

# Bed, Breakfast and Friendship: Intimacy and Distance in Small-Scale Hospitality Businesses

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## Abstract

Through an analysis of the narrative of a Bed and Breakfast (B & B) and art gallery owner, the emergence of intimacy as a commercial value in the hospitality industry is illustrated. This is a formation of economic value where economic rationality as a motive for commercial activity is rejected. Simultaneously though, a different set of market attitudes are performed by hospitality practitioners in the course of everyday interactions with customers, and a tension between emotional, spatial and temporal intimacy and distance is uncovered and discussed. It is concluded that commercial friendship is a more complex issue than what has been acknowledged so far in the hospitality literature. A continued discussion of intimacy in hospitality will therefore affect the cultural understanding of emotions, identity and lifestyle values on the one hand, and business strategy, value creation and markets on the other.

**Keywords:** Hospitality, intimacy, distance, performativity, boundary work, lifestyle entrepreneurs

## **Introduction: A Hospitality Paradox**

In service economies, the relationship between economic and social exchange is often close. Sometimes there is no distinct boundary between them. Service interactions are transformed into experience products and a form of commercial friendship might emerge (cf. Price & Arnould 1999; Lashley & Morrison 2003). Although this kind of friendship has been regarded in the literature as a specific type of instrumental marketing relationship it has several characteristics in common with other forms of friendship, notably affection, intimacy, social support, loyalty and reciprocal gift giving (Price & Arnould 1999: 50). The term commercial friendship implies that spatial and temporal boundaries between private/public and non-commercial/commercial have become subjects for negotiation in certain commercial service contexts (see Sennett 1993; Seligman 1998; Hochschild 2003). Bed and Breakfast (B & B) businesses in rural tourism – a business sector identified in the literature as a significant part of the hospitality industry (Lee et al. 2003) – highlight how a growing service economy reorders these boundaries. The B & B industry typically features small firms that sometimes combine the basic service of accommodation with added-value experience offerings such as horse-riding, nature experiences, stone-oven baking, painting courses and similar activities. Many of the operators of these businesses can be called lifestyle entrepreneurs, striving for a correspondence between their own lifestyle values and those of their guests (Ateljevic & Doorne 2000; Andersson Cederholm & Hultman 2010). When the correspondence between host and guest lifestyle values is the basis for the commercial enterprise, economic activity becomes situated in the intersection between intimate and commercial life spheres.

Earlier research on lifestyle entrepreneurship in rural hospitality has shown how qualities such as more family time and the attraction of specific localities are crucial motivating factors (Shaw & Williams 1987; Ateljevic & Doorne 2000; Getz & Carlsen 2000; Andersson et al. 2002; Getz et al. 2004). Lynch (1998:332–333) reports that emotional motives such as “meet interesting people”, “like to cook for people” and “makes me [the host] feel good” are generally rated as more important by B & B hosts than economic motives. This indicates a need to contextualise small-scale hospitality businesses in relation to the development of a critical understanding of the hospitality industry (cf. Lugosi et al. 2009). This is a dynamic empirical field and the boundaries and characteristics of a critical hospitality research agenda are simultaneously contested and articulated (Ottenbacher et al. 2009). From a cultural analysis perspective, small-scale rural hospitality businesses are interesting in two ways. First, these businesses are framed by a wider social and cultural context articulated through rhetoric markers such as “the good rural life” and “a living countryside”, indicating values of social embeddedness and sustainability.<sup>1</sup> Quality of life and locality are thus important aspects of lifestyle entrepreneurship (Marcketti et al. 2006) and business success is typically defined

in ways that differ from growth-oriented economic measurements (Reijonen 2008). Practices associated with economic rationality – such as strategic work to gain competitive advantages – are often explicitly rejected (cf. Ateljevic & Doorne 2000; Di Domenico 2005; Helgadóttir & Sigurdardóttir 2008).

