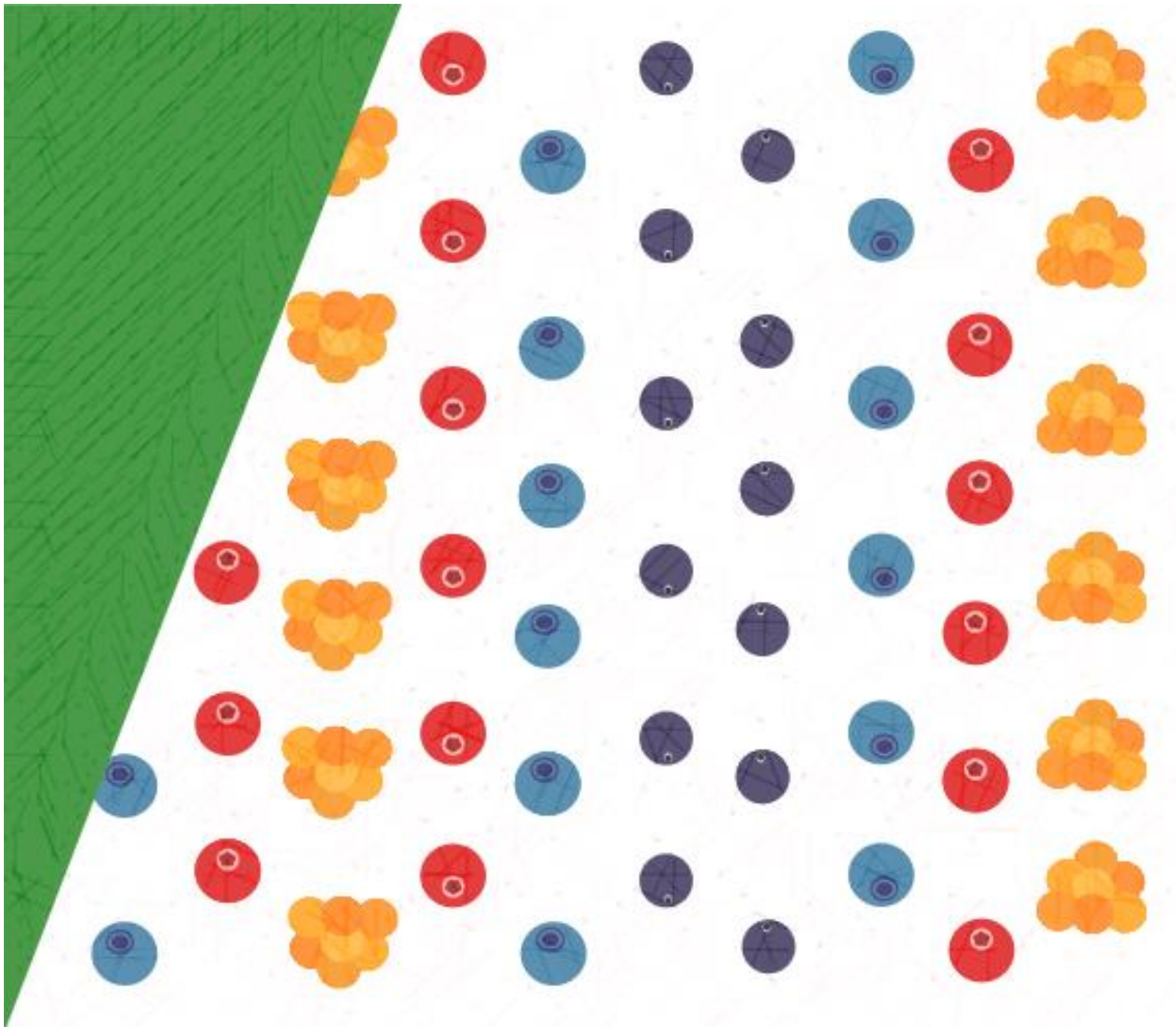


The role and place of wild northern berries in tourism in northern Norway

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• • • • • ● **Dedication** ● • • • • •

To Hanna and Myhaylo Tkach.

With the most genuine gratitude and the highest possible regard, I dedicate this Master's thesis to my beloved grandparents. To my grandmother Hanna, who taught me how to appreciate every bit of nature, down to a single berry. Also, to my grandfather Myhaylo, the strictest mentor but the most compassionate friend. No one laughed or clapped louder when they first heard my topic, and after I submitted the final version. I managed to finish this project solely because of your support and positivity. Thank you for constantly reminding me that everyone has their own front line.

• • • • • ● **Abstract** ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

Uncovering a vital value of wild berries in local food practices, I aim to understand their realities. The specific research question that focused my study is: how are berries entwisted in northern tourism and how does that reflect local food practices and their role and place in Troms and Finnmark? With very few exceptions, in and outside tourism wild berries are situated within gastronomy. Although, very important in providing authentic tastes in local menus, the role of wild berries remains mainly in seasoning, and sometimes as a key ingredient in and of desserts.

By exploring the use of wild fruits by two berry businesses, both of which relay on the tourism sector, I study the importance of wild berries as the main products of these businesses with a focus on the concepts of terroir, gift and food security. These concepts provided a framework for a threefold discussion around wild berry realities. Due to their terroir characteristics, berries complement unique local tastes. As gifts, wild berries are deeply grounded in internal reciprocity systems throughout communities, they are also commercialized gifts of nature in tourism. Wild northern berries are a sustainable solution with respect to provisioning; their value in securing the food supply has been reinforced lately; and their Arctic origin is of special interest in tourism. Within this thesis, I explore the present and future use of wild berries in food practices and in tourism in the study region by using three themes related to the aforementioned concepts: tasting terroir, giving and profiting, procuring and securing food sovereignty.

Keywords: wild northern berries, tourism, terroir, gift, food security, berry picking



Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background for the study

For as long as I can remember I have been attracted to the flavour of the wild and have always considered the berries picked in the pristine wilderness as tasting better than any other berries. Wild fruits¹, produced by nature without intrusion from people and society, lured me with an unstoppable force that I dared not resist. For me, some of their magic came from experiencing how year after year nature produces berries for humans and animals to harvest and live by. These are gifts from nature. Free and available for all of us.

Taking part in gathering activities, I learned to treat everything that came from the wild with considerable commitment and thoroughness. I am still confused by the fact that almost every time I have announced that topic of my Master's project is about wild berries, listeners either giggled or smiled. Of course, such reactions are a matter of perception and linked to the individually appointed meanings given to wild berries. After all, Horwood (1991) noticed that the wilderness is both serious and comic, but never includes licence and irresponsibility. Most notably after choosing wild berries as the central topic of my Master's thesis, I struggled to understand how for others wild berries were not as important as they were for me. I do think that in tourism studies berries and berry picking have not received the attention that they deserve.

My interest in and love of berries originally hails from my childhood. Then, back home in the Ukraine, little brother and I harvested strawberries and currants in the garden of our summer house that was situated in the bosom of nature far from city noise, or granny and I were on quiet hunts for wild strawberry. The last was a special treat, and since then I cannot imagine something more delicious or flavorful than a handful of spiky ruby wild strawberries with the tempting smack that grabs you by the nose, awakes your stomach immediately and tastes heavenly sweet as only a first kiss does. My senses were cheering for berries, while the time of picking, of being together and bonding as a family, were the best moments spent in the meticulous work and gladness.

I acquired from my grandmother knowledge behind berry practises as well as an appreciation for the hard work required to grow or find and gather berries in the wild. From participating in these activities with my grandmother, I learned to respect these gifts from nature. Such respect is a key

¹ Fruits here and further on are used interchangeably as a synonym to berries

attitude, as Horwood (1991) outlines: youngsters living with experienced elders gain respect for their knowledge. Secrets such as how to preserve berries through the winter and best berry patches locations I learned, can be interpreted as a gift (Olsen & Thuen, 2012), as a tradition passed on (Parlee & Berkes, 2005) to me that I value above all.

Later, visiting Norway in summer months, I picked cloudbberries and blueberries with my family here. Though, only during the beginning of my Master's studies and moving to Alta, was when my long-lasting love started taking shape into something more – a research topic. I realized that wild berries are a valuable resource in northern Norway (for many inhabitants in Finnmark they are the key element of food gathering practices) as well as I already have learned them to be for my own family. In the initial phases of my research, I began to raise new questions in relation to the importance of berries and in particular asking how come it was not more central within food tourism. Consequently, the endeavour of this Master's thesis aims to focus on and offer insights into the role and place of berries in tourism settings.

There is a rather large body of both scholarly and popular literature about wild northern berries. That being said, biological and chemical properties together with health benefits were found to be the most discussed topics. For example Nestby, Hykkerud and Martinussen (2019) reviewed botanical characteristics, growth preferences, climatic adaptation and human health effects of blueberries, lingonberries, crowberries and some other berry species in alpine and Arctic areas. A similar study was undertaken by Nilsen (2005) with regards to cloudbberries. Winge and Bergersen (2013) and Ulltveit (1995, 2013) were among the few that provided comprehensive descriptions of berries that grow in Norway with deliberate overview of their characteristics in an easily accessible manner for the general public.

Apart from being a vital source of vitamins, it is advocated that wild berries maximize tastiness while being a minor burden to the environment (Mithril et al., 2012; Mithril et al., 2013). As an ever-present element in Sámi diet and a part of old established food practices, wild berries are also believed to have a great potential for increased utilization for securing food supplies in the North (Nilsson, 2018; Smith et al., 2019). Thus, wild berries, in addition to being a product full on antioxidants and vitamins, are a sustainable choice.

There are few accounts of wild berries as an important element in tourism. Everett (2005) sketched the place of wild berries in the local tradition of Newfoundland and Labrador and in gustatory tourist' experiences. Further, examples of wild berry use in destination development of Canadian provinces were described by Everett (2007) and Doonan (2016) with a focus on how wild berries are used as a symbol of wilderness and purity in place-branding. The importance of restaurants offering cuisines founded on permanent uses of local products, among which are wild berries, and an overall effort in conveying regional food culture to tourists was also emphasised

by de la Barre & Brouder (2013) and Fusté-Forné (2019). In turn, this ethnographic research aims to broaden knowledge about wild berries.

1.2 Research question

The initial inquiry that inspired me to undertake this research project was derived from a strong desire to discover the reasoning for the unfair ignorance expressed towards berries in tourism in northern Norway. Specifically, I wanted to determine why and then how to change the situation. However, entering the complexity surrounding berry relations, I realized that the situation with wild fruits utilization is multifaceted. I delved into exam papers related to different university subjects and into the single topic of wild berries in the north to try out various perspectives. By exploring the field with all available means and engaging with many people in Norway, I uncovered my berry agenda and gradually shed light on the twofold main question:

How are berries entwisted in northern tourism and how does that reflect local food practices and their role and place in the region?

With an overarching aim to examine the wild berry profile in tourism in Troms and Finnmark, three conceptual pillars: terroir, gift, food security are used in this thesis to answer the research question.

1.3 Research design and methods

Through the analysis of semi-structured interviews with the owners of two businesses situated in northern Norway related to wild berries, I mark out similar topics and reflections and explore them using a theoretical canvas. Obtained via fieldwork and personal observations insights into berry practices, my reflections and analysis provided me with materials to speculate about wild berry uses and argue about their situatedness in local tradition. Although well-ordered field notes allowed me to utilize all the received information in a structured way, all three methods: semi-structured interviews, fieldwork and personal observations, along with a thorough literature review helped me to generate new knowledge on the topic.

When conducting my research, I predominantly considered two businesses in northern Norway, production of which is highly dependent on wild berries and tourism sector. All raised topics and utilized concepts were analysed according to current issues and contemplations of the industry. My initial interest triggered this project but on the way through it I was led by the unfolding realities that I encountered.

A qualitative design was chosen and found to be successful in discovering wild berry realities in northern Norway using a tourism lens. As qualitative researchers are concerned with the meaning people attach to things in their lives (Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault, 2015), I was conducting this

project in search of answers to all my “how” and “what”. Bringing those meanings to the light of the day was possible due to my qualitative methodology that determined the course of this thesis.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

This thesis consists of eight chapters. Chapter 1, in which this subsection belongs, comprises a background sketch related to chosen topic; research question, the answer to which is provided in the following chapters; my methodological considerations; an overview of the thesis structure.

