

Marketing the Perfect Ride

A Study of the Marketing of Horse Tourism on the Internet

Aage Radmann

Norwegian School of Sport Science, Oslo
<aage.radmann@nih.no>

Susanna Hedenborg

Dept. of Sport Sciences, Malmö University

Abstract

The aim of this article is to chart and analyze Internet marketing of sport and leisure tourism, with a special focus on horse-riding tourism. The article will spotlight marketing directed to the physically active tourist, that is, tourists travelling to destinations to participate in a physical activity (i.e. not spectators). Previous research has demonstrated that increased interest in sport tourism has rendered effective marketing essential for travel companies. Yet, despite growing interest in sport tourism in general and horse tourism in particular, studies of the marketing of horse tourism are scarce. The source material for the present article consists of the websites of three different horse travel agencies. The analysis is based on both quantitative and qualitative data. Firstly, we mapped out all trips offered (offers $N=559$) in relation to continents, countries, and types. Secondly, we performed a content analysis of pictures (pictures $N=110$) and texts promoting trips to Spain (offers $N=9$). Our findings indicate that the travel agencies focus their marketing on Southern Europe, and particularly Spain. Trail rides are the most frequently recurring trips offered. The marketing builds on story-telling related to trust; (implied) common experiences of organizer and tourist in relation to horses and horsemanship; and natural and cultural landscapes. In contrast to the representation of women in other sport contexts, women in horse tourism are portrayed as active participants in a challenging athletic activity. The representation is, however, complex. Firstly, true horsemanship is represented as masculine. Secondly, the representation of women as strong and active in the marketing of horse tourism may be interpreted as part of the 'girl power' discourse connected to neoliberal constructions of the female body. Thirdly, horses are also clearly important in the marketing. Although this observation may seem redundant, it nonetheless highlights the importance of animals as workers in sport tourism.

Keywords: horse tourism, sport and leisure tourism, equestrian sport, gender, human-animal relationships, story-telling

Introduction

The aim of this article is to chart and analyze Internet marketing of horse tourism. The article will focus on the marketing of horse tourism travel agencies who seek to attract the potential Swedish tourist, in 2017 and 2018. Local organizers' marketing of these tours will not be analyzed here. Instead, the article will map out destinations and the kinds of trips offered by the horse tourism travel agencies, and analyze how the latter represent themselves as well as local organizers, trips, and tourists. The analysis is framed by gender theory, and insights from human-animal studies.

The definition of horse tourism per se will not be problematized in this article, as we focus on marketing used by travel agencies selling horse riding tours.¹ Yet, it is worth pointing out that horse tourism can be seen as a branch of sport and leisure tourism. In addition, it constitutes active sport tourism, rather than spectator sport tourism. *Active* sport tourism is frequently neglected in tourism research, which has often focused on large sporting events whose economic impact is more easily measurable (Geffroy 2017).

In comparison to other countries, Sweden has one of the highest shares of the population (15 years and above) who engage in tourist travel (76 percent; Tourism trips of residents 2014). In addition, horse riding is one of the ten most popular sports in Sweden (Idrottsstatistik.se). With an estimated 355,000 horses, or 36 per 1,000 capita, Sweden is a horse-dense country.² Despite this, sport and leisure tourism, and more specifically horse tourism, has received little attention in Sweden. The latest Swedish public report on the tourism industry briefly discusses sport tourism in general as an area in which touristic innovations can be expected. Horse-tourism is only mentioned on one page in relation to the development of riding trails (SOU 2017:95, 288), and local organizers in Swedish horse tourism maintain a weak position on the international

1 The definition of tourism is in complex (Syssner & Kvarnström 2013), as is the definition of horse tourism. It is worth noting that the first definitions of horse tourism focused on touristic activities on horseback, which included trail rides longer than 24 hours for pleasure (Pickel Chevalier 2015). Contemporary definitions are more inclusive; for instance, Pickel Chevalier (2015) defines horse tourism as “all kinds of leisure linked to horses, ponies or donkeys practiced by a person outside their normal place of residence or more then 24 hours and less than four months” (p. 116). The former definition is too narrow for our purpose, whereas the latter is too wide. The typology used here, developed by Claudia Ollenburg, will be presented and discussed below (Ollenburg 2005).

2 <https://jordbruketisiffror.wordpress.com/2017/02/02/355-000-hastar-i-sverige-2016/>

market (Segerblom 2006).³ It is reasonable to assume that the market for horse tourism is underdeveloped in Sweden. An objective of this study is, therefore, to inform Swedish local organizers of horse tourism on how travel agencies reach potential horse tourists.

Analytical framework

Increased interest in sport and leisure tourism renders effective marketing essential for travel companies (Kotler 2006; Pine & Gilmore 2011). The Internet is the most important source of information on travel destinations in general; according to previous research, 90 percent of tourists begin their journey on the Internet (Hellman & Bergman, 2009). To interest tourists in a certain offer or place, it is important for travel organizers to recognize the ‘tourist gaze’, that is, how a deal is experienced by the tourist (Urry, 2002; O’Dell, 1999; Urry & Larsen, 2011). Previous research has indicated that the contemporary potential tourist wants to buy experiences, rather than products (Moutinho, 1987; Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007; Woodside et al., 2000). Consequently, marketing strategies emphasize the type of experiences the tourist may have during a trip. A relatively new way of marketing an experience is story-telling, in which narratives are used to sell the experience of a destination. Narratives easily reach people; hence, they are used in marketing (Mossberg & Nissen Johansen 2006). For this article, recurring themes in the narratives used for marketing have been identified and analyzed in two ways. Firstly, themes appearing in the material have been depicted and discussed. Secondly, the narratives have been analyzed using gender theory and insights from human-animal studies.

Throughout history, the affluent sectors of society have travelled to engage in their favorite sports. Although active sport tourism has gained

3 Horse tourism emerged in Europe, North America, and Australia during the 1950s and 1960s (Pickel Chevalier, 2015). The year 1975 witnessed the foundation of an international federation for equestrian tourism: *Fédération Internationale de Tourisme Equestre (FITE)*. FITE comprises 21 National Equestrian Tourism Organizations (NETOs) (FITE 2017). In Sweden, the Swedish Equestrian Federation (SEF) organizes a majority of riding disciplines (jumping, dressage, para equestrian sport, eventing, driving, endurance, vaulting, reining, working equitation, mounted games), and is among the ten biggest federations under the umbrella of the Swedish Sports Confederation (<http://www.ridsport.se>; Idrottsstatistik.se). SEF plays no role in organizing touristic activities. However, the Swedish Icelandic Horse Federation – not itself a member of the SEF – is part of FITE (Icelandic Horse 2017). 66 associations are members of the Swedish Icelandic horse association.

mass appeal, there are nonetheless identifiable patterns of social class and gender (Gibson 2004, Geffroy 2017). In addition, travelling has traditionally been characterized in masculine terms (Pritchard & Morgan 2000). In the North American context, the typical active sport tourist is likely male, affluent, college-educated, willing to travel long distances to participate in their favorite sport, likely to engage in active sport tourism well into retirement, and tends repeatedly to engage in their favored activity (rather than ‘one-off’ vacations) (Gibson 2004). A pertinent example is skiing. Studies show that skiing is dominated by a white, middle-class demographic, and that many women perceive alpine skiing as excessively dangerous, athletic, and cold. It has been suggested that these attitudes are likely related to women’s socialization into the sport (Williams and Lattey, 1994; Hudson 2000; Williams and Fidgeon, 2000; Shaw, Bonen and McCabe, 1991; Gibson 2004; Hedenborg & Radmann, in press). The representation of a typical sport tourist can be problematized in relation to gender. In contrast to many other sports, 90 percent of the members of the Swedish Equestrian Federation are women⁴; thus it is likely that the potential horse tourist is also female. However, the ways in which women are represented are yet unknown.