Secondly, however, the rejection of economic rationality carries within itself a new set of attitudes towards the market. In the formation of a hospitality discourse this has consequences for how hospitality can be conceptualised both as a phenomenon and as an empirical field of critical research. At the same time as the business rationale expressed by lifestyle entrepreneurs is frequently explained in explicit contrast to that of large-scale firms, small-scale hospitality businesses are driven by values that are increasingly becoming promoted as business ideals for large hospitality firms. As an example of this, a recent issue of the globally distributed lifestyle magazine *Monocle* was dedicated to the “Heroes of hospitality”. Here the heroes – “the players reshaping the travel sector” (*Monocle* 2010, cited from front cover) – were asked to pinpoint what was missing from modern hotels and what were going to be strategically important factors in the future. A majority of these informants answered that qualities such as “earthiness”, “authenticity”, “human feel”, “the human touch” and “personality” were missing. Important issues for the future of hospitality businesses, consequently, were expressed as becoming “smaller, simpler, always cosy”, that hotels should be more inviting towards locals to use its lobbies, bars and restaurants, that they should become “more focused on emotional values”, that hotels must become explicitly integrated and central to their local environments and communities, and that they should move towards “old-fashioned inn-keeping” (*Monocle* 2010). In the same issue, the author Alain de Botton annihilated any distinction between the economic and the social by stating that “A good hotel is an embodiment of the act of love: love understood as a commitment to the wholehearted care of another human being”, and that few hotels “are able to promote proper sociability” (*Monocle* 2010: 105). Consequently, the formation of a hospitality discourse contains a paradox. Small-scale businesses traditionally understood as being driven by emotional rather than economic motives are becoming the ideological and perhaps even strategic role model for a rapidly expanding and hyper-commercial industry.

### **Commercial Homes and Commercial Friendship**

In rural lifestyle entrepreneurship where traditional conceptualisations of economic growth and the market are dismissed, lifestyle values are marketed as commercial propositions aimed at predominantly urban consumers. Personal values are translated into economic values. The physical site of business for these entrepreneurs is often the home (see Di Domenico & Lynch 2007). The home of the host is transformed into a commercial home (Lynch & MacWhannell 2000; Lynch et al. 2009), and this commercial home becomes the site where boundaries between personal and commercial values are launched into a process of negotiation. Hosts

are not merely providing accommodation, activities and service in the traditional sense, but also the set-up for guests to socialise with each other and with their hosts. In some cases, socialising is developed into specific business concepts offering guests recreational and self-developing social interactions as part of the commercial product. This is the setting where we will apply the concept of commercial friendship.

Commercial friendship is a term used by Lashley & Morrison (2003) to describe sociable relations between hospitality producers and guests. Such relations are seen as a result of explicit strategic considerations on part of the producer in an instrumental manner. In this way, normative service marketing literature argues that commercial friendship is of great strategic importance (e.g. Grönroos 2008). But in light of the motivations and negating attitudes towards economic growth expressed by lifestyle entrepreneurs, such an understanding is not enough to make sense of the formation of a hospitality discourse. So in addition to its strategic implications, we propose to look at the concept of commercial friendship from another perspective. We will argue that it emerges from the negotiations of boundaries between personal and commercial values in real-time social encounters between hosts and guests, rather than preceding the host/guest relation. It follows that strategy in lifestyle contexts will not imply the same thing as strategy in instrumental business contexts. To date, there is a lack of empirical research discussing how emotion is understood and transformed – in situated social interactions – into values possible to calculate on a market (but see Callon & Muniesa 2005), and the whole issue of emotions and the political and economic importance of emotions is an underdeveloped research focus. Anderson and Smith (2001: 7) notes that: “emotional relations tend to be regarded as something apart from the economic and/or as something that is essentially private, and does not substantially infuse the public/policy sphere”. The formation of a hospitality discourse and the emergence of discursive practices of hospitality in commercial settings makes it necessary to re-think boundaries between the “economic”, the “political” and the “emotional”. To accomplish this, we first turn to the economic sociology of Georg Simmel. Then we draw upon recent discussions about the temporality and spatiality of emotion, specifically as manifested in the dynamics between hosts and guests.