Chapter 2 is devoted to the theoretical scope of the study. The chapter consists of three headings under which different topics are viewed through the lens of relevant concepts. Rigorous work with extant literature ensures a sound framework for the following discussion.

Chapter 3 includes a toolbox of methods used in conducting present research and the all-encapsulating methodology that shaped this Master's thesis in a way it emerges from the pages that you read. This chapter also discloses the ways data were collected and obstacles encountered. Field work with observations, diary keeping, and semi-structured interviews were used as methods and are discussed in detail with separate arguments regarding the implication and role of each method in obtaining findings. In the chapter summary ethical concerns are illuminated.

Chapter 4 is a thorough presentation of the history and nowadays realities of two berry businesses in Alta and Storslett that work closely with wild northern berries. The insights derived from my fieldwork together with personal observations allow me to depict the settings carefully, so the reader obtains a good grasp of the milieu of the places where the research was conducted.

Chapter 5 together with the two following chapters represent the core of the whole thesis, their structural logic is conceptually driven. Chapter 5 tackles berries as an element in local food traditions, as a *terroir* food. I exemplify how wild berries are inscribed in traditional cuisine and in culinary tourism, turning to the unique berry taste as a milestone in ‘tasting places’ in the region.

In chapter 6 the linkage with the *gift* concept is undertaken. I look on berries as gifts of nature and gifts circulating within communities. Focusing on the harvesting activity and implementation of new strategies, I provide an exploration of managerial insights regarding berry boost in tourism.

Chapter 7 engages in the meaning of wild fruits in the uprising *food security* and sustainable foodways concern. It outlines the wild berry profile in the Arctic, the meaning of indigenous knowledge in berry practices and elaborates on the potential for wild berry utilization in promotion of the area as well as in tourism related practices.

Chapter 8 consists of general conclusions. It retrains the role of wild berries as an integral element in local culture, and as a desirable ingredient in tourism as well as its current place in local food practices and in tourism propositions. At the end of the chapter limitations of the present study are noted and suggestions for further research are advanced.



Chapter 2: Theoretical approach

2.1 Introduction

The main purpose of this theoretical introduction is to relate to the existing research within my field of interest, that later will support my analyses. It has not been possible for me to identify specific berry theories, so, I blaze my trail through a range of concepts. The current chapter presents a review of literature, both general and specific, academic and non-academic, likewise prior studies which helped me in sculpting new knowledge.

To start with, the examination of literature on wild northern berry qualities is undertaken, the place of wild ingredients in the Norwegian diet is closely connected to ongoing research on local food and the concept of terroir. Further, studies utilizing the concept of gift are reviewed and connected through the meanings of berry gifts in local communities also berries as gifts of nature. Lastly, the concept of food security is integrated by linking it to indigenous knowledge and Arctic tourism theory. Continuously, I draw from works concerning commercial utilization of wild berries, for instance there is close to no research undertaken in relation to tourism and wild northern berries, however, some studies touch upon berry uses in restaurants and the overall potential for wild product trade.

2.2 Terroir food

In this chapter section, I refer to scientific and non-scientific works to delineate the key resources where wild northern berries were holistically described in cultural and everyday use. I engage with the theory about berries in diet and investigate the concept of terroir food to build on how wild berries were and are entangled in local food practises. Exploring wild northern berries from a culinary tourism perspective I address studies about health properties of wild fruits, their gastronomic uses and berries as local foods in regard to the terroir narrative.

Favour for wild fruits as a dietary component can be explained, among other factors, by their unprecedented, for such small sized fruits, number and amount of vitamins, nutrients and bioactive compounds. In this Master's thesis, I mainly focus on four wild berry species: cloudberry (*Rubus chamaemorus*), lingonberry (*Vaccinium vitis-idaea*), crowberry (*Empetrum nigrum*) and blueberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*), so their characteristics are thoroughly reviewed. Academic and a bunch of

non-academic studies feature their beneficial effect on human health as well as provide me with fruitful discussions around different themes.

There are studies that describe wild northern berries as remedies from all sicknesses and exemplify their widespread harnessing in ethnomedicine. Cloudberry, rich in vitamin C, is an ancient treatment for scurvy (Nilsen, 2005; Nestby, Hykkerud, & Martinussen, 2019; Doonan, 2020; Kolosova, Belichenko, Rodionova, Melnikov, & Soukand, 2020); lingonberry is good as a urinary antiseptic and cure for sore throats (Winge & Bergersen, 2013; Small, 2013); crowberry juice is known as a diuretic and laxative remedy (Winge & Bergersen, 2013); blueberry is beneficial for eyes and vision to a large extent due to positive effect on blood flow (Rattfelt, Pihl, & Nyblom, 2011; Small, 2013). Apart from being a natural medication, wild berries are not confined only to folk medicine but exploited since time immemorial in tens of other ways.

In one way or another, wild berries have been an ever-present element in the diet of inhabitants living in the territories of modern Norway. The traces of wild berries go as deep as the Viking age or early Middle Ages, old Arabian texts described Norwegian sailors visiting the Mediterranean areas bringing along wooden barrels full of cloudberries (Bratrein, 1995). Long-lasting appreciation of the wild fruits is also recognized by Sámi (Nilsson, 2018), the indigenous people of the northern Europe.

Based on several accounts (Parlee & Berkes, 2005; Thornton, 2004; Nilsson, 2018; Boulanger-Lapointe et al., 2019; Joks, 2022), wild berries have special meaning for indigenous communities, whose food practices rely heavily on resources from the wild. Concentrating predominantly, but not only, on the questions of health, in all five aforementioned research accounts the dietary role of wild berries was analysed. A case study on Gwich'in berry harvesting from Canada (Parlee & Berkes, 2005) showed that wild berries are crucial for sustaining health and well-being of Gwich'in people. An exploration by Thornton (2004) of Tlingit berry picking in Glacier Bay provided new insights into the relationship between hunters, gatherers and plants. An in-depth analysis and comparison of changes in berry use through time across Inuit territories, Canada provided a comprehensive review of the cultural and social importance of berries as well as the constraints on their availability (Boulanger-Lapointe et al., 2019). Ethnobotanical knowledge of indigenous communities about wild berries was deconstructed in the article into several topics: cultural and social value of berries; harvesting practises; climate change influence on berry patches. These topic points go in line with Sámi relations with wild berries in northern Norway. Nilsson (2018) and Joks (2022) addressed the traditional Sámi ration and described how wild berries were and still are used by Sámi.

Nevertheless, in the diet of the non-indigenous population of northern Norway, wild berries also have its special place. One monograph published by culinary enthusiasts was devoted to food

traditions in the region among which a large part was played by wild berries (Fjellheim, 2018). A holistic overview of food habits of Norwegians, with a focus on local food history, attitudes, and general conceptualisation of the term ‘local food’ was made by Østerlie and Wicklund (2018). They purported that food produced, processed, and distributed locally tastes better and is perceived as potentially safer alternative (Østerlie & Wicklund, 2018). Wild northern berries are clean and nutrition recourse, what is more, they lie within the domain of local, traditional food, which is highly valued by Norwegians.

Thus, high-quality food, that by all accounts includes wild northern berries is a preferable component in the diet of Norwegians. Such food represents an inclusive narrative which consists of traditional, local, terroir. Featuring the main characteristics of these dimensions, I build upon the theory of terroir food and wild northern berries as a part of it.

Culinary, food and gastronomy tourism are interchangeable definitions and generally refer to touristic activities with the main purpose of acquiring food experiences. Everett (2005, 2007, 2011, 2012) expands the notion to include traditional foodways and culinary practices, with the important addition of indigenous flora and fauna. In her works, she explored wild berries as a culinary tourism product. Despite a vast number of studies conducted on culinary tourism, I predominantly base my discussion on the works of Everett and her interpretation of the term because of two reasons. Firstly, I have been initially inspired by this author and secondly, the focus of this thesis is on food in tourism rather than on food tourism as a phenomenon. So, there is no need to approach culinary tourism from a holistic perspective, but to outline the invisible connections between berries, gastronomy and tourism.

Traditional food encapsulates eating habits made by available raw materials with potential health effects used over a long period of time (Nilsson, 2018; Østerlie & Wicklund, 2018). It mainly consists of food items with a direct link to natural resources and local food production (Hossain, Nilsson, & Herrmann, 2020). Wild berries and meals prepared with them are believed to be traditional food in Scandinavia (Himmelrick, 2005; Hossain & Punam, 2020; Nilsson, 2020). Even though, Nordic countries consists of tiny cultural pockets, each with its own distinctive ways of cooking, the principle of everyman's right to natural resources ensure a standing tradition for products from nature and the important role of wild berries (Østerlie & Wicklund, 2018).

Terroir represents ‘the taste of place’ which is expressed through both the land where a food is produced and its cultural methods of production (Fusté-Forné, 2019; Doonan, 2020). The taste of place as a set of values, practices and aspirations is crucial for navigating between two categories of local and global in regard to food (Trubek, 2008). A terroir product should mirror biological markers that originate from the site together with the culture in the area and craft knowledge (Østerlie & Wicklund, 2018).

In the fundamental book by Trubek (2008) where every chapter follows a main story, a certain road to the taste of place, the author elaborated on the history and many possible definitions of terroir. Derived from French, terroir means the combination of natural factors (soil, water, slope, height above sea level, vegetation, microclimate) and human ones (tradition and practice of cultivation) that gives a unique character to each small agricultural locality and the food grown, raised, made, and cooked there (Trubek, 2008). More dimensions in the translation of the term terroir could be added through the concepts of local and traditional cuisine, designated in Norway as indigenous or native (Østerlie & Wicklund, 2018). Terroir can be identified as a complex element that brings distinctiveness to food, understood as the natural aspects of a specific region, it plays a central role both in the production of food and in food tourism (Bertella, 2011). Linking the celebration of local cuisine to tourism Trubek (2008) featured terroir food as a remedy for people in search for something true, an antidote having provisional roots in peoples' increasingly fast-paced lives.

So, in the tourism industry the concept of terroir is not new but specifically important in culinary tourism. Analysing knowledge in food tourism, Bertella (2011) discussed strategies to determine whether food tourism with respect to specific terroir is a realistic development. Such determinations offer an indication about which forms of food tourism to promote. The author concluded that any policy regarding food tourism should be based on the peculiarities of the specific terroir (Bertella, 2011).

The importance of seasonal produce in building terroir and providing a unique seasonal taste within tourism by using foods available in each season was discussed by Fusté-Forné (2018) using the example of wild mushrooms as rural, mountain and forest terroir. In Troms and Finnmark such terroir is wild northern berries, as old sorts of berries have developed and are well adapted to the climate and soil in the region, which could be said to have the character of terroir (Østerlie & Wicklund, 2018). Thus, accumulating culture, nature and production (which can also be berry harvesting), terroir is a promising discourse for wild northern berry analyses in peoples' diet and possibilities in tourism.

2.3 Gifts of nature

In the middle of my fully-fledged review of the literature where wild northern berries are seen in one way or another as a source of income, I want to touch upon relations where wild fruits are above the economic value and draw your attention to studies portraying berries as gifts. Concerning the scarcity of research on berries in tourism, and in order to hold on to the complexities around wild northern berries, the literature overview presented in the preceding section is not sufficient to answer the research question, so I needed to go deeper in two other areas

– berries as gifts within communities and gifts of nature. Here, I begin by reviewing studies on food gifts in the region, then I refer to the literature portraying cultural and social meaning of berry picking and then the legislation of the activity in Troms and Finnmark. In between endeavours to monetize wild berry uses are addressed, with the majority of attention placed on scientific works about berries in restaurants and related sectors. Finally, the integral characteristics of wild northern berries – seasonality and wilderness, which, on one hand, attract tourists to them and on the other – add complexity to mutual interaction, are deconstructed from the literature.

Food gifts circulation in northern Norwegian communities was explored in a few case studies (Lien, 2001; Kramvig, 2005; Svensson, 2014), and linkages made between such gift giving and the sustenance of social relations between people. Wild edible plants as natural assets are gifts of nature by themselves, they are freely utilized by locals (Anderson, 2000; Łuczaj et al., 2012) and have a great potential for tourism (Cohen & Fennell, 2019).

