

Neocalism and Beyond—Sexing Up Rural Places*

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ABSTRACT In this paper, we revise the concept of neocalism by showing how companies that sex up rural places update and add novel nuances to neocalist marketing. As the positive aspects drawn from tradition, stories and history are at the center of neocalism, we aim to highlight how the usually negatively perceived images of the rural may be turned into something positive, trendy, desirable, and eventually sexy in the marketing of rural areas and businesses. The data of this study consists of nine company interviews and four consumer focus groups ($n = 17$). Our findings show how three features—namely, the hybridization of rural and urban, generational experience of millennials, and minimalist visualization—combined construct ideas for new image creation for rural areas. The concept of sexing up places ushers in new possibilities for rural actors and regions by reducing the distinction between rural and urban via visual imagery that is a particularly good match for the generational experience of the millennials. In this way, the study offers a novel way to tackle the challenges faced by rural areas, such as depopulation and image loss.

Introduction

When thinking about the extant imagery of the rural, we can notice two contradictory storylines. The marketing of the rural commonly highlights stereotypically positive aspects such as peace, nostalgia, and nature (Kalaoja 2016). To illustrate, in Finland, where the current research is located, the emphasis is on beautiful and inviting rural images, such as picture-perfect nature, consisting of thousands of lakes, hay fields, and pine and birch forests. This kind of imagery is reinforced in advertising, which presents a mythical portrayal of the nostalgic and rustic past, enabling Finns to regain their material connection to their idyllic roots (Pietilä, Tillotson, and Askegaard 2019). Theoretically, this type of

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positive image building is approached in the discussion on neolocalism (e.g., Argent 2018; Flack 1997; Shortridge 1996), which is used to refer to a form of social action that combines place marketing, authenticity, and local commodity production (Holtkamp et al. 2016; Schnell and Reese 2003). Typical examples of neolocalism are craft breweries that highlight place, story, history, rootedness, and authenticity in their marketing (Booth-Smith 2017; Rosko 2017).

On the contrary, the more negative storyline regards rural areas as empty, untrendy, and backward looking. In Finland, this storyline stems from structural diversity such as the long distances, low population density, and lack of built environment that characterize the Finnish countryside. In general, the rural is often linked to a conservative mindset rather than open-minded and liberal values (Shucksmith 2016; Ward and Ray 2004). This binary is also true in Finland, where the discourse is characterized by high contrast between the rural and the urban (Hyyryläinen and Rynänen 2018). In these accounts, the rural is seen as the opposite of the more active and progressive urban, reflecting one of the oldest and most pervasive geographical binaries (Williams 1973; Woods 2011:3).

In this paper, we argue that it is not only the first mentioned positive storyline of the rural that is used in marketing today, but also increasingly the negative aspects of the rural are turned into a new, trendy, desirable, and even “sexy” approach to image creation, a phenomenon we label “sexing up rural places.” To illustrate, as Hyyryläinen and Rynänen (2018) claim, the binary contradiction between urban and rural actually creates creative tensions that attract consumers. Thus, by “sexiness” we do not refer to eroticism, but exclusively to the quality of being “generally attractive or interesting,” as defined by Merriam-Webster dictionary. Furthermore, it appears that the younger generation is in a pivotal role in this phenomenon, as studies indicate that Generation Y especially favors authentic products and experiences, locally produced goods, and smaller companies (Cronin, McCarthy, and Collins 2014; le Grand 2017; Piispa 2018), which are also at the heart of neolocalism.

The aim of the paper is to show how by using the negative aspects of the rural, it may be possible to produce attractive marketing by sexing up rural places. As positive aspects drawn from tradition, stories and history are at the center of neolocalism (e.g., Argent 2018; Fletchall 2016; Hede and Watne 2013; McLaughlin, Reid, and Moore 2014; Shortridge 1996), we revise the concept of neolocalism by highlighting its novel variability with the concept of sexing up rural places. The theoretical contribution of this paper consists of *revision*—seeing something that has been previously identified in a new way (MacInnis 2011). The core argument is that although we build on extant theorization on neolocalism, neolocalism

no longer captures the whole picture, or as MacInnis (2011:144) puts it: “the need for a revised perspective is reinforced by reference to dynamic changes in firms or the marketplace that make the prevailing view outdated.” Indeed, in this paper, we explore how sexing up rural places revises neolocalism and highlights an updated and more nuanced view of what is happening in the marketing of the rural.

Through this theoretical contribution, we also aim to shed light on more practical-level implications. By suggesting the novel concept of “sexing up rural places,” which might seem a bit provocative, we hope to provide bold ideas and outline tools for various rural actors, be they companies or municipalities, that might benefit from them. Thereby, sexing up rural places can enhance the vitality of areas and businesses by boosting the revitalization of the image of the rural. It can facilitate attracting new citizens and employees to rural areas, which might lead to changes in migration trends as well as bring new customers to rural businesses, thereby enabling the economic and social growth of rural areas.

The structure of this article is as follows. We begin by delineating the particularities of the Finnish landscape and rural areas. Second, to showcase where the theoretical contribution emerges from, we delve into discussions on place, neolocalism, and generational changes. Next, we present our methodology and analyze empirical data gathered through qualitative interviews of Finnish companies ($n = 9$) and consumers ($n = 17$). Our findings highlight how the sexiness of rural places consists of three interlinked features—generational experience, rural–urban hybridization, and minimalist visualization—that show the variability of the ongoing changes and bring forward novel nuances to neolocalism. Finally, we conclude by discussing how sexing up rural places may generate new possibilities for enhancing the vitality of rural areas and providing rejuvenated imagery to rural companies.

The Rural in Finland

Finland is a Nordic country with about 5.5 million inhabitants. As its land area is some 338,000 km², the population density is low. Finland is often considered the most rural country in the EU together with Ireland (Muilu 2010:74). Most of Finland’s surface area is predominantly rural or intermediate areas between rural and urban (Eurostat 2019). Together, these areas cover 95 percent of Finland, but have only about 1.66 million inhabitants (Sireni et al. 2017). Furthermore, in line with the international trend, Finland’s rural population is declining (Johnson and Lichter 2019). Between 2000 and 2015, Finnish rural areas lost 136,083 inhabitants, 7.76 percent of their population, while urban areas grew by 12.58 percent (Sireni et al. 2017). It is predicted that if this trend

continues, there will be only three growing city regions 20 years from now, and rural Finland will become increasingly empty (MDI 2019). At the same time, services in these areas have declined, as their supply has partly moved to more populated regional centers (Sireni et al. 2017).

However, there is no definitive definition of Finnish rural areas. For instance, the economic and landscape characteristics as well as types of rural areas vary greatly between municipalities. To shed light on this, the Finnish regional structure can be approached through the urban–rural classification, which separates regions based on their land use and population density (Figure 1) (Finnish Environment Institute SYKE 2013). As shown in Figure 1, large sparsely populated areas are most prevalent in the classification. These areas are more common in northern and eastern Finland, whereas southern and western Finland are very different in character, with larger cities and more densely populated rural areas.

