the tourist farm businesses by phone requesting products and prices and asking about availability and capacity of the farms’ facilities. The telephone demands availability and means being constantly disrupted from whatever other work one is doing. Answering telephone calls is a type of task that John tends to avoid, and as it is important to be friendly and accommodating, he claims that women are more “fit” for doing this task. From this example we see how the new work for women, which very well could mean undoing conventional rural definitions of women, is instead redefined to fit the heterosexual matrix and repeat conventional conceptions of an essential femininity.

That women are doing managerial work can be considered a significant leap in the direction of more power and influence for women on farms. However, we see that it is conceived of, or recoded, as either housework or office work and thereby is being normalized in terms of gendered power relations.

### **Outdoor activities**

Organized activities are offered by all the farms in the study and are important parts of the product. Some of the activities are inspired by

older, rural times such as stepping on driving logs, throwing axes and arrows, and climbing trees. Other activities include boating, canoeing, fishing/angling, hunting, guided tours, and mountain climbing. Such activities constitute men's masculine domain. "I do the boats and the canoes. That's because I have always liked the outdoors," Daniel on the forest farm explained. And Martin, who defines himself as a hunter and angler, claimed that he would not have started the wilderness camp if it had not been in accordance with his main interests. He has made his hobby into his work. "Now I can pursue outdoor life and get paid for it," he said. In this domain the men have the know-how and are the team leaders, and the activities and the accompanying equipment are strong symbols of rural male competence. Their gender is mingled with the gender of the product. This work, drawing on symbolic aspects of the rural combined with a masculinity of adventure, connects them to a natural environment that is rough and rugged, confirming their identity and status as rural men.

As we have pointed out, in farming, masculinity has been confirmed by outdoor work, often with heavy machinery, be it in the fields or forests. This type of masculinity involves physical strength, battles with nature, hardship, and rugged individualism (Brandth 1995; Liepins 1998). By having the main responsibility for the outdoor activities within farm tourism, men doing this work continue to perform in accordance with rural norms of masculinity. This is the part of the tourist-related practices that most strongly maintains the original rural way of doing gender and work.

Yet, since one focus in this article is on undoing gender, it is important to point out that this gender conformity takes place in a new context. In a service context, the men need to conduct their wilderness activities in a style that allows for care and consideration of the guests. Martin at the wilderness camp told us about being with the guests in the wilderness: "You need to be very attentive and observant and make sure that the guests are satisfied." It may thus be that tourist work, even when it comes to tasks that are traditionally coded as masculine, allows for more open and flexible or dialogical masculine identities (Peter et al. 2000), suggesting change toward less differentiated ways of doing gender.

### **Conclusions**

The intention of this article has been to explore how gender is done when women and men do farm tourism. The cases explored are household businesses, based in a rural/farming culture and characterized by the norms and practices of traditional heterosexual couple relations. Our ques-

tion has been how the new work of tourism may create conditions for (un)doing gender at the interactional level and reshuffling power within the couple.

Our cases indicate different consequences for the various categories of work. As seen from the analysis, catering, cleaning, and caring are often flexibly shared between men and women. More commonly women organize the work and men assist, but the pattern of sharing may also be that of separate tasks for men and women. The element of undoing is found in men's participation in this work. The necessity of having two people handle these tasks in a small business and the fact that the tasks are done for commercial or business reasons may be what motivates men to participate in what traditionally has been coded as women's work. We have seen how these tasks are given a meaning that genders them in a way with which rural men can be comfortable, thus keeping the gender binary and hierarchy intact.

Since women are managers in most of the cases in this article, we have had the opportunity to study how their new position on the farm affects the doing and undoing of gender. On the one hand, management implies a change in power relations as compared to farming. Managing a family business receives recognition simply because it is a public position and is exercised as paid work. As managers, women become engaged in new relations of influence both outside and within the business. We have also seen how women may experience personal growth as a result of occupying this role. On the other hand, they negotiate rural norms of what is appropriate work for women. Taking place in the home, managerial work is easily mistaken for housework and therefore underestimated. Moreover, when defined as office work and housework, management is not the type of work that has held status in rural areas and is therefore placed in the symbolically gendered spaces of the indoors.

The third category of work that we have explored is outdoor activities and games. Hunting, fishing, and adventures in the wilderness are products grounded in the traditional competences of rural men and take place in the spaces that rural men have monopolized. Thus, they represent a repetition of men's gender performances. However, when such activities are done in a context of service work, there is a move beyond conventional rural masculinity that may support alternative ways of doing masculinity and entail elements of undoing gender.

Finally, the study demonstrates that undoing gender is not particularly straightforward, as women and men are situated within certain conventions when it comes to communicating country living to visitors and meeting visitors' expectations of gender and work. Both men and women's

practices are tied to their need to be seen as authentically and sufficiently rural, something that indicates that discourses of the rural-urban distinction also play a part in the shaping of their identities and gendered work practices.

In sum, the segmentation of work and the unequal status between men and women that we know from research on family farming seem to be less distinct in farm tourism. The distinctions that do exist seem to be affected by the indoor-outdoor dichotomy and the traditional norms of rural gender roles, which are expressed in both the farm owners' descriptions of their labor and the tourists' expectations. Moreover, we have seen that gender and work as interrelated practices are being done and undone, again and again. The indoor-outdoor dichotomy plays a defining role. The work practices through which gender is (un)done entail both mastery and submission for women (and men). Even if women and men have changed their practices, gender and work are still frequently interpreted and perceived according to the heterosexual matrix.

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