

**Subculture of Deer Hunters and the Negotiation of Masculinity:
An Ethnographic Investigation of Hunting in the Rural South**

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in
Marketing

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November 16, 2006
Blacksburg, Virginia

Keywords: Hunting, Subculture of Consumption, Socialization

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(ABSTRACT)

Hunting is an important recreational activity for many men in the rural south and as such, it represents a backdrop from which to view the social development of masculinity within families and among the community of adult men. Despite the importance of this activity, little research has examined the consumption implications of and socialization into hunting. This project uses the ethnographic methods of participant observation and depth interviews to examine the role of hunting in socializing men through stages of development from neophytes to competent hunters, and describes five groups into which these hunters may develop. While current conceptualizations of community in the consumer research literature, including subcultures of consumption (Schouten and McAlexander 1995), brand communities (Muñiz and O'Guinn 2001), and tribal marketing (Cova and Cova 2002), describe phenomena that are of relatively short duration and are highly market mediated, I suggest an alternate conceptualization of community that includes the long family socialization process—often covering multiple generations within families—and activities that may be less market mediated than those previously studied.

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Chapter One

Introduction

If evolution and the survival of the fittest be true at all, the destruction of prey and of human rivals must have been among the most important.... It is just because human bloodthirstiness is such a primitive part of us that it is so hard to eradicate, especially when a fight or a hunt is promised as part of the fun. (William James)

The time will come when public opinion will no longer tolerate amusements based on the mistreatment and killing of animals. The time will come, but when? When will we reach the point that hunting, the pleasure in killing animals for sport, will be regarded as a mental aberration? (Albert Schweitzer)

The only reason I played golf was so that I could afford to go hunting and fishing. (Sam Snead)

Hunting is an unexamined and under researched domain within marketing and consumer research. This oversight is surprising since hunting is at the center of many interesting social tensions and controversies. Is hunting an important “primitive part of us,” “a mental aberration,” or merely a captivating leisure activity? While the meaning of hunting is debatable, the intensity with which people debate is not. Thus, the failure of so few scholars to engage this issue is a conundrum. McKenzie (2005) suggests that historians have shied away from hunting because they hail from a liberal intellectual background and are repulsed by the “bloodsports.”

Within marketing, the failure to examine this thirteen million strong and lucrative market segment is an anomaly—the promise of profits usually calms even the queasiest of stomachs. The people who engage in this sport participate in a range of consumption activities. They purchase rifles, shotguns, and ammunition. They travel in recreational vehicles, tow trailers containing all-terrain vehicles or boats, and stay in second homes,

hotels, lodges, and tents. They spend money on specialized clothing, organizational memberships, and magazines.

While hunting seems inescapably entangled in social controversy, it is also a good site to explore some interesting theoretical issues. A study of hunting would be incomplete without an examination of how technology mediates this activity. Thus, one must examine hunters and their relationship to guns. For example, Belk (1988) suggests that some tools *extend* the self by providing capabilities that the individual would not otherwise have. Do guns play a role in the extended self? Is it possible that the gun gives the owner special powers or is self-expressive? One of the central tools of the modern hunter is the gun. The use of a gun gives a person, large or small, the ability to kill, an ability that might otherwise be beyond the physical capabilities of the hunter's body. Does this power affect the hunter's self-definition, perhaps increasing feelings of self-worth or self-esteem?

Hunting is routinely linked with masculinity both historically and in popular culture. In Stuart Marks' (1991, p. 78) study of southern hunters, he claims, "with its weapons, tests of skill, dominance over dogs, and conquests of wild creatures" hunting is a quintessential masculine activity. Feminist Brian Luke (1998) dramatically links hunting to predatory heterosexuality arguing that both are simultaneously an expression of power, dominance, and sexuality. Analyzing passages from a range of novels, as well as books written by hunters, he presents metaphorical descriptions of hunting as love, romance, and seduction arguing that this comparison is not merely literary--hunting is sexual.

Yet often in these historical and popular accounts, hunters are totalized and treated as a uniform, monolithic entity: “North American white men do not hunt out of necessity; they typically do not hunt to protect people or animals, nor to keep themselves or their families from going hungry. Rather, they pursue hunting for its own sake, as a sport” (Luke 1998, p. 634). According to these authors, hunters neither display a range of reasons for hunting (i.e., they only hunt to kill) nor do the hunters explore a variety of social meanings and constructions. But might not a variety of motivations drive hunts and might not a range of social and cultural meanings be negotiated in the hunt?

Hunting is also a battle ground on which large and financially powerful interest groups fight, such as the National Rifle Association (NRA) and People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). The NRA was formed in 1871 to address the problems of marksmanship among Union Army soldiers; it is well known for its aggressive support of hunting. Services offered include hunter safety training courses, maintenance of shooting ranges, and lobbying at all levels of government to encourage legal changes that favor gun owners. The NRA is the largest group of gun owners in the United States, with approximately four million members (www.nra.org), and is the preeminent lobbying organization. The lobbying branch of the NRA, the Institute for Legislative Action (NRA ILA), works on hunting issues such as “access to hunting lands, wilderness and wildlife conservation, civilian marksmanship training and ranges for public use” (www.nraila.org).

PETA, with 800,000 members and a \$24 million budget, is the largest animal rights organization in the world (www.peta.org). The networks of groups that oppose hunting do so primarily on ethical grounds. Critics of hunting stress the harm done to

animals and attack the notion that hunting is needed for survival as outdated in current society. Moriarty and Woods (1997, p. 402) suggest when evaluating the necessity of hunting in any culture, we should ask: “Is it necessary to eat animals to survive?” PETA attacks hunting because of the cruelty to the animals. Similarly, the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) emphasizes minimizing cruelty to animals and helping “people live in harmony with wildlife” (HSUS 2002 Annual Report).

In summary, hunting is a controversial domain but it is an ideal site to explore social constructions of leisure, subcultures of consumption, mediation of this leisure activity by technology, and the negotiation of masculinity. The goal of this dissertation is to conduct an in-depth qualitative examination of deer hunting in the rural south. A key focus of this research is to explore various meanings of hunting in the lives of deer hunters from the point of view of the hunter.

Chapter two provides a brief literature review. Following the conventions of interpretive research, relevant literature is also discussed as the results are presented. The socio-cultural context of hunting in North America is explored and traditional meanings of hunting and masculinity are reviewed. The concept of masculinity within the consumer research literature is also explored. Finally, hunting as a consumption activity is contrasted with three dominant approaches within marketing: family socialization, brand communities, and tribal marketing.

Chapter three provides a review of the ethnographic methods that were employed. I primarily relied on thirty in-depth interviews with deer hunters. However, these insights were supplemented with first-hand experience that I gained as a participant in the

community. Field notes recorded insights that emerged as I took gun safety classes, joined a shooting club, attended hunting events, and hunted as a neophyte.

Chapter four focuses on how the young hunter is socialized to be a hunter within the family. I trace the long struggle and evolution from pre-hunter, to neophyte hunter, to apprentice hunter, and finally to competent hunter. The rituals and rites of passage in the making of a hunter are explored. I seek to offer a more nuanced understanding of what it means to be a man in the deer hunting community.

Chapters five through nine explicate five different groups of hunters who form meaningful groups based on the intrinsic versus extrinsic relationships to their equipment and the emphasis they place on end goals versus the process of the hunt: traditionalists, pragmatists, gearheads, experientials, and transcendentals. For each group, I explore their relationship to their equipment, approach to the hunt, values, social connections, and distinct view of masculinity.

Finally, in chapter ten, I seek to integrate the broad findings of the dissertation and discuss the conceptual contributions made. A discussion of the public policy implications follows. This chapter concludes with the limitations and future research directions.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

A Brief Historical Overview of Hunting

Hunting has a basis in pre-modern history. Prior to the development of agriculture, hunting and gathering were the primary means of providing food for the family. Insight into this pre-modern activity may be gained by the examination of current day hunter-gatherers, such as the Hadza of East Africa (Hawkes 1996; Hawkes, O'Connell, and Blurton Jones 2001) or the !Kung from Northwest Botswana and Northeast Namibia (Wiessner 2002). These groups divide activities by gender; men are the primary hunters and share the proceeds from a successful hunt among groups of families, providing insight into what is perhaps one of the first processes of exchange. Mackey (1976) suggests that our early dependence on hunting influenced the bonding between adult males and children and this impact continues into contemporary society.

In more modern societies, hunting is an activity spanning important cultural dichotomies. Hunting is located at the intersection between leisure vs. work and consumption vs. production. For example, English game laws once constructed hunting as a leisure right of the social elites in contrast to peasants who claimed sustenance rights to hunting based on tradition. Similarly, in the United States, the 20th century conservation movement involved struggles among urban sportsmen engaged in leisure hunting against rural hunters engaged in subsistence hunting (Smalley 2005). Hunters played a pivotal in the early conservation movement. They experienced first-hand the direct impact of development on the number and diversity of game. They sought to preserve natural areas where game and fish could flourish and future generations could

continue the traditions of hunting and fishing. Aldo Leopold, who is often considered one of the key figures in the environmental movement, argued that hunting was a democratic right (Reiger 1975).

Perhaps the most charged cultural dichotomy spanned by hunting is that of masculinity and femininity. Victorian and Edwardian historians routinely linked hunting as the hallmark of masculinity. Hunting was believed to initiate boys into life and death struggles, mark the rite of passage into manhood, and build moral character by celebrating perseverance, toughness, and stoicism. “They masculinized men; they unfeminized women (McKenzie 2005, p. 548).” Of course, a small group of women have always hunted despite myths of hunting causing distress to the “weaker sex” (see, McKenzie 2005). In fact, at the end of the nineteenth century in Britain, upper class sports women attacked the myth of the tender sex. Those British of higher social rank found appealing the argument that healthy robust women would produce strong children.

Historians typically contrast social constructions of hunting at the end of the nineteenth century to post-World War II constructions to explore the intersection of gender and class in hunting. For instance, in Smalley’s (2005) analysis of sportsmen’s magazines such as *Outdoor Life* and *Field and Stream*, turn-of-the-century male sportswriters promoted a heterosocial image of hunting as a recreational activity in which both men and women could share. At this point in time, the social tensions played out in hunting had little to do with gender and much more to do with social class. These periodicals portrayed hunting as an elite and genteel leisure activity of “sportsmen” in contrast to more unseemly sports and the rough ways of farmers and frontier types. Women’s participation in hunting “softened” this leisure activity and was encouraged to

convey greater respectability and refinement to the sport; thus, women's presence became a marker of a more elitist form of leisure (Smalley 2005). In contrast to the eighteenth century, by the end of the Victorian period, upper class women were engaging in activities like fox-hunting without the disapproval of men (McKenzie 2005).

Post World War II, women became more oppositional figures in sports writing as the discourse moved from hunting as a heterosocial activity to hunting as a homosocial activity. Male sports writers became fiercely patriotic and success on the battlefield was attributed to the existence of a wellspring of tough and wily hunters. In the United States, for example, a large pool of skilled hunters was viewed as essential to homeland defense. The conceptualization of "sportsman" was no longer attributed to an elite group but to any man who could shoot, such as those men returning home from the war. The ranks of hunters grew supported by a much more democratized vision of the hunter within the United States. This rise in hunters was also supported by an increase in wages, greater leisure, more cars, and the expansion of public lands. Hunting became a more exclusive male domain where men could bond with each other and away from women who undermined the authenticity of this masculine activity (Smalley 2000).

Masculinity and Hunting in Contemporary Writing

Perhaps the most common form of contemporary research on hunting involves survey data on hunting. These "fun," fact-filled inventories explore the demographics of hunters, their motivations, their attitudes and preferences, the amount of money spent, and so forth (see, for example, Wright, Rodgers, and Backman 2001). This research tends

to be long detailed and descriptive of hunters. Little research takes an in-depth look at the social and cultural meaning of hunting by those people who actually hunt.

The second most common research tends to rely on secondary data, such as the analysis of sports writing in periodicals (Smalley 2000), using excerpts from literary forms, such as novels (Luke 1998), or the analysis of the writings of famous writer/hunters, including such contemporary figures Theodore Roosevelt, Ernest Hemmingway, Ortega y Gasset, or Aldo Leopold (Kheel 1995). Rather than wielding statistical data, these authors use dramatic and polarizing quotes to make their points. Luke (1998), for example, presents a thesis on the erotic nature of hunting and quotes from rock legend Ted Nugent's book as the author waxes about the joys of bow-hunting: "the heated excitement of the shot," "the shaft was in and out...complete penetration," and "I was hot.... I was on fire (p. 635)." One must wonder whether the explicit sexual metaphors employed are compelling evidence of the erotic nature of hunting or perhaps are better evidence of the profit-seeking impulses of an author who is hoping to sell a book.

This approach is exemplified in Marti Kheel's (1995) chapter entitled: "License to Kill: An Ecofeminist Critique of Hunters' Discourse." While never having interviewed a single hunter, she claims that all hunters see the activity as "an instinctive, sexually charged activity, which transports the hunter back to a primeval, animal-like state (p. 104)." Reviewing a range of writing produced by hunters, she organizes hunters into three varieties of hunters: happy hunters, holistic hunters, and holy hunters. The happy hunter embraces hunting as a pleasurable and recreational activity. The holistic hunter eschews the joys of killing and stresses other positive features of the hunt such as the

pleasure of the natural world, companionship, and producing food. This hunter justifies the killing of game to help benefit and manage the animal population. The holy hunter conceptualizes the hunt as a spiritual journey. The act of killing is a religious rite in which the animal gives up their life as a “gift,” and the hunter seeks commune with the animal killed through the act of eating the animal (Kheel 1995). This holy hunter is perhaps most disturbing to the sensibilities of an ecofeminist because they have appropriated the language of the ecofeminist, such as the idea of becoming one with nature. Kheel suggests this masculine identity within hunting emerges from men’s alienation with nature and that killing allows the hunter to ritually enact “the death of his longing for a return to a primordial female/animal world, a world to which he cannot return.”

What these analyses lack for in data, they make up for in narrative drama. Three recent studies are notable in their attempt to deal with the experiences of ordinary hunters (Bye 2003; Fine 2000; Marks 1991). In Fine’s (2000) study of Michigan auto workers after World War II, she similarly argues hunting grew in popularity as a proactive attempt by these men to assert a white, working class masculine identity. Hunting was “an antidote to two basic demasculinizing concerns of the era: domesticity and the new factory system (p. 812).” In her study, this post-war masculinity included an opportunity to escape women, abandon hygiene, drink, and enjoy male camaraderie (Fine 2000). These empirical findings suggest that within the hunting subculture of auto workers hunting is constructed as an exclusive masculine domain in which to bond with other men.

Bye's (2003) in-depth examination of hunters in Norway specifically examines rural hunters who tightly intertwine ideas of masculinity and rural identity as oppositional identities to outside urban hunters. Specifically, elk hunting is an important ritual through which young rural men are initiated into the community of men. The first killing of an elk, for example, is a rite of passage in which the hunter gains status and honor. Moreover, the hunter gains status when the kill is clean and loses status if the animal is merely wounded. However, in this area, economic hardships have forced the community to open hunting to outsiders, who are attracted to hunting as the epitome of masculinity. Bye examines how these local hunters reconstruct their notions of rural masculine identity against these urban invaders. Specifically, the rural hunters take pride in their skill, patience, and ongoing stewardship of the land; they regard themselves as civilized and stable. The rural hunters distance themselves from the uncivilized urban hunter, who is preoccupied with the expense of their gear and the size and quantities of their kill. Thus, despite their lack of economic resources, the rural hunters used their hunting narratives to construct themselves as more privileged than their urban counterparts.

Marks (1991) examined hunting first from an historical perspective in North Carolina and then examined different types of hunters such as small game, quail, duck, fox, and buck hunting. He surveyed, interviewed, and observed hunters in North Carolina and took a more socio-cultural look at hunting by examining communities of hunters as well as their social dynamics. Unfortunately, he did not gain a lot of depth in the area of buck hunting and used a fairly simple typology organizing buck hunters into four groups based on whether they hunted in hunt clubs, on managed lands, from tree stands, or if they poached.

In his research, Marks found men negotiating masculinity across their hierarchical relationships with other men and their relationships with their women and wives. The buck was used as a metaphor to describe this tension. Bucks that bear mighty racks signify strength, authority, and the intelligence to outwit their adversaries for years. However, indiscriminant does often undermine the bucks' freedom and autonomy. Despite taking a much more socio-cultural perspective, Marks paints an almost quintessentially traditional and uniform masculine image of the buck hunter:

The buck hunter is the epitome of a masculine mystique. He is cool and collected in the trying and risky moments of performance. He uses his mind instead of his emotions in situations where discretion is essential before action. He is active and assertive in the appropriate context and shows control in any situation likely to compromise him. He knows how to win appropriately, and does not cause others to become jealous or envious of his triumphs.

This description captures the classic American hero found in almost any old western. Here is a man who is in control even in the face of danger. He is rational, not emotional. He is active, not passive. His sense of fair play and skill wins the approval of other men; he is a man's man. While Marks is to be applauded for actually talking to deer hunters, it appears that he did not systematically analyze his data for themes but appeared to have selected a single case to make his point.

Thus, historically hunting and masculinity are linked. Nevertheless, these meanings are socially and culturally-constituted and have been in flux and continue to change. While a few recent studies have analyzed hunting from the perspective of those who hunt, the majority of research represents a broad survey of the demographics of hunting or focused upon the dramatic writings of single cases from authors and hunters.

Masculinity and Consumer Research

A notable few studies have examined masculinity and consumption (Schouten and McAlexander 1995; Belk and Costa 1998; Holt and Thompson 2004). Schouten and McAlexander argue that a core value within the Harley-Davidson subculture is machismo or manliness and certainly the other values of rebellion and personal autonomy combine to form a fairly traditional notion of masculinity. Within the Harley-Davidson community, the archetypical masculine image of the cowboy is used as the motorcycle is a metaphorical steed that carries the frontiersman (donned in leather chaps) into the wild, far away from demands of nine-to-five workdays and family commitments.

Similarly, the old west “Rendezvous” gatherings studied by Belk and Costa (1998) offer similar support for these traditional notions of masculinity. The modern day “Mountain Men” re-create the trading experiences of hunters and trappers from an earlier era. The authors attended a series of gatherings that replicate the experiences of men in the early to mid 1800s in the Western United States and occur periodically throughout the year. Participants are required to wear and use materials from the appropriate historical period. The Mountain Man image of masculinity is a traditional one in which they romanticize themselves as escaping from civilization into more primitive and authentic lives characterized by “rugged, raucous, masculine individualism” (p. 221). The Mountain Man’s ethos involves a respect and striving for authenticity, self-sufficiency, and complete immersion in the Mountain Man fantasy. Authenticity is attained by the level of commitment in both acquiring possessions of the correct type and by attaining knowledge of the historical period.

For the most part, masculinity is relatively unexamined in consumer research. When it is discussed, it is used to describe forms of consumption. Little research examines how men and women negotiate and re-negotiate these dynamic notions. Perhaps the most direct exploration of masculinity is found in the work of Holt and Thompson (2004). They offer three models to explore heroic masculinity. First, in the *breadwinner* narrative masculinity is defined as “reserved, dependable, and devoid of self-aggrandizing flamboyance” (p. 427). The breadwinner narrative derives from a Protestant work ethic in which hard work is rewarded by success. While breadwinners represent good fathers and contribute to the civic well-being of the community, this narrative is nevertheless perceived to be tainted by the stigma of being conformist and submissive. Second, the *rebel* narrative of heroic masculinity involves ferocious independence, courage, cunning, and strength. The rebel fights against injustice and is a maverick. Yet the rebel narrative also suffers from the stigma of an immature boy who has not grown up and exists in reaction against the stable breadwinner image of masculinity. Holt and Thompson suggest that the men in their study fused these narratives into a *man-of-action heroic* masculinity that combines the individualism of the rebel with the collective concerns of the bread winner. The man-of-action is a rebel who works toward social advantageous goals and the informants used this narrative to organize their consumption activities. These authors do not explore the origins of these narratives and they empirically support these narratives with only two selective case studies. Therefore, it is unclear just how widespread the man-of-action narrative is or how such narratives are appropriated by consumers.

Kiesling (2005) offers an even more nuanced and dynamic approach to understanding masculine cultural discourses and the friendships of men. He argues that “hegemonic masculinity” in the United States is composed of four contradictory discourses: *gender differences* is a discourse that sees men and women as separate and natural categories; *heterosexism* is a discourse in which men desire women sexually but not men; *dominance* is a discourse in which men are strong and assertive over others; and *male solidarity* is a discourse in which men seek companionship and bonding with other men. While hegemonic masculinity is made up of these four separate discourses, these discourses are explicitly contradictory. For example, how does a man demonstrate his desire for solidarity with another man without getting this desire confused as homosexual? Or how does a man seek friendship and equality while still asserting a dominant position over other men? (Similarly, Smalley (2005) suggests that the sports magazines regularly use images of women to distinguish male camaraderie from homosexuality.) Kiesling documents the way men use social indirectness in terms of who they address and the topics they address to achieve desire and solidarity. For example, in fraternities, young men can assert homosocial feelings when they are broadcasted to the group at large (e.g., “I love you guys.”) Or men use discussion of sports to find common interests yet within this shared passion they can assert their expertise and status in a delicate balancing act.

In the next section, the marketing research on communities of consumption is explored. Specifically, three literatures are interrogated for the insights they may hold for the community of hunters.

Community Approaches to Consumption

Historically, consumer research borrows heavily from the fields of economics and psychology. However, beginning in the 1990s, a group of researchers began studying different communities of consumption and a body of research emerged. Traditional marketing researchers had long organized social groups by demographic variables such as race (Bristor, Lee, and Hunt 1995; Cohen 1970; Gensch and Staelin 1972; Sexton Jr. 1972), or ethnicity (Deshpande, Hoyer, and Donthu 1986). But these new researchers began studying people who self-selected into communities based on a commitment to a brand or a consumption activity (Schouten and McAlexander 1995, Muñiz and O'Guinn 2001). In this section, I will organize and compare research in marketing that examines these various communities of consumption to better understand how the hunting community overlaps and deviates from past conceptualizations of community.

In the next three sections, I compare hunting to three different approaches to community: brand and consumption communities, tribal marketing, and consumer socialization (see Figure 1). While typically ignored in the brand community literature, I am including the consumer socialization literature, which focuses on the family as an important socializing agent, as a point of reference from which to tease out why hunting is different from so many of the brand communities studied to date.

	Brand and Consumption Communities	Tribal Marketing	Family Socialization	Primary Hunting Communities
Exemplar	“Harley-Davidson” “MacIntosh” “Sky Diving” “River Rafting” (Schouten and McAlexander 1995; Muñiz and O’Guinn 2001; Celsi et al 1993; Arould and Price 1993)	“Rave” “Burning Man” (Cova and Cova 2002; Kozinets 2002)	“Family of Origin” (Moschis 1985; Roedder John 1999)	“Deer Hunters”
Social Basis	-Brand and consumption affinity	-Shared passion	-Nurturance and blood ties	-Shared passion and often blood ties
Geographic Dispersion	-Widespread and large	-Local and small	-Local and small	-Local and small
Boundaries	-From temporary (river rafting) to relatively fixed (MacIntosh) -Ownership and/or participation	-Blurred -Short-term participation	-Fixed -Long-term based on kinship ties	-Well-defined by strong family and social ties -Long-term participation
Fluidity	-Fluid (Burning man) to stable (Sky diving)	-Dynamic, unstable	-Stable	-Relatively stable
Community Affiliation	-Secondary	-Temporary	-Primary	-Primary
Commercial Anchor	-Often	-Infrequent	-No	-Wide range
Barriers of entry	-Moderate, Ownership and participation	-Little, participation	-Significant	-Significant to mastery of technology and animal behavior
Hierarchical organization	-Expert-Novice	-No	-Parent-child	-Parent-child
Consumer Socialization	-Moderate	-Little	-Extensive	-Extensive
Makeup of members	-Heterogeneous	-Heterogeneous	-Homogeneous	-Relatively homogeneous

Figure 1: Four Approaches to Community

Brand and Consumption Communities

Community members may unite over the shared use of a brand. While consumers will likely have brand relationships that result in private meanings of the brand (Fournier 1998), shared public brand meaning may lead consumers to join informally together in groups based on their allegiance to that brand. In McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig's (2002) work on building brand communities, they offer a concept of brand community that places the consumers' experience of the brand as central, but also examines their relationship to the brand, the product, other brand users, and the marketer. Moreover, they propose a unifying conceptualization of brand community. For instance, they conceptualize brand communities to include those groups who organize based on a commitment to a brand (e.g., Muñiz and O'Guinn's 2001 study of Saab, MacIntosh, and Ford Bronco brand communities), as well as those who congregate around a consumption activity (e.g., Schouten and McAlexander's 1995 study of Harley-Davidson riders and Celsi, Rose, and Leigh 1993's study of sky diving). Moreover, these communities may be temporary or stable, geographically concentrated or dispersed, and both rich or lacking in social context. The breadth of the brand community concept is explored next.

Muñiz and O'Guinn's (2001) study of brand communities provides a more informal and unstructured approach to communities of consumption. Through interviews in a suburban neighborhood, the researchers documented a series of community groups loosely centered on loyalty to a specific brand. According to Muñiz and O'Guinn, a brand community is based solely on admiration for the focal brand. By studying social relationships among consumers in a suburban neighborhood, Muñiz and O'Guinn (2001) found that brand communities existed for Saab automobiles, Ford Bronco SUVs, and

Apple MacIntosh computers. These communities were characterized by three elements: consciousness of kind, shared rituals and traditions, and a sense of moral responsibility. Consciousness of kind describes not only the connection to the brand that community members feel (see also Fournier 1998), but also the connection they feel to each other as fellow consumers of the brand and the opposition they feel to outsiders. Brand community members differentiate between users and nonusers of the brand suggesting that some type of community boundary might exist. This boundary, however, seems to be crossed by the mere purchase of the product, indicating that a brand community is less structured than, for example, the subculture that surrounds the use of Harley-Davidson motorcycles (Schouten and McAlexander 1995). Another similarity is the existence of hierarchies of status. While users and nonusers are differentiated, users with extensive admiration for the brand, as evidenced by long-term brand loyalty rather than use based on current brand popularity, are considered “true believers” (Muñiz and O’Guinn 2001, p. 419). A second indicator of brand community is the existence of shared rituals and traditions that typically focus on shared consumption experiences with the brand. These may involve knowledge of the history of the brand or the sharing of archetypical brand stories. Third, brand communities have a shared sense of moral responsibility to each other and to the community as a whole. This responsibility may manifest itself in actively integrating new or potential members into the community, or assisting others with the use of the brand.

While brand communities may organize based on an informal, loose commitment to a brand, they can also be organized more formally based on a stronger commitment to a brand and consumption activities. In a study of the more structured community of Harley-

Davidson owners, Schouten and McAlexander (1995) introduce the subculture of consumption concept: “a distinctive subgroup of society that self-selects on the basis of a shared commitment to a particular product class, brand, or consumption activity” (p. 43, emphasis added). Subcultures are characterized by a hierarchical structure, a unique ethos, and a transformation of self with gradual adoption of the subculture’s jargon, rituals, and symbols. The hierarchy allows clear distinction between those people in and outside of the subculture, and provides internal status differentiation based on the degree of commitment to the ideology of the subculture. Meanings derived from subculture participation are public, and members’ increased status within the hierarchy comes from recognition, both by members of the subculture and by members of the general public, of this commitment. The core values that make up the ethos of the Harley-Davidson subculture include personal freedom, liberation, patriotism (the Harley-Davidson is the last continuously produced American-manufactured motorcycle), and machismo. Moreover, those bikers who are deepest into the subculture and have the greatest status engage in signaling behaviors such as customization of the motorcycle, wearing the biker “uniform,” getting tattoos, and so forth. Bikers who wish to join the Harley-Davidson subculture progress through a self-transformation starting as a “neophyte” and gradually increase their knowledge and participation within the subculture and may evolve to become part of the “hard core,” having developed a “total biker lifestyle.” (See also Celsi et al. 1993 for an example of a community organized around the consumption activity of sky diving.)

Similarly, under the umbrella of brand community McAlexander et al. (2001) also include temporary market-mediated consumption communities (e.g., Arnould and Price’s

1993 study of packaged whitewater river expeditions) and temporary anti-consumption communities (e.g., Kozinet's 2002 inquiry into the Burning Man community) along with communities that are more stable. Arnould and Price (1993) studied the consumption experiences of river rafting. These river adventures are profit-motivated and market organized activities. Like many service encounters, the organizers take great care to deliver a standardized experience. Participants describe the "extraordinary experience" resulting from participating in the activity by detailing the common narrative of a rafting trip. The study findings indicate, first, that rafters experience rejuvenation through communion with nature by engaging all of the senses in the process. Second, rafters experience communion with friends, family, and strangers. This communion involves feelings of linkage, belonging, and group devotion. Last, they experience self-renewal through the rafting experience.

Kozinets (2002) documented a consumption community with somewhat deeper social interactions than those of river rafting. The Burning Man gathering, an annual anti-consumption gathering of 26,000 in the Southwestern United States, represents a temporary community with a long-term element. Attendees come year after year, resulting in a weeklong community that re-creates itself annually. Relationships among members might span years but new members also come each year. Kozinets argues that Burning Man attendees create a space that is free from market forces and profit motives—a gift economy. With an oppositional attitude toward the market, Burning Man rules forbid selling and require that brand names be hidden from sight. Thus, to achieve a "free" gift economy, the Burning Man ironically erects a set of rules to structure appropriate behavior. Individuals do have considerable license in their personal artistic

expressions (e.g., nude dances are an appropriate gift for the economy but the dance is not controlled).

But brand communities may also exhibit fairly stable patterns and more fixed boundaries. For example, the Harley-Davidson subculture is hierarchically organized with more experienced and skilled members having greater status than neophytes. Given the extensive knowledge and skills needed to demonstrate mastery in this subculture, a significant investment of time is needed. Similarly, the boundaries and stability of groups is fairly stable among sky divers (Celsi et al. 1993).

A rich and interesting literature on brand communities has emerged but some omissions exist. Past research tends to focus on consumption activities that are learned in adulthood (e.g., Harley-Davidson riding, sky diving), require a relatively short to moderate period of socialization (e.g., McAlexander et al. 2001 found new Jeep owners could be socialized into the community at Jeep Jamborees in as little as a few days), are relatively unskilled (e.g., Burning man), and are often market-mediated and organized (e.g., River rafting). In contrast, many hunters were socialized as children and have hunted for decades (see Figure 1). The activity of hunting requires a long period of socialization. For example, a hunter who is actively socialized to hunt within a family of hunters may begin at age 5 and will often spend 15 years before establishing their independence. Hunting is a skilled activity that involves mastery of both technology and nature; the hunter must master a lethal weapon and also possess an intimate understanding of animal behavior and habitat (Hirschman 2003). While hunting contests and events do exist, hunting generally occurs among informal groups of family and friends in local environs. Thus, the hunting community differs in some significant ways

from past consumption communities and may offer an opportunity to expand our understanding of consumption communities in general.

Tribal Marketing

Building on the work of Maffesoli (1996), Cova and Cova (2002) suggest that tribal marketing provides a different notion of community. The contemporary pre-occupation with individualism and the accompanying personalization of consumption to communicate one's difference and style, foster increasing fragmentation and social isolation. Neo-tribalism instead celebrates community and localism, such as in the shared but temporary experience of a Rave¹. Rather than relying on the modernist notion of community that focuses on a shared communality, postmodern tribes coalesce around interests and shared passions. These tribes are small scale, localized, unstable, and temporary. But as people engage in the "(re)construction or (re)possession of meanings through shared experiences and their enactment through rituals," they assert their tribal identity (Cova and Cova 2002, p. 598.) Because these communities are fleeting, they are non-totalizing; people can participate in many tribes, and the shared affect and re-appropriated signs unite them (see Figure 1).

Hunting is clearly unlike tribal marketing on most dimensions. Hunting groups often hunt for decades and even return to the same locations. The considerable investments in skills, experience, and knowledge, mean that significant barriers exist for participation and one can not easily move into and out of this community. Nevertheless, both of these communities are driven by a shared passion, such as the desire to connect to something that is collective and bigger than any individual. For example, the hunter may

¹ A Rave is a concert or party where emotive dancing is often accompanied by taking illegal drugs.

seek to connect with a past in which people produce their own food. Moreover, both of these groups tend to engage in local activities on a small scale (see Figure 1).

Hirschman (1985) suggests that some consumption processes are primitive in nature, and “arise from little-evolved, traditional, communal, and ancestral-based sources” (Hirschman 1985, p. 143). Originally hunting was a primary means of acquiring food. Modern hunters may be seeking primitive and authentic experiences by using hunting as an alternative to more common, market-mediated means of providing food. Today’s hunters provide food for their family much as their ancestors did. Hunting may be less a re-creation of the past and more of a return to the past and a connection to something bigger than any individual, which would clearly share a family resemblance on this dimension to tribal marketing.

Consumer Socialization

A rich tradition of research exists on the topic of consumer socialization. Within marketing, research on cognitive development is dominated by a Piagetian approach as exemplified by the work of Deborah Roedder-John and her colleagues (see Roedder John 1999 for an excellent review). This work has made significant contributions focusing on the information processing differences of children at different stages of development. For example, children progress through three stages of consumer socialization--the perceptual, the analytical, and the reflective—and these stages are defined by differences in knowledge structure, decision-making, and influence strategies. This approach tends to emphasize that development occurs as the result of innate forces in the child in interaction with the environment. The child learns best when they are actively engaged with the world and are actually forming their own understanding. Moreover, learning is a

series of progressive, universal stages and healthy individuals move successfully through these stages. Finally, the dominant view argues that socialization leads to a whole, unified, coherent self. This view of socialization stresses a progression to a self that is stable and enduring.

Given the current study of hunters is focused on the socio-cultural development of the hunter, it would seem this highly cognitive stream of research has little to offer. For example, more recent postmodern approaches to leisure activities do not posit a unitary self but that multiple selves exist and are constructed through these different leisure activities. Socially constructed selves are negotiated within powerful social discourses that exist in society. We can playfully and creatively choose among a vast array of identities (see Thompson and Haytko 1997 on fashion discourses for an exemplar of this type of research). This identity play is not just putting on roles but creating and living different identities. The plasticity of self is perhaps best demonstrated on the internet where people create disembodied selves and engage for extended time in cyber realities in which they create a persona that exists in this world (Turkle 1995).