Even though the overall regional trend is that big cities are growing while rural areas are losing population, a closer look reveals differences between the changes in rural areas in the 2000s (Ponnikas et al. 2014; Sireni et al. 2017). First, the most sparsely populated rural areas have suffered from the most dramatic demographic decline. Rural heartland areas have also suffered major migration losses. On the contrary, local centers in rural areas have just about managed to avoid the worst demographic declines. Rural areas close to urban areas are doing better; their population has grown throughout the 21st century, mostly due to the proximity of prosperous cities (Sireni et al. 2017).

Migration is not the only thing causing the demographic decline in these rural areas. When younger people move to cities, the rural birth rate decreases due to the older population structure (Sireni et al. 2017:30). This progression can also be argued to relate to the image of the rural. Often, the countryside is viewed negatively in public debate (Leinamo and Voutilainen 2017:14–16) or considered to have lost its allure (Alasuutari and Alasuutari 2017), as it is where old people live and conservative traditions prosper. Indeed, it could be argued that these developments, along with the growing migration of (young) people to bigger cities, have given Finnish rural areas an unfashionable or stagnant image. However, in this paper, we delve into how these rather negative images may be turned around and used to create a new, sexy image for rural areas and business.

From Stagnation of Places Toward the Sexy Rural

We begin the theoretical discussion by analyzing the various approaches of the concept of place. As neolocalism is by definition intertwined in fostering the sense of a particular place (e.g., Argent 2018; Holtkamp

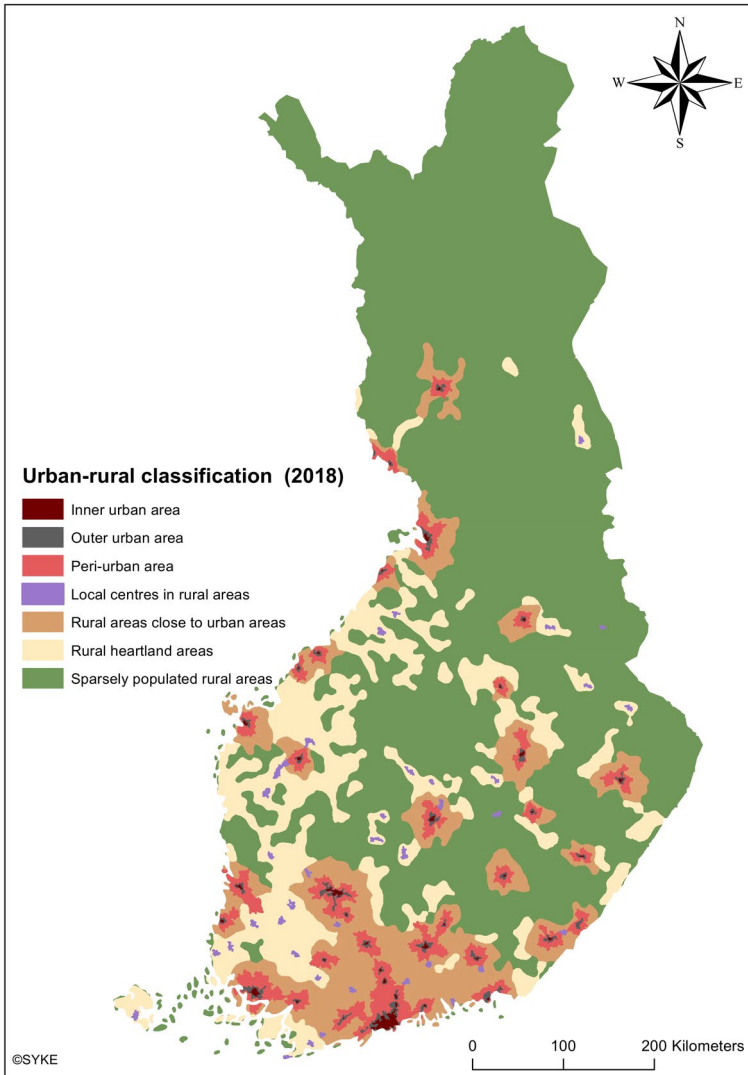


Figure 1. Urban-rural Classification in Finland (Finnish Environment Institute SYKE 2013).

et al. 2016), the general notions of the place create a theoretical background for this research. Furthermore, our key argument concerning the concept of place is that it should be understood as being in constant

motion, thereby also providing a basis for a more mutable conception for neolocalism. Second, we delve into the conceptual ideas of neolocalism, and highlight its key components and tenets. Third, we describe how the key ideas on the sexiness of rural places stem and are distinct from neolocalism. Finally, as the construction of the sexiness of rural places appears to be tightly connected to the younger generation, we discuss how the generational change has brought Generation Y (“millennials”) and the particular characteristics of its members to the center of the concept of the sexiness of rural places.

The (Un)Mobility of Places

At first glance, “place” may seem to be a relatively clear concept (Cresswell 2014:55). A closer look at the extant literature showcases, however, that it is very broad, and there are different definitions and uses of the concept in various fields of science. In the field of humanistic geography, the emphasis is on the soft, inclusive, and subjective aspect of the place (Cresswell 2014:35), and the significance of the place is expressed in terms of its uniqueness, as a lived, historical, subjective, and experiential entity (Relph 1976; Tuan 1977). In these accounts, place is often discussed in relation to identity, and places are regarded as having a vital role in maintaining and developing people’s and the region’s identity processes (Paasi 2003; Twigger-Ross and Uzzell 1996). On the contrary, in feminist geography, places are regarded as excluding and exploitive (Cresswell 2014; Massey 1994), and spatiality as a part of forming contesting identities (Paasi 2003).

For our purposes, it is interesting to note that the concept of place is often pondered in relation to (un)mobility. One could argue that in the present, highly globalized and fast-moving world, the significance of place decreases. As Massey (1991:24) puts it, “things are speeding up, and spreading out.” If we think of the concept of place as a pause in movement (Tuan 1977:6), it is hard to imagine that place would have a meaningful significance in our ever-changing world. In a similar spirit, the concept of place is discussed in relation to the concept of time, in which time refers to movement and dynamicity, and place to stasis and stagnation (Massey 1991:26). Places and locality can therefore be seen as reactionary, as an evasive retreat from the “real world” of movement, dynamicity, and progress. In these scenarios, place is seen as a source of security, calmness, and stagnation (Massey 1991) or permanence (Harvey 1996).

