

Community Formation and Sense of Place – Seasonal Tourism Workers in Rural Sweden

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ABSTRACT

Seasonal tourism workers in the Swedish mountains can be conceptualised as members of occupational communities. For members of such a community, the dual relationship between the job and other members are important. However, a place perspective might be fruitful, as place amenities are expected drivers of job acceptance. By studying seasonal workers' relation to place, through the lens of their 'membership' of an occupational community, it is possible to capture both the individual sense of place and the group's shared sense of place. The former is highly important, as social relations among the workers are particularly significant. In this study, the conceptual framework of occupational communities is modified to better suit temporary and mobile workers in amenity-rich rural areas. The overall aim of this paper is to investigate how seasonal tourism employees can be analysed as an occupational community. Further, it studies the ways in which a particular tourism-related occupational community perceives and connects to its location, as well as the ways in which seasonal tourism workers perceive the role of place and community in their everyday lives and future plans. Hence, this article concludes that members of an occupational community have a dual attachment to place. This type of community could exist and move around without being affected by the geographical place, but the place has affective possibilities influencing the workers, and in an isolated rural place, the community has more space to grow stronger. Copyright © 2016 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

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INTRODUCTION

Six young adults (in my eyes, 'ski bums') sit around the table, drinking coffee. For them, it is quite early in the morning; I have been awake for hours, preparing the first interview with seasonal tourism workers at one of the largest companies in the mountain destination of Sälen, Sweden. We start the interview by introducing ourselves. It was clear that many of them were friends. They teased, disrupted, and contributed to each other's stories without thinking of it. This interview was held before Christmas, 2010. The season had just started, and the workers had been in Sälen (a small tourism-dominated village with 1,500 inhabitants that during the winter months hosts over 2,000 seasonal workers) for a couple of weeks only. I wondered if they knew each other from before.

The seasonality within the tourism industry in the Swedish mountains, as well as in many other tourism destinations around the world, calls for a large number of new employees entering the workforce at each peak season. In many destinations, this seasonal labour gap is covered by various solutions, such as employment of backpackers (Duncan, 2008), working tourists (Uriely & Reichel, 2000; Uriely, 2001), and migrant (tourism) workers (Bianchi, 2000; Janta *et al.*, 2011; Joppe, 2012) and in Sweden, seasonal tourism employment (Lundmark, 2006). Tourism workers are often motivated by the possibility of working with people (Szivas *et al.*, 2003), financial and career reasons along with tourism-orientated activities (Heimtun, 2012; Tuulentie & Heimtun, 2014) in pleasant surroundings (Szivas *et al.*, 2003).

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As rural tourism destinations often offer attractive natural amenities, this can explain why the distinction between leisure and work among tourism employees is sometimes blurred (Bianchi, 2000; Duncan, 2008; Wilson *et al.*, 2010). One example of this is skiers who support their stay in the mountains with seasonal work in the tourism industry (Boon, 2006), which indicates that natural amenities and place-specific characteristics affects the choice of geographical relocation.

This study focuses on seasonal workers in a rural tourism destination in the Swedish mountains. In such destinations, seasonal workers often constitute a large part of the workforce, and most of the employees are recruited from outside of the municipality, and therefore, live-in accommodation is required where a clustering of the employees creates strong social relationships (Engström, 2011) and strengthens the community created by the workers (Lee-Ross, 2008). Strong bonds to other like-minded workers are also evident in friendship networks (e.g. Conradson & Latham, 2005; Conradson & Latham, 2007) as they offer a 'localised social backdrop' through which disembedded and disconnected lifestyles can be practised and sustained (Conradson & Latham, 2007, p. 246).

It will be shown that seasonal workers can be motivated by group formation, that is, social relations instead of work itself (Ball, 1988, cited in Lee-Ross, 1995, 1999). This motivation can create a strong social bond, forming a community that may be conceptualised as an *occupational community* (culture in practice), in which bonding and hedonism complement the importance of the job in the tourism industry (Lee-Ross, 1999). Hence, the discussion in this paper is not only about the jobs per se; it is also about the sociality of the experience. The importance of natural amenities and place-specific characteristics as a motivator for seasonal workers also urges for further modifications of the conceptual framework of occupational communities to better explain its complexity in the context of seasonal tourism work in rural areas.

