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How Wild Boar Hunting Is Becoming a Battleground

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ABSTRACT

Sport hunting has been shaped by modernization processes such as commoditization and rationalization. But these processes have also precipitated counterreactions seeking to return hunting to a state of authenticity. This is manifested in the rise of atavism such as bow-hunting and exemplified in an embodied turn that involves a more intimate and care-based relationship with wildlife. Many hunters today are demarcated into "communities of practice" on the basis of how they are positioned in relation to these contradicting trends. In this article, I investigate what happens when such trends and leisure communities of practice collide, using a case study of wild boar hunting. I show how the wild boar becomes a nexus for the contradictions of modernization. This is discussed, first, as to what this means for wild boar welfare and, second, as to what sorts of identities, values, and ethics the wild boar brings about among hunters.

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Introduction

The wild boar is a newly recolonizing game species to most of Europe. It sits in an uneasy position in the moral economy of hunters (meaning how they value and categorize game, see Boglioli, 2009) given the tradition and historical context for hunting it. Its rapid proliferation in the landscape, its "good sport" chase, disease transmission (African Swine Fever [ASF], tuberculosis, foot and mouth disease), crop damage, and game meat places a high hunting pressure on the wild boar everywhere (Boonman-Berson et al., 2014; Sandom et al., 2013). The European Union estimates the wild boar population is increasing 20% yearly in Europe (Massei et al., 2015). Management and boar mitigation plans stress the role of hunters in culling the population (Keuling et al., 2016; see also CIC, 2017), with official documents using "combat," "eradication," and "reduction" to mitigate the biosecurity risk of wild boars (Commission, 2018) but leaving the details of such measures to member states and civilian hunters. On the ground, calls for the development of "new hunting models" for wild boar, technically or organizationally, (Quirós-Fernández et al., 2017, p. 57) and do-it-yourself live-capture traps (Hestvik et al., 2011) are heard at the same time as rallies to hunt more boar

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per hunter to compete with the wild boar's reproduction rate (Keuling et al., 2016). Its invasive or nonnative status also gives license to increasingly experimental and ruthless culling measures (Wallach et al., 2015).

To this end, a pest control ethic is only *one* ethic that shapes wild boar hunting. By using the term hunting ethic, we mean a shared set of norms for hunting practices (Luke, 1997). Because norms for how to hunt rapidly evolve among modern hunters in a variety of directions following new influences in modernization and changing human-animal relations in society (von Essen, 2017), there is no one shared hunting ethic. Instead, as hunting diversifies in modern society, communities of practice of hunters (Widlok, 2016) form with "specific operational environments" (Mykrä et al., 2017, p. 10) and aesthetic preferences for how to hunt. In wild boar hunting, these diverse communities of practice with distinct ethics meet and collide.

There is profound diversity of wild boar hunters in Europe, sitting on a spectrum from professional cullers to leisure hunters. In Italy, wild boar attracts the aging male hunting population because it represents a more comfortable shoot with a higher probability of success than, for example, the labor-intensive deer stalking. In Germany, wild boar hunting is the purview of an adventurous breed of young hunters who use "cold weapons," such as daggers and spears, thereby approximating a macho primeval character to hunting that may have been lost for other game (Mörner & Olausson, 2017). In Sweden, much wild boar hunting is done through baiting the boar at feeding stations and solo hunters staking out in towers at night or twilight to get a shot, requiring patience and precision (also done as *Espera* in Spain). In Greece, wild boar hunters are generally willing to pay great expense for the pleasure of wild boar shooting (Tsachalidis & Hadjisterkotis, 2008), suggesting an untapped hunting tourism niche. Elsewhere, and even in other parts of Greece, wild boars are culled unceremoniously as agricultural pests by farmers using poisons, traps and vehicular slaughter. Outside of Europe, as in the United States, canned feral swine hunts may be sold as commodified hunts in the form of hunters using semi-automatic weapons from helicopters (*Perfect gift for a husband, father or boyfriend!* as on Helibancon.com).

In this article, I posit that wild boar hunting may be understood as a nexus for the collision of competing forces of modernization and their manifestations on contemporary hunting cultures. In this argument, the wild boar is a game species that channels and reflects the latest influences and leisure trends in hunting. For hunting practitioners and leisure, tourism and hunting scholars seeking to study the impact of modernization processes on hunting — commoditization, new demographics of hunting, new technology, the rise of cosmopolitan leisure hunting, the sportization of hunting and more (von Essen, 2017) — the wild boar arguably represents the single most compelling case study. It is compelling as a nexus, not least because these modernization processes bump up against one another and produce counterreactions. For example, a too strong emphasis on technology and rationalization in wild boar culling has precipitated a counterturn in bare-bones atavistic hunting using cold weapons.

