Kulturella Perspektiv

Research article

Freezers full of gold

Living well with landscape in rural Northern Sweden

Flora Mary Bartlett

The modern chest freezer has significantly altered food storage practices in Sweden. Based on 13 months of ethnographic fieldwork in Arjeplog (rural Northern Sweden/ Swedish Sápmi), this article investigates how the chest freezer plays a crucial role in more-than-human networks of food, sustainability, and living well in the local community. Among participants of this ethnographic study, most of the protein stored in freezers was hunted or foraged from the local landscape, and participants felt “rich and content” with freezers full of “natural” food. Building on theories of new-materiality and the more-than-human, I examine the relationships between moose, freezer, forest, and the body, arguing that the chest freezer is not a static object of symbolic meaning but a vibrant actor in these networks of “the good life”. This paper is an empirically grounded contribution to studies of freezing practices and landscape relations in Northern Sweden.

Keywords: freezers; Northern Sweden; materiality; landscape relations

Moderna frysboxar har förändrat matförvaringen i Sverige. Baserad på ett tretton månader långt fältarbete i Arjeplog (Norrland/Sápmi), undersöker den här artikeln hur toppmatade frysboxar spelar en viktig roll i mer-än-mänskliga nätverk av mat, hållbarhet, och “det goda livet” i det lokala samhället. Det mesta av proteinet som lagrades i frysarna av deltagarna jagades eller plockades från det lokala landskapet, och deltagarna kände sig “rika och nöjda” med frysboxar fyllda av “naturlig” mat. Genom att utgå från teorier om nymaterialism och det mer-än-mänskliga, undersöker jag relationerna mellan älgen, frysboxen, skogen, och kroppen. Jag hävdar att frysboxen inte är ett statiskt föremål utan en levande aktör i dessa nätverk av det goda livet. Artikeln är ett empiriskt grundat bidrag till studier om frysning och landskapsrelationer i norra Sverige.

Nyckelord: frysbox; Norrland; materialism; landskaprelationer

The moose hunt was well underway across Arjeplog as the first snow fell, coating the truck in a soft white film. Beneath the raised roof of the trailer, plastic boxes filled with cuts of moose meat waited to be packaged and frozen in the large *topmatade frysboxar* (chest freezers) in the garage. During ethnographic fieldwork in Arjeplog, a small rural community in the sub-Arctic rural North of Sweden and Swedish Sápmi, I noticed how hours of work were invested into acquiring food that was to be frozen and later eaten throughout the cold, dark winter. I asked Anna-Lena, one of the research participants in my study, how it felt to fill the freezers with food she had hunted herself. “You feel rich”, she said. “You feel rich and content with a full freezer”. Anna-Lena’s comment is telling of the patterns which emerged during fieldwork, which placed the chest freezer at the core of a “bundle” of human and non-human relations with the landscape (cf. Latour 2005:43).

This article argues that the freezer occupies a central and active role in relational networks of landscape, building on interdisciplinary scholarship from the material turn and the increasing recognition of more-than-human assemblages. While previous research on freezing practices discusses the time saving efficiency and innovation of modern technology (Sandgren 2016) and the role of the freezer in preparedness (Marshall 2021), I argue that the freezer is not simply a means to survival in Arjeplog. It is a crucial part of what makes a good life, playing a material role in prosperity and allowing participants to thrive both bodily and in their sustainable life in relation to the landscape. Against this background, the aim of this article is to explore what role the freezer plays in these landscape relations. What significance does it have for living well? How does it act in networks of landscape relations? And how is it brought into discourses of self-reliance and sustainability?

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In responding to these questions, I draw on and seek to contribute to ethnological and anthropological studies concerning rural Swedish communities (Fjellström 1990; Ekman 1991) including research on hunting (Gunnarsdotter 2008) and specific rural challenges (Wollin Elhouar 2014; Vallström et al. 2021), bringing new focus to relations with the non-human in this context. Specifically, this article is an ethnographic contribution to the study of freezing practices, relations, and ideas of "the good life" in the rural North.