As the Internet is used as a source in this study, media analysis of sport and gender will inform the analysis. Previous research has demonstrated that men and women are often described in different ways in connection to sport, with men and masculinity treated as the norm. Firstly, women’s sport is rarely covered in everyday, sport-related media. Worldwide, less than ten percent of television or newspaper sports coverage focuses on women (Bruce, Hovden & Markula, 2010). Secondly, men are often represented as serious athletes, whereas women are portrayed as ‘primarily woman’ or as ‘ridiculous sports-practicing women’ (Tolvhed 2008, Hjelseth & Hovden 2014). Female athletes are also infantilized and sexualized in sports media. Still, studies of the media coverage of equestrian sports show a somewhat different perspective. As early as the mid-twentieth century, when women in other sports were ridiculed in media or presented primarily as women (Tolvhed 2008), female equestrians were represented as authentic and hardworking athletes (Hedenborg 2009, 2016). The representations were, however, complex, as the female riders were also recurrently associated with socially constructed feminine traits, such as grace, beauty, and maternity (Hedenborg 2009, 2016). The representations can be problematized further. In recent years, feminist

4 <http://www.ridsport.se/Svensk-Ridsport/Statistik/>

studies of girls and sport have indicated how girls and female athletes are visually represented as healthy, strong, and powerful. This representation has been interpreted as part of a neoliberal discourse, which advertises – to quote Leslie Heywood – that ‘anyone can achieve this look if they just work hard enough’ (2007:117). This discourse conceals socioeconomic and gender inequalities, suggesting that lifestyle is a matter of personal choice (cf. McRobbie 2004; Harris 2004).

In several studies, Linda Birke has stressed that animals matter in social studies for three reasons (Birke 2007, cf. Coulter 2016). Firstly, our ideas of gender and other positions are intertwined with our ideas about animals, and by including animals in social theorizing we can scrutinize and understand power relations and systems of domination between different groups. Secondly, our perception of nature as external to the social world must be questioned, as ‘nature’ is both strongly affected by, and related to, human actions. Thirdly, Birke contends, ‘nonhuman animals matter for themselves’, which implies the importance of an inclusive way of thinking and acting. This suggests that animals should be taken seriously and made visible in research.

Method and sources

This study is based on data collected on the Internet. Both quantitative and qualitative data are analyzed. To understand how horse tourism is marketed for the potential customer, texts and pictures found on the websites of three different horse travel agencies are explored. The websites were selected after an Internet search (utilizing Google) using Swedish terms that we deemed likely to be used by a potential horse-riding tourist: ‘ridresa’ and ‘hästresa’ (‘riding trip’ and ‘horse trip’). The Swedish terms were used to find websites in Swedish, which are most likely aimed at Swedish tourists.⁵ While it is possible that the trips advertised on the websites also attract non-Swedish travelers, the present article will focus on how marketing is directed to the potential Swedish tourist. A comparison of how travel agencies seek to attract tourists from

5 Whether the agencies can be seen as Swedish, and whether marketing is directed to a Swedish audience, is a more difficult issue. HorseXplore present themselves as a Swedish company, with an office in Sweden, whereas HippoTours has a Danish address. When we commenced our study, Greenways presented themselves as a Swedish agency. Now they are the Swedish representative of an international agency, Unicorn trails. HorseXplore and HippoTours have Swedish sites, whereas Greenways Travel/Unicorn trails have English sites.

different regions would have been interesting, but exceeds the scope of this study.

The first search was conducted on 5 January 2017. ‘Ridresa’ and ‘hästresa’ rendered almost 8,000 and 4,000 hits, respectively.⁶ Many of these hits were related to specific trips, or journal articles about horse-riding tourism. Among the first 100 hits for each of the two search terms, however, three travel agencies organizing horse-riding trips distinguished themselves by generating more than one hit each: HorseXplore, Greenways Travel, and Hippo Tours. Webpages related to these travel agencies comprised 25 percent of the first 100 hits for ‘ridresa’, and 30 percent of the first 100 hits for ‘hästresa’. The market is clearly diversified, with multiple local organizers, and thus it is likely difficult for the potential tourist to find and compare available trips. In this study, however, we decided to focus on the three travel agencies mentioned above.

When mapping out the trips advertised by the three travel agencies, we found 559 different deals, which we subsequently analyzed in relation to destination (continents and countries), and the type of horse-riding trip offered. In order to map out the trips offered by the travel agencies, we utilized a typology developed by tourism researcher Claudia Ollenburg. According to her, international horse tourism can be divided into the following categories: guided commercial treks and trail rides; fixed-site farm stays; guest and working ranches; expert riding clinics; children’s riding camps; and horse-drawn carriage tours, where clients have no direct interaction with the horse (Ollenburg 2005). The typology will be further discussed in relation to our findings.

After this general mapping, we conducted a content analysis based on information about the travel agencies and three of the most advertised trips per agency, i.e. nine trips in total. This sample was selected by accessing the agencies’ respective websites, continuing to the most advertised destination and type of trip, and selecting the first three offers in this group. For instance, the most popular activity was trail riding in Spain; therefore, the first three offers for trail rides in Spain were scrutinized.

6 We also tried using alternative terms, but these did not cover the organizers in the same way. A search for “hästturism” (horse tourism) gave 3,730 hits, with articles on horse tourism in majority among the first 50 hits. A search for “att rida häst som turist” (riding as a tourist) gave 62.000 hits, the first 100 of which comprised a mix of articles on horse riding in general, horse welfare in the tourism industry, specific sites offering horse tourism, and travel agencies.

The presentations of the trips in some cases comprised several webpages that cover facts about the trip (e.g., dates, closest airport, transfer and cost for transfer, what is included in the price, and horse-riding hours), the location (e.g., where the potential tourist will sleep and eat), the local travel organizers, and the horses. Reviews from previous travelers are sometimes included and can be seen as part of the travel agencies' marketing, as the agencies likely post them in order to attract future tourists. Therefore, we have included these reviews in our analysis, even though they did not feature as part of all online presentations.

The analyzed texts presenting each trip include between 8 and 18 pictures showcasing the location, the landscape, the local organizers, previous tourists, and the horses. In total, 110 pictures have been analyzed (all pages and pictures for each offer have been explored). The analysis of texts and pictures was conducted in two steps. Firstly, texts were read and observed repeatedly, and recurring ideas, concepts, and elements were coded according to interesting and meaningful content. Subsequently, the codes were grouped and organized into overall themes. Secondly, the texts and pictures were analyzed using gender theory and insights from human-animal studies.

The use of online source material poses certain challenges. Strachal and Thurén (2011) emphasize four aspects of source criticism related to Internet analysis:

- 1) *Authenticity*: can the information on the webpages be trusted? Who are the gatekeepers, and which ethical guidelines apply?
- 2) *Time*: webpages are constantly changing, resulting in volatilization of information;
- 3) *Dependency*: can at least two independent sources be found?
- 4) *Tendency*: why is the information presented in a specific way, and what is the intention behind the presentation?