In this article, I show that a number of contradictions like this in modern hunting become pronounced in regard to the wild boar. I examine the competing forces of neo-atavism that seeks to return hunting to an ethos of self-sufficiency and masculine prowess (Franklin, 2001) and rationalization that emphasizes efficient, mechanistic, and

dispassionate culling of pest and invasive species using advanced technology (Figgins & Holland, 2012; Littin & Mellor, 2005). This provides the guiding motif for examining also interrelated contradictions that become visible in wild boar hunting: 1) the simultaneous *sportization* of hunting on the one hand (Gibson, 2014) and a utilitarian emphasis on its wildlife management dimension as means to an end on the other (Cahoone, 2009), and 2) emphasizing wild boar hunting as a site for military-fetishized male bonding on the one hand and reacting against this by increasingly turning to feminine discourses influencing wild boar hunting, including the rise of care ethics on the other hand. While wild boar hunting reflects modernization processes, I also posit that the wild boar as a species, and wild boar hunting as a combined leisure and wildlife management activity, actively *brings out* the contradictions of modernization. By foregrounding the boar as such, this is a principal contribution of this study. Indeed, previous research has so far studied what different hunting methods and management actions do to the wild boar in Europe and elsewhere (its population density, behavior, diet, reproduction cycles; Bieber & Ruf, 2005; Geisser & Reyer, 2004; Massei et al., 2015; Thurfjell et al., 2013), but there is as yet no research studying what the wild boar *is doing to hunting* and its communities of sportsmen in terms of activating new or old values, identities, and norms.

Method

In what follows, I synthesize literature of wild boar hunting in Europe to present four themes/topics that show the interaction of contradictions of modernization and their implication on hunting practices and wild boar welfare. Literature is taken from a multidisciplinary cross-section of wild boar management articles across conservation, ecology, wildlife biology, rural studies, anthropology, sport and leisure sciences, and human-animal studies journals.

The study was conducted in three steps. The first step included taking out the principal challenges that Swedish hunters predicted would face them in the near future, in a research project hunting that originally investigated illegal hunting. Through in-depth semi-structured interviews, a majority of hunters from the south and middle of Sweden phenomenologically identified "the wild boar issue" as an upcoming concern in relation to hunting ethics. Their reflections on the prospect of militarized extermination campaigns, as well as the practice of feeding boars for commercial purposes, provided some direction for targeted literature searches in the second step of the study. These searches led into ethical issues in relation to weapons technology and management-by-feeding issues in particular.

It is likely that particular concerns in relation to wild boar hunting would differ somewhat nationally. Indeed, biosecurity risks associated with the spread of African Swine Fever (ASF) along with trichinosis and Chernobyl-radioactive boar meat would have likely emerged as primary concerns affecting wild boar hunting were this study set in central and Eastern Europe. At the time of this research study (2013–2016), however, ASF was not a big part of the wild boar debate in Sweden. Their rapid proliferation north and northwest, moreover, were main challenges.

As part of the second step of the study, initial readings of wild boar management in terms of efficient culling to combat this proliferation provided the point of departure for a backward snowball approach to further literature (i.e., consulting its references; Webster & Watson, 2002). The search snowballed into new topics, which included the appeal of wild boar hunting as an atavistic hobby and the market for wild boar hunting as a recreational experience. Through these new topics, the remit of fields of study increased to include environmental ethics literature and tourism studies which could resolve of the drivers for atavism and for canned wild boar hunts. Particularly instructive texts, insofar as they thematically combined hunting as tourism and hunting as a revival of lost human-animal relations, came from human-animal tourism books, such as the work by Franklin (2003) and Lovelock (2008b).

In the third step of the study, the frameworks on hunting in modernity and recreating with nature in modernity more broadly, as were found in the above texts, provided a preliminary set of themes. At this point, the original empirical datasets of hunters' reflections on wild boar hunting were returned to within this new light. It became clear that much of hunters' concerns in relation to future challenges they would face were indeed products of hunting currently undergoing (and struggling with) modernization. Hence, I refined the themes by which future challenges were presented to correspond to forces of modernization. This provided the basis for the analysis.

Much of hunters' experiences and attitudes on wild boars, captured by my own previous research and through the literature study, are analyzed with the term "ethics." This transpired as a commonality across diverse fields of study, from human-animal relations and tourism studies to wildlife management. I note also that the term ethics is now part of hunters' daily vernacular and, to them, comprises a shared system of norms not only for hunting practices but also for the way one talks about wildlife, photographs wildlife, and the values that one holds about them. It is a normative term, capturing how things ought to be. For this reason, although related terms such as attitudes, norms, practices, and representations may all be valid lenses in their own right to apply to the content here, ethics is arguably the term with the greatest analytical and empirical utility in the context of Swedish hunters speaking about dos and don'ts when it comes to the wild boar.