A new-materialist approach to "the good life"

In my study, the terms "living well" or "the good life" reflect how participants described their emplaced prosperity and attitudes towards the freezer, often through statements such as "*Det här är livet*" ("This is the life"). Wellbeing is a vast multidisciplinary area of study, including in relation to the environment (Walton 2021) and in qualitative studies concerning experience and imagination (Wolvén 1990, Fisher 2014). Christina Fjellström's (1990) study of "the good life" in a rural Swedish community similarly involves a qualitative examination of subjective desire and aspiration.

In my analysis of the freezer as a central node in the creation of "the good life" in the rural North, I draw on theorists in the tradition of the so-called material turn, who recognise the importance and agency of objects and materials formerly overlooked (Miller 2005; Latour 2005; Henare et al. 2007) including relational networks and technologies (Damsholt et al. 2009; Hallqvist 2022). In light of new ethical challenges of the Anthropocene and our collective yet inequitable climatic futures, scholars develop this approach further to decentre the human and explore ways of multispecies living (Bennett 2010) including living well with others (Haraway 2016). In this paper I build on this research to explore networks of landscape, people, moose, and the freezer. I utilise actor-network theory (Latour 2005) and Jane Bennett's work on *vibrant materiality* to pay attention to more-than-human actors in an "unfolding network" (2010: 31), in which the object can also act beyond being simply ascribed symbolic meaning in a social context. This, as I will show, is also true of the freezer.

Importantly, statements about living well were made with reference to the material connections to local landscape in traditional practice. I use the term *landscape* in this analysis to include networks and relations between human and non-human actors and living spaces (Gan et al. 2017) in dynamic, multi-sensory and unbounded ways, beyond aesthetic associations of *looking at* a visual plane (Tilley 2004). It recognises phenomenological experience (Ingold 2000) and processes of multispecies co-creation by things conceived of as both natural and unnatural in this community: hunters, cabins, moose, and the spruce and pine all making up the montane forest landscape of Arjeplog.

Researching Arjeplog

Arjeplog municipality has a vast inland area of 14 000 square kilometres that sits astride the Arctic circle in the larger province of Lapland and the county of Norrbotten, covered with dense pine and spruce forests and speckled with birches. Its sub-Arctic climate brings extreme winters, with temperatures as low as minus 45° Celsius, and bright summers with midnight sun

Image 1. Arjeplog high street in its frozen spring-winter drapery, the sun rising over the town, the freezers filled with bounty from the autumn hunts.

and a vibrant tourism industry. The main settlement, a town also called Arjeplog (Árjapluovve in Pite Sami, or Árjepluovve in Lule Sami), sits at the intersection of three of the 8727 lakes of the municipality.

The municipality is home to approximately 2700 residents, living mostly in and around Arjeplog town (Image 1) with smaller settlements dotted along the Silver Road, cutting through the region to the Norwegian border on the West. The population doubles in winter as thousands of engineers fly in from around the world to test new car models on the frozen lakes. Winter tourism, fishing, Sámi reindeer herding, and working for the car testing companies are key occupations. Among participants in this study, occupations included administrative work, journalism, retail, and local goods and services. Arjeplog is what in Swedish is called a *glesbygd,* namely a sparsely populated municipality, which is important in how place is experienced and contrasted with urban regions. Life in *glesbygd* involves specific challenges such as diminishing populations as young residents move to cities (Wollin Elhouar 2014). Arjeplog's population is declining, and the median age is high.

Hunting is popular though not ubiquitous in Arjeplog, with prey including birds and small game. But it is the moose[1] hunt that dominates the autumn. As one local said, "there are no seasons, only the moose hunt". Many participants in this research, both men and women, were involved with hunting teams, closing their businesses in September and driving off to their hunting grounds in search of the solitary creatures. Fishing was common and is important in the history of the region among the Indigenous Sámi (Bergman 2018) and the subsequent settlers (including Sámi, those moving North through internal colonialisation, and mixed descendants).

The data for this article comes from my larger PhD project in this community in which I examined the experience of landscape and climate change (Bartlett 2020). I lived in Arjeplog town between July 2017 and August 2018, conducting ethnographic fieldwork including participant observation, formal interviewing, informal conversation, and more experimental visual methods such as image co-creation and discursive exhibition spaces to spark dialogue about landscape traditions and aesthetics (see Bartlett 2021). The extended period of fieldwork and ethnographic methods allowed an empirical understanding of freezing practices. Image-making was entangled in the research process of understanding relations to the non-human and what was considered important local practice. In this article, my images (and one kindly provided by a participant) give a visual sense of place, providing rich information in the "shared ethnographic space" between writing and art (Grimshaw and Ravetz 2005: 1). They create a visual portal into the everyday aesthetics of life in this community and feature the things that were presented to me as worthy of attention. Showing them here extends this gesture to the reader.