However, places are also argued as being in constant interaction and connection with the surrounding world. Seamon (1980) states that bodily mobility is the key component of understanding a place and

Lippard (1997:6–8) that mobility and place are closely interconnected, with place informing social action (Martin 2003). In the United States, for example, the diversity of rural areas has in fact increased, implying that places and people are in constant motion (Sharp and Lee 2017). According to Massey (1991), places do not have just one single identity, and the sense of place does not stem solely from inward-looking history. Wheeler (2014:30) describes places developing in “pluri-temporal form, rather than as fixed monuments representing a specific and static temporal state.” In fact, regional identity should be regarded as a process in which territorial boundaries, symbols, and institutional practices are constructed (Paasi 2003). Thus, places are actually formed through temporality and movement rather than stagnation.

This processual view of regional identity highlights those features of nature, culture, and people that are used in creating regional marketing (Paasi 2003). According to Chatzidakis, McEachern, and Warnaby (2018), the concept of place is mostly approached from a phenomenological and social-relational perspective in marketing. Due to their dynamic and relativistic aspects, places are in a constant state of becoming and their meanings are continuously recreated, showing again how place and mobility are not opposites, but inevitably interlinked. Branding takes place dynamically in constant dialog between various stakeholders (Kavaratzis and Hatch 2013) and different organizations use the discursive resources of the place to boost collective action (Martin 2003). This supports our conceptualization of sexing up rural places in which the changing meanings of rural places are produced and recreated by various actors to rejuvenate rural images.

Furthermore, it is interesting to note that the traditional, immobile definition of place is in line with the traditional image of Finnish rural areas. This notion is in the center of our argument: The concept of place and the Finnish rural are both conventionally regarded as stagnant, evasive, and backward, rather than cool, trendy, and mobile. However, we aim to show the opposite: We argue that places, the rural and localities are important and interesting in a globalized world of flows and mobilities.

The Relationship Between Place and Neolocalism

Neolocalism can be broadly understood as a form of social action emphasizing place and locality, and as a conscious effort by communities or companies to cherish and foster the sense of place based on the—usually positive—qualities of their community (e.g., Argent 2018; Holtkamp et al. 2016). Shortridge (1996) is often considered the inventor of the concept, which he introduced in his study of the American microbrewing

industry in its rise in the 1980s. According to Shortridge (1996), microbrewers emphasized locality in naming and label design. Although the microbrewery boom is at the center of neolocalism, Schnell and Reese (2003) assume that the phenomenon is actually much larger in scale. They (Ibid.) link the phenomenon of people's general desire to get away from homogeneity at the national/global level and embrace the local and original, and therefore, neolocalism is also regarded as a counteraction to globalization and to homogenous large corporations (Flack 1997:38). Although the concept refers to the means by which locals and companies within the community can influence the challenges posed by globalization, neolocalism is not an anti-globalist movement. Instead, it aims to change prevailing political and administrative practices by highlighting elements of place, story, history, rootedness, and authenticity (Booth-Smith 2017; Rosko, 2017). Authenticity is a particularly crucial element in neolocalism since all the other features are more or less based on it, and therefore, neolocalist brands and products should always naturally link to actual local places, stories, and images. Authenticity manifests itself, for example, in the genuine connection of a company's operations with its particular place.

The elements of neolocalism are highlighted in the visual materials and marketing of the products. As place attachment and loyalty can be strengthened by stories and consciousness of shared local history (Schnell and Reese 2003:57; Tuan 1991; Twigger-Ross and Uzzell 1996), companies engaged in neolocalism employ similar themes in their visual appearance: layered history, stories, traditions, and highlighted locality. Microbreweries in particular are found to seek to awaken a sense of belonging, authenticity, and the rootedness of place (Schnell and Reese 2003:59), visually evoked in their corporate logos, product packaging, and typography (Argent 2018; Debies-Carl 2018). To illustrate, label typography is often old-fashioned/curlicue and features earthy colors. The labels connect the mindset with the history of the places (e.g., stressing historical buildings, places, or events). Thus, the visuals used in neolocalism emphasize traditional and historical elements, expressed through positive images of authenticity, short stories, and pictures (Schnell and Reese 2003), as the backbones of neolocalism.

Schnell (2013:76–81) conducted a geographical review of neolocalism in the United States. According to him, the phenomenon occurs mostly in urban or suburban areas, which are usually politically liberal and wealthy. It can be generalized that in the United States one has the best chances of finding manifestations of neolocalism in a county with a smaller proportion of inhabitants born in that county (see Schnell 2013). This, according to Schnell (2013), is due to the desire of people

who have moved from elsewhere to seek local “roots.” Indeed, migration seems to play a major role in the formation of neolocalism, as it exposes people’s interest in unique places (Flack 1997).

Growing cities and their surroundings serve as good bases for neolocalism in Finland as well (Honkaniemi, Lundström, and Viinamäki 2019); however, the phenomenon takes a slightly different form. Neolocalist companies can also operate in areas that have not traditionally been understood as “politically liberal” as defined by Schnell (2013). For example, the number of neolocalist companies is particularly high in Southern Ostrobothnia, a rather conservative and robust rural heartland county in western Finland. The county is virile in a business sense, with a high density of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Due to the region’s conservative and backward stigma, companies are able to use this place-related stigma and turn “uncool into cool.” In this way, the negative features of the rural area, such as its backwardness, can be employed in marketing, images, and storytelling, as they are authentically based on the location.

To sum up, neolocalism consists of elements such as place, authenticity, stories, and history. These elements are produced by companies in order to differentiate themselves from competitors by emphasizing a regional touch. The companies market themselves and their products, but at the same time also market “their places” (Schnell 2013). The companies thus benefit from the unique characteristics of the place, while the place benefits from the neolocalist companies, as the sense of place is transferred forward.

Turning Uncool Places Into Sexy Rural Places

Although previous research on neolocalism has focused on craft breweries (e.g., Argent 2018; Flack 1997; Shortridge 1996), the phenomenon is much wider, as neolocalist features also appear in different industries (Schnell and Reese 2003), such as in design, alcohol, clothing, and food production. Although the essentials of neolocalism can be found in the characteristics of these companies, we claim that there is more to it. We call this phenomenon sexing up rural places. The way companies do this revises neolocalism by updating and bringing new nuances to it in several respects, such as the way of using rural elements in brand stories and imagery, products, and other marketing materials that turn the uncool into something cool and sexy. In contrast to neolocalism and other more general rural marketing, the sexiness of rural places does not obscure the negative features of the rural—on the contrary, they are emphasized. Thus, the marketing imagery is not overly polished or clean, but based on a genuine sense of the place, as its negative features are turned into

something positive through an authentic connection to the place. In this way, the sexiness of the rural places changes the image of the rural, as it embraces the authentic characteristics of the place, such as the somewhat rough or backward nature of the place. To further highlight the distinction between neolocalism and sexiness of the rural from each other, we illustrate our point with three examples.