### **Intimacy and Distance**

This analysis of hospitality practices deals with the social and normative construction of what are commonly presumed to be subjective experience values, and how these are constructed in an interactive process between hosts, guests and society (Granovetter 1985; Zafirovski 2000; Steiner 2009). Tools for the analysis of value and value creation as social processes, and the contextualisation of value creation, are offered in Georg Simmel’s *The Philosophy of Money* (1900/2004). This classic in economic sociology showed how the construction of economic and non-

economic values is a relational process. From this follows that values can be understood as being performed in host/guest interactions. This is contrary to dominant service marketing theory where values are seen as preceding and thus scripting host/guest interaction. Instead we understand performativity as the continuous becoming-in-action of values and norms (see Edensor 2001; Perkins & Thorns 2001; Bærenholt et al. 2004). The issue of value and values is a tricky one. We are not concerned with the construction of taxonomies of values as such, but it is necessary to categorise values in some conceptual manner since translations between different kinds of values are central to the analysis. To Simmel, economic value is one value category among others, for example aesthetic, moral and cultural values (Simmel 1900/2004; Cantó Milà 2005). Economic value is the category most objectified, manifested in practices of monetary exchange. It follows that the notion of distance is central in Simmel's analysis and a crucial aspect of value realisation. When distance is introduced between a subject and an object, desire emerges and later develops into the concept of value. Distance places the object in relation to other objects (Simmel 1900/2004: 59).

By making distance a central part of the analysis two issues need to be addressed: time-space and emotion. A sociological understanding of distance usually means social or even abstract aspects rather than tempo-spatial ones. But by conceiving of hospitality in a way that makes boundaries between commercial and non-commercial spheres a matter of negotiation, the distinction between the social and the tempo-spatial begins to break down. It then becomes appropriate to find a way to bring social and time-space dimensions together, and here we find support in the field of emotional geography. Distance and intimacy, as well as in-betweenness, are central aspects of geographies of emotion. In the hospitality industry, social relations are arguably a central product dimension and not merely vehicles for product deliverance. Service encounters, in common with the concerns of emotional geography, are all about "the emotions that people feel for each other and, more extensively, for places, for landscapes, for objects in landscapes and in specific situations." (Pile 2010: 15). Commercial friendship in the context of a commercial home can then be explained as an encounter between a person and another person or people; or in the encounter between a person and their environment, whether through travelling, dwelling, reading, ageing, consuming, covering or whatever...this space between...is easiest to ally with a politics of caring, and the production of caring...environments. (Pile 2010: 15).

Thus, in combination with intimacy and distance in economic sociology, the in-between time-space relating hosts to guests as defined in emotional geography serves to further frame the formation of a hospitality discourse and markets of sociability.

## Boundary Work

To see how distance and intimacy are performed in a situated, commercial context we use the concept of boundary work (see Gieryn 1983; Nippert-Eng 1996; Allen 2001; Åkerström 2002; Goode & Greatbatch 2005; Zelizer 2005). This refers to ordering practices, which create, maintain, and recreate cultural and/or cognitive categories, in our case categories related to time-space, social relations, emotions and values. We focus on the borders between what are considered economic and non-economic spheres – more specifically borders between personal values on the one hand and collective values possible to transform into commercial values on the other, but also borders between host and guest time-spaces – and illustrate how these are performed in lifestyle entrepreneurship. In this regard, our analysis ties into the concept of emotional labour as discussed by Ek and Ooi in the introduction of this special theme issue of *Culture Unbound*. Emotional labour was introduced by Hochschild (1983, 2003), who studied emotional work in service labour where the service provider – often a woman – is expected to evoke positive emotional responses in the customer. The concept is used in studies of service interactions with a clear asymmetrical power relationship with no or little mutual emotional response, where the service provider gives (or sells), and the customer takes (or consumes).