Modernization as framework for emerging issues

The literature study on evolving wild boar ethics was put in a framework of modernization theory (Inglehart & Baker, 2000) to inform the choice of themes in this article, since modernization can identify the change processes that impact hunting ethics. Modernization involves the rise of postmaterialist values that drive much of leisure and recreation, including identity, status, and self-realization (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). It also involves greater existential security, individual autonomy, and wealth, enabling the fulfillment of identity pursuits and self-production through leisure at a larger scale than before using travel and technology (Troye & Supphellen, 2012). At the same time, these are processes that have also pulled humanity further away from its roots, resulting in an experience of a loss of authenticity and alienation (Franklin, 2003).

To overcome alienation, nature- and animal-based recreation and heritage tourism are increasingly offered, at least, as temporary antidotes to the modern consumer (MacCannell, 1973). On this rationale, sport hunting has become a form of atonement for the ails of modern society, offering not only nature reconciliation but also the promise of self-fulfillment (von Essen & Hansen, 2016b). Despite this, modern sport hunting is also driven by, and is a product of, modernization. Indeed, technological innovation and commoditization are two rationalization processes responsible for the wide array of destinations, gadgets, and weapons available to the recreational hunter. Paradoxically, however, many modern hunters and leisure consumers generally desire a respite from the rationalizing and "artificial" effects of modernization, calling instead for a return to tradition and roots (Radder & Bech-Larsen, 2008).

The struggle for authenticity is thus central to modernization and to modern sport hunting. When hunting attempts to instill in participants a sense of authenticity while simultaneously relying on commoditized exchanges and technological innovation in doing so (such as matching bow-hunters to a convenient hunting spot using an app with a built-in transaction), hunting may be criticized as being insincere. In this article, I do not take such a normative position. Indeed, in line with recent decades' leisure tourism literature that argues everything has a claim to authenticity (Franklin, 2003; Urry, 1990), suggesting it is perceived/experienced rather than absolute, I choose instead to see how such hunting forms embody contradictions of modernization.

I engage with these contradictions in the wild boar hunting context through four themes emerged. The first two themes describe rationalization processes of modernity: commoditization and technification and how they are manifested in wild boar hunting. The final two themes denote *counter-reactions* to modernity: atavism and the rise of a care ethic in wild boar hunting. As will be shown, themes are interrelated in positive and negative ways. That is, commoditization drives technical innovation and also alienates people from nature, which is one of the key drivers behind a rise of neo-atavism: striving for authenticity in nature. The care ethic, as another example, sits in ostensive opposition to the technification of hunting, but is also shown to be realized through it through enabling more animal welfare sensitive deaths.

Contradictions of modernization in hunting

Commoditization

Commoditization describes the transformation of, for example, animals and experiences with animals to commodities or economic goods to be consumed (Sztybel, 1997). This is especially prevalent in modern societies where the consumer is separated from modes of production and alienated from experiences with nature. These can now both be sold back to the modern hunter client as a package delivering self-realization (Ollman, 1976). Commoditization explains the rise of an urban hunting amenable to rhetoric on getting back to nature and one's roots (von Essen & Hansen, 2016c). It also explains the rise of canned hunts involving the rear-and-release of wildlife for the sport of the shooter (Causey, 1989; Gamborg et al., 2016).

Wild boar hunts outside of large cities can sell at high prices for principally urban-based hunters. In a Stockholm hunting leasing company, apps match the hunter to an

ideal hunting ground based on his preferences and willingness to pay and travel. These comprise "commercial offerings to up-market, urban hunters" in particular (Øian & Skogen, 2016, p. 105). While convenient because it is quick and efficient, traditional hunters observe such developments erode the impact of social norms (Gezelius, 2002; Gunnarsdotter, 2005; Øian & Skogen, 2016). These hunters are only subject to market logic and limited by the thickness of their wallets.

This is seen as an inherently modern act of "uprooting from the local" (Epstein, 2003). Indeed, Dizard (2003, p. 112) describes the influence of commoditization on hunting as entailing "less and less hunting tak[ing] place within a moral economy in which norms are enforced by virtue of close familiarity." Franklin (2008) traces this development to the deterioration of responsibility on the part of the consumer, suggesting "the proliferation of destinations clamoring for attention may generate blasé indifference to any one location" (p. 41). The ethical implications of this is clear: not much commits the hunter to a longer-term relation of care toward the land or its animal inhabitants. To this end, this may be a bigger concern with large-scale commercial enterprises that offer one-off package trips compared to the longer-term leasing of land, which contracts often include built-in wildlife management clauses for the client.

