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Embodying the rural idyll in farm tourist hosting

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Abstract

This article is concerned with service work conducted on farms, and it explores how men and women's bodies are involved in producing and mediating positive aspects of the rural. The main question is whether the two types of work, farming and tourist hosting, are represented by compatible or conflicting bodies. The analysis is based on interviews with couples from 20 farms. Findings show that farm heritage and culture is central to the farm tourist product, and that dress and appearance, as signifiers of both a farming lifestyle and professional tourist hosting, hold fewer tensions than could be expected from the taken-for-granted difference between the two types of work. Relations between hosts and guests in the different spaces of nature and the home disclose gendered challenges. Men need to incorporate caring aspects in their wilderness activities. Women struggle to balance their own needs and emotions with tourists' expectations – as the personal and the home are commercialized as part of the rural idyll. Interestingly, as service work expands into the agricultural sector, our findings indicate that these two different types of work may gradually lose their distinct embodied differences.

Keywords: tourist hosting, farm tourism, bodies, embodiment, interactive service work

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Introduction

This article focuses on aspects of farm tourist hosting and explores how farm hosts' bodily practices are involved in constituting the product of farm tourism. In many regions and countries tourism has become a valuable source of additional or alternative income for farmers as increasingly productivist demands create challenges for family farming. Understanding farm tourism as a transformative cultural force, this article aims to contribute knowledge on rural change.

For farmers, diversifying their production into tourism implies a significant change in the type of work they undertake on their farms. Following Bourdieu (1977), who has stressed the importance of the materiality of daily life (work and physical environments) in shaping embodied beings, the transformation from farming to tourism makes a compelling case for studying rural transformation through a focus on embodiment. In this article we understand 'embodiment' to be about rural culture and practices insofar as these can be understood from the perspective of the body.

In making farming, its places, people and practices into tourist attractions, farm tourism generally is found to trade on positive connotations of the rural where the idyllic aspects are understood as the dominant social representation of the countryside (Baylina & Berg, 2009; Bell, 2006; Bunce, 2003; Short, 2006). The elements of the "rural idyll" consist of qualities such as remoteness of farms, wild landscapes, and a simple life characterised by notions of safety, gentleness and rusticity (Bell, 2006, p. 149). Accompanying these qualities are ideas about the presence of animals, beautiful vistas, peace and quiet, community, domesticity, tradition and pure foods. According to Crang (2004, p.76) the essence of tourism is to take dreams and myths and inscribe them on to places. Rural tourism operators draw on such expectations of the ideal-typical idylls in seeking to create special experiences for visitors (Brandth and Haugen 2011). This does not mean it is without problems and downsides (Skavhaug and Brandth 2012, Brandth and Haugen 2012). In our context, when understanding

bodies as practices with socially incorporated meanings, the idyllic imaginary of the rural is central, and the article deals with how bodies are involved in producing and mediating the positive aspects of the rural.

Previous research on the farming body has depicted it as an instrument of work and had a particular focus on the work-hardened bodies of men and the relationship between masculine bodies and machinery and stressed qualities such as strength, toughness and endurance (Brandth, 2006 a,b; Little & Leyshon, 2003; Saugeres, 2002). Farming is thus a prime example of how bodily labour is associated with masculinity. At the same time, research has described how women's bodies and abilities have been inferiorized, devalued and portrayed as incapable of farming like men, resulting in a view of women as lacking attributes defined as central to farming (Brandth, 2006a; Saugeres, 2002; Silvasti, 2003).

Studies of service work have emphasised the emotional character of the work as well as the aesthetic qualities of the workers' bodies (Forseth, 2005a, b; Hancock & Tyler, 2007; McDowell, 2009; Witz, Warhurst, & Nickson, 2003). Moreover, service work is described as more personal than work in the agricultural sector, and encounters between the tourist host and the tourist are an important difference to farm work. In the service sector the bodily attributes of the service providers enter into the production process in a direct way and become part of the service. In contrast to farm work, in service work it is men who may find their bodily attributes to be a disadvantage (McDowell, 2009, p. 11). However, as stressed by Veijola and Jokinen (2008, p.166) attributes that have previously been understood as feminine virtues or skills are now also required from men. Nevertheless, the bodies of men and women may incorporate the rural idyll differently meeting various challenges in the change to tourism.