Back in the day and now, wild northern berries were and still are valuable gifts. Lien (2001) wrote about the cultural practice of cloudberry giving as a form of social safety net in Finnmark. Not just wild berries as they are, additionally, the information about affluent berry spots is considered a gift (Olsen & Thuen, 2012). Berries and berry related knowledge are not rendered to just anyone, they are carefully kept for special occasions and relations (Ween & Lien, 2012).

Several studies mentioned that wild berries are used as an exchange currency within or outside communities (Parlee & Berkes, 2005; Murray, Boxall, & Wein, 2005; Thornton, 2004; Everett, 2007; Olsen & Thuen, 2012; La Mela, 2014). Shifting the focus to berries for money change, different belief systems can cause complications for such a trade.

So, for indigenous and non-indigenous locals the commercialization of wild berries can be encountered differently. In the majority of reviewed sources (Murray, Boxall, & Wein, 2005; Thornton, 2004; Olsen & Thuen, 2012; Boulanger-Lapointe et al., 2019), I found no support that wild berries were ‘a forbidden fruit’ for commodification or pure profit but rather the opposite – people hold a positive attitude to gaining money from harvesting. However, according to a case study on Gwich'in berry attitudes, Teetl'it Gwic'hin women “would never sell their berries for money” (Parlee & Berkes, 2005, p.134). According to Svensson (2014) within exchange practice ethical considerations and social sanctions prevent cloudberry from being a commodity in northern Norway. Nevertheless, in practice, I ubiquitously encountered yellow berries sold as mundane goods and it was indigenous and non-indigenous locals who benefited from it.

While the question of monetized wild berries is for now left open, the occurrence of berry giving certainly remains a gesture beyond reproach. Kuokkanen (2006) when interpreting indigenous philosophy argued that the gift constitutes a certain logic. Although there is a difference between interpersonal gift practices and giving to the land, Kuokkanen (2006) concentrated on the second

one, she claimed that the overall philosophy of the gift for indigenous people is above reciprocity and economy.

In this subsection, the array of scientific works devoted to berry picking from different standpoints is touched upon. Berry picking is often explored in a tight connection with hunting and fishing and such an approach has sound ground, claiming that similarities between the three practises lie in common land-use planning (Boulanger-Lapointe et al., 2019), meaning for locals (Dannevig, Bay-Larsen, van Oort, & Keskitalo, 2015, Boulanger-Lapointe et al., 2019; Hossain & Punam, 2020), and are equal parts of the annual cycle for Norwegian inhabitants (Ween & Lien, 2012). However, wild berry harvesting is superior to cruel hunting and fishing, at least in the matter of ethical considerations.

Everett (2005, 2007) pointed out that berry picking is a traditional activity beyond reproach. On the contrary to hunting and fishing that involve killing, berry picking is a more humane way to fend for oneself. Possibly, this is one of the reasons why berry picking is often considered as a woman and child driven practice (Ulltveit, 1995; Rattfelt, Pihl, & Nyblom 2011). It is indeed a popular way of bonding together between young generation and the maternal part of families, it is an activity that creates a variety of benefits for everyone involved. Socializing with experienced elders and knowledge sharing are among two valuable features of wild berry picking.

There are several studies of berry picking from indigenous perspective (Nuttall et al., 2005; Parlee & Berkes, 2005; Boulanger-Lapointe, 2019; Joks, 2022) which claimed it is important for maintaining social relationships and cultural identity in indigenous societies. However, not only indigenous communities benefit from the positive social effect of harvesting practice. In their article, Pouta, Sievänen and Neuvonen (2006) suggested that harvesting is a source of rich social relations in poor rural areas, and a time for recreation and socializing for all northern inhabitants. In northern Norway, where people enjoy every day of the sunny summer and rely heavily on nature to fulfil their free time slot, a berry picking tour is often a good reason to come together.

Facilitating a healthy diet as well as wellbeing for those who have access to them, wild northern berries are so valuable, that in many areas they are controlled at a governmental level. In Scandinavian countries every mans' right proclaims berry picking with no impediment and free of charge (Pouta, Sievänen, & Neuvonen, 2006; Sténs & Sandstrom, 2013; La Mela, 2014). Nevertheless, exceptions to this general rule do exist and they concern a selected area of research.

In the territories of Troms and Finnmark, cloudberry picking has been limited *de jure* since 1854. Bratrein (1995) provided an overview on the cloudberry picking legislation in northern Norway. Modern restrictions are derived from a prohibition dating back to the 9th of June 1854 about cloudberry picking on privately owned lands in northern Norway, with the exception of berries

eaten on the spot. Nowadays, regulations on berry picking are a part to the right of public access, described in Section 5 the outdoor activities act (Friluftsløven, 1957):

During outings, the general public can harvest wild nuts to be eaten on site and pick and take wild flowers, plants, berries and wild mushrooms, as well as roots of wild herbs, when it is done with consideration and care.

For cloudberry on cloudberry land in Nordland, Troms and Finnmark, the first paragraph applies only when the owner or user has not imposed an explicit prohibition on picking. Regardless of such an explicit ban, the public can always pick cloudberry that are eaten on site.

The appliance of the law was commented on by Winge and Nohr (2020), the construction of ‘cloudberry land’ is explained as an abundant cloudberry spot that is economically significant for the landowner. So, to restrict cloudberry harvests being taken away from the place of picking, the landowner should make the prohibition explicit for others, by putting signs or information boards nearby the cloudberry patches. Even with such an embargo it is still legal to pick cloudberry and eat them on site.

Another document which concerns management of land and natural resources is The Finnmark Act (2005) the purpose of which is to facilitate the management of land and natural resources in Finnmark in a balanced and ecologically sustainable manner. According to the Finnmark Act (2005) everyone can pick cloudberry on the land of Finnmark property. Those who do not belong to the local population on Finnmark property are only allowed to pick cloudberry for their own household (Finnmark Act, 2005).

Researchers have argued that the fully-fledged commercialization of wild berry resource demands steady supply and is hindered by unpredictability (Martinussen et al., 2019) which is result of both wilderness and seasonality. Although the absolute advantage of pristine origin is that the number of healthy substances in wild berries is higher than in conventionally grown ones (Mithril et al., 2012), belonging to the wilderness causes some issues. If tasting local food in its original place in the right time is what lure tourists interested in authentic experiences (Fusté-Forné, 2019), year-to-year variation in availability and overall short season can be the reasons for a dent in demand.

Thus, restraining factors for berries ramping up their potential within tourism and general commercialization are crop seasonality and belonging to the wilderness. The issues of wild foods seasonality in culinary tourism were unfolded by Fusté-Forné (2019), who noted the binary nature of the phenomenon and mentioned both, negative and positive effects of food seasonality in tourism. Concerning the wilderness, Saarinen (2019) provided a fundamental overview of the concept, he deconstructed the term with attention to tourism, but looked on wilderness as the main subject rather than the object which influences it, as threatened by tourism but not a tourism threat.

Wilderness perceptions of locals in Finnmark were touched upon by Ween and Lien (2012), who denoted the difference between wilderness for northern inhabitants and outsiders. Finally, the wilderness narrative was analysed with regard to berries by Doonan (2016), who focused on cloudberry as a nexus of systemic and institutional logics that intersect to construct the 'wilderness' category as a pretext for regional development.

There are several accounts on wild northern fruits within restaurants and festivals. Dining establishments around the world play a vital role in offering cuisines founded on the permanent uses of locally grown food (Fusté-Forné, 2019). For culinary tourists, such use is the touch point for their object of interest. Wild berry centred events are another supplementing part of the overall canvas of wild berry image (Everett, 2005, 2007). Berry festivals complement the culinary tourism field, and often attract masses of visitors. The perspective of organizing an event of such kind in northern Norway is explored in this thesis. From tangible sharing of wild berry value through traditional and newly invented cooking to intangible engaging with berry-centred topics during thematic experiences, wild fruits can create many touch points in host-guest interactions.

2.4 Food security

The third concept that craves attention is food security. I inspect food sovereignty theory in the Arctic and entangle wild berries to the concept of food security to understand why wild fruits are important for locals to enrich further analysis of their potential in tourism. I begin by conceptualizing what food security is and how it is seen in this thesis. Then, I overview scientific works ascribing indigenous knowledge in the agenda of food security in the Arctic. Finally, I revise the literature featuring wild berries in northern tourism connecting berries in culinary tourism to sustaining food security.

Concentrating on Norwegian realities, the country's population is steadily growing², such growth is one of the key challenges for food security (Shaheen, Ahmad, & Haroon, 2017). Wild berries proliferating in northern areas have lost their level of prior attention by locals due to industrialization and economic growth. These berries represent an ambitious crop that can feed more than Norwegian citizens. So, following recommendations of the United Nations (United Nations, n.d.) to adopt best methods and practices and learn from indigenous knowledge, wild berries should be in the limelight to maintain food security and, respectively, environmental balance in the North.

Global food production should increase drastically to meet future demand. Additionally, the ecological footprint from this food production should be reduced for the sake of the environment

² Retrieved from: <https://population.un.org/wpp/Maps/> Last visited 15.04.2022

(Hickey, Pouliot, Smith-Hall, Wunder, & Nielsen, 2016). A magic bullet, well-known and widely used for tackling this issue in third world countries (Shaheen, Ahmad, & Haroon, 2017; Hickey et al., 2016) and indigenous communities (Nilsson, 2018; Smith et al., 2019) is wild foods.

Over the last decades, because of concerns regarding climate change, more and more researchers are disturbed with the food security in the Arctic region and consider wild foods an alternative to indemnify a stable supply of good quality food. Nilsson (2018), while depicting Sámi realities, wrote that food security is an issue of increasing concern amidst large-scale changes in climate and the development of national food systems based on trade rather than local production. Similar concerns encouraged the study of the contribution of wild foods to diet, food security, and cultural values in an era of climate change in Native American communities, USA (Smith et al., 2019). Wild berry picking was found to have not only positive influence on securing an edible supply (Smith, et al.2019), but also wild berries were forecasted to have a great potential for increased utilization (Nilsson, 2018). So, in addition to cultural importance and strategic tourism perspective, the role of wild berries in securing food supplies are also concerns of this present study.

It is quite difficult to state a concrete definition of food security. There are about two hundred definitions (Shaheen et al., 2017). However, during the World Food Summit in 1996, a general understanding of the concept was suggested as “food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (Food and Agriculture Organization, 1996). A comprehensive analysis of factors determining food security was conducted by Shaheen et al. (2017) with specific attention to edible wild plants as an alternative approach to food security. A conceptualisation of food security by referring to four pillars: availability, access, utilisation and stability or sustainability was completed by areas (Hossain et al., 2020) with an emphasis on the Arctic regions of Nordic countries, more precisely Sápmi. Food security can also refer to a situation in which people maintain traditional knowledge about how to utilize wild plants and berries for local food production (Hossain et al., 2020).

Although, wild berries are a resource that in times of need gives some guarantees to indigenous people, they are accessible for other locals too, and yet are not presently overly favoured. Due to urbanisation, valuable ingredients that help meet the dietary needs (and not only) of those in the North, have largely been abandoned (Hossain et al., 2020). Turning back to legislation within berry harvesting, traditionally performed activity is also constrained by state-based natural resources management regimes, limiting the ability of people to be flexible in their food practice (Hossain et al., 2020). This complements food insecurity in northern Norway. Even though, knowledge of sustainable food systems in Sápmi is crucial to develop future systems for food security not only

among the Sámi people, but also in the entire North (Nilsson, 2018), this must be reinforced to gain more attention of all locals.

Mostly due to focusing on material goods or shifting to a money-dominant world and Norway being a proliferating country, wild berries have been cast into the shade with lesser and lesser young people interested in harvesting from the wild rather than buying (Boulanger-Lapointe et al., 2019; Nilsson, 2021). A whole array of studies (Pouta et al., 2006; Peltola et al., 2014; Hossain et al., 2020) named economic growth as responsible for abandoning wild crops in Scandinavia. At the same time wild berries are still widely present in the traditional culinary and livelihood of citizens in the north and used in the local restaurants, craft shops and imbedded into touristic tours.