In this paper the adapted occupational community concept is used as a way of investigating seasonal workers. Further, it studies the ways in which a particular tourism-related occupational community perceives and connects to its location, as well as the ways in which seasonal tourism workers perceive the role of place and community in their everyday lives and future

plans. It is worth noting that this study focuses on domestic labour mobility, and therefore, cultural norms and values are inherent, which does not have to be the case in all occupational communities. By studying this specific group of seasonal workers, this study contributes with new insights of how seasonal workers can fit into the existing work on occupational communities within the field of tourism and to extend the concept of occupational communities by adding a place dimension.

To fully understand the connection between occupational communities and place, a definition of the latter is essential. A 'place' is not only a geographically defined area; it can also be seen as moments of encounter(s) rather than fixed in time and space (Amin & Thrift, 2002). Places can no longer be seen as isolated, static, and defined by borders; places are intersection points where social interaction ties individuals together, and thereby, places can be seen as processes rather than motionless 'things' (Massey, 1994, p. 154). Places are also attributed with significance for individuals, that is, a 'sense of place' (Tuan, 1977). This sense of place defines both the subjective and the emotional attachment individuals assign to a certain place (Agnew, 1987).

Gustafsson (2001) argued that by developing a sense of place within a community and/or as an individual, the place is attributed with meaning. Within Gustafsson's (2001, p. 10) three-pole triangular model showing the meanings of place, the edges constitute of *self* (personal meaning), *others* (characteristics, traits, and behaviour of inhabitants), and (the physical) *environment*. Along the sides and in-between these ends, the meaning(s) of place is mapped. This three-dimensional way of studying sense of place is related to Scannell and Gifford's (2010) suggestion of a framework for studies on place attachment focusing on *person* (meanings of the individual or group)—*process* (a psychological dimension including affect, cognition, and behaviour)—*place* (including both social and physical levels). Gustafsson's and Scannell and Gifford's frameworks on the meaning of place are at many points complementary. Both frameworks relate the individual's meaning with other individuals' meaning of place, and in relation to the social process, this creates a sense of place. Therefore, thoughts and ideas of both theories will be used interchangeably in this paper.

A main point of interest is to discover if (and how) an occupational community assigns meaning to the *environment* (the geographical area) and *others* within and outside the community. In previous research on occupational communities, the perspective of place is absent, except for studies focusing on differences between working at the same place or geographically spread out where Salaman (1974) argues for two types of occupational communities. Salaman makes a division between 'local' (community members work at the same job at the same place) and 'cosmopolitan' (community members have the same occupation but in different geographical areas). Hence, for occupational communities in the tourism industry, it is fruitful to study the importance of place especially among the 'locals', because job and leisure are argued as being blurred (Lee-Ross, 2008) where both the job and the leisure time can be partly dependent on the amenities found in the place/destination. By studying seasonal workers' relation to place, through the lens of their 'membership' of a 'local' occupational community, it is possible to capture both the individuals' sense of place and the group's shared sense of place. The latter is highly important, as social relations among the workers are particularly significant (Lee-Ross, 2008; Engström, 2011).

OCCUPATIONAL COMMUNITIES

Basically, an occupational community is set by 'a group of people who consider themselves to be engaged in the same sort of work; who identify (more or less positively) with their work; who share with one another a set of values, norms, and perspectives that apply to, but extend beyond, work related matters; and whose social relationships meld the realms of work and leisure' (Van Maanen & Barley, 1992, p 12). These communities can be analysed and understood as 'social frameworks that create and sustain unique perspectives of work' (Lee-Ross, 2008, p 470). Occupational communities have gained some attention within the tourism industry, for example, with studies among seasonal hotel workers in the UK (Lee-Ross, 1999), employees on cruise ships (Lee-Ross, 2008), among employees at pubs (Sandiford & Seymour, 2007), and in relation to seasonal workers in mountain areas (Engström, 2011).