Hunting likely is a domain in which discourses on masculinity are negotiated and creatively re-appropriated and altered by hunters. Yet, unlike many of the studies of brand communities, hunting as an activity shares many features of the family socialization literature (see Figure 1). Hunters are often socialized within the nuclear family (Mackey 1976; Stedman and Heberlein 2001) and supported by extensive social networks (Price and Stevens 1998; Marks 1986). In the south, for example, it is common for fathers to take their sons hunting as a bonding experience and rite of passage. Thus, like the family socialization literature, hunters are often socialized by their parents within

a relatively stable family organized by legal and blood ties and the boundaries are fairly fixed and stable. While hunting events may be commercially based, such as Cabela's' support of The National Wild Turkey Federation, most hunting is informally organized among groups of family and friends. Like the significant barriers to entry into the family, hunters must demonstrate considerable proficiency with weaponry and develop an ability to read terrain and animal movements. Such skills take years to acquire and extensive socialization. Moreover, the hunting community is relatively demographically homogeneous. Thirteen million adults hunt in the United States (U.S. Department of the Interior 2001). These hunters are generally middle-aged men who live rural areas (i.e., 68% are between 25 and 54 years of age). While 1.2 million hunters are women and almost a million hunters are 65 or older, a hunter is likely to be a middle-aged, white, rural man.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Overview

The methodology in this study is based on ethnographic research practices from anthropology and, more recently, consumer research (Arnould and Wallendorf 1994). The primary method used was in-depth interviews, but these interviews were supplemented with participant observation of a community hunting group. I also became a neophyte hunter and a member of this community and participated in a range of activities including safety classes, hunting trips, and gun shows.

This methodology was chosen for three reasons. First, the ethnographic method is appropriate when new areas are studied and it is impossible to construct an adequate list of a priori propositions from which to question informants. Given the dearth of research on hunting in the consumer domain, an ethnographic approach is appropriate. Second, ethnography provides an opportunity to learn about consumption communities with greater depth than traditional methods such as surveys. Hunting is an activity that spans decades and even generations; moreover, it is an activity that evolves across the hunter's lifetime. Thus, ethnographic methods are better suited to explore social experiences that are complex, dynamic, and socially diverse. Ethnography is well suited to developing "thick descriptions" in which data are socially and culturally contextualized (Geertz 1973). Third, this form of engaged observation involves the close interaction with hunters participating in a range of activities from tracking and skinning game to enjoying a celebratory game of cards and drinking after the day's hunt. This type of extended contact is likely to improve the rapport between the researcher and the hunter, which will

hopefully yield more detailed and intimate insights into the hunting community. Next, I detail the sources of data and methods I employed: interviews, participant-observation, and participant-participant data collection.

Sources of Data

Interviews

The primary method of data collection was semi-structured, in-depth interviews with hunters. I used an initial interview protocol with general areas of research questions to ensure that all informants were queried about the broad domains suggested by the literature (see Appendix A). However, the informants were encouraged to take the lead in the interviews, tell their own stories, and bring up issues they felt were important.

Interviews delved into the informant's hunting history, the lived experience of the hunt, rituals, equipment, skills, and the communal and social aspects of hunting, to name a few.

As the interviews progressed, several unanticipated domains were included. For some hunters, for example, hunting with their family was an important part of the hunting process and so I adjusted the interview questions to explore these intergenerational experiences. I also discovered that topics, such as competitive shooting and reloading bullets for improved accuracy, gave me greater insight into hunters' use of different types of equipment across the hunting experience. Some research domains proved unproductive and were deleted. For instance, I stopped directly probing on the brands employed by the hunters. Instead, when brands were important to the informants they emerged more naturally in the context of discussions about guns or clothing. Thus, the explicit probing on specific brands proved to be both awkward and redundant.

In the first couple of interviews, I relied more on the research protocol. But it quickly became clear that these informants were eager to share their love of hunting and hunting narratives. So I began to relax and let them take greater control over the interview. I had merely to ask a couple of initial questions before they would launch into extensive and detailed discussions on specific hunts, their philosophy about hunting, or the pros and cons of various equipment. As the interviews progressed and I became increasingly aware of the topics of interest to the informants, the discourse became more natural and spontaneous. Later interviews were more likely to be perceived by informants as conversations between interested individuals rather than interaction based on a formal researcher-researched relationship. Interviews generally ran about two hours with the shortest running just over an hour and the longest taking over two and a half hours.

Of course, I employed different interview questions with non-hunters who were interviewed because of their relevance. For instance, the standard interview protocol would have been inappropriate when researching a non-hunting natural resources biologist who is in charge of a significant local government facility that allows hunting on its premises.

Sampling. I purposefully sampled hunters across a range of hunting expertise and depth of experience ranging from neophytes to life-long hunters. As originally proposed, diversity was sought in both the extent of experience and family background. In addition, at the suggestion of committee members, I also sought some diversity in gender by interviewing two female hunters. These interviews were conducted to challenge the emerging findings and to use a different lens from which to explore the impact of both traditional and more recent gender roles in the activity of hunting. Similarly, as the study

progressed, I sampled across hunters who hunted as an important supplement to their diet. I explored whether the meanings of hunting were different when it played an important role in one's economic well-being verses when one hunted primarily for recreation or sport. Finally, because hunting provides a unique opportunity to explore intergenerational elements of consumption, I interviewed five father-son dyads.

At the recommendation of the committee, my primary focus in sampling was on deer hunters. Deer hunters are ubiquitous in the geographic area of the study. Given the range of hunters and hunting activities (e.g., the hunting of squirrels, turkey, duck, elk, and so forth), the focus on deer hunters provided a realistic and reasonable population to study within the limitations of a dissertation. While the primary focus was on deer hunters, it was not uncommon for hunters to vary the game sought based on the intricacies of local game laws. I found many hunters, particularly those people I would characterize as experts, who varied the animal sought and the technology used in order to maximize their hunting opportunities. While I originally expected that different hunting practices would lead to different meanings to hunters, I now believe that the experience of hunting—tracking, waiting, and taking an animal—supersedes the type of animal sought and the technology used. As a result of this emerging finding, I sought variation in the primary game preferred by the hunter. In nearly all cases, however, hunters had some experience hunting deer (see Appendix B for a listing of informants and their backgrounds.)

Recruitment. Informants were generated from a number of sources. As a member of a competitive shooting organization, I established relationships with organization members who were also hunters. These contacts served as a starting point for initial

exploratory interviews as I learned generally about the deer hunting community. While my initial informants were members of this organization, I expanded my informants to family members and friends of these initial informants. For example, several of the organization's members had fathers and grandfathers who hunted and became the informants selected to explore intergenerational hunting dyads.

A second source of interviews resulted from joining the local chapter of a national organization that focuses on wildlife issues, primarily fishing and shooting sports, including hunting. Attendance of organizational meetings and other events assisted me in understanding the issues that were relevant to the local community of hunters. Finally, I contacted local hunting retailers to gain access to additional informants.

Participant-Observation

I joined a hunting organization to accomplish three objectives. First, I gained access to a larger and more diverse pool of informants. Second, I was able to explore hunting as it relates to the larger hunting community within these meetings and other club events. Third, I gained a greater understanding of local and national issues that surround hunting in the area. For example, in volunteering to help train young shooters in an annual JAKES Day (Juniors Acquiring Knowledge, Ethics, and Sportsmanship) sponsored by the National Wild Turkey Federation (“jake” is also the term for a young male turkey), I was able to see interactions between fathers and sons, better understand approaches to hunting safety, and better understand the local hunting culture. These activities augmented my understanding of issues that are important to the local hunting community and its members. Data collection in this area consisted of field notes from club meetings and events (see Appendix C for an excerpt from my field notes). My role

in these activities was largely as a participant-observer. While some members of the organizations I associated with were aware of the current study, most simply saw me as a member, volunteer, or participant.

Other opportunities for participant-observation included taking field notes and conducting informal interviews at local hunting-related retailers, gun shows, and other local and regional hunting-related events. These provided an opportunity to examine the commercial side of hunting.

Participant-Participant

A final data collection method consisted of active participation in hunting as a novice hunter (prior to this research, I had not hunted), including taking a hunter safety course, purchasing a hunting license, and both accompanying others hunting and hunting alone (see Appendix D). This first-hand experience as a novice hunter provided insight into the experiential aspects of hunting and contributed to an understanding of the process of gaining increased skill and status in the community. I sought out opportunities to hunt with individuals and with established groups of friends and, by so doing, was able to observe first-hand some of the social aspects of the hunting community. Data included field notes, informal interviews, and formal interviews. In short, I documented the process of initial immersion into the hunting subculture (Schouten and McAlexander 1995). To provide a baseline point of reference, I wrote a self-reflexive account of my prior experiences and understanding of hunting (See Appendix E). This text documents my initial perspective on hunting in order to provide insight on how this perspective might inform and shape my subsequent analysis.

My initial perspective can best be described as uninformed yet neutral about hunting. Early experiences provide evidence for this “neutral” attitude.

My parents lived for some of that time in a small development outside of town with ten acres of land on which they posted “no hunting” signs.... [Their] development had “no hunting” signs as well, and I recall a time when we came in to the development one evening and the sheriff was arresting 2 or 3 hunters for hunting on the property. I don’t think I had (or have) strong feelings about this event, although I do have the vague feeling that they got what was coming to them.

Rather than strong feelings either in favor of or against the hunters who were being arrested, I had a weak feeling about their capture, perhaps similar in strength to the feeling one might have had if they had been trespassing or committing some other minor crime. Similarly, my feelings about guns in general were rather neutral.

From that age [about 12] until I was about 28, I don’t recall any interactions with guns. I think my feelings were best described as ambivalent.... One apartment mate had two handguns, and I recall him showing them to me once. I wasn’t all that interested, and might have been a little intimidated by them because I didn’t know how to operate them.

So earlier in life, my feelings about guns were as “ambivalent” and uninterested as they were about hunting.

As I interacted with hunters on the shooting team (but prior to the initiation of this study), I became aware of public celebrations of hunting success, something to which I had been previously unexposed.

It is not unusual for a team member to talk about his (usually male—but I do recall an instance where a female team member talked about shooting her first duck the weekend before) recent hunting experiences or his future plans. These are frequently introduced by a comment about eating venison or other comment that invites question about the activity.

At this point, I began to see that hunting was an area of greater social significance than I had previously understood it to be. As study informants began to offer to take me

hunting, I encountered an experience of the woods of which I was heretofore unaware, despite a great deal of personal history with backpacking, camping, and caving.

As I walked behind Charlie, I tried to walk quietly in a manner similar to him. His awareness of what was happening in the woods seemed pretty substantial. He pointed out deer feces frequently, and could tell (from its placement) whether it was a doe or buck. There was one spot where there were many piles of feces where there was a path that they took. (Field notes, April 22, 2004)

Also on this trip, I recall being struck by Charlie's invisibility in the woods with his camouflage clothing, which was irrelevant to my previous backpacking experience.

In contrast to these pre-hunting and early hunting experiences, my interpretations of interviews show a more developed and sophisticated understanding of both the physical activity of hunting and the social interactions surrounding hunting. An example of this deeper understanding is found in the interview with Zack who was my 26th informant. Zack was suspicious of my questions because, as his wife explained to me, he was concerned that I was after knowledge of his prized hunting spot. He eventually agreed to something akin to an interview.

His wife, clearly the outgoing member of the couple, arranged the "interview." Actually, Zack didn't want to do an interview, but he was willing to show me his deer heads with the tape recorder on. So rather than the traditional interview, we basically walked around his house (mostly his living room) and [discussed, on tape] all of the trophies he had displayed. (Field notes, Zack interview)

The awareness of Zack's suspicions, and my ability to understand both the importance and the original source of his concerns, allowed me to interview this particularly "solitary" hunter. Also, my interpretations of the interviews in general became more detailed and specific as I progressed through the interviews. This process contributed to my gradually increasing understanding of the community of hunters through both greater access to data and through increasing understanding of the data as I progressed through

the study.

Researcher Positionality

During the course of the study, I made a transition from being a non-hunter to being more knowledgeable about both hunting practices and the social norms that surround hunting. In the earlier interviews, I adhered closely to the interview protocol, typically referring to it throughout the interview. I found, however, that I quickly became comfortable with the naturally occurring format of the interview, and soon refrained from referring to the protocol except to review it upon completion of the interview (to ensure that all domains were adequately covered). This ability to engage in a conversation about hunting allowed rapport to develop more quickly with informants and the subsequently more relaxed interaction led to greater volunteering of hunting insights and stories.

I also leveraged my status as a neophyte hunter within the interview. Informants frequently asked about my hunting background and experience. I readily described my background as a member of a shooting team and national organization, but (honestly) described my limited hunting background. The stance of a neophyte proved advantageous. Informants typically understood they were talking to a sympathetic but ill-informed potential hunter, and seemed to move into a mentoring role, providing me with detailed explanations of hunting activities, practices, and gear. They took care to offer detailed explanations; if I had been an experienced hunter, they would have likely assumed I knew this information.

Similarly, since they were not threatened by my status (as they might have been when talking to a hunter of equal or greater experience), they were less likely to engage in impression management. In many ways, they saw me as an interested neophyte trying

to learn about an activity of great importance to them. Potential conflict in the interviews arose if informants' were suspicious that I might be against hunting and this description of my background demonstrated I was sympathetic to their activities. Similarly, another potential concern was my position on gun ownership, a concern I was able to allay by describing my gun ownership and shooting experience.

Confidentiality

Consistent with recent and historical methodological practices that strive to protect informants from unnecessary risks, Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was sought and received. All names and most places in the paper are either deleted or referred to by pseudonym to protect participant identities. Approval for the study was granted February 2, 2004 and renewed February 2, 2005 (see Appendix F for submitted information).

A number of mechanisms were used to maintain informant confidentiality during this research. While actual names were sometimes used in the interviews, pseudonyms were used during the analysis and write-up to maintain confidentiality. Thus, all written documents use the pseudonyms and any identifying information was disguised to protect the identity of the informants. Additionally, any information that might identify the informants, hunting areas, or other areas of personal vulnerability was disguised. Tapes and transcripts were accessed only by the researchers working on the project and by the transcriber. At all times, any material with identifying information has been and will continue to be locked in a filing cabinet in a locked office (double locked) to ensure informant confidentiality.

Data Analysis

Interviews were recorded on audio tapes and transcribed to provide an accurate record of the informants' stories. Similarly, all field notes were typed or transcribed when necessary (i.e., when they were handwritten). The interviews resulted in 996 single-spaced pages of transcriptions, with field notes, including a research journal, and photographs serving as additional sources of data.

Analysis of the data was conducted using an approach that involved an iterative reading of the data in order to develop broad conceptual groupings that emerged into research themes. This approach is consistent with past research in the consumption literature (Arnould and Wallendorf 1994; Spiggle 1994) and emphasizes a more hermeneutically-oriented technique suggested by Thompson (1997). This approach assumes that consumers' personal histories are embedded within a context of personal meanings that are expressed by "culturally shared narrative forms" (Thompson 1997, p. 439-440). It is insight into these narratives that I attempted to achieve through an analysis of their hunting stories.

First, all transcribed interviews were coded on the computer using a priori and emergent conceptual categories (see Appendix G). Next, an intra-textual step involved reading an individual informant's text in its entirety and generating ideas about the informant's personal meanings of the consumption experience. This intra-textual understanding was delineated and explored using tables to organize key themes as well as metaphors to capture the overall meanings for each informant. This step was completed for all informants. The second, *inter*-textual, step entails a comparison of themes across interviews so that shared meanings can be explored. The data were dimensionalized; for

example, individual informants were located across different conceptual dimensions such as “degree of life integration” (see Thompson 1997 for more details on the specific processes used).

Immersion of the researcher in the relevant literature occurs prior to textual analysis. This immersion allows the researcher to be sensitized to topics of importance to members of the population of interest and develop an understanding of areas for subsequent questioning. I have taken steps to achieve this immersion and to avail myself to opportunities to increase my a priori understanding of the consumption stories that served as my data. Thompson (1997) provides a description of the hermeneutic approach to analysis of consumption stories. He suggests, first, the examination of literary elements to interpret consumption stories. These include plot lines, symbolic parallels between meanings, inter-textual relationships among meanings of different consumption stories, existential themes that indicate consumers’ self-identity, and indications of the cultural code of the individual within the consumption story. As I moved iteratively from data to analysis, I looked for each of these five elements both within each informant’s set of consumption stories and across stories of multiple informants. Thompson also describes a number of techniques that are helpful in generating broad conceptual categories leading to research themes. For example, he suggests analyzing the narrative framing of the story. From what perspective is the story told? What aspects or perspectives are emphasized or de-emphasized? One way to look at this framing is to use what he calls “imaginative variation” in which the researcher considers different framing perspectives that the informant could have chosen. This technique provides insight into the selective nature of the informant’s choice of perspectives, itself a lens through which to view the cultural or

social influences at work on the informant. Another technique Thompson suggests is the use of binary contrasts to provide further insight into the perspective of the informant. The interview protocol I present in Appendix A includes a number of contrasts that attempted to provide opportunity to use this analysis technique.

In summary, the data analysis entailed first a reading of the consumption stories to arrive at a broad understanding of the consumption themes suggested by the data. Second, a dialectic tracking between the consumption stories and the analysis resulted in tentative emergent themes that were further refined through subsequent tracking iterations.

Chapter Four

The Making of a Hunter

This chapter explores the development of hunters who learn to hunt in the context of their family (i.e., “primary socialized hunters”) and those hunters who learn to hunt later in life (i.e., “secondary socialized hunters”). The literature on consumer socialization is first reviewed followed by a discussion of the development of the hunter.

Traditional Approach to Consumer Socialization

The process of socialization, especially of children, has been studied extensively in the consumer research literature. Most of this work has used a cognitively-oriented explanation similar to the approach introduced by Jean Piaget. This approach conceptualizes childhood development as attaining specific skills at various universal stages and progression through these stages depends on the complexity of cognitive structures the child achieves (see, for example, Piaget and Inhelder 1969). Simply put, the child moves through a series of stages from an egocentric simple understanding of the world based on sensory and motor skills to later stages that include abstract, conceptual reasoning and understanding of others.

In the consumer research literature, Ward (1974) first suggested the need to study consumer socialization of children in order to provide a more detailed understanding of adult consumption behavior. He defined consumer socialization to include “processes by which young people acquire skills, knowledge, and attitudes relevant to their functioning as consumers in the marketplace” (Ward 1974, p. 2). He argued for the importance of studying both family and intergenerational influences on consumption and adopted the

perspective, later detailed by Roedder John (1999), that consumer socialization should be studied as a developmental phenomenon.

Roedder John (1999) follows with the developmental approach in her extensive overview of consumer socialization research. Like Moschis and Moore (1979), she suggests two mechanisms exist through which children are socialized to consumer behavior, one pertains to cognitive development while the other to social development. For social development, Roedder John uses Selman's (1980) view that the child moves from an inability to see any perspective other than his/her own and then develops to an advanced stage whereby s/he can see multiple perspectives at once.

For cognitive development, Roedder John proposes three stages of consumer socialization—a perceptual stage, an analytic stage, and a reflective stage. The perceptual stage, lasting from approximately three to seven years of age, is focused toward “immediate and readily observable perceptual features of the marketplace” (p. 186). The analytic stage, from seven to eleven years old, is a more abstract stage characterized by a shift from perceptual thought to more symbolic thought where the child can see multiple perspectives. The last stage, from eleven to sixteen, is the reflective stage. In this stage, the child is able to grasp not only the functional meanings as in the previous stage, but also more subtle and socially-oriented meanings of the consumption experience. Roedder John limits her discussion of consumer socialization by looking only at consumption-related outcomes, such as brand knowledge and shopping knowledge.

In summary, the study of consumer socialization in consumer research is dominated by a developmental cognitive and social approach that sees the process of socialization as involving a series of universal stages. While influences such as the

parents, family, peers, mass media, and other marketing institutions are included in this model, the focus is how the individual attains particular universal stages of development. In addition, outcomes of the socialization process focus on consumption variables such as information search and product choice.

In the current study, I examine socialization from a broader perspective. Rather than focusing on the formation of brand relationships or consumer choice, I explore how hunting socializes young men more broadly in areas regarding their knowledge, skills, and values, as well as in what it means to be a man.

Hunters who learn to hunt in their family of origin were different from those hunters who learn to hunt later in life. This socialization has a more pervasive influence on the hunters' identity at a number of levels. First, they begin the process at a very early age, frequently around the age of five, and are influenced by both members of their immediate and extended families. Typically, a male role model (e.g., father, but some informants were socialized by uncles, grandfathers, or other family members) guides them through the process of becoming a new hunter. These events, as well as various rites of passage, may include the preparation for a hunt, accompanying Dad hunting, serving as a "retriever," and carrying an unloaded firearm. Similarly, meal rituals, usually led by their mother, celebrate the success of the hunt. These experiences surround the young men from a very early age long before they actually hunt.

Bob is an excellent case of a hunter who was socialized from a young age. Bob learned to hunt as a small boy, first accompanying his father. He has hunted at the same location during his entire life—the family farm—and values the time he has spent with his male mentors.

I do a lot of hunting with my father and many times, me, my father, and my grandfather will hunt together, especially this time of year. Spring turkey season is coming in.... Both of my grandfathers are still alive—my mother’s father and my father’s father. I hunt with both of them. One of them, really all he does is turkey hunt, so, I’ve had some great hunting experiences with him; being able to harvest some turkeys and just kind of sharing some moments in the outdoors with him. And my father’s father, I’ve had some great moments with him. I’ve actually called in some turkeys for him that he actually killed, so that’s a lot of fun; to have the grandson calling in the turkey for the grandfather. It’s kind of like a bonding-type thing, you know? Like I said, I’ve been able to share a lot of moments outside with him along with my father. (Bob)

In addition to the role that his father played in socializing him into hunting, his mother was also involved. When he brought home his first deer, she made public her admiration that he had completed this rite of passage and orchestrated a celebration involving Bob’s whole family.

Primary socialization

Hunters who learned to hunt in their nuclear family and were guided by a male relative have hunted for a significantly longer time, and they had many childhood memories associated with hunting when they reached adulthood.

I used to hunt with him all the time—I just tagged along. I remember the last deer that my Dad killed before he died. I was with him. My Dad used to get real tore up, real excited. (Zack)

For Zack—a lifelong hunter—both his earliest memory and his last memory of his father were linked to deer hunting.

Primary socialized hunters advance through stages that I identify as pre-hunter, neophyte, apprentice, and competent hunter, which are discussed next. These interpretations are based on both recollections of competent hunters’ early hunting experiences as well as descriptions from more senior hunters as they mentor their

nephews, sons, and grandsons. For example, in the following quotes, Fred recalls both his own childhood memories and the childhood memories he is currently creating for his nephews.

[The first time I hunted] actually carrying a gun, I'd say about 13, 12. But I'd been going out to the dove field with my father, and me and his dog runnin' out and pickin' up doves since I was probably about 6 or 7. (Fred)

I can't wait until my nephew's old enough. He is 5 now? No, actually he's 6. And I actually took him out to the dove field this year for the first time. And I had my dog with me, of course, too, so he would race--whenever I would shoot a dove, he would race my dog to the dove. She'd beat him every time. [laughing] It's definitely neat. You know, he'd bring it back. Just to see his reaction for the first time. You know, it was the first time he'd ever seen a dove. Well, I don't know. A dead bird up close. But then he had to hold it, pick it up and carry it to me otherwise. I know his mom is my sister, so I know he definitely doesn't do any of that [at home]. (Fred)

An intergenerational symmetry exists in the mentoring process that gives both direction and depth of meaning to the process; that is, as the mentors coach new hunters, they are recreating for the youths the pleasures of their own childhood. As Quentin says, "My best experience, I think, was hunting with my boys, you know? Just watching them do their kill, their first bird, or kill their first ring-necked pheasant." Similarly, the sons recalled the special feeling of just being with their fathers. As Xavier says, "I looked forward to spending time with him."

Pre-hunter

The first stage of socialization is when the hunter is inexperienced and a beginner. The new hunter, typically around 5 years old, begins to accompany his father or family mentor on hunting trips. During these early trips, the youth is allowed to accompany the experienced hunter as a companion and observer. However, extensive training is necessary before the youth can participate more fully in the hunt.

During the pre-hunter phase, the prospective hunter learns the importance of moving with stealth through the woods and avoiding making loud noises or sudden movements. The pre-hunter must learn patience, given much of hunting involves a great deal of waiting; he² must learn stoicism, given much of the waiting is in uncomfortable conditions. Typically, at this stage, the mentor has modest expectations as to the outcome of the hunt and sees the experience as an opportunity to bond with his son or nephew.

I have three grandsons. One is just over a year old so he is not into it. And then the other two—one is 7 and the other just turned 5. And they like to go out with me. I took the one that is 7 now—his name is Jake—we took him up to the hunting camp with us. He was probably about 5, and so the second week and it wasn't too busy. So I took him out, and we drove kind of up the hollow and got out and started walking in these little woods that I knew we would see deer, and so we started walking and of course he had a blaze orange vest that was mine that was a vest but it stretched down to about below his knees because he was so small. And he had a hard time sitting still as any 5 year old, but we had a good time. (Oscar)

It is common for the pre-hunter to move through stages of increasing responsibility that progress from accompaniment on a hunt, to carrying an unloaded gun, and finally, to carrying a loaded gun--which defines the movement into the neophyte stage. Across this process, the boy's status grows as he moves deeper into the community of men and has increasingly important roles.

Neophyte

Skills. While there is a great deal of variation among how mentors train new hunters, clearly identifiable rites of passage exist that result in increased levels of responsibility and privileges for the new hunter. The first and most important hunting skill developed at this stage is demonstrating responsible and safe gun handling, which is

² Because the vast majority of hunters are male, and 28 of the 30 informants interviewed are male, I use the male pronoun unless explicitly referring to hunters who are female.

the chief hurdle to carrying a loaded gun. For example, keeping the gun protected and pointed in a safe direction are the first concerns in gun safety.

I think I was six years old the first time I went out with Dad.... But I did not carry a gun until I was probably 11 or 12. I'd just go sit with him. And a few years leading up to carrying my first gun, he'd let me carry a gun unloaded and no bullets, just to learn muzzle control and safety stuff. (Ed)

While marksmanship eventually becomes very important, at the neophyte stage, modest skills in hitting a target are usually acceptable. Also at this stage, hunting skills develop, such as reading animal sign and knowing hunting etiquette. Typically, the neophyte witnesses first-hand the field dressing and butchering of an animal.

A great deal of variation exists when specific rites of passage occur due to variation among individual hunters in their skill and maturity, and also due to the uncertain nature of a hunting trip. For example, hunters do not know in advance if they will even see game or which type of game will be seen. The following sections describe common rites of passage that occur for neophyte hunters.

First hunt. Young hunters typically accompanied their father and friends on their first hunt. Sometimes the purchase of the first gun was a part of the preparation for the first hunt, which is discussed next. It was more common, however, for sons to be given the use of a spare gun, despite the difficulties they had in carrying and protecting an adult firearm. (Recall that the distinction between a pre-hunter and a neophyte hunter is the carrying of a loaded gun.)

The movement of these pre-hunters to gun-toting neophytes is a slow and deliberate process. The mentor provides opportunities in which the protégés can learn skills even before they are ready, such as the emerging visual acuity that Ian describes:

... he saw the deer moving up it and I didn't see it! [laughs] I was too young. But there was a couple moving through and I just didn't have the eyes for it. It's kind of weird how you can see something moving through the woods and you can plain out stare and they aren't just completely oblivious--you can't see it right off. So, I didn't really have the eyes for it yet and it wasn't until the last second that I saw one and it went behind a bush, not a huge bush or anything like that, but behind this bush.

These experiences tended to be very concrete and practical, as Oscar says, "an awful lot of learning goes on with what you do as compared to what you say." For example, the eager neophyte would want to shoot the deer prematurely, "Can we go get 'em? Can we go get 'em?" But the mentor would insist on waiting: "You won't lose the deer that way." The youths soon learned that these lessons, such as patience, were needed.

While the lessons might appear accidental, the mentors often planned ahead. For example, the mentor might take special care to scout a location where they would be sure to see deer. Oscar describes how he placed his grandson literally in the path of a deer:

...it takes experience to look for ears and tails and legs because they don't stand out there. So these were of course in the brush, but I knew Ryan was going to see it. And sure enough, he was standing on a little incline, not much of an incline, when he finally saw the deer. And when he saw the deer he lost his footing and fell right straight on his butt because it surprised him, he sat right down. It really surprised him that he saw the deer, which was kind of neat.

Or, Bob's father returned home to get his son's help as a "tracker" after he wounded a deer. Even though Bob was quite young, he was able to participate in the hunt.

In contrast with the stereotype of hunters as inept and uncaring "rednecks" willing to shoot at any movement or sound in the woods, these novice hunters gradually developed skills over a long apprenticeship under the watchful eye of their patient mentor.

The first time I ever went, we was walking through the woods and I dropped the gun 3 times in the mud. Like straight forward. I couldn't carry it. It was too big for me. You know, the gun was like 3 feet long, maybe. But I couldn't hardly carry it. So I'd drop it and he'd [his father] get up and break it open and get the mud out of it and

give it back to me. We'd walk a little more and I'd drop it and he'd open it up and get the mud out of it. And the third time, he said, "If you drop it again, we're goin' home." So I had like a dead grip on that thing. He was killing me to keep it up. But I finally didn't drop it anymore. (Gene)

These narratives are consistent with the later Vygotskian socio-cultural view of development that stresses the importance of interpersonal interaction in his theory of learning (Vygotsky 1978; Tudge and Scrimsher 2003). Vygotsky's frequently cited concept of the *zone of proximal development* is defined as what a child can accomplish with the help of someone more competent. Thus, mentors and peers provide social scaffolding from which the boys can make "themselves a head taller" than they actually are (Wink and Putney 2001). In contrast, the cognitive approach assumes that development precedes learning; new learning is "wasted" on a child who has not reached the level of cognitive development compatible with the learning task.

However, many of these hunting mentors act like good Vygotskian theorists by providing "zones" of development that are out ahead of development (Tudge and Scrimsher 2003). With the supervision of the mentors, the youths achieve beyond their years. For example, they tote the unloaded gun and this experience gives them the physical strength and mental discipline they will need later when they carry a loaded gun. Similarly, with the help of his father, Gene's young cousin was able to kill a deer, which he would not have been able to do alone.

You don't have to be an expert hunter to kill deer. Like my little cousin killed a deer this year with a black powder gun. First deer he ever killed. It was like an 8-point. I mean, his dad took him out. They practice hunting, you know, shooting at the range and stuff. So he got decently good at shooting and then he took him out and a deer showed up and he shot it. (Gene)

Specifically, Vygotsky suggests that learning is out front and ahead of development; challenging experiences, with the help of social scaffolding, result in

learning that can spur development (Vygotsky 1978). For instance, Gene responded to his father's challenge and willed himself to hold the heavy gun. The challenge of this adult male setting, and his Dad's patient help, made him "a head taller." On another occasion, Gene's father insisted he drag out the deer that he had killed: "You have to pull it. You killed it. You gotta' drag it." While Gene's father eventually does offer some assistance, Gene performs beyond his past physical feats and learns that hunting is "not all fun and games."

Similarly, Vygotsky argues that children "grow into the intellectual life of those around them" (Vygotsky 1978, p. 88). The desire to hunt was fueled by family stories as well as the draw of the companionship of adult males and a clearly masculine environment.

I can remember the first time I had a desire to go out with my Dad. We lived in a house that had a one-car garage in it. It wasn't really a garage, it was more like a shop. And I can remember my Dad coming in, in the evenings late at night and he would have a deer, a doe, or whatever that he had shot. He had gone out with his buddies and hang out in the basement. And my sisters have memories that have just mortified them for their entire lives of just this dead deer hanging there from the rafters with its tongue hanging out, like they do. And I remember seeing my Dad come home and drink a beer and sit with his buddies. He seemed like he was having a good time and I definitely wanted to be a part of that. (Fred)

While the young pre-hunter may have expressed his desire to go hunting with his father, and may have demonstrated some of the skills necessary, he is not considered a hunter until he has hunted with the ability to kill. Thus, this liminal status also fuels the desire of the young hunter to go on his first hunt (Van Gennep 1960/1909; Turner 1967). The significance of the first hunt is that the young hunter is has the potential to kill game and become a fuller member of the community of males.

First gun. The first gun the young hunter possesses has great significance in the life and identity of the hunter. This rite of passage may take place in preparation for the first hunt, but may also be delayed due to monetary constraints or maturity. When the boy is entrusted with his first gun it signifies that his parents now have confidence in the youth.

I got my first BB gun at 7½ , and that fall my Dad took me up behind the house with a bee-bee gun squirrel hunting.... My Dad took me squirrel hunting, taught me how to shoot, how to hunt, how to walk quietly in the woods, different things like that. I thought it was cool, because before that, I was just a woodsman. I'd like walking through the woods and having the adventure. But, then all of a sudden a gun gets added, and, even though it was a BB gun, I took it seriously, my Dad took it seriously, and he started instilling in me the safety values that come with caring, owning, possessing, touching, feeling, looking at a gun. (Charlie)

As Charlie indicates, the first gun is a clear demarcation for the young boys from a want-to-be status to a neophyte hunter, and as such represents a new level of responsibility for the young hunter.

While the zone of proximal development is the most widely used Vygotskian concept, his theory also stresses the cultural-historical context. Vygotsky (1978) argues for play being the most significant activity of childhood because in play we see how tools, language, and social norms shape development. Vygotsky argues that when children enter into play or imaginary worlds they learn to detach themselves from the physical world and enter into figured *social* worlds. Though only a BB gun, the youth imaginatively transforms himself from a woodsman into a hunter. The physical tools (such as the gun) and the symbolic tools (such as the concept of safety) are given to them collectively by their culture but they also help him structure their figured world. The habitual use of these tools shapes thought. Thus, Vygotsky considers play as an essential part of how we pass on socio-cultural ideas. The child's greatest self-control occurs in

play as they develop their ability for deliberate behavior and self regulation (Holland, Skinner, Lachicotte, and Cain 1998). For example, Gene describes the physical and mental control he must demonstrate to manage the gun given to him by his father.