Where wild boars constitute the objects of the former sorts of hunts, they become commodities. Do you want to a shoot a large old sow? Is your preference for adrenaline-filled boar hunts with dogs and large groups of people involving the flushing out of boars toward the shooter in direct confrontation? Hunting organizers can accommodate a variety of preferences, in part because the wild boar is so numerous today. Another reason for catering to such diverse preferences of hunters is because choice and flexibility have become important to the self-constitution of the modern consumer of leisure. On this argument, hunting becomes a site for conspicuous consumption or for practicing serious leisure (Heley, 2010; Wightman, 2004). It is not just that the act of being in a hunt today involves a conscious choice (unlike in historical times when it was tied to existential needs), but *what* and *how* one hunts signals attributes. In Germany for example, wild boar hunting communicates you are a young and adventurous hunter seeking exhilarating and physical hunts. In Australia, Adams (2013) describes wild boar hunters as a community onto itself with machismo overtures: "muscled, tattooed, shaven-headed pig hunters whose dogs where chest armor with built-in knife sheaths" (p. 51).

One need look no further than the burgeoning leisure industry in which hunting and animal-based recreation is increasingly integrated (Manfredo et al., 1996) to see identity and status emerge as performative markers. Managers and corporations have caught on to the fact that it is important to the modern hunter to express his identity through the choices he makes in leisure. As a result, much literature discusses optimization of hunter satisfaction, calling for "needs to successfully manage recreation hunting" (Kerr & Abell, 2016, p. 70). In a commoditizing hunting culture, managers typically think of hunters as clients to whom they should promote satisfaction (Kennedy, 1974). Indeed, managers "need to understand the diversity of […] hunters and allocate effort and resources to maximize hunter satisfaction" (Schroeder et al., 2006, p. 385), a topic familiar to this journal (Hazel et al., 1990; Hultsman et al., 1989).

Similarly, Kerr and Abell (2016) speak in terms of providing site-choice models to cater to the "interpersonal heterogeneity" of hunters. This may include optimizing hunting packages with logistics, accommodation, food, guidance, and other services (Kaltenborn & Andersen, 2009) and other tailor-made programs to improve the hunting experience (Schroeder et al., 2006). These are marketed as ideal gifts for the discerning hunter who wishes to choose what he hunts ("you have black hogs … brown hogs … spotted hogs … red … you name it – they come in all colours!" Olausson, 2017, p. 24, from "So Many Hogs so Little Time").

A key ethical issue is that the commoditization of boars is compounded in the language used to describe the animals. This is a common refrain adopted by ecofeminists to critique hunting discourse (Adams, 1991; Kheel, 1995). They argue that terms that disguise the fact that one deals with a living creature are integral to a commodity logic that neutralizes guilt in hunters over their killing. This is termed "absent referent" and refers to divorcing the meat from the living animal: deer/venison, calf/veal, sheep/mutton, and pig/pork. To this end, slang for wild boars in Sweden is common. von Essen (2017) showed Swedish hunters find their peers "talk about them like shooting rats; they just want them gone" (p. 27). Online terms such as *griseknoar* (old-fashioned for domestic pigs), *nassar* (little piggies, but also Nazis), *nöffar* (onomatopoeic for the sound pigs make), and *grisar* (pigs) recur. These arguably belittle wild boars by removing referents that identify it as a wild species. Similarly, French hunters use *cochon* (pig) instead of *sanglier* (boar) when they go hunting. In Spain, *guarro* and *cochino* refer to the boar as dirty. It can be noted that in Sweden colloquial names are not extended to useful game species such as deer, moose, or bird.

Technification

Hunting paraphernalia is changing the nature of hunting at an unprecedented rate today. There is much debate in several European countries over the use of semi-automatic (AK) rifles in hunting (Public Radio International, 2012). While a majority of hunters scoff at the idea of using such weapons for most game, wild boar hunting is becoming an arena in which the idea of using militarized weapons is increasingly entertained. In Sweden, the link between the military and wild boars was suggested after a news story broke that the army ought to use wild boars for their target practice in the south of Sweden where they are particularly numerous. In Mörner and Olausson (2017)'s exposé of wild boar hunting videos on YouTube, they observed military influence in the form of presenting nature as a battlefield "as we know if from war movies" (p. 22) and hunters wearing camouflage clothing, balaclavas, and sharp automatic weapons even in the most domestic settings.