First, the famous Finnish vodka brand named after a small village utilizes many originally negative aspects of Finnish rural life in its marketing and turns these aspects into something positive. The company plays with rural stereotypes like distorted age distribution, reticence, and emptiness. The twist is that, by underlining the usually hidden negativity, their ads actually end up making Finland's countryside more interesting, humorous, and even exotic, especially to foreigners. This is highlighted in its brand slogan, "Vodka from a village," which evokes smallness and authenticity to appeal to consumers around the world.

Second, the farm-based design company Myssyfarmi ("Wooly Cap Farm") employs stereotypically negative rural imagery and meanings. Its products are knitted by local grannies, which plays with the aging population of rural Finland—these products, the company declares, are "not cool but warm" (Picture 1). Myssyfarmi thus markets its products with a pinch of self-irony while playing with rural backwardness combined with minimalistic urban and Nordic esthetics.

Third, Sugar Daddies Co., an Isokyrö-based honey and surf wax company, plays with typical stereotypes and self-irony even in the name of the company. Isokyrö is a municipality in Southern Ostrobothnia, a robust rural heartland county in western Finland. As an example of its authenticity, the company highlights specific places in Isokyrö in the names of its products: many of its honey jars are named after the places where the honey is collected. They turn the uncool into something cool or even sexy in their marketing material and emphasize the "weirdness" of the village combined with the typically negative stereotypes of the backward rural, as can be seen in Picture 2. Turning the uncool into something cool is strongly related to the place, and also to Gen Y esthetics. The tiger, mullet, and "weird cult stuff" refer to Netflix's popular Joe Exotic "Tiger King" documentary, which was popular in the spring and summer of 2020, especially among young adults.

The sexiness of rural places thus has its background strongly in neolocalism, as the rural is made sexy through stories, imagery, and authenticity, which are also the backbones of neolocalism. However, the concept of neolocalism does not completely cover the actions of these companies. The companies' visual imagery plays with minimalist esthetics while emphasizing the traditional aspects of rural Finland. Instead of



Picture 1. Myssyfarmi's Commercial: How Uncool Is That? Photography: Jere Satamo.

concealing the stereotypically negative aspects of the countryside, they are highlighted self-ironically.

According to Debies-Carl's (2018) analysis, bigger companies have a more generic understanding of places and locations, and cannot therefore believably adopt neolocalist claims. The Finnish examples support this argument: Most of the companies using these themes in their branding are young, small, and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). In addition, most of the entrepreneurs who rely on the sexiness of rural places belong to Generation Y—they are millennials. The same can be observed about their customers; the image created by these companies seems to be especially appealing to Generation Y (Honkaniemi et al. 2019).

The Rejuvenating Role of the Changing Generations

The fundamental idea of the concept of generation is that in terms of values, beliefs, and conceptions of life, each generation is different from its predecessors (Lindén, Annala, and Mäkinen 2016:40). Classic thinker Karl Mannheim [1927] (1952) distinguishes between biological and social approaches to generation (Alestalo 2007; Mannheim [1927] 1952). Whereas the biological approach is based on biological age, the social definition emphasizes that a generation is made up of the actions



Picture 2. Sugar Daddies' Picture With Caption on Instagram: "Greetings From Isokyrö, If You Have a Mullet—You Can Apply to Become a Citizen in This Weird Village. But If You Own a Tractor You Get Access Into Some Weird Cult Stuff Which Does Not Include Tigers, but Bees."

of the people living in the same historical, social, and cultural environment (Toivonen 1998:177). The members of the generation are connected by an awareness of the specificity of their own generation. The distinction in lifestyles and values is usually made in relation to older generations (Purhonen 2007:17).

These observations are strongly linked to the concept of third generation return by social historian Hansen (1938). Hansen's (1938) main

idea is that the first generation of immigrants in the USA—those born abroad—retained their previous homeland’s language and habits. The second generation, born in the USA, is more likely to adopt the New World’s customs. However, the grandchildren of the first immigrant generation are more eager to look back at their original roots and are most likely to assimilate to the New World without losing their ethnic identity (Dewey 2020; Hansen 1938).

The same logic seems to apply to rural–urban migration patterns in Finland. Urbanization is relatively recent in Finland, and the first big migration from rural to urban areas started in the 1950s and 1960s. This means that the parents or the grandparents of Generation Y have one foot in the countryside and remember the push factors of migration, such as lack of jobs or small social circles. Yet, for the younger, third generation, the rural becomes interesting rather than just depressing. Therefore, an essential aspect of sexing up places is Generation Y, those born between the early 1980s and the 1990s (Piispa 2018), commonly referred to as millennials.

Following the logic of generational change, it appears that it is millennial entrepreneurs who are currently sexing up rural places. Furthermore, as they target consumers of the same age group, the phenomenon of sexing up rural places seems to be driven by millennials for millennials. To ground this evolution, we explore the general ideas of the millennial generation and their consumption patterns.

In regard to the generational experience of millennials, they are described as self-confident, self-revealing, open, optimistic, and willing to change (Gatrell, Reid, and Steiger 2018; Piispa 2018). In addition, millennials favor densely populated urban environments (Moos 2015). They are an “urban generation”—the statistics show that millennials inhabit large cities in Finland. It should be noted that, in the Finnish context, a large city is one with over 50,000 inhabitants. There are 21 such cities in Finland (referred to as C21). Around 63 percent of Generation Y lives in C21, while 53 percent of the total population are city dwellers (Piispa 2018).

In their lifestyle and consuming habits, millennials are interested in local cultures and people (Gatrell et al. 2018). Millennials favor smaller companies over mainstream companies (Carter 2016). According to Gatrell et al. (2018), millennials emphasize the values, lifestyles, and personalities of these smaller companies, are willing to pay more for their products and services, and show loyalty to those brands. Their food consumption can indeed be seen to differ from mainstream consumer culture (Cronin et al. 2014). Millennials are described as adventurous consumers who emphasize individualism and appreciate versatility,

authenticity, and creativity (Gatrell et al. 2018). Furthermore, millennials value ecological-ethical consumption (Chen and Chai 2010; Naderi and van Steenburg 2018), as reflected in the growing popularity of organic/vegetarian food, flea markets, and vintage shopping.

However, these overall consumption preferences and styles cannot possibly apply to the whole of Generation Y, although such generalizations are often made. Indeed, many of the consumption trends described above are particularly evident among a subgroup of Generation Y, hipsters, who are often portrayed as urban and trend-conscious young adults. Thus, as an example, their consumer behavior emphasizes flexibility, trendiness, and authenticity, and instead of favoring mainstream brands they prefer small products and services (le Grand 2017:1–2; Maly and Varis 2016). These characteristics show how millennials play a key role in the formation of the sexiness of rural places.