When I was initiated, my dad gave me a bolt action rifle with no rubber butt pad, it was just like your 700. It was another military rifle with a metal butt pad. And he was like, “shoot this gun.” And it beat the tar out of me. But then I was like, I know what it would do. I wasn’t scared. I knew it was gonna’ kick the dog shit out of me, but it was okay, you know. (Gene)

For the youths, the gun is also an important part of childhood play. With cousins or friends, this gun play included squirrel hunting and target practicing as precursors to hunts with men. This gun play might include killing squirrels that were robbing bird feeders or groundhogs that were damaging farms.

As a young kid, my cousin was the same age as I was. We would go out every now and then... we would save up enough money to get a box of 22 shells and shoot. When I was a little older, probably 7 or 8 or so, I would spend my summers up there on the farm. I would sometimes stay for a month at a time. My uncle hated groundhogs so anytime you wanted to go out and shoot some groundhogs, that was fine with him. He would encourage that kind of behavior. So he would hand me the 22 rifle and a box of shells and say “Go kill something!” which of course he meant “Go kill a groundhog!!” not just...don’t shoot the cows. (Dave)

For the neophyte hunter, the first gun is typically a small caliber (i.e., 22 caliber) rifle or small gauge (i.e., 410 or 20 gauge) shotgun and gives some degree of autonomy to the hunter—he is now responsible for handling the gun safely and caring for the gun, often under supervision. He may be allowed to take the gun out for target practice or hunting close to home as he demonstrates greater safety and skill.

My Dad took me. I was probably about 8 years old and he bought me a—actually he bought pieces to a Harrison or Richardson 410. Little shotgun, single shot. And he put it together for me and he bought a stock and cut it off so the stock was like 8 inches long or something. We went squirrel hunting. That’s how I got into it. (Gene)

[My dad] was encouraging me to hunt. And that tickled him to death and tickled me too. When I first received my first 410, a little single shot. We were raised on a farm

and money was very tight. I was only allowed very few shotgun shells. And I would go out and walk. I knew where all the spots were. I lived on the farm and knew exactly where the habitat was and where they fed and everything. (Quentin)

For Quentin, the acquisition of the first gun meant a degree of independence, he was now able to use his knowledge about the locale to locate game on his own. For others, the first gun meant acceptance into the group of men inhabited by his father and his father's friends.

For many neophytes, hunting small game was a transition to deer hunting. Small game is less challenging and more readily available. Hunting small game is an activity carried out using simpler technology. Often, for example, neophytes used small-caliber rifles or even BB or pellet rifles to hunt small game. Small game hunting occurs closer to home, allowing the young hunter more opportunity to hunt, as well as the chance to hunt without adult supervision. Finally, small game hunting does not involve extensive field dressing and butchering. Thus, the neophyte hunter is able to claim at least partial membership in the hunting community by successfully hunting small game.

First deer kill. The first kill is an event that evokes opposing feelings of, on the one hand, the success of objectively demonstrating hunting competence and, on the other hand, guilt and regret over the taking of a life. For the young hunter, this event is a bridge across which he may not return. Perhaps for this reason, the first kill was the most commonly celebrated rite of passage. The first kill also demonstrates that a degree of competence has been achieved by the hunter—he has proven both to himself and to the hunting community that he is capable of hunting success. This represents a change in status of the hunter; specifically, he has crossed the line between “not killing” and “killing” or between potential hunter and actual hunter.

Like other rites of passage, a great deal of variation exists in the age of the hunter during the first kill.

The first deer was actually at the age of 10. I killed that deer with a shotgun. Most of the time, at least where we're from, age kind of varies; usually around 8 to 10. If you're introduced to hunting, you usually kill your deer somewhere around that age. You're starting to get out; your Dad's taking you. You're kind of able to kind of tag along a little better and you get on a deer stand. You're learning to hunt, basically.... When I was 8, 9, and 10 years old, I had shot at a couple of deer but, I hadn't been successful yet. (Bob)

For Bob, the first kill took place at a relatively young age, and he sees it as a natural progression. While some hunters experienced the first kill while hunting small game, the more important kill was the killing of the first deer. Deer hold the position of the largest and most commonly hunted large game animal for the informants. Similarly, Ian who, despite his earlier experience hunting squirrels, found that killing his first deer had much greater significance:

Killing something, that was made a little more relevant, and I actually had to field dress it—get in there and get bloody up to my elbows and just pull all of the internals out of it and then drag it back.... It was kind of disgusting and stomach-turning. (Ian)

The contradictory tensions of this moment of realization—that competence is demonstrated by taking a life—gains even more significance with the celebration that occurred after the successful kill.

I had experiences when I was even younger of seeing deer brought home by either my father or my grandfather that they had killed, so there was a little of an introduction there. But the actual realization that I killed something was probably with the first deer that I shot. It was kind of re-introduced again when I was deer hunting and I was that close to it when I shot it.... With my first deer, it only took a couple of steps and dropped so there really wasn't much tracking and we pretty much knew it was dead right away. So we went and found it and my Dad's friends congratulate me and there was a little celebration like if you will and then we had to field dress it. Which is basically you just cut it open and pull out all of the internals—its intestines, heart, liver, everything. Basically what you want to do is get the body to cool down as quickly as possible so there is a less chance of spoiling the meat. (Ian)

Ian's success in killing and the congratulatory celebration of his dad's friends signal membership in the community of adult male hunters. But this success is tempered by the reality of killing and butchering the deer.

Hunting partners. A function hunting plays for primary socialized hunters was to provide youths with experience interacting with adult males in the hunting community. Hunting served to socialize young hunters into both the hunting community and the larger community of adult men. Any hunting trip, but particularly the rite of passage of killing a first deer, represented a step into manhood for the young hunters. The congratulations Ian received after he killed his first deer is a good example. This serves not only to diminish the tension-causing ambiguity of the first kill but also to welcome him into the fold.

Well, that night, we were sitting around the campfire and we had a plate of Grandma's homemade chocolate chip cookies. And then the guy that brings everything but the kitchen sink is there. And it's just him and my father and me there that year again and he's fixing up his wife's stew--she usually puts dumplings in it. He starts that warming up, so we're just talking around the campfire, snacking on these chocolate chip cookies and the winds' blowing and it's making these pieces of ice fall everywhere. And all of a sudden out of nowhere, one of them fell right smack in the middle of the cookies. Cookies go everywhere, this piece of ice just smashed right down in the middle of our cookies!! It got rid of grandma's cookies.... The first deer that I shot was actually while I was up on one of those hunting trips. (Ian)

During these hunting trips, Ian is accepted into the group of adult hunters who suffer the same harsh weather and welcome of warm food at camp. In this way, hunting socializes young men into the community of hunters both through their participation in the hunt and in the re-creation of the hunting trip through "hanging out with friends, sitting around the campfire telling stories" (Ian).

The neophyte hunter still holds a liminal and ambiguous position in the community of hunters, however. Despite the fact that they are carrying a loaded gun and have the ability to take game, they do not have equal standing. The degree of supervision by—and perhaps simply the presence of—their mentors at this stage signals adult members of the hunting party that they are not full members, which is a stage subsequently discussed.

Values. At the neophyte stage, the novice hunter is trained in the values important to the hunting community. This section describes a subsection of these values and traces the development of these values through the three stages of the hunter’s development. While a variety of other values could have been explored, these values were important across the hunters interviewed for this study. Moreover, by tracing the values through the development of the hunter, we can see how their interpretation changes. In Figure 2, across the stages of neophyte, apprentice, and competent, the different interpretations of success, patience, and stewardship are explained.

	<i>Neophyte</i>	<i>Apprentice</i>	<i>Competent</i>
“ <i>Success</i> ”	a kill	a clean kill	fair chase
“ <i>Patience</i> ”	Waiting for a deer without moving	Waiting for a big buck	Enjoying the outdoors, uncertainty of the kill
“ <i>Stewardship</i> ”	Don’t kill without a reason	Don’t kill something you aren’t going to eat	Don’t waste the meat (in butchering)

Figure 2: The Evolution of Hunters’ Values

During pre-hunting, success would be merely the inclusion in the hunt and the demonstration of safe gun handling. For the neophyte, success is killing game, which is why the first deer kill is so important; this rite of passage is concrete evidence of the

neophyte's success. Xavier describes the importance of the killing of his first rabbit and the family involvement thereafter.

Yeah, the first time that, well the first time I was actually with my brother at the time, and we were walking to go do some target practice. And it was during rabbit season, and we saw a rabbit. And you know it was fairly decent away, and he's like hey it's rabbit season. So, I shot a rabbit. That was probably the first thing I killed I guess. We done a fair amount of target practice. I was pretty accomplished at that point. ... Yeah, and my mom actually even fixed it for us. (Xavier).

For the neophyte, patience is being able and willing to sit still and remain quiet as his father hunts.

I can remember times going with [my father], just following along behind him and probably messing him up, but he put up with it because it was hard, I can remember it was hard to sit still and not move your feet or throw rocks or pick up a stick or something. I remember that was part that you had to be still. (Oscar)

Oscar's difficulty in being still and quiet in the woods was a common theme in descriptions of hunting with children.

Stewardship is a value that meant taking a life is a significant act and should not be done lightly. Neophytes are typically trained to believe that not all killing is appropriate, particularly if the killed animal is not used.

...the first lesson I had about per se 'don't kill it unless you intend to do something with it' ... I guess I had shot a bird with a pellet rifle that I had... but anyway he didn't make a big deal out of it. He was probably like, you know, "Why did you do that? Just like I was curious why did you do that?" Well, I guess because I wanted to see if I could hit it. He was like well, "It looks like you had a pretty good shot, but why did you do that?" It made me think you know. It's kind of like, "Why did I do that?" And at the time I didn't really give it a second thought, but reflecting on it, it didn't make a whole lot of sense you know I am not going to eat it you know and it wasn't really bothering anything. (Xavier)

Again, this is consistent with Vygotsky's idea that the more competent teacher or peer provides scaffolding upon which the child leverages what they already know. Children use language to communicate their thoughts, and through the *social* act of verbalizing

those thoughts combine their experiences with others. Xavier's evaluation of his kill suggests that, at the neophyte stage, he was motivated by demonstrating his success in hunting. His father's indirect but persistent questioning forced Xavier to reflect on killing a creature for no particular purpose and allowed him to develop his own notions on thoughtful stewardship over wildlife. This is also consistent with Vygotsky's assertion that mental constructs get their meanings first on an interpersonal plane and then on a psychological plane. Xavier first explores the meaning of killing in dialogue with his father and only later internalizes the meaning of stewardship. "The higher functions of intellectual activity arise out of collective behavior, out of cooperation with the surrounding people, and from social experience" (Vygotsky cited in Tudge and Scrimsher 2003).

Apprentice

As the neophyte hunter improves his skills and demonstrates an appreciation for safety, he signals to his parents that he is worthy of increased independence and responsibility. During this phase, he undergoes an important rite of passage—the first unsupervised hunt—and expands the domains of his hunting expertise. At this stage, he becomes an apprentice hunter.

Rather than using a borrowed gun or a low-powered rifle or shotgun, hunters at this stage typically have graduated to high-powered rifles or compound bows and those hunters who hunt birds will be using full power (almost exclusively 12-gauge) shotguns. Mid- to late-teen-age males frequently have jobs that result in income that is spent to

purchase hunting accessories—clothing or rifle accessories, for example. Thus, they are able to play a larger role in both the decision-making and purchase process.

Skills. The apprentice must first demonstrate a range of skills and a full comprehension of the expectations of a hunter, both by the family and the community of hunters. While for the neophyte it is common for youths to accompany their fathers on hunts only after they have demonstrated a degree of self control, the criteria for hunting without supervision for the apprentice are significantly more demanding. Typically apprentice hunters begin venturing out on their own in their middle teens, although this may occur earlier in some cases. During the neophyte phase, the youth develops and demonstrates a range of skills that includes safe gun handling, tracking game, marksmanship, and field dressing game. In addition, the norms of hunting and a grasp of the language of hunting develop as they become members of the fraternity of male hunters.

While new skills are also learned during the apprentice stage, the emphasis is on practice and improvement of existing skills learned during the earlier stages. For instance, it is expected that he will improve his tracking abilities through practice and will learn greater persistence through trial and error. His overall understanding of the hunting process improves as he manages the hunt, such as planning the location and path to be followed and contacting landowners for their permission. This increased role in managing and planning independent hunts allows the apprentice the opportunity to explore a wider range of hunting styles and to find an approach that works for him (a detail of different hunting approaches is provided in chapters 5 through 9). The apprentice is developing his skills as a hunter and is exploring his identity as a hunter.

And then as time went on and I got a little older my dad died when I was 14. And so then I could remember rabbit hunting with him a little bit, but not too much. I don't remember a great deal about rabbit hunting, but then as I was in high school, I guess in high school because I had my driver's license then my friends and I would go rabbit hunting. And then in the, especially in [this part of the state] I don't know where else, but there is an early squirrel season, which would be, opens up about the first of September and is in for 30 days and then closes. I used to go out before school some mornings and squirrel hunt for 2-3 hours and then come back and go to school. You know, I wouldn't be late for school because you didn't have to go very far to squirrel hunt. (Oscar)

While the apprentice may continue to hunt with his father, this “young buck” stage is characterized by growing independence as he hunts alone or with other hunting partners of equal status who are typically friends. As with the earlier stages, rites of passage signal improving skills and increased development in the apprentice hunter.

First solo kill. For apprentice hunters, killing their first deer without their mentor present is a significant rite of passage. This accomplishment leads to feelings of proficiency since, without a mentor, he has successfully completed all of the tasks necessary to bring in game himself.

It was in the afternoon, after class. And I'll remember this forever. I had two tests the next day, one in AP calculus and one in anatomy. And I think the grades I got, when I finally got 'em back, didn't add up to 80. [laughing]. But I've got him hanging on the wall right now. He ended up being like, I think, it was like a 17 inch spread, 8-point. It was tall. It's nothing huge. But it was the first buck I'd ever killed and the first deer I killed without Dad standing beside of me. (Ed)

As the preceding excerpt indicates, Ed viewed his first kill without his mentor as a significant event in his life. He has demonstrated his ability to take game without his father present, which signifies self-sufficiency and provides additional evidence of his membership in the hunting community of men.

Expanding Expertise. Apprentice hunters begin to branch out using different weapons and methods of hunting to improve their skills and expand their proficiency. As

a result, their first kill experiences with new weapons or methods are also significant rites of passage.

It was probably in '85. I had bow hunted when I was a student but never had any luck. I was just using a re-curve bow, actually the one that I had in high school. Never really had any luck killing a deer. Of course, deer are a lot more prevalent now than they were back then. I think the first time that you kill a deer with a bow, it's something that you've never done before, so you're glad to get that experience in having done that. I guess that it's the skills necessary to kill the animal and all that goes into it. It's not just a casual thing where you just pick up a bow and walk out in the woods. (Dave)

This first kill with a bow was a significant rite of passage and signified a greater domain of expertise. This tool demands both strength and skill since the hunter must let the deer come closer prior to taking a shot due to the relatively limited range of the bow as compared with a rifle.

Similarly, different methods provided different rites of passage but they all demonstrated increasing expertise.

I can remember the first quail that I ever killed over a bird dog. I was hunting with my uncle and hunting on my granddaddy's farm, and I can take you to the very spot right now. My uncle was a very generous man, and I would go and I would shoot and get all excited when I would see a bird fall. And he would let me go and say oh you made a good shot, and he would be the one that would kill it. Well, I knew that, and I said no. One day we were hunting together, and I was very young. I had shot some, but [it was] the very first bird that I killed over a pointing dog. (Quentin)

Quentin's first kill using a bird dog had a similar degree of significance as the first kill using a bow. Moreover, both activities involved skills developed over significant periods of time.

Of course, these hunters are still in training and their skills are not always adequate especially when working with a new method. Thus, these hunting experiences did not always have positive outcomes, as was the case with Fred's first kill with a bow.

Well, about 20 minutes later, a 4-point walks out and he's about 30 yards away. And he walks the same path as the doe did and I had drawn back. But this time, he didn't stop at the thicket. He walked a little bit further. And I shot. And it was a horrible shot. I actually hit it in the head. It was broadside and I was aiming for his front shoulder. And I hit it in the head. And I was just so happy I hit it. I was like, "All right!" But I realized this was bad. Well, I wait about 20 minutes to a half hour in the stand, which is always rough to do. Especially if it's your first deer, you want to get out there and get on it quick. And so, I waited and I tracked him down for a better part of a half mile to $\frac{3}{4}$ mile and I just found the blood and the blood stopped. I was thinking, "Man! Like this is horrible." I wished I hadn't shot. At about that time, I heard a crow start to call from about, I don't know, over the ridge to the left a little bit. I was like, "Well, there's no way the deer could have gone that way because there's a big hill. But there's gotta be something over there." I was out of ideas, so I walked over there. And there was the buck and he was just laying there. He was definitely--and this is kind of sad. He definitely had lost his will to go on. You know, he was like, "I'm done for." He definitely wasn't dead yet. So I pulled back and shot another time. I shot him right in the neck with the arrow and that was that. I was happy with my first deer. But it was definitely not the first way you want to do it. Not the way you want to kill any deer. (Fred)

Fred's description of the killing of his first deer with a bow once again reveals the tension between the positive feat of achieving a significant rite of passage, and the negative emotions of having killed an animal. This tension is exacerbated in this case by his poor shot at the deer that injured but did not kill.

Hunting partners. The apprentice hunter is branching out by hunting either solo or with one or more close peers. Fellow hunters may be classmates or, more commonly, neighbors or relatives (typically cousins or siblings). These relationships are characterized by high levels of trust and identity exploration among safe, yet often critical, peers. In particular, masculinity narratives at this stage involve competition, challenges, and bravado. These hunting stories often involve peers making a claim or meeting a challenge by other hunters to assert his skills and abilities.

I had my new gun so on Sunday night before the deer season opened on Monday [my friend] said "give me one of your shells." So, I gave him a shell. He used a knife point and he scratched on it "six-point buck". And he said this is one you put in the chamber of your gun. (Yan)

I said, "I'm gonna get that deer tomorrow morning." He said, "No, you're not going to get it." I said, "All right, if that's what you think. Maybe not. But I'm gonna try." So I wake up. And normally I get in the woods about a half hour before daylight. But I knew this deer was like in the area well before daylight. So I knew I had to be there really early. So get there like an hour and a half before daylight... and found me a little spot that I thought would be good. I sat down there and I waited for an hour. And then I heard a doe bleat. They have this bleat they do when they're in heat. And I heard her. So I had my bleat back and I bleated back at her. She thought there was another doe out there. She come straight out of the bottom coming right at me. Then I see that buck walkin' in the back. I'm like, "I told these guys. Look at this." I told them.... So I put the gun up on the buck in case he darts off. So she runs back over the same way they came. He sees her run over the hill and like, "he's gonna turn around and go right back after her."... So he comes and circles around straight at me.... I call my buddy up and I said, "Hey guess what?" He said, "You didn't see him, did you?" I said, "No, he's laying in my front yard." [laughing] I mounted that one. I mean it was like \$175. I mean, to me, just to have that memory of saying, you know, I killed that deer. My best friend wouldn't listen to me, you know. It was just worth it to me. (Gene)

Yan's hunting partner challenges him to kill a deer by engraving "six-point buck" onto the shell. Similarly, Gene savors the memory of proving his ability to his friend. In both cases, these apprentices met challenges, set by either themselves or by others, that pushed them to improve their hunting skills. They achieve these goals within a supportive environment and are able to claim bragging rights and greater standing in the group based on their skills.

Values. Again, we see the dynamic reinterpretation of the hunt by these more experienced hunters who are challenge by their peers. For the apprentice hunter, the values of success, patience, and stewardship have different meanings. While the novice hunter sees success as simply the taking of game, the apprentice hunter sees it as a personal challenge—an opportunity to prove himself against his peers. Therefore, success is taking the largest deer, preferably a buck, and the young men make comparisons with their fellow hunters based on the size of the kill, which also indicates greater skill

development. As the next quote suggests, failure to demonstrate control is viewed negatively.

They call it “buck fever” you know. You don't really make rational decisions. You are kind of caught up in the excitement and that is all that matters. They kind of lose all of their rationality. They get excited. I have heard some guys don't think their gun is loaded and will actually empty their magazine. They will see a deer and forget there is already one in there and put another one in and all of a sudden the gun is unloaded. Or some guys that shake so badly they can't make a shot. Most folks will come to earth when they are shaking, I can't make the shot, I better let the deer walk. But some guys won't. They will point the gun and shoot you know and maybe hit it in the leg or not hit it at all. (Tom)

While “buck fever”—the excitement that results from suddenly seeing a deer and being unable to make a successful shot—is legendary among hunters, it is more prevalent during the apprentice stage. The increased peer pressure to take a large buck and prove oneself results in more buck fever. Few hunters admitted to suffering the effects of buck fever as adults. It is unclear whether experience has a curative effect on this fever or whether it is only socially acceptable to suffer buck fever as an apprentice.

Not surprising, patience for the apprentice is no longer the ability to wait quietly and stoically, but is instead the perseverance and patience necessary to bring home the large buck. Moreover, this definition of success includes the notion of a clean kill so the apprentice hunter must take his time to make a careful shot on a prized deer, thereby demonstrating his improved skill level.

I wasn't gonna shoot anything unless it was a nice deer. So we'd talk on the radio about every hour. And he said, “Did you see anything.” And I said, “Yeah, I seen some does.” And he said, “Sit tight. You might see somethin'.” And I was eatin' my bologna sandwich and watchin' the does run in front of me. And then I see a buck. Nice buck come right behind one of the does. I laid my bologna sandwich down. Dad said he could see all this happening. I don't believe him because I was chewing tobacco and he didn't say anything about it. But I put my gun up and shot him and he fell. Turned on my radio, finished eatin' my sandwich. And, Dad said, “You got

him?" I said, "Yeah, I got him." And that was the end of that hunt. He was a 7-pointer. He was a real old deer. (Ed)

Ed describes patiently waiting for the big buck. While he was hunting with his dad, he expresses the need to prove himself, to establish his legitimacy and his independence, which he does both by proving that he can cleanly kill a big deer and by using tobacco without his father's permission. Note also the bravado in the way Ed describes finishing his bologna sandwich, as though the successful conclusion of the hunt was a foregone conclusion.

The third value of stewardship also changes from the neophyte to the apprentice. Rather than asking the young hunter to consider the general utility of the killing process, the apprentice has a finer understanding of "use what you take." Specifically, killing must include eating the game taken. While shooting a small bird may be acceptable (although not encouraged) among neophytes, the apprentice believes that using the meat is essential.

If you use it, more power to you. That's fine with me. And I've hunted with some really rich people and I've hunted with some fairly poor people. And, you know, if you want to shoot a buck and have it mounted, that's fine. Do something with the meat. If you want to kill 10 does, that's fine too, as long as you do something with the meat. (Ed)

Ed's understanding of "use what you take" involves consuming the meat. As with many hunters, he is adamant about the importance of using the meat.

Competent Hunter

Competence is determined in part by mastery of hunting, the achievement of a wide range of experiences, and adherence to core values. Other family members and hunting partners signal to the competent hunter that he has advanced his skills, his values, and his experiences sufficiently to achieve competence. Competence has a social element

at its core. This is distinct from the process of “internalization” described by Schouten and McAlexander (1995), where the Harley-Davidson rider’s rise to the highest status levels is a function of making internal perceptual changes.

The following five chapters (chapters 5 through 9) describe five different types of competent hunters. As will be seen in these chapters, equipment relationships among competent hunters take many forms, from those who see equipment as the primary motivation for the hunt to those who see the equipment as simply a necessary tool in acquiring game. Certainly during this phase, the role of the gun as a mediating technology in the hunting experience plays a role in the skills developed, the techniques used, and even the formation of the hunter’s identity as a competent hunter.

Skills. Frequently, hunters at this stage continue to expand in both the game sought and in the technology used, but the motivations for doing so differ from those of the apprentice hunter. While the apprentice hunter expands his game and skills to prove himself, the experienced hunter no longer needs to demonstrate proficiency. His competence is naturally accepted, in a manner similar to the final transformation of the self that Harley-Davidson riders undergo, in a lack of self-consciousness (Schouten and McAlexander 1995). The competent hunter no longer engages in the bravado and challenge exhibited by apprentice hunters. Instead, he explores the limits of hunting by expanding the range of his technological skills to increase the total amount of time he can hunt during different seasons (e.g., bow season, black powder season, rifle season, etc.), expanding the type of game sought (e.g., spring gobbler), or expanding the network of hunting partners he uses.

Since rites of passage represent a change in status from a lower level to a higher level, the discussion of rites of passage among competent hunters is not relevant. Perhaps the hunters will collect new experiences, but these events would no longer be considered rites of passage. Gene, for example, describes hunting for ram in his desire to increase the number of types of game he has hunted.

Well ram are mostly out west. You have like Texas Doll Ram. You've got mountain goats and all that stuff. So you had to go out there and get 'em. But they like get they're called "exotics" is what they're called. And I shot a ram that originally came from Australia. So basically, they import 'em over here.... But most people, when they do that, they just go shoot it and they take the head. That's all they want. And just pure sport hunting. Like going to Africa and shooting a lion. The only reason you want that lion is to say, "I shot a lion and I got the head to prove it." (Gene)

While Gene decries pure sport hunting in this passage, hunting an "imported" ram was a novel experience. Competent hunters continue to branch out by using additional technologies, by taking additional game, or by hunting in different locations.

Hunting partners. By this point in their hunting careers, hunters have developed a sense of whether they prefer to hunt in groups with other hunters (i.e., "social" hunters) or alone (i.e., "solitary" hunters). Social hunters derive meanings primarily from their contact with others during the hunting process. While they may spend some time alone in the woods, these hunters recount stories, display their hunting prowess, and for the most part, enjoy the social interactions with other hunters during the hunt. Social hunters are sometimes members of either hunting clubs or participate in "hunting camps," which tend to involve a lot of male camaraderie among hunting friends and sharing of activities (eating, playing cards, drinking) that are ancillary to the hunting experience. Solitary hunters, on the other hand, derive their meanings from the hunting experience by being

alone in the woods. To them, the connection with nature and solitude provide them with their personal meaning of the hunting experience.

Values. The key change from the apprentice hunter to the competent hunter is in the purpose of the hunt. As hunters approach competency, they develop strong preferences about how to hunt and with whom they want to hunt. As a result, they tend to move into one of the five clusters detailed in the following chapters. Perhaps the largest change in their values is a changing sense of how they define hunting success. Some hunters, for example, value the kill to a larger extent, some value the experience of the hunt, while others value the technological aspects of the hunting experience. As distinct from apprentice hunters, competent hunters are less motivated by proving their abilities to others and more interested in actualizing their own preferences (e.g., the kill, the experience, the technology).

As the competent hunter has largely transcended the need to prove himself or compare himself with his peers, the style of his hunting, as described in the following chapters, dictates his definition of success. This definition varies from success in the use of technology in one group to success in the experiencing of nature among others.

You are walking through the mountains and you see different wildlife and the views and God's creation. It gives you an opportunity that you don't get on the football field or the basketball court or the tennis court. Golf has some, but not like being out in the mountains. You get out in the mountains and you go from one peak to another and you stand up there and look around and you just marvel at the beauty that is out there. (Quentin)

Quentin's notion of success as a competent (and long-time) hunter is being in nature.

This approach may be contrasted with other hunters, such as the traditionalists and pragmatists (chapters 5 and 6), who considered success as tracking and taking game, or the gearheads (chapter 7), who enjoy interacting with hunting gear.

Similarly, the meaning of patience changes for the competent hunter. While the neophyte must remain patient enough to take game and the apprentice hunter must remain patient enough to take a big buck, the competent hunter sees success over the longer term and does not find it necessary to prove himself each time. Hence his definition of patience means that he need not take a deer every time he hunts, he might instead simply enjoy the process of the hunt or he might wait for the opportune moment to take the perfect deer.

Well [pointing to a deer head on his living room wall]... that one taught me how to be patient. I was bow hunting up here at [a local hunting area] and I was in the stand and.... well it was right before dark and a smaller 8-pointer come down the mountain and I shot him. Then I looked up the mountain and I seen that one coming right behind him. And I made my mind up I was going to kill him and then it took me a month to kill him. [laughs] That one taught me how to be patient. And this one [pointing to another] was killed in the same area. I let that one walk three times before I shot him. (Zack)

Hunting is a relaxing time for me. I will climb up in a tree stand and sit there from before sunup until after sunset and wait for something to come by and take a shot at night that is fine too. A lot of times I will get on the ground under a tree and sleep. (Keith)

In Zack's case, patience takes the form of waiting for the opportunity to shoot a specific deer. This type of patience might involve multiple sightings or long time lags before he succeeds. Keith has a different hunting style than Zack in that he values the experience of the hunt. He describes relaxing, waiting against a tree for a deer to emerge. These differences are further explicated in the following chapters.

The stewardship value undergoes even more fine-tuning in the transition from the apprentice hunter to the competent hunter. For example, Bob takes pride in his efficiency in which the butchering process that produces higher quality cuts of meat.

We usually take a lot of pride in the way that we butcher our deer. We are very meticulous.... We do a real neat, nice job and don't have lot of waste. A lot of people

are just like “All I want is the back-stretch,” you know, the two tenderloins and they discard the rest. To me, I think that’s real wasteful. I guess that kind of goes back to the way I’ve been raised; the Indian that lives on within me. If you’re going to kill something, make good use of it. (Bob)

Bob takes pride in the quality of the butchering he and his family does. He further expresses this pride in the presentation of meat to friends:

From my experiences, you just don’t see many people that go that far in butchering their deer. I guess the word that I want to use is sloppy. They’re just cutting away at the hide and there’s hair flying around every where. For me, you want to work quickly, but you don’t want to just sit there and make a mess. The way that we work-up our deer is kind of showing our respect for the animal. It’s given its life for the nourishment of our bodies, so you want to do the best job possibly that you can. A butcher that cuts steaks that you buy in the supermarket, you want him to do a nice, clean job; not having hair all over the meat. That’s kind of the way we go about our butchering also. Do a nice, neat, professional job; take pride and be happy about the way you did it: “I’d show anybody the way I worked this ham up, this is very good.” (Bob)

Bob extends his stewardship even to the way the meat is butchered and shows respect for the animal and respect for those who will be eating the meat.

For the primary socialized hunter, various rites of passage mark the transition to increasingly independent stages of development. Unlike a Piagetian conception of these stages that would depend on cognitive development within the child to signal the need for exposure to increased levels of responsibility and autonomy, the conception described in this chapter is more a function of social and cultural influences that serve to place the child in a context in which he needs to demonstrate increased levels of responsibility within a social setting.

In this way, hunting socializes boys to become members of the band of men within the social contexts (i.e., hunting situations) in which they later become active. Specifically, the expectations change from when a young pre-hunter first accompanies his father on a hunt, to when he and his friends achieve a level of independence in planning

and orchestrating their own hunts, to when he achieves a level of competence that allows him to transcend the external evaluations of other hunters. Through this social development process, the meanings, values, and activities of what it means to be a man among the community of men changes for the hunter. The pre-hunter and neophyte gain access to manhood through accompanying males during the traditionally male activity of the hunt. The apprentice demonstrates his masculinity to his peers by killing (ideally large) game in a competitive and hierarchical display. And the competent hunter negotiates a range of meanings of masculinity, which are discussed in the subsequent chapters.

Secondary Socialization

In addition to the primary hunters described in the first part of this chapter, some hunters learned to hunt later in life, often exposed to the activity through friends rather than family. Sometimes a co-worker or friend first convinced them to accompany them on a hunting trip, although occasionally they struck out on their own to learn. Rob is a good example of this secondary socialization. While he was involved in shooting sports as a child, and has even taught others to shoot, he did not begin hunting until after he had a family. When he started, he had little knowledge of basic hunting skills.

I didn't know how to recognize animal signs. I didn't know how to walk quietly. I read a lot about this stuff, I hadn't practiced it. I had no one to teach it to me, no one to hand it down. (Rob)

Rob and his wife bought a weekend cabin in a hunting preserve whereupon he applied for his first hunting license. Without a parent to train him, he had a more difficult time acquiring the knowledge and skills used in hunting than did informants who were

socialized within their families. As he describes, he used other sources of hunting information rather than a mentor in the family of origin. This late socialization in life also affected what skills he could pass onto his children as well.

But that's the father son, that's the kind of, I taught my kids how to shoot, and I taught them courtesy, field courtesy, which is safety, but I couldn't teach them how to hunt. I didn't know how to hunt. (Rob)

Rather than hunting being associated with a long family and personal history, secondary socialized hunters construct different meanings. They may first begin hunting and see it as a casual hobby to be participated in when the opportunity presents. These hunters inhabit a place in the subculture described by Schouten and McAlexander (1995) as being on the lowest hierarchical level. Skill levels varied greatly with secondary hunters. I interviewed secondary hunters with a wide range of experience levels, so it was easy to see the clear relationship between experience and skill. For those secondary hunters who achieve greater skills, interest in hunting grows and continues throughout their lives. Hunting becomes an important part of their lives and their identities in a fashion similar to “hard core” Harley-Davidson riders. Their continued participation in the activity provides them with opportunities to master skills and knowledge in such a way as to minimize the social distinctions between themselves and lifelong primary hunters.

Secondary socialization is explored by past researchers seeking understanding of various market-centered communities. These have been termed “subcultures of consumption” (Schouten and McAlexander 1995), “tribes” (Cova and Cova 2002), consumption-based “microcultures” (Thompson and Troester 2002), and “brand communities” (Muñiz and O’Guinn 2001). The following sections describe the rites of

passage, hierarchical levels, social organization, and values of these secondary socialized hunters.

Rites of passage. Secondary socialization into hunting, like subcultures of consumption and brand communities (and primary socialized hunters), progresses from neophyte to expert through a series of steps. Neophytes in the study of Harley-Davidson riders (Schouten and McAlexander 1995) had modest riding skills, little awareness of the depth of values held by hard-core members, and lower levels of Harley-specific experience and knowledge. Neophyte hunters who are secondary socialized do not yet have experience, skills, or knowledge, and do not understand the depth of commitment to some of the widely held values in the hunting community.

Al, a secondary socialized apprentice hunter, describes himself as an ethical hunter, then tells of shooting his first deer from the back of a pickup truck.