In Lee-Ross' (1999) study on seasonal hotel workers, the employees did not fully correspond to the original theory of occupational communities. The research revealed that work situations characterised by meeting and socialising with workmates and close social bonding, explained as hedonism, were more important than the actual job. Compared with the original theory, where the job is central in life, social characteristics related to the job was more meaningful for the hotel workers.

In a later study by Lee-Ross (2008), the theory was tested on cruise ship employees, where hedonism, and the merging of work and leisure, explained as fusion, were ranked higher than the job itself. Through such fusion community, members acquire work-based friends, hobbies, and interest, and the members tend to talk about work outside work (Lee-Ross, 1999, p 240). The job also controls non-work activities, influences patterns of friendship, and sets values and norms both at the workplace and during non-work time, which is in line with the original theory (Lee-Ross, 2008).

In the case of the public sector, among workers in the UK, Sandiford and Seymour (2007: 213) used the broad criteria of occupational communities identified by Salaman (1974) as a 'strong sense of identification with the occupation and a preference for spending leisure time with other members of the community'. The key ways in which a sense of belonging to an occupational community was demonstrated in Sandiford and Seymour's (2007) study were a fusion of work and leisure, along with the importance of a sense of belonging and involvement in the community, explained by Lee-Ross (2008) as group cohesion where group membership is the most important.

In its original form, the theory does not presume that members live (or work) near each other (Van Maanen & Barley, 1992). However, empirical studies have identified clustering as important. For example, Lee-Ross compared his own works on onshore hotel employees (Lee-Ross, 1999) with cruise ship employees (Lee-Ross, 2008) and highlighted the differences in accommodation as one variable that was important for community formation. Accommodation is not supplied for hotel employees, which is seen as limiting. Periods of isolation, such as the sailing time of ships, can be beneficial, as this creates an environment in which the community can grow stronger. In some sense, seasonal work in a rural tourism

destination such as Sälen can be compared with work in cruise ships, where the supply of services is limited in relation to the number of staff and the volume of passengers/tourists along with a clustering of workers and absence of alternative accommodation.

METHOD

Seasonal tourism workers were interviewed in focus groups. This interview method was selected because it generates 'dynamism and energy as people respond to the contributions of others' (Cameron, 2005, p. 117); additionally, through interviews, respondent(s) generate topics not predicted by the researcher (Patel & Davidson, 2003), which triggers a chain of responses (Cameron, 2005). The group pushes the interview further with misunderstandings among respondents and attempts to persuade other respondents of different points, which is ideal for research on 'the multiple meanings that people attribute to places' (Cameron, 2005, p. 117).

In cooperation with one company, which runs several restaurants and cafés in Sälen, two focus groups were selected. The restaurant manager provided six first-year employees (i.e. persons in their first season in Sälen) aged 19–21 years and six return employees (i.e. persons that had worked for the company before) aged 20–24 years. Both groups had an even gender distribution, and all the respondents had an upper secondary level of education as their highest education. The respondents in this study worked at different restaurants located near one of the main skiing areas and were employed as chefs, head waiters and waiter, café managers and staff, scullions and bar assistants, and drivers of tracked vehicles (to transport guests to inaccessible restaurants when lifts were closed). The employees worked mainly during the day when ski lifts were running, while a few of them worked some evenings per week. Of the respondents in the first-year group, all except one (with experience from retail) had previous experience of working within the tourism industry as chefs, café and bar assistants, and entertainers, during summer seasons. All of the respondents in the return group had been working within the tourism industry during summer season(s) as well.