A theme in relation to the influx of technology in wild boar hunting is the transformation of hunting into culling, characterized by a mechanistic, dispassionate pest control ethic. Here, the wild boar is not killed but "dispatched" (Guertler et al., 2017). von Essen (2017) showed Swedish hunters admit "it's become more like a kind of clean-up pest control and less like a hunt, a bit like getting an ant infestation in your house" and that you can use technical shortcuts "in a whole different way [to other game] and you can use trapping" (p. 27).

The dispassion of pest controllers in the case of boars is somewhat at odds with the above observation that hunters approach wild boar hunting as adrenaline-filled battles, revealing a contradiction within technological influence on hunting. In the dispassionate pest controller frame, there is little interest in honoring fair chase. Any means and weapons are permitted because the end goal and not the process is valued: dead boars. Trappers may not think of themselves as hunters when they clean up the populations of nuisant wild boars on their farms. Marvin (2003) describes how pest controlling of fox in the United Kingdom by quick efficient kills was conceptually different to the sportsmanship of traditional fox hunts, where one withholds much technology to give "fair chase" to the fox (as fair as packs of hounds and horses allow). Standard fox culling was looked down upon and called *vulpicide*, as if denoting a lesser form of killing.

Is wild boar (*Sus scrofa*) culling *susicide*? To many Swedish hunters, its unceremonious treatment both during and after the hunt is seen to reflect poor ethical standards that are increasingly characteristic of large wild boar hunts. These "bring out the worst side" in hunters (von Essen, 2017, p. 27), such as shooting them indiscriminately and with the wrong ammunition. There is also concern about the presentation of the quarry when it comes to the wild boar: bloodied, peppered, and unceremoniously disposed of. This is not dissimilar to coyotes in the United States, which Kalof et al. (2004) found "flung across human shoulders like bags of dirty laundry" (p. 118). Shooting wild boar from vehicles is also a growing practice of concern in the literature (Guertler et al., 2017).

Finally, there is an aspect to technological efficiency that is arguably more respecting of animal welfare than bare-bones hunting styles and honoring fair chase. This is the observation by numerous hunters that good weapons, aids in hunting, and safety measures facilitate a hunt that is quicker, more efficient, and involves less suffering for the animal. At present, Swedish hunters discuss spotlights, silencers, optics, and camera surveillance in relation to wild boar (von Essen, 2016). They suggest lights enable better tracking efforts for retrieving wounded boars; weapons minimize the chance of maiming boars; silencers are less disturbing for wild boars; and the use of surveillance cameras tells the hunter if the boars are part of a family unit where the sow has just given birth to a litter (since leaving the young to starve is goes against the principle of not inflicting unnecessary suffering in Swedish hunting law), which facilitates more considerate hunting choices. The contradictions embedded in technology is that it simultaneously generates an ethic of combat, a mechanistic culling ethic, and a care ethic in ensuring animal suffering is minimized with responsible use of weapons. Not just a force in itself, technology becomes a vehicle for three other trends in hunting.

Atavism

Atavism describes a kind of evolutionary romanticism whereby one reverts back to prior states. It is a characteristic of the disillusionment of modernity, where traditional values and customs have been erased to make way for efficiency and rationality. Atavism describes the yearning of people to regress or approximate historical or often primeval lifestyles and practices. Its influence is ubiquitous in society inasmuch as it informs whole paradigms (rewilding), diets (paleo-diet), exercise (fell running styles without

shoes), self-sufficiency (urban agriculture and growing your own food), counter-urbanization, and more (Bye, 2003). Atavism may be said to be the primary mechanism by which authenticity is delivered.

In the hunting context, atavism trades on making visible the primal instincts upon which hunting is built (Luke, 1997). It is even said to be the "cure" to the disease of modern society, where man [sic] has become pampered (Littlefield & Ozanne, 2011; Swan, 1995). Inasmuch as hunting is said to "clarify the positions of humans in ecological processes" (Adams, 2013, p. 43), the implication is that this has been muddled in modernity. At other times, on the individual level, it represents a way to connect with one's heritage as a predator. It suggests man [sic] has been a hunter for most of his existence and that modern society has suppressed these instincts to the detriment of emotional stability, self-sufficiency, and happiness (Ortega & Gasset, 1972). Hence one reacts *against* technology and commoditization, seeking to return hunting to a more intimate relation between predator and prey where terms are as equal as possible. Neo-primativist, neo-darwinist, and compassionate transcendental are some names used to describe the atavistic hunter (Cahoone, 2009; Franklin, 2001; Littlefield & Ozanne, 2011; Morris, 2013).