Since I've never really done it besides riding around in the back of a pick-up truck with a spotlight, I can't talk about "the thrill," and, you know, people get buck fever where they can't pull the trigger. They're just frozen in the tree. I can't talk about that because I've never really had it and I saw the deer that started to turn run away. I had a gun that fit me very much like my shotgun. I threw it to my shoulder; I didn't even aim. Shot it and it died. I hit it twice. The first time I hit it, he actually jumped and it kind of blew his leg off. (Al)

Al's quote indicates he lacks awareness of the importance of "fair chase," taking a careful shot, and following the law. He values the kill as a milestone and presents an image of himself as successful hunter. However, more competent hunters, whether primary or secondary socialized, would consider spot lighting a deer to be an unethical practice.

The stages of development are less definite, partly due to the wide variance in age that they first start learning to hunt but also because these hunting rites of passage occurred in adulthood rather than in the domain of childhood. For instance, the

acquisition of the first gun, a signifier of increased responsibility and trust in primary socialized hunters, is less important to a hunter who begins the activity as an adult. Recall, for the primary socialized hunter, the first gun represents entrance into both the hunting subculture and the world of adults. For a secondary socialized hunter, the gun represents a significant and exciting new experience but without the additional meaning of increase in status level experienced by primary hunters. In addition to the first gun, other rites of passage for secondary socialized hunters take different forms than those of primary hunters.

First hunt. The first hunt is a significant rite of passage for any hunter. Unlike the first hunt of the primary socialized hunter, however, which is often characterized by years of anticipation and excitement, secondary socialized hunters' first hunts were less emotionally charged. Secondary socialized hunters do not experience the depth of emotion attached to this rite of passage.

Even though my dad is not hunter, he did agree to go with me and that was my first experience, and I just latched on to it even though my dad wasn't too excited about it and went from there. (Bill)

The first hunt for secondary socialized hunters is more isolated, it is often unconnected to a family and personal narrative, and it did not involve years of training. Hence, it was less embedded into a social and cultural context. Secondary hunters sometimes went hunting with their fathers, although their fathers were untrained and less involved than the fathers of primary hunters.

I just talked my dad into going one day, and he went out for a couple of hours and went back home and left me out there. Well, we got up well before daylight and got out in the woods. When I say that's, it's literally just across the road from the house I grew up in. And got up before daylight, we went out, and this is in August. So, it's still pretty steamy even in Kentucky. Mosquitoes are kind of bad and after a couple of

hours my dad had had enough, and he went back home. I stayed out. I don't think I shot anything that day. I shot at some things. (Bill)

The preceding quote dramatizes the difference between secondary socialized and primary socialized hunters. Rather than a gradual family process of socialization to increasing levels of skill, Bill experienced the first hunt with his father, but without the guidance that fathers provide primary hunters.

First kill. Another significant rite of passage for both primary and secondary socialized hunters is the first kill. But secondary hunters see this passage as an achievement rather than the status changing rite seen by primary hunters. Specifically, primary socialized hunters see the first kill as a step on their progression toward manhood, a significant life event, while secondary socialized hunters see this simply as a step toward proficiency in hunting.

So I was walking along holding my rifle just taking my time meandering around some trees and open land. And sure enough there was a 7-point buck that just didn't pop up from behind the tree and stare at me. My heart jumped in my throat, and it was all I could do to remain calm. Here is a gorgeous deer standing in front of me, there is no impediments to shot him, there is a hillside for a backstop, this is it. I raised my gun, the deer was about 40 yards away, 30 yards away, reasonably close, I raised the gun shaking and fired. And I clipped the deer in the underbelly, you know just tickled him. He jumped straight up in the air and then landed where he was and started at me like what was that? I racked the bolt on the gun and fired again. This time I went over top of him. I was shaking. And he ducked down a little bit and I thought he was going to run, and he took a step toward me, turned broadside, I shot and almost hit him in the rump and tickled him. He got mad and turned around and snorted at me, and I nailed him. Took him right there. (Nick)

In Nick's description, he continues to fire at the deer until presented with the opportunity for a good shot. He seems to see this as a challenge between the deer and himself akin almost to a test of wills between two adversaries—a victory rather than a rite of passage. Moreover, this first kill does not demonstrate the patience, discipline, and skill so admired by competent hunters.

Unlike primary hunters, secondary hunters sometimes experienced their first kill alone. Thus, two rites of passage—the first deer kill and the first solo deer kill—occur together.

So I just went out behind my house in Floyd with a Swedish Mauser and it happened to be a very spot to deer hunt. I got lucky and picked the right location. There was just deer everywhere. They would come there in the evening. I would just go sit out back and you know the first time I went deer hunting I sit out back and the deer come walking by. You always hear it's so hard to deer hunt, it's just the right place at the right time. And see I missed one deer, two deer, three deer, and finally I got lucky and hit one and killed it, which a lot of it had to do with hunting with a Swedish Mauser, which that thing about sighting in your firearm is important. At 100 yards it shoots about a foot high.... Well that was kind of funny actually because I shot the thing, and I had an idea of what you had to do to field dress them and all of that, but still if you have never done it before you can read all the books you want. The best way to do it is to have somebody show you. I was like all right whatever it couldn't be that hard. (Jack)

While Jack experienced his first kill alone and lacked the knowledge of how to field dress or butcher the deer once he killed it, other hunters had this experience with a non-family mentor.

I was out hunting with my high school physics teacher on some property that he hunted in an adjacent county, and he set me up that morning in a location where he knew there would be traffic and sat there for a while. And eventually I saw a doe run by and gathered that she was probably being chased by a buck so I sat there and waited for a few minutes and came along, and I missed my first shot and got a second chance. So, I hit it with the second shot and that was it. I mean I waited a little while and then called out for [him] to come over, and he field dressed it and took it home and went from there. I mean it was a pretty, at the time the best I can remember it did seem like a level of accomplishment that I hadn't achieved before. (Bill)

Like primary hunters, the effect of the first kill crosses a significant line in the life of the secondary hunter. The distinction between not killing and killing signals the entrance into the hunting community for secondary socialized hunters in what may be described as “the male bonding experience” (Yan).

Hunting partners and values. Like primary hunters, hunting partners of secondary socialized hunters have varied preferences in their selection of hunting partners. For secondary socialized hunters, continued participation with their original mentor occurred until circumstances like geographical relocation caused a split, while others hunted with one hunting partner or as members of hunting clubs.

Secondary hunters also express many of the same values as primary hunters. Common values such as minimizing pain and using the meat exist in secondary hunters as well, although their development over time is more varied and less connected with the values learned in the family of origin. The secondary hunters who became apprentice or competent hunters are included in the analysis of all hunters and their approaches to the hunt and technology are described in chapters 5-9.

The Female Hunters

In an effort to gain insight into the role that gender plays in the predominantly male activity of hunting, two female hunters were interviewed for the study. Both Carla and Patricia were secondary socialized, learning to hunt later in life, although both grew up around hunting and have taken steps to train other hunters in ways similar to primarily socialized hunters. Given the prevalence of hunting among men, daughters and nieces must usually rely on men to socialize them into the hunt. As Oscar reflects, it is unclear why so many fewer girls are socialized as hunters.

Yeah, we take my oldest grandchild is a daughter, she just turned 12. She hasn't shown much interest. And I don't know if it's a combination of her not showing much interest or maybe me not giving her the opportunity to show interest.
(Oscar)

While Sam is willing to go hunting with whichever niece or nephew is willing, it is likely the low number of women hunting (less than 10% of hunters) is due in part to the fewer opportunities for girls to grow into the life of a hunter as described in this chapter.

Certainly female hunters enter into a domain dominated by men and their participation in hunting may be perceived as challenging or threatening. Carla is a female hunter in her thirties who began hunting at 27 at the invitation of (male) friends. She is very involved in displaying the results of her hunting, and says she “pretty much owns the trophy wall at the cabin.” She is also very aware of her gender as a hunter among males, but believes that women hunters in general are more patient than men, an attribute often associated with femininity.

I have had experience with working with the game department in teaching women about shooting and stuff like that. They seem to have, women seem to have more patience as to, they take the attitude they don't know anything at all about shooting and they are just all receptive to you know instructions and stuff. (Carla)

When Carla hunts with males, she is often more experienced than they are. She sometimes uses this knowledge strategically and seems to enjoy defying expectations.

Yeah, the seven pointer. Checked him in, who got that? And I said I did. Oh, you know they were astounded that I had gotten that deer, but I guess I always think of my brother. He won't sit still out in the woods. He is probably on the stand for about two or three hours and that's it. He is out moving around. So, sometimes I will get near him because I know he is going to start moving. So, he will scare anything up towards me you know. (Carla)

As a Hunting Safety Instructor, Carla teaches hunting and shooting skills and safety to both males and females. Despite her demonstrated success and publicly acknowledged skills, she has suffered criticism because of her gender.

So, I went with the guys. And it was, we had to cross the river down there to get to this farm. It was the easiest way to get there. So, I am you know like a good hunter

supposed to be, I took my case for my shotgun and had my shotgun in that. It was all unloaded, and I strapped it into the canoe. And the other guy who was, you know, pretty much operating the canoe, he just threw his in there and stuff, and we started heading across. And I told him, I said, it doesn't look like it's shallow yet. Don't jump, and he starts moving around, well we dump. And I didn't lose my gun, but he lost his. Well, right there it was probably 4 1/2, almost 5 feet you know, and that is where I was at because I was still able to walk to shore. I grabbed a hold of the canoe and drug it just for fear of losing my firearm you know. He comes up and he's you know cussing and all of this stuff you know where is my gun, where is my gun? And I said mine is right here. [laughs] So, and all I heard was you know it was my fault this and my fault that. [He was blaming me] for his mistake. That was pretty much a bad trip all the way. (Carla)

Some men may have negative expectations of women and these expectations negatively influence their interpretation of events such that women are seen more negatively.

Well, I don't think he was really happy with you know me hunting with the guys you know. So, I mean he was older; he was older than me at the time. I was you know not in the typical female role you know. All the rest of the guys' wives, including his wife, was back home you know fixing breakfast and making sure he had all his stuff to go hunting. (Carla)

Her perception of the event suggests that his expectation of Carla's role would be different than that of an equal status hunter. As a result of this and similar experiences, she certainly must consider her gender as she makes sense of her identity in the context of hunting.

As an experienced hunter, Carla seems to possess the characteristics of the competent hunter. She is more focused on challenging herself with new game than she is competing with other hunters as an apprentice hunter might do. She also serves as a mentor for other hunters, particularly for women. She has organized a "women only" turkey hunt with her sister-in-law and they navigate the male-dominated hunting community together.

Patricia is a hunter in her early twenties who is also secondary socialized; she learned to hunt through male cousins and hunts primarily with one hunting partner. Her recent socialization into the activity would make her an apprentice, although she does not display the usual competitive characteristics displayed by primary socialized male apprentices, perhaps she is simply less competitive. She too is focused on display of her hunting acuity—her deer kill is a source of pride, which she demonstrated in showing me a picture taken of her kneeling over her kill. Patricia describes herself as “girly” when it comes to field dressing, nevertheless she adheres to the value “if you kill it you know you have got to gut it.” In killing this deer, her first shot was not lethal and she was assisted by her (male) hunting partner.

So, I had him shoot the deer again. Because it was suffering, and I didn't want it to suffer. So, he shot the deer again, and I gutted it and did all of that. Of course, he teased me and joked, I am not going to help you. I said, "Well, I didn't ask for your help". It took me about an hour. (Patricia)

Patricia uses the help of her male companion in providing the kill shot because he was hunting with a powerful rifle and she was using a shotgun. Her acceptance of his statement that he would not help her, however, was one in which he treated her with the same status he might provide a male hunting partner. He provided assistance with tasks that she was unable to do, including dragging the deer out of the woods and providing the kill shot, but these were areas where her physical stature and weapon provided limitations. Her emotional nature was uncontested, nor was her status as an equal (though less skilled) hunter, unlike Carla. In these ways, Patricia is like other secondary socialized hunters.

Female hunters seem to fit into the framework described for socialization of hunters. Carla's status as a Hunting Safety Instructor allows her insight into current trends in hunting as they relate to gender. She has witnessed more females starting to hunt, and has seen "several dads bringing their daughters in for the hunter education class." Patricia has served as a mentor to her young son, whom she recently took hunting, and she describes the same type of intergenerational bonding displayed by male hunters in training her son in the neophyte skills of being "still and quiet." With a young family member present, the end goal of making a kill is less likely, and she re-interprets this experience as an opportunity to have "time for us."

While this study did not collect enough data from female hunters to make strong assertions, the two hunters studied seem to fit into the socialization framework as described earlier in this chapter: Carla as a competent hunter serving as an instructor and mentor to others, and Patricia exhibiting intergenerational mentoring shown by male hunters in hunting families. These women do, however, are well aware of themselves as females in an activity dominated by males, and in this sense define themselves with an awareness of this sometimes marginal status in a way described by Martin et al. (2006) as "a gendered paradox." For instance, Carla provides an example of a woman who serves as a female role model encouraging other females to hunt, similar to Martin et al.'s "boys on the side" characterization.

The experiences of these women may indicate that it is possible to overcome some of the activities of primary socialization if the early socializing (i.e., family) environment supports hunting. One reason that female hunters may not challenge the framework relates to the fact that, rather than changing the nature of the hunting narrative

described in this chapter, female hunters merely adopt different roles within this narrative and, if uncontested in these roles, serve similar functions to, for example, fathers socializing their young sons into the activity.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have described the process of the socialization of the male hunter by describing the specific stages of development through which he not only learns to hunt but also finds his role as a man among the community of male hunters. One unique aspect of this process over other forms of socialization described previously in the consumer research literature is an emphasis on the role of the family in the socialization process. Rather than conceptualizing this process as a Piagetian progression through stages of cognitive development, I have focused on the development of primary socialized hunters in a social sense, from the stage of pre-hunter and neophyte, through apprenticeship, to competent hunter. Moreover, Vygotskian theory is introduced to help interpret the findings. The following chapters explicate the specific differences among clusters of competent hunters.

Chapter 5

The Socio-Cultural Landscape of the Community of Hunters

One of the historic and primary purposes of hunting is to provide food for direct consumption. Contemporary hunters, however, enjoy hunting as a recreational activity and in this way hunting has utility beyond the taking of game. Nevertheless, within the hunting culture as a whole, prudently using the proceeds of the hunt remains a strongly-held value (e.g., the “use what you take” discussion in Chapter 4). Most informants describe an ethical hunter as someone who uses the meat and avoids waste. Despite this widely-held value, the meaning of the hunt differs for different hunters.

The informants can be organized along two continuous dimensions that capture differences in the meaning of hunting. This first dimension is anchored by hunters who focus on the end goal versus hunters who are more process oriented. The “ends-oriented” hunters place a higher value on the taking of game and the actual kill. The “process-oriented” hunters value the hunt for the experience, such as being in nature or escaping from the stresses of everyday life. These differences are not hard and fast. For example, all hunters to some degree enjoy the process of the hunt. But for those hunters who are more “ends-oriented,” the hunt is less enjoyable when they fail to bring home the game. Thus, these continua are used to denote the relative emphasis hunters give to various parts of the hunt.

The second dimension is derived from divergent meanings of the accoutrements of hunting. Hunting is equipment-intensive. Hunters carry weapons, ammunition, safety devices, communication gear, food, and water. They wear appropriate clothing for the climate and camouflage for the terrain. They may use seats, blinds, or tree stands. They

may drive all-terrain vehicles to travel to the hunting site or use deer carts to transport the carcass back to the vehicle. Among the informants in this study, these differences can be organized by the meanings intrinsic to the equipment (e.g., the accuracy of a rifle) versus the meanings extrinsic to the equipment (e.g., the emotional attachment a hunter has to an inherited rifle). Hunters tended to give greater emphasis on either the intrinsic or extrinsic aspects of their equipment.

By combining the ends vs. process orientation with the intrinsic vs. extrinsic equipment meanings, distinct clusters of hunters emerge (see Figure 3). In the lower left hand quadrant, the *traditionalists* (Chapter 5) often use guns and equipment that are rich in personal history yet they value the killing of game as the primary goal of the hunt. In the top left quadrant of the figure, *pragmatists* (Chapter 6) and *gearheads* (Chapter 7) share a love of the performance of their equipment and privilege the moment of the kill, although they share different foci in relation to these elements. In the top right quadrant, the *experientials* (Chapter 8) also enjoy the intrinsic meaning of their equipment but they privilege the process of the hunt. Finally, in the lower right hand quadrant, the *transcendentals* (Chapter 9) enjoy both the extrinsic meanings of their equipment and the process of the hunt.³ These clusters are explored in more detail in this chapter and the following four chapters.

³ All of the people interviewed who were either apprentice or competent hunters were fit into the conceptual space in Figure 3 except for Ulf and Vick. Ulf is not included in the figure because he no longer hunts and the depth of information was not adequate to classify him. Vick is involved in wildlife management and is not a hunter.

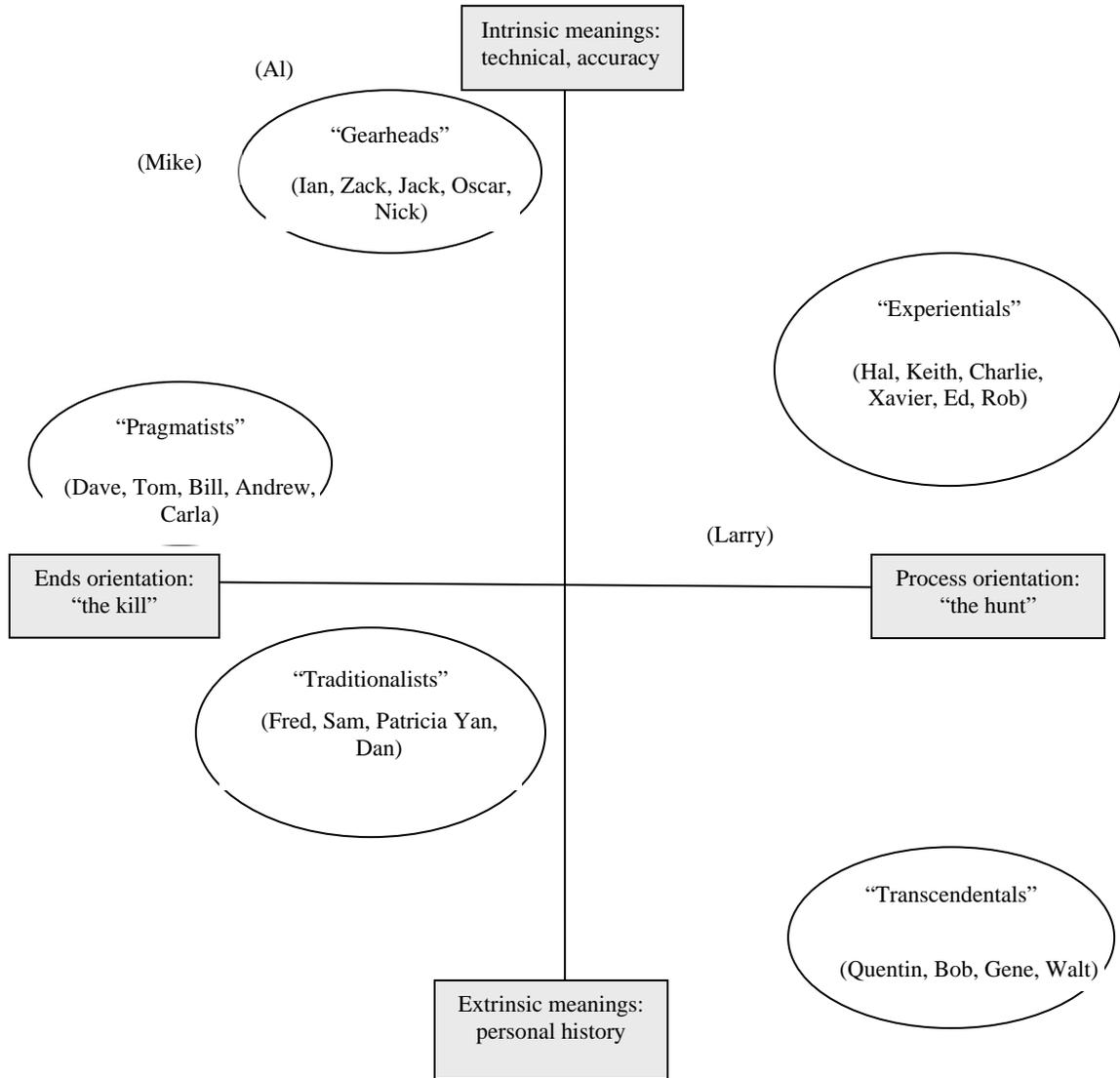


Figure 3—The Socio-cultural Landscape of Deer Hunters

Traditionalists

Overview

There's a lot of people that just buys stuff. I mean, it's like anything. You have [a] class of people who are definitely very fashionable with what they wear. And some people definitely have top of the line camouflage. But not only regular camouflage at the Army Surplus, but they actually match their camouflage, like the deer care, like it matters. (Fred)

For the traditionalist, the meaning of the hunt focuses more on the goal of the kill than on the enjoyment of the hunting process. These hunters define success in terms of the game taken during the trip. Traditionalists find meaning in their equipment based on the personal and emotional connections forged with the equipment, and seek to both cultivate and maintain their emotional connection to the equipment in its supporting role to their goal of a hunt ending in a kill. A traditionalist may hunt with his father's gun, but he would not sacrifice his ability to take game to pay homage to this emotional connection. Given this ends orientation, the traditionalist values hunting skills and would be offended if another hunter used the equipment that he used as an indicator of his skill level, a practice common among neophyte hunters.

Relationship to Equipment

For traditionalists, equipment is imbued with extrinsic meanings that frequently originate from the personal history of the hunter, such as a gun that belonged to a dearly loved family member or a gun that was tied to a memorable event in the hunter's life.

...Big blackbird in a cherry tree... I was probably eight or nine. And you know my grandmother had a pair of 22 single shots. Beautiful little guns that eventually got stolen. I would love to find those again somewhere, but she kept one of them right at the door and keep [sic] the ammunition on a little shelf because when something was in the garden or something was in the fruit trees, you have got to deal with it. And you could hear it when the blackbirds came in. She was sitting in the chair and heard them come in, and she said 'why don't you go take care of that?' And I loaded the thing up and pulled the trigger and boom there it went. And that wasn't nearly the first time I shot. I shot at Scout camp. Whenever we were at the farm; we lived all over the south and drove to the farm for vacation. Whenever we were at the farm, we shot a lot. In fact, we used to do Appalachian tricks. There was a telephone pole in the front yard, and you would stick matches in the telephone pole and try to light them with a 22. That's old fashioned Appalachian shooting. More often than not you broke the match without lighting it. But it's a real fine shot to light a match. We would also shoot flies. It used to crack me up to watch episodes of the Beverley Hillbillies where they would shoot flies because we did that long before we ever saw that on the Beverly Hillbillies. I still do that. I will go to the range down at [the local] creek with a 17 or a 22 with a good scope. And you put a white target out there in the heat of summer flies just come to it. So, after you know you are on target it's a pretty good shot then to shoot flies. (Sam)

Thus, the significance of the 22-caliber guns arises primarily from Sam's childhood memories of play in rural Appalachia.

Many of the narratives shared by the hunters involved the origin and acquisition of possessions. Due to financial constraints, Fred purchased a used bow from a local dealer:

Well, my bow has an interesting story actually. I was getting into it (bow hunting) and this guy down the road from me, he actually owned a bow shop in his basement.... He knew cost was a constraint for me, so he searched around until he found—of course, one of his buddies—you know how people at the trap ranges, everyone knows someone who has a gun for sale. And he found me a [bow] that's probably about 15 years old or so. But as he was giving it to me, you know, I paid him the money and he gave it to another fellow who actually owned the bow, who I actually knew. It was kind of weird, that triangle. But that bow has actually probably killed just about every North American species. (Fred)

For Fred, the hunting successes by the previous owner of the bow gave his equipment added value. The bow was imbued with these meanings and, through its purchase, the bow's meanings transferred to Fred who took pride in its rich history.

The traditionalists define a successful hunt as one that ends in a kill, so the performance and functionality of their equipment is also relevant.

I don't know, maybe I had the safe open and she could see what was in the safe. Because she asked me in this very disdainful way why would anybody need so many guns? Why would anybody need more than one gun? And you know I tried ineffectively to explain to her that every gun has a purpose. Every gun is different in its purpose, and if you are actually trying to fulfill all those purposes you need different weapons. You are not going to shoot a grouse in the air with a 357 Magnum not unless you are filming some Western movie or something. (Sam)

While having sentimental attachments to their guns, traditionalists approach the hunt with a practical orientation. They use gear that has withstood the test of an actual hunt in adverse conditions.

And you can kind of tell the people who are serious about deer huntin' and the ones who aren't by what kind of gear they have. Some people have gear that looks really nice. But you're like, "Man, that has no functionality out in the woods. I would hate to have that out there." And just the way they talk, you can tell they've never spent a day out in the woods. Or they have, but they really don't know what they're doing. . . . One of my friends, he really wanted to get into hunting. . . . He was definitely all into it one year and had gone out and got a lot of the top of the line gear, but a lot of his stuff was--I want to say he had Nike hiking boots that were pretty. The kind that you'd wear to school to look nice when you're 16. But they were definitely ones that would fall apart in like 2 seconds. They were just pretty. And of course, he had perfectly good hunting clothes that were passed down from his brother to him, but he definitely took the time to go out and buy a whole bunch of extra stuff that really wasn't needed. . . . But he definitely became a know-it-all when it came to the woods. He knew everything. And a lot of the stuff he was saying just didn't make any sense, like out in the woods. Which, I guess, he was just trying to impress someone. (Fred)

Fred was not only offended by his friend's assumption that acquiring the correct clothes would somehow offset his lack of hunting knowledge and skills, but also by his friend's

rejections of the practical clothes imbued with meaning from being handed down from his brother.

Thus, the traditionalists are sentimental about their guns but also care about the functional performance of their guns and equipment. However, as is developed in the next section, the skill of the hunter is paramount.

Approach to the Hunt

Skills. Given the traditionalists' focus on bringing home the game, they emphasized weaponry skill in their general approach to the hunt. You must be a skilled marksman to be successful in getting a kill. Traditionalists were quick to claim expertise with weapons and equally quick to back up these claims with evidence of their hunting success.

Well, the three years prior to last year, I shot a trophy eight point, a trophy ten point, and a trophy nine point--one each year. The trophy nine point was probably the highlight because it was about 230 yards, and I got to watch him for 40 minutes before I pulled the trigger because he wouldn't give me a shot. (Sam)

I have hunted with a 22 and shotgun. Actually I started squirrel hunting with a 22. I guess any hunter that's worth his salt should be able to shoot a squirrel with a 22. (Yan)

Sam values his success in shooting the nine-point buck, and Yan suggests a necessary threshold of skill because without accurate marksmanship, these hunters will not meet their goal of a successful hunt that ends in a kill.

Beyond mastery of shooting, additional hunting skills are important, such as how the hunter moves in the woods. For example, Patricia talks about the importance of "being quiet, being still" and trying to avoid stepping on twigs and leaves. Fred provides additional support:

The way my father taught me how to go out is you pick a tree, maybe 10 yards away. You walk to it, stop, look around for a minute or so, and then walk to the next tree. And if you're going to your stand, I guess that'd be fine. But when you are slow hunting or still hunting, it won't work. You won't see anything, because they'll hear you way far away. But he definitely takes little baby steps, maybe goes 6 inches every minute or so, which definitely takes a lot of discipline and it's definitely really hard because you definitely want to move along. But if you don't move that slow, they'll see you. And if you don't move that slow, they'll hear you. (Fred)

Fred's technique of moving slowly to avoid being sensed by game is something a novice hunter might have some difficulty mastering. Traditionalists strive to develop both the set of skills necessary for successful hunting and adequate equipment. For them, the appropriate equipment increases the probabilities of taking game home, but it is not a substitute for skills and experience.

I've never really gone out and bought too much. Although, I have gotten scentless soap, so I don't have much of an odor. I know with my hunting clothes, I'll definitely put them in a bag with leaves or a big Tupperware box, so that they smell like the woods. Maybe put some pine needles or something in it. Any little bit helps. But, at the same time, if the wind's blowing wrong and deer's right in it, they're gonna smell ya. I don't care how much scent lock stuff you have on, I don't care. Any of that. Although, if your scent, you know, man scent on you, is minimized, that just increases your chance that if they do walk by your scent line, they won't smell you if they walk by. (Fred)

For the traditionalist, equipment can not substitute for experience gained from being in the woods.

Values

Family tradition. Traditionalists grow up within families of hunters and enjoy hunting for both its recreational aspects and the meanings that derive from hunting as a family ritual with a very personal history. These family traditions are an important part of the meaning of hunting and the traditionalists' identities as hunters:

It's tradition in our family from the time we moved back as a family to West Virginia until my grandmother passed away, the tradition was that she would take the squirrels away from us prior to Thanksgiving, any squirrel we shot prior to Thanksgiving—that is all the squirrels you would shoot anyway because by Thanksgiving you are deer hunting and not squirrel hunting. She wouldn't let us dress them; she would dress them herself. She would put them in the freezer and Thanksgiving dinner, we would have squirrel along with whatever else. And that was the tradition. We did that for a long, long time. (Sam)

While providing a similar function, this Thanksgiving ritual is noticeably different from the set of rituals documented by Wallendorf and Arnould (1991) that surround the Thanksgiving celebration. This study employed middle-class marketing students who documented their family Thanksgiving rituals and glossed over tradition-based distinctions that exist among hunters, particularly those who are primarily socialized into the activity. As Wallendorf and Arnould suggest, these rituals are “little traditions that are particular to a family, time period, geographic area of residence, or origin, class, gender, or age group” (p. 23).

Rook describes the role that rituals play in linking people together through “social cohesion” (1985, p. 255). This occurs in the context of the family by providing a script upon which family members rely during repeated holiday situations, such as the Thanksgiving celebration in the above example. These rituals provide guidance to family members in the present and encourage bonding into the future. This family tradition in hunting also extends to future generations of hunters, as traditionalists endeavor to carry on the activity to subsequent generations.

The most recent time is I took my son last year. He is nine. And he carried a 410 shotgun also. And, of course, he has not quite got the concept of it yet, but he enjoyed it, and I enjoyed it too. It was time for us. He didn't get the part where you have to be still and you have to be quiet. The first one he sees he starts hollering, "Mom! Mom!" But I enjoyed it. It was a learning experience for me. It took me back to when I was a kid too because I couldn't sit still and that kind of stuff too. (Patricia)

This particular fellow that I hunt with now owned an old farm place just up the road and the cabin where we stay now. His son actually lives at the old farm place. Years ago, 25-30 years ago, they used that as a hunting camp and over the two-week period all of his brothers and nephews and close friends came in and stayed at their house for, and he ran it like a hunting camp you know everybody had specific duties. (Yan)

Humane Killing. Traditionalists place great significance on the taking of a life and only do so for the explicit purpose of using the meat. Given the value placed on life, they do not want to see the game suffer and seek to kill in a humane way.

Well, some people you know, oh, that is so cruel, and I think it's not. I don't think you should kill anything unless you are going to eat it or use it for something.... There are some people that hunt just for the rack, which I think is wrong, you know. They had several people up there last year that were cutting the racks off and leaving the deer laying. That is wrong. If they get caught doing that, they won't get in any trouble, but that is just wrong I think. I would never do that. If I am going to kill it, I am going to eat it or give it to somebody that is going to eat it you know.... And not let it go to waste. (Patricia)

One of the things I pride myself on and my brother prides himself on we don't lose deer. We have been known to track a deer for miles for other people. We just don't lose deer. We are both experienced, and we don't give up because we care about the deer that we shot. It kills me when I go hunting with somebody that says well I shot a deer, it didn't fall down, it must be gone. Well, yeah it's gone. It's laying in the brush pile 20 yards away. You got to go look for it.... And we look hard. But because of that we can tell fairly quickly on the trail whether that deer is a hit or not. (Sam)

As both Patricia and Sam suggest, traditionalist hunters feel an obligation to be a good steward and go to great lengths to avoid wasting a life. While traditionalist hunters' primary focus is on the individual deer that they hunt, they also see the broader issue of managing the deer population as important, which is discussed next.

Population management. If taking a life has significance to the traditionalist hunter, then it is unsurprising they have a well thought out position on the population management of deer. Traditionalist hunters see management of an increasing deer population as a key reason to condone the hunting of deer. They imagine a death from the

effects of excess population—such as starvation or intense food competition—as a far worse outcome for individual game animals than the swift death resulting from hunting.

What they do with the meat is a big deal. It's a big a deal as anything else.... because if you are just shooting for shooting sake, you can shoot paper. You don't have to shoot life. These are living beings, and we are ending their life. We are ending their life if we are doing it right much more humanely than it would happen naturally if we didn't hunt them.... Because I get that a lot. Leave them alone and let them live and die naturally. Do you know how a deer dies naturally? They lose their teeth and then they starve to death or then they lose their teeth and they get weak and then a bobcat or coyote or something kills them. That is not nearly as humane as you know a 270 through the heart and their life ends instantly. (Sam)

While many hunters use population management as a justification of their hunting activities, this value is particularly strong and well delineated among traditionalist hunters. Traditionalist hunters take a macro-environmental view of the deer population and see their activity as a necessary part of the ecosystem. Interestingly, Sam's views on population management fit within a broader world view informed by the economic realities of living on a family farm. Early on, Sam learned the role of predator and prey in the context of his family farm and helped his grandmother battle any creature who threatened his family's livelihood. Managing animal populations is a reality in a rural subsistence setting where killing livestock is an occasional chore. Thus, this value is consistent with the lives of traditionalist hunters on both the micro (family) and macro (population control) levels. Traditionalist hunters value the lives of the deer they kill but frame this life against human needs ranging from feeding their families, to managing deer population, to protecting a farm.

Social Connections

Traditionalist hunters generally learned to hunt at a young age within the family. Or they have been exposed to hunting within their extended family, such as witnessing relatives hunting. Hunting is an activity done within the family or with close friends.

I can remember my Dad coming in, in the evenings late at night and he would have a deer, a doe, or whatever that he had shot. He had gone out with his buddies and hang it in the basement. And I remember seeing my Dad come home and drink a beer and sit with his buddies. And he doesn't drink, really, at all. And he seemed like he was having a good time. And I definitely wanted to be a part of that. (Fred)

As traditionalist hunters mature, they tend to hunt with a few close friends. Rather than joining hunting clubs or hunting in large groups, traditionalists tend to stick close to their roots, continuing to hunt with these close friends or with family. As a result, they often bond with other traditionalists, primarily because they have similar expectations and values.