Given this article is concerned with service work conducted on farms, the combination of service worker and farmer in one body is of central concern. How is this mix signified by their bodies when producing positive tourist experiences in the rural?

The body and work in tourism, service work and farming

Research engaging in the sociology of the body has addressed a whole range of issues, including tourism (Crouch & Desforges, 2003; Everett, 2008; Perkins & Thorns 2001; Veijola & Jokinen, 1994), service work (Forseth, 2005a, b; Hancock & Tyler, 2000, 2007; McDowell, 2009; Witz et al., 2003; Wolkowitz, 2006) and rural/agricultural studies (Brandth, 2006a, b; Brandth & Haugen, 2005a, b; Little & Leyshon, 2003; Saugeres, 2002).

Tourism studies have moved towards a more culturally aware research agenda (Tribe, 2005), which has led to increased theoretical attention on tourist subjectivities and performances (Crouch & Desforges, 2003; Franklin 2007). In the aftermath of Urry's (1990) seminal work on the tourist gaze, embodiment has come into greater focus. Scholars have, however, pointed out that focus on the gaze is limited as tourism typically involves more senses than the visual alone (Cloke & Perkins, 1998; Crouch, 2004; Edensor, 2006; Veijola & Jokinen, 1994). Tourists do not just come to look, but to engage in activities that often revolve around bodily experiences such as eating, drinking, dancing, sunbathing, swimming and walking in the wilderness (Veiola & Jokinen, 1994; Perkins & Thorns, 2001). Senses such as touch, sight, smell, hearing and taste are working interactively to create such experiences (Crouch, 2004). In short, tourists are putting their bodies into tourism in many ways. The focus of attention in "new tourism studies" has, however, primarily been the tourist - a problem that Franklin (2007) has called "touristcentricity". Consequently, with few exceptions (see special issue of *Tourism Studies* 2009) research has focused on the various bodily engagements of the tourist, less so on the operators of and workers within the tourism sector.

Increasingly employees in front-line *service work* have been instructed to do "emotional labour" (Knights & Thanem, 2005), and since Hochschild (1983) introduced the concept, it has been central in research on interactive service work. The concept of emotional labour has been used to describe service workers' attempt to increase interactional quality and manage the emotional climate within service provider/receiver relationships (Forseth, 2005b; Warhurst & Nickson, 2007). Those engaged in hosting tourists are typically engaged in the creation and management of "good" feelings. As most research on emotional work has taken place within large companies among waged workers, much less is known about smaller, self-employed owner-operators, where worker-client relations may differ (Bolton, 2005).

Image and appearance at work has been of central focus in research on front line service work. In "customer-facing" service work, organisations are seeking market differentiation via image, resulting in an emphasis on the aesthetics of bodies (Witz et al., 2003). Examples are stewardesses, tourist hosts and front-line employees in banks and hotels who are required to conform to certain expectations in the presentation of their bodies. The sociology of work has thus become concerned with the changing demands being placed on the bodily appearance of employees in many service industries.

Research on the *farming body*, has provided insight into a number of themes (Brandth, 2006a; Little & Leyshon, 2003), but first and foremost it has contributed to understandings of gender and has shown how dominant perceptions of femininity and masculinity include traditional assumptions about the body and sexuality (Bell, 2000; Little, 2003, 2007; Little & Panelli, 2007). The organisational form of family farming is embodied in the sense that it is based on emotion (love) and sexual ties between husband and wife. Farm wives perform reproductive activities that include child-care and housework, but in addition they do various tasks related to the farm operation. To carry out all the tasks demands a great deal of flexibility regarding the capabilities of the body, and women in farming have been regarded as the flexible gender. The gendered and spatial division of work in farming, with men typically working outdoors and women indoors, is connected to farming as a household-based business where the border between work and home is more or less absent. To a large degree many aspects of the services being offered to farm tourists are similar to the work women and men have been doing in the home and around the farm. Further, when the distinctions between productive and reproductive areas are blurred, as they are for women in family farming, their work has often been dismissed as domestic (Brandth and Haugen 2005a).