While separation from harvesting practice compromises wild berry supply for single individuals and is a deliberate choice, the availability, accessibility and safety are threatened by climate change. In an ethnobotanical study that concentrated on berry traditions in a changing socio-ecological landscape Boulanger-Lapointe et al. (2019) deduced that the availability of berries and accessibility to berry patches were threatened by climate change. These complications in the ability of indigenous peoples to access traditional food can have a corresponding impact on the social fabric of their communities (Nuttall et al., 2005). Several research projects on wild foods in indigenous communities amidst climate change concluded those wild foods contribute to resilient and sustainable food systems by supporting health, cultural, economic, and environmental well-being (Nuttall et al., 2005; Smith et al., 2019). Thus, wild berry picking although constrained by climate change, complements food security and is sustainable practice in a climate change era.

There is a scarcity of scientific works regarding wild northern berries in tourism. Existing research focuses on explorations of wild berries as a valuable, albeit not exclusively edible, resource from the perspectives of nature-based, wellness and cultural tourism. Hjalager and Konu (2011) discovered wild berries as a valuable Nordic element in cosmetics in wellness tourism. Miettinen (2005) drew an example from cultural tourism wherein wild berries are embedded in Nellim village tours as a part of traditional Sámi Skolt livelihood. Interest in wild fruits in different areas of the tourism industry underline its omnitude, but my main interest lies within the scope of culinary tourism.

The overall position of wild northern berries in the northern food market is estimated to rely on several theoretical resources. A survey among Nordic countries in the wild berry sector (Paassilta, Moisio, Jaakola, & Häggman, 2009) sketched the realities of the wild berry business, touching upon practicalities and challenges. In a study on food's Arctic origin perspectives, Nøstvold, Kvalvik and Heide (2021) discussed the perceptions of Arctic food by consumers and producers, which allows further elaboration on wild northern berry potential in commerce and culinary tourism.

de la Barre and Brouder (2013) investigated the role of food in the Arctic tourism experience, examining food tourism trends in Yukon, Canada and Swedish Lapland. Although, in the article, few berry-related experiences were touched upon because wild berry products were not the key interest of the research. However, the authors underpinned vibrant connections between Arctic meal, food security and storytelling, while situating their analysis in a tourism context.

Some believed that food is seldom central in Arctic tourism, instead it is present as an experiential component, and enhances visitor experience (de la Barre & Brouder, 2013). Others considered gastronomy a key element in tourism, especially with destinations related to culture and heritage (Ravdna & Mathiesen, 2020). No doubt, food tourism makes it possible to approach a culture in a more authentic, experiential and participatory way (Fusté-Forné, 2019). Although, I argue that in the realities of Troms and Finnmark county, edibles are quite seldom the main reason for people to come here, but a supplementary bonus. Mostly, wild northern berries are overshadowed by more nutritious main courses with reindeer meat and Norwegian salmon and settle for second-role positions on menus. Nevertheless, berries within culinary tourism give travellers a unique taste of the Norwegian Arctic. Enhancing this berry taste, terroir speciality and gift of pristine nature, by the traditional knowledge embedded in berry practices, the role of berries in tourism and everyday life of locals will only increase, entwisting berries even more deeply into the food security of the region.

2.5 Conclusions

Scoping the whole array of studies and research that in one way or another engage with wild northern berries, I sketched through the concepts and main arguments that inform the theory used in the future chapters. Albeit I believe that wild berries have a great potential in various types of tourism, my chosen theoretical background together with empirical material allow wild berry analysis within the culinary or food tourism domain. All academic and non-academic works as well as scientific concepts provide a supportive foundation for building my own discussion.

In the various sections of this chapter, I outlined prominent literature on the characteristics of Norwegian wild berries, their place in the diets of different indigenous groups and the northern Norwegian population. Although, there are other works devoted to cloudberries, lingonberries, crowberries, blueberries and many other wild northern berries, dissimilarities in their chosen focus or perspective constrain me from relying on them in this present research. The thoroughly selected concepts of terroir, gift and food security with adopted reference works also contribute to analytical discussion that aims to answer my research questions.



Chapter 3: Methodology and methods

3.1 Introduction

While it is easy to report on methods used in the course of work, to describe research methodology is a demanding, though vital task. Methodology, an essential component of social scientific research, informs a researcher's awareness of, and reflection about methods in which to engage during any enquiry (Hammersley, 2010). It embraces the aspirations of the researcher and reveal how research was conducted.

In this Master's project, I was led by an ethnographic methodology, which refers to methods employed in a study and a qualitative approach in general. My topic of wild berries in tourism could have had many different methodological entrances, however, I chose to follow the ethnographic methodological steps of Rantala (2011) in order to gain new insights by:

- 1) participating in the activities studied;
- 2) analysing the context of the activities;
- 3) adhering to reflexivity during the research process.

All these steps were aimed at obtaining new embodied knowledge of wild northern berry practises and then to communicate that knowledge through text.

This present chapter is above all an overview of, and here I use the much-loved metaphor adopted from Moses and Knutsen (2019), the well-equipped toolbox namely methodology and tools i.e. methods. Firstly, I elaborate on my enthusiasm for studying wild berries in tourism in Troms and Finnmark and the type of research that was carried out. Secondly, I describe one by one the methods used to perform my data collection. Thirdly, I touch upon ethical considerations which were accounted for before and during the course of my project. Fourthly, I share the challenges that ambushed me along the whole process. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to communicate my way through the vast expanse of possibilities for undertaking this research.

3.2 Choice of subject and methodological review

Wild northern berries can be found everywhere during the fascinating time when summer and autumn merge in the Arctic. Being a foodie with exceptional interest in healthy high-quality products and tolerable competence in wild plants, I ended up with a strong desire to extend knowledge about wild berries.

Practice-based research regarding foraging took place from positions of not-knowing – from both the native and immigrant perspective – as well as a ‘very-locally-sourced’ experience (Paterson, 2013, p.162). The term foraging applies to the physical practice of finding wild food in one's own local environment, but also a research process, foraging for information on sites, within books, across networks, and from the Internet (Paterson, 2013). I have concentrated my study on Alta, Storslett, Karasjok, which are central to Troms and Finnmark county. The locations can be mapped in a hypothetical triangle with Alta and Storslett lying on the coastline and Karasjok situated deeper in the Norwegian tundra. The shape of a metaphorical triangle can also be assigned to my prior knowledge, with two starting points at “Bærkokeriet” and “Nordlysmat” which I visited for the first time due to my research interest, and a much deeper background from Karasjok where my blended Sámi family lives. The race for new knowledge apart from rethinking my prior experiences (picking berries and talking about berries with various people, working in the food industry) included processes of gathering and ingesting visual pictures, smells, sounds and of course berries themselves.

I was leaning towards an ethnographic method as a gateway for conducting current study within tourism to deepen the understanding of berry realities. As Rantala (2011) stated the ethnographic approach is nothing more than an adequate way for a researcher to gain embodied, situational, and practice-related knowledge. I believe such embodiment provided a reliable framework for studying wild berries and their place within tourism.

When referring to embodied and practice related knowledge regarding wild northern berries, I mean an awareness of what wild fruits are and what they are for, how climate and other conditions will affect berry crops, when and where to harvest. Human and non-human actors carry this wisdom. Berry knowledge is embedded in the land, it is nurtured by people involved in berry practices – to get this insider lore I had to immerse myself in the setting, to experience all at the corporeal level, to entrust myself to the body senses. I was trying to be flexible and seek complexity. So, the crave for embodied knowledge first and foremost pointed me to the entrance to ethnography.

My research design was inspired by ethnographic method. Differentiating ethnographic study from the qualitative perspective in general, Rantala (2011) emphasised that it is the first-hand exploration of the research setting and the importance given to the social context of the research subject that make a difference. I wanted to go through the thick and thin of planning and conducting field work to base my knowledge on personal experience because above all I believe that trustworthy data can be obtained *in situ*, where berry practices unfold.

Although I realize that the fundamental idea behind ethnography is long-lasting fieldwork, it is possible to do ethnography-inspired research in a shorter period, even as short as one day (Kramvig

& Førde, 2013). As I was aiming from the very beginning to attain insight into berry realities in tourism, ethnography and participation in berry practices proved to be reliable guidelines in creating new knowledge. Ethnography requires an intrinsically reflexive role of the researcher and an acceptance of the messiness of the research process, which both gave me opportunity to immerse myself in the context without reducing its complexity (O'Reilly, 2012). Ethnography also enabled me to tell a deep, candid and sound story about wild northern berries. These reasons determined my use of ethnography as the one adequate way to gain embodied knowledge within research.

Notwithstanding that field work took four days and research interviews were done with only two key informants I obtained rich data with which to work. In the realm of this thesis, I decided to concentrate on no more than two businesses because of several constraining reasons. These reasons differ for everyone, however, are intrinsic to larger scale personal or scientific projects. My main deterrents were the limited number of companies to engage with in the field and a rigid timeline. So, I had to sacrifice quantity in favor of stronger discussion and deeper data analysis.

My aspirations appeal to the works of Everett (2005, 2007, 2011, 2012) whose holistic take on berries in tourism created a solid theoretical backdrop for this study. Taking her cue, I also adopted ethnographic approach to seek answers to my research questions. After all, interdisciplinary scholars from long ago facilitated the documentation of social and cultural meanings of food through ethnographic methods (Everett, 2005), so exploration of wild berry's position in tourism through ethnography was a viable methodological strategy.

Embodied, situational knowledge resonated differently with multiple methods: participant observations, keeping field notes, interviews. Thus, in three paragraphs below I sketch the procedure of how methods were carried out or how methodology delineated methods.

Being together with my informants in the field went beyond field notes analyses and even interview dialog insights. Observing and taking part in what my two informants were doing corresponded to participating in the meaning creation of land, berries, daily practices. Embodied knowledge of field work is knowledge of body movements (how to orient in space, where to go to find patches, in what way to pluck different berries) smell and taste (of both fresh fruits found during the picking tours and products made from them in “Nordlysmat” and “Reisa”) and other sensations.

Kinesthetic sensations, which are fundamental for handwriting, provide phenomenological analysis of the perceived environment and transform the information into something more. Cognition through writing was examined by Frangou (2018), who acknowledged that sensations involved in handwriting connect us to the outside world and new knowledge. In capital letters or in bold, underlined or scratched, the special meanings have even shortcuts, as well as situatedness

on the notebook sheet – text organizes and imprints the data. Later, text speaks back repeating old and triggering new meanings. The use of field notes was predetermined as an extension of my memory, but above all, the writing process in itself developed and shaped the knowledge as I was writing and after.

Another reflection on what I have done in the research process concerns the way semi-structured interviews were conducted. During the interviews I also aimed to obtain situational embodied knowledge through the senses. Such knowledge included the way my informants articulated, changed their voice tones depending on the question asked, their facial expressions and mimics. Additionally, through knowledge garnered from hearing and sight, I was able to use gustatory and tactile senses to further my knowledge. The following provides two snapshots of acquiring embodied knowledge: «*By the way we are launching new product. Would you taste it?*»; «*There is a batch of goods waiting to be sent. Would you pack it?*» – «*Sure thing. Gladly!*»³. In both cases I again had opportunity to gain new knowledge through embodiment during interviews.

The body is associated with senses and is within the description of ethnography. Embodied knowledge is what I learned commuting from one berry spot to another about the swampy cloudberry bogs, smelly lingonberry patches, sour blueberry taste; it is HOW I learned. Embodiment and situatedness narrate how I did what was done, discovering wild berries in tourism.

3.3 Data collection methods

I used qualitative methods, because I believe they are a reasonable way to study berries in tourism. A good qualitative study combines an in-depth understanding of the particular setting being investigated with general theoretical insights that transcend that particular type of setting (Taylor et al., 2015). That is why, along with interviews and field work, including getting feet wet (for cloudberry picking quite literally, as it grows in the bogs and marshes) a thorough literature analysis was undertaken.

Before elaborating on my main methods of data collection, I want to underline once again the importance of a thorough theoretical foundation. In the past, ethnographic approaches were believed to be limited to pure description and offering little scope for understanding the dynamics of tourism (Dann, Nash, & Pearce, 1988). Therefore, as a preliminary task I reviewed the literature on wild berry practices and berries in tourism, to be able to trace the development of tourism research on the topic and to say something about its current state (Dann et al., 1988).

³ An approximate reconstruction of dialog phrases during the research interviews.

3.3.1 Participant observations

Studying wild berries in tourism in Troms and Finnmark, I was lucky to engage with two venues whose work is based on wild foods. I was kindly hosted by the owners aka managers of both businesses and spent useful time full of valuable insights in their company. Before my fieldwork, I took short reconnaissance trips as preliminary steps to get acquainted with settings. I paid two proper visits to each venue during August-November 2021, three of which were one day based and one where I stayed for two days. The rough estimation of intensive interactions is about 25 hours.