Three interviews with each group took place; interviews were conducted in the beginning, middle, and at the very end of the 2010/2011 winter season. This three-way split was suggested by

the company, as they experienced a change in the employees' mindset throughout the season. By following a group of interviewees, in this way, synergies where the interviewees remind each other of previous discussions, statements, and questions were reached. This generates an extra dimension to the triggering of other group members' responses, as highlighted by Cameron (2005) as one of the achievements with this type of interviews. The three interview occasions were used to capture different phases in the season, with different focuses at each interview.

Two researchers and one graduate student attended the interviews. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed afterwards, with unspoken details noted. All citations in this paper were translated by the author and in some cases slightly changed for grammatical reasons. The data were analysed through theory-grounded qualitative analysis where the interview material was organised by using categories discussed in the literature on occupational communities, with a focus on tourism-related literature, and (sense of) place. Based on the categories of fusion, hedonism, group cohesion (Lee-Ross, 1999; Sandiford & Seymour, 2007; Lee-Ross, 2008), and Gustafsson's (2001) triangular model describing sense of place, the material was codified to help summarise the text. The analysis is discussed with reference to similarities and differences of the findings in relation to previous studies.

It is worth noting that interviewees in this study represent the hospitality part of the tourism labour market in the area. Other occupational groups are included in the tourism labour market and might be structured differently. Despite this, studies on tourism employees' relation to work, workmates, and place have used a single company focus (e.g. Adler & Adler, 1999a, 1999b). One could argue that a multi-company strategy would have given a broader picture of the functions of the seasonal labour market and that a single company study could be affected by business culture where the results could show company rather than place relationships. For this study, the single company focus will not affect the results in becoming business-related rather than place-related as the starting point for discussions during the group interviews were focused on life as a seasonal worker, not how the specific company conducted its business; the focus was on the sociality of the experience rather than the profession.

SÄLEN – A SMALL VILLAGE WITH A VIBRANT WINTER

Sälen is a village located in the southern Swedish mountain range. There are six ski areas in close proximity to the village; together, they form one of Sweden's largest winter tourism destinations. It is worth noting that this mountain area differs from mountain destinations in other countries (such as Whistler in Canada, and Aspen and Vail in the US), as well as from other destinations in Sweden (such as Åre). Compared with other locations, Sälen is not a nodal centre that serves as a gateway to its backcountry (Nepal & Chipeniuk, 2005). The only services that are located in the village and not at any of the mountain destinations are the Swedish Alcohol Retailing Monopoly, a pharmacy, a post office, and a district healthcare centre. Therefore, tourists can visit the mountain tourism destination without visiting the village, where most of the permanent population lives.

The village of Sälen, with surrounding settlements, has 1,500 inhabitants. During the winter, which is the tourism peak season, 70,000 commercial beds are available for tourists in the skiing areas, and the area has about 1,000,000 guest nights per year. The destination is known mainly for downhill skiing, although other options are available. The mountain areas are located between 10 and 40 km from the village, each hosting restaurants, bars, cafés, grocery stores, retail stores, and experience centres in addition to the skiing facilities. Because of the flourishing tourism industry, a customer base is generated, and Sälen hosts services that are not normally found in villages of a similar size. The tourism industry makes it possible for extended services to be established (e.g. the Swedish Alcohol Retailing Monopoly in the village) or to run on a year-round basis (e.g. restaurants, swimming pools, and bowling at the mountain and in the village).

Approximately 2,000 seasonal workers are required each winter season to meet the labour demand. Most of the seasonal workers are recruited from other municipalities, within Sweden, as the local labour force is too small. This influx of labour requires housing opportunities, and the accommodation is often provided by the employer. This accommodation is often cottages or apartments located at the base of the mountains with close proximity to the skiing destinations and therefore

also close to work. The respondents in this study shared accommodation with four to six other members of the staff with a mix between first-year and return workers.

TO WORK, PLAY, AND LIVE IN SÄLEN

The dimensions of hedonism, fusion, and group cohesion are used below to illustrate the interviewees' thoughts on the importance of socialising with workmates, blurred work, and leisure time, and the importance of group membership. This paper will give evidence of an occupational community and will discuss how the interviewees' put meaning to Sälen as a 'place' in relation to job and leisure activities, seen from a perspective of belonging to an occupational community.