Emotional labour could under certain assumptions be used to describe the everyday business activities of a B & B host, but at the same time it should be acknowledged that lifestyle hospitality is embedded in a different context compared to earlier analyses of emotional labour. The relationship between hosts and guests in the small-scale tourism and hospitality industry features emotions such as joy, disappointment and irritation. For management-driven emotional labour, surplus value is created but it does not necessarily, or even at all, benefit the emotional labourer (Constanti & Gibbs 2005). The case of small-scale tourism and hospitality firms, where the business is built upon lifestyle motifs, is different. Lifestyle businesses do not display the same asymmetrical relationship between provider and guest, as for instance the relationship between air-stewardess and the passengers (Hochschild 1983), and the expectations on professional roles are not scripted from the same kind of management perspective (see also Bærenholdt & Jensen 2009). For the lifestyle entrepreneur, emotions evoked by interactions with customers coincide with the commodification of personal lifestyle values, since togetherness and in-betweenness are not only social values but also commercial ones. The surplus value created then becomes difficult to separate from other kinds of values, economic or otherwise. Emotional performativity among lifestyle entrepreneurs is in other words embedded in different tempo-spatial and social contexts compared to managerial hospitality. Furthermore, the emotional work performed by lifestyle entrepreneurs is commonly discussed in relation to a cultural and economic context where rurality connotes “the good life” through the potential for social embeddedness and environmental stewardship, which are values with great

power of attraction on a tourism market. One important condition underpinning lifestyle-based economic activities is a social discourse encouraging entrepreneurship and the development of small enterprises (Berglund 2007), particularly in rural areas (the Association of Swedish Farmers 2009). The societal support for starting a business may encourage new modes and ideals of self-development and identity construction by making a living through emotional work that differs in important respects from asymmetrical emotional labour. This development contributes to the norms and ideals of lifestyle entrepreneurship, and legitimises the emergence of specific values that are attractive in the hospitality industry.

### **The Performativity of Distance and Intimacy**

We will proceed to examine everyday practices and the business narratives of lifestyle entrepreneurship by an analysis of how personal and commercial values are socially constructed through emotional performativity. We will visit the commercial home of a lifestyle entrepreneur – Lisa – and focus upon how practices characterised by specific emotional qualities are performed (the empirical material has also been used in Andersson Cederholm & Hultman 2010).

### **The Empirical Study**

Lisa runs a B & B combined with an art gallery by the shore of a lake, at the outskirts of a middle-sized town in Southern Sweden. Lisa is in her fifties with grown-up children and grandchildren. She is divorced since some years back and lives by herself in a small and picturesque cottage. We have chosen Lisa as a case study because her narrative and her business are ideal-typical – in the Weberian meaning of the term – of a lifestyle entrepreneur in relation to approximately 20 other informants in rural tourism and hospitality businesses that we have conducted open-ended interviews with during 2006-2008. These interviews were part of a research project with the aim to unpack and analyse practices and processes where formerly non-economic natural and cultural values were transformed into commercial attractions. In this way, lifestyle entrepreneurship can be seen as one form of enactment of how tourism has gained strength as a force of rural economic, social and spatial restructuring. For our analysis, this is important in the sense that it illustrates how hospitality practices order space and social relations – not only in the micro-scale but also in wider societal contexts. Lifestyle entrepreneurs, as an integral part of tourism, are “world-makers” (Hollinshead 2008, 2009) and this in turn is important for an understanding of the meaning of emotional performativity in the hospitality industry.

The interviews have been conducted in an “active” manner in the sense that we have paid attention to *how* respondents give answers and present their narratives, not only to *what* they say (Holstein & Gubrium 1997). In Lisa’s case, she gives primacy to values and qualities such as the small scale, close contact and commu-

nication with guests, the emotional importance of the specific locality, intimate knowledge of surrounding areas, and a focus on issues of care-taking. During the interview with Lisa, she led us around her home, garden and atelier, discussed artefacts – such as objects, environments or vistas – of particular importance for her business and several times she related particular situations and instances to specific places.