Participants were found using personal connections to the community[2] as well as chance meetings at local events. My positionality was beneficial as I was not seen as purely an outsider. I worked closely with 15–20 participants, formally interviewed several additional inhabitants, and spoke informally with many more. Interviews were often recorded, always with prior consent. Following discussion with local participants, I did not specify participation based on ethnicity. Many were uncertain of their ancestry given a long history of internal colonisation and forced assimilation, and others highlighted the problematic focus on Sámi experience by anthropologists.[3] Participants were identifying as *Arjeplogare* ("Arjeplogians") more generally. As the project concerned experience of landscape more broadly, I conducted research with residents of all ages but mostly with adults between the ages of 40 and 80. Residents lived primarily in the town of Arjeplog but I also travelled to their cabins and to their friends living more rurally.

Filling the freezers

On a cold February day, one of the main participants in this research, Marianne, took me to see her friend Uffe, who lived outside town and was involved in a few hunting teams in the municipality. Several large sets of moose antlers decorated the walls of his sparsely furnished living room, and he was quick to explain that they were not merely trophies but memories of successful hunts. He guided us to the garage beside the dog kennels, leading the way to a large chest freezer. It hummed with a gentle electrical pulse in the cold and cluttered room, the plug socket powered in part by the contentious hydroelectric dams built in the municipality.[4] He smiled cheekily as he lifted the freezer lid, a gust of bracing air rushing out and immediately condensing into smoke. Inside was a whole capercaillie and the hooves of a moose, flung in after the hunt. A second freezer was more orderly with neat rows of vacuum-packed bags, marked with the exact cut of meat and year (Image 2).

The home freezer emerged on the Swedish market in the 1940s, becoming common in the Swedish home by the 1970s. There were more in rural areas as people froze their own produce (Sandgren 2016), bringing the icy conditions of Arjeplog's winter into the household, year-round.

Local business owner Anna-Lena was delighted to hear of my interest in Arjeplog freezers when I called her to discuss this article. She responded:

[1] Latin: *Alces alces. Älg* in Swedish, also "elk" in British English, not to be confused with the "elk" of North America (*Cervus canadensis*). Moose in Sweden can be 210 cm tall and can weigh 200–360 kg (female) and 380- 850 kg (male).

[2] My partner has family in the municipality.

[3] See Green (2009) for an in-depth discussion of this issue in her own research.

[4] Built throughout the 1900s, the dams were later drawn into the green energy revolution yet cause local environmental impacts and ecosystem disruption.

Image 2. Uffe's neatly archived moose cuts and piles of moose hooves and capercaillie in chest freezers of the garage.