Evidence of an Occupational Community

The results of this study is in line with the key results from Lee-Ross (2008) on the importance of hedonism and fusion, together with Sandiford and Seymour's (2007) findings on the importance of fusion and group cohesion for occupational communities within the tourism industry. New friendships, socialising with workmates at work and during non-working hours, tight social ties, and forced interaction with workmates during non-working hours due to shared accommodation are some of the evidence of the formation of a community based on the occupational situation. While the focus is more on the social dimensions of community formation, the respondents do value and put significant effort into the job itself; most of them are very proud of their job and talk about it as something very important, even if it is a temporary career for most. They analyse the company for which they work and compare their present job with previous jobs and express dreams for the future. As a group, they also often talk about and reflect on the company.

One motivator to accept the job was the idea of a flourishing social life and ways of socialising with friends from work (in other words, hedonism). It is worth noting that there is a difference in the way this is expressed among first-year and return workers.

First-year workers were mainly attracted by the social life of which they had previously heard.

When discussing how the first weeks in Sälen had been, it was clear that they spent and wanted to spend much time together: 'It feels like many of us are here for the same reason. You want to meet new people and have fun, so to say, and to work, sure. But everyone is so open when you arrive', said one of the respondents, followed by 'many of us are here for the same reason, which is why it becomes easier'. Among the first-year workers, much free time is spent partying together with workmates, which is justified through arguments such as 'now in the beginning when we don't know each other then it is always... if something is happening you want to participate 'cause you want to get to know each other, and we have so much fun'. When talking about their thoughts on the upcoming season, they also mention social relations: 'I want to tie as many new contacts as possible. I already feel that I have done that and it's so damn fun', said a respondent. Even at the last interview reflecting on the season, the most fun parts were those spent with their workmates.

Among return workers, the reasons for taking the job in Sälen are different from first-year workers. Some were not planning on returning but in the end accepted a job promotion and/or were contacted by the employer with a work offer. In their case, the job situation was a more developed topic of discussion during interviews, even though they described the life in Sälen as very social. They also described the differences in accommodation, where cottages with many first-year workers are party places compared with other cottages where there are more dinners, movie nights, and calmer social activities. This reflects the maturity of returning workers, who know there will be different opportunities for parties and other social activities. Meanwhile, first-year workers were described as finding everything new and exciting. There is also the drawback of pressure from the social group. For example, a female respondent described what she saw as a problem regarding living with others:

'I would like to have a day when you do not think of what to do when you come home, to have a day when you come home and then maybe find out. But now it's like this; a thousand questions every day; "are you out tonight,

are you up for dinner, what will you do." And there's always something you have to decide on, every day. [...] you come home and you have six different people with six different ideas of what they should do. So it is perhaps like when you have a family, when you have children, then it will be planned for the family. But these people are not my family either, and then when I get that every day you become like a family with six different thoughts.'

The view of accepting the job for the social life can create this conflict of a constant pressure to socialise. Problems with strong ties, live-in accommodation, and the fusion of work and leisure are mostly expressed by return workers who gained more responsibilities the second year as headwaiters or managers. The respondents described problems in 'leaving the work at work'; they are often asked work-related questions during leisure time and are constantly forced to express their wishes to separate work from leisure. Others, mostly in non-supervisory positions, react to this with scepticism and 'end-of-friendship' thoughts. However, this fusion of work and leisure is not only expressed among return workers with staff liability, even though they are most negatively affected. Others described this fusion in a more romanticised manner; for example, 'We live together with those that we work together with. We are like a small family', and 'it's nice to be able to come in here [to the restaurant] when you're free and have a cheery hello from everybody, to know everyone who works here and to know that most of them like me.' However, being part of a family is sometimes mentioned with some negative nuances, such as 'you don't choose your family' or 'you don't get along with everyone'. Hence, this gives evidence of strong group cohesion where a sense of belonging, membership, and community involvement takes both positive and negative turns, and fusion of work and leisure together with group cohesion is important in the formation and maintenance of the community.