In the literature, the characteristics of farm work, which typically involve bodies, have explicitly been tied to the performance of rural masculinity. Agriculture's favouring of male bodily qualities is also a dominant theme in studies on the relationship between the individual and the wilderness where physical ability to withstand harsh environments and push one's

body to the point of exertion are considered important (Peter, Bell, & Jarnagin, 2000; Little, 2007).

Working bodies are raw resources but they also have symbolic value. The way the body looks and how it performs give off messages about what it represents and the kinds of work it is capable of. This may become challenging when farmers diversify into tourism in order to create new and additional livelihoods on the farm.

Habitus, body and performativity

In this article we recognise, following Morgan, Brandth, and Kvande (2005, p. 4), that 'any one individual might be the site of numerous bodies', including working bodies, gendered bodies, urban or rural bodies. This stand avoids seeing the body as a fixed category, instead recognising it as negotiable and changeable (Howson, 2004). Thus, embodiment may be experienced and understood differently across social formations and spaces. Bourdieu's (1977) work on the incorporation of the social into the body does consider this dynamic notion of the body. Its main emphasis, however, is on the durable aspects of the body, related to the principle of continuity and regularity in social life and the reproduction of society.

It is through the concept of habitus as a 'system of durable, transposable dispositions' (1977, p. 72) that Bourdieu's theory seems applicable when aiming to explore what happens when farmers change their work to incorporate tourist hosting: habitus is both reproductive and transformative. Moreover, habitus involves a practical sense, a "feel for the game" of a particular field of activity. Thus it links embodiment to people's work and represents a connection between practice and position. In this way it becomes not only an individual phenomenon, but also a collective phenomenon in which people with similar life conditions (in this case farmers) might share a habitus.

There are three aspects of habitus that we will emphasize as particularly relevant to our analysis: first, that habitus embodies the past. In the words of McNay (1999, p.102), the past is 'embedded in the durable structures of the habitus'. In other words, habitus, as a system of dispositions, brings the past to life and tends to perpetuate it into the future. Farm tourism

trades vastly on the past (Brandth and Haugen 2011). Second, habitus signifies the deportment, manner and style in which actors "carry themselves". This means that we embody habitus through the way we walk, dress, speak and conduct ourselves with others and in different spaces (Cregan, 2006, p. 67; McNay, 1999). Third, interaction with others and with the environment is important to the dynamics of habitus. Interaction with customers/visitors is central to the reproduction or transformation of the farm habitus in this article. Although habitus is not conscious, its dynamic character may allow for strategic performance as a response to interaction and an answer to the expectations of others. We will employ these three categories in the empirical analysis of embodiment.

The interactional character echoes tourist studies, where the *encounters* between hosts and guests have caught research interest (Crouch & Desforges, 2003; Hannam, 2006) and shown that it is interactional quality that creates a high quality product (Crang, 1997). The interactional character of the encounter is particularly important to take into account in a mobile culture where people constantly meet other people of different habituses and habits. Consequently, the concepts of "performance" and "performativity" have become central to capture the complex relationship between hosts and guests (Bærenholdt & Jensen, 2009; Crouch, 2004; Edensor, 2001; Hannam, 2006; Woods, 2010). In cultural geography performativity and bodily practices are linked together in what has been termed "non-representational theory" (Nash, 2000). This approach is about practices rather than representation and meaning. It is concerned with 'the performative "presentations", "showings" and "manifestations" of everyday life' (Thrift, 1997, p. 126–27, quoted in Nash, 2000). Tourist hosting is by definition performative or staged (MacCannell, 1999). In exploring farm tourism we are interested in how the body is involved in the performances of the farm tourist hosts.The analysis is structured as follows: First we explore how hosting practices embody the past. Second, focus is on their bodily appearance, and third, on embodied aspects of their interaction with the guests.

Data and methods

The analysis draws on data from a study of farm based tourism in Norway which aimed to identify farm hosts and their style of business operation. Data collection methods included

both surveys and ethnographically inspired interviews. This present article is based solely on the qualitative data that was obtained during fieldwork undertaken in 2005 (pilot study) and in 2008 (main study). In total 20 family farms (19 businesses) from various districts in Norway were visited and farm couples interviewed.