Data and Methods

In order to achieve multisided viewpoints and spark open discussions on the sexiness of rural places, we generated data through qualitative interviews. Furthermore, to listen to both producers and consumers (Kavaratzis and Hatch 2013) involved in the sexiness of rural places phenomenon, we interviewed Finnish companies as well as rural and urban consumers.

When interviewing companies, we sought to gain insight into how features of neolocalism and the sexiness of the place appear in the activities of Finnish companies. Nine qualitative semi-structured interviews (Table 1) were carried out in the spring of 2018. The interview frame consists of four sections: (1) background information on the company (e.g., size of the company, the customer profile, and future prospects), (2) the brand of the company and role of the rural in it (e.g., the brand in general, to whom it is aimed at, feedback about the brand, the appearance of the rural in the brand, why the rural has been chosen, and the emphasized/unemphasized features of the rural in the brand), (3) the rural in general (e.g., the general perception of the rural, whether it is trendy and important, the location of the company, and the desire to develop the community), and (4) other (e.g., freeform answers and other specific discussions relating to the particular company). The interviews were conducted in person at the interviewees' office (5) or by telephone (4). The interviews spanned from 30 to 55 minutes and were transcribed, yielding 71 pages of text.

The selection of companies was a two-part process. First, we sought to find Finnish companies using the ideas of neolocalism in their marketing and branding. The total number of companies soon reached 100.

Table 1. Data Set 1: Companies Interviewed Through Industry and Company Turnover.

Company	Industry	Company Turnover
C1	Cosmetics	EUR 38,000
C2	Superfood	EUR 221,000
C3	Furniture	EUR 2.6 million
C4	Alcohol	EUR 205.3 million
C5	Clothing	EUR 2.3 million
C6	Alcohol	EUR 4.5 million
C7	Dairy products	EUR 700,000
C8	Cosmetics	EUR 11,000
C9	Clothing	EUR 300,000

Second, we focused on those in this group using the idea of sexing up rural places as a core brand strategy. Also, when choosing the companies, we sought diversity in terms of industries represented, while choosing only companies operating in consumer markets. In addition, the companies were chosen based on their brands' visual imagery. Furthermore, the companies varied in size; the turnover of the interviewed companies ranged from EUR 11,000 to EUR 205 million. Eight of the companies are SMEs and one is a listed company. This process eventually led to the selection of nine companies.

Aligned with the initial assumption of the influence of generational change, we could easily observe that in the original list of 100 companies, Generation Y was well represented. As the age of the person interviewed was not a selection criterion, out of the chosen interviewees (entrepreneur, brand manager, and CEO) five were members of Generation Y and four of the preceding Generation X. However, the generational impact was evident in the companies, as five of the interviewed companies are young, founded in the past 5 years, and the rest had transferred their business to the younger generation, which had changed almost the whole company in terms of image and strategy. In Table 1 below, we list the companies interviewed.

Second, the consumer data were generated in four qualitative focus group interviews (Table 2). In order to gain a multifaceted understanding of consumer meaning-making regarding the Finnish countryside and its connection to company images, we interviewed both consumers living in rural areas (two groups) and urban consumers (two groups). The interviewees were recruited via a call posted on the social media pages of two of the biggest cities of Finland and of two rural municipalities. The selection criteria for consumers to be included in the focus groups were their personal experience of being either “a city person” or

Table 2. Data Set 2: Consumers Participating in the Focus Group Interviews.

Rural Consumers (R) (Two Groups)	Municipality of Teisko (four persons) Municipality of Kangasala (four persons)	4 women and 4 men together	Age 22–67
Urban Consumers (U) (Two Groups)	City of Tampere (four persons) City of Helsinki (five persons)	5 women and 4 men together	Age 24–35

“a rural person.” Their ages ranged between 22 and 67, but almost all (15 out of 17) were members of Generation Y. The focus groups were carried out in person during the fall of 2018 and each had four or five participants ($n = 17$). The focus group interviews took place either in local cafés or participants’ homes according to their wishes.

The focus groups followed an identical script, which was however allowed to change according to discussion and social interaction. The script consisted of three themes—brands and advertising in general, images related to rural areas, and brand narratives—which were further illuminated by more detailed questions appropriate to each conversation. To provoke fruitful discussion on meanings related to the rural business, an advertisement video—from one of the interviewed alcohol-producing companies—was shown during the discussion. The video was particularly suitable for our purposes as the company uses strong visual imagery in its marketing and has firm roots in the Finnish countryside. This enabled us to elicit conversations about rural meanings in marketing without explicitly mentioning any preset ideas. The focus group discussions lasted around 45 minutes and were transcribed, resulting in 58 pages of text.

The analysis of both data sets followed hermeneutic procedures of interpreting qualitative data, comprising abductive data analysis in which both theoretical understandings and the richness, originality, and distinctiveness of the data are emphasized (Thompson 1997). In the first phase, the company and consumer data sets were analyzed separately to identify any emergent themes on the sexiness of rural places. Thus, the initial coding of the data sets was informed by extant theory, paying attention to features of neolocalism (e.g., authenticity, social engagement in local places, and tradition), but allowing any new themes to enter as they emerged when analyzing the data sets. In the next phase, to find shared meanings and interpretations, we aligned the two data sets to identify

commonalities and extract joint themes. In searching for shared features of the sexiness of the place, we used extant theory as an informative tool, bearing in mind the prior understanding on neocalism, but focusing on finding a novel conceptualization of the features characterizing the sexiness of rural places. Therefore, as our aim was not only to strengthen existing ideas of neocalism, but also to look beyond it, the final finding categories highlight the features that revise it by adding new nuances.

Companies and Consumers Sexing Up Rural Places of Finland

Our analysis shows both outcomes that strengthen the prior ideas on neocalism in a traditional sense and also highlights how the new nuances of the sexiness of rural places revise the extant knowledge on neocalism. In regard to the previous research on neocalism, the themes of authenticity, stories, history, small places, tradition-enhancing visions, social engagement with local activities and people, and the social connection of business to the place (Argent 2018; Schnell 2013) also came up in our data. Next, we first illustrate how our findings support prior theory with examples of authenticity, social engagement, and connection, and then, in the following sections, we focus on novel nuances.

First, authenticity in relation to a rural place is evident in both the consumer and company interviews. Of the nine interviewed companies, seven either reside in or hail from the village the company highlights in its brand. The other two companies are also authentically connected to rural places—they have a big manufacturing plant in the village or the entrepreneur has roots in that rural area. The companies felt that if the brand is not authentic, it will be caught in the act, as consumers are very sensitive about noticing false stories. Therefore, this involves creating a brand narrative that engages consumers credibly. Consumers indeed emphasized that when rural images are used in corporate marketing, the connection must be authentic and real; for instance, it must be easy to link the line of business—such as foods—to the countryside. Thus, the connection between the company and the rural needs to be authentic; as an illustration, one of our informants describes a case in which the opposite is true:

R1: “Yeah, like, if Shell shows you mountain streams, that just feels tacked on ...”