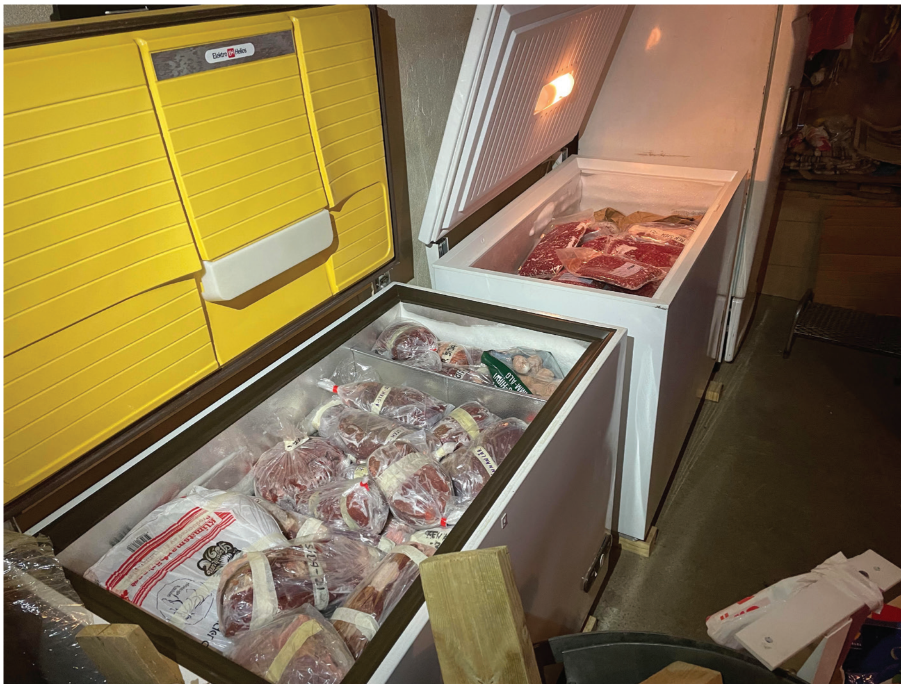

Image 3. Mats has two large chest freezers full of moose meat, one full of larger cuts and one with mince (used with permission).

> I just bought a new chest freezer! I've already filled a 370-litre freezer with moose, another with perch, another with reindeer. And we have a spare in storage in case we need it for the hunt. During Covid it was perfect because I could shop from my own freezer and go to the supermarket once a week. (Interview, Anna-Lena, February 2022)

This demonstrates the quantity of local produce stored during the winter, and the benefits of self-sustainability in a global pandemic where shopping trips could be minimised. Participants in Arjeplog buy in extra freezers for the autumn hunting season, where existing space becomes insufficient for the incoming bounty from the forest. They are sometimes bought new from the coastal cities, but often second-hand from locals looking to upgrade. Once beyond-repair, they sit perched on heaps of white-goods at the local tip, their materiality evolving into scrap metal, parts, or waste – all of which placing them in new material networks (cf. Bennett 2010).

A pattern emerged among participants in which guests were invited for food with the explanation: "I need to make space in the freezer". Food storage is "part of practicing domestic hospitality" (Marshall 2021: 13) and having a full freezer means one is prepared to host. In Arjeplog, this is common mainly among the older generation who keep small cakes in the freezer. Mostly, however, hospitality centres around coffee in this community and the expectation of being able to drop round unannounced. The explanation of needing to empty the freezer framed the invitation as a favour to help make space before the next hunt, removing formality by posing it in a common situational frame.

Image 4. Traditional practices of preservation are still popular in Arjeplog, such as smoked moose or dried reindeer meat which can also be frozen – achieving specific tastes and textures and extending the shelf-life of already preserved foodstuffs.

It was common for households to have smaller upright freezers indoors filled with, for example, *mjukkaka* (traditional soft bread). Larger chest freezers, for those who had the space, would often be out in the garage and filled with meat from the hunt. There was a co-existence of food hunted, foraged, and bought, where paper boxes of frozen raspberries and mango from the local supermarket sat alongside bags of bilberries, cloudberries, lingonberries, moose cuts and fillets of perch, trout, Arctic char, and grayling. Participants were not solely dependent on local produce, but a combination of products including those imported from afar.

While many participants were part of a hunting team (or connected to one through family), this is not the case for the whole community. Anna-Lena was careful to point out that not everyone had access to this kind of meat, nor the knowledge to cook the larger parts of a moose. Filling the freezer required specific knowledge beyond the hunt itself, such as butchery and how to cook the more complicated cuts.

Living well with the landscape

Preparedness was sometimes mentioned by participants, often specifically framed in relation to urban Sweden and especially Stockholm. One key participant, Mats, told me that he'd read that Stockholm wouldn't last a week if it was cut off deliveries. Everything is transported in from surrounding farms or factories, not hunted, grown, or foraged. Rural life was frequently compared to the urban, and having freezers filled with food was key. People knew they could live off the land and their seasonal supplies for a long time, if necessary, in traditional practice pre-dating the "prepping" trend described by Mellander (2021).