For the main study we selected most of the sample from a catalogue marketing agri-tourism farms (See HANEN,2012/2013). For each business the catalogue contained pictures, contact information and a short description in Norwegian, English and German of the farm's characteristics and tourism offerings. For our study, we selected farm tourism businesses that offered accommodation and were distinctly family based. The main criteria for sampling were that businesses had small-scale tourism activities based on a family farm, and were run by the farm couple who had themselves experienced the transition to tourism.

At the time of the interviews farm couples had been involved in agri-tourism for periods of time ranging from three to twenty-three years. Half of the farms combined farming and tourism while the other half had renounced traditional farm production after having started farm based tourism. Only two of the working farms offered farm related activities to the guests. Engaging visitors in the activities of a modern farm seems to be rare in contemporary farm tourism (Sharpley & Vass, 2006; Skavhaug & Brandth, 2012). In the majority of cases, farms had seasonal opening with summer being the peak season. Accommodation and food were offered by nearly all, in addition to activities such as fishing, hunting, mountain hiking, guided tours, canoeing, courses, cultural activities, horseback riding and others.

From the cases, 35 people were formally interviewed: 16 women and 19 men. Interviews were conducted at the farm site and lasted between two and three hours. In most of the cases, husband and wife were interviewed together, but in six cases only one of them was available for interview. Respondents and farms are anonymous, and pseudonyms are used for interviewees.

Semi-structured interviews are useful for inductively investigating peoples' own experiences regarding a phenomenon (Berg, 2001). Exploration of embodiment was not the main

objective of the broader study, however, the topic was addressed in interviews through questions about dress, tiredness and how interviewees handled visitor demands. The topic was further addressed through farmers' descriptions of the everyday, mundane practices of managing tourist hosting. Our focus on the body also included those practices that cannot adequately be spoken of and that often become so routinized that they appear natural (Nash, 2000). This means that analysing the interview transcripts, we have used the body as our analytical lens, and followed David Morgan's advice to look for reference to forms of body work, bodily feelings, physical appearance and practices (Morgan, 2005, p. 19). Our analytical approach disclosed a large amount of issues where the body was relevant. Next step in the analysis therefore dealt with connecting issues that could contribute to a coherent story for presentation in terms of Kuhn's (1970) "context of justification". This step included dialogue with literature and theory to develop appropriate categories.

The past in the present

In this section our focus is on how the hosting practices embody the past and brings it to new life. In David Bell's (2006) words, the idyll is often a reminder of a past, 'a golden past that was lost in the rush to modernity' (p. 152). In this regard, farmers' body-practices convey the history and special qualities of the farm. Traditions and heritage are a main aspect of the product offered to tourists (Brandth and Haugen 2011, 2012). Old buildings combined with stories about the farm in the past were central as a cultural framework for tourist visits. Some created an atmosphere of peasant farming with many small animals around the farmyard. The image of the farm offered to tourists was that of a relaxed and beautiful place. As a result, hosts felt the farm must be tidy and presentable without visible agricultural equipment or rubbish, dirt and plastic lying around.

Another example of how hosts produced the idyllic aspects of farm living for tourists is illustrated by the case of Mariann and Olav who combined tourism with small scale sheep farming. They served a niche market of companies coming for seminars and meetings. The farm dates back to the 16th century and contains several old buildings. They advertised their facilities for people who want to hold meetings in an alternative, peaceful atmosphere where part of the experience is the possibility to stay overnight in an old stable and barn. Olav

pointed out that he presents his farm as a place for "down-to-earth" activities, which are unique because they incorporate fundamental aspects of life and thus single the farm out from other tourist sites. According to Olav, traditional local food processing was part of the visitors' perceptions of the idyllic rural. Being aware that knowledge of food processing is unknown to most consumers this was offered as part of their tourism product. For instance, they produced cheese and let the guests see and try how it was done in the old days.