I found myself unconsciously employing field tactics that helped me to broaden my knowledge of settings and informants (Taylor et al., 2015). The most effective field tactic was placing myself in situations likely to yield the data in which I was interested (Taylor et al., 2015), in my case these were berry picking trips. I fished many interesting stories and practice related facts from those tours, but even more useful in terms of information gained was unplanned ‘employment’ at the companies with which I tightly collaborated. Once I was asked to look after the shop, another time I was left to carry on working on the preparations for dispatching the products. Both situations taught me a lot about how companies really function, not to mention that for some moments I really felt a part of the team. Building reports in the field and giving something back to informants are not the only reason to do favours for people or to help them out; these activities can also be effective ways of getting access to the information that would not otherwise be available (Taylor et al., 2015).

My participant observations included common berry harvesting, squeezing berry juice and arranging stickers on the packaging in the production process, dialoguing with workers and many other. All these activities were vital to go through in order to immerse myself in the realities of berry businesses in Troms and Finnmark, I enjoyed time spent in participant observations. Unlike researchers who use most other methods, participant observers and qualitative interviewers often develop feelings towards their subjects (Taylor et al., 2015). It happened in my case, I am very thankful to people with whom I was interacting for being open and willing to share their knowledge. The field work for me was an unforgettable adventure.

The method of participant observations that I conducted in the relatively early stage of research helped me in formulating interview questions. My initial stance was “I don't know what questions to ask or how to ask them until I have spent some time in the setting” (Taylor et al., 2015, p.73). Although during conversations in the field, I was enquiring and getting answers on many relative questions, those conversations empowered me to deepen my questioning and later, triggered comprehensive interviews. As observers acquire knowledge and understanding of a setting, questioning becomes more focused and directed (Taylor et al., 2015).

3.3.2 Field notes

Participant observations depend upon the recording of complete and detailed field notes (Taylor et al., 2015, p.81). As every researcher is just a human after all, relying exclusively on a faulty, imperfect memory that tends to forget details and facts can drastically affect the adequacy and completeness of gathered data. In anthropology where ethnography initially was used, the practice of keeping descriptive notes upon what was seen and experienced is longstanding (O'Reilly, 2012). So, in tourism studies, I follow the traditional way. Using numerous almanacs, diaries, remarks – all kinds of written records, it is possible to preserve the information obtained on site for further interpretation and analysis. Doubtless, everyone has h(is)er own take on how to engage in note-making.

O'Reilly (2012) claimed that for those who opted to use ethnography it is usual to start making sense of their data in the field, to take notes that are not just observations, but interpretations and theorisations. I concur, field notes in nature are raw data sources along with participant observations (Taylor et al., 2015). Without field notes, I could have limited my side thoughts and inspirational idea flows, which I considered valuable to preserve. Looking at my field notes taken hastily between conversations, wandering around the workshops, participating in production and berry picking tours, I can conclude that spending four to six hours recording field notes for every hour of observation (Taylor et al., 2015) did not work for me either. So, quite short, analytical reflections in the margins of my field notes served as little memos that could eventually be developed into more formal writing (O'Reilly, 2012).

Even though my supervisor Britt Kramvig suggested to have a separate journal for keeping field notes, for me it resulted in a messy process of noting with and in whatever turned up. I wrote mostly with pencil somewhere in the margins of a university conspectus and then often redid these on my computer into more descriptive versions. I featured everything, every berry harvesting with friends or on my own and every visit of two settings, the photos taken also helped me to keep track of what I saw and experienced. I broadened my pencil sketch to 15 pages of printed, by all conventional standards⁴, memo text describing many hours of personal observations and participation. It might seem too little according to some guidelines (Taylor et al., 2015), however it was clear and to the point. Such memo-writing can lead to more data collection, more observations, more questioning and thinking (O'Reilly, 2012).

⁴ Times New Roman font and 12 pts size 1.5 line spacing, and 2.5 centimetres margins

3.3.3 Interviews

An interview has been defined as a meeting where a questioner obtains information from a person to achieve a specific goal, and more generally, as a conversation with a purpose (Kvale, 2006). Comparing spontaneous dialogs during participant observations, in this Master's project, interviews were employed as a method to engage in more specific topics and broaden understandings developed during participant observations. It has been argued (Kvale, 2006; Magnusson & Marecek, 2015) that the research interview is nothing like casual dialog, it has a dominant logic, the interviewer's project and knowledge interest set the agenda and rule the conversation.

I looked up to Kvale's (2006) advice on how to do interviews and build an interview guide, I implemented many of his suggestions in the course of my interview work. The key principle that I adopted is the interview is not a dialog. Interviews were a complementary method, employed to clarify and enrich the insights gained during field work, as all topics were derived from personal observations during my visits.

Two interviews with business owners were conducted in order to shed light on the research question. Being an instrument for providing the interviewer with descriptions, narratives, which the scholar then interprets and reports according to h(is)er research interests (Kvale, 2006), interviews complemented my other methods and fulfilled many informational gaps. They informed my thesis regarding concrete issues and deepened my understanding of informants' perspectives.

Interviews vary from highly structured to free and open ones, every version has its advantages and disadvantages as well as in many cases they are representations of the author's view on research. For instance, positivists imply a higher degree of structure, while 'romantic researchers' prefer loosely structured interview guides (Alvesson, 2010). For me, the ideal approach was using the best from two worlds – semi-structured interviews. This involved an interview guide with themes to be covered, in a broad, flexible manner and enabled me to avoid the limitations of the other two interview kinds. The disadvantage of highly structured studies is a scarcity of new results, they tend to answer pre-given questions, which does not stimulate the raising of new ones (Alvesson, 2010). The risk of unstructured interviews lies in wasted time while letting people talk on irrelevant topics and follow too many tangents (Alvesson, 2010). In semi-structured interviews, the limit of chosen topics is present, and the interviewer is concerned to get answers on all of them, yet neither the questions nor the answers need to appear in the set order of an interview guide (Magnusson & Marecek, 2015).

While conducting both interviews I allowed slight deviations in the order of questions, some questions from the interview guide were omitted as they were answered as part of responses to other inquiries, also subquestions varied depending on the natural conversation flow. Allowing

this is suggested as being reasonable in semi-structured interviews (Alvesson, 2010; Taylor et al., 2015; Magnusson & Marecek, 2015); together with some extent of personalization. In strict surveys, the interviewer's task is to question all informants identically, however in interpretative research, the interviewer should create equally good conditions for participants and as all people are different, this task requires approaching informants somewhat differently (Magnusson & Marecek, 2015).

Two key participants in in-depth interviews were also the main guides during my field work, they are Linda Fjellheim from “Bærkokeriet” and Toril Bakken Kåven from “Nordlysmat”. Both informants are locals and their ancestors had resided in the Troms and Finnmark for generations. Both operate within one segment of wild foods targeting tourists and represent a small business niche. Both are owners/senior managers of their respective businesses and are eager appraisers of wild berries. The different locations of their venues and dissimilar utilization of wild berries in production guaranteed two independent and distinct viewpoints on the same issues.

In this project, interviews with the two selected people were employed because of three main reasons. Firstly, to record through further analysis the stories of interviewees' early and present relations with wild northern berries, their memories and family traditions. Secondly, to gain in-depth insights into the realities of companies that work with wild berries and associate themselves with the tourism sector. Thirdly, to get a grasp of the position of wild berries' in those businesses covertly belonging to tourism as well as industry in general.

For interviews I vaguely allocated between 1 to 2 hours, since I did not know how broad or long answers might be. Another reason is that face-to-face interviews with managers during work time is a process of negotiation. What I mean is, the crucial point in getting answers to my questions was the ability to adjust to free time spans in the tight work agenda of my informants. Both interviews were conducted in the locations of “Bærkokeriet” and “Nordlysmat”, during minutes free from talking, I was able to resume participant observations.

Such a messy take on interview timing suited my informants and gave me opportunity to extend participant observations. So, I do not agree with Magnusson and Marecek (2015) who emphasized the strict obedience to pre-given timeframe and stated that the main responsibility of the researcher is to complete the interview within an agreed-upon time. At the end of our semi-structured interviews, both participants were surprised that there were no more questions, and the interviews were done. We continued for a while with a free-flowing conversation that reached a natural conclusion. Even though I have spent 4 and 3 hours respectively at “Bærkokeriet” and “Nordlysmat”. The time of voice recordings were 1 hour 25 minutes and 1 hour 5 minutes.

Using interviews as a research method gives rich, valuable data and on all counts is a gratifying experience. On one hand, it is about knowing a field well enough to hold meaningful and flowing

conversation, and on the other, about being humble, and to learn and seek insights into a world that is not your own (Kramvig & Førde, 2013). Interviews were held face-to-face during late October-mid-November 2021. Face-to-face was the preferred form because it is believed that interviews conducted through external devices are likely to lead to poorer quality interviews (Alvesson, 2010). Semi-structured interviews did not bring any surprises and I always felt in control over the conversation.

3.4 Ethical considerations

Several guiding recommendations and necessary requirements regarding recognised norms of research ethics were retrieved from the website of NESH (The Norwegian National Research Ethics Committee)⁵ and strictly followed in the course of work for this Master's thesis. As an obligatory procedure, the project was registered with NSD (Norwegian centre for research data) on the 4th of August 2021 and only after approval on the 25th of August 2021 I moved from the planning to doing stage. Both institutions NESH and NSD as well as extra assistance from my home university provided a clear idea of how to conduct research in an ethical manner by holding to good scientific practice.

“In-depth, unstructured nature of qualitative research and the fact that it raises issues that are not always anticipated mean that ethical considerations have a particular resonance in qualitative research studies” (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003, p. 66). During my field work and semi-structured interviews, I asked questions of a private nature regarding the likes of educational and working background, berry related memories from childhood and stories about family traditions. This approach of knowing some personal information let me build knowledge on a broader foundation. Though, collected personal data was specifically confined to the interests of the thesis and excluded any sensitive information. For me, ethics was intrinsic and my main ethical position was to stay humane and show empathy to the people with whom I engaged.

My main ethical consideration was rejection of anonymity of interviewees. From the very beginning, I was willing to name key informants of this study. Researcher necessarily make ethical and moral decisions when conducting field research (Taylor et al., 2015). The NSD can insist on certain protections for subjects but cannot make all decisions for researcher.

While several sources claimed that confidentiality goes hand in hand with protecting participants from harm (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003; Taylor et al., 2015; Magnusson & Marecek, 2015), I did not study any sensitive topics, so precautions were considered non-compulsory. Kvalsvik (2019)

⁵ Retrieved from: <https://www.forskningsetikk.no/en/guidelines/social-sciences-humanities-law-and-theology/guidelines-for-research-ethics-in-the-social-sciences-humanities-law-and-theology/> Last visited 14 February 2022

argued that stories and skills are embodied, and only the one living in a body of certain experience has that knowledge, which is why, it is not ethical to present personal stories as anonymised or generic. I could not agree more, so I did not want to anonymize my key informants.

Both informants agreed upon been named in this study, they were notified that the thesis would be published and available to the general public. Apart from signing a copy of written informed consent, where the purpose of the project, the meaning of their participation, their rights and contact information for me and my project supervisor, were stated, interviewees received their own copies of consent. The key participants also received the final draft of this thesis before it was submitted. They had opportunity to reflect upon my interpretations of our interactions as well as direct citations that were used in the thesis with subsequent changes from my side if such were required.

3.5 Challenges

For me, conducting this Master's project, full-scale independent research, was quite a challenging process, as it is the very first endeavour of mine at such a level. Along the way I encountered many difficulties, in one way or another I overcame all of them and learned a lot from every single nuisance. Holding to good scientific practices I want to be as open and honest as I can, not only in communicating arguments and conclusions, but also in depicting my working processes. Subsequently, some of the main challenges are described below.

Gaining key participants, people who would host me, devote many hours to me and open up to me, so I could fetch their stories and knowledge – was the hardest task. First of all, it was not easy to find and reach those with whom I was looking to engage. I started to select and contact prospective informants as early as April 2021, but final agreement took place in August 2021. There was a very limited circle of people who have businesses based on wild berries in Troms and Finnmark county. Moreover, seniors are always busy, especially amidst the berry season, when I needed to step in, luckily two gave their consent to participate. As Toril Bakken Kåven commented: *«I agreed to take part in this research just because Britt Kramvig, my former professor from student years asked me, otherwise I would have rejected. Too many things to do»*.