When respondents were asked to describe a day off, most of them spoke of times during the day when they visited the restaurant where they worked, or other restaurants run by the company, where their coworkers were. Some went to the restaurant each day to have breakfast, and others spent a day in the slopes with many stops for

socialising at the restaurants. The fact that many of the workers used the facilities created to meet tourist demands, which are the same facilities they support as workers, also fused the borders between work and leisure. They were free to use all facilities, but the community is strict regarding the norms that one should behave in certain ways at the places in which one works. Of course, the company has rules of how to behave at work and at work places, yet the community takes this on to non-working time as well, without the company's involvement. Everyone is told if someone does something out of the norm, and there are no borders between managers and staff as most of them live together and belong to the same community formation. For example, a manager sends text messages to workers about things that have happened the night before, even though the manager was not present during the party, which is indicating friendship and strong social bonds over management levels. This is described by the respondents as a result of the fact that 'it is such a small place' and 'you spend so much time together with your "work"'. Having such a tight, borderless group, with social relations to all workmates regardless of management level, was expressed by all respondents as desirable and worthwhile, and this strengthens the 'local' occupational community.

As noticed in the first interview as well as in the following ones, these groups of individuals had strong relations. Even though some had only spent as little time as a few days together, they saw each other as friends. Similarly, they were eager to include everybody in the group, as exemplified by the following quotation from the beginning of the season: 'every time someone new arrives, everyone is so welcoming'. Throughout all interviews, respondents repeatedly talked about the social relations they had with each other and also mentioned that they seldom made friends with people other than staff at the company or staff from other companies who worked close to their own workplaces. Some even expressed the lack of social relations outside their group as 'bothersome', as they wanted to talk to someone outside the community. This was especially noted among return workers who did not spend as much time socialising at parties and social events including alcohol. Yet, even though they expressed this lack of external relations, they did not have any strategies to go beyond the

social relations they had with workmates. Some mentioned that they could do some small talk with others, for example, those working in the ski lifts, yet they did not make friends with them even though they met them, not only when skiing but also when going out at night. On the other hand, this isolation from the surrounding society can create an environment in which the occupational community grows stronger (Lee-Ross, 2008).

The company actively worked to create a community from which a good work ethic would emerge. From the company's perspective, each season had to start with educating new employees, so that they would easily adapt to assigned tasks. To start a new season with only first-year workers would be inoperable, as the employers needed the help of workers with previous experiences to guide new employees not only in work-related tasks but also in social activities and practical information regarding, for example, accommodation. Respondents mentioned that they had experienced an introduction weekend that the company organised during the autumn. This weekend surprised them, as they left with a feeling of belonging to a group. Yet, after this weekend, the company did not organise any other group activities or parties. From that weekend on, the employees organised all social activities privately. These social activities were often organised in their shared accommodation (such as parties, movie nights, and dinners) and without external guests. Among those who have more responsibilities, living together with their staff is described, in this context, as something good. Through accommodation, they obtain a sense of group belonging with their staff; without this sense, it is argued that the idea of seasonal working is lost. As described by one headwaiter, 'what made me come back was all my friends'; another manager expressed that 'it is cozy to be up here. You get such a community feeling'. Their friend added his own reason for coming back, which was because he had such good memories from seasonal work in Sälen. The life and the people there created a special type of group dynamic that was desirable. In line with Lee-Ross (2008, p. 477), 'the work itself may not be the most important means of employee motivation but rather the opportunities for socialisation provided by the work situation'. The importance of living together is identified as a strong link, and the fusion, hedonism, and group cohesion that

are sensed would not be as evident if accommodation was not provided by the company. Accommodation is organised so that workers live in close proximity to each other and not very far away from any of their workplaces, which gives them the opportunity (and in some cases, restriction) to spend most of their time at the destination in which they work.