The practices of past generations are performed as tourist products. Some hosts created farm museums in order to impart knowledge about the history of the farm and their ancestors who worked and lived there. Moreover, stories told about the community, landscape and nature were often indicative of the unique features of the local area and thus played a part in the presentation of the farm as unique. Hosts suggested that guests seemed curious to learn about work and life on the farm, both the strains of earlier times and the contemporary ways of rural living. In this way, the hosts' own lives became part of the product. This is a characteristic of service-dominated economies where individual bodies have become "absolutely central" as a part of the exchange between hosts and guests (McDowell, 2009, p. 8). Laila, who runs a dairy farm in a remote valley with her husband and son, emphasised this point:

> *We try to communicate our way of living (...) As farmers we are very dependent on nature. In all weathers. A lot of this we don't control ourselves, we know that. So we want to tell about our everyday life, how we actually live and how we have adapted to life in this valley.*

When discussing their way of living, hosts stressed a lifestyle that they assumed was different from that of their visitors, that which is simple and genuine, although at the same time characterised by hard work and strain on the body. Such down sides of farm life were romanticised and incorporated into the attraction. It was the atmosphere and special qualities of the farm and the hosts as embodied performers of this uniqueness, which seemed to make the place attractive. Indeed, it is life itself that was made into a tourist object: "We *are* the place in a way," Mariann said, "I think it is because of *us* that people come here". She emphasised that it must be personal: "Without hosts with a belonging to the farm, you may as

well go to a hotel!" In this way, personal characteristics became an integral part of the product. In the literature on service work, the performance of the service provider is part of the production of good customer relationships (Forseth, 2005b, p. 441). The farming body is both a representation of rural/farm competence and a sign of a professional tourist host. For tourist hosts managing service work that is based on their farming experience, the two different kinds of bodies are made compatible and in fact, the embodiment of tourist hosting on the farm requires the farm habitus as its basis. The farmer and tourist host melt into each other in a form of experience that the guests appreciate.

Tourism and farming in dress and appearance

As pointed out in the theory section, body image, aesthetics and self-presentation are significant aspects of interactive service work. This "packaging of the service provider" (Solomon, 1985) is part of refining the image of the business, 'seeking to create congruence (or fit) between the employee appearance and corporate image', in Warhurst and Nickson's (2007, p. 116) words.

As a form of interactive front line work, hosting has implications for the way hosts conduct themselves and the clothes they wear; there is no room for smelly farm clothes and dirty fingernails. Underlining the aesthetic element of tourist hosting, hosts sought to create the "right" setting without dirt and smell from farming. One of the men, Martin, a former dairy farmer, reflected on his role this way: "As a tourist host you have to present yourself all the time. (...) Therefore it is quite exhausting (…) When you do farm tourism, you are part of the product whether you like it or not." Roger, who guides visitors on trips into the wilderness, consciously wore an outfit that was not too expensive or made of the latest, modern textiles in order to signal his rural/farm habitus as distinct from the (urban) visitors (see also Brandth and Haugen 2005c). In this way, dress is an active agent in performing his tourist product.

In another example, John, who for many years combined sheep husbandry with tourism, described how the two activities demanded different bodily appearances. Some days he changed his clothes as many as seven times. Whenever he saw a car approaching, he rushed to change his clothes from the working gear that he wore in the barn or in the fields, to the white

shirt and vest that he used when accommodating guests. He couldn't dress like a farmer when hosting tourists, but nevertheless he needed an outfit that communicated his belonging to the farm and its local heritage – to dress the product so to speak. Dress was seen as so central, that John and his wife had employed a designer to find a material that matched old woven tapestries from the area. Both he and his wife wore vests in this material. Other hosts wore copies of traditional farmer's shirts (busserull), or various types of costumes inspired by local traditions. In one case where activities were directed towards activities in the wilderness, the hosts wore clothes made of moose hide. In this way their bodies represented their farm's identity. Nils told a story about a foreign tourist visiting his farm tourist enterprise. Since it was "in a remote country like Norway", the tourist expected the hosts to be clothed the way farmers were 200 years ago, and he was very disappointed to find the experience "too modern" and the hosts "too business-like". Although most visitors did not carry extreme expectations like this, the example shows the incongruence that may arise between the two different types of bodies.