In relation to the aim of the present study, the criteria for authenticity, dependency, and tendency do not present significant problems. *Authenticity* is not an issue as the article focuses on *how* the trips are marketed, rather than whether or not they exist in reality. Nor is *dependency* a problem as the study focuses on how the travel agencies represent tourism, whether or not the local organizers present themselves in the same way. Neither is *tendency* an issue as the sources are used for marketing to attract tourists. However, the second criterion – *time* – presents a more sig-

nificant challenge in relation to the collection and presentation of data. Since our first Internet search, we have visited the websites several times between 5 January 2017 and 12 April 2018. Websites change continuously, and the sites have been altered over the course of our study. One example of this is that the travel agency Greenways Travel – which originally maintained its own website – became the Swedish representative of the international travel agency Unicorn Trails, whose website presents the trips offered by Greenways Travel in a different way. Nonetheless, we decided to keep Greenways Travel/Unicorn Trails as part of the study, as a new Google search demonstrated that Greenways Travel/Unicorn Trails could still be found among the first 100 hits using the Swedish concepts ‘ridresa’ and ‘hästresa’.⁷

Previous studies

Although the amount of scholarship is growing, there is still relatively limited research on the relationship between humans and horses from social science and humanities perspectives (Adelman & Knijnik 2013; Gillet & Gilbert 2014; McManus, Albrecht & Graham 2013; Hedenborg 2008; 2009; 2011; 2012; 2013; 2015; 2016; Davis & Maurstad 2016). In addition, research on horse tourism is scarce. While some previous studies have charted the number of local horse-tourism organizers as well as tourists in different countries, the diverging aims, methods, and statistics used within these studies – as well as the lack of clear definitions of horse tourism – renders it problematic to compare their results. Nonetheless, the subsequent section provides a brief overview of previous research in the field.

A study indicates that the number of horses and riders in France has increased in recent years. About 20 percent (1,600) of France’s 8,000 equestrian centers specialize in equestrian tourism (Pickel Chevalier 2015)⁸. In Spain, the number appears lower, with a previous study suggesting that the country has around 500 companies whose principal business is equestrian tourism (Castejon & Rodriguez, 2012). The local horse-tourism organizers are often small; according to Castejon and Rodriguez (2012), almost 90 percent of the companies are individually or

7 The last search was done on 2018-04-13.

8 Pickel Chevalier writes that there are “...around 1,600 businesses specializing in equestrian tourism (and/or stabling)”, making it difficult to ascertain the number of horse-tourism companies.

family-operated. Another study demonstrates that horse-tourism organizers in Iceland emphasize belonging to a horsemanship culture where the human-animal relationship is essential, and stress that they share an interest in horses with their guests (Helgadóttir & Sigurdardóttir 2008). Thus far, it has not been researched whether horse-tourism companies in France and Spain present themselves similarly.

The scarcity of research renders general conclusions about the typical horse tourist difficult. According to a study of France, the typical horse tourist is female (70 percent), on average 36 years old, comes from a middle or upper-class background, and has a modest level of equestrian experience (Pickel Chevalier 2015). The study does not discuss whether the typical horse tourist is French or international. However, a study of Spain indicates that most horse tourists in the country are native, with only 25 percent visiting from abroad; the gender of the Spanish tourists is not presented in the study (Castejon & Rodriguez 2012). A study of Iceland shows a similar pattern, indicating that less than 40 percent of the horse tourists come from other countries (Sigurdardóttir, 2011), yet 15–18 percent of overseas visitors in general travel to Iceland in order to participate in horse tourism (Helgadóttir & Sigurdardóttir, 2008).

In Spain, the most frequent equestrian activities offered by the local organizers are ‘rural accommodation including horseback riding’ (30 percent) and ‘unique equestrian activities for traditional fairs, pilgrimages and sports gatherings’ (jointly comprising 25 percent). Only 6 percent are trail rides (Castejon & Rodriguez, 2012). The French study indicates that tourists are attracted by the reliability of trails; quality of and accommodation of horses; fees; dining spots or stops accessible for the horses; friendliness; safety; the opportunity to get away; relaxation; and the beauty of the site (Pickel Chevalier, 2015).

Sweden appears similar to other European countries in some respects. The estimated number of horse tourism companies in Sweden is 500–700. This appears to be a high number per capita in comparison to Spain, as well as in relation to the number of riding schools or riding centers overall (an estimated number of 900). The local horse tourism organizers are typically small businesses with 1–2 employees, similar to the countries presented above. In addition, a previous study demonstrates that the Swedish local organizers have (as in Iceland) developed the company from a personal interest or hobby (Segerblom 2006).

The present article has a somewhat different focus than the studies presented above, as we will analyze the trips offered as well as the Inter-

net marketing of certain destinations, rather than the local organizers, the tourists, or the experiences of the latter. Even so, the findings of previous studies will be related to general patterns and the self-positioning of horse-tourism organizers.

A small number of previous studies use the Internet as a source for understanding horse-animal relationships. From these studies, it is clear that the horse has a strong and active online presence. In a study of Finnish blogs, in which the relationships between humans and horses were described, Schuurman indicates that the narratives are presented as shared emotional and embodied experiences. They are situated in places that carry special meanings, in that experiences and emotions are interpreted in each place (Schuurman 2014). Dashper has studied the British online horse world, showing that amateur and professional rider blogs reproduce norms and attitudes that construct, reconstruct, and legitimize ways of thinking and behaving in relation to horses. In addition, she emphasizes interesting results with regard to blogs that use horses as fictive blog writers (Dashper 2017). Neither Schuurman nor Dashper have focused on the marketing of horse tourism. Still, their studies are of relevance for the present study as they underline the importance of accounting for horse agency and the human-animal relationship. Their insights will be taken into account when analyzing the story-telling used in the marketing of horse tourism.

Internet horse tourism marketing

Destinations and types of trips

HorseXplore, Greenways Travel/Unicorn Trails, and Hippo Tours offer many trips to destinations all over the world. A closer study demonstrates, however, that trips to destinations in Europe dominate (see table 1). In turn, the majority of those trips goes to southern Europe. In that way, horse tourism seems to follow a broader pattern of European tourism; in 2014, a majority of tourists in the EU travelled to southern Europe. Spain was the most popular destination, followed by Italy and France (Tourism destinations 2014). Again, the trips offered by HorseXplore, Greenways Travel/Unicorn Trails, and Hippo Tours follow a similar pattern (see table 2). There are slight variations between the travel agencies, but a general pattern is that most of their offered trips are destined for Spain, Italy, and France. The fourth most common destination

for the general EU tourist is the UK. The studied horse tourism agencies differ in this regard, as Portugal was their fourth most common destination for trips. Trips to destinations in Sweden could also be found on the websites. Hippo Tours had the highest number of offers for Sweden (7), whereas HorseXplore and Greenways Travel/Unicorn Trails had fewer, 2 and 4 respectively.