Second, in relation to social engagement and connection, companies operating in a neocal framework are employers in their community and the engines of the local economy and place-based social development (Argent 2018:11–12; Martin 2003). Desire to develop the region also emerged in our analysis. Based on our data, companies that sex up rural places have a strong local role; besides the production of images,

they also participate tangibly in rural development. For example, one company maintains and develops local expertise and helps other smaller companies in the same industry in its region. Many companies also mentioned other companies that might benefit from using the idea of the sexiness of rural places in their marketing. Consumers, in turn, expressed their wish to support local producers, especially smaller ones, and thereby participate in vitalizing not only companies, but also their operating environments.

In addition to the abovementioned extant characteristics of neolocalism, our analysis shows three novel nuances relating to how the sexiness of rural places is presented and conceptualized in products and brands. They are: (1) generational experience, (2) mental hybridization of the rural and the urban, and (3) minimalistic visualization, which is distinctly different from neolocalist traditions. These features combined bring out the core of the sexiness of rural places, which is the creation of a new image for Finnish rural areas. These key features are highly overlapping and in constant dynamic interaction with each other as the meanings develop in relation to each other. Thereby, sexing up rural places not only updates and adds new nuances to neolocalism, but also showcases the dynamic and ever-changing nature of such a construct in need of revision. This framework is illustrated in Figure 2.

Generational Experience

The generational experience of Generation Y (or millennials) is the first feature that revises neolocalism toward the sexiness of rural places. On the one hand, millennial entrepreneurs are responsible for brand image creation. On the other hand, millennial consumers exhibit the most favorable response, which then expands to other age groups. The next quotes from urban consumer focus groups highlight how generational experience is intertwined with emerging imaginative visions, consumer memories, rural scenery, and the way these imageries are employed in creating brand images for trendy new foodstuffs (e.g., local, vegan) and further experienced by various kinds of consumers. In addition, they highlight the binaries between the urban and rural while discussing the differences in generational experiences.

U2: “Older people might remember childhood memories. They’ve been used in past ads. More people lived in the countryside in the past. Rural areas are rich in evocative imagery, and it’s easy to tie the image marketing of different products to that. Think about the food business: Local production, vegan products or pure products in general are fashionable words that people unconsciously associate with a product linked to a rural landscape. It’s a rich area that creates different impressions

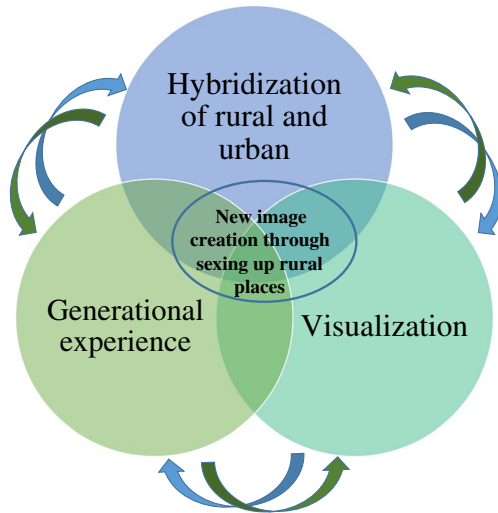


Figure 2. Framework for New Image Creation Through Sexing up Rural Places.

for different consumers—a neat, sure-fire solution. Many kinds of consumers link their own memories of nature and the countryside to the product...”

U1: “I started thinking of all the memories that come to my mind [about the Finnish rural] and then my thoughts drifted to my grandparents—the countryside means old people, and the city means young people. I know very few young people who live in the countryside.”

Social and personal memories of a certain place are indeed found to be an important part of place-based memory and heritage construction (Wheeler 2014:17). Also, the concept of third generation return is emphasized here as the generational experience of rural background came up in our data; consumers felt proud of their rural roots. Many consumers consider themselves as both urban and rural citizens (also, Aho and Rahkonen 2014), for instance, because they live close to both surroundings; one of our informants says: “We go to the city to work and see cows on our way back home—which are we, urban or rural?”

Generation Y contributes to the creation of the new image of the rural, in which themes of authenticity, openness, ecology, ethics, and smallness are closely intertwined. This new image and imaginative understanding of Finnish rural areas differs significantly from the discussion, in which the rural is seen pessimistically and as uninteresting (Leinamo and Voutilainen 2017). Companies that sex up rural places create this new

image, which is tightly interwoven with the generational experience, as the following company excerpt showcases.

C4: “I realized that we’ve already got a true story [...] that something is truly from some place, is much more important to millennials than to older generations—that you’re from somewhere, you can be traced back to that place ...”

The consumption patterns and practices of millennials are indeed essential; in particular, our data shows how hipsters as its subgroup consisting of urban and trend-conscious young adults have a significant impact on the success and popularity of rural products. They emphasize flexibility, trendiness, and authenticity in their consumption, and favor small-scale producers (le Grand 2017:1–2; Maly and Varis, 2016). What is desirable and credible in the eyes of a trendy urban consumer may stem, maybe surprisingly, from the “untrendy” rural. As the following quote from a company highlights, hipster culture is truly beneficial for this phenomenon, as hipsters appreciate cool and authentic involvement that does not need to originate from big cities.

C6: “I think hipster culture is wonderful—they appreciate small, cool things, wherever they’re from. These things don’t have to be from Helsinki or New York, by some big brand that steamrolls over everything. Hipsters get into cool things from everywhere and learn all about them.”

In summary, the generational experience highlights how the rural gains new interpretations in the eyes of millennial consumers and producers, and is entwined with meanings stemming from the urban, as discussed below.

Hybridization of the Rural and the Urban

The second feature extends neolocalism toward rural–urban hybridization. Emphasizing urban elements is rare in the frames of neolocalism (Debies-Carl 2018), and in line with more general notions of place identification in which urban residents are found usually to negatively highlight the distinctive characteristics of rural areas to strengthen their city-identification (Twigger-Ross and Uzzell 1996). Therefore, the idea of crossing this rural–urban binary with hybridity (Wheeler 2014) revises earlier discussions. Our findings show that companies invigorate brand images through their visual appearance, particularly in a way that combines elements from both the urban and the rural worlds. This visual-esthetic image reduces the mental gap between the rural and the urban, as it borrows elements from both and thereby enables attracting young and urban consumers.

According to the company interviews, their products are not aimed only at urban consumers per se. However, city-living consumers are the

ones who seek authentic products, and in this context, the rural generates the characteristics they respond to positively. Urban consumers want to “feel” and “live” a rural experience in safer, familiar surroundings. Urban consumers pointed out that it would be vital to narrow the gap between the rural and urban in consumption. The rural can be seen in urban settings in many respects, as one of our company interviewees explained:

C5: “An enlightened urban consumer wants authentic products [...] We don’t make fashion, but wilderness wear under our original concept. These consumers experience our clothes as authentic and thus cool—you can see people wearing our jackets in the city, too.”