There is also another practice about how to embody the product, one that does not emphasise history or heritage so much, but rather contemporary authenticity. On Kari's farm she and her family didn't want to present the farm as a relic of the past, but to emphasise that which is "natural and simple, genuine and real". "What is important is to be yourself and not anything artificial," Kari says. Similarly Mariann suggested that she did not want to "dash around in a peasant girl's costume," but wear what was practical when hosting. She wanted, in other words, to appear as a modern farm woman to the visitors.

Embodying contemporary rural lifestyle, hosts stressed the importance of wearing clothes that signal a simple and everyday-like atmosphere: "I wear an apron when I cook, otherwise I try to dress simple, but nice, not farm clothes, no," Inger said. She pointed out that hosting is very complex work with many different tasks and events. This made it necessary to dress in a practical way, and for the hosts to vary their clothes accordingly. In Inger's case it was the tourist work, not the farm heritage part of the product that decided her dress. Bodily presentation also differed with the type of event that was occurring on the farm. Weddings, for instance, could demand a national costume (bunad) in honour of the party, as long as the

hosts did not outshine the guests. It was also considered important that the visitors were able to single out who the hosts were so some hosts wore t-shirts with a logo or some kind of symbol of identification. Generally speaking, bodily appearance is an important way of classifying people (Howson, 2004, p. 4). It is, for instance, well known that dress and body language, as part of the habitus, vary according to class.

Through dress and appearance, hosts tried to combine the two types of work. Some dressed to emphasise the farm aspect of the product, while others stressed the hospitality part. Thus, dress tended to show somewhat more conflicting and varied embodiments - not only between farming and professional service work, but also between farm/rural heritage and modern rural (service) work. It is men, who traditionally have embodied outdoor work in farming, who experience the most shifting demands to dress and comportment.

Bodies of interaction in the spaces of nature and home

Our third category comprises the interactional aspects of embodiment. One part of this is interaction between the hosts and tourists when it comes to nature and the home. Providing for the bodies of customers in various ways, involves what has been termed "work on the body" (McDowell, 2009, p. 9). Taking good care of (urban) bodies is an element in the understanding of farm tourism's advantages. The rural idyll is for instance perceived as a place where stressed bodies can rest and relax: "We market ourselves as a quiet place in close connection to nature," Mariann said. As a way of appealing to the senses, one of the farms planned to emphasize qualities of darkness and quietness – characteristics understood as being out of the ordinary for people living in cities.

Nature-based activities were commonly provided, and it was the men who had as their responsibility to run such activities (Brandth and Haugen 2010). Activities comprised guided tours, mountain climbing, hunting, boating, fishing, canoeing and outdoor games, and were inspired by heritage-based activities such as running and balancing on floating logs, tree top climbing, and throwing arrows and axes at targets. These activities were often accompanied by stories about ways of life in the past and served to position the present-day activities within the context of their heritage. Hosts also served meals in the wilderness, often prepared on

open fires. In this work, an important aspect of their competence as hosts was the mastery of nature, for example the physical challenge of lighting a bonfire, even during rain. Most of these competences match characteristics of rural/agricultural masculinities reported in the literature, but as has been pointed out by Veijola and Jokinen (2008), customer care skills must be added. It is not enough to take customers out into the wilderness; they have to do it in a style that allows for care and consideration of the guests and their well-being. As Martin said: "You need to be very attentive and observant and make sure that the guests are satisfied." In this way, men in particular, combined a service providing body with their rural competences.

Tourists often come to engage in activities that have to do with bodily experiences. On one of the farms, where guided wilderness tours were offered, Roger told the following story about what made an impression on his visitors:

> *We have thought about offering a bit more comfort, but that is not what they (the visitors) remember. Rather, it is the primitive and the simple. A nice dinner in a simple spot and physical effort and sweat to get there. That is what they remember. Sunshine and stuff is fine, but they remember the bad weather the best. "Imagine having such a nice trip in that weather!" It is the embodied mastery they remember - to have moved a barrier in themselves.*

What he is talking about is the empowering character of bodily practice that he himself is in possession of when practicing nature-based tourism, a competence that he passed on to his guests. Roger was very aware that he performed part of his life world as an alternative to urban life and mass tourism. He took great pride in what he had to offer, something that became visible through his practice of local tradition in relation to the wilderness, farming and rural culture.