I enjoy going hunting with everyone. But the person, pretty much my mainstay hunting buddy is probably Roger. I don't know if you've met Roger or not. We'll go out to the woods a lot. And it's just a good time to have him out there. (Fred)

I have a buddy that I go hunting with every year. We go hunting together for like the last five years. And we went to our usual spot. (Patricia)

These hunters share a close camaraderie based on history and shared values. For example, to accomplish a clean (humane) kill, hunters must be committed to searching for any game that has been shot. This task may take as long as several days if the terrain is rough or the hunter has shot poorly. Traditionalist hunters' dedication to this value demands they continue to search until the game is found or until they mutually acknowledge that little hope exists of finding it. Such bonds are a source of comfort.

It's nice to have [my friend] out in the woods because I know if I was to shoot something and I didn't hit it very well and it ran off, he would be there 'til we found it or 'til I said, you know, that it's gone. I know he would definitely help me with

whatever I had to do up at the cabin. And I'd do the same for him. And plus, he's a good time to be around. And those are the best people to go out hunting with. (Fred)

Enduring bonds among these hunters are forged based on friendship, shared history, and common commitment to the same values.

Masculinity

In the review of the literature, masculinity was socially and culturally negotiated across different historical periods and across different settings. The masculinity constructed by the traditionalist shares much in common with the post-WWII hunters who took pride in their skills and hunted with family and friends close to hearth and home. Hunting is deeply intertwined with rural family traditions and it is an unconscious part of who these hunters are. Given the traditionalist hunts with life-long friends and family members, close male social bonding is easily achieved; their hunting companions are well known and a casual comfort exists that generally arises among those people who have years of shared history.

One of my good friends, Mike from back home. I actually met him in Scouts growin' up. And we've done a pile of backpacking together and hiking. I enjoy going with him. But he pretty much enjoys just ridin' around in his jeep, findin' a spot, gettin' out and sittin' down. But he'll definitely help you with whatever. (Fred)

These hunters do compete, but the field of competition is a well-defined one of hunting skill and experience. Their shared values, such as achieving a humane kill, bind them together assuring them they can count on their partner if they need to track an animal the other has shot.

Unlike the rebellious and raucous masculinity found in studies of Harley-Davidson riders and mountain men (Schouten and McAlexander 1995; Belk and Costa 1998), these men pride themselves on traditional values such as family and they do not

celebrate the brutality of the kill but instead seek to achieve a humane kill. In fact, this form of masculinity is more consistent with the dependable breadwinner model (Holt and Thompson 2004). These hunters quite literally bring home the game to their families and enjoy the hunting within the bonds of family. However, this breadwinner image is not tainted by negative associations of conformity or submissiveness. Quite the contrary, these men take pride in their deep-rooted connections, constancy, and steadfastness. While this masculinity value does not perfectly align with Patricia, she too shares the deep-rooted connections to family and rural tradition found in hunting.

Chapter 6

Pragmatists

Overview

I am not knocking the technology. I guess I am of the mindset that it's not necessary for me and, you know, I have got deer in the freezer to prove that you don't have to do all of that stuff to be a successful hunter. (Bill)

Like the traditionalists, pragmatists have as their primary goal the taking of game during the hunt. Rather than focusing on the hunting process, pragmatists are likely to evaluate the success of the hunt by whether they successfully killed the prey. Unlike the traditionalists who often have strong emotional connections to their equipment based on historical or family associations, the pragmatists' relationship to their equipment is primarily based on functionality. These hunters are called pragmatists because of their no-nonsense, practical view of their equipment. Given the primacy of the goal of taking game, pragmatists see their equipment as a means to this end.

Relationship to Equipment

The pragmatist hunter approaches the hunt in a down-to-earth manner. Dave describes his father as a practical hunter, who hunted with a sharpened stick and took a somewhat “minimalist” approach to first-aid:

So, we're out there and we're kind of walking along and he's pointing out some of the signs of the rabbits and you could tell where the trails were. And then we see a rabbit. So, he rears back and throws this sharpened stick and it actually hit a rock and it bounced back and caught him right on the chin and went all the way thru. Luckily, it didn't knock his teeth out. So, he was cussing.... He wasn't a happy camper. So, we go back to the house; it was bleeding pretty bad. I watched him as he stood in front of a mirror and sowed himself up. He sowed the outside; sowed the inside and that was probably one of my earliest remembrances of a hunting experience. (Dave)

The pragmatist hunter takes a no-nonsense approach to both his acquisition and use of equipment. For example, the pragmatic hunter is perfectly comfortable borrowing or acquiring used or hand-me-down equipment, or he is willing to keep and use old equipment. Unlike some of the other hunters who find nostalgic or personal meanings in used equipment, pragmatist hunters treat equipment in a utilitarian fashion—the equipment provides them game at a reduced cost.

The first bow that I ever had was way back when I was in probably the beginning of high school. I had just a re-curve bow that actually I had got from my brother because he had bought a new bow and gave me his old one. So we would go out to an area... sometimes even go over to the high school and set up a bail of straw or something and shoot.... and just lob arrows down the football field and try for some imaginary spot on the field. (Dave)

[The first time I took a deer] was actually up here in [this state]. I was hunting at my sister-in-law's place. I had come up here for Thanksgiving and stuff. It was pretty cold. I didn't have any long johns or insulated stuff. So, my brother gives me a pair of his which are big. I am rolling up on the cuffs and everything. I was hunting with a 30-06 pump, which was a little bit; it was my other brother's. Because I didn't have a rifle. (Carla)

As the preceding quotes suggest, pragmatists do not gain extra utility from new or expensive equipment.

Extra equipment and gadgets are not valued; they are as likely to be happy with fewer items relying on their skills to take the game. Unlike the gearheads (who are discussed in the next chapter), the pragmatists do not have a “more is better” mentality. They are minimalist and believe that “less is better.” Pragmatists tend to question the necessity of some equipment.

I have a few pieces [of camouflage]. I have a pair of pants and a jacket that I have had since I was probably a senior in high school if that gives you any indication [laughing]. I have a little fanny pack that I carry my extra ammunition, snacks. I have a rope that I use if I need to drag the animal out. Just tie up the legs and the head upwards. It's easier to drag. I carry my binoculars with me. That's pretty much it. I don't have a whole lot of gadgets and gizmos in technology outside of my gun.... The

reason I am laughing, I would probably, there would probably be a lot of arguments against this, but let me go back to my high school physics teacher who taught me to hunt. He did not wear camouflage; he did not wash his clothes in leaves and twigs and pine needles to try to mask his scent. He took a thermos of coffee and he sat and smoked cigarettes while he hunted. I think some of the novice hunters probably put too much faith and emphasis on the gadgets and the peripherals of hunting. Not that they are necessarily bad and not that they don't necessarily give you an edge, but just understanding that they are not absolutely necessary to be a successful hunter. (Bill)

However, they are open to experimenting with alternative arrangements and practices.

[My dad] would hand me the 22 rifle and a box of shells and say “Go kill something.” which of course he meant “Go kill a groundhog.” So we would go out there and shoot groundhogs. And then later on, I was a little older... this 22 rifle was old, beat to hell because it was carried on the tractor. At some point, the front sight had got knocked off. Well all we do is take some chewing gum and stick it on the front and take some of the silver paper from the chewing gum and make a front sight. Well I knew roughly how high to make it so it would shoot halfway decent. That would last for probably about a day or so before it would fall off and then you would have to put another piece of chewing gum on there. So it was a “make-shift” front sight. (Dave)

The pragmatic hunters share a common belief; the essential experience of hunting is not a function of equipment the pragmatist uses but the success in bringing home game animals. Rather than focus on having the “right” camouflage or participating in the “correct” scent-avoidance practices, Bill’s mentor was successful regardless of his equipment choices. Bill subsequently elaborates on this concept.

I don't hunt in a deer stand. I hunt on the ground, and it's by personal choice. One, it's safer. I don't have to worry about falling out of a tree stand. And you know I am much more mobile. I can get up and move around if I choose to. I am comfortable hunting on the ground. Occasionally I will construct a blind out of materials that are laying around, but I don't use pre-fab blinds or anything like that. The most I have ever done to mask my scent is to put doe pee on my shoes if I am walking into the stand, and I don't even put a whole lot of faith in that.... I just sit and think about Randy and you know he was a great hunter, but he went out in his plaid jacket and blue jeans you know sitting there smoking a cigarette and drinking his coffee. And he saw deer plenty. And so I think if I saw somebody walking through the woods with all of this gadgetry and stuff I might question how experienced they are. (Bill)

For pragmatists, the ultimate measure of equipment is its contribution to taking game.

Nostalgia, newness, or other sources of intrinsic meaning valued by other hunters are

unimportant to pragmatists. In fact, for pragmatists like Bill, the type or amount of equipment often indicates a lack of experience and skill.

Approach to the hunt

As was discussed previously, pragmatists approach the hunt with a primary goal of bringing home game. Pragmatists, like traditionalists, abhor the idea of hitting a deer poorly and perhaps causing suffering in the animal.

You have to hold, you have to hit the animal right. It bothers me more to shoot and hit one not good, to not to make a good shot at it than it does to shoot and totally miss a deer. That bothers me. (Andrew)

As a result, improving their shooting skills becomes an important part of the hunting process because it ensures a clean kill (i.e., a kill that minimizes the suffering) and increases one's chances of bringing home game.

In addition to improving their shooting skills, pragmatists also seek to improve their general hunting skills. Carla, for example, discusses the measures she goes through to improve her skills at turkey calling.

I have several videos or just audio tapes also and just practice in the car how to do a locator call, I have got a tape like that. I will sit there in my apartment and people think there are hoot owls or a gang of turkeys.... I feel really comfortable with my slate calls and glass calls and stuff, but you can't have your gun up and ready fire and then have to drop and call. So, that is why I am trying to [learn how to use a mouth call], that has really got me working at it. (Carla)

Pragmatists approach the hunt as an opportunity to use their developed skills and minimal equipment to achieve success in terms of killing game.

Pragmatists used knowledge of deer behavior to make the hunting process more efficient. Not only does this provide a short term benefit of increasing the game taken in

the short run, but it also provides a long term benefit of improving the health and quality of the deer taken in the future.

We have an environmental engineer who is secretary of the club. He is one of the three or four of us that started the club, and he has studied quite in detail whitetail deer. He probably has 12 trophy whitetails. Pope and Young scored whitetails that he has killed on this property.... And he studies them and finds out what they eat and knows a lot about them therefore we use his knowledge to gain. And if you use salt, the deer get dependent on it. We don't have any salt. We have a special mixture that Southern States mixes for us. Every year they will mix two tubs of this mixture. You can eat it. It's made from molasses. It has a lot of phosphorous and magnesium and things like that in it. It promotes good health among the does. It promotes antler growth among the bucks. And therefore we get a better quality of deer. The does, most of the does we see have two fawns in the spring nowadays. It used to be you didn't see that. Most of them were just single fawn. And now we have even seen deer that have had triplets and four fawns. (Andrew)

The hunting club's concern over the long-term health of the deer population is driven by a practical desire to produce healthier does that reproduce multiple fawns.

The pragmatic hunter also uses their knowledge of deer to be able to predict deer movements and potential evasive movements and, thus, be more successful in the hunt.

However, it was somewhat surprising that these very down-to-earth hunters all talked about achieving an "empathetic" understanding of deer behavior.

I find the easiest thing for me is just to put myself in their mind you know. I am a big buck, and there is a lot of pressure in the woods, what am I going to do? And then you take that idea, which is kind of like a theory, and you start seeing it play out in the woods and then you got the magazines and papers and studies and all of that and you kind of tie it all together into a bigger picture. (Tom)

This empathetic union, while highly romantic, is clearly done by the pragmatist because they believe that such anticipation of the deer's behavior leads to hunting success. The values of the pragmatist hunter, discussed in the next section, also contribute to successfully killing game.

Values

Utilitarianism. The value of utilitarianism among pragmatist hunters suggests that, rather than seeing process- or gear-related meanings in hunting, more practical motives exist among this group. Pragmatist hunters hunt to eat game and seek to demonstrate their ability to do so through public displays. As described, their equipment relationships and their hunting approaches emphasize this set of goal-directed meanings and they adapt their tactics toward this accomplishment.

I killed one deer last year, the only deer I killed in four or five years with a rifle, and I was hunting on a fellow's property. He gave us permission to hunt. I hunted there a day and a half, that's all I hunted with a rifle, and I killed a small buck and had it processed. I have a butcher that does that for me, and he butchered the deer for me, and I took it and gave it to the fellow who gave us permission to hunt. So, my youngest son and I hunt together, and he killed one and I killed two with my bows. So, we were just hunting for fun of hunting and this fellow said he would like to have a deer. That's the only reason I shot the deer I shot. I wouldn't have killed it. But I killed it for him so he would have the meat and that's, it was a small buck; I wouldn't have shot it otherwise. (Andrew)

Andrew's motives for the preceding hunt were twofold. First, by befriending a landowner and sharing the hunt's proceeds with him, Andrew secures a future hunting location. Second, he is consistent with his beliefs that one must always use the game secured by hunting. In this way, he shows that the utilitarian motive of eating game provides a legitimate reason for taking the life of a game animal. This value is echoed by Bill, who opposes farmers who kill nuisance game on their land yet fail to recover the food.

I think one, and again this goes to my utilitarian view of the game, it's a waste of food. Most of these farmers are just interested in saving their crops. They are not interested in harvesting the food, but I don't know if it exists here or not, but there were food banks in Illinois that were set up that could take wild game you know to supply food for these food banks. And just the thought of somebody gut shooting an animal so it could get off their property before it died seemed like a real waste. (Bill)

Bill's values are violated by the senseless killing of an animal when the meat is wasted.

Ethical hunting. To a large extent, pragmatists share with other hunters the same list of forbidden activities, such as baiting animals, taking animals solely for the purpose of display, and acting discourteous to landowners. What makes pragmatists unique is their justification for these prohibitions. While many hunters agree with respecting and helping landowners, for instance, pragmatists respect landowners to guarantee their access to future hunting sites.

Well it doesn't take many. The next thing you know, you're not allowing anyone to hunt on your property. That's what's happened in a lot of places. And you see people out throwing trash around. I used to like to go trout fishing occasionally and there was a stocked area. It was a fairly pretty area. But you'd go in there, particularly around the first week of trout fishing season, and the place would just be littered with empty drink cans and trash and everything else. I used to go out there and take a trash bag with me just to pick the stuff up because it would just infuriate me. You know, you want to be in the outdoors and all that and you don't want to stand in that garbage stuff. (Dave)

In the previous quote, Dave worries that littering will limit his ability to hunt on a landowner's property. So rather than avoiding littering because it is wrong or disrespectful, he avoids littering because it will diminish his future hunting opportunities.

Similarly, Tom monitors the hunters he invites into a hunting area for violations of ethical standards. Unethical hunters and hunting practices can adversely affect Tom's reputation and affect his ability to secure future hunting areas:

I am asked point blank by these guys: 'Do you think he is going to be a good hunter?' 'Is he going to be able to help us manage the population?' You get all of those questions. It's like an interview. My reputation is on the line so I say, 'No, I don't think so. I really like him, and he is a good guy, but I just don't think he would....' I had one friend who is one of the most ethical guys I know, and one year he was dead set on killing a deer with his 20-gauge shotgun open sights. And I said, 'Okay man, that is fine, but don't shoot any more than 50 yards.' Open sights on a shotgun is dangerous! A doe come out 80 yards away; he shot, tracked her all night long and didn't get her. I mean stuff like that. I can't recommend a guy like that. (Tom)

For pragmatists, ethics are not simply a set of rules to be followed. Instead, ethical behavior seems to arise out of necessity. For example, Tom is willing to take such shortcuts, such as not buying a fishing license if he is fishing on a friend's property (as opposed to government-controlled areas) or hunting on land without the owner's permission.

In general if it's not being hunted, sometimes I will, I won't go way over in the far corner, but I will expand the boundaries of the property I am allowed to hunt on. So, if I find a good bedding site, and it's off my friend's property, and a trail coming into feeding area is off this property, I will go in you know 100 yards or so off his property to make sure I get a better stance or whatever. But I usually back off if someone is hunting there. So, I bend the rules. I wouldn't say I break any rules. (Tom)

In describing unethical behavior, Andrew discusses witnessing two hunters trying to shoot a duck sitting on the water with a bow, an unethical and typically illegal process that is unlikely to result in a successful shot:

Whenever you go to shoot an animal, you want to make the cleanest kill possible if you are an ethical hunter. These guys weren't interested in making a [clean kill], and how were they going to retrieve the duck? You know if I shoot a duck, I have got some way to get out there and get it; a dog, a boat, chest wader, something. And they had no way. Of course, they weren't very smart either because an arrow with a broad head on it costs you about \$6 or \$7 a piece. They lost it. Shot it into the water. And you know it doesn't make sense to me. It's a waste of money, one, to shoot an animal you are not going to be able to retrieve. (Andrew)

Andrew suggests that not only is it unethical to shoot a duck on the water, but it is not practical to do so because the duck can not be retrieved and an arrow will be lost. So his concern about the ethics of this shot is as much pragmatic as it is rule-based.

Public Display. Pragmatists like to display their hunting success publicly because it provides objective evidence of their prowess. If pragmatists see success as taking home game, then mounted heads and other trophies signify this success. Some pragmatists

participated in shooting competitions to hone their shooting skills but also to demonstrate (to themselves and to others) their hunting abilities.

Just the idea of taking something home bigger than anybody else is taking home you know. I would say in my earlier days even though the first deer I shot was just a small six pointer, there was still this idea of you know the trophy to take home. (Bill)

We call it a cabin, but my brother is a carpenter by trade so with his know-how and our backbone, you know sweat, we built a little house up there that we call the hunting cabin. And it's got a really big wall inside there and you have trophies, we call them trophies, from all the hunting experiences. I have three deer up there on the wall now. Two I got in one year and another one was I would say about three years ago.

And then there is turkey fans and tail feathers and stuff. (Carla)

Social Connections

Like other groups of hunters, the camaraderie gained from interacting with other hunters is enjoyable to pragmatists. While many pragmatists originally began hunting and continue to hunt in the context of their families, they may also be members of other social organizations such as hunting clubs. Typically, hunters join together to either lease or purchase property on which to hunt. Improvements on the properties include permanent tree stands, roads, food plots, and cabins. But beyond having a well-developed hunting site, the hunters benefit in their interactions with other hunters in the club:

I have hunted with groups of hunters before on leased land. That's a lot of fun. You go and spend maybe a long weekend or whatever, and you have a hunting cabin and everyone sits around in the evening and bullshits hunting stories and tall tales and maybe have a couple drinks of whiskey. This is after all the guns are put away. You know, you get some good camp food and it's pretty rugged. You get up pretty early in the morning and get out and everybody has—on leased land like that, they have maps and they place people in different places to hunt for safety reasons. (Dave)

The friend is probably the main thing [that started me hunting]. He said 'come on let's go deer hunting for a week over at a cabin,' and it was friendship, camaraderie that started me, and I love the outdoors. I always have. (Andrew)

Like equipment relationships, the pragmatic hunter also fosters these social relationships to increase their chances of a successful hunt. While social ties with other hunters are important to this group for interpersonal reasons, these relationships are also instrumental. For instance, the group increases the pragmatic hunter's success. In the following text, Andrew describes some of the practical reasons for participating in a hunting club.

I had made a lot of acquaintances through hunting, a lot of good friends, and people I only see during hunting season. I am on a hunting lease in a hunting club. And there are 25 of us. We have 7,000 acres leased, and it's archery only. We only hunt with bows on that property for deer. You can hunt with shot guns to hunt turkey. But we only hunt trophy turkeys, deer. And we can kill bears with bow and arrow. That's not only our regulation but that's the state regulation in the locale of where I hunt. It's strictly archery hunting. (Andrew)

Andrew shows how the cooperation among members of his hunting club provides guidelines for not only ethical management of the hunting lease but also club member interactions, thereby decreasing the chances of future disagreements. One way this pragmatic motivation gets manifest is through the help of friends in the hunting process. Tracking shot game, particularly when bow hunting, is often difficult and the outcome is uncertain. Some informants described waiting from thirty minutes to as long as an hour after the shot before they begin to track the animal to avoid frightening the animal and causing it to run further. During this time, the animal is frequently out of sight of the hunter. Having more people to look for the animal after this waiting period is likely to increase the probability of bringing game home.

[When I've lost the trail,] usually that is when I get some of my buddies to come out with me, and we will check likely spots. A hit deer will usually go to water if it's fatal. A lot of other times it will go to a thicket and lie down. So, we will usually fan out and start searching. (Tom)

Hunting was something we did as a group. We all carry radios, and we are all tuned on the same channel when we are on the property. Every hour we turn the radios on, and if somebody needs help tracking an animal I have told them, everybody has said if you need help, call. I will come off my stand and help you track an animal. It's not a problem. I will give up that half day's hunting or that all day's hunting to help you recover your animal. That is the kind of hunters we look for. (Andrew)

This ethos of helping others hunting carries over to helping those who are not able to (or are only marginally able to) hunt due to health or other disabilities. Andrew describes the assistance that elderly hunters get from members of his hunting club.

We have two fellows that hunt with us that are both over 70 years old. They can't get up in the trees, and we have to haul them out to their sites. We have ground blinds set up for them with chairs in them so they can be comfortable. They don't hunt when it's real cold or when it's real damp. But they are still out there trying. (Andrew)

This solidarity among members provides utilitarian benefits to hunters who consider the long term nature of the activity within the context of their lives. Rather than seeing themselves as unable to hunt due to advanced age or infirmity, the young hunters demonstrate the solidarity of the club in assisting others.

Masculinity

Masculinity takes on a unique meaning in the balance between individualism and expressions of group solidarity of pragmatist hunters. While traditionalist hunters' conception of masculinity derives from learning to hunt in the family of origin and the need to provide for the current family, pragmatist hunters focus on working together during the hunt in order to take home game. Masculinity is hunting success defined as killing, finding, and using game animals for both consumption and display. To pragmatists, deer meat in the freezer and deer heads on the wall provide evidence to both themselves and to others of this success.

This practice has historical importance when mutual cooperation among men rather than technology was necessary in taking large game. Unlike traditionalist hunters who bond with family and friends as part of the hunting tradition, however, pragmatists create interpersonal bonds for a more practical reason—success in taking game is partially dependent on working with other men to track and hunt animals.

In so doing they walk a tightrope between cooperation with others and competition among them. They must work with other hunters to achieve success, but must also demonstrate their competency through the success for which other men have been at least partially responsible. In this way, pragmatists are struggle between two of Kiesling's (2005) discourses of hegemonic masculinity—the discourse of dominance and the discourse of male solidarity. In the dominance discourse, males must compete with other males to show their masculinity, while in the male solidarity discourse, males find value in camaraderie with other males.

I guess you know there is just this, I don't know if you consider it the primal urge that men have to hunt and gather type thing. Just the idea of taking something home bigger than anybody else is taking home you know. I would say in my earlier days even though the first deer I shot was just a small six pointer, there was still this idea of you know the trophy to take home. (Bill)

[When I don't see any more blood,] usually that is when I get some of my buddies to come out with me, and we will check likely spots. (Tom)

Bill describes the competition that the dominance discourse entails and his “primal urge” to dominate takes the expression of bringing home a better deer than his peers.

Alternatively, Tom relies on his buddies—male solidarity—when he needs help in finding a deer that he's tracking. The pragmatist hunter is most consistent with “breadwinner” myth described by Holt and Thompson (2004) in which the hunter sees

success in working hard to bring home game. In this context, the male, through hard work and unrelenting effort, accomplishes the task at hand. Through a combination of utilitarian equipment and values, pragmatist hunters work individually and collectively to express their masculinity by bringing home game.

Chapter 7

Gearheads

Overview

Well, you know, I am kind of weird. I like the technical aspect of it. Like pay a lot of attention to what kind of bullets I use and caliber and all of that. . . . I am really picky about equipment. (Jack)

If the equipment necessary for hunting is an important part of the process to the average hunter, it *makes* the process for gearheads. For this group, precise use of the appropriate equipment for the purpose at hand is an integral part of the hunt. Typically gearheads became interested in guns early and their first interest was in a 22-caliber rifle or a small-gauge shotgun.

I can remember going out with my father and shooting shotguns mostly. I had a small 410 shotgun. And then I can kind of remember the first time I went out with him to actually squirrel hunt. And that is what he did mostly was squirrel and rabbit hunt. And I can remember that very vividly, very vividly. (Oscar)

The gearhead, like the traditionalist and the pragmatist previously discussed, has an interest in the goal of killing (as opposed to the goal of experiencing the hunt). However, on the horizontal axis of Figure 3, they are located to the right of the traditionalists. Gearheads are interested in the end kill but they particularly enjoy the hunt as a site in which to use the right tool for the right job. Therefore, on the vertical axis, the gearhead is located at the most extreme location because, of all hunters, the equipment is most important to them. For the gearhead, the hunt is an opportunity to use their gear.

Relationship to Equipment

Gearheads may have emotional attachments to their guns and equipment, but these ties derive from a respect for the efficacy of the equipment. For example, the accuracy of a gun is more likely to be a source of pride as opposed to traditionalist hunters who have emotional ties based on inheritance or their personal history with the gun.

Unlike the neophyte hunter who may purchase equipment to compensate for his lack of experience, gearheads make informed decisions about the acquisition and use of equipment based on their expertise in the field. Jack compares his own use of equipment to a novice hunter:

Well, I try and pack light.... He hunts, but I was trying to help him out and show him what to do.... I didn't tell him what to pack, but he shows up and he has got an Alice pack with a frame on it, military equipment, he uses all military equipment, fanny pack, two canteens, a couple of MREs, you know, like a couple hundred yards of rope, you know. His frickin' combat knife that is like 8 inches long, you know, the blade is like 8 inches long! Stuff to sharpen with, a hatchet, a saw, you know, it's like he is carrying like 50-60 pounds of equipment or something stupid. I have got a fanny pack. I have a pocketknife, a little folding pocketknife, probably about 20 feet of rope. My hunting license and if I hunt at night I take a flashlight with me. Other than that, oh, I carry like three cartridges in the gun and then, you know, four, it will hold four and then I carry like four more in my bag and figure that will be enough. (Jack)

The gearhead neither carries an arsenal nor packs for an invasion. Instead, he is equipped with the best equipment for the task at hand, as Ian describes:

It depends on what type of hunting. For dove hunting, it's going to be a warmer climate; it's usually in early September, it's still going to be kind of warm out, depending on what area you're in. Lighter, thinner clothing will work. You pretty much want something covering, you want a hat....another thing is a brimmed hat is a pretty good thing to have. You should have one because a lot of times you'll be peppered from a shot—if somebody near you shoots up in the air, the shot's going to come back down somewhere. It's not going to be lethal or it's not going to hurt you except for if it gets in your eye. So with a brimmed hat, if you hear a shot falling around you, you can look down and it won't get in your eye. So, you definitely need a brimmed hat! Good camouflage helps a lot because they're real visual birds.

Depending upon how you hunt, you're going to want a good pair of boots to walk around in there too. When I hunt dove, I walk around a lot. In deer hunting, you want a good pair of thermal underwear. In the type of deer hunting that I do, I walk around a lot and do a lot of hiking, so a good pair of thermal underwear will keep the perspiration away. (Ian)

Sometimes the best equipment is purchased, but the more experienced gearheads seek the best tool for the job and will customize and create inventive solutions to achieve demonstrable performance differences. Oscar reloads his own bullets and uses a dentistry tool for a novel purpose. And Nick takes pride in owning a gun that uses ammunition that must be customized.

...you are worried about a bullet exploding on you, or not detonating correctly, and the brass separating. Typically where I think it separates, and I am just a novice at this, but it separates down at the web, down at the end where the primer is. So I have got several dental tools that the dentists use to pick around on your teeth that are very strong and very narrow. So when I reload after I have punched the primer out and resized it then, before I do anything else, I take that dental pick and run it down through the mouth of the case and then with that little point I can pull it back on the inside of the shell and I can tell if there is an indent there because that is where its going to come apart. So that is how I check to see if it's still safe, you can't see it from the outside particularly. (Oscar)

This particular gun I paid little money for it. I got it on a really smoking deal, and it was chambered in a wildcat cartridge. Wildcat cartridge means it's a cartridge that you can't buy ammunition at the store for. You must make this brass casing from existing brass case. You have to alter the case, and I like doing experimental stuff like that. So you take 223 cases and you neck them open to take a 7 millimeter bullet. (Nick)

This original use is consistent with Hirschman's (1980) observation that consumers creatively fashion new objects and find new uses for old objects. Moreover, these self-fashioned objects are often a source of pride.

Often gearheads are the early adopters of new equipment, but, like Nick, they may just as likely forge their own solution to a problem. Gearheads derive satisfaction in comparing various solutions and considering the tradeoffs involved.

Granted the hunting scent-blocker suits are lighter and more oriented towards hunting, they're a little nicer to wear. They got better camouflage patterns on them and what not. They're a little more user-friendly, easier to get off. Basically you can go out and spend \$50 verses \$150 to \$300. Yeah, you would spend \$300 on a scent-blocker suit or you can spend \$50-75 on a military chemical suit that kind of works the same way. And actually I was wearing one of those chemical suits when I was bow hunting and I shot that deer. (Ian)

Ian trades off cost against the improvements of the new technology and selects the less expensive military chemical suit in place of the costly commercially available scent-blocker suit.

The gearheads' relationship to their equipment is exemplified in their participation in the "scent war." While deer have poor eyesight, they compensate with a highly developed sense of smell. Hunters seek to make themselves "invisible" and will go to seemingly extreme measures to minimize their olfactory presence to deer. For example, Ian suggests a tree stand (a device for climbing and sitting or partially standing up in a tree) is a viable weapon in the scent wars.

It's two parts, you hook your feet into the bottom of it and you hold the top part of it and you kind of just inchworm up the tree with a climbable tree stand. That gets you up off the ground and keeps your scent from getting on the ground. If you get a good location, you really don't have to worry about your scent as much because the wind is not going to carry it down to the ground where the deer could smell you. (Ian)

While a large number of commercial products exist that are intended to block the scent emitted by hunters, most hunters have individual rituals.

And the other thing I do is I try to avoid, well I don't use perfume or anything, I can't stand it. You take a shower and use unscented soap. And I have deodorant that is unscented. It's all special hunting stuff, but it's just unscented is all it is. (Jack)

Similarly, Zack changes his clothes as a maneuver: "I'll carry it 100-200 yards before I put it on, I get real sweaty and then totally change clothes. I spray down with my scent killing stuff and I totally change clothes."

Alternatively, hunters fighting the scent war use naturally occurring scents to cover the human scent in their clothing. One method involved placing their hunting clothes in a garbage bag with leaves:

Another thing that doesn't cost anything to help in watching your scent is, let's say you've scouted an area and you're going to hunt in that area and let's say that there's pine trees in the area. Cut a couple of pine branches down, grab some of the leaves and stuff that's on the ground, and throw it a trash bag, stick the clothes that you're going to be hunting with in that trash bag, tie it off, and let them sit in that trash bag and they'll catch the scents that are in the area that you're going to be hunting in.
(Ian)

Approach to the hunt

It would be incorrect to say that gearheads hunt only as an opportunity to use their equipment, although this motivation is important. They hunt to take a game animal and use the meat. Thus, the use of gear is also instrumental to achieving this overriding goal. What is unique to the gearhead, however, is the central role played by the use of technology to accomplish this task.

Technology plays a starring role in the hunt and the gearhead uses feedback gleaned from the hunt to customize the technology across a number of hunting iterations. The preparation of the equipment prior to the hunt is an important part of the process for the gearhead. Then, when the equipment is used in the hunt, the performance is critiqued, and once again the equipment is fine-tuned. While other hunters might customize their equipment, this iterative process of gradual improvement has unique meaning to the gearhead. As the equipment improves in functionality over time, it serves as a demonstration of both his hunting and his engineering skill.

Skills are important to gearheads since the increased accuracy from a firearm (an important goal for the gearhead) is wasted on an unskilled shooter. The gearhead knows

that each weapon (or other piece of equipment) is different, and thus it is necessary to practice and acclimatize oneself to its function. Gearheads work to become better, but specifically to become better with the individual rifle they use.

Some rifles you just seem to shoot more accurate the faster the bullet goes once you get the right bullet and the right powder in it and some rifles it just seems like the hotter it is the more accurate it shoots. Of course, at the same time, you are doing that you have got to develop your own skill sets so you can tell the difference between the components you have loaded or is it you. Or just have the ability to hold it steady three shots in a row. See after you shoot a lot, you don't flinch. If you do, you have shot too much that day or the caliber is too big, but I don't flinch. (Oscar)

Awareness of one's limitation and the limitations of one's equipment is evidence of their skill and expertise. Gearheads frequently discussed forgoing opportunities to shoot because of extreme distance or other environmental conditions.

Well there is no way in hell I would shoot at a deer at 300 meters even though the sights are set for that. That is military, I don't even know what they were thinking. It would kill a deer at that range, it's got the power to do it. I just don't trust myself as a shooter to do it. (Jack)

Shooting is a mechanical type thing, and it also takes a great deal of practice. A minute ago when I mentioned that people talk about shooting a deer at 200 yards, and I just laugh at that because most can't do that and they can't do it because either they don't have a firearm that is capable of them knowing exactly where that bullet is going to be, a 3 inch or 6 inch circle out there at 200 yards. And then secondly I don't think most of them have the skill level in a field position to be able to hit a deer at 200 yards because of the wiggles and the waggles because you don't have a good rest. It's as simple as that. (Oscar)

In the process of customization, mechanical skills are important to the gearhead. Their focus on altering pieces of equipment or adapting tools for uses other than those intended requires a minimum degree of mechanical proficiency. As discussed, reloading ammunition is a common example of this customization among gearheads because it gives them the opportunity to accomplish the constant improvement that provides

meaning to them. But the gearhead is characterized by attitude more than by mechanics as the thirst for detailed and accurate information drives the gearhead.