The target consumer of this kind of rural–urban hybridization is not “a genuine guy living in a cottage in the wilds of Lapland,” as stated by one of our company interviewees. Rather, it is aimed at consumers who have rural roots. Therefore, the images often play between the “real” rural and the urban: neither too close nor too far from the rural. In the consumer focus groups, city-dwelling consumers especially enjoyed this hybridization. The following excerpt illustrates how urban consumers analyze the alcohol company advertisement in a way that highlights traditionality and old-fashioned feelings, while satisfying urban expectations of a good story and high-quality visualization.

U1: “The images and other stuff had an old-timey feeling, but the storyteller’s voice gave me chills—like, wow, he’s gonna tell a great story. I liked that it was old-fashioned, traditional in a good way.”

Thus, the consumers linked themes of traditionality and old-fashioned to the rural, and these (sometimes negative) images are not hidden, but openly played with. Indeed, when the company has successfully sexed these ideas up, the feeling is also urban.

When the stereotypically two extremes of place—urban and rural—collide without juxtaposition, the images and conceptions of these two will mix and be revived. The exciting and dynamic is not reserved only for the urban and the boring and the static not only for the rural, as the next quote points out. The interest of the quote lies in its surprising and candid way of connecting these two worlds:

C6: “We combine the typical hipster vibe of the Punavuori [trendy neighborhood in downtown Helsinki] with a rural flavor, not by portraying them as opposites, but by creating similarities.”

C9: “People want to see images they can relate to—so we have to show our products in an urban environment, which is where probably 90 percent of our products are used. We also have to show that side, too, we can’t just be all straight-laced and stuck out here in the fields. But in our mix of urban photos and images from the countryside, we’ve got this ...

balance. At the same time, we must also be careful not to lose the essence of what makes us different.”

Thus, creating a brand narrative that engages consumers requires balancing both sides with style. Rural–urban hybridization to a great extent involves the visualization of the idea, we analyze how exactly in greater depth in the following.

Minimalist Visualization and Imagery

The third feature, visualization, updates neolocalism so that the sexiness of rural places is produced mainly through minimalism, such as black-and-white images and/or sharp trendy colors with stylish layout. Minimalism as a movement is nothing new. In general, the concept has usually described a wide variety of different forms of art, music, design, or architecture in the 20th century. The concept is also often used, for example, in connection with dressing and interior esthetics and decoration. Especially in recent years, more popular observations have been made about the interconnection of minimalism and millennials (e.g., Davis 2020; Weinswig 2016). Concepts such as “millennial aesthetic,” “millennial pink,” or “hipster aesthetics” have emerged, and they are usually described with the words “gentle,” “enticing,” “placid,” or “friendly.” They also favor “blank, clean surfaces” and “soft lines” (Davis 2020), linking them more to the classic interpretation of minimalism. Though these concepts may seem a bit vague, they have something important to tell about this time. For example, minimalism can be seen not only as style, but also as a way of life. Reducing consumption, caring for the environment and coping with less can also be seen as part of a minimalist way of thinking (e.g., Davis 2020; Karunungan 2017; Tate 2020; Weinswig 2016). These qualities can also be seen in the marketing actions of companies we interviewed.

Typical neolocalism does not employ a minimalist style of imagery. For example, Schnell and Reese (2003:59) did not find modern imagery or names in their data. On the contrary, according to them, historical lifestyles are emphasized over modern ones, and images tend to connect to history through nostalgia (e.g., steam ships, and horses). As the new minimal visualization brings the elements of the rural to the urban environment, millennial consumers can buy a piece of the rural when purchasing the products. According to Lundström, Honkaniemi, and Viinamäki (2019), these characteristics go hand in hand with the general associations of the Finnish countryside, such as nature, purity and authenticity. However, as Picture 3 shows, the visual imagery plays with old-fashioned rural artifacts (such as an enamel mug, traditionally used in Finnish rural areas), but in a way that the representation style and



Picture 3. Kyrö Distillery's Commercial: Rural and Urban Hybrid.

layout of the picture is minimalist and more up-to-date (such as black-and-white color scheme and angle of the picture), and this particular rural item is brought into an urban-looking bar with the highly emphasized branded product. This kind of representation style can also clearly be seen in Picture 2, where an old rustic tractor is modernized and visualized in a new minimalist way.

Some of the interviewed companies stressed that many good rural products and services remain unknown due to inadequate and outdated marketing and branding. In many cases, the product itself may be of high quality, but is not marketed to appeal to the younger audience. A similar observation can be made about the dry, bluntly informative marketing communications of rural places (e.g., municipalities), although visibility is becoming increasingly important along with the growing role of social media, in which much of the image creation takes place. One of the company representatives analyzes this phenomenon:

C5: "It doesn't matter how excellent your product or place is—if you can't communicate about it properly, your sales will suffer, you won't make the most of it."

The significance of high-quality visualization also emerged in consumer data. Urban consumers, in particular, liked the advertisement's self-ironic humor that twists the traditional meanings of the rural. As the humor is connected to the quality of the product, the company,

smallness, and the Finnish countryside, it seems to successfully generate authenticity and honesty for the brand. Most importantly, this image is carried out through minimalist visualization:

U1: “I think it’s really minimalistic, nothing extra—they produce just one product and that’s it. And it’s good.”

Our analysis has shown how the three features—generational experience, rural–urban hybridization, and minimalistic visualization—are interrelated when establishing the sexiness of rural places in a way that revises neocalism. Next, we finalize our analysis to highlight how these features combined result in new image creation for companies sexing up rural places.

New Image Creation

New image creation relates to the novel kind of imaginative understanding of rural areas through the three features. Generational experience, rural–urban hybridization and minimalist visuality together create a new rural image by and for millennials. These three features of sexing up rural places stem from and simultaneously revise the concept of neocalism. Figure 2 highlights these intertwined and overlapping features of the sexiness of rural places. To illustrate, generational experience is strongly linked to the use of minimalist, trendy visuals, which in turn leads to a new kind of image of rural areas. Rural–urban hybridization is also interconnected, as the visual brand images combine features of both rural and urban environments attracting millennial consumers.

Furthermore, not only are these features intertwined, so are the actors and places contributing to the creation of the sexiness of rural places. Companies attach emotional ties and meanings from a place to their branded products, while consumers want to “experience” the rural in a way that highlights the good values of a particular rural place. According to Lippard (1997), each time we enter a new place, that place adds something to us, and we also add something to the place. Therefore, places, companies and consumers form a circle in which all participate in this new image creation of rural meanings (also, Kavaratzis and Hatch 2013).