Beyond the notion of crisis preparedness, however, lies a stronger motivation for filling the freezer. It is not just about having *some food* but the best food*, real food* from the forest, unpolluted with additives or factory processes. Anna-Lena and Marianne mentioned the lack of antibiotics in game and wild fish compared to cattle and farmed Norwegian salmon. Another participant specifically mentioned the lack of chemicals in the moose meat. This echoes the notion of "pure food" being preferred by Swedes described by Bildtgård (2010: 226), perhaps also in response to risk from historical pollutants in the country and the aftermath of Chernobyl (cf. Larsson Heidenblad 2021). Moose meat is seen as wild, as it is separate from industry and chemical intervention, and thus uncontaminated, and good for the body.

Beyond its nutritional value, food forms the body that eats it, by crossing boundaries of outside and inside (Jönsson 2020) and acting as a "coparticipant" affecting the bodies that consume it (Bennett 2007: 134). In his outline of actor-network theory, Latour (2005) argues for attentiveness to flows of materials and action. Objects *do things,* and he calls for us to trace the *associations* between actors, including objects, rather than reducing material to its symbolic meaning (Latour 2005: 10). We can approach the materials flowing between forest, moose, meat,

Image 5. This diptych mirrors the way participants discussed the moose meat as being "of the forest", visualising the associations between the meat and the landscape.

and hunter. The animals eat the pine trees and absorb the nutrients into their body. The hunter stalks and catches the moose within the forest space, bringing it first into the butchery and then home where these networks take on new spatiotemporal characteristics in the freezer and then in the person, as the meat becomes part of the body's materiality (cf. Bennett 2010). Processes of hunting and gathering in Arjeplog thus form a flowing and relational network, involving the human, the moose, the trees, the forest space itself, and the relations between them all.

Participants themselves framed this relationship as reciprocal, in which hunters protect the landscape while accessing its resources. "Moose eat the tops of young pines", Mats told me, "damaging the forest". Hunting keeps the moose population low, allowing the forest to grow without these disruptions (Ericsson 2003). This is an example of how participants perceived the benefits of the relationship flowing back to the forest, though this is arguably anthropocentric: the forest is protected as a resource for human industry and as a habitat for moose to be hunted in the future, and this reciprocity serves as a rationalisation for hunting beyond the procurement of food. It also served as an incentive to keep the landscape free from pollution in a local form of environmentalism (Bartlett, forthcoming) as they literally lived off the actors within it. Participants described this as almost a symbiosis with the forest: rather than a one-way movement of materials, it is in constant flow between forest and hunter in which both are seen to benefit. This takes place in a specific forest and is thus connected to place, in what Yvonne Gunnarsdotter has called the "wholeness of hunter-forest-game-place-history" (2008b: 189) in her analysis of hunting groups. The diptych (Image 5) showing the moose meat beside the forest is an attempt to represent this visually, placing the two together to show the associations and material history of the meat being served.

Actors should not be understood as stable or fixed (Bennett 2010). Tim Ingold (2011) has criticised actor-network theory for its focus on relations between seemingly self-contained objects, arguing instead for a "meshwork" that allows the actors to be influenced by one other. Saxer and Schorch describe "thing~ties", representing both the dynamic relations *and* objects in a constant process of becoming together (2020). In Arjeplog, the food affects the body, and the hunters affect the moose, both hunted and those that survive, and the forest itself, including the other actors within it. Here the concept of the network or meshwork also mirrors the notion of the landscape as a site made through processes and relations between human and non-human actors over time (Tsing 2015; Tsing et al. 2017). We must therefore understand the different elements of this network or meshwork as influencing each other and constantly making the landscape together.

While harmony with nature may be the dream, Fjellström (1990) asks if this is best from a national-economic perspective, in which ideas of the good life can stand in contrast to societal expectations. There is a growing argument for more plant-based proteins, meanwhile others commend "eat local" approaches. Participants argued that game and fish were locally sourced, whereas to eat more plant-based protein would be to rely on imports. There are differences between rural and urban attitudes towards environmental crises in Sweden. As argued by Isenhour (2011), rural Swedes should not be overlooked as their understandings of nature are important for sustainable lifestyles on the national scale. Finding food from the local landscape has other environmental attributes in the Anthropocene. A study of foraging found that picking mushrooms and berries led to a strong connection with landscape even after a catastrophic forest fire, whereas just "enjoying nature" did not serve the same restorative function as it rested upon an ideal of the landscape that disappeared in the flames (Butler et al. 2019). Foraging and hunting is thus a form of engagement with landscape that can have important adaptive capacities in future environmental crises.