Table 1. *Number of trips to different destinations offered by HorseXplore, Greenways Travel/Unicorn Trails, and Hippo Tours in 2017. The grouping of countries by continents follows that of the travel agencies.*

Continent	HorseXplore	Greenways Travel/ Unicorn Trails	Hippo Tours	Total (%)
Europe	75	130	123	205 (58)
Africa	8	41	5	49 (14)
Latin America	8	38	11	46 (13)
North America	6	17	5	23 (6)
Others	6	25	4	31 (9)
Total	103	251	148	354 (100)

Source: Websites (visited the first time) for HorseXplore (2017-01-05); Greenways Travel/Unicorn (2017-01-05) and Hippo Tours (2017-01-07).

Table 2. *Number of trips to the most frequent destinations and to Sweden as offered by HorseXplore, Greenways Travel/Unicorn Trails, and Hippo Tours in 2017.*

Country	HorseXplore	Greenways Travel/ Unicorn Trails	Hippo Tours	Total (%)
Spain	9	33	20	62
Italy	10	19	22	51
France	5	13	16	34
Portugal	8	9	8	25
Sweden	2	4	7	13
Total	32	74	66	172

Source: See table 1

As previously mentioned, Ollenburg (2005) provides a typology for horse tourism. Using Ollenburg's typology, a majority of the trips offered by the three agencies can be categorized as commercial treks and trail rides (see table 3). These are offered all over the world, and include rides where the guests stay in different locations every night, or trips where the guests ride during the day and return to the same place to stay overnight.

Table 3. *Types of trips offered by HorseXplore, Greenways Travel/Unicorn Trails, and Hippo Tours 2017, share in percent (rounded to 99%).*

Types of offer	HorseXplore	Greenways Travel/ Unicorn Trails	Hippo Tours	Total N (%)
Guided commercial treks and trail rides	187	110	106	403 (72)
Fixed site farmstays	3	-	1	4 (1)
Guest and working ranches	15	-	11	26 (5)
Expert riding clinics	8	21	7	36 (6)
Children's riding camps	-	3	4	7 (1)
Horse drawn carriages	2	-	-	2 (0)
Mixed offer	26	25	30	81 (14)
Total N *)	241	159	159	559

Source: See table 1. *) Total sum differs from table 1 as the same destinations can offer more than one type of activities.

Another type of trip offered by the agencies is the 'clinic'. Here, riders are given the opportunity to perfect their skills in dressage, show-jumping, or cross-country riding. These trips are not as common as the trail rides and they are concentrated to European destinations. Some trips offered include helping out at a ranch, with activities such as rounding up sheep or horses in the US or on Iceland (Roundup 2017). The smallest categories of trips are fixed farmstays, children's riding camps, and horse-drawn carriage tours.

Ollenburg's typology (2005) presents some problems when applied to the present source material, as some of the offered trips cannot clearly be organized according to her model. These trips include a mix of activities, and we therefore chose to organize them in the category 'mixed'. This category includes trips where riders are offered to (learn how to) ride in the paddock and on trails, in addition to other activities such as sunbathing, cultural experiences, wine tasting, and wellness. It turned out that 'mixed' was the second-largest type of trip offered by the travel agencies. It is difficult to ascertain whether this is an indication that horse tourism has changed since Ollenburg created her typology, or, perhaps more likely, that the travel agencies studied here attempted to attract a certain type of tourist.

Comparisons between previous research and the results presented here based on the typology are similarly problematic, as previous studies have shown that the majority of horse tourists are drawn from within the country in question (cf. studies of Spain and Iceland). These tourists may be attracted by other activities than the ones found on the websites of

the travel agencies. It is possible that riding camps for children, or treks and trail rides using Icelandic horses, would have amounted to a much higher number if our study had instead focused on Swedish local organizers.⁹ However, a discussion of this complexity exceeds the purpose of the present study.

Story-telling and horse tourism

As mentioned above, previous research has indicated that the potential tourist wishes to purchase experiences, and that the prospective traveler's experience begins as early as when he or she accesses a website for the first time. This requires companies to use clever marketing strategies to attract customers, and the usage of narratives is an increasingly common tactic. The general sport tourist follows the same pattern: he or she travels to practice sport, and the trip begins at home in relation to activities and landscapes in which the activities are supposed to take place (Gefroy 2017). Our analysis demonstrates that the agencies use story-telling related to *creating trust, common experiences of organizers and tourists, the natural and cultural landscape* and *gender* to market the trips.

CREATING TRUST

The travel agencies present themselves as having long experience of horse-riding tourism. According to the website, HorseXplore was established in 1993. Greenways Travel was initiated somewhat later, in 1997 (Alla bolag 2017), and Unicorn Trails was founded in 1998 (Greenways 2017). Hippo Tours' website does not state when the company was established, but underlines the agency's long experience of organizing tours (Hippo tours 2017). In a similar way, the local organizers are presented as having many years of experience:

Your guide Emilio has years of experience in the area, [and he is] dedicated and enthusiastic about this trail. His warmth and care contribute to an all-round experience.¹⁰ (Unicorn Trails 2017)

9 There are some Swedish sites for horse tourism offers in Sweden. A search on the Swedish website *ridlager.se*, posted by SRR, a Swedish organization for local organizers of horse-riding camps), demonstrated that 37 Swedish horse-riding camps were advertised there (20181204). As previously mentioned (see footnote 1), there are 66 associations within the Swedish Icelandic Horse Federation, also possibly organizing local horse-riding tourism activities. At the site *destinationhast.se*, offers in the southern part of Sweden, Scania, are collected and presented.

10 All quotes are translated by the authors.

References to longevity and experience can be interpreted as ways of conveying to the potential traveler that the company is dependable. Trust is also built through the usage of personalized presentations, emphasizing ‘companies being family based/small’, and mentioning the guide’s first name. Two of the websites state that the travel agencies are family-operated (HorsXplore and Hippo Tours). Greenways Travel presents a somewhat different case, as it since a few years back represents the international company Unicorn Trails in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Finland. Unicorn Trails is a large, international company, and Greenways Travel/Unicorn Trails underline that they have a great supply of offers. Yet, Greenways Travel’s website points out that its Swedish branch has two employees, and that the person who established Greenways Travel has worked for 25 years in the travel business, with the last 17 as CEO of the same company. Presenting a business in this way can be interpreted as a way of building trust and emphasizing a personalized contact with an (otherwise big, and potentially impersonal) travel agency.

COMMON EXPERIENCES OF ORGANIZERS AND TOURISTS

Horses and horsemanship are important parts of the websites’ presentations of both the travel agencies and the local organizers, and the marketing emphasizes the (implied) commonality of experience between organizer and traveler. Those involved in organizing the trips are presented as ‘horsey’, which possibly connects them more closely to the potential horse tourist (cf. Helgadottir & Sigurdardottir, 2008). In this way, the companies’ history is interwoven with the potential tourists’ history, and the horse-tourism organizers underline their belonging to a shared horsemanship culture, rather than a tourist organizing culture (Helgadottir & Sigurdardottir, 2008). Hippo Tours’ website states:

We are in the business out of pure pleasure and enjoyment of travelling around the world and experiencing it from the horseback. To travel to places rarely seen by ordinary tourists, to experience nature and wildlife close-up, to get moving, to use one’s senses in a new way, to experience the boost from a really lovely, long canter on a beach or a meadow, to enjoy the interaction between horse and rider, and not least the community with other people with the same passion. It is simply irresistible... (Hippo Tours, 2017).