### **Drawing Boundaries and Generating Intimacy**

Even though the hospitality performed in Lisa's business is characterised by homeliness, it is still different from the practices of a private home. According to Lisa, warmth and spontaneity should appear to customers as surprises. This is illustrated through anecdotes on how Lisa finds a sofa for the unexpected guest, or lets the guest sleep in her own bed while she herself has to find a bed in the basement. She speaks of warmth and instant familiarity as specific experience values, values that are socially constructed as experiences worth having. This value construction is made possible by a positioning of Lisa's performativity in explicit contrast to a rational and standardised service context common in managerial hospitality firms. Hereby, the complex nature of the commercial home providing intimacy as an experience value becomes evident in how host/guest interactions not only invoke trust, but insecurity and ambivalence as well. One important means of managing this dynamic is through stories of the norm breakers. In Lisa's narrative, two types of deviants appear, representing opposed expectations of the commercial home: those that expect more efficient and standardised services, and those who treat the place too much like their own home. As a way of avoiding the former, Lisa prefers to have personal contact with potential guests before they book rooms. She can then get a feeling for if they are the "wrong" kind of customers and discourage them to come. She avoids the booking system Citybreak™ administered by the local tourist office. Here, guests can book themselves into registered accommodations on a web page. One important reason for not signing up with this system is the lack of first-hand personal contact and thus the lost opportunity to vet visitors. At the other end of the deviant spectrum are guests treating her place too much as their own home. She tells us about the Austrian young men who undressed in the kitchen, the guests who ate grandmother's cake when they failed to realise that Lisa had set the table for her own private family party, or the boys who without announcing brought girls to their rooms, causing embarrassment at breakfast. These examples become amusing anecdotes and show how situations are transformed from potentially threatening to a crucial aspect of the in-betweenness of host and guest through Lisa's performance of sociability: "I sometimes become a mother to my guests". Stories of deviance become a mediator in the boundary work to negotiate and perform private and public time-space.

Distance is also introduced by the temporal and spatial limitations of the commercial home. The relations that unfold between host and guest are framed in a

specific time-space, similar to what Price & Arnould (1999: 12) in their analysis of commercial friendships between hairstylists and their clients, describe as compartmentalised. Their study showed how friendship relations among service provider and client may emerge, but are often limited to the service context. Even though the client and the service provider may develop an intimate relationship of mutual trust and self-disclosure within the servicescape framework, meetings outside this time-space context may be out of the question. Lisa sometimes gets invitations from guests to come and visit them in their homes. She tells us that she might consider visits to her guests, but while saying this she comments with a smile of self-reflexion "...but then they may not recognise me". The existence of this dynamic between intimacy and distance is thus temporally and spatially asymmetrical – it would not appear in the home of the guests. This points towards the overlap between the social and temporal dimensions necessary to evoke distance, intimacy and in-betweenness in commercial hospitality, but in particular the spatial aspect is highlighted.

### **Producer Experiences**

When we ask Lisa what her guests appreciate most, she immediately mentions the locality, the beautiful surroundings, the local attractions found in tourist brochures and the excellent conditions for walks and bicycle tours. It is the kind of attraction categories found in marketing material, standardised and clearly framed as values for the tourist. However, except from this direct question and quick, seemingly ready-made, answer, Lisa's story is full of descriptions of more intangible values, such as the atmosphere, the spontaneous, the personal and the intimate. These values are simultaneously described as values for herself and values for guests. While talking about these values, Lisa juxtaposes the intimate B & B with the scripted and efficient service of a Hilton hotel where the guest knows what to expect, but which lacks the personal touch. Lisa emphasises the personal and the intimate as a value her commercial friends search for. Thus, she recognises its collective and social importance, although she does not frame intimacy as a typical tourist value.

A similar example is the importance of storytelling, where Lisa enjoys telling her guests the stories of her family heritage, how the family industry was founded 300 years ago, how her grandfather built the cottage, and about the furniture and other characteristics of her home. In this way – and in this time-space – personal values become tourist values. She recognises the potential of the commercial value of storytelling, since she describes it as belonging to her standard repertoire for entertaining her guests:

...then when the weather is bad we use to sit in the atelier, I serve coffee and... I have always a lot of suggestions on what to do in the surroundings... and they enjoy hearing about the house and I always have some funny anecdotes about the house, because that is what I think people appreciate with B&B, because when you stay at a hotel, Best Western or Hilton or whatever, you have a nice cleaned room and every-

thing, but you will not have that contact with the local milieu... many people like it because it is so old fashioned and charming, and I tell them about my family's history.

- So you are a real local...?

-Yes [laughter] and I take advantage of that a little bit, with the tourists...

While this practice of storytelling has a clear value for guests, it is also related to Lisa's own collection of experiences. This negotiation of values between boundaries of the subjective and the commercial illustrates value formation as an explicitly social process. It also points to the importance of specific media, or consolidating catalysts, such as generic marketing material and tourist brochures in the social construction of intimacy as a crucial hospitality value.