I had back surgery. I was going to be laid up for about six weeks and I thought ‘you know, I have always wanted to get into [reloading ammunition] and now I got time.’ So I bought the Speer Manual, which is sort of the standard in reloading, and I read it cover to cover six times while I laid there and convalesced. I knew every load. I knew the angles on the cases. Just everything—I was fascinated! (Nick)

Values

Law abiding. Gearheads strictly adhered to the law and followed hunting regulations. At a basic level, they considered an ethical hunter to be “somebody who goes by the law” (Zack). These laws provided a minimum ethical standard they followed. Not surprisingly, these informants had careers in very rational, linear, and logical fields, such as engineering and accounting, in which accuracy is highly valued. As such, the first step to following the law is to know and understand the law. As Jack shows in his discussion of permissible bullet size (measured in thousands of an inch), hunting laws can be complex and specific, so understanding the law is important.

It’s like 224 is the minimum bullet size or above 224. I am pretty sure 223 is illegal in [this state] so I think it has to be larger than maybe its 223 and up, I know it excludes 223. (Jack)

While other hunters tended to adhere to the laws with which they agreed, gearheads’ linear and logical approach led them to adhere to the law regardless of their understanding of the logic behind it.

Well, I think that an ethical hunter is going to be one that hunts in the season to start off with. I don't always understand the seasons as they are set. I can see little difference of shooting a deer in September as compared to November, but then again the game laws are such you need to shoot them in November and not in September, unless you are going to shoot them with a bow or if bow season is in September, I don't know. So the ethical part of it is, I think, one you need to abide by whatever game laws are out there and then you need to abide by bigger principle whatever the

laws are. You can't be just poaching on people's land and just walking in on peoples' land. And so the ethics of hunting you need to given that I think you need to do it in a lawful manner. (Oscar)

Moreover, Oscar must follow not only the spirit of the law but the letter of the law even if it is inconvenient.

Up in [a nearby state] our property up there, somebody was on our property and shot a little deer and it was too little and after they shot it they realized it was too little and shoved it back in the creek and left. And we found it, and I called the game warden to come up there because if I took it, it's an illegal deer. So I called the game warden and he came up and came in the cabin and we gave him a cup of coffee and he wrote me a permit so we could use that deer meat. (Oscar)

Similarly, Oscar is law abiding regarding the issue of gun control regardless of his belief in the logic of the law. Oscar, a member of the NRA, defies the stereotypes of extreme members who claim the government will have to pry their gun from their “cold dead hands.”

As they start passing gun control laws and God knows we have got plenty, and I understand the need for that, but the real problem is that the only people that are going to adhere to gun laws are going to be folks like me. The criminal is going to do something, rob you or rape or whatever, the crime he is getting ready to commit or anticipates committing is far worse than that of a gun law. So why the rank and file or some American folks seem to think that putting gun laws on the books is going to deter crime is beyond me. ... You know, you hear some people say I will never give up my gun. Well if the law of the land passed, I would give up my gun. I am a peaceful citizen. I wouldn't like it. I wouldn't like it one bit and may be the last to do it, but I would do it. (Oscar)

Oscar's unwavering commitment to principle means he would make a personal sacrifice rather than break the law. Despite his personal opposition, he would yield to the will of the many.

Accuracy. Gearheads see two main sources of accuracy—the accuracy based on the quality of the gun and the skill of the user. Since they respect both bases of accuracy, they tune their weapons for increased accuracy and spend considerable time practicing to

develop this skill. In the following two quotes, Ian first describes that accuracy that derives from a sighted weapon and second explores the accuracy that derives from a skilled practitioner.

... it's making sure that the weapon you're using is sighted in or your bow or whatever. With a bow, you're going to know because you're practicing with it. But with a rifle,... a lot of people go out season to season without really sighting in their rifles and something could happen throughout the season; for example, they've bumped it, or it's riding in the back of the truck and it hits something, or you're walking through the woods and accidentally bang it on a tree—something just happens.... make sure that your rifle is shooting where it's supposed to be shooting. (Ian)

You could make a shot where the deer would run on for miles and finally lay down and have an agonizing death. But, if you're doing what you're supposed to be doing and practicing and you take a good, clear shot—not shooting thru the brush and what not—and you know your weapon and you know how to use it well, you'll make a good, clean shot. You're not taking a shot that's too far away,... you're making a good, clean kill straight through the heart. (Ian)

This value for accuracy is not an end in itself, it is a value that contributes to an end goal of a clean kill.

It is common for these hunters to participate in shooting sports in order to hone their hunting skills. (Recall, one of the sources of informants was a competitive club.) In addition to his hunting, Zack's competitive shooting is important in his identity construction.

I've been competitive shooting since about....88-89. I won the master tournament this year [showing his trophy]. This was the best year that I ever had, actually. I got into tournament shooting to help my bow hunting....and basically now I'm more of a tournament shooter than a hunter. (Zack)

Gearheads take pride in their shooting accomplishments. As Oscar states: accuracy is “one shot kills.” While last minute movement leads to inaccuracy, he confidently states: “I don't flinch.”

Utilitarianism. The gearhead demonstrates a love of functionality—the best equipment and hunting techniques are those one that work. Equipment is valued to the extent it helps achieve the successful end to the hunt—the kill.

Well usually you cut through the pelvic bone, there are a couple of ways you can do it, but you can cut through the sternum. Oh I added a bone saw to my arsenal. Yeah I went and bought a, I was looking for one, and I bought this Gerber saw that is just amazing. This one slides out. They have the fold out ones, it's the same as the fold out one, but this one just happens to slide out and you lock it. And it's got weird teeth on it. It has one for cutting and then one for cleaning. It's hard to describe. One is pointed and one is kind of rounded, and it will just zip right through bone like nothing I have seen, but it makes it so much easier and tidier. (Jack)

Most people's deer rifles are not very accurate. They would maybe shoot a group a two inch out of three, say a three shot group. Lots of folks you know it may be a 2 or a 2 1/2 inch group at 100 yards. I would not own a rifle unless it can group less than 3/4 of an inch at 100 yards. Now that is under ideal conditions because you are shooting over a bench, you know you are very silent and the reason for that in my opinion is that when you get in the field and you get excited because you see the deer, if you don't get excited I don't know what you are doing out there. (Oscar)

Both Jack and Oscar value the functionality of their equipment—the cutting ability of the bone saw and the accuracy of the rifle—over any emotional, nostalgic, or personal meanings.

Social Connections

As the quote at the beginning of this chapter points out, gearheads see themselves as different from other hunters, but despite this perceived difference, gearheads experience the same need to balance feelings of social rank with feelings of solidarity. Rather than being an ostracized or marginalized group, gearheads consider their separation as being based on higher status. For gearheads, this status is based on their value of, and even preoccupation with, accuracy. Oscar reflects on how others perceive him:

They think I am just too fanatical, well I shouldn't say fanatical, they don't think they need that kind of accuracy, and I probably don't.... You know you don't need that kind of accuracy to hunt deer, you don't. But that is just kind of what I enjoy doing.... Most people's deer rifles are not very accurate. They would maybe shoot a group a 2 inch out of, say, a three-shot group. Lots of folks you know it may be a 2 or a 2 ½ inch group at 100 yards. I would not own a rifle unless it can group less than ¾ of an inch at 100 yards. (Oscar)

Oscar sees himself achieving a higher standard than other hunters, although he readily admits that their standard is perfectly adequate. Similarly, Jack sees himself as more committed to hunting as indicated by his intensity in purchasing equipment.

I get into a hobby or something, and I usually get into it very hard core and read as much as I can about it and try to get the best equipment I can. And you know there are some people when they hunt they don't really care about having the best equipment, they are just if it works, which I shouldn't say there is a problem with that, if it works it works, you know they go to Wal-Mart and buy their Marlin or whatever, [Remington] 700 or whatever Wal-Mart sells. (Jack)

Jack's own gun selection communicates his preference for function over form. He suggests that "real" hunters privilege performance and his selection of a gun based on performance bolsters his claim to greater authenticity in the hunting community.

It's kind of a weird looking gun. They are kind of ugly to look at, and most people if you showed it to somebody who didn't hunt a lot or wasn't really I would hate to say this, a real hunter, an avid hunter would be a better term. Avid hunter. They would probably look at it and go okay it's a rifle you know it's not, it doesn't look like a military rifle. It's pretty nicely made. I mean the finish, it has a nice wood finish on it. It's just not really that pretty a rifle like aesthetically pleasing like a Winchester Model 70. Most people consider that, the older one, kind of nice looking. But it's nicely made and you know, but somebody that actually hunts if they pick it up and actually shoulder it and look at it they actually, I always get the 'geez that is a nice little rifle' you know. 'It's a nice little set up,' 'I could hunt with that.' (Jack)

Among the gearheads, this hierarchical ranking is based on expertise particularly in regards to equipment. This is perhaps the prototypical equipment relationship for gearheads—achievement of hierarchical status through their equipment purchase or use.

I can be a little snobby, and I like the things that other people don't have or something a little odd. I couldn't just go buy a Remington 700 or 30-06 and be done with it, which will kill just about anything you want in this country. You know you could hunt anything with that and buy ammo for it anywhere, but you know everybody has one so I don't want one. (Jack)

In addition to feelings of hierarchical dominance that are present among gearheads, these hunters also experience feelings of solidarity and camaraderie with other hunters. For example, they like to help other hunters with equipment-related problems. Ian, a member of my competitive shooting team, adopted the role of technological expert, assisting other team members with gun- or other equipment-related problems. He frequently gave advice or, more commonly, simply disassembled the piece of equipment on the spot. In this way, he achieved recognition as a member of the organization and demonstrated his expertise. He also enjoyed mentoring young hunters.

That's something else that a good hunter will enjoy: taking somebody else out that hasn't really hunted before. Giving them the experience and watching them enjoy it—that's more gratifying than shooting a trophy buck or a trophy animal. Watching somebody that's never experienced that before... a kid, a friend that hasn't really ever done that before— just watching them enjoy doing it. (Ian)

Like other hunters, the gearhead balances feelings of difference with feelings of solidarity with other hunters. Unlike other groups, however, the focus on the equipment that defines the gearhead also leads him to emphasize these hierarchical differences through comparison with other hunters.

Masculinity

Gearheads derive meaning from the process of mastering both hunting skill and technology to accomplish the hunt. For them, the mediation of technology in the hunting process is particularly evident, and this mediation takes on a unique form for gearheads. Mastery of equipment, in both skill development and in customization of equipment,

expresses the gearhead's masculinity through his desire for control, order, precision, and accuracy. This mastery of equipment was also seen by Schouten and McAlexander (1995) in their study of Harley-Davidson riders where increased hierarchical status within the subculture was gained by increased knowledge and skills in working on Harley-Davidson motorcycles.

Unlike Schouten and McAlexander's Harley-Davidson riders, however, hunting provides an opportunity to conceive of success in different ways, each with a different set of values (i.e., the clusters of hunters discussed in chapters 5 through 9). While Harley-Davidson riders achieve hierarchical status through their knowledge and technical skills, hunting is a more complex activity with different value systems. Once hunters become relatively competent, hierarchical organization becomes less important as people seek out other hunters who share a similar relationship to the equipment and hunt, as is the case in these clusters of hunters.

Of the hunting clusters, gearheads are unique in their focus on a hierarchy based on technical expertise. Compared to other hunters, they exhibited the least amount of interest in other hunters. Their fascination with technology led them to privilege equipment over people, and this serves, at times, to distance them from others. As Ian's shooting team role suggests, however, gearheads may serve a specific role (which they likely see as one of higher status) as the expert in assisting others with guns or other equipment. They also forge bonds with other gearheads based on a shared mastery of technology. While their competition with other hunters is based on skill, as discussed, they privilege this technological expertise to improve accuracy and to demonstrate skill level.

Chapter 8

Experientials

Overview

Deer hunt is a good hunt. You just get out there and experience what is around you and stuff: sunrise and sunset, the animals you hunt, the animals you don't hunt. In the fall early season, the changing color of the trees, acorns falling down out of the tree—it's all just great. (Keith)

Compared to the traditionalists, gearheads, and pragmatists who all emphasize the final kill, experientials and transcendentals (discussed in the following chapter) focus on the experience of the hunt. While killing an animal is still a penultimate goal for experientials, the ultimate goal is to be fully engaged in the lived moment of the hunt. When describing the highlights of the hunt, members of this group spoke of the joys of being in nature and the beauty of their surroundings. Like gearheads and pragmatists, experientials derive meaning from their equipment based on intrinsic, functional dimensions of the equipment rather than on emotional or nostalgic dimensions.

The following section expands the discussion of the experiential hunters' relationship to their gear and their approach to the hunt. Next, values, social connections, and masculinity are explored.

Relationship to Equipment

Experientials were able to provide surprisingly specific detail on their current and past equipment. While they did not reach the aficionado status of the gearheads, experientials nevertheless are most enamored with the performance and functional aspects of their equipment. Moreover, their equipment signals the experientials'

membership in the hunting community. While an understanding of hunting goods and accoutrements supports their ability to hunt, it is subordinate to the acquisition and demonstration of hunting skills. For experientials, expertise and skill take priority over their equipment. In contrast to the gearheads who use the hunt to demonstrate their equipment, this group employs technology to aid their hunting and by so doing demonstrate their legitimate claim to community membership.

Experientials provided detailed equipment descriptions, such as the brand and model of guns. For example, Hal's recall is impressive given he is describing events from almost five decades ago.

This fellow in the mountains was a gun collector, he was a young lad, but he had quite a few different action-types of firearms, shotguns; primarily pistols and rifles. A lot of 1873 Sharps, 1873 Colt Frontier, we would go out and shoot does. That was where I was first introduced to the 44/40, he had an 1873 Winchester. So, that sparked my interest and when I got home I became interested in guns. That was when I was around 10 years old. Around the age of 12, I kept badgering my parents for a gun and that was not in the cards. So, I was working—I got a paper route. I worked on that for a couple of years and at that time, I finally convinced my parents that I could buy a gun. I bought my ol' 1967 Winchester, which is a single-shot, 22 rifle. (Hal)

Although they are able to recall past information with a high degree of precision, experientials privileged aptitude over apparatus. Rather than emphasizing the nature of their equipment in terms of quality or other factors as gearheads might, the experientials saw the equipment as secondary to their expertise.

My philosophy is dead is dead. If you are going to hunt with and you can kill it, you don't need anything else. And I have a good shotgun that will shoot well and kills what I shoot at. The rifle is the same way I don't need a \$5,000 [gun] to be able to do the same thing a \$500 gun will do. And so that is kind of my philosophy on guns and marketing. If there is a need for it, I go get it. If there is not a need for it, I don't go looking for it. (Keith)

Experientials are more likely to share narratives about their hunting prowess, such as their skill in acquiring and detecting animal patterns, than they are to wax poetically about the nuances of various gear.

You've got to find signs that say [deer are] in the area. It's always good to talk to people who know the area. One of the places I hunted last year was a guy's 30 or 40 acre farm. All he had was horses. His house set on top of the hill and he could see his field down below and he could see every evening where they came out, where they came in. By relaying that information to me, I could piece it together and figure out they're coming out 45 minutes before dark at the end of this field. So, I want to be in between them and the field just an hour before dark. (Charlie)

Charlie's use of the landowner's knowledge allowed him to evaluate and predict game habits of the deer. Despite the extensive product knowledge exhibited by experientials, they view this knowledge as secondary to the development and demonstration of hunting expertise.

Approach to the hunt

In addition to being sensitive to their natural environment, experientials are aware of the social environment. Experientials' hunts are characterized by social engagement; they enjoy the process of interacting with other hunters on the hunt. Just as they are engaged with the technical processes of the hunt, experientials are also engaged with the hunt's social processes. They were aware of the actions of other people, but also of the effect of their own actions on others. Ed's quote captures the importance of friends on the hunt.

I like being around the people I hunt with. Coming back and talking with them about their hunt is as much fun as hunting. Just being around those kind of folks. That's what makes it. It wouldn't be fun if you hunted by yourself, I don't think. Not to me. It's more about friends than hunting. I mean, God forbid they ever outlaw hunting. But if they did, I would have fun with the same people. (Ed)

Ed shows the degree of his social engagement with others both during and after the hunt—the social interaction is an essential part of the hunting experience.

Hunters shared the social experience of *communitas* and this momentary experience of connection with others usually results from total immersion in an involving activity (Arnould and Price 1993). The excitement of the hunting experience increases their bond with fellow hunters and this sense of *communitas*.

All right. I killed one. And, depending on—I'll usually—where we hunt, people hear you shoot and they ask you if need help on the radios. And I usually don't because Dad's usually fairly close or I can get it to the road or whatever. And we just talk for a while. And I'll just sit put for probably a half hour after I shoot just to let 'em die all the way. (Ed)

Still, these hunters value skills. An experiential hunter must have honed his skills to participate in the hunt, but he judges the hunt's success not on the game killed but on the enjoyment of the process of hunting.

I do mostly goose hunting. You get out there early and setting up the decoys and figuring out the wind and figuring out where you want the blind up and when you see them coming you try to call them in with a goose call. When everything works, they start circling and locking up and coming down, that is the most beautiful sight. (Keith)

Not surprisingly, the process-focused experientials emphasize the importance of planning the hunt. Keith suggests that the “complete hunting experience” includes both preparation and knowledge and these elements are “just as important as the kill.” Part of this planning involves purchase of equipment, and during the hunt itself the experiential demonstrates his skill through his actions, through use of his equipment, and through interactions with others accompanying him on the hunting trip

I like to be set—completely set up a half hour before first light. And you can't shoot at first light. I think it's 30 minutes before sunrise and it's a certain time every day. I like to be set up 30 minutes before you can even barely start to see. If you jump deer on the way in, you give 'em time to settle. And I hate being late. I've slept in a little

bit too late and been walkin' to where I've wanted to hunt and the deer are already there. So if I can stop that from happening, I'll get up an extra hour earlier. (Ed)

Through acquiring a base threshold of skills in order to participate in the hunt, by making the effort to plan the hunt, and through the social interaction of the hunt, experiential hunters approach the hunt as a process. While they would like to kill an animal, the enjoyment of the total hunting experience is most important.

Values

Love of nature. Experiential hunters share a joy of being in the outdoors surrounded by nature. This commune with nature was the primary benefit they attained from hunting. At times, this commune is joyful, at times, it is decidedly uncomfortable, yet a fascination with nature is evident.

I don't believe in going out and shooting shit. I believe in going out and having fun. I have fun sitting there listening to the wind, the trees, the birds...that kind of stuff waiting on what I want to happen. Even if it don't happen, I still enjoy my time with the nature, woodsy atmosphere part of it. (Charlie)

Deer huntin' is very solitary and boring 99 percent of the time. Usually I get cold within the first hour. And I start just trying to stay as warm as I can. You watch squirrels and crows and the hawks, all kind of stuff. You'll see a mole. I've had moles come up right next to me sittin' in the ground. And you just get to see everything in its natural state because they don't know you're there most of the time. Turkeys, all kinds of stuff. Grouse. (Ed)

This type of escape to nature was seen by Arnould and Price (1993) in their study of whitewater river rafting. Their rafters experienced momentary episodes of "communion with nature" (p. 33) during which a moonrise was appreciated or rafters adjusted to "river time" (p. 34). In the rafter study, the river guide plays an interesting role by facilitating and socializing the new rafters into this love of nature. Unlike hunting, rafting (as studied by Arnould and Price) is a market mediated activity in which river

guide accompaniment is an understood part of the process. But like hunting, the river rafters find that not all communion with nature is pleasurable or safe for the participants as they describe their passage of dangerous rapids in the context of this communion. And like experiential hunters, the escape to nature encourages social cohesion (“*communitas*”) within the rafting groups.

A similar finding occurred in a study of ecologically oriented consumers by Dobscha and Ozanne (2001). In this case, the connection that study informants experienced with nature was not as momentary as that found by Arnould and Price. Rather, Dobscha and Ozanne’s informants “view humans and the natural world as part of one system” (p. 205). Experiential hunters also experienced the depth of this natural connection.

If you do it long enough, you realize that you are not the only thing out there, the only animal out there and everything has its place.... I think for the average hunter its they just are more aware of what is going on. They see the pollution in the springs probably faster than the non-hunters.... And they think that probably the worst animal on earth is the human being. (Keith)

Keith’s connection to nature makes him aware of the harm that humans do to nature. In his case, however, the connection was a more concrete one rather than the abstract descriptions found among ecologically oriented consumers. Unlike Dobscha and Ozanne’s informants whose views focus on opposition to “anthropocentric assumptions [i.e., that the natural world’s purpose is to serve humans] made by deep ecologists,” hunters, by participating in the activity and by using the metaphor of harvesting game, tacitly express this more anthropocentric view.

Experientialists hunt not only to commune with nature but also to escape from the pressures of everyday life. In this respect, experiential hunters are like the Harley-

Davidson riders studied by Schouten and McAlexander who exhibit personal freedom in the form of “freedom from” (1995, p. 51) societal symbols of confinement. Xavier, a businessman and the son of a hunter, tells of getting away from work pressures by hunting.

I just like to get up early and watch, you listen to the turkeys and you see the wildlife. There are no phones ringing and it's quiet. You are there by yourself or with somebody. It's quiet and it's you and nature. It's relaxing I guess even if you don't kill anything you know you just go and just relax. (Xavier)

This example suggests that the escape in hunting is a type of “restorative escape” found by Corus and Ozanne (2006) in their study of the consumer fascination in gardening.

Xavier sees hunting as a way to escape from his work pressures and an escape to the safe harbor that nature provides, which is more important than his degree of success in taking game.

Challenge. If experientials enjoy the hunt as an opportunity to be fully engaged in the natural environment, then this feeling can be intensified by setting up personal challenges. By continually testing themselves, experientials ensure that they remain caught up in the unfolding drama of the hunt. Ed describes the differences between bow and rifle hunting and how the former is more engaging than the latter.

To me, hunting with a rifle just got too, maybe not boring, but not challenging enough. I mean, it's hard to find a deer. It is. But, to be able to find a deer and get him that close is just so much more rewarding to me. I'm gonna' kill one next year with my bow. And it will probably be a doe. I'm gonna' shoot the first thing that comes within range. And when I do that, I think it'll mean more than those two bigger deer I killed... it will mean a lot. It'll mean a lot. (Ed)

Ed anticipates that the challenge of the bow will increase his satisfaction with killing a deer. However, the size or gender of the deer is unimportant. Unlike other hunters who prize the display of large racks of antlers as a demonstration of their ability to kill, Ed

prizes the expertise that a successful bow kill will demonstrate and the self satisfaction he will feel.

Charlie demonstrates a similar need to challenge himself, but as a young hunter, who is a new apprentice, he rises to the challenge of a hunting companion.

I was kind of put in a dare.... A guy told me that I couldn't walk in the woods and 30 minutes later, come out with a squirrel. And that made it kind of a sporting thing and I wasn't too much up for it, but it was kind of a dare. So, I said, alright, I'll do it. Let me get my hat. I got my camouflage hat, that was all that I needed, and two bullets for my gun. He dropped me off and said I'll be back in 30 minutes to get you. You'd better be standing here!! I didn't know where he'd drop me off, I kind of walked in the woods and just used what I had been doing. Looked at the trees and the ground and I found a previous spot that I thought was good. I sat down and I just sat there for a few minutes and all of a sudden, I hear the leaves rattle on top of the tree. I looked up and I saw it; it wasn't at a real safe shooting angle. It was about a 45 degree angle with a 22, but, I was shooting towards the main road, or across it, depending upon how far the bullet would travel. And I didn't feel safe, so I held off and it climbed down the tree. I held center mass, and my first shot, I hit it in the arm. It was dangling by it's other front arm, off a tree limb, trying/struggling to get it's legs up to flee for it's life. I guess that's a nice squirrel term to use... And the second shot, center mass, lights out. I walked back, sit down beside the road, used a little bit of tobacco. My friend came back and said 'Where's he at?' And I pulled him up and said 'Wham, bitch!!' That was the end of that dare. He didn't dare me anymore. (Charlie)

Charlie's accomplishment of a challenge intensifies his enjoyment of the hunting experience by encouraging him to live in the moment. While this example as a whole provides an instance where Charlie's skill level was questioned and he met the challenge by proving, with a minimum of time and equipment, that his skill was sufficient for obtaining a kill, it also provides the understanding of skill to include safety. Charlie shows patience in taking his shot. Since safety concerns also signal skill level, Charlie's hesitation in favor of safety suggests that a more complex set of values exists than the stereotypical hunter who is motivated to kill for any reason.

Social Connections

In the same way that the experiential hunter is engaged in the natural world, he is engaged socially. He enjoys the overall picture of the hunt and his or her fellow hunters are key elements in the composition of this picture. Like many hunters socialized within the family, typically by fathers, the mentor-father connection remains important to experientials.

I love hunting with Dad. I'm gonna hate to see the day when he can't go up to the nasty parts of the mountain with me. But it's gonna happen sooner or later. That's why we go up there every chance we get now, while he can still get around pretty good. (Ed)

Ed continues to enjoy the company of his father.

Other hunters play a role in the experiential hunter's experience of the hunt. As Ed says, "it's more about friends than huntin'." Like family, friends are valued for more than their loyal contribution to the activity. Friends are valued for the depth of social connections they allow in the lives of experiential hunters in the same way that the natural world allows deep rather than abstract connections to nature.

For me a successful hunt is: 1: nobody gets hurt, 2: being outside with someone you enjoy being with—that's a successful hunt, 3: being able to see game, wildlife and to see the game that you're pursuing, and then 4: if you get a shot. I like to be able to bag game, but there are gradations of that and there all successful for me. If you come back and say nobody was hurt, that's a success. If you were with someone that you really enjoy being with and you had a good time with them—which on many occasions is as far as I have gotten—I saw nothing, but it was a success. (Hal)

Hal's quote points out the importance of this camaraderie in social connections with his fellow hunters. He values the camaraderie in the hunt above the taking of game. Unlike marketplace created encounters such as river rafting or skydiving or market mediated encounters such as evidenced in the Harley-Davidson or Saab brand communities, the

social ties that bind hunters have formed over years and are based on deeper connections among participants.

For example, during field work I was able to participate in not only the hunt itself but also in the joking, feasting, and card playing that surrounds the hunt. After hunting with Charlie, for instance, a number of his friends and I ended up playing poker in his apartment until late at night. A quick camaraderie was established among us even though I was an outsider in their group. This was due in part to my ability to engage in joking and my failure to be offended or react negatively to the teasing. Similarly, when I first scheduled my interview with Charlie, he fed me an unidentified meat that I later learned was venison.

[Prior to starting the interview,] he also showed me his squirrel tails (that he discusses in the interview), and fed me venison. I suspected it was venison, but I didn't ask and he didn't volunteer until after I was eating it. I wondered if it was a test of some sort, but he had clearly gone to trouble preparing it. (Field notes 5/31/04)

In hindsight, I realize that being fed "mystery" meat was more akin to friendly teasing than it was to a competitive test. These challenges and, even at times, displays of bravado are the joking and play of men indirectly demonstrating affection more than an attempt to assert social superiority or rank.

Masculinity

Masculinity for the experiential hunter harkens back to finding his particular place in both the natural world and the social world. As a man, his participation in the hunt involves a connection with nature like that found in other studies of outdoor activities (e.g., Arnould and Price 1993) and studies of ecology-minded people (Dobscha and Ozanne 2001). Rather than a simple model of dominating nature (which anti-hunting

groups would say underlies this activity), this connection to nature involves an interconnectedness with nature. But nature is also a site in which the hunter can challenge their skills and taking game under difficult conditions is evidence of their ability to rise to this challenge. For the experiential hunter, this potentially contradictory tension is resolved by an understanding of the “harvesting” metaphor. Rather than seeing nature as a sacred site that must be protected from harm, experiential hunters see nature as a source of food, recreation, and restoration. Hunting groups often claim that hunters are the best conservationists of nature because they are the first to see the destruction of human activities, they are aware on a very concrete level of the interconnectedness of the various food chains in the environment, and they see themselves fitting into the natural world. While environmental activists mostly focus on more abstract issues such as recycling that occurs separate from nature, hunters see first-hand the effects of littering.

Similarly, the experiential hunter has an image of himself in a social environment during the hunt. His hunting partners, be they friends or family, play a central role in the hunt through the development of a long-term *communitas* resulting from this shared experience and a shared history and friendship. For the experiential, masculinity involves the artful balance of technological mastery within a social community where friendship and camaraderie are valued. Masculinity encompasses technological competence, as demonstrated in capable skill with the weapon, natural competence, as expressed in finding his place in nature, and social competence, as demonstrated by his comfortable and confident ability to suture warm and trusting relationships with other men.

Chapter 9

Transcendentals

Overview

Hunting is one of those things that stirs the inner soul to me. And I know it does to some of my children. And I think it's just an added dimension of something they can never get anywhere else. They can't get the opportunity to go hunting and get the scenery and see the bird dogs work. It's something serene about just going for a long walk in the mountain and following a bird dog. Nothing else can ever take its place. (Quentin)

The transcendentals are perhaps the group who are most deeply socialized as hunters. Hunting is integrated throughout the lives of the transcendentals. Rather than seeing hunting as a hobby or avocation, they see it as a lifestyle; it is difficult for the transcendental to even imagine their life without hunting.

While transcendentals have fully integrated hunting into their lives, they have also naturally achieved what Schouten and McAlexander (1995) call a lack of self-consciousness. Rather than achieving this state through full integration into the subculture, as Schouten and McAlexander suggest, transcendentals have lived their lives within hunting and can see no other way of living.

[If I could no longer hunt], I probably would call everybody that did go hunting and ask them what they did, what happened. Obviously I am getting you know, that is going to happen. I am 77 years old, and I experienced some of that back when I had heart trouble this past year. I didn't get to hunt much. And you know I have sense enough to know that some of these mountains are really, as they said the older you get the steeper they are. And believe me that is true. And I don't know. I hope that I will be able to continue to hunt some right on up until the time I pass away, pass on or whatever you want to call it. I have hunted so many years now it's just part of my life, and it's a good part of my life. I mean there are a lot of good parts of my life, but this certainly is one of them. And I just, I look forward to it. I look forward to going hunting. Like I said I am 77. Every time I put my hunting clothes on and turn that bird dog loose, I get excited. And you know it's wonderful to be old and still be able to get

excited about doing something. Hunting is it. It's one of the things I enjoy doing.
(Quentin)

Relationship to Equipment

Transcendentals described some of the deepest emotional connections to their equipment of any group. Most frequently, strong emotional significance is forged through inheriting guns or because the guns have a unique family history (Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry 1989).

The percussion cap muzzleloader was given to me by my Dad's father, my grandfather. When I was younger, I didn't have one to use. My Dad had his muzzleloader, and my grandfather had really slowed down and didn't do a lot of hunting especially muzzleloader hunting. So, he says 'sure, get some use out of it!' So, I carried it with me, I think the first season I went out with it I ended up getting a deer with it, so [he said]: "Alright! You got a deer with my gun!" It's very accurate, it's a 45 caliber with an old octagon barrel, real heavy, you pull the hammer back, and I still love to hunt with it to this day. (Bob)

When these informants discussed the possibility of the gun being lost or stolen, the depth of their connection to the gun was apparent. Bob described the hurt he would experience if he lost this treasured familial possession. But Gene's quote better captures the intensity of these feelings:

[If my grandfather's gun got stolen,] I'd cut his balls off. [laughing] I would try everything possible to get the gun back. Because, I mean, it's mine. And no one else deserves it but me because he give it to me. I would never sell it. You could not pay enough money to give you the gun. You could give me 5 times what it's worth and I'd tell you no. I mean, you can go to the gun store and get a 1903 just like mine, not nearly as good of shape as mine. Because mine's like perfect. Like there's no rust anywhere. The barrel's perfectly smooth and stuff inside. It's got the original barrel in it still. And you go to this gun store and you'll see guns like the wood's all dinged up on it. The barrel's aren't glued and stuff. Just straight out from the military. And it's not a collector's item by any means. I mean, it wasn't that big. It was a WWII gun. It's not like a Civil War antique. And the barrel's are all pit and stuff, and they'll go for like a thousand dollars. Well, mine would probably be worth at least that much and I wouldn't sell it for \$5,000 just because of the memories I have behind it. I just wouldn't do it. There's no way. Unless you like killed me and then took it, that's the

only way you could get it. (Gene)

Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry (1989) suggest that inheritance is one way that sacredness may be imbued into a possession, an idea supported by Gene's strong emotional attachment to his gun. Consistent with Belk (1988), this family gun is part of Gene's extended self and is irreplaceable. Gene's gun is a sacred possession; he would not profane the gun by selling it and if someone sought to profane the gun through theft, he would excise his pound of flesh.

Approach to the hunt

Transcendentals approach the hunt in ways unique from other groups of hunters. Like experientials, they are focused on the process of the hunt more than the killing of game. The lived experience of being in nature and among friends is most important to the transcendental hunter. While the taking of game adds to this hunting experience, transcendentals do not define their hunting success as a function of game taken, nor would the failure to take game detract from the experience.

To me, the reward of hunting is just being in the outdoors, just solitude, not having the hustle n bustle of everyday life; just being out there. A reward to me doesn't necessary mean harvesting an animal or anything like that. If you kill or harvest an animal or whatever you're hunting, that's great; but it doesn't make the experience for me necessary. Just being there at that point, whether you are in the woods, or where ever you are at, and whatever you are hunting; just the whole experience. Harvesting something is kind of like an extra or something. (Bob)

A grouse primarily is a big breast because it's such a strong flying ability. They will run on the ground. It's amazing how fast they can run on the ground when they want to. But they usually fly. They are a lot of fun. From all the hunting I have ever done in my life, the grouse is the most exciting because of where you are having to hunt them. If they were out here in the open field, they wouldn't be near as exciting, but you stand with one leg on the top of a mountain and the other one about to fall off of one side and slide down and the bird comes up, and you have to try to figure out a way to

get your gun up and not fall down and still shoot and kill the grouse you know.
(Quentin)

Unlike other groups of hunters, the meanings generated by hunting are fully integrated within the lives of the transcendentalists. Hunting is less an activity and more a lifestyle. Perhaps an apt analogy would be that hunting for the transcendentalist is like driving an automobile is for the average American—it is just something that we do. We cannot imagine a life without the convenience of a car. Key rites of passage are linked to driving, such as getting one's first car. We learn to love specific brands because those were valued by our family or friends. Of course, this metaphor fails to capture the breadth of meaning that hunting gives to the life of the transcendentalist.