Norwegian language was another challenge. I do know the language well enough to refer to books and articles written in Norwegian, however I am not that fluent to hold conversations about wild berries as a tourism topic. It has been mentioned that when conducting participant observations, a researcher has to 'learn the language', as meanings of words and symbols can vary from setting to setting (Taylor et al., 2015). In my case, I literally had to learn the language, I always had at hand a Norwegian-English translator application in case something needed to be

translated. The main language, though, was English with a mix of Norwegian and Russian⁶ (surprisingly, one of the workers at “Bærkokeriet” was Russian speaking).

The global Covid-19 pandemic is too big issue to ignore here. As it started in early spring 2020, I had some time to adapt mentally as well as to plan the project with all precautions. Nevertheless, it was crucial for my research design to conduct field work on site. Despite the national and local restrictions, living in the north of Norway with the small density of population, I feel that the Corona virus affected us the least. Four scheduled visits were neither cancelled nor distracted by any social distancing and quarantine rules. However, one prospective informant rejected participation because of Covid-19.

It was mentally hard to concentrate on the writing process after 24th of February 2022 when my homeland was brutally attacked by its neighbouring country. Having family members in the middle of a fully-fledged war deployed colossal resources of all kinds, though work on my thesis, for me, became an escape from a devastating new reality. Only the constant support of my closest people helped me to finish on time.

3.6 Conclusions

This chapter revealed my methodological choices, from an elaboration on my ethnographic methodology and methods to my viewpoint on ethics and obstructions along the way. Based on research question, a qualitative approach was chosen. I realized that qualitative data could provide rich insights into human behaviour as well as be useful for uncovering emic views (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). With adopted methodology, a choice of methods became merely a tactical matter (Moses & Knutsen, 2012). Participant observations with field notes and two semi-structured interviews with key informants were used for data generation and analysis. Multiple methods enhanced dependability and veracity of the study.

My role as a qualitative researcher, was to immerse in the setting capturing not only embodied practices but also relational dimensions. An ethnographic methodology was employed in the context of gastronomic berry businesses as one way that research on wild berries can provide a base for understanding the place and role of wild fruits within tourism. My methodology required a close personal synergy, I distilled new knowledge through participation and empathy, it was created using interplay (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

⁶ I have two mother tongues: Ukrainian and Russian



Chapter 4: The settings

4.1 Introduction

Since I grounded my Master's thesis on insights obtained from two berry businesses, before I step into the analysis and discussion of wild berry realities in tourism in Troms and Finnmark, a thorough presentation regarding these two business venues for field work is needed. Subsequently, in this chapter, I familiarize the reader with the two settings in which I conducted my research: “Nordlysmat” and “Bærkokeriet”. I refer to information obtained during field work in August–November 2021, interviews with the owners Toril Bakken Kåven and Linda Fjellheim, also online resources devoted to the businesses, such as websites⁷ and social media pages on Facebook⁸ and Instagram⁹ (online content is in Norwegian). Thus, chapter 4 includes relevant information about the history and strategy of the businesses, detailed descriptions of their business structure, their general situation and relationship to the tourism industry.

Concentrating on the business side of the berry niche in tourism in northern Norway in this thesis, I was in search of enterprises that utilize wild local berries and make a quality product out of them. The main selection criteria were: situatedness in the northern Norway in Troms and Finnmark municipality; the explicit utilization of wild berries in products; the use of locally harvested berries; association with the food industry, and relation to tourism sector. I could have included businesses that exploit wild berries in other spheres, but that would be unjustified deviation from the original objective.

⁷ Website of Nordlysmat: <https://www.nordlysmat.no/> ; Websites of Bærkokeriet and Reisa: <https://berkokeriet.no/> , <https://www.reisa.no/> Last visited 16 February 2022

⁸ Facebook pages of Nordlysmat: <https://www.facebook.com/Nordlysmat?fref=ts> , <https://www.facebook.com/Kavenutmarksgaard/> Facebook pages of Bærkokeriet and Reisa: <https://www.facebook.com/berkokeriet> , <https://www.facebook.com/Reisasirup/> Last visited 16 February 2022

⁹ Instagram pages of Bærkokeriet and Reisa: <https://www.instagram.com/berkokeriet/> , <https://www.instagram.com/reisasirup/>

4.2 “Nordlysmat”, Alta



Figure 1 Nordlysmat from the inside of the café, August 2021, photo by the author

4.2.1 Exposition

“Nordlysmat” is a small business making foodstuffs with wild ingredients situated further away from the centre of Alta city, Troms and Finnmark county. Three people are permanently employed there with Toril Bakken Kåven as the administrative director and product developer in the lead. Sometimes, seasonal workers are required. Toril Bakken Kåven runs “Nordlysmat”, a production workshop, small-scale enterprise outputting organic food, it has a farm shop and café “Kåven Utmarksgård” – all in the one location.

As emphasised by Toril, the company is tightly connected to tourism, because of two reasons:

«Firstly, I have a tourism education myself...I have made [products] so nice that they also can be souvenirs... Secondly, our market. We are not selling that much here ourselves in the café, but we are selling to all other companies that have lots of tourists visiting».

The shop and café venues were also created and designed in addition to the production line for tourists, to attract them to the company and provide a place to rest and spend time during their visits.

The peak of “Nordlysmat” development Toril believes to be the year 2019, in early 2020 the working team was well prepared for the tourism season, a lot of resources were allocated to marketing and making the location attractive and appealing for tourists. However, the Covid-19 global pandemic ruined all the plans and dragged the state of affairs far behind. *«Since we are very dependent on the tourists, it has been terrible for us. We lost so much of our income, probably*

40% the first year, this year (referring to 2021) I think it will be better, but it is becoming even worse» (Toril).

Nordlysmat translated from Norwegian as Northern Lights food. For Toril there is a strong meaning behind the name. She believes that the natural phenomenon of the Northern Lights affects plants, animals, people living in the north also together with the midnight sun makes food originating in the north healthier and better tasting. With such a powerful relationship to nature and transcendental forces, “Nordlysmat” builds on the image of the purity and exclusivity of its merchandise.

The story of this business started in 1998 from Toril's love of everything from the land and her hobby to experiment in the kitchen. Her first products ended up as gifts to friends and neighbours, but eventually the business idea transgressed into “Nordlysmat Drift AS”. The company as it is today, was established in 2003.

The launch of the first products – jellies, initially happened at the local markets. Now, the assortment has grown and the realization of “Nordlysmat's” groceries is fulfilled across all Norway, products are presently in approximately 140 shops around the country. Wild berries are among ingredients in 9 out of 15 products at Nordlysmat, juniper in “Polarbjørk Drikk”, “Mørketids Gelé” “Fjell Eddik” and “Mjødurt Drikk”; crowberry in “Nordlys Eddik”, “Rabarbra Chutney”, “Nordlys Gelé”, “Salt med krøkebær” and lingonberry and juniper in “Tyttebørsalt med einer”. Juniper, crowberries and lingonberries are the main berry actors here.

4.2.2 Best from the Arctic wilderness

I arrive at the spot five minutes before the appointed time, the front door is open, so I make a first step towards the entrance and see Toril, she smiles to me and welcomes me inside. Toril is busy, in addition to many other personal and social positions, she is a politician, a representative in the Sámi parliament and this year is in the election. The business matters in the middle of berry-picking season and political activity just before elections are two good reasons to be extremely grateful for the time allocated to our meeting. Still, she comforts me that we have time to talk, have a tour around the production and go berry picking.

Toril tells that she came from a mixed Norwegian-Sámi family, where nature-based practises were embedded in every-day routines, and wild foods were on the table all year round. Back in 1998 she decided to start a nature-based business because her family before did a lot of wild fishing and because of the fear that the intensity of nature-based practices in everyday life of people was decreasing. I ask to elaborate.

According to Toril, there are two reasons why the businesses that concentrate their field of operation on nature resources are not a frequent occurrence: legislation and the excessive wealth

of Norwegians. The first one involves difficulties in transporting wild berries from their places of harvesting and a prohibition on use of quad bikes, all-terrain vehicles, in wild areas (though, Toril mentions that now the situation with those restrictions is a bit better). The second reason can be interpreted in a way that people have lost interest in wild fruits as they have enough money to buy fresh berries which are labeled and nicely packaged in plastic from the nearest grocery all year round.

For a while the conversation becomes emotional, I agree with the second argument as being originally from Ukraine¹⁰, I understand exactly what Toril means with the example of eastern European countries: «*When it is hard to survive then you have more meaning in life*», – she says. But berry picking is more than just a surviving necessity: «*Collecting from nature is extremely important for human beings, we can lose nature if we do not turn back to it*», – her thought continues. The precious renewable resources in the case of wild berries that are abundantly growing in northern Norwegian terrains do deserve appreciation, and I am a bit happier hearing Toril's assessment: «*Now it is better with local food valued more than 20 years ago*».

We go directly to the core of “Nordlysmat” in its unbarred beauty; the door opens and Toril leads the way. On the day of the visit local pickers have brought 40 liters of crowberries, I am impressed. In the meantime, Toril says that she can pick 20 liters in half an hour, although she is not harvesting for the company needs, just for fun and for further use in her private household. I did not catch the moment of crowberry delivery, but I see now the two-third full barrel in the middle of the kitchen. Shiny beads, lying in the gigantic plastic barrel contrast against the snow-white backdrop with their onyx charm, I have a feeling that those are by no chance berries but cold and stone-hard little round jewels...

Now, I gaze upon the storage of salt, flat trays filled with a thin layer of colorful glazed rocks resting on a wooden frame. Toril pulls forward one of the trays and rests her palm on the lilac shiny granules, the crowberry salt has extraordinary color. The lingonberry salt is light crimson, that stack of trays is further from me, but the difference in color is obvious. I go deeper in the small room, it is saturated with a sickly, sweet and luscious fragrance, the smell is undeniable. French perfume could have smell like this, but no, it is salt storage room in “Nordlysmat” that has this delicate aroma.

I am left for a while, in the café, more accurately, in the former café, as now the hall is not used for that purpose, so Toril can arrange some working matters. At this beautiful location the office, shop, café, manufacturing facility along with the private house are bonded together. Toril said that

¹⁰ In Ukraine the income level is much lower than in Norway, at the same time people are very involved in nature-based practices, they cultivate land and harvest wild foods such as mushrooms, herbs and not the least berries. Often wild berries are sold in the market squares afterwards in form of homemade jams, teas, and raw during the picking season; that is the correlation about which Toril is talking.

before it has been also a garden on the front line, the idea behind it was that people could come and observe how the components used in the production look like and grow in nature. But the magnificent location that should have served so many goals at once can be rearranged and even abandoned in favor of something leaner. All because the Covid-19 pandemic hit hard, the investments and efforts on marketing has gone down the drain and the huge stakes that were put into the tourism aspect of business fell flat.

Time to go berry picking. I was warned that we are not going on a proper picking tour but rather a walking-talking tour. Later, Toril says that before planning to go berry picking, she always makes a reconnaissance of the area in question.

It is literally two minutes' walk from the doorstep of “Nordlysmat” to the edge of the woods and the promising red carpet of lingonberries spurs us on. Toril leans forward and plucks a handful of lingonberries, she says that they are almost ready to pick as she never follows the rule of first frost¹¹. The moss is softly trailing the ground, it is such a pleasure to wander in the forest slowly steeping from one spongy hillock to another.

Toril has with her a white 20-liter bin and inside it another small red one, so self-assured for a short reconnaissance tour, but here I recall 20 liters of crowberries for half an hour and think that anything is possible. We do not have the tools, berry picking rakes with us, as I prefer to pick by hand and Toril has all hers left elsewhere, however, going deeper in the forest, it becomes clear that there is no berry abundance this year. Toril is surprised as last year she picked at this very same place 10 liters of blueberries, big, juicy berries beyond comparison to this-year's blueberries that hang on poor blueberry bushes here and there.