It is implied that the potential horse tourist will have a very different experience of their trip than other (ordinary) tourists, and it is stressed that

the sensory input and horse interaction involved in the trip will make this experience extraordinary. In addition, it is suggested that the employees of the travel agencies and potential tourists share an interest in horses. All three agencies present their employees as experienced riders, and state that they have visited most of the destinations they offer. A reasonable interpretation of this strategy is that the travel agencies imagine that the tourist will feel that the personal experiences of the agencies' employees will enable the latter to help the horse tourist, and make them more qualified to offer the tourist the riding experience they are looking for. Similar stories are found on the websites of the other companies.

In relation to the trips on offer, both pictures and texts underline the importance of the horses. The potential tourist's love of the horse is taken for granted, and horses feature in 67 percent of all pictures. They are portrayed with and without riders, on trails, along the beaches, eating, and drinking. Horses are shown walking, trotting, and cantering, as well as standing still, their riders (and possibly themselves?) admiring the beautiful landscape.

As suggested by previous research, it is important to recognize the tourist gaze (Urry 2002, p. 12; O'Dell 1999, p. 34). Our analysis of the websites shows that stories about the horse are important for the marketing of the trips. In one of Hippo Tours' advertisements for a trip, the horses are presented as follows:

One of the biggest and best ranches in Spain with 250 fine and well-behaved horses. The ranch has its own breeding program and breeds virtually all its trail horses. From birth, they roam freely in large flocks until they are about four years old, after which they are slowly taken in and trained for various riding programs. This provides strong and durable horses with a good and stable temperament – and there are many to choose from. (Hippo Tours 2017)

The narrative is focused on care of horses, and it is suggested that the horses live a good and 'natural' life, making them strong and healthy. It is possible that the potential tourist is expected to be interested in, and attracted by, the fact that the horses are cared for in a specific way, which is seen as appropriate to the tourist. Once again, it is implied that the tourists and organizers share the same values and ideas regarding the caretaking of horses.

Another aspect of marketing by focusing on stories about the horses is the emphasis on a specific breed of horse being used: namely, the An-

dalusian horse. Unicorn Tails' website states: 'Pure Andalusians are well-loved and very sure footed mounts on the steep trails.' On another page, it is underlined that:

You ride home-bred, pure Andalusian and pure hispano-arab horses, born and brought up and trained by your guide. (Unicorn trails 2017).

HorseXplore's website similarly expresses the importance of a specific type of horse:

Mediterranean climate, the beaches and the salty waves but also high mountains, genuine cultural cities, and last but not least, the Andalusian horse. (HorseXplore 2017)

Unsurprisingly, the horse plays a significant role in the marketing of the trips. In previous studies, Schuurman and Dashper have stressed that researchers must recognize the agency of horses and the human-animal relationships in stories on the Internet (Schuurman 2014; Dashper 2017). The horse holds a central position in the marketing of horse tourism. Similar to Claire J. Brown's findings regarding the Connemara Pony, the Andalusian horse intersects with 'global processes of commodification, globalization and modernization' (Brown 2016). The horse must also be recognized as a significant worker in horse tourism. In the present study, the Andalusian horse, a type of horse for which Spain is famous, is clearly used for attracting potential horse tourists. Other types of horses are used as well, but the Andalusian horse stands out even in these presentations:

The horse's role on the small island is significant. It has even bred a separate breed. The muscular menorquinern, which is black, is very similar to the /.../ Andalusian. (HorseXplore 2017).

Horsemanship is also emphasized. As indicated by previous research, the well-being of horses is assumed to be of importance for the tourists. Several quotes suggest that the local organizer knows how to take care of horses in a way acceptable to the customers, as it is emphasized that the horses are '...loved and used to gentle English riding'. The emphasis on a certain manner of handling horses implies that other ways of taking care of horses are not appropriate, and it is possible that the agency assumes that 'gentleness' attracts the Swedish tourist.

The importance of the horse and of horse care is also evidenced by the reviews of the tours (cf. Pickel Chevalier 2015). Below, two quotes from tourists who have participated in a specific tour are presented:

An even bigger plus is the ranch, and the fact that the horses were well mannered, well-behaved and a joy to handle.

Incredibly nice, and the horses were taken care of well. (Hippo Tours 2017)

The importance of the horse and horsemanship in the marketing of the trips stands out as more important than, for example, information about the hotels and food. Nonetheless, some of the webpages marketing the trips show pictures of the rooms and of set tables (hotels and food feature in 20 percent of the pictures). HorseXplore underline that, while horse-riding tourism is their main attraction, the provision of good food and drinks as well as nice living conditions and hospitality are important for their choice of local organizers with whom to cooperate (HorseXplore 2017). Similar information is found on the other sites as well, as demonstrated by the following quote:

The hotel accommodation is of a high standard with comfortable en suite rooms, and a hot shower and an aperitif is never very far away. (Unicorn Trails 2017)

In addition, it is stated that the riding centers are chosen carefully to live up to the travel agency's codes of conduct with regards to riders, horses, and the environment in which the riding experience is situated. In a study of identity construction around hacking (riding in nature), Dashper problematizes how this activity is sometimes presented as the most enjoyable part of the human-horse relationship. Yet, as pointed out in the interviews she conducted as part of her study, the experience can also be frightening (Dashper 2017). The story-telling of the agencies studied here emphasizes safety both in relation to living arrangements and riding. In all pictures, riders seem pleased with the experience, and there are no pictures of injuries. However, some pictures feature potentially dangerous activities, such as riders without helmets, and horses and riders cantering in big groups side by side. This feature may be interpreted as part of the travel agencies' attempt to attract all kinds of riders, simultaneously underlining that their activities are safe, but also sufficiently challenging for the more experienced or intrepid riders. The agencies

further claim that they decline to work with local organizers who do not live up to their high demands. The emphasis on ‘high demands’ once again indicates the imagined values regarding horses and horse riding that are shared between agency and tourist.

NATURAL AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

Previous research on sports tourism marketing has indicated the importance of presentations of the landscape – digitalized ‘geographical imaginaries’ – in which the sport tourist is supposed to spend their time (Geffroy 2017). Travel organizers frequently emphasize aesthetic aspects of the sites, lavishly praising the beauty of the landscape. Similar conclusions can be drawn in relation to the marketing of horse-riding tourism studied here. Horse-riding tourism is presented as a rural activity, and the potential tourist is invited to partake in trail riding in which both nature and culture play important roles. The tourist gaze in these offers does not include city life, highways, or beaches full of sunbathers. Instead, the marketing strategy focuses on empty beaches where horse riding is allowed, mountains, and birdlife:

Andalusia is a fascinating part of Spain. This region borders on two seas while being separated from the rest of Spain by high mountain ranges. The climate is mild and Mediterranean. There are beaches and salty waves, but also high mountains... (HorseXplore 2017)

In addition to the long sandy beaches, you will also discover a nature reserve, the Parc Natural dels Aiguamolls de l'Emporda. This Park has been designated as both a RAMSAR site and an Important Bird Area. The Park is built on marshy land and shelters predominantly aquatic birds. More than 300 different species have been sighted here. Riding through the magnificent river mouth ‘La Gola’, which is a protected natural area, will give you a view of the coastal plant life and the fauna of maritime-land areas of Costa Brava. (Unicorn Trails 2017)

The pictures used on the websites in this study show beautiful rural landscapes, with and without riders. Most of the pictures featuring horses and humans show the latter in a natural landscape. Natural landscapes are also presented without horses and people (this type of picture amounts to 10 percent).