There is always a delicate balance in hunting between honoring the natural aspects of the hunt and using technology that ensure safe and efficient kills. When this balance is destabilized, as by someone pinning a glossy GPS tracker on the animal or, conversely, vowing to kill an animal with a dagger, the hunter is frequently chastised by his peers (von Essen & Hansen, 2016a). For some hunts and some game, upsetting this balance would likely be unthinkable. This explains why in Finland, for example, the bow-hunting lobby has not touched the moose bow hunt or large carnivores bow hunt questions. At present, it is limited to game less likely to invoke controversy and moral outrage among hunters and publics.

While for most hunts the balance is upheld via social sanctions and established traditions for how to hunt, it is more precarious in the case of wild boars. What is too much technology, and what is too much Paleolithic-inspired, bare-bones hunting? Because the wild boar is only recently beginning to repopulate Europe, there is a notable gap in hunting communities' histories and social norms for how to hunt this animal. Additionally, the wild boar' "wildness" is questioned, given accidental or planned releases from human enclosures are to a large extent responsible for their proliferation today. It is delegitimated within a naturalness and wilderness discourse that usually follows atavistic values, exemplified in discourses on needing to exterminate feral hogs and pigs in many parts of the world (Massei et al., 2011; Parkes et al., 2010; Weeks & Packard, 2009).

Such discourses trade on a construction of wild boars as illegitimate escapees from domestic contexts, now "invasive," "pest," and "varmint" because they cross a symbolic boundary in the landscape of human-animal relations (Donaldson & Kymlicka, 2011). Franklin and White (2001) note that boars in Australia, by way of constituting invasive and feral species, are hunted with less moral discrimination than kangaroos. All in all, it seems that authenticity and naturalness are virtues within the atavism discourse that have made it more important for the modern hunter to relate to "native" animals. This is an outcome of a loss of authenticity in modernity (Kleese, 2002) that now values

wilderness, naturalness, and "the real thing" (Bye, 2003). This discourse sanctions ruthless measures for dealing with hybrids and pests that fail to approximate standards of authenticity (von Essen & Allen, 2016b).

I noted above that such discourse, in combination with its rapid proliferation, invasiveness, "unnaturalness," and disease transmission, usually licenses the overuse of technology. Yet all of the aforementioned have also opened up wild boar hunting as a site in which to experiment with bare-bones hunting. Hence, the use of spears and daggers and finishing the boar off at close range are couched in atavistic rhetoric on approximating ancient ways of hunting, while helping identify the hunter as a red-blooded predator who does not shy away from nature's processes. This is part of the embodied turn in wildlife and nature recreation that increasingly characterizes people's leisure preferences (Franklin, 2008). Clifton (1996) describes this kind of hunting as "a 'hands-on' fascination with and participation in the natural world in all its aspects rather than a squeamish withdrawal" (p. 148). The argument predicates on a perception of nature as red in tooth and claw. That said, sometimes this hunter is sanctioned for going too far.

The use of cold weapons sometimes also lends itself to the waging-a-war frame on wild boars. Wild boars are not just edible game but also a fierce opponent in battle at great personal risk. It connects to a masculinity dimension that infuses hunting. At the same time, atavism is problematic because it is selective in what it chooses to revitalize. That is, one can be selectively nostalgic and romanticize some things in the past and not others. This has been critiqued as the invention of neo-tradition or reflexive tradition (Bye, 2003; Mellor, 1993; von Essen & Allen, 2017). Figgins (2008) exemplifies this through the rise of "balmorality" in 1930s Scotland, a "resurrection and reinvention of tradition around hunting by social elites, forming a new 'cultural genre'" (p. 91) that was syncretic of earlier, cherry-picked customs.

Clearly, wild boar hunters are equally guilty of cultural cherry-picking in their pursuit for authenticity. They have no problem matching themselves up with commoditized wild boar hunts in the area, setting off in their pick-up trucks and getting back to a cushiony lifestyle at the end of the hunt. For example, when it comes to the compound bow in common use, it may *appear* primeval but it is actually a sophisticated piece of carbon fiber gadgetry with laser optics. It is not always the purview of no-frills hunter but an additional gadget to add to an array of modern technology. The use of cold weapons in the actual hunt is hence a selectively romanticized practice that features elements of technology and commoditization. This is a recurring phenomenon in contemporary hunting, which Wightman (2004) describes as "highly modified and carefully constructed adaptations of elements of older indigenous cultures" (p. 4).

The growth of a care ethic

The next and final theme is at once a parallel strand to atavism and a rejection of it. It is related inasmuch as it partly latches on to a locavore and nature reconciliation discourse, where hunting game meat is seen as the most responsible and sustainable way of consuming meat today (Tidball et al., 2013). It is often contrasted with the welfare horror scenarios for livestock and factory farms for chickens, pigs, and cows (Knezevic, 2009). Asserting that you hunt your own meat and that you do so in a way

that is considerably more humane than the food production industry becomes a way of signaling you are an ethical hunter who cares about animal welfare (Samuel, 1999). In Sweden, it is significant that the word for wildlife management translates to "wildlife care," evoking imagery of nursing animals to health (von Essen, 2017).