That might be because it was too cold here during the last winter or not enough moisture for the berries to grow, I ruminate with Toril on why there is such a scarcity of blueberries and lingonberries. Every year is unpredictable and that is a beautiful mystery of nature also a good reason to do reconnaissance tours beforehand. We turn back to the house, and I leave “Nordlysmat”.

¹¹ There is a common belief that lingonberries are ripe and good enough for consumption only after a frosty night, otherwise they are considered immature. The natural freeze up gives berries sweet taste and respectively more juice.

4.3 “Bærkokeriet”, Storslett



Figure 2 The author, outside the main entrance of Bærkokeriet, August 2021, photo from personal archive

4.3.1 Exposition

When I mention “Bærkokeriet” as a place where field work was done, I keep in the back of my head “Reisa”. Both are located in one building, and both are businesses managed by Linda Fjellheim. First is the shop and second is the production of berry syrups, both are small-scale and apart from seasonal workers, there are three permanent workers.

“Reisa”, the company named after the area where it is situated (Nordreisa municipality with administrative centre in Storslett) is the preliminary child of enthusiasts in love with berries. It is all about the production of wild berry syrups and other delicacies. Linda took over the company and eventually opened “Bærkokeriet”, the showroom of goodies made at “Reisa” as well as other local products.

Helmond Larsen was inspired by the local wild berry bounty and started “Reisa” around 1999. Experimenting with berries, he ended up making syrups out of them. Already then, Helmond also relied a lot on different groceries manufactured locally, such as: meat, fish, bread and other. In 2006 the company was owned by six people, the venue was rearranged, so syrups became the main and only commodity but as there was no work on business development, “Reisa” brought in hardly any profit. In 2012, Linda took over the company and restarted it again.

The berry cookery – that is how “Bærkokeriet” is translated from Norwegian, has more bound with tourism as the place is a nice-looking shop with a big window that opens to expose the production of syrups. It presents a wild berry image of local tradition and serves as a feasible place

to visit for tourists. That is why I always feature “Bærkokeriet”, rather than “Reisa”, as I consider the first one is more related to tourism.

From Linda's point of view, her companies halfway belong to tourism:

«We want to show what we do here and how our traditions are implemented daily to the rest of the world. To show that it is not so difficult, but it must be done and it is made by hands like we have always done, and we want to educate the visitors on how we preserve [these traditions]. So, I think we are in both ways, we want to keep it as local as possible, but we want to show the world how we are doing it».

However, at “Bærkokeriet”, a large part of profit comes from tourists stopping by with a desire to visit an attractive shop with local food situated just by the main road.

The assortment in “Bærkokeriet” is rather immense and not limited to food, apart from the physical store, the products can be ordered online via website. The online shop was created not long before Covid-19 hit, and it flourished during the pandemic. According to Linda the income from the online sales is equal or sometimes surpasses the income from “Bærkokeriet”.

The “Reisa” product range on the physical and virtual shelves are syrups, juices, jam and marmalade, sometimes there are also limited editions of other edible berry related products. Although the groceries are also complemented by souvenirs of many kinds, “Reisa” is mainly about food. Main berry actors: cloudberry, blueberry, crowberry, bilberry, rowanberry, juniper, from time to time raspberry, strawberry, currant – are welcome in “Reisa”. The key wild berry products are five different syrups from cloudberry, blueberry, crowberry, bilberry, rowanberry and are concentrated, as well as ready-to-drink juices from blueberry and crowberry. Rhubarb is valued in juice and syrup production also; the rhubarb marmalade is a popular item.

4.3.2 Wild berry bounty

At the doorstep of the “Bærkokeriet”, I am standing for the second time. The first time was early August when, driving by on private matters, I missed the opening hours, so I just stood staring through the window and not knowing if Linda would host me here one day or not. This time I am luckier, with Linda behind I open the door. It is quite dusky, so the white square of the door glass through which goes beams of scarce daylight seems extra bright. The whole place from the front to the back door is clearly seen, even though it consists of three areas and even more rooms, all due to open doors.

The first room that serves as a shop is warm and cosy, yellow light creates an intimate atmosphere and a nice smell of birch adds to it. Here on the open shelves in the fridges and stacks hundreds of unique, mostly locally produced goods and foods sit, lie, stand, awaiting purchase. Rectangularly shaped, shopping room accommodates products divided into a few sections. From the formation

of syrups right by the cashier desk here are, in order, candies and chocolate, can containers of different size with all kinds of prints, an open fridge with soft drinks and delicious-looking sausages, tea sets, various teas, salts, vinegars with unexpected ingredients, metal mugs and some other tour equipment. On the long table between stacks are arranged soaps, conditioners, gels and everything possibly needed for a sauna. To the outer wall with two big windows lean shelves with hand-made candles, house décor subjects, an open fridge with jams, jellies, marmalades and a large selection of cheese, on top of the fridge lie all sorts of biscuits, flat bread and chips. To the left from the entrance is a freezer with reindeer, moose and other exotic meat that northern Norway can provide, while the shelves before the window are full of printed cups and saucers and plates and fabrics for kitchens and other uses. In one corner are stretched brown, white and black animal skins in the other – the adjoining counter long window to the production room.

In 2011-2012, the sales of “Reisa” were falling, that is when the former owners proposed to Linda to buy the business. Lock, stock and barrel – the offer comprised the brand, glass bottles for syrups and other packing, sacks with sugar and equipment. Since 2012, when she took over the company, production has changed premises four times and the way of running the business has also changed a lot.

With the takeover of “Reisa”, Linda participated in all possible fairs, markets and other events to raise awareness of her brand and berry syrups. Linda says that people still come to the shop, bring a few glass bottles with syrups to the cash desk and ask: “*How do I use it?*”. Syrup, being thick, stingy and concentrated is not a fit to a commonly used jam. Although not even being a unique product, wild berry syrups at “Reisa” still confuse customers, who are not aware of the use of syrup. However, they have plenty of uses, Linda says, as a food additive, sweet topping, cake filling, base for fruit-drink, medicine, and other possibilities that can be constrained only by one's imagination. The educational process of customers present and potential is ‘går i sirup’, which means it happens but slowly.

The “Reisa” company can be called a northern Norwegian kingdom of wild northern berries. In 2020 here was processed around four tons of raw materials, mostly blueberries and crowberries. But even if berries are not regularly used in production, they still can be sold here. Linda gladly buys raspberries, black and red currants and juniper.

Most of the people who supply berries are elderly, those who get used to picking from childhood and are pickers for many years, but there are, of course, exceptions. «*When kids are bringing to the shop a few hundred grams of currant from their grandmother`s garden, I will never turn them away, but will weigh the berries and pay for them, so the children know that picking can bring money and they go and pick again*», – Linda says, her goal is to use locally grown raw materials in the production processes. She is afraid that people will stop picking. In the begging of her

involvement in the berry business there was a need to buy concentrated juices from Finland, she recalls that in 2016, only four locals had brought their berries to sell.

Now the course of things is different, “Reisa” is working with 100% Norwegian berries, Linda reflects, it was hard to make people come and bring berries, but gradually they became interested. And after harvesting and bringing berries to “Bærkokeriet” (where the pick-up station is), locals can buy syrups or juices on spot, sweet treats partly made from those berries that were earlier picked and brought by themselves. This berry circle is very symbolic, a circle of exchange and preserving something important...

Next morning, I am again at “Bærkokeriet” and the pleasant surprise is that I can participate in the production. After a short acquaintance with one of the employees responsible for production, we are going to the workshop, the beating heart of “Reisa”. We change shoes and put on one-use hats also aprons and gloves to make sure that everything is clean. On today's agenda is crowberry juice, 35.5 kilograms of crowberries were taken from the freezer and put into three containers, set in the kitchen's room temperature for further processing.

Crowberries are the juiciest of all the berries that company deals with, from 100 kilograms of raw materials on average 79 litres of juice are extracted. The numbers for blueberries, rowanberries, cloudberry and lingonberries vary drastically. The second after crowberry by juiciness is blueberry – 77 litres per 100 kilograms, then numbers significantly fall, in 100 kilograms of rowanberry it is about 59 litres of juice, a similar amount from cloudberry 57 and lingonberry 54¹². In “Reisa” as was said previously, juices are the main interest, but leftovers after pressing (berry seeds and skins) are also gathered and stored for innovative ideas that are yet to come.

I stand in the white well-lighted kitchen with polished equipment and watch how the pressing mechanism is prepared. While my today's teacher is pumping the juices out it seems so easy, when I try to take over the job it feels hard and I cannot move the bottle jack lever even one millimetre. The secret is that the mechanism should rest for a while before pumping again, also this pause is used to let the juices flow and not to flood over the tray.

Linda opens the kitchen door and announces that it is time to have lunch. With a fresh sandwich from the local bakery, I get a glass of crowberry juice, not the one squeezed a moment ago, but diluted with water and sugar. It tastes so unexpectedly good, the taste is very unusual, it is much milder and at the same time it is so rich, with a fruity flavour and delicate palate.

After our meal, Linda and I are sitting in the car and heading to one of the possible berry spots. Ten minutes' drive brought us to the farm fields which lie on the way to one of the town's famous

¹² All numbers are taken from Reisa production and correspond to the juicing technique used at Reisa

hiking trails. We leave the car behind (after all, picking berries is an activity that requires personal mobility) and look around to find out where and what to pick. On our left, grows a plantation of raspberry, crimson dots drag our attention. Linda has a plastic bag and I have a small plastic bin, and when my bin is almost full, I accidentally drop it, so half of my berries are now on the ground. Linda is very concerned and suggests giving me her harvest, but it is unnecessary as my primary goal is not a full berry bin but her company.

We talk about picking and recipes and berry places, we laugh and argue, gradually moving from raspberry bushes back onto the trail. When I see an occasional blueberry, I pick it and so we go further. On the small glade grow many lingonberries, the piece of land seems totally red, large and round berries cover the ground without leaving a single gap, we pick them in our packing and go back to the car.

The last gift from Storslett was a huge red-capped scaber mushroom that I found by the fence when we almost approached the car, its weight was 1.710 grams. Loving all harvesting activities, I have a big passion for mushroom picking too. Packed nicely by Linda, it served as a heavenly dinner the day after. Together with the mushroom, I took with me a full bag of goodies from “Bærkokeriet”. As a researcher should immerse herself fully into the studied environment, I bought at the store many tasty delicacies among which were syrups from “Reisa” and crowberry salt from “Nordlysmat”.



Chapter 5: Wild berries as terroir food in the north

5.1 Introduction

Wild northern berries can claim various statuses, different designations. Subsequently, their inherent characteristics allow for them to be placed and studied within many contexts. They are inscribed in traditional cuisine, presented in tourism in different ways, but above all as local edibles. In this chapter, I concentrate my attention on the analysis of wild berries as terroir food, a healthy and authentic treat from the northern wilderness.

In the current chapter I discuss the overarching concept of terroir food as a complement to the main research question. The first section focuses on berries as local and terroir food, wherein I argue about the importance of designation marks used in food tourism. The second section is devoted to wild berry profile in local food practices and in tourism. In particular, I feature the most important wild berries in Norwegian context, their presence in the household kitchen and on shop shelves. The third section concentrates on one of the most important qualities of wild berries: their unique taste and responses to that taste from locals and tourists.

5.2 Conceptualizing local and traditional

What berry adjectives are applicable to describing how berries are entwined in local food practices and in food tourism? Earlier, I grounded the descriptive necessity of ‘wild’ and ‘northern’, hereby I disclose another branch of narratives such as local, traditional, organic, terroir food. Wild northern berries as terroir food (and terroir here is much more than a representational adjective, it is a conceptual claim) offer new avenues for berry analysis using local food and tourism perspectives.

The meaning of terroir is close to local, but somewhat deeper and broader. In her book, Trubek (2008) defined terroir as a taste of place. However, not just any locally produced food can be claimed as terroir food, but the ones that can, exhibit both belongingness to a certain place as well as linkage to culture and traditions.

The concept of terroir was initially adopted in France for wines as a uniting link between taste, place and agriculture (Trubek, 2008). With time, public and scientific interest picked up on the notion and popularized it in many different directions. For instance, mussels were called a terroir food in Denmark (Hjalager, Johansen, & Rasmussen, 2015), wild mushrooms in Spain (Fusté-

Forné, 2019), cloudberries in Canada (Doonan, 2020). Being able to demonstrate a reliance upon belonging to a certain place and being native to a specific food culture, wild foods in general and wild berries, in particular, can indeed be placed among terroir foods. In Norwegian realities, cloudberries, lingonberries, blueberries, crowberries and other native berries have grown on these territories since time immemorial, are well-adapted to the climate and soil in the region and also have become imbedded in traditional food practices, bare the characteristics of terroir (Østerlie & Wicklund, 2018).