New image creation emphasizes the importance of visual materials because mental attachment to rural places is created particularly with images featuring a mixture of rural and urban elements. As this combination decreases the contrast between the rural and urban, rural places become a natural part of urban life. Furthermore, when an urban consumer embraces a product mainly developed for rural conditions (e.g., Fjällräven or Timberland), the identity of this brand experiences a dramatic change (Kuksov, Shackar, and Wang 2013). In this case it refers to

the displacement of a product away from its natural environment. This kind of mixing creates a new kind of image for the rural—and the urban.

Our results show that the smallness, peripherality, and backwardness of the community can be clearly beneficial if a company brands itself through these images and thereby engages in sexying up the rural place. These rural interpretations can produce new kinds of opportunities when characteristics that are usually seen as weaknesses can be turned into strengths. These companies give new nuances to the rural, for instance, through self-ironic humor:

C6: “Maybe our Finnish negation of the countryside has become self-ironic. I think it’s amusing.”

C9: “Well, authenticity is a vital part of our brand—we don’t try to hide anything. Our most popular Instagram photo from the past month is a shot of our Piimätie road, which has a darned lot of potholes, a whole series of them. Definitely our most popular photo for some time. People are interested in authenticity.”

C1: “Yes, I’d say that being located in some small place would be valuable. Being from someplace other than Helsinki absolutely yields added value. The smaller and grungier the place the brand is from, the better.”

Our findings also relate to the concept of the place. Like rural areas, place is also traditionally related to stagnation, evasion, and a reactionary mindset. However, places, and rural places in particular, gain new meaning if they are conceptualized as streams of social interactions and meeting points without boundaries (Massey 1991:28). Millennials in turn create and consume this progressive understanding of (rural) places that are open to global flows to construct a fresh image. Our results show that the companies generate their own perceptions and experiences about the rural and its places through the brand of the company. It is aimed especially at urban consumers who might not have direct links to the rural. The members of the third generation are returning to the rural areas of Finland in their own way.

Conclusions

In the current research, we have revised the concept of neolocalism by showing how companies that sex up rural places update and add novel nuances to the neolocalist marketing. Central to our argument is that these novel nuances highlight how instead of concealing the negative aspects (e.g., emptiness, backward-looking atmosphere, and old-age structure) of the rural, these images are turned into something positive, wanted, trendy, desirable, and eventually sexy. We have chosen not only to use the term “sexy” in the sense of “generally attractive or interesting,” but also to encourage bold ideas that play with the traditional imagery

of the rural and twist them in a new way. Thus, we hope that this bit of provocative terminology helps to push forward rethinking and revitalizing of rural areas and images.

Our study contributes theoretically to the concept of neolocalism by showing how the sexiness of rural places has three new interlinked features that revise neolocalism: generational experience, rural–urban hybridization, and minimalist visualization, which combined provide ideas for new image creation. These three features are still emerging, bubbling under the surface, and thus, their identification shows why the update on the concept of neolocalism is both timely and necessary. It follows that there is a chance that this identification can lead into a broader change in terms of developing and revitalizing rural business and areas. To illustrate, it has been interesting to note that after our data collection, a new kind of behavior has already emerged between many of the case companies, as they are forming networks for collaboration. Some of them have started to collaborate in order to boost their own and each other's businesses, as well as their places' images.

As for the practical implications of our research, the idea of sexing up rural places indeed creates opportunities for rural companies. In their visual appearance, companies may combine elements of the urban and rural—places often viewed as opposites. This combination increases the attractiveness of the rural in a new way, as it reduces the mental gap between the rural and urban, encompassing fine-tuned combinations of both. Therefore, even the concept of the rural should be seen in more nuanced terms, especially in how we think about rural places associated with youth, trends, and urbanity level. Therefore, sexing up rural places adds new nuances to neolocalism and the rural in that while neolocalism stresses traditional imagery, storytelling, and history, the sexiness of rural places concentrates on minimalistic imagery, hybridization of urban and rural lifestyles, and the generational experience of millennials. Schnell and Reese (2006:65) have stated about neolocalism: “This is marketing, not for the masses, but for the selected few.” This goes hand in hand with sexying up the places—not everyone necessarily picks up on these nuances, but those who do, provide significant market potential for local companies and communities. Neolocalism has made a strong contribution, especially in the microbrewing industry, but the sexiness of rural places has much to offer to other rural industries as well.

Furthermore, companies employing these ideas are employers in their regions and participate in revitalizing their rural communities. At the intellectual level, they increase the communal social capital (e.g., Coleman 1988; Putnam 1993), self-confidence and community spirit of rural areas as they improve the rural brand image. Our findings highlight

how companies that sex up rural places in fact urge other companies as well as rural regions that they could and should use these ideas in their marketing, too. Therefore, this phenomenon may push forward rural community cohesion and development on a more general level. Future research could dig deeper into the concept of social capital and elaborate on its role in this revitalization of the rural, as we see signs of emerging communality also in this study.

As Finnish rural areas have recently suffered from net emigration and image losses, there is a social need and rationale for utilizing ideas such as the sexiness of rural places. Thus, there is a chance to revitalize not only rural industries, but also municipalities and regions. If we take a look at the traditional way of marketing the rural in Finland, the imagery of nature, peace, and traditions are prevalent (Kalaoja 2016). However, we argue that this Finnish rural imagery has only skimmed the surface—nature, for example, has been taken for granted in rural imagery (Kalaoja 2016). Therefore, the message conveyed has remained rather simplistic and apparently, it has not been strong or appealing enough, as trendy, cool, or sexy are not the first words that come to mind when describing Finnish rural areas. This shows how there are possibilities to uplift the meanings of rural areas in the development of companies, municipalities, and the state's vitality through sexing up the rural brand image. Boosting the revitalization of the image of rural areas can be an effective means of attracting citizens and employees to rural places, thereby helping to change the current migration trends and possibly slowing down the decay of rural regions. As these images especially attract young adults, this may also serve to counteract the distorted age distribution of the rural population if younger generations refind the countryside. However, the actual changes taking place is a subject for further research, in which a longitudinal approach could work well.

Furthermore, as our theorization highlights the continuous change in the rural imagery produced in collaboration between various different kinds of actors, there is a need for future investigations on these developments. Neolocalism has been here for a while now. Sexiness of rural places is a concept that revises neolocalism by adding new nuances to and updating it, so it is interesting to see what comes next. Also, as sexing up rural places is a Finnish way of utilizing the rural, it could be widely harnessed by companies globally. As the features identified here mainly concern Western countries, there is room for future research in contexts where the rural–urban distribution might be different. Finland, in particular, is very distinct with its low population density and wide-ranging rural areas, so we encourage future research in different countries and rural areas. Thus, future research on rural areas, neolocalism, and

companies utilizing rural elements in their branding might explore different variations of neolocalism. Can such examples be found in other countries, and more importantly, can future research recognize different kinds of ways to interpret the rural in connection with the urban?

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