Lisa's narrative is structured by a clear dissociation from typical strategic, economic thinking when she explains her motives for running a business. Associated with her B & B is an atelier where she paints, sells art and gives painting courses to guests. She describes how she first realised that she might make a living out of her hobby:

I have always painted because I enjoy it, and then, by coincidence, a relative of mine came for a visit and said "Oh, I want to buy that painting! How much does it cost?" "Cost? How should I know?" "I give you 400." "400!? It is much too expensive, it is not possible. It must be a lot cheaper! 200..." "No, I give you 400..." and so it continued, and finally it ended at 300. And then I went out to buy a notebook and I started to make a note whenever I sold a painting. So that was fun!

Lisa describes all her activities, not only her painting and the painting courses, as the result of coincidences. In her narrative, they evolve organically with one incident leading to another. This attitude is accompanied with her reluctance to even start a business in the first place. With certain pride she says that someone else was actually responsible for taking the initiative. One of her daughters brought her to the tourist office to discuss the potential of her business. Presently, her other daughter helps her with marketing. Lisa does not acknowledge a self-identity as a business woman: "I am just the same old bohemian artist as before, I just try to make this work as well /.../ I have no claims on running a 'good business', I just do it by intuition". When she tells about her recent engagement in local tourism business networks and meetings, she is delighted: "I have never been to meetings in my entire life, it was so fun". She also expresses distance towards the institutionalised social obligations that come with professional economic relations: "I just do it [engage herself in networks] as long as it suits my life and schedule". In this way, she makes the social, emotional and economic coincide in time and space. Lisa rejects the ideals of an instrumental attitude towards the market, but at the same time she embodies a new set of market attitudes through her emotional performativity.

## Performing Hospitality

These attitudes and ideals are manifested in everyday activities and encounters with guests. Lisa recounts several anecdotes of how she has to improvise to handle unforeseen situations: "...and then there was this girl, she had been bicycling for three days and she said 'do you really not have any room for me?' ... 'OK, then, I say, I will sleep down in the basement'". She repeatedly stresses the importance of being flexible and creative and having the ability to improvise, but the way she talks about this quality does not make it appear as a necessary dimension of a professional role. Rather, flexibility and the ability to improvise are expressed as her own personal characteristics and part of her general take on life. To improvise and to handle things spontaneously emerge in her narrative as the ideal way of doing and being. But her anecdotes about being flexible are primarily about being hospitable, of providing intimacy. One way in which Lisa illustrates the overlap between the social and the economic is thus how she performs the time-space boundary between order and sudden chaos:

There was this wedding party ... a Swedish girl was about to marry a boy from Boston and his whole lovely large American Jewish family would come ... and I had made a buffet and served it in the atelier ... and they were so pleased ... and it rained and it rained, like a tropical rain, and everything went alright until I suddenly saw ... I didn't believe my eyes ... how the water started to pour into the room, like a waterfall, there was a blockage in the drainpipe and all the water just poured in ... In that same moment I saw in the corner of my other eye how someone had opened the door towards the sea ... it was so crowded ... and the rain poured in and "sh-t, I have to do something!" So I grabbed some carpets because it was flowing on the floor and I threw towels on the windows and the guests thought that was really funny ... and I asked the guests afterwards how everything had been and they said that "Oh, it was such a wonderful party" "but didn't you notice all the rain coming in...?" "Oh, no, it was so little, it was just fun" [laughter].

The customers were pleased despite the pouring rain and a wet floor, and Lisa's spontaneous actions would in a scripted management context be interpreted as commercial friendship; as a relationship marketing strategy to have satisfied customers although the product was not what the customers originally expected. But in Lisa's case, the personal relationship becomes the primary product, despite – or because – the lack of dimensions deemed critical in managerial hospitality: for Lisa entertaining guests is to a great extent about her own emotional satisfaction. So Lisa rejects economic instrumentality by dissociating herself and her performance from the images and discourses of a commercial and strategic service business, and by emphasising the intrinsic values of the relationship with the guests. However, she still recognises the economic value of the by-coincidence attitude, by emphasising how pleased the guests are: parts of the narrative that features chaotic or unforeseen situations and the subsequent need to improvise are followed by testimonials of satisfaction among guests. In her narrative, economic value is equalled with guest satisfaction that in turn is told interwoven with her own emotional satisfaction. This rejection of economic instrumentality – at the

same time as value is created in social interaction – makes sense as a strategic practice if viewed as emerging from the dynamics between distance and intimacy – the in-between space – structuring the emotional performativity of commercial hospitality.