The families of transcendentalists have always hunted and will continue to hunt. Their friends hunt. They celebrate the success of the hunt together. Rather than weekend warriors, hunting is integrated throughout the fabric of their lives. First, hunting begins in childhood as they are socialized within a family of hunting. Second, as they mature, they continue to hunt, going through rites of passage that include meeting increasing challenges in terms of terrain or game hunted. Finally, they carry on the legacy of hunting by influencing future generations' hunting activities by serving as mentors. While other hunters grow up and live among families of hunters, the transcendentalists have a greater breadth and depth of intensity. These hunters would agree with the introductory quote by Sam Snead, "The only reason I played golf was so that I could afford to go hunting and fishing." They live to hunt.

Not only do transcendentalist hunters have a more integrated role of hunting in their lives, their perspectives on other parts of their lives are also unique. For example, they

place a different emphasis on their career. Rather than seeing the career as a central path from which they might digress to take time off to go hunting, hunting is so important that they see hunting as the central path around which they plan work. For example, transcendentals will plan hunting vacations to compensate for the time spent at their job.

From what I'm seeing so far, I think your hunting times goes down and down and it gets reduced more and more as you get older. You get in to the workforce, you've got to work everyday. Eventually, if you're really big into hunting, you'll want to take some vacation time during hunting season. That's kind of my goals. Eventually, I'm going to get a job and I'd like to spend maybe some of my vacation time that I build up in whatever I end up doing in my life.... Having that to go out and do my hunting kind of 'makes-up' so to speak for time lost. I'm able to get out into the field and enjoy that sport. (Bob)

A final way hunting is integrated into the lives of transcendentals is through the number of interpersonal linkages and the strength of these connections between hunting and family. While other hunters described hunting playing a role in family rituals and in socializing their children, Quentin's description below of a family relationship that originated during a hunting trip exemplifies the breadth and depth of hunting in his family's lives.

We have been going to South Dakota for probably, we started around 1959, and we have been going every year to South Dakota ring-necked pheasant hunting. And have become real good friends with these, I have been seeing the same farm family for about 30 some years now and watched their children grow up and go to college and get married, get divorced like everybody else's. And they come out here and visit. As a matter of fact, they are going to be coming out here and staying oh sometime in the month of July. And they come and stay up on [the] lake on our property, and we go out there and hunt. (Quentin)

Quentin describes meeting the family while looking for land on which to hunt pheasants. This relationship has since expanded to include attending non-hunting-related events such

as weddings and graduations. Quentin's son, Xavier, also described the relationship with this family and his expectation that it would continue into the future.

[My parents] got involved with this farm family. . . . I don't know exactly how it worked out, but . . . they ended up staying in their house. And they had children. They had a son who is my age, and they watched him grow up if that gives you any idea. So, they have been going for 30 some years, and they have some daughters and stuff like that, but literally when we go out there, we go out there and we arrive on the farm, and we walk in, don't even knock on the door. Just walk in and they have their garage they convert and put the cots and stuff in their garage. We take a shower in their shower. The woman of the household she has somebody come to help her, and she fixes us breakfast every morning and has sandwiches for us at lunch and fixes us dinner every night. We stay in their house, we sit and watch television with them at night. And their kids that we have watched grow up and some of them are our age, like one of their daughters might come over one night and you know just to visit with us and bring her children. Their son might come the next night and bring his children. Their mother might come, you know and just have a meal with us. I have been going since high school, and I have missed one year and that was when my son was born that week. So, I have been going for years and years. (Xavier)

The degree of interaction with the family in South Dakota is extensive and promises to continue to be. Xavier also highlights the nature of transcendentals to extend relationships beyond the activity of hunting.

The relationship that we formed doesn't necessarily have to be associated around hunting. Like the people from South Dakota they will come here and visit us and stay in one of our houses. And they will come and see what our lives are like you know. They may come and visit, may come and see you at your house with your family and then go see some of the other folks. We had extra room and they may stay with some of us when they were here. I mean because we live in their house while they are there. So, it's kind of neat you know. Really I guess we are more friends than just a relationship.

Values

Like the hardcore Harley-Davidson riders studied by Schouten and McAlexander (1995) and the expert skydivers studied by Celsi, Rose, and Leigh (1993), transcendentals' hunting values and their life values are one and the same. Specifically,

transcendentals successfully integrate their values from hunting with the remaining portions of their lives.

Re-enchantment of nature. Similar to other groups who find meaning in the process rather than the result of hunting, transcendentals value their time being outdoors. Nevertheless, this experience is more than a walk in the woods. Rather, transcendentals described their experience as a deeper and more spiritual connection to nature or God, in sharp contrast to ends-oriented hunters.

You are around people and you hear them talk, and they're kind of like "I didn't kill anything hunting" so, it's kind of like it's a bummer. They are disappointed. For me, it is not necessarily (a disappointment.) Sure, I think that those in the hunting realm like to kill stuff, like the feel of some success by harvesting something, but, that's not necessary the case for me, it's not that way. (Bob)

While "killing stuff" may be part of the general hunting narrative, for Bob it is not an essential part of his experience nor does he experience the disappointment that other hunters describe when they are "unsuccessful." Perhaps the introductory quote from Quentin sums it up well—hunting "stirs the inner soul." He elaborates in the following quote:

It's a, and you know when they are out there doing it they get to see God's creation. ... It's different every day you go. Something really spectacular is going to happen to you that day that you are going to see something and nature is going to do something out there for you. If you went out there, you wouldn't have that opportunity to see it you know. Maybe you are walking in the mountain and you just run across a black bear or something like that, a mother with its cubs and see them you know and scamper up a tree or something you know. Maybe the dog will do something special you know or maybe just be, maybe a beautiful sunset or sunrise or some little brook running. You know it's just things out there that we are seeing. And unless you are there, you are never going to get that opportunity. You need to go, and I think every child should have an opportunity. That they can find some way or another to at least have an opportunity for someone to take them hunting or take them fishing and let them try it. That's all. (Quentin)

Corus and Ozanne (2006), in their study of gardeners, find the same enchantment with nature and conceptualize this relationship as one of sustained consumer fascination, which is composed of restorative escape, surprise, creative problem solving, and insight. Similarly, transcendental hunters talk about the escape into nature offering them relief from the stresses of everyday life and the continual unfolding surprises of nature keep them engaged. Other aspects of the hunt resemble sustained consumer fascination based on their engagement with amazing aspects of nature (e.g., the unexpected black bear and cub), creative problem solving (e.g., tracking a wounded animal in unknown territory), and emergent insights and understandings (e.g., what is the meaning of a good kill or a noble death).

Another way transcendentalists express re-enchantment of nature is through what might be called the imagined and empathetic relationships they have toward the animals that they hunt. For example, Bob wonders what the animal feels as it is being shot, while Walt goes to the trouble to carry a “kill shot” in order to minimize the pain that the deer feels.

A lot of people say that the broad head or whatever you are using with your arrow is so just so sharp that animal almost doesn't feel it. It's so quick. It's almost like a needle sticking you. It's just a prick.... It kind of makes you wonder sometimes what an animal really feels when you shoot them. I've had some that you shoot and then they just run out of the block of woods or run down through the woods like a ball of fire, just crashing and thrashing and you wonder what they feel. They may feel the same thing that a deer who doesn't even know it's been shot feels. Is it the sound of that bow going off? Or that gun going off? Or, is it a pain factor? Is it just a fright-flight response? (Bob)

When they are dying, they make the God awfullest sound. You will hear people that are dying of bad, people who have emphysema or a lot of ways you can't catch your breath, and you can actually hear. It's almost like a little gurgle. They make this, it's like a child for its mother bleating sound. It's just, I can't stand it. It drives me crazy. That is why I always used to carry a kill shot. Like a bird shot, but something when you knew it wasn't going to get up and just over and put him out of his misery. Walk

up there and throw it up underneath the chin and pull a Dr. Kevorkian on him. You know the end is inevitable, there is no reason to suffer, bam. That is hard to do, too. I got to where that was hard, but now I don't get close enough to hear it. Just wait a little bit longer. It's going to lay over and die. And that's still (hard) for me. I mean I am a humanitarian. (Walt)

In the preceding quotes, both Bob and Walt express empathetic feelings toward the animal whose life they had taken. Sometimes, the animals possessed human-like traits, such as an uncanny intelligence; these animals achieved more mythical status and became both heroes and adversaries in great hunting stories of the transcendentalists.

There's this monster 22-point on my grandfather's property and he's still alive. A monster. He was too smart for us. As soon as rifle season kicked in, we were certain we could get it because it would always stay like 100 yards away from us. We knew we could get him. Well, another season change and he'd be ours. (Gene)

Gene describes putting forward substantial effort to hunt this particular deer and admires his intelligence. His relationship to the deer is one of admiration and respect, which is more like the relationship between two equal adversaries rather than the predator-prey relationship one might expect. Transcendentalists experienced what might be termed relationships not only with family members and other hunting partners, but also with their hunting dogs and, more surprisingly, even with the game that they hunted.

Humane killing. The relationship of hunter to animal hunted is a more complex one than simply predator and prey. Hunters certainly have the goal of taking game, typically for consumption of meat, during the hunt. But transcendentalists interpret this death within a broader awareness of the fragility of both populations of animals and of the lives of individual members of those populations. Thus, an important part of hunting is the treatment of game during the kill. They both respect the individual animal and seek

to minimize the potential pain the animal might feel. Bob describes taking a good shot as “doing your best” and invokes the myth of the Native American hunter.

Humane. To me, that’s making the best possible shot that you possibly can. Most of the time you want to aim for the vital area of an animal that will give you a quick, clean kill so to speak; many times it has been described as just that. I guess that hunters probably get a bad rep a lot of times if they see just a part of an animal and pop a shot off and they may shoot it in the leg and just cripple it up and think “Oh, it will be all right.” That’s not the way I was raised. I guess that I was kind of raised on the old ‘Indian style’ of you only kill what you eat. You do the best job that you can.... But, you’re always going to have those that get away sometimes even if you try your best to do it.... Many times I haven’t [taken a shot] because things just haven’t worked out; a little brush in the way, the animal turned the wrong way, etc. Things just didn’t work out so you hold off. Why chance putting a bad shot? Yeah, you might shoot and you might kill it right off, but, there’s always that chance that it might not work. There is a chance of that every time, but that really increases your chances when things aren’t, so to speak, ‘perfect’ in a way. (Bob)

This value is similar to the humane killing value of traditionalists, and would likely be echoed by most hunters. For transcendentalists, however, humane killing contributes to the overall aesthetic of the hunting process. Given their distinct definition of hunting success, they place more importance than other groups on the process of the hunt, and the hunt can not be a good hunt if the game animal that is ultimately killed suffered needlessly.

Nostalgia. Holbrook (1993) suggests that nostalgia involves a connection with one’s past and describes this “nostalgia proneness” as a psychographic, individual variable influenced by gender and age. However, he points out a difference of opinion exists as to whether nostalgia refers to only an earlier time in an individual’s life or to earlier times in history as well. Holbrook and Schindler later define nostalgia as “a preference . . . towards experiences associated with objects . . . that were more common ... when one was younger” (2003, p. 108) suggesting that the former conceptualization is preferable. The current study found examples of both conceptualizations as transcendentalists traced experiences to earlier times in their own lives and to earlier times

in (perhaps an idealized) history. These hunters yearned for a time when hunting was a means of survival. Transcendentals see themselves fitting into the greater scheme of human evolution, tracing the activity of hunting back to these earlier times, or as Gene says, it's "going back to your real roots."

Nostalgia often surrounded a meaningful piece of equipment—frequently a gun—as described earlier in this section or, in Quentin's case, a hunting dog.

She was, she was amazing. I have had a lot of really great dogs, but my dog, Super; everybody that ever hunted with it said it was the best dog they had ever hunted with it. It didn't make any difference what kind of bird we were hunting, she adapted immediately. And the same thing at Georgia. I have seen her in Georgia have one quail in her mouth and be bringing it back and point at another one, stand there and point with one bird in her mouth and pointing another one. She had a tremendous nose on her and was just so smart. When she was clean, I would let her ride up front with me and lay her hand on my leg. When she was wet and dirty, I would make her lay in the floor board. I had a dog box in the back, but she never did like it. She wanted to be with people. (Quentin)

While Hirschman describes the use of "animals as equipment" (1994, p. 618) in her description of the functions of pets, it is clear that Quentin experiences a multifaceted relationship with his dog. In addition to the dog's utilitarian function in carrying out some of the functions necessary in bird hunting, he also experiences a nostalgic connection with his dog in what Hirschman describes as "animals as family members" (p. 621). Humans and their pets can be described as "sharing bonds of intimacy that approach, or even equal, those they share with other humans" (1994, p. 629). Lastly, Hirschman suggests that pets play a role in mediating nature and culture, particularly relevant for the present study in which the bonds between nature and culture are being re-enchanted.

While transcendentals foster personal connections to possessions and animals, they also foster nostalgic connections to place. For example, Bob's family has been

hunting on their family farm for enough generations that common locations have names that are passed down to subsequent generations.

Most of the time, we always hunt close to home, me and my father. It's kind of close; we know that area and we know the trails, where the feeding and bedding areas are; where the animals are. When you hunt an area for years and years, the family farm has been in the family for a long time and all of my family, previous generations have hunted (there), so, you've kind of got almost like these traditional deer stands. 'I'm going to the big oak' or 'I'm going to the stool stand by the creek. Deer stand are almost named because they're used so many times. Most of the time when I'm hunting, if I'm hunting by myself, I'll leave a note for my mother or father just to tell them where I'm at. You never know when an accident might happen; fall out of a tree stand, or you turn your ankle or something. Especially to my Dad; he knows these places because he was the one that really introduced me. My grandfather, he knows the same type places; the name kind of carries on. Deer stands get their names and that's kind of part of it. A generation thing as time goes on. (Bob)

Marx describes *the alienation of labor* as a situation where the laborer becomes estranged from what he produces. A similar alienation occurs in the separation of production and consumption of food in recent history. Rather than individuals providing their food through hunting and gathering or through cultivation of agriculture or the raising of livestock, they now make use of intermediaries (e.g., the grocery and meat industries) that serve to cleanse the process of any unpleasantness. Transcendentals see hunting as a means of re-establishing of this connection.

I think it keeps you seated in your roots basically. Like you go to someplace in the middle of the city and you talk to somebody about hunting and stuff and they're just like, "You do what? Why would you do something like that?" I'm like, "Where do you think that cow comes from in your McDonalds burger? It comes from a slaughter house." Back in the day, people hunted. That's the way they survived. I don't do it to survive. I do it because it's enjoyable. You know, that's a way to get away from the hustle and bustle. I'm like, "If you would try it, you know, you say you're stressed out from the city. If you would try to do this, maybe you could go and relax a little bit. You might enjoy it." (Gene)

Transcendentals also see hunting as an activity that historically connects them to a time when people hunted as a means of survival. For example, Walt bemoans the current deskilling of people and is nostalgic for a time when people still had basic survival skills.

I think it's good to know you know I often think in the world that we live in today if something God forbid catastrophic happens, most of the kids would starve to death. They don't know how to grow a vegetable. You can go out here and pick an apple, but sooner or later it will freeze. You need to know how to grow food, can food. You know raise livestock, be able to butcher livestock and know what to do it with it once because we have learned how to salt meat and sugar, salt pork without refrigeration you know and that's the way it was done, that's just the old timey way. You salted your meat. You could salt hams down and kept them like in a, well you kept them basically in old wooden boxes in the basement, but see you didn't think about that back then. That's like kids today they don't get it. (Walt)

In contrast to Holbrook's conceptualization of nostalgia being related to earlier times in the life of the individual, transcendentals experienced nostalgia as a connection to both earlier times in the life of the individual, and earlier, perhaps romanticized, times in history.

Social Connections

For transcendentals, hunting provides the social glue that holds together their social networks, among both family members and other groups of hunters. The transcendentals in this study all shared a primary socialization as a hunter and were taught to hunt at a young age by their father or other significant male mentor, and this group saw learning to hunt as a normal part of their upbringing. As a result, the rites of passage discussed in chapter 4 were important to transcendentals and served to forge strong emotional ties within the family of origin.

I mounted my first deer. My Mom and Dad actually mounted it for me. And I was just gonna cut the horns off. Normally you kill one, and if it's not huge, you just cut

the horns off and you nail it to a board or something. And they sell these things at Wal-Mart, you can put over the skull. So I was just gonna do that. I get the hack saw out and stuff, so I could get it home and take the pictures and all that. And Dad's like, "Oh, we'll do that later." And I was "Okay, whatever." He said, "I'll take care of that later. We gotta go do something. And we leave. And it was like 2 months later and I'm like, "Okay. Where are the horns at?" I want them and put them in my room or whatever. And my grandpa was like, "Oh. The dog got in the garage somehow and like tore up the carcass and stuff and chewed on the horns and he just messed him all up." And I was like, "Well, crap." Well it was still no big deal. It doesn't really matter. I wanted something, you know. So Christmas day, you know, I was doing the Christmas thing or whatever and then my grandparents come over and whatever. And then there's like, "there's another present for you in your room." And I go in my room and on the bed there's the deer mounted for me. It was all mounted. Normally it takes like 7 months to get one back. (Gene)

Gene's family participated in the celebration of his first deer by covertly having the deer head mounted for him as a Christmas gift. This quote demonstrates the central role that hunting plays for this group of primary socialized hunters as the kill of Gene's first deer is shared within the context of a family Christmas celebration.

Transcententials, like other hunters, frequently hunted with family members. What differentiates transcendentals from other hunters, however, is the degree of depth to which these intergenerational experiences added meaning to the hunters' lives. These intergenerational experiences occurred between father and son frequently, but also spanned generations, unique among primarily socialized hunters whose fathers had also been primarily socialized.

One particular moment with my Dad's Dad, we flushed some turkeys one fall. We sat together and I said, "I'll call for you, Pop." We sat there and hadn't been there not quite even an hour and here come this turkey. We were kind of right along a creek and the creek is pretty wide. I thought it was like a big heron crane because there are cranes all up and down the creeks, catching the fish. All I could see was this big bird. It had its wings set and it was just sailing right down the creek and it was coming and it almost lit (landed) right there on us. We weren't expecting it because it just flew in there too so my grandfather didn't even have his gun ready. It all worked out, the turkey kind of turned around and my grandfather was able to shoot. That was just a real exciting moment. It's just beautiful seeing that bird come through the air and then

being able to capitalize on hit/harvest it with your grandfather.... I was calling it; I was the reason it came and he was able to do the shooting. That was just a really great moment. My Dad another good hunting companion of ours, were actually hunting together and my Dad was calling, on this same trip. They weren't able to get a turkey so, it's like the youngun and the grandfather were able to out-do the [Dad]. (Bob)

For Bob, both of whose grandfathers also hunt, these experiences serve as a means to connect him with other members of his family in a meaningful location, the family farm. Like Gene's earlier description of his deer being given to him for Christmas, Bob's example shows the deep connections around hunting that exist among families of transcendentals.

Masculinity

Transcendentals are sentimental about their equipment, romanticize hunting, show pride in their family experiences, and stand in awe at the beauty of nature; taken together, these displays might be considered the antithesis of traditional ideas about masculinity. The traditional notions of feminine are usually linked to emotion and family. Yet within the context of hunting, these men negotiate different meanings of masculinity which are deeply emotional and firmly committed to family. Unlike other groups (e.g., the traditionalists and pragmatists), masculinity is not the balance between competition against men versus solidarity with men. Instead, these men are deeply woven into the social fabric of different generations of hunters, warmly ensconced between the generations and comfortable in their own skin. They possess self-confidence; they know who they are and they have an unquestioned idea that masculinity is deeply intertwined with being part of a larger community and connection to the nature around them.

Previous consumer research in masculinity fails to capture the distinctly non-machismo nature of transcendentalist hunters, who lack the conformist and submissive qualities of Holt and Thompson's (2004) *breadwinner* myth without displaying the rebellion of their *rebels* or *men of action* myths. Similarly, Kiesling's (2005) hegemonic masculinity's conflicting discourses between dominance and male solidarity does not capture the transcendental hunters. The manner of this group of hunters is perhaps best explained in Schouten and McAlexander's "hard core" Harley-Davidson riders—the bikers' lack of self-consciousness is similar to the cool awareness displayed by transcendental hunters—but without the underlying explicit demonstrations of machismo by Harley-Davidson riders. I suggest that transcendentals represent members of a category of masculinity that affirms emotional bonds to family and seeks to emotionally connect to nature.

Transcendental hunters use their primary socialization and resulting long hunting experience to achieve a balance between stereotypically feminine characteristics and a stereotypically masculine activity of hunting and killing with other men. In this way, their social connections with other men are not at risk by the expression of "feminine" displays but rather are expressed as a relaxed camaraderie among other male hunters more in line with the conceptualization of hunters as elite sportsmen (Smalley 2005).

Chapter 10

Contributions, Limitations, and Future Directions

Introduction

This dissertation describes the results of an ethnographic study of deer hunters in the rural south. The data gathered consist of in-depth interviews with hunters, participant observation of a hunting organization, and field notes from direct, first-hand participation in the activity of hunting. In this chapter, I highlight the substantive and theoretical contributions, the limitations, and suggest opportunities for future research.

The Making of a Hunter

The traditional and dominant view of consumer socialization is described by Roedder John (1999) and is based on a Piagetian (1963) framework in which children rise through progressive age-related stages of development. Given that hunting is an activity that is undertaken in families among multiple generations of typically male hunters, hunting serves as an ideal site to examine the nature of consumer socialization and the role of intergenerational experiences in consumption. Among the hunters in the study, I found two paths in their socialization into the activity of hunting—primary and secondary socialization—depending on the time in their life when they learned to hunt.

Primary socialized hunters learned to hunt in the context of their family of origin, with their father or an adult male relative serving as mentor. Their first hunting-related experience included watching their father return from a hunting trip, interacting with their father and his fellow hunters, or participating in the life and workings of a hunting camp. As their interest in hunting developed, their activities and role in the hunt expanded. An

alternative path to socialization in hunting involves learning to hunt later in life. These secondary socialized hunters went through a similar progression, but without the strong connection between their development as a hunter and their development as a young man.

Primary socialized hunters grow up in families where an important role male model hunts. Their youth is surrounded by activities embedded in the annual routine of a hunter: preseason scouting, sighting in the weapon, and eating wild game. These activities encompass what is the first stage in the life of a primary hunter—that of the pre-hunter. As they begin to show an interest in hunting, pre-hunters accompany their mentor during their first hunting trip. This hunting trip serves as an early rite of passage in which they work on and develop skills such as walking quietly in the woods and remaining still so as not to scare game. As the pre-hunter progresses and develops more experience, he will often begin carrying an unloaded firearm and must demonstrate safe gun handling skills. At this time, the pre-hunter is usually given his first gun, typically a small caliber rifle or small gauge shotgun, with which he may practice his shooting skill and may begin some individual small game hunting activities. The first gun has significance in the life of a primary hunter not only as a tool with which to accomplish a goal, but also as a sign of parental trust and a degree of personal autonomy.

Eventually the pre-hunter proves himself and gains the privilege of carrying a loaded gun during the hunt and now has the ability to kill. This rite of passage moves him into the stage of neophyte hunter. At this stage, modest gains in accuracy and marksmanship occur in conjunction with development of hunting skills such as reading animal sign and tracking game. With the aid of his mentor, he then achieves the rite of the first significant kill. The first kill of large game such as deer often evokes a visceral

reaction among neophyte hunters as they experience first hand the taking of a life and the experience of field dressing a recently killed animal. This event is characterized by ambivalence in the new hunter as he balances the thrill of achieving the rite of passage with the reality of killing an animal.

The next phase of the hunter's development is the apprentice phase and is signaled by his increased agency in the hunting process. As the hunter strives for increased autonomy, he expands the boundaries, both geographic and social, that were in place as a result of hunting with his father or mentor. For instance, he begins to hunt with partners of similar status and to take a larger role in planning and leading the hunting trip. Traditionally viewed masculine values of competition between his hunting partners and himself come into play. He typically is using a high powered rifle or compound bow of his own. His first unsupervised hunt is a significant rite of passage, as this represents the apprentice putting his skills into practice. Hunters also begin to branch out in the technology used, sometimes beginning to hunt with bows or muzzle loader ("black powder") rifles or to seek new game.

The primary socialized hunter becomes a competent hunter as he further develops his skill level and his adherence to hunting values. The key criterion for determining if a hunter has reached competence is the loss of need to engage in the challenge and bravado of the apprentice hunter. Instead, he confidently accepts his place in the hunting community and continues to challenge himself (rather than others). At the beginning of this final stage, the hunter begins to converge toward one or more hunting styles. For instance, he begins to become either a social hunter, for whom the experience of others plays a significant role in the hunt, or a solitary hunter, who prefers to hunt by himself.

Like the apprentice hunter, he too continues to increase his skill levels and frequently chooses new technologies or game.

While the hunters studied seemed to express some widely-shared values, one consequence of studying the stages of development of hunters was the discovery that values contained different meanings at different stages of hunter socialization. While all hunters valued success, for instance, neophyte hunters saw success as the killing of an animal, while apprentice hunters saw success as a clean kill with a minimum of animal suffering, and competent hunters saw success in the broader terms of “fair chase” or accomplishing the kill with a sense of fairness toward the game.

Important to primary hunters in their socialization toward the activity were rites of passage that served to mark progression to higher levels of status. While these rites of passage exist for all hunters (and in the socialization of many activities), rites among primary socialized hunters were interwoven into their development as children and, later, into adulthood. For example, while the first kill is important to any new hunter, to the primary hunter the first kill is celebrated in the context of the family (often as a meal where the game is eaten by the family) and is part of the narrative of becoming a man.

Secondary socialization occurs when a hunter begins hunting later in life in a context other than the nuclear family. In the study, this typically occurred when a friend or coworker served as a mentor into the activity. The main difference between primary and secondary socialized hunters is the linkage that primary hunters experience between their socialization as hunters and their socialization as people. As such, the rites of passage they experience in hunting are also “life” rites of passage and the development of masculinity within the hunting context carries over to their everyday experience of life.

Hence, while similar rites of passage are achieved by primary and secondary socialized hunters, secondary hunters achieve them without the rich and deep meaning imbued in the young child in his socialization into the community of male hunters.

The experiences detailed here are more consistent with a Vygotskian socio-cultural approach to socialization (Vygotsky 1978). Rather than a Piagetian perspective that places development before learning, here learning leads development and the child grows into the social life around him. Mentors provided the youths with opportunities to challenge and develop beyond their current physical and social skills. The continually unfolding process of hunting provides various zones of proximal development in which the child grows with the help of the mentor. Success, patience, and stewardship are first experienced on an interpersonal domain and only later internalized as mental constructs. As the youths gain in experience they renegotiate and evolve new meanings for these values across the lived experience of the hunt.

The Socio-Cultural Landscape of the Hunting Community

Hunters in the competent stage can be categorized by two factors that influence their role in the hunting community. The first relates to the mediating role of equipment in the hunting process and arises out of meanings that their equipment plays in their constructions of their “extended self” (Belk 1988). Their equipment meanings vary on a continuum between meanings that are intrinsic to the equipment (e.g., accuracy, technical aspects) and meanings that are extrinsic to the equipment (e.g., personal history, nostalgia). Therefore, a gun that was inherited from a close family member would

possess extrinsic meanings while a gun that was prized for its accuracy would possess intrinsic meanings.

The second factor relates to the approach to the hunt, which varied from a focus on the experience of the hunt (a process orientation) to a focus on the final kill (an ends orientation). A hunter who primarily enjoyed the natural beauty of the outdoors or the social relationships gained while hunting would be an example of the former, while a hunter who was primarily motivated by killing game would exemplify the latter.

Crossing these two factors, five clusters of hunters emerged. Each of the groups of hunters formed a unique set of equipment relationships, a distinct approach to the hunt, values, and a set of social relationships with other community members that define their sense and expression of masculinity. The first cluster, traditionalist hunters, tend to value the extrinsic meanings of the equipment and focus on the end result of the hunt. While personal equipment meanings might prevail for the traditionalist, however, he would not let these meanings override the utility of the equipment in taking game. Due to this orientation toward taking game, skill with the equipment is also important. Important values for the traditionalist involve family tradition and managing the game population (for future hunting success), while social connections are based on maintaining a few close friends with whom to hunt. Masculinity, for the traditionalist hunter, is constructed around notions of being a good provider, such as being able to bring home meat to the family.

Pragmatist hunters are participating for one primary reason—the kill. Their equipment relationships are not as intense as the gearheads, but they do value function over nostalgic meanings. Pragmatist hunters value utilitarian goals in accomplishing their

task and seek to find the balance of often minimal equipment and acceptable skills to support these goals, which are demonstrated through public displays of success. They tend to value social connections for the aid fellow hunters might provide in reaching their goal of a successful kill. As opposed to traditionalists who construct masculinity around providing for the family and tend to affirm male solidarity among a few important hunters, pragmatists present a construction of masculinity based more on competition and rank in a social hierarchy of many hunters.

If pragmatists are thrilled by the kill, gearheads are enamored with the equipment. Technical attributes and high degrees of accuracy are valued by this group. They create an assortment of equipment that ranges from the best and latest equipment, to tried and true equipment, and will even customize their equipment to yield the best performance. Thus, they tend to value the outcome of the hunt since it allows them to test and demonstrate the efficacy of their equipment. Masculinity, for this group, is expressed by having the best tool for the job and the skill to use it. They tend to view masculinity in a rigid hierarchy in which expertise is the measure of all men; yet, they forge male solidarity by freely sharing of this expertise.

The last two clusters, experientials and transcendentals, focus more on the hunting process. Experientials still value performance-based aspects of their weapons and the skills necessary for successfully hunting. But experientials value their time in nature, and their social engagement with other hunters is central to a rewarding hunt. While experientials do construct masculinity in a hierarchical fashion based on technical competence, they privilege the male camaraderie of the hunt.

Finally, transcendentalists value the natural beauty and wonder of nature and the social process of the hunt. Thus, a hunt may be successful independent of taking game if they experience the enchantment of nature. Their deep socialization into the hunting culture makes it difficult for transcendentalists to even imagine a life without hunting. Transcendentalists' equipment relationships are strong and based on nostalgia; their guns have a rich family history from the use by and value of previous generations. Transcendentalists construct masculinity in ways that encompass the traditionally feminine characteristics of seeking communion with nature, as well as emotional and sentimental attachments to people and possessions.

To summarize, hunting is a site in which hunters weave rich and varied narratives of masculinity around their equipment relationships and their approach to the hunt. In exploring these narratives, we are able to see the different meanings that hunting possesses for the various clusters of hunters. Despite previous consumer research literature that defines masculinity in relation to Protestant-related views of male expectations or reactions to authority (Holt and Thompson 2004) or as the machismo stereotype (Belk and Costa 1998, Schouten and McAlexander 1995), I found that masculinity as constructed by clusters of hunters to be more nuanced, containing social and familial elements, and sometimes containing qualities such as beauty and love of nature. Thus, hunting provides a rich source of materials that can be flexibly adapted to forge different meanings of masculinity.

Other consumption communities might be similarly dimensionalized--such as musicians—a community with which I have some familiarity. Like hunters, musicians balance skill and equipment. Musicians might value equipment's extrinsic factors such as

a personal connection with an instrument (e.g., positive memories evoked from an inspired performance) or a link to a classic era (e.g., a 1960s Fender Stratocaster guitar draws a substantial premium), or intrinsic meanings resulting from technological features. While some musicians may focus on perfecting their technique or giving a flawless performance, other musicians may play merely for the pleasure of making music.

Brand Communities

In this study of the hunting subculture, I found groups of individuals that constructed their identities in the shared experience of hunting. In addition to extending conceptualizations of masculinity in consumer research, this study has implications for the understanding of brand communities (Muñiz and O'Guinn 2001) and subcultures of consumption (Schouten and McAlexander 1995). Both of these models of community focus on the shared experience of consumers that surrounds a consumption activity. One may view the hunting community as a subculture of consumption because at its essence, hunting is an activity that both consumes products (to greater and lesser degrees) and is structured around the activity of hunting, which produces food for consumption. In addition, these past conceptualizations have also explored the process of how an outsider becomes an insider.

However, earlier conceptualizations of consumption communities share two characteristics that do not occur with hunting. First, activities such as sky diving, river rafting, and Harley-Davidson riding are activities entered into later in life and are not intertwined with key rites of passage marking the movement from childhood to adulthood. Many of Schouten and McAlexander's Harley-Davidson riders, for example,

began riding motorcycles after achieving success in their careers. This difference is, of course, an empirical and not a conceptual one. Clearly, someone can be raised within a family of Harley-Davidson riders and experience a long and extended socialization. But, to date, this type of socialization is not studied in the consumer research area. Within the rural south, hunting has a widespread and long history and, thus, we have large groups of hunters who begin this activity during their early childhood and many follow it throughout their life. As a result, the child develops into the competent hunter as he develops into adulthood. The rites of passage in this consumption community are tied to crucial life events and have a powerful influence on the youths.

Second, the activities studied have a generally high degree of market mediation. For example, full membership in the Saab brand community is not achieved without the ownership of a Saab automobile. Hunting, on the other hand, exhibits a diverse range of market mediation, from hunting with primitive weapons (e.g., recurved bows and black powder weapons and one informant even described hunting rabbits using a sharpened stick) to hunting with the latest technology (as demonstrated by gearheads). The hunter can also use public hunting lands or hunt on friends' lands, which decreases the amount of market mediation.

In Figure 4, I depict a selection of consumption communities based on two dimensions that distinguish the types of communities found in the hunting subculture from other consumption communities found in the consumer research literature: the degree of market mediation found in the activity and depth of socialization of the activity. Market mediation encompasses aspects such as a requirement of ownership (exhibited by Harley-Davidson and Saab brand community members) and required participation

through an intermediary (such as the requirement among skydivers to use a United States Parachuting Association certified trainer or a pilot). Depth of socialization in the activity varies from relatively short (e.g., the time it might take to attend a rave) to moderate (e.g., the experience required to skydive) to quite long (e.g., the 15 years of training to be a hunter).

As can be seen from Figure 4, activities such as hunting occupy a relatively unexplored place in the brand community literature. Unlike activities that require the purchase of a brand or use of an intermediary, hunting may be relatively unmediated by the market (e.g., the use of a handmade bow). As gearheads demonstrate, however, hunting may be highly mediated by the market, although even gearheads participate outside of the market when they customize equipment themselves. Similarly, unlike short duration brand communities that simply require purchase of a product for membership, hunting may encompass multiple generations in families and socialization that takes over a decade.