Concerning rural competencies, one of the stories we were told dealt with a winter's day when there was an avalanche that completely blocked the road, cut electricity and totally

isolated the farm, stranding a group of tourists, who had planned to stay at the farm for only three hours. Of this event, John said:

> *The first thing I did, was to light candles and fires in the stoves. It crackled and was really cosy, you know. Yes, they stayed for thirty hours! They had an extra evening meal and breakfast and lunch and dinner again, and then coffee before they left. I gave them a guided tour of the farm and had history lectures for them up in the attic. I played the accordion and sang a bit, and… It turned into a great experience for them. (…) And when the lights came on, one of them exclaimed: "Turn them off again, because now we are having such a good time here!" (laughter)*

From this account, we learn how John tackled an unexpected situation caused by extreme weather conditions and remained calm for his guests despite the stressful situation. This is an example of how hosts' diverse competences, as farmers in remote areas *and* tourist hosts, are needed to deal with guests in such situations, to provide safety and support, improvise and build positive experiences even in situations that are extreme and unplanned. From John's story we see that tackling natural forces, such as snow and storms and avalanche, were done by creating a safe atmosphere indoors. Stressing the care aspect of hosting, Martin relates:

> *You are responsible for the well-being of your guests – to make sure that they enjoy themselves. You must dance attendance on the customers. It is necessary to succeed in this business. The guests who come here must feel appreciated and receive good service.*

Our analysis confirms that in tourist hosting, rural men's embodied competences have to include a distinct element of caring for other people. In a host(ess)ing society (Veijola and Jokinen 2008), men also have to perform emotional labour and create positive states of feeling for visitors. This may represent a change in farming men's embodiment, but it is nevertheless rooted in rural men's practice when it comes to providing shelter, wood and heat.

Contrasts between the embodiments of farming and hosting were expected to be greatest for men, as women's work on farms has traditionally taken place indoors in the homes, something that translates into creating a homey feeling. Mariann was clear that she wanted the visitors to feel like home. "If they smell the freshly baked bread they suddenly might feel hungry and come to get a thick slice of bread in the kitchen", she said. Incorporating "home qualities" into guests' experiences seems to be vital to the product and "good old rural hospitality," is connected to women's work. Thus, the interactions between hosts and guests are often performed in accordance with traditional country stereotypes, such as the idealised farmer and his wife. Concerning women's habitus, we see how their rural, domestic practices and tourist performances merge.

To a greater extent than men, women seem to be burdened by one particular aspect when performing the idyll. This concerns the body as a manifestation of feelings. It is a characteristic of hosting that the boundary between the service provider and the product is blurred. In farm tourism, where work and home are not differentiated, host(esse)s opt for virtuosity in performance by using their personality and informal, domestic skills in the public sphere of work.

Performing the idyllic, positive aspects means guests have to be met in a friendly manner and that host(esse)s must communicate that the guests' needs and desires are of utmost importance. According to Brit: "You have to be nice and friendly, accommodating and service minded. So, you have to offer yourself all the time whether you have a good day or not." The smile is a bodily expression of certain feelings. Although feeling bone-tired, "you have to smile and be gentle", Lisa explained. She spoke of an episode where she had been working very hard for a long period of time and hardly slept for a week. Still she tried to meet the expectations of being a happy and gentle hostess. A guest came by when she was feeling the most down and said: "Oh, it's so nice to stay here with you because here there is never any hustle and bustle!" "Then I knew that I had succeeded." She continued,

> *you have to keep a straight face. In periods you might want to tell the guests to get lost! But you have to be polite. It is very important. If you can't suppress feelings like that you are in the wrong business.*

The hosts expected to be able to read their guests and balance their own needs and emotions with tourists' expectations. A lot of effort seemed to be put into overcoming and controlling bodily reactions like anger and frustration and tiredness (see Hochschild, 1983).