### **Conclusion: The Complexity of Intimacy and Distance in Hospitality Businesses**

Through an empirical example of lifestyle entrepreneurship we have used the narrative of B & B and gallery owner Lisa as our ideal-typical case to illustrate ways in which attitudes towards the market are simultaneously rejected and shaped. Earlier studies of lifestyle entrepreneurs have concluded that market instrumentality is rejected in favour of personal values as motivating factors for doing business. By viewing lifestyle entrepreneurship from a perspective focusing on emotional performativity and the micro-spatiality of hospitality practices, we conclude that attitudes towards the market are not so straightforward. Through a “by coincidence” attitude and dissociation from the role of a typical rational business manager, as well as through the emphasis on intrinsic values concerning relationships with guests, an instrumental market ethos can be rejected within a commercial context. However, the case shows the emotionally rich space in-between host and guest as an experience value emerging and being consolidated in the everyday practices of a commercialised home. This in-between space is constantly performed around key notions such as flexibility, deviance, intimacy and non-standardisation. Hereby, the lifestyle entrepreneur acts as the embodiment of an ideal on a complex market where personal, social, experiential and economic values fuse together. The emergence of new meanings, practices and ideals of a market and how market relations should be performed becomes indexical to the formation of a hospitality discourse that includes, even demands, intimacy as a critical value even in hyper-commercial settings. This paradox goes beyond rhetoric, and the surplus value created by emotional labour must be contextualized in order to be critically assessed. Managerial emotional labour is conditional upon the separation between the social and economic. From a mechanical perspective, the surplus value created here must be kept pure in the sense that it must not escape the economic sphere and overflow into other areas. The emotional labour performed in lifestyle entrepreneurship, on the other hand, is embedded in a context with different time-space conditions.

The commercial home brings forth the potential for a kind of commercial friendship that is difficult to categorise as a relationship marketing strategy. When the social and economic become tempo-spatially concomitant, emotional labour can become emotionally rewarding in a deep sense since this labour in turn rests on lifestyle values and self-identity. There is also a wider societal discourse of small-scale entrepreneurship, rural restructuring and stewardship issues that in

effect encourages the tempo-spatial conditions for commercial homes and commercial friendship development. The celebration of the kind of values apparent in lifestyle businesses in large-scale hyper-commercial businesses is one, probably important, feature of the emerging hospitality discourse. But to put this in a larger picture, just as a neoliberal place market discourse celebrates values such as creativity and tolerance while neglecting issues of equality and ethics, so does the hospitality discourse celebrate values of intimacy and homeliness while reproducing and strengthening inequalities associated with for example gender and migration. In a more analytical sense, intimacy in hyper-commercial settings can hardly be conceived as anything but an instrumental relationship marketing strategy since the crucial aspect of distance – resulting from boundary work in situations where the social and the economic overlap in time and space – is hardly possible to perform outside the commercial home. At the same time, it is difficult to imagine how management-driven hospitality businesses could reach strategic goals associated with small-scale lifestyle entrepreneurship without scripting distance, intimacy and in-betweenness. This analysis has taken one step in unpacking this paradox by illustrating that commercial friendship is a more complex issue than what has been acknowledged so far in the hospitality literature. It seems probable that a continued discussion of the social, temporal and spatial complexity of commercial friendship will have bearings on the cultural understanding of emotions, identity and lifestyle values on the one hand, and business strategy, value creation and markets on the other.

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## Notes

- 1 See for example the Swedish Rural Network (2010) for an institutional framing of this discourse. The network is a government-led public-private partnership whose aim is to facilitate the implementation of the national Rural Development Programme, where the diversification of rural farming businesses towards offering experiences on tourism and hospitality markets is encouraged (see the Government Offices of Sweden 2010).

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