Sälen, a Geographical Place or a Social Community

The geographical place of Sälen as a village is not spontaneously mentioned in the group discussions of Sälen as a place to work and live in. This could mainly be explained through the geographical structure where the village does not act as a nodal centre serving as a gateway to the mountains, like the examples given by Nepal and Chipeniuk (2005). The tourism workers live, work, and spend most of their time at the same place/destination as their workplace in the mountains, that is, their *environment*. They do not create any affiliations to the village; rather, they become attached to distinctive features created by the tourism industry, and as with the tourists, they seldom spend time in the village except when they visit the alcohol retailing store, the pharmacy, or use the post office. There are a few seasonal workers employed at a bakery in the village, and the respondents feel sorry for them as they miss the fun part with the seasonal work, that is, living and working in close proximity. Even though the village is located less than 10 km away, these workers are not included in the occupational community discussed in this paper. In this occupational community, distance matters.

As described in the preceding text, the community is not particularly bound to the place, though the characteristics of the place affect the community in many ways. In such a small and isolated place, the group has more space to grow stronger, and it could be argued that the occupational community shrinks the geographical consciousness of its members because of their temporary residency being primarily performed as a social activity related to workmates at a particular destination. Thus, it is no wonder that the term 'the bubble of Sälen' was mentioned among the respondents; this refers to a social bubble, in which the seasonal workers stay over a winter.

For example, when asked whether they would return to Sälen for a second season, two male respondents discussed what they would want to come back to: 'Oh, I don't know... it is this life, I think. You have a nice time and...'; his friend interrupted, 'Just work a season.. to let go of everything'. In their line of argument, the *environment* has no particular meaning outside the social atmosphere and relations to *others* with which they work and live. *Others*, as one edge of Gustafsson's (2001) triangular model, is attributed with more meaning in relation to *self* among these seasonal workers, and social relations create the sense of community. This is also described by a female respondent's answer to the question if Sälen could be a possible place to stay, if the summer tourism season grew: 'Maybe if you are a great bunch of people who decide to work in Sälen. Let's say we are 20 persons, obviously it can be a blast as well. But that is nothing you put an effort into'. Once again, the importance of hedonism and group cohesion inside the occupational community is expressed where relations to others assign meaning to the place.

In the case of this occupational community, you could well see the community as a 'bubble'. The 'bubble' is not seen as a physical place, but as a social community based mainly on relations to colleagues, in other words, an occupational community. The community is seen as a social atmosphere in which one lives at the moment and is not particularly attached to the place. Place is socially constructed within the community, and the community could be seen as a floating soap bubble where these workers spend their time. Hence, as the community is, in many ways, disconnected from the geographical place, the floating bubble would not necessarily have to stop in Sälen. All respondents work or have been working in sea-and-sand destinations during summer seasons and could have met and formed this occupational community at one of these destinations if the conditions were right. In this way, their sense of place is mainly related to place-bound social relations (Gustafsson, 2006) where bonds between the place and individuals and/or communities are based on the affection to others and spending time at the same place.

However, the socially constructed place works as a holder of certain characteristics, which can be explained as emotions among its possessors. In other words, many seasonal workers have certain emotions attached to the idea of the place, which

were attractive in the process of moving to the area, and this creates place-related affections. The seasonal workers thought that this particular place offered the possibilities of affections such as happiness and freedom (for many, this was their first step away from family ties), which is demonstrated through many of the quotations in the preceding text. Thus, the place create affective possibilities explained through conditions related to the place in embodied feelings (Conradson & Latham, 2007), which are important in the *process* of place attachment (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). This could further be explained through respondents' discussion of the attractiveness of the neighbouring skiing destination on the other side of the Norwegian border, Trysil. It is well known that the wages are higher in Norway and many of the respondents had been or had thought of working in Norway to earn money during the summer. When asked why they did not take a seasonal job in Trysil, they simply said that it was not as fun there. Trysil offers the same types of jobs, better skiing (according to some) and better wages. However, Trysil is not attributed with affective possibilities among the respondents, and therefore, Trysil is not as attractive.