In a study of human-horse relationships and identity, Davies et al. suggest that being outdoors in the terrain, in any weather, is central to the construction of the relationship between the Icelandic horse and their

(Nordic) rider. The interviewees of their study underline the thrill and enjoyment of hacking, and ‘nature’ is an elaborated theme in the narratives (Davies, Maurstad & Cowles 2013). In contrast to the theme ‘there is no bad weather, only bad clothes,’ found in the narratives of Davies et al, the narrative of the travel agencies in this study suggests that the tourist gaze is attracted by sunny and warm weather, and trails running along the sea or rivers as well as mountains.

In relation to the cultural landscape, the narratives emphasize small, whitewashed villages, old buildings, and ruins. Some pictures show tourists riding through old villages, and once again history is emphasized:

Here, everything remains much as it was during the Rebellion of the Moors 400 years ago. Whitewashed villages cling to the edge of cliffs... an experience not much different from that in Spain of the 19th century. Here time stops for travelers, who wonder at the changing landscapes and the vegetation of the different micro-climates. (Unicorn Trails 2017)

All rides are based around Joan’s beautiful 18th century farmhouse nestled in the foothills of the Pyrenees. Here is your chance to /.../ explore small medieval villages... (HorseXplore 2017).

The use of cultural heritage in marketing suggests that (contemporary) landscapes have not been affected by industrialization or urbanization – an (imagined) frozen geography where the potential tourist can experience something that is (possibly) far from their everyday lives.

GENDER

A final aspect of the marketing found on the websites analyzed in this article is the gendered representation of the tourist and the tourist guides. In contrast to what previous research has concluded for sport tourism in general, the typical tourist presented on the websites of the travel agencies is female (cf. Gibson, 2004; Yang et. al., 2017). (White) women, together with horses, are shown in half of the pictures (together with men 23 percent, and without men 30 percent). Only two pictures in the analyzed material feature men (without women) and horses. This is consistent with Pickel Chevalier’s observations regarding France (Pickel Chevalier 2015). In the vast majority of the pictures, women actively partake in riding, and engage in potentially dangerous situations. In contrast to what is seen in other studies of sport tourism, they are not presented so as to please the (heterosexual) male gaze (cf. Pritchard & Morgan

2000). Congruent with what Dashper has emphasized in a study of the performance of rural femininity through equestrian sport and leisure, the pictures of women represent the potential tourists as strong and active women (Dashper 2016). The narratives featured on the websites in this study question and negotiate femininity in relation to sport and leisure. The female rider portrayed is not presented as ‘primarily [a] woman’ or as a ‘ridiculous sports-practicing woman’, nor is she shown taking care of children, or presented in a sexualized manner. There are, however, contrasting narratives, rendering the interpretation more complex. Firstly, the analysis of the story-telling of gender relations must account for the construction of masculinity. The pictures of male riders do not clearly show whether they are tourists or not. The texts, however, feature an alternative narrative, where men are presented as guides with long experience of horses and horse riding:

Follow Toni along the Cami de Cavalls – the horse trail. Toni has been riding since he was a child, and practices several riding disciplines – he is a genuine and passionate horseman. For a week, he takes you around the winding paths, over mountains and along the beaches. (HorseXplore 2017)

The part of Andalusia [that is] West of Gibraltar’s Costa de la Luz. Small whitewashed villages and beautiful beaches succeed each other, but it’s mostly Spanish tourists who find their way here. Here are mountains, plains, and vast beaches where horses are allowed to stretch out at full canter. That was why Josef from Germany chose to settle here about 20 years ago. (HorseXplore 2017)

In the narratives, masculinity is socially constructed in relation to horsemanship. The narratives focus on the male guides as genuine and authentic horsemen; personalized through the use of their names, and represented as part of a local horse culture that the female tourists will briefly visit. However, it is important to remember that the images on the websites present women as active consumers of sport tourism. The tourist gaze is met with a construction of horse tourism as a matter of individual choice – any woman can (consume) do it! In addition, the choice seems to lead to healthy, powerful female bodies and happy faces. The marketing strategies of the travel agencies can be interpreted as acknowledging a specific kind of female body connected to the neoliberal discourse (cf. McRobbie 2004; Harris 2004; Heywood 2007). A more comprehensive study of the complexity of gender representations, possibly built on in-

interviews with representatives of the travel agencies, guides, and tourists could strengthen this analysis. However, it is interesting to note that while the story-telling of the potential female tourists indicates that they are strong representatives of horsemanship as well as active sports (wo)men, their belonging to a horse culture is implicitly questioned and challenged by the representations of the guides as (primarily) male. Furthermore, it is of relevance that both the men and the women shown in the pictures, matching previous research on sports tourism in general, are white (Gibson 2004; cf. Williams and Lattey 1994; Hudson 2000; Williams and Fidgeon 2000; Shaw, Bonen and McCabe 1991). However, decisive conclusions in this regard require further analysis.

Conclusion

The aim of this article has been to map out and analyze the marketing of horse tourism, as both tourism and horse riding are important leisure activities in contemporary Sweden. The analysis has focused on destinations, trips offered, and the story-telling used to attract the potential tourist. The source material consisted of the websites of three of the largest travel agencies for the Swedish market for horse tourism. According to previous research, local organizers of horse tourism in Sweden hold a weak position on the international market. This is also evidenced by the three websites, which present few offers involving local organizers in Sweden. It is likely that the low representation of Swedish local organizers on a common platform on which the potential tourists can gather and compare information can explain Sweden's weak position on the international market. The most frequent tourism destinations on offer for the horse riders is in Southern Europe. In line with general touristic patterns in Europe, Spain appears to be the most attractive destination for the prospective Swedish horse tourist. In addition, it is clear that trail riding is the most common type of trip offered.

The narratives on the websites focus on experiences. This is consistent with previous findings, which has concluded that tourists want to buy experiences (Moutinho, 1987; Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007; Woodside et al., 2000). In this article, it is demonstrated that four themes are apparent in marketing offers to the horse tourist: *creating trust*, *common experiences of organizers and tourists*, *the natural and cultural landscape* and *gender*. The tourist gaze is present in the themes in different ways.

Trust is created by stressing both the travel agencies' and the local organizers' long experience of organizing horse tourism trips. In relation to the theme *common experiences of organizers and tourists*, horses (and, for the sample used in this analysis, especially the Andalusian horse) and horsemanship are central to the offered experience. Both texts and pictures focus on the horse tourist's involvement with the horses, rather than other practices. The central position of the horse and horsemanship underlines the importance of an understanding of horse tourism in which human-animal relationships are recognized. The potential tourists encounter stories about the employees of the travel agencies as well as the local organizers, focusing on their experiences of horses and horse riding. Their experiences are presented as shared with the potential tourist. In addition, the centrality of horses and horsemanship in the marketing strategies indicates the importance of recognizing the horse as a worker in the tourist industry (cf. Coulter 2016). Another important aspect of the presentations is their emphasis on the connection between horse tourism and rural tourism. The marketing texts and pictures highlight natural and cultural landscapes and stories connected to riding on (otherwise empty) beaches along the sea and in the mountains, and viewing animal life and traditional buildings. The source material implies that the potential horse tourist will not experience big, modern cities or sunbathers, nor be exposed to poor, rural areas. Natural and cultural landscapes are presented as unaffected by modern life, a life possibly lived by the potential tourist.