Where the care ethic distinguishes itself from atavism is in its increased emphasis on animal welfare. It contrasts the ecocentrism that usually characterize hunters' ethics, where animals are thought as clusters of population in an ecosystem, expendable for the greater ecosystemic integrity (Morris, 2010). In a care ethic, by contrast, hunters become increasingly attentive toward the wellbeing of individuals or packs of wild boars both as rights-holders in themselves and as subjects with which they have entered into special relationships of care. Empathy and caring are extended toward *individuals*, such as by observing the human-like traits of the game (Littlefield & Ozanne, 2011) and, for wild boars, their frequent intelligence.

Some Swedish hunters express unease with the direction that wild boar hunting is taking. This is evidenced in their criticisms toward their peers that hunters "relax" or "forget" ethical standards because the wild boar is not the conventionally aesthetically pleasing animal (von Essen, 2017, p. 27). They also condemn some culling practices, including live-capture trapping, fuzzy boundaries around what constitutes a piglet (so the sow to be killed while piglets are comparatively young; Keuling et al., 2016), the use of excessively sharp hounds to flush them out, feeding-and-baiting practices (Geisser & Reyer, 2004; von Essen & Allen, 2016a), trigger-happiness and sloppy tracking efforts, and defamatory jargon like "pig-devils" which they argue facilitates unethical hunting practices (von Essen, 2016).

Wild boars are also subject to supplementary or diversionary feeding. This practice puts the care ethic on edge by at once insisting on feed for wild boars in winter times, thus preventing slower deaths that involve greater suffering, and often developing personal relationships to boar packs that frequent one's feeding stations (particularly when a camera is mounted to record their visits). At the same time, feeding is also done to bait wild boars into sites where hunters can shoot them from a tower. So it is a deceptively caring practice (von Essen & Allen, 2016a). Indeed, environmental ethicist Taylor (1981) has criticized hunting for being a game that involves deception. Hunting scholars, such as Vitali (1990), have countered, saying there is no deception involved since there is no trust. This may hold true for most hunting, but feeding-and-baiting wildlife imparts clearly a sense of false trust and care.

The meaning of contradictions in wild boar hunting

The abovementioned processes of commoditization and technification, along with the counter-reactions atavism and growth of care ethics, are all products of modernity inasmuch as modernization is characterized by paradoxes (Giddens, 1991). These trends sit in an interrelated web in modernity and in hunting in particular. For example, commoditization fuels technification by constituting material culture of hunting today. Atavism may facilitate a care ethic by engaging the hunter in a more intimate, embodied relation with the game but it may also, through this very embodiment, also breed machismo that is at odds with the feminine care ethic (Clement, 2003). Furthermore, it

can also be argued that some processes of commoditization and technification promote atavism. For example, the compound bow, as opposed to the longbow, is in many ways a sophisticated machine that is marketed to gearhead hunters who want to have the latest hunting technology. Brandt (1995) writes that within rural pursuits such as agriculture, hunting, and forestry, masculinity is becoming increasingly technological, including wild boar hunting. Yet we could also see a link between technification of wild boar hunting and the cultivation of a care ethic. Here, the latest weapons and hunting aids are prioritized by some hunters because they involve less suffering for the game. Littlefield and Ozanne (2011) resolve these as "different constructions of masculinity that contain contradictory tensions" in modernity (p. 334).

If wild boar hunting is subject to contradictions, why is the exposing of these contradictions important for researchers? I posit three reasons. First, they may not be entirely *known* to hunters or wider publics. It is just the effects of them that are experienced and not reflected upon, like the popularity of the compound bow. In illuminating why it is increasing in popularity, we invite hunters to be more reflexive about its use: where it comes from, why it is used, and what it can and cannot deliver in terms of self-fulfillment.

The second reason hunters need to be reflexive about their ethics pertains to the justification of hunting. It can be said the ethics of hunting determine the *morality* of hunting (Loftin, 1984); that is, the sorts of rules for engagement that comprise hunting practices will ultimately determine for the general public whether hunting is justifiable as a whole (Peterson, 2004). It is essential such ethics be well thought through and defended by hunters if they seek the legitimacy of society. This is one context in which hunting arguably sets itself apart from many other forms of leisure and sports that have similarly risen to respond to struggles for authenticity and self-fulfillment, such as engaging in historical re-enactments, ancient games, and fell running. This is so because hunting involves the use of a public resource, that is, wildlife. This means rules for engagement pertaining to this public resource cannot be left entirely to the purview of hunters. They need to be held publicly accountable. Transparency and reflexivity are therefore needed over the ethics that guide their interaction with the common good of wildlife. This responds to recent calls on the part of Nordic hunters to problematize their effects before each other and society, such as in the Swedish Hunting Association's "etiksatsningen" ("the ethics project") and the Danish Hunting Association's push for "jagtetiket" ("hunting etiquette"). These initiatives may be driven by self-preservation (Van de Pitte, 2003) but likely also reflect growing animal welfare awareness on the part of modern hunters (von Essen, 2016).