From the interviews we also note that farm tourist hosting was not only strenuous work, but on the contrary, hosting guests and receiving feedback seemed to produce energy: "I have been so tired that I have thought I wouldn't be able to get up from the chair and go to bed. Then someone arrives and you make it, and suddenly, thanks to them, you regain your strength" (Lisa). In return for being sensitive to the guests and their requirements, positive feedback from satisfied guests nurtured the hosts' bodily energy, self-confidence and job satisfaction. Similar results are reported in Veijola (2009).

Since intimacy has assumed an important commercial value in the hospitality industry (Cederholm & Hultman, 2010), there is a general need to set boundaries in order to create distance between the hosts' and the guests' bodies. The intensity of interaction between hosts and guests can be quite high, therefore strategies purport to construct boundaries and mark privacy. Some of the hosts built reception areas to keep the guests from entering the private spaces of the home. Others created private spaces in the garden out of sight for the guests. Keeping distance and creating boundaries made the relationship between hosts and guests easier to manage. Distancing strategies may amount to defining their product carefully, managing spaces and making house rules of conduct (Brandth and Haugen 2012).

Conclusion

This study of farm tourism and how it combines incorporations of farming and hosting practices contributes to the wider question of how the rural is being reproduced and transformed. The continuation of the past into the present is an unquestionable advantage in the hosting business, and we have seen very few incompatibilities between the embodiments

of farming and tourist hosting as the farm hosts take advantage of tourist trends that emphasise the particular, the idyllic and the sustainable rural. Their farms, with their locations, buildings and history, and the hosts – as belonging to the farm – are what constitute a special and unique experience for the visitors. Because farming culture is so central to the tourist product, there is a strong overlap between the two types of embodiments. That the farm tourist hosts draw on heritage and perform it as tourist idylls shows that a farm habitus may continue to work long after its objective basis has been dislodged (McNay, 1999). Its durability confirms regularity in rural social practices through the farmers/hosts embodied performance of their tourist product.

When it comes to dress and demeanour the merging of the two embodiments becomes more challenging. The working clothes of farming are incompatible with tourist hosting and vice versa. One question faced by hosts is whether to dress to embody rural local life as it was historically, or whether to mediate contemporary rural/farm life. In other words, there is a tension between the "old rural" and the "modern rural" – both of which are important aspects of the tourist product. This has to do with the notion of what it means to be "genuine" something that is understood to be rooted in tradition as well as in contemporary, rural life. This tension is parallel to the dilemma between using dress as a performative of farm life versus that of hosting. Hosts want to perform both, but incorporation of the two into the same outfit is difficult, and hosts' choices vary. Being traditionally based in the different spaces of the indoor and outdoor, men and women face different challenges in this respect.

Initially, we expected differences between men and women when it came to mixing the two embodiments because occupations of farming and tourist work have different gender connotations. In farming it is men who are connected to heavy work in the fields and women to the spaces of the home. Consequently, we find that it is men who must perform care in ways not conventionally associated with farming practices and agricultural masculinity, although such practices are not necessarily foreign to them. Women's hostessing practices, arranging for good atmosphere and hospitality, are more an extension of their activities in the home. Some of the women we interviewed had been engaged in outdoor farm work, but to a smaller degree than men. All of them had, however, taken care of the household activities

which much of the hospitality is an extension of. In the context of this analysis, therefore, it is men who seem to perform the rural idyll in the most transformative ways.

In sum, when it comes to the relationship between the two embodiments analysed from this data, we did expect that the embodiment of both farmer and service worker in one person would create tensions and conflicts. These tensions are, however, less than could be expected from the taken-for-granted difference between the two sectors. Interestingly, as service work expands into the farming sector, our findings indicate that these two different types of work may gradually lose some of their distinct embodiments and work content. Both men and women farmers need "soft skills" as well as competences conventionally associated with agricultural work and culture. In terms of their particular performance men need to retain rural masculine embodiment but within a setting that requires elements of care. Since the real/authentic/genuine is such a conspicuous aspect of what is performed as the rural idyll, and since it trades on people's expectations of what the rural consists, elements of conventional gender roles on family farms are conserved.

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