While this network is sometimes presented by participants as a harmonious relationship, it involves conflict. Hunting moose with guns and dogs creates unequal and violent encounters in which the animal is killed for the benefit of the human.[5] In terms of social conflict, the State is seen by some participants to be imposing too many testing regulations for moose meat and fish, making it difficult for hunters to sell to local restaurants. Furthermore, not all *Arjeplogare* are involved in hunting and fishing, or have space for large chest freezers, and there is the potential for exclusion in some hunting groups. Hunting also raises questions over rights to land. Across Lapland, hunting rights were historically granted by the Sameby (Sámi administrative region) but are now obtained from the County Administration, contradicting both the Reindeer Husbandry Act and the Sámi rights to land since time immemorial (cf. Green 2009). Hunting is an area of conflict in the North in terms of who *can* live in symbiosis with the land and who grants the rights to be able to do so.

The freezer as a "node" in the network

I was assisting Mats' hunting team with the butchery of two large moose, which would result in 180 kilograms of meat. Mats' teammate Karen took the legs and beckoned me over to look at the meat. "This is the best", she said, tapping the deep purple-reddish flesh with her knife:

> There is no better meat than this, anywhere. It is straight from the forest. I wouldn't even know how or where to buy it if we did not hunt it ourselves. I

[5] From the perspective of participants, violence is mitigated through strict rules concerning how and when the moose can be hunted, in a way that causes the least distress and pain. Compared to industrial farming, this is arguably a more ethical way to procure food (both regarding the environment and animal welfare).

> hunt for the food, the quality of it. The hunt is nice, I like to meet everyone and be around the fire and talk shit with everyone. We joke and tell old hunting stories. But the main thing is to have food for the winter, and it feels like you are prepared – whatever happens, you know you have really good, quality food in the freezer. (Interview, Karen, October 2018)

The freezer is an integral part of the relational network involving *Arjeplogare*, the physical and experienced landscape, the fish, berries, meat, and electricity. It acts as a "node" with performative and dynamic status as a junction point for other processes and relations (Hand & Shove 2007). While this reasoning could be extended to all material elements of hunting and foraging (the gun, for example, or the quads used during the hunt) the freezer becomes a node *in* the home, filled with the bounty year-round. This is supported by the empirical data from my fieldwork in which people expressed security and contentedness in having a full and working freezer, as in the above quote from Karen.

The freezer is not just a material representation of the bond with the landscape but an active part of the process. We cannot always separate people and kitchen objects as they can operate in a sort of symbiosis (Jönsson 2020), and the freezer connects the person with the food and the landscape while forming part of the network itself through being the spatial centre of survival and prosperity during the winter. As a dynamic actor, it brings together associations and relations in space. None of the parts are acting alone but are within an interactive process involving people, objects, and forces (cf. Bennett 2010). The temperature alters when opened or filled with new produce, it ages, it breaks, and it is itself dependent on relations with humans, produce, and electrical power systems.

Food is not just stored in the freezer, but *through* its material properties and function. Latour (2005) reminds us that even without intention, machines *act* upon substances, for example the kettle boiling water. Likewise, the freezer *freezes* food, changing the physicality and materiality of the contents. Miller (2005) argues that we need to recognise the agency of machines and not analyse them through the meanings ascribed by human actors. While the freezer does not decide to freeze meat or berries, it nevertheless imposes action upon them. Objects can also encourage human action (Latour 2005) and even when intentionality is human, it is also wrapped up in interplay of non-human forces in a "mingling" (Bennett 2010: 31). The freezer influences the decision making of the hunters, as its relative fullness or emptiness (or operational status) determines social practice in inviting people to assist with the emptying, and regulates the amount of meat, fish, and berries people consume in relation to the next opportunity for procurement.

Modernity is often associated with acceleration, progress, and time saving. But in the freezers of Arjeplog, electrification muddles and slows the passage of time and of landscape relations. Seasonal produce is frozen in place and time. Experiences of being in the forest, and the relationships between person, place, and moose, are saved and stored. The neatly dated packets of meat, shown in the images of Uffe's freezer (Image 2) and Marianne packaging the meat (Image 6), become material memories of confrontations in the landscape between human and non-human actors. When stored in the deep-freeze, the electricity also becomes part of this network, generated through the power of the landscape itself – hydroelectricity sourced from the rushing waterways of Arjeplog. These frozen relations can be accessed into the future, playing with the passage of time.