The story-telling used to sell horse-riding trips is gendered, and interesting conclusions can be drawn in relation to sport and leisure tourism in general. Other studies suggest that women are the most common horse tourists, and this is reflected on the agencies' websites. A more significant conclusion is related to how they are presented. Previous research has shown that men and masculinity are closely connected to sport tourism and travelling. Marketing of horse tourism is different as the potential female tourist is represented as active, and as a participant in potentially risky and dangerous sporting activities. Whether the horse tourism context opens up for another kind of sporting femininity, or if the content can be connected to a neoliberal discourse on the healthy and powerful (white) female body, requires further studies. Importantly, however, another and possibly contradictory gendered narrative is also present on the websites, as the guides are presented as male riders be-

longing to a traditional horse culture in which men and masculinity are central, and women are short-time visitors.

Acknowledgment

Particular gratitude is extended to the reviewers for challenging comments pushing us to work with a more coherent argumentation, and to Manon Hedenborg White for language review.

References

Internet Sources

- Alla Bolag (2017), http://www.allabolag.se/5565434254/Greenways_Travel_AB_FITE: <http://en.fite-net.org/content/view/full/12279>.
- Greenways (2017), <http://www.greenways.se/>
- Hippo Tours (2017)
- HorseXplore (2017), <http://www.horsexplore.se/>
- Icelandic horse: <http://www.icelandichorse.se/>.
- Mixed (2017) (visited several times in the period 2017-01-05–2018-04-13): <http://www.unicorntrails.com/europe/italy/equestriantraditionsofmaremma/>; <http://www.hippotours.se/resemaal/europa/sverige/turridning+med+wellness>
- Roundup (2017) (visited several times in the period 2017-01-05–2018-04-13): <http://www.unicorntrails.com/europe/iceland/horseroundup/>; <http://www.unicorntrails.com/europe/iceland/autumnsheeproundup/>
- Tourism destinations (2014): [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:Top_10_tourism_destinations_%E2%80%94_nights_spent_at_tourist_accommodation_establishments,_2014_\(million_nights_spent_in_the_country_by_non-residents\)_YB16.png](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:Top_10_tourism_destinations_%E2%80%94_nights_spent_at_tourist_accommodation_establishments,_2014_(million_nights_spent_in_the_country_by_non-residents)_YB16.png)
- Tourism trips of residents (2014), [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:Tourism_trips_of_residents_\(aged_15_years_or_more\),_2014_YB16.png](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:Tourism_trips_of_residents_(aged_15_years_or_more),_2014_YB16.png) (2017-01-05)
- Unicorn (2017) (visited several times in the period 2017-01-05–2018-04-13), <http://www.unicorntrails.com/easterneurope/>
- Idrottsstatistik.se (20180410)
- jordbruketisiffror.wordpress.com/2017/02/02/355-000-hastar-i-sverige-2016/, 20180410
- www.ridsport.se/Svensk-Ridsport/Statistik/ (20180410)
- Hippo tours – Ronda Trail (visited several times in the period 2017-01-05–2018-04-13): <https://www.hippotours.se/resemaal/europa/andalusien/ronda+trailer>

<https://www.hippotours.se/resemaal/europa/andalusien/zahara+trailen>
 Quotations are collected from specific parts of the sites in relation to the following themes:

ABOUT THE TRAVEL AGENCIES

<http://www.greenways.se/kontakt/> (last visited 2018-04-13)
<http://www.hippotours.se/bra+att+veta/om+oss> (last visited 2018-04-13)
<http://www.horsexplore.se/om-oss> (last visited 2018-04-13)

HORSES

Hippo Tours (2017) (last visited 2018-04-13), <https://www.hippotours.se/resemaal/europa/andalusien/ridsemester+vid+solkysten>
 Unicorn trails (2017) (last visited 2018-04-13), <http://www.unicorntrails.com/europe/spain/alpujarrastrail/> ; <http://www.unicorntrails.com/europe/spain/catalanculturebeachtrail/>
 HorseXplore (2017) (last visited 2018-04-13), <http://www.horsexplore.se/spanien-andalusien;> <http://www.horsexplore.se/menorca>

NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

HorseXplore (2017) (last visited 2018-04-13), <http://www.horsexplore.se/spanien-andalusien;> <http://www.horsexplore.se/spanien-costa-brava>
 Unicorn Trails (2017) (last visited 2018-04-13), [http://www.unicorntrails.com/europe/spain/catalanculturebeachtrail/;](http://www.unicorntrails.com/europe/spain/catalanculturebeachtrail/)
<http://www.unicorntrails.com/europe/spain/alpujarrastrail/>

ABOUT HOTELS

HorseExplore (2017) (last visited 2018-04-13), <http://www.horsexplore.se/om-oss>
 Unicorn Trails (2017) (last visited 2018-04-13), <http://www.unicorntrails.com/europe/spain/crystallinewatersofthegredos/>

GENDER

Unicorn Trails (2017) (last visited 2018-04-13), <http://www.unicorntrails.com/europe/spain/crystallinewatersofthegredos/>
 HorseXplore (2017) (last visited 2018-04-13), <http://www.horsexplore.se/menorca;> <http://www.horsexplore.se/spanien-andalusien>

Literature

Adelman, M & Dorfman Knijnik, J, (2013), *Gender and Equestrian Sport: Riding Around the World* (Dordrecht: Springer).
 Birke, L, (2007), "Relating Animals: Feminism and Our Connections with Non-Humans", in *Humans and Society*, 31(4):305-318.
 Brown, C. J, (2016), "From working to winning: The shifting symbolic value of the Connemara Ponies in the West of Ireland", in Davis, D. L.,

- & Maurstad, A. (eds.) (2016). *The meaning of horses: Biosocial encounters*, Routledge: New York.
- Bruce, T., Hovden, J. & Markula, P. (eds.) (2010), *Sportswomen at the Olympics: A Global Comparison of Newspapers Coverage*. Rotterdam. Sense publisher.
- Coleman, A. G. (November 01, 1996), The Unbearable Whiteness of Skiing. *Pacific Historical Review*, 65, 4, 583–614.
- Coulter, K. (2016). *Animals, work, and the promise of interspecies solidarity*. NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Davis, D. L., & Maurstad, A. (eds) (2016), *The meaning of horses: Biosocial encounters*, Routledge: New York.
- Davies, D., Maurstad, A. & Cowles, S (2013). “Riding up Forested Mountain Sides, in Wide Open Spaces, and with Walls? Developing an Ecology of Horse-Human Relationships”, *Humanimalia*, 4(2):54–83.
- Dashper, K. (ed). (2014). *Rural Tourism: An International Perspective*, Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Dashper, K (2017), *Human-animal relationships in equestrian sport and leisure*. London: T&F.
- Geffroy, V. (2017), ‘Playing with space’: a conceptual basis for investigating active sport tourism practices. *Journal of Sport & Tourism*, Vol 21 - Issue 2, pp 95-113.
- Hall, D, Byrne Swain, M, & Kinnaird, V (2003), Tourism and Gender: An Evolving Agenda, *Tourism Recreation Research*, 28:2, 7–11.
- Heywood, L (2007), “Producing girls. Empire, sport and the neoliberal”, Hargreaves, J & Vertinsky, P, *Physical culture, power and the body*. Routledge, 101–119.
- Hjelseth, A. & Hovden, J. (2014), Negotiating the status of women’s football in Norway, An analysis of online supporter discourses. *European Journal for Sport and Society* 2014, 11 (3), 253-277.
- Fuller, L.K. (ed.) (2006), *Sport, rhetoric, and gender: historical perspectives and media representations*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gibson, H. (January 01, 2004), ‘Moving beyond the “what is and who” of sport tourism to understanding “why”’. *Journal of Sport Tourism*, 9, 3, 247–265.
- Gillett, J & Gilbert, M (2014), *Sport, Animals, and Society*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Green, B. C., & Chalip, L. (1998), Sport tourism as the celebration of subculture. *Annals of tourism research*, 25, 2, 275–291.
- Harris, A. (2004). *Future Girl: Young women in the 21st century*. New York: Routledge.
- Hedenborg, S, (2009), ‘Till vad fostrar ridsporten? En studie av ridsportens utbildningar med utgångspunkt i begreppen tävlingsfostran, föreningsfostran och omvårdnadsfostran’, *Educare*, (in eng. Fostering in Equestrian sports. A study of study programs in relation to the concepts of competition, association and care), no. 1 (2009), 61–78. Lärarutbildningen Malmö Högskola, <http://hdl.handle.net/2043/8424>.