The third reason to be attentive toward emerging contradictions is they produce idiosyncrasies and hybrid subjectivities that might otherwise go unexplained. For example, as has been shown by recent ethnographic hunting research, male hunters are torn between macho and feminine influences. On the one hand, they adhere to the atavism frame of cold weapons hunting and, on the other, wanting to show sensitivity toward wildlife (Bogliogli, 2009; Krange & Skogen, 2011). I argue the contradiction here means the "opening up [of] traditional rural masculinity for redefinition" (Bye, 2003, p. 151). While this is promising, it can spur counter-reactions and the reactivation of machismo in hunting, as men may feel threatened and return to enclaves where they can nurture

their masculinity through engaging in more extreme body politics of predation (see also Liepins, 2009).

With contradictions, we may see the polarization of hunting types. As contended, social differentiation already undergirds commoditizing hunting, ensuring each profile has his preferences met (Bye, 2003; Kaltenborn & Andersen, 2009). Here, gear hunters bond over a shared mastery of technology (Littlefield & Ozanne, 2011) and may be poised in greater opposition to "bare bones hunters," just as paying clients seeking the wild boar hunting experience at large estate may be profoundly contrasted to the everyday rural hunter who tends to his game and feeds his wild boars locally. Certainly, animosity the other way around is clear in rural communities today, where "those that do it for fun" are resented by locals (Boucquey, 2017). Research indicates that as hunting becomes subject to new forces, people, and trends, one's identity in relation to others is given greater importance (Bye, 2003; von Essen, 2017). It also makes it easier to blame mishaps or lapses in ethics when it comes to the wild boar on other sorts of hunters. Indeed, ingroup and outgroup designations serve a principal role for resolving attributions of responsibility for unfavorable events (Tajfel, 1982). The pluralization of wild boar hunters who often condemn the practices of one another can be explained on this model. Indeed, it invites a knee-jerk separation of "true" hunting and "not real hunting" and the hardening of boundaries around communities of practice.

Contribution of the research

Competing trends of modernization coalesce in wild boar hunting and have profound consequences on wildlife welfare and hunting ethics. The wild boar is not just a commodity or a vehicle for the self-realization of modern hunters. This study has also shown that the wild boar is an instructive heuristic to visualizing how modernization influences play off one another. By attributing wild boars the role of heuristic, it stands to reason my method of investigating them for what is going on in hunting generally can be transferred and applied to other contexts. If the wild boar is a nexus for modernization processes, there may be hunts or animal-based recreation that are nexuses for entirely different things of equal importance to researchers and publics. For example, some hunting forms increasingly appear battlegrounds for different classes, including the Fennoscandian moose hunt that unites but also produces friction between meat hunters in the north and wealthy urban hunters getting out once a year to enjoy the recreational pursuit of moose hunting (Bye, 2003; Gunnarsdotter, 2005).

The result is the constitution of new hybrid practices and identities but also increased clinging to traditional roles, especially in re-activating rural masculinity identities against urban outsiders. Similarly in Germany, large pressure hunts are another nexus that brings together diverse groups in terms of their environmental orientation. Some become transformative projects simply because they unite diverse hunters in cooperation, as when tracking, flushing out game, or working with dogs (Littlefield & Ozanne, 2011). Many hunting forms today are also interesting inasmuch because they constitute leisure nexuses that involve the "cultural exchange between regional hosting cultures and foreign hunters" (Foote & Wenzel, 2008, p. 125). Wild boar hunting, which is common to sell in safari packages in Eastern and Central Europe, should be further studied

as to these dimensions (Lovelock, 2008a). My point is to call the attention of future research to these leisure nexuses to see them as sites for collision but also production of hybrid subjectivities of for example gender.

Lastly, my research suggests we need to be wary of what happens to and around species that fall through the cracks in the moral economy of hunters, that is, species that are new, invasive, out-of-place, and inviting of experimental practices. It seems obvious these are extra vulnerable to new influences in hunting, constituting first ports to some questionable practices. Since wild boar remains, as all wildlife, a public good, however, hunters must be encouraged to think reflexively about evolving ethical standards for this species.

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