All aspects of the network are not equally accessible to different human bodies. Hunting and fishing are largely seen as male activities in Sweden (Gunnarsdotter 2008) and were historically masculine pastimes in Arjeplog, though this is now changing. In archival photographs, men were often posing with guns while women were working with packing the meat. Cutting and packing meat has in the past been considered women's work in Sweden (Ekman 1991). Many of my participants were women who hunted and fished, acknowledging that it was a recent change and still a male-dominated practice, as it is in other parts of Sweden. The butchering was done by both men and women, as was the packaging of meat into freezer bags. The networks are broadening for the hunt, though challenges are still present for women joining this historically male dominated space.

The gold of the freezer

I have depicted how the freezer is integrated into everyday life and rural networks. There is an economic incentive too, as the meat is largely seen as cheaper despite licence and equipment costs. But the freezer also brings contentment through the perceived value of the contents beyond economic worth.

Like Karen, Anna Lena said the meat was "the best", and it was therefore both good economically but also in terms of living well. The freezer, filled with frozen meat, made her feel "rich and content." This echoes a freezer book from 1957, entitled "*My treasure chamber*", depicting the freezer as a realm of treasure and possibility (Lyberg 1957 in Sandgren 2016). For participants in Arjeplog, it was the meat and fish that became the gold in the chest freezers, as it pulled the networks from the forest into the home and ensured future wellbeing. The Swedish countryside is often associated with a richer life (Vallström et al. 2021), and participants described this themselves regarding their freezing practices. Anna-Lena acknowledged the enormous amount of labour and time behind the riches: in the forest during hunting, in the boat laying nets and *mjärdar* (metal cages for

Image 6. Marianne packing moose meat into freezer bags after the butchery. She had me label the meat "nice moose"–categorising the meat by its superiority rather than an attempt at anatomical indexing.

catching fish) and afterwards taking care of the meat and filleting the 100 kilograms of perch they catch on average per year.

The good life has been defined as one in which people find meaning and value (Fischer 2014). This applies to food: meat and sugar have been integral parts of "*drömmen om det goda livet*", or "the dream of the good life", in working class Swedish culture (Fjellström 1990) and the ability to eat unlimited amounts of meat has been a dream for many generations in Sweden (Jönsson 2020). For participants in Arjeplog, this dream is their reality, and they were keen to express their prosperity of being able to eat meat all year round. They did not perceive meat as a luxury in terms of monetary wealth, but due to its being *local*, sustainable, self-caught, the best, and situated within the networks with and of landscape as discussed above. Filling the chest freezers involves taking care of the future self and future relations, with a focus on the body, prosperity, and living well from the local landscape. The notion of the food as riches is thus deeply connected to the relations involved in acquiring the produce. The agency of the freezer is integral in this process by materially preserving these prized goods for the coming year, and influencing the processes of hunting, gathering, and eating the treasures contained within it.

Conclusion

In this article I have drawn on materiality and the concept of the network to pay attention to the freezer as focal point of living well whilst also playing an active role in the good life. I have argued that the freezer is not only important because of the meaning ascribed by human actors, but itself performs an action within the more-than-human networks of Arjeplog. I have attempted to follow the flow of materials within the network of forest-hunter-freezer-body and discussed how the freezer changes the properties of these materials and influences behaviour. Once full, it continues to act, carrying this network into the present and the future. The freezing practices are framed as beneficial for both body and for landscape, as the "wild" game transcends bodily boundaries and the hunters care for the forest in turn. The food, containing and maintaining these relational networks, then becomes riches tucked away in a frozen treasure chest-freezer.

This article contributes to understandings of the more-than-human by focussing in on the everyday landscape relations in Arjeplog. It is important to pay attention to different ways of living with landscapes in the Anthropocene, including different local and rural perspectives on sustainable food and living well. Rural perspectives should continue to be explored and represented, including the challenges between rural and urban discourses regarding food and landscape relations.

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