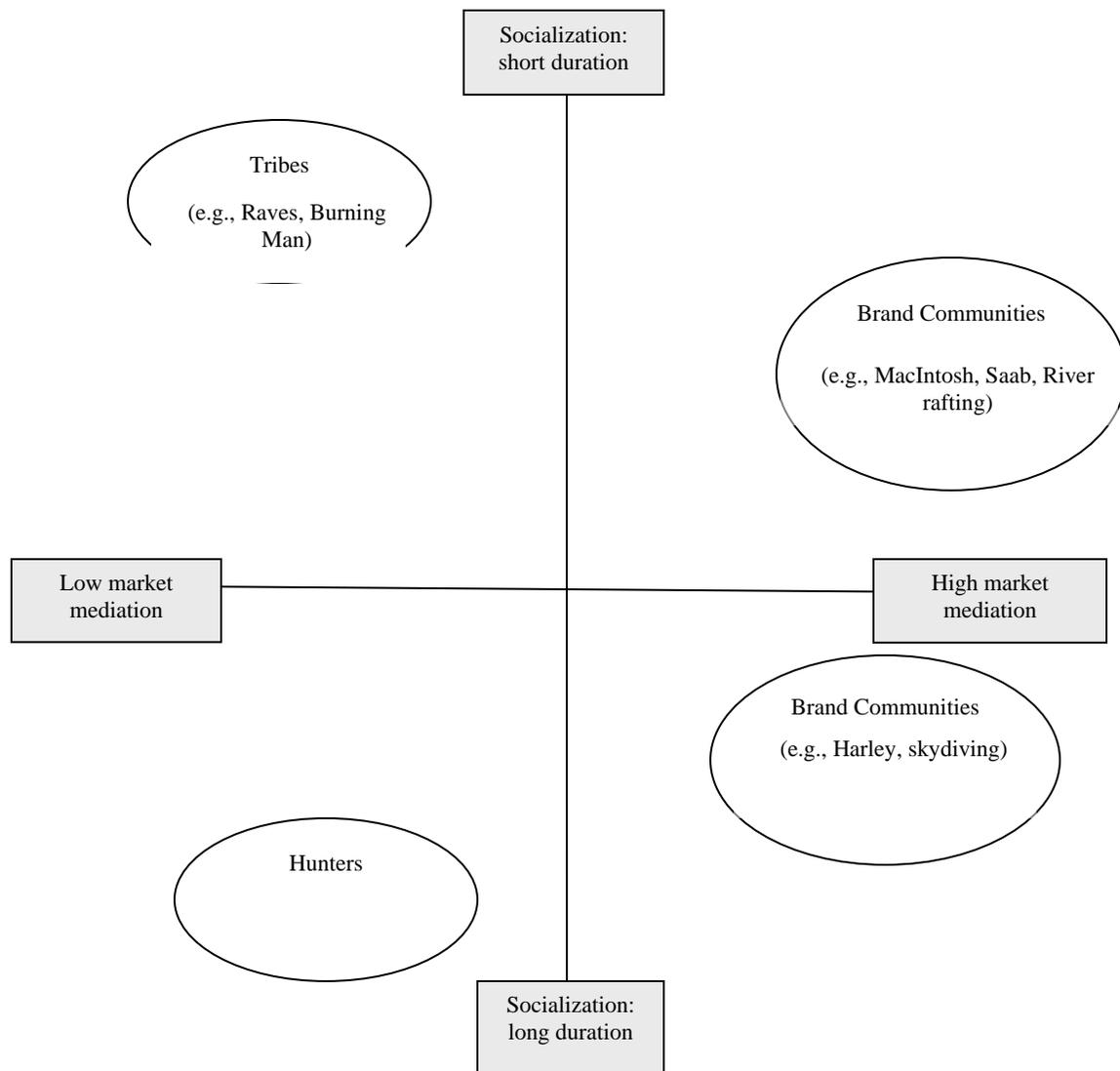


Figure 4: A Typology to Organize Consumption Communities

Public Policy Issues

Hunting is an activity that evokes strong feelings and opinions in two primary areas: gun rights and hunting rights. Both issues have highly polarized followers. The National Rifle Association (NRA), the largest group of gun owners in the United States with approximately four million members (www.nra.org), aggressively supports hunting

rights. Groups that oppose hunting, including People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), stress the suffering of animals and suggest that hunting is not a necessary activity in our current society.

Thus, hunting is an activity at the heart of the battle between activists for hunters' rights and activists for animal rights. These groups are so polarized that little common ground exists even for dialogue. Given that the goal of this study was to examine hunting as a social activity and that the selection of informants was based on their hunting experiences, it was not anticipated that it would generate a discussion that encompassed both of these viewpoints.

The study findings suggest that the stereotype of the rural hunter, as is presented by animal rights and anti hunting groups, fails to capture the subtle nuances in meaning constructed by the various clusters of hunters. While similarities exist at a basic level (all hunters attempt to kill animals), individual reasons for doing so differ to the extent that a single characterization of the hunter is inappropriate. I found, for example, that gearheads—focused on use of equipment—have substantially different values than do transcendentals, who are focused on the process of the hunt.

Hunting is an important policy issue because of the amount of money spent in the market by hunters and because of the strong polarization of both sides of this debate. The understanding of the depth of the socialization process in which hunters move from boys to men and of the different meanings constructed by hunters provided by this study suggests that this debate is likely to continue to be highly charged in the future. However, interested parties from either camp are likely to be more effective if they move away

from polarizing stereotypes and grasp the diverse meanings that underlie the activity of hunting.

Limitations and Future Research

The study did have a number of limitations. First, while the number of informants interviewed was quite large in comparison to similar studies, it remains possible that one or more types of hunters were not interviewed. For example, I did not interview children under 18. This group might have been informative given the emergence of a more Vygotskian explanation for child (and hunter) development. It was necessary, instead, to use the memories generated by lifelong hunters of their childhood years, and this approach suffers from the possible difficulties of informants' ability to remember such experiences. However, hunters were able to recall quite vivid and detailed memories from decades ago. Given the important role played by hunting in the lives of these hunters, this limitation was probably not a serious one.

I would also have liked to interview hunters who depend on hunting as a major supplement to their diet. While most of the hunters interviewed supplemented their diet through hunting, and some of these held jobs that might be deemed lower income, access to those hunters who depend highly on hunting for a portion of their diet was not achieved. It is possible that, given social supports that exist in this country, this group represents a very small portion of hunters in the United States.

At the suggestion of a committee member, I changed my selection process to include two female hunters. It is unlikely, however, that interviewing two female hunters even begins to capture the complex meanings of hunting for women. Given that over two

dozen interviews were needed to forge a typology of meanings, considerably greater depth is needed to explore the role of gender in either the activity of hunting or the development of hunting in families with female children, although it did provide an interesting counterpoint.

This study has provided insight into future research projects. First, the findings resulting from the expanded conceptualization of brand communities suggest a need for both refining our understanding of communities that encompass families over generations of consumers and for identifying other activities with the same historic and nostalgic importance to individuals. While research on family decision making is gaining increased exposure in consumer research, research on intergenerational consumption experiences is under-examined (for an exception see Moore and Wilkie 2005).

One future study could specifically examine female hunters. With the findings of the current study focusing on the expression of masculinity in the hunting community, it would be interesting to explore the constructions of gender in conjunction with or in opposition to this dominant male expression. Specifically, how do females see themselves in this traditionally male-stereotyped and male-dominated community? Is the socialization process the same for groups with minority status? What is the role of other family members (e.g., female role models) in this socialization process? Such a study would allow comparison of findings with the current study to explore differences in the construction of gender.

Another study might focus on socialization of children who are primary socialized into hunting (or some other activity) but who do not become interested. Do other activities substitute, or is it possible that this results from rebellion or errors or mistakes

in the socialization process? For instance, could it be the “zone of proximal development” (Vygotsky 1978) was inappropriately set so that it was not possible for the child to reach above his current abilities?

Last, policy implications of the polarized populace surrounding hunting or gun issues could be further explored. The degree of separation and the pitched voices of the extreme minorities (e.g., NRA and PETA) likely result in the more ambivalent voice of the majority opinion being least represented in public thought. In the debate over concealed carry, for example, both sides share the desire for personal safety while pursuing different routes for achieving this goal.

In summary, the current study presents findings in the areas of consumer socialization and the construction of masculinity among hunters within the context of the hunting community. It also suggests an extension of our conceptualization of brand communities that works toward inclusion of lifelong and even intergenerational activities. I have detailed the stages of socialization involved in the making of the hunter as an individual, and have described the different types of hunters that emerged as competent hunters based on their equipment meanings and on their orientation to the hunt. And I have suggested potential fruitful areas for future research.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Protocol

Grand Tour Questions and Rapport Building

I am currently finishing my graduate studies at Virginia Tech and I am doing this study to complete my degree. I am interested in all aspects of hunting. Basically, I want to find out about the history of hunting in your life. While I have a few specific questions that I would like to ask you, I basically want to hear about your hunting life story.

First, could you tell me a little about yourself? (Probes: How long have you lived in the area, your job, your interests, and your family?)

Hunting Narratives

How often do you hunt in a year? How long have you been hunting?

Beginning

Tell me about the first time you went hunting.

Tell me about your first gun.

Tell me about your first kill.

(Possible probes: How old were you? How did you feel? Who went with you?)

The Highlights

Tell me about the best hunting experience you have ever had? The worst?

(Probes: What makes a good or bad hunt?)

Now

Tell me about your last hunt.

Does the hunt have a regular sequence,...a beginning, a middle, and an end?

(Probes: Are there things that you do on every hunt?)

Object/People Relationships

What are the most important things that you have to have for a good hunt?
What is nice to have but not necessary?
What things get in the way of a good hunt?

Gun

Tell me about your gun/guns? (or weapon if bow hunting)
Describe the feelings you have when you are with/without your gun
Best/worst gun you have ever had?
How would you feel if your favorite gun was lost or stolen?
What gun would you like to have?

Experience/Skills

What is sporting and unsporting behavior?
What are some of the key differences between a beginner and an expert?
How would you describe your experience/skill level?
Are you doing anything to improve your skill?
Are there people who say they are hunters but perhaps are not genuine hunters?
(What makes a genuine hunter?)

Gun Community

What makes a hunter different from other sportsmen? Other hobbies?
Do you prefer to hunt alone or with others?
Who do you love to hunt with? Who do you hate to hunt with?
Who hunts in your family?
How does your family feel about your hunting?
Given you have children (or if you have children), will you initiate them into hunting? Tell me about that.

Various Topics

I'm going to read a list of topics, please tell me what comes to mind when I say each of the following:

A good hunting spot

A bad hunting spot

Hunter safety?

Remington (and we could list other key brands)

Orvis?

Gun mags/books

Gun clubs

NRA

Gun shopping

Closing

What would you do if you could no longer hunt?

Is there anything that I have left out that I should know about hunting?

APPENDIX B

Table of Informants

#	Pseudo-nym	Age	Occupation	Socialization	Stage	Game	Primary Technology
1	Al	20s	Student	Secondary	Apprentice	Duck	Shotgun
2	Bob	20s	Student	Primary	Competent	Deer	Rifle, bow
3	Charlie	20s	Student	Secondary	Apprentice	Deer, squirrel	Rifle, bow
4	Dave	57	Professor	Primary	Competent	Bird	Shotgun
5	Ed	20s	Student	Primary	Competent	Deer	Rifle
6	Fred	20s	Student	Primary	Competent	Deer, dove	Bow, shotgun
7	Gene	20s	Student	Primary	Competent	Deer	Rifle
8	Hal	50s	Shooting Consultant	Secondary	Competent	Bird	Shotgun
9	Ian	20s	Student	Primary	Competent	Deer	Rifle
10	Jack	20s	Student	Secondary	Competent	Deer, squirrel	Rifle
11	Keith	53	Lab Manager	Primary	Competent	Deer	Rifle
12	Larry	38	Grad Student	Secondary	Neophyte	Caribou	Rifle
13	Mike	35	Research Associate	Primary	Neophyte	Squirrel	Rifle
14	Nick	45	Instructor	Secondary	Competent	Deer	Rifle
15	Oscar	57	CPA	Primary	Competent	Deer	Rifle
16	Patricia	20s	Cleaning	Secondary	Apprentice	Deer	Shotgun
17	Quentin	77	Business owner	Primary	Competent	Pheasant, Grouse	Shotgun
18	Rob	60s	Retired military	Secondary	Competent	Small game	Rifle
19	Sam	40	Academic Dean	Primary	Competent	Deer	Rifle, bow
20	Tom	37	Professor	Primary	Competent	Grouse, deer	Bow, rifle
21	Ulf	38	Engineer	Primary	Apprentice	Deer	Rifle
22	Vic	40s	Wildlife Manager	N/A	N/A	Non-hunter	N/A
23	Walt	30s	Business owner	Primary	Competent	Deer	Shotgun
24	Xavier	33	Entrepreneur	Primary	Competent	Bird, Deer	Shotgun
25	Yan	59	Computer Tech	Secondary	Competent	Deer	Rifle
26	Zack	~40	Landscaper	Primary	Competent	Deer, turkey	Bow
27	Andrew	60s	Retired	Secondary	Competent	Deer	Bow
28	Bill	34	Agricultural extension agent	Secondary	Competent	Deer	Rifle
29	Carla	30+	surveyor	Secondary	Competent	Deer, turkey	Rifle, shotgun
30	Dan	50s	Government contractor	Primary	Competent	Deer	Gun

APPENDIX C

An Excerpt from Field Notes

Field notes—[club] meeting (February 19, 2004)

... I arrived to the clubhouse for the club just before 7:30 for the meeting. There was a table of 5 older men at the back of the room smoking cigarettes and playing poker for money. In fact, as I walked into the room I had the overwhelming smell of cigarette smoke.

I sat down after meeting and shaking hands with a number of people. In all, there were 15 people in attendance, mostly men (all white) in their fifties and sixties. There were 2 or 3 who were younger, maybe in their 30s, and myself and two other members of the [shooting] team who were also joining the club. ...

The meeting room is what appears to be the living room of an old house. I was told later that the land the club owns was donated some years ago by a local man, whose son or grandson still lives on a few hundred acres above the club's property. At the front of the room, raised a step above the rest of the room, sits a long table, behind which two people sat. One was the current president, and one (whose official role I did not learn) actually officiated the meeting. Robert's Rules (call to order, old business, new business, etc.) were followed, and in the old business, there was a long discussion about an upcoming event called "Jakes Day" which was oriented toward youth hunters and fishers. A gentleman from another organization [the National Wild Turkey Federation] that was renting out the [club] property was sitting next to me, and there was extensive discussion of arrangements (stocking of the trout pond, volunteers for the shooting events, etc.). A number of other events were discussed at the meeting, including an open house fair that was done for the first time last year. I noticed during the meeting that hunting related events were frequently considered (the opening of turkey season was specifically mentioned a number of times) in determining schedules for various activities.

... After the meeting closed, an hour or so after it had started, I spoke for some time with Eddie, a motorcycle mechanic in Roanoke. He said that he is a good friend of the original owner of the land (actually his son, who still has a right of way to his property, behind the gun club's property). Eddie said that he often goes to [the club] during Mondays when there is no one else there, and also hunts with ... (the previous owner's son) on his land behind the gun club.

APPENDIX D

Hunting Activities of the Author

Member of a Shooting Team

I was a regular member and participant on a shooting team for three and a half years beginning in 2002. This organization has weekly meetings and regular seminars on shooting techniques and safety, regularly practiced marksmanship, and competes in an annual national shooting competition. I was also a member of a state shooting organization from 2003 to 2005. In this context, I competed in a state shooting competition in 2004.

Exploring the technology

Across the last four years, I have attended approximately 15 gun shows (e.g., the Salem Gun Show, etc.). I have researched, purchased, and/or sold 12 guns (brand names included (Taurus, Beretta, Glock, Ruger, Browning, and Remington, among others). I have conducted informal interviews with 6 retailers about their product lines and customers.

Identification of key informants and exploration of the hunting domain

In January, 2004, I had informal interviews and discussions with three hunters who later became key informants. We explored the issues that were important to hunters and explored potential directions of the study. As the direction of gender emerged during the Spring of 2005, I gained access to two more key informants in the hunting/shooting community who led me to access with 2 female hunters.

Understanding Community Hunting Issues

Beginning in 2003, I spent two years as a member and participant of a local hunting chapter of a national organization that was concerned with issues such as hunting, fishing, and conservation club. This organization maintained land with fishing ponds and rifle and shotgun ranges. Meetings related to on which members fished, met each month, and did (what?). I also participated as a volunteer in JAKES day and participated as a volunteer and a fundraiser in various fundraising events.

I attended and did informal interviews at the 2004 Dixie Deer Classic (Raleigh, NC).

Gaining Qualifications as a Hunter

I participated and passed a 3-day hunter-safety course.

I received my first hunting license on April 18, 2004.

Hunting Experiences

I purchased my first hunting gun (Spring 2001)

My first hunt was with Charlie (informant 3) where we hunted for turkey (4/22/04).

I squirrel hunted with Charlie at the Boy Scout Preserve in Pulaski (Fall 2004)

I squirrel hunted with Charlie and witnessed a kill for the first time (9/6/2004)

I went on my first group squirrel hunt with Jack (informant 10), Larry (informant 12), and another hunter (9/18/2004).

I went duck hunting with Al (informant 1) and Gene (informant 7), first duck stamp (Federal license to hunt migratory waterfowl) (Winter 2005).

I made two solitary turkey hunting and scouting trips (Spring 2005).

Supplemental Photographic documentation

Dixie Deer Classic—28 photos

Patricia (informant 16)—photo with her first deer

Zack (informant 26)—photos of his displayed deer heads—12 photos

Al (informant 1)—photos of Al's hunting gathering

Charlie (informant 3)—photos of squirrel kill and cleaning

Photo from 9/18/04 trip

APPENDIX E

Reflexive Account of Hunting History

Childhood and Background

I grew up the oldest child of a university professor who did not hunt. Although he was in the army just after the Korean War, he did not see active duty and didn't seem to have had any firearms training. The one time I have shot with him, shooting a shotgun at a practice range about a year ago, caused me to think that he was uncomfortable around guns. His current stance is anti-gun (although I have not heard him say anything about hunting itself), which he has supported by joining the NRA as an "infiltrator," discussing in his classes and other places the harmful role of guns, and posting a "no guns" sticker on his office door. I believe that he has developed this stance recently, perhaps the result of his discomfort with guns more than his ideological opposition. I did not hunt as a child nor have I hunted as an adult.

The only family involvement I have had with hunting is a distant relationship with an Uncle who bow hunts in Southern Ohio. I have heard from family members that he hunts, but have not talked with him in depth about it. One interesting experience, maybe kind of a test, was when I ate Thanksgiving dinner at his house a few years ago I was told (after I started) that I was eating venison. This was followed by joking that it wasn't really, they were just kidding. I do think it was a way to determine how I would react—would I be squeamish about what I was eating. (I wonder if this is a hunting value that hunters have to be less concerned or less picky about what they are eating or perhaps squeamishness is how they spot an outsider.) This seems different than having a preference for one type of animal over another.

Hunting

Within the last twenty years or so, I have lived (on and off) in an area where hunting is popular. My parents lived for some of that time in a small development outside of town with ten acres of land on which they posted "no hunting" signs. The deer would walk across their yard within view of the house, and it was always an occasion where activity within the house stopped and everyone was quiet as we watched them gracefully walk past. The development had "no hunting" signs as well, and I recall a time when we came in to the development one evening and the sheriff was arresting 2 or 3 hunters for hunting on the property. I don't think I had (or have) strong feelings about this event, although I do have the vague feeling that they got what was coming to them.

With my involvement on a target shooting team, I have interacted quite a bit with hunters. It is not unusual for a team member to talk about his (usually male—but I do recall an instance where a female team member talked about shooting her first duck the weekend before) recent hunting experiences or his future plans. These are frequently introduced by a comment about eating venison or other comment that invites question about the activity. As I've told team members (and other friends and acquaintances)

about my dissertation topic, it is quite common to hear them say that they know someone that I should talk with. These have ranged from game preserve (for pay) hunters to descriptions of “mysterious” happenings (I think it is drinking, mostly) at hunting camps, to offers to go hunting, to description of a friend’s boss who has 800 acres of land and lets (perhaps for pay) people hunt on it.

Shooting/Guns

I remember an early episode, probably at day camp as a child (8-10 years old?) where I shot a 22 rifle at a target. This was done along with archery, and I don’t have much sense of it being a positive or negative thing, just that I did it. From that age until I was about 28, I don’t recall any interactions with guns. I think my feelings were best described as ambivalent. I lived with a number of roommates, none of whom hunted or had guns, as I recall. One apartment mate had two handguns, and I recall him showing them to me once. I wasn’t all that interested, and might have been a little intimidated by them because I didn’t know how to operate them. At one point, he advertised one of them in the newspaper for sale—a 44 magnum. As we sat in the living room, watching out the front window of the apartment, waiting for his potential customer to arrive, he noted that the guy walking up to the door looked familiar, and that he thought he was the same guy that he (my apartment mate) had sold a truck to before. Seems there had been some unresolved problem with the truck, so it seemed particularly ironic to me that he was now selling him a gun.

After a semester in the doctoral program (coincidence?), I began to develop an interest in buying a gun. I would describe it as almost a fascination. Part of my motivation was to get over the fear I had about guns. My awkwardness at handling something I didn’t know anything about was a concern to me, so I collected information online, bought gun magazines targeted to handgun owners, and spent a great deal of time looking through a particular annual issue of a magazine that listed, with pictures, features, and MSRPs, all of the guns that were produced that year. I would look at a certain gun, look at others that were similar, and turn page to page and compare attributes. This is really the point I consider my interest in guns increasing, around 1999. During the summer of 1999, I lived in a commune with my (now ex-) wife and son. I decided at that point that I wanted to go through the experience of purchasing a handgun, and used my buyer’s guide to decide on a certain model. The one I chose was a 9mm, a fairly new model of a well known imported (from South America, hence less costly than Europe) brand. I chose this after looking at comments on newsgroups such as rec.guns, and with the intention of carrying it (legally) concealed. It was, as a result, smaller and lighter than many others available. It also had a double action trigger so that each pull of the trigger was of equal strength. This was emphasized in the information sources I was using as desirable for concealed carry. As I was living in Floyd County at the time, I chose a retailer in Roanoke and asked the procedure for buying a particular gun that he didn’t have in stock. He quoted a price, and I ordered it that day. It took about a week to come in, and I drove in to pick it up. I had been told to bring two forms of identification with the same address on them, and that the criminal check would be done when I picked it up. I filled out two forms with basic information (name and address, and a list of

questions such as did I have a criminal record or did I use drugs—no to both) and he called the hotline to get the approval. As it turns out, it is not always an immediate process, and I was told that if there was no response in three business days, then I could pick up the gun. So this took two trips.

I picked up the gun and bought a box of ammunition for it at the same time. So my next task was to go try it out. I walked probably a mile in the woods to an area distant from the center of the commune, over a hill and (hopefully?) out of earshot of other members. I fired the first time into a stump and was amazed at how loud this was. I believe I used hearing protection the first time, but one time I fired it without to see what it would be like. My ears were ringing for many minutes after that but it was an interesting exhilaration. Also, because this gun was primarily plastic and small and light, and the trigger was hard to pull, it forced my hand up from the recoil. It was relatively painful to shoot it more than a few times because of the recoil.

I have since owned five additional handguns, two shotguns, and a rifle. I have purchased these through a number of different means, including purchasing a gun used in a gun shop, purchasing a gun used through a friend, ordering directly from a wholesaler through a friend who had an FFL, and buying at Wal-Mart. I have also used a variety of means to sell guns, selling online (locally) and selling to friends. I currently own only a competition shotgun.

APPENDIX F

Informed Consent and IRB Protocol

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

Informed Consent for Participants in Research Projects Involving Human Participants

Title of Project: An Ethnographic Investigation of the Hunting Subculture
Investigator: Jon Littlefield

I. PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH/PROJECT

The purpose of this study is to learn about your hunting experiences. Approximately fifty hunters will be interviewed to learn about hunting.

II. PROCEDURES

The research will consist of a taped interview that is expected to last approximately one to two hours. It will take place in your home, or another mutually-agreed upon place. During the interview, your name will not be used, so that I may protect your identity. In the recording and transcript of the recording, as well as in the final report, you will be identified with a pseudonym in order to protect your confidentiality. Additional details will be changed in the final report if necessary to protect your confidentiality (see below).

III. RISKS

Risks to you from participating in this study are small, and relate mainly to people learning about your identity. I have taken steps to minimize these risks that include using false names, keeping recordings and notes locked, and restricting access to materials to those involved in the study.

IV. BENEFITS

This research is expected to help us understand the individual experience of hunting, and the role of hunting in people's lives. This will help business people understand this group of consumers, and will help policy makers to develop policies that more effectively meet the needs of this group. No additional promise or guarantee of benefits has been made to encourage you to participate.

You may contact the researcher at the completion of the study for a summary of the research results.

V. EXTENT OF ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

During the interview, you will not be referred to by name, and in any subsequent analysis and a pseudonym will be used to identify you. Your name or address will not be used in any report. Additionally, if necessary, information that may lead to your identification will be disguised.

All tapes and transcripts will be kept locked under the supervision of the researcher. Access will be limited only to those working on the research project. At the completion of the project, all tapes will be destroyed, and all transcripts will be kept locked under the supervision of the researcher.

VI. COMPENSATION

There is no offer of compensation for participation in this study.

VII. FREEDOM TO WITHDRAW

You are free to withdraw from this study at any time. Additionally, you are free to not answer any questions that you choose.

VIII. APPROVAL OF RESEARCH

This research project has been approved, as required, by the Institutional Review Board for Research Involving Human Participants at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, and by the Department of Educational Research and Evaluation.

IRB Approval Date

Approval Expiration Date

IX. PARTICIPANT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I have the following responsibilities:

- Participation in a interview

X. PARTICIPANT'S PERMISSION

I have read and understand the Informed Consent and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent:

Date

Participant signature

Should I have any questions about this research or its conduct, I may contact:

Jon Littlefield **231-9618/jlittlef@vt.edu**

Investigator Telephone/e-mail

Julie L. Ozanne **231-9727/jozanne@vt.edu**

Faculty Advisor

Telephone/e-mail

David M. Moore

231-4991/moored@vt.edu

Chair, IRB

Telephone/e-mail

Office of Research Compliance

Research & Graduate Studies

Participants will be given a copy (or duplicate original) of the signed Informed Consent.

Protocol to Accompany IRB Request for Expedited Review

Project Title: An Ethnographic Investigation of the Hunting Subculture

Principal Investigator: Jon Littlefield, Department of Marketing

Faculty Advisor: Julie L. Ozanne, Department of Marketing

JUSTIFICATION OF PROJECT

Thirteen million adults hunt in the United States (U.S. Department of the Interior 2001). These hunters are generally middle-aged men who live rural areas (i.e., 68% are between 25 and 54 years of age). Nevertheless, 1.2 million hunters are women, almost a million hunters are 65 or older, and 28% live in MSAs with one million or more people. While the core of hunters may be middle-aged men, hunting is an activity that spans a wide range of people. For example, hunters are diverse economically. While hunting may be popularly associated with lower-income individuals, in fact, 44% of hunters report an income over \$50,000. Hunting related expenditures are also substantial. During 2001, hunters spent more than \$20.6 billion to participate in the sport. The average hunter spent 18 days hunting, and took 15 hunting trips during the year. Yet despite the large number of people who participate in hunting and hunting-related activities, no marketing study directly examines hunting. This study closes this research gap by examining hunters and their consumption activities.

While current day hunting is an activity that is often learned within the nuclear family (Mackey 1976; Stedman and Heberlein 2001) and supported by extensive social networks (Price and Stevens 1998), hunting also has a basis in pre-modern history. Prior to the development of agriculture, hunting and gathering were the primary means of providing food for the family. Current insight into this pre-modern time may be gained by examination of current day hunter-gatherers such as the Hadza of East Africa (Hawkes

1996; Hawkes, O'Connell, and Blurton Jones 2001) or the !Kung from Northwest Botswana and Northeast Namibia (Wiessner 2002), who divide activities by gender and share the proceeds from a successful hunt among groups of families, providing insight into what is perhaps marketing's first exchange process. Mackey (1976) has suggested that our early dependence on hunting affected the bonding between adult males and children, and that this continues to affect us today. This may be a key insight as to the importance of modern hunting as an activity in the context of both family and society.

In summary, this study is important for four primary reasons. First, hunters are a demographically diverse group, encompassing all social classes and income levels. Second, many Americans have strong feelings about hunting and about the use of firearms in general. Few issues evoke the level of emotion or calls for legislation that hunting and other shooting-related activities engender. Third, the activity of hunting is a social one, in which various stakeholders participate in a complex web of interactions. And fourth, hunters are a group that demands and receives attention from policy makers.

Ethnographic methods are to be used in this study for a few important reasons. First, I believe that using interviews with hunters will provide information as to the hunter's consumption patterns and experiences that other methods will not yield. Second, this method is consistent with other studies in consumer research that use ethnographic participant-observation to study consumption experiences. Third, the research itself is exploratory. With the small amount of study to which this activity has been subjected, it is not possible to determine a priori what research domains are important for study.

I expect that study findings will provide insight into the consumption activities of hunters and into the social networks that develop around hunting. Also, public policy

with regard to hunting is an important area for exploration in the consumer research literature.

PROCEDURES

Approximately fifty hunters will be interviewed for the study. Access to this group will result from informal associations I currently have with hunters, and through my membership in a hunting-related outdoor group. No offers of compensation will be provide to participants. Due to the large degree of male participation in the activity, I expect that informants will be mostly male, but females may also be interviewed.

Participants will be interviewed in their homes or at other mutually agreed locations. Each participant will take part in one interview, which will last approximately one to two hours. The interview will request hunting narratives, descriptions of specific hunting experiences, typical hunts, and relationships involved in the hunting process.

RISKS AND BENEFITS

There are no known risks to participating in this study. Potential benefits to the participants include the opportunity to describe their hunting experiences and to more deeply evaluate their participation in the activity. Potential benefits to society include a better understanding of hunting as an ancient activity with modern implications, and to provide information as to the norms and motivations of hunters. These benefits may inform public policy at the State and Federal levels with regard to hunting.

CONFIDENTIALITY/ANONYMITY

During the interview and in any subsequent analysis and reporting, a pseudonym will be used to identify participants, and any information that may lead to identification of participants will be disguised.

All tapes and transcripts will be kept locked under the supervision of the first researcher, who will personally transcribe these interviews. Access will be limited only to those working on the research project. At the completion of the project, all tapes will be destroyed, and all transcripts will be kept locked under the supervision of the first researcher. Audio recording is justified in this study by (1) common practice, and (2) the fact that this is the most effective means of accurately capturing participant discussion. This protects the integrity of the study by ensuring accuracy, and protects the participant by avoiding misquoting.

APPENDIX G

Hunting Themes

ETHOS

display
fair chase
killing
love
management
nature
nostalgia/genuine/true
providing
use what you take
comparison
challenge
patience/luck/success/missed opp

PROCESS

BIG/MACRO/LIFE

first kill
goals
preseason
best hunt
eating game
reading
motivation
ancestral
background
background hunting
first hunt
first gun

Small/micro/daily (the hunt)

hunt process
kill process
kill feelings
skills
location
butchering
buck fever
flow
bow hunting
game habits
instinct
methods

LEGAL/ILLEGAL/ETHICAL

spotlighting
regulations
illegal
legal
accidents
alcohol
safety

STRUCTURE

camaraderie
gender roles
hierarchy
intergenerational
redneck
meat sharing
public relations
rite of passage
ritual
mentor
hunt club

EQUIPMENT

bow
clothing
gun

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EDUCATION

Ph.D. Pamplin College of Business, Virginia Tech (2006)
Major: Marketing

MBA Pamplin College of Business, Virginia Tech (1993)

B.S. Mars Hill College (1985)
Major: Business Administration

DISSERTATION

Title: Subculture of Deer Hunters and the Negotiation of Masculinity: An Ethnographic Investigation of Hunting in the Rural South (Chair: Julie Ozanne)

PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

Littlefield, Jon, and Eloise Coupey (2003), "Materialism and Illegal Enterprise: A Life Stories Analysis," In *Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol. 31, Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research.

Littlefield, Jon (2004), "Resident Autonomy in Mobile Home Communities," Presented at Marketing and Public Policy Conference, May 2004, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Littlefield, Jon, and Eloise Coupey (2004), "Why Do Idealized Images Exhibit their Negative Effects? The Role of Self-concept," Poster presented at Marketing and Public Policy Conference, May 2004, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Iyer, Gopalkrishnan R., Jon M. Shapiro, and Jon Littlefield (2004), "Practitioner Perceptions and Impacts of Culture in International Business: Implications for Academics," Presented at Academy of Marketing Science Conference, May 2004, Vancouver, British Columbia.

Honors:

2004 Doctoral Consortium, College Station, Texas, June 2004.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Philosophy: I love to teach and seek to bring this passion into the classroom. My style of teaching is best described as critical engagement. I demonstrate course concepts by posing problems and ask the students to develop their analytical skills as they wrestle to solve these problems. Relevant examples, drawn from the students' lives and my business experiences help the students visualize and see the significance of these concepts. I have high standards but present the material in a friendly and approachable style.

Courses Taught:

Consumer Behavior	Marketing and the Internet
Marketing Research	Marketing Channels and Logistics
Advertising	Principles of Marketing
Experiential Marketing: Sports & Arts	Qualitative Marketing Research Methods

Case Authorship:

Littlefield, Jon (2003), "Windsor Industries," in Dollinger, Marc J., *Entrepreneurship: Strategies and Resources*, 3rd Edition, Prentice Hall: Upper Saddle River, NJ.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS & ACTIVITIES

Pamplin College of Business, Graduate Studies Committee
Campbell School of Business, Outreach Committee
Berry College, Committee for Student Scholarship

SELECTED EMPLOYMENT

Managerial:

ComServ, Inc., Asheville, North Carolina
Carolina

Contract Services Manager
Area Director
Business Manager

Hubbell Incorporated, Christiansburg, Virginia
Carolina

Customer Service Supervisor

Sales:

Hydra Data Entry, Inc., Raleigh, North

Programmer
Sales Executive

The Leader Magazine, RTP, North

Account Executive

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