To end, the desire to ski/snowboard is noteworthy, even though workers ultimately have only a few hours in the slopes, after spending months in the mountains. In a way, this might be a justification of their time in Sälen, that is, saying that they are interested in skiing as a recreational activity even though they spend more time with workmates than planned time on the slopes. Yet, some respondents had no interest in skiing; rather, they justified their stay in Sälen as based on the social environment amongst workmates. As Sälen is one of relatively few winter tourism destinations in Sweden for those who seek seasonal work, independent of an interest in skiing. It is a place that is known for its social life among the tourism workers who are attracted to the place. The social life and the community formation were not tightly connected to the interest in skiing or any other use of the natural amenities; rather, by working and living close to each other, the occupational community grew. Hence, the occupational community does not explain why they are in Sälen; rather, this can be explained by the place itself, with its supply of amenities and the available labour market as this makes it possible for like-minded people to meet.

CONCLUSION

It is vital to discuss occupational communities in relation to place among seasonal tourism workers (in Sälen), and the evidence of an occupational community supports that of Lee-Ross (1999, 2008) and Sandiford and Seymour (2007), where the main ways in which a community feeling demonstrated was through the three key dimensions of hedonism, fusion, and group cohesion, which can be blurred at points. The workers demonstrate close bonds to each other, and the social life experienced in Sälen is a motivator to decide on a first season. Those coming back for more seasons are motivated by the social atmosphere experienced previously, as well as by the possibility of being promoted to senior management positions. However, the occupational community that is discussed in this paper differs from other occupational communities in tourism as they are built on a temporary basis with a mobile workforce. In many cases, friendship networks brought them to Sälen, and the same network will bring them to other destination and/or back to Sälen again as these networks are relocated, extended, and changed through mobility (Conradson & Latham, 2005). Therefore, such networks play a significant role in the formation of temporary occupational communities.

It is also important to understand this occupational community's relation to place through its temporal and mobile character with members only spending time at the same work for a couple of months before moving on to other places. The members are from the very start intent on building a friendship network based on their workmates as they know time is limited and the social dimension and the affective possibilities of a life in Sälen are the main attractions. This could partly explain why the community feeling grows strong immediately. The place has importance as a meeting point for people, creating an occupational community with members sharing the same interests and embodied feelings. To be able to live the life they desire at that moment, they use the available labour market within the tourism industry. This creates a certain type of occupational community where the work itself is important but secondary in relation to the lifestyle these workers lead; the place serves a purpose of creating the conditions for like-minded people to meet.

The importance of live-in accommodation is also evident. As staff members from many restaurants live together in cottages, all staff members working for the company interact with each other, and the community grows to include all employees, instead of only those who work at the same restaurant. This supports Lee-Ross' (2008) results on the importance of live-in accommodation in the creation of occupational communities and provides empirical evidence on the importance of clustering community members, in contrast to the subordination of clustering that is argued by Van Maanen and Barley (1992), and moves beyond the 'local' and 'cosmopolitan' division of occupational communities considered by Salaman (1974).

A key contribution of this study is the recognition of the twofold attachment to place that an occupational community can have. On the one hand, there is a possibility that members of the community could have met and formed this community in a tourism destination that has a significant amount of seasonal workers entering the workforce; on the other hand, the amenities and the isolated place create an environment in which the occupational community grows stronger. The members of the occupational community have similar embodied feelings about the place before moving there, and the affective possibilities related to the place are attractive and create an arena for like-minded people to meet. It is therefore suggested that, for occupational communities that are built in a labour market strongly connected to natural amenities, the place has significant importance. In other communities, the actual job can be the carrier of affection, and in such cases, the place might be subordinated. Hence, in the case of this paper, the place is attributed with affective possibilities, and a place dimension is important in the understanding of why social relations are crucial in community formation among seasonal tourism workers.

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