- Hedenborg, S. (April 24, 2016), Lis Hartel – an extraordinary equestrian. *Sport in Society*, 20, 8, 1030–1046.
- Hedenborg, S. (April 09, 2015), Gender and Sports within the Equine Sector – A Comparative Perspective. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 32, 4, 551–564.
- Hedenborg, S., & Svenska ridsportförbundet. (2013), *Hästkavlar, hästtjejer, hästälskare: 100 år med Svenska ridsportförbundet*. Strömsholm: Svenska ridsportförbundet.
- Hedenborg, Susanna, & Pfister, Gertrud Ursula. (2012), Écuyères and “doing gender”: Presenting femininity in a male domain – female circus riders 1800–1920. Malmö University.
- Hedenborg, S. (January 01, 2011), The horse in Sweden: Workmate and leisure pursuit. *Agriculture and Forestry in Sweden Since 1900 : Geographical and Historical Studies*.
- Hedenborg, S., & Morell, M. (January 01, 2008), Hästar och hästarbete: Ett klass-, genus- och generationsperspektiv på förändringarna under 1900-talet. *Arbete pågår: I Tankens Mönster Och Kroppens Miljöer*.
- Helgadottir, G & Sigurdardottir, I, ”Horse-based Tourism: Community, Quality and Disinterest in Economic Value”, *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 2008, vol 8, No 2, 105–121.
- Hedenborg, S & Radmann, A, (in press), “The development of alpine ski tourism in Sweden from a gender perspective: A tentative analysis of the movies Snowroller and Force Majeur”, in Müllner, R & Thöny, C (eds.) *Skispuren, St. Christoph: Austria*.
- Hellman, P. & Bergman, K. (2009), *Kommunicera turism på nätet [Elektronisk resurs]*. Stockholm: Tillväxtverket.
- Hinch, T., & Higham, J. E. S. (2011), *Sport tourism development 2nd edition*. Bristol: Channel View Publications.
- Hudson, S. (January 01, 2000), The Segmentation of Potential Tourists: Constraint. Differences between Men and Women. *Journal of Travel Research*, 38, 4, 363–368.
- Kotler, P et al. (2006), *Marketing for hospitality and tourism*, Upper saddle river: Paerson Prentice hall.
- McManus, P, Albrecht, G, and Graham, R, (2013), *The Global Horseracing Industry: Social, Economic, Environmental, and Ethical Perspectives*. New York: Routledge.
- McRobbie, A. (2004), “Notes on post-feminism and popular culture: Bridget Jones and the new gender regime, in Harris, A (ed) *All about the Girl: Culture, Power, and Identity*. New York: Routledge.
- Mossberg, L. & Nissen Johansen, E. (2006), *Storytelling: marknadsföring i upplevelseindustrin*. (1. uppl.) Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Moutinho, L. (1987), *Consumer behaviour in tourism*. Bradford, England: MCB University Press.
- Ollenburg, C. (June 01, 2005), Worldwide Structure of the Equestrian Tourism Sector. *Journal of Ecotourism*, 4, 1, 47–55.

- Pickel Chevalier, S. (2015), "Can equestrian tourism be a solution for sustainable tourism development in France?"; *Loisir et Société/Society and Leisure*, Vol 38, No. 1, 110–134, 2015.
- Pine, B. J., & Gilmore, J. H. (2011), *The experience economy*, Boston Mass: Harvard Business Review Press
- Pritchard, A, & Morgan, N J (2000), Constructing tourism landscapes – gender, sexuality and space, *Tourism Geographies*, 2:2, 115–139.
- Queckfeldt, E. (2000), Attraktiva blondiner, stadiga bitar och mödrar till två barn: bilden av kvinnor på två dagstidningars sportsidor 1948–1980. *Idrott, historia och sambälle*. (43–63).
- Segerblom, L, (2006), Uppföljning av kvalitetssystemet Godkänd hästgård för turism (in eng. An evaluation of the quality system for accredited horse farm for tourism), Konsumentverket.
- Segrave, J. O., McDowell, K. L., & King, J. G. (2006) Language, Gender, and Sport: A Review of the Research Literature, in Linda K Fuller (ed.) (2006). *Sport, rhetoric, and gender: historical perspectives and media representations*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Shaw, S. M., Bonen, A., & McCabe, J. F. (January 01, 1991), 'Do more constraints mean less leisure? Examining the relationship between constraints and participation'. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 23, 4, 286–300.
- Thurén, T., & Strachal, G. (2012), *Källa: internet: Att bedöma information utifrån källkritiska principer*. Johanneshov: TPB.
- Tolvhed, H. (2008), *Nationen på spel: kropp, kön och svenskhet i populärpressens representationer av olympiska spel 1948–1972*. Umeå: h:ström – Text & kultur.
- Schuurman, N (2014), "Blogging Situated Emptions in Human-Horse Relationships", *Emotion, Space and Society*, 13:1–8.
- Swarbrooke, J., & Horner, S. (2007), *Consumer behaviour in tourism*. Amsterdam: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Syssner, J., & Kvarnström, L. (2013), *Det turistiska fältet och des aktörer*. Lund: Studentlitteratur AB.
- Urry, J. (2002), *The tourist gaze*, London: Sage
- Urry, J. & Larsen, J. (2011), *The tourist gaze 3.0*, London Sage
- Williams, P. W., & Lattey, C. (October 01, 1994), 'Skiing Constraints for Women'. *Journal of Travel Research*, 33, 2, 21–25.
- Williams, P., & Fidgeon, P. R. (January 01, 2000), 'Addressing participation constraint: a case study of potential skiers'. *Tourism Management*, 21, 4, 379–393.
- Woodside, A. G. (2000), *Consumer psychology of tourism, hospitality, and leisure*. Wallingford, Oxon, UK: CABI.
- Yang, E.C.L., Khoo-Lattimore, C. & Arcodia, C. (2017), A systematic literature review of risk and gender research in tourism. *Tourism Management*. Vol. 58, pp 89–100.