In Norway, twenty years ago, the principle of terroir was validated at a governmental level in the national directive for the protection of appellations of origin¹³. The regulations apply to food and stipulate conditions for protection of designations of origin, geographic indications, and traditional distinctive features. In this directive, three protected designations were created, which represent a public labelling scheme that ensures that Norwegian food taxes receive the protection and recognition they deserve (Stiftelsen Norsk Mat, 2021). By May 2022, 35 origin-labelled products were registered, among them three from Troms and Finnmark: “Lyngenslam” lam from Lynden, “Gulløye” potato from Senja, “Målselvnepe” turnip from Målselv. It should be said that despite the early conceptualisation of the term and approval in high official circles, there has been limited success with origin-labelling (Amilien, 2011).

However, wild berries from various areas in Troms and Finnmark county, both manufactured and as raw material have good reasons to be granted protection labels for designation of origin, geographic belonging and traditional speciality. For instance, cloudberries from “Tamsøya” are claimed to have specific colours, size and flavour due to their unique place and conditions of growing¹⁴. Another example is the syrup line of five berry tastes from “Reisa” made from locally picked berries and named after the area of collection and manufacture. Both examples are foodstuffs originated and produced, prepared, and processed in the geographic area that is stated in the product name. Moreover, they have special qualities and identifiable reputations within the geographic environment of the area. Consequently, the examples meet the requirements of the origin protection principle (Stiftelsen Norsk Mat, 2021). “Tamsøya” cloudberries and “Reisa” berry syrups align with the key ideas behind terroir food too. Specifically, that edibles must be from a particular locality, reflect the growing landscape and mirror biological markers, which give the product a distinctive taste and quality, and the culture of the area is added by craft knowledge (Østerlie & Wicklund, 2018).

¹³ «Forskrift om beskyttelse av opprinnelsesbetegnelser og geografiske betegnelser samt betegnelse for tradisjonelt særpreg for landbruksbaserte næringsmidler» (5. juli 2002): Directive on the protection of geographical indications, designations of origin and traditional speciality guaranteed, for agricultural products and foodstuffs. <https://lovdata.no/dokument/SF/forskrift/2002-07-05-698> Last visited 12 May 2022

¹⁴ For more information see: <https://tamsoya.no> Last visited 12 May 2022

The purposes of certification schemes are to increase innovation in local food production and broaden the range of products with a reliable origin and tradition specific from which consumers can choose (Stiftelsen Norsk Mat, 2021). The main gain for producers from receiving the protective marks, is first and foremost protection. In the berry industry, it is a question of present interest how to prevent misuse and fabrication of wild berries and products made from them. Many ways of authentication of berry and berry-based products were reviewed, since the purposeful or accidental representation of any berries as one grown and picked from the wild is akin to customer deception and presents a risk for public health (Salo et al., 2021). Nevertheless, the honest name of a business says more to consumers than ownership of any marks or going through any authentication procedures. Here, Linda reflects on copycatting in the industry:

«If someone else wants to do their part, how they want to do it, that is another side of the same aspect. I think it is a positive thing anyway, they cannot beat us (laughing). We have to do our thing and if someone else wants to do the same they will do their thing and we are right here at this place where we are and the world is big enough for everyone».

In Norway despite a steep increase over the last decades of interest in locally produced and high-quality edibles (Østerlie & Wicklund, 2018), previous country politics aimed at quantification and valuing high-volumes over low-volume products, which slowed down the penetration of origin-labelled goods to the masses (Amilien, 2011). Neither “Bærkokeriet” nor “Nordlysmat” possess labels protecting their uniqueness. Firstly, it is expensive to obtain such a mark. Secondly, it is extra work and in such small businesses, there is no human capacity for doing it. Finally, both entrepreneurs do not see the tangible gains from labelling their products. What then can be said about wild northern berries that belong to everyone and at the same time to no one specifically, as they grow on their own untagged by producers and respectively not protected or privileged by any labels?

Notably, the goods from “Nordlysmat” are certified by the “Debio økologisk” mark, but the idea behind this certification is somewhat different and aimed at the principles of health, ecology, justice and discretion¹⁵. Toril commented that for her it was natural to apply for an ecological label, as all that she does in her private life and in production is led by the philosophy of sustainability:

«Since we started, we have this organic brand on all our products. Both for me personally and for the company it is part of daily life, it is so natural that we all the time have to think about sustainability. We never pick too many berries in one place; we do not use more boxes than we need, and we take them from the shops so we can fill them once more».

¹⁵ For more information see: <https://www.okologisk.no/no/okologisk> Last visited 16 March 2022

Returning to the complicated question of recognition of terroir characteristics in wild berries and berry-products, the arguments of Trubek (2008) regarding wine parallel only processed berry manufactures belonging to terroir, leaving berries as raw materials behind. Terroir attempts to capture, to bottle, interactions between nature and culture for those involved with wild berries; while harvests and fruit crops brought from the forests and glades are just a beginning (Trubek, 2008). Following Trubek's steps, it appears that wild northern berries are the keepers of unique lands and climate properties that are in charge of the 'taste of place' transgressing to the sterling category of terroir only with the human touch.

Relatedly, it has been claimed that wild berries by themselves are terroir foods (Østerlie & Wicklund, 2018) without any extra efforts from humans as the berries already exhibit a unique 'taste of place' shaped by the conditions where they grow. To some degree, this requirement for processing and belonging to a certain area to become terroir food was omitted in the decree of protected designation where cherries, apples, pears and plums from Norway have protected geographic designation. According to the description of the designation, cloudberries from "Tamsøya" could have also been a candidate for the same mark. There are no such arguments that can belittle the meaning of raw materials, on the contrary, for producers to output groceries in line with a terroir vision, the resources should be on the same level. And local wild northern berries used by businesses in the region are in line with terroir characteristics.

5.3 Wild berry rush

Wild northern berries are the midpoint of this thesis, all concepts, theory, empirical data strive to engage with and hover around berries. Meanwhile clarification is needed regarding which berries fall under the interest of my research and explanation of why these berries. Focusing on northern Norway, I reveal the realities of wild berries that are found in the northernmost mainland county of the country – Troms and Finnmark municipality. Rising from a pristine origin, the focal entities of this Master's project hail from bogs and marshland, valleys and lowlands, woodsides, glades, lichen heaths, craggy grounds – wherever berry plants find comfort to grow with no intentional interventions from human side. Moreover, empirical data helped to narrow down the large sample of wild berry species common in the region to the most appreciated and widely used.



Figure 3 Wild berries in guksi, August 2021, photo by the author

Four main and absolute favourites among other berries growing in the wild in northern Norway are: cloudberry, lingonberry, crowberry and blueberry. Figure 3 demonstrates three of the mentioned berry types, picked during one of my harvesting trips, the lingonberry is missing. A special place is held by juniper, although not very popular in household use, juniper berries are an extremely valuable component for local producers.

To ground overall perceptions, I refer to cloudberrries, blueberries, lingonberries, crowberries and juniper as to berries. These colourful flavourful fruits may be technically something else, but it would be pedantic to deny them a berry status, as they are counter-intuitive and perplexing lot (Anderson, 2018, p.9). So, of the five mentioned fruits, only blueberries and lingonberries are ‘proper’ berries. Cloudberrries and crowberries are botanically speaking stone fruits and the juniper berry is a false fruit or cone. In the context of this thesis, berries are small, round, fruits with a distinctive smell and taste that has benefited people's diet from ancient times. Operating within the social sciences field, I move away from the strict botanical divide, emphasising that people know intrinsically what is meant when berries are mentioned.

Cloudberrries have been hailed and adored by many, so, often they are metaphorically called ‘northern gold’. Several works were dedicated to them in and outside Norway. As my focus is on northern Norway, I referred to authors depicting cloudberrries within Norwegian traditions, among these are Winge and Nohr's (2020) handbook about cloudberrries in Norway. The handbook distinguishes their characteristics, provides general advice about usage, identifies the position of cloudberrries in a Norwegian diet, discusses legislation related to cloudberry harvesting. The academic article “Cloudberrries – the northern gold” (Nilsen, 2005) provided a comprehensive

review of cloudberry, outlined the berry's historical and cultural importance in Norway. Article in Norwegian about cloudberry realities in northern Norway by Bratrein (1995) included the traditional use of yellow berries and history of legislation on cloudberry picking in the region.

The cloudberry builds on and complements traditional meals and enriches the northern diet due to its vitamin C and omega fats contents. Sometimes its beneficial qualities are praised too highly and even overestimated. For example, it was stated that one berry contains more vitamin C than an orange (Doonan, 2019, p.971), such an analogy sounds impressive but far from the truth. On average per 100 grams of raw cloudberry yields 95 milligrams of C vitamin and per 100 grams of orange 51 milligrams of C vitamin¹⁶, however the weight difference of one berry and one orange is obvious. Although, given the availability of imported alternative vitamin sources, cloudberries could have become forgotten, they still hold a strong position in northern Norway not only as an authentic ingredient but also as an element connected to the land, traditional knowledge, as a valuable resource in times of global food insecurity.

Cloudberry is indeed a living tradition and is entwisted firmly in food practices in the region, but it is not the only one. In the vast northern territories can be found alternatives to the oily and sourish yellow berry. The most confusing by name berry is blueberry or, to be precise, *Vaccinium myrtillus*, which is quite often called northern/ wild/ European bilberry. The uncertainty in nomen is rather a mere language misunderstanding caused by English ambiguity that admits both names to be correct. In Norwegian such muddle is eliminated, and everyone knows the difference, *Vaccinium myrtillus* is strictly blåbær (literally blue berry) and bilberry, that is also widespread, but less appreciated in the north of Norway, is called blokkebær or *Vaccinium uliginosum*.

Blueberry is a sweet and aromatic fruit. With its qualities, blueberry received many attention from Norwegians with respect to its applications. Rattfelt, Pihl and Nyblom (2011) wrote about its history, kitchen usage and blueberry stories grounded in culture and the everyday of Norwegians. Blueberry was also called the children's berry (Rattfelt et al., 2011, Ulltveit 1995, 2013), because of its palatable characteristics, blueberries were and are adored by children. As Linda reflected: *«When I was a child, I ate more berries than I put in the bucket (laughing). So, I was full of blueberries when I came home and then we made jam out of them, to put it on bread and eat before we go to bed. And the next day we made pancakes with blueberries»*. Before mass accessibility and financial availability of sugar, blueberries were eaten first, the main dishes with blueberries were pies, porridges, blueberry juice was a popular drink (Fjellheim, 2018).

Lingonberry and crowberry deserve special attention. Both featured as extremely important and widely used in northern Norway (Ullveit, 1995, 2013; Winge & Bergersen, 2013; Fjellheim, 2018).

¹⁶ The information was taken from <https://www.matvaretabellen.no/>

Lingonberry and crowberry are also the main berry actors in “Bærkokeriet” and “Nordlysmat”. Juniper is a ‘dark horse’ because it is not a berry in the common sense of word. However, it is native to northern Norwegian cuisine and utilized in production by both mentioned businesses.

To serve lingonberries together with meat, especially with cutlets, and meatballs is normal practice in Norway as well as in some other counties. The taste of lingonberries is a mix of sourness, sweetness and bitterness, in my humble opinion it suits the meat meals but hardly anything else. Linda shared her memories about lingonberry use in her childhood: «*We did not eat so much because they are sour to eat as they are, that was for meatballs, dinner... Meatballs with brown sauce and lingonberries will not be the same without lingonberries at all, then it will be missing something*». In her production line, Linda actively uses lingonberries in syrup making, she also cooperates with companies that make lingonberry lollipops and lingonberry flatbread. A recent pilot project was jam-sauce made of lingonberries with chili pepper. Toril is successfully producing salt marinated with lingonberry and planning to serve cold-pressed lingonberry juice in her soon to open inn.

Together with crowberry, lingonberry dominates the northern Norwegian areal, red and black beads dispersed over many acres of wild lands, often can be found growing. Red lingonberries are also believed to be “the red gold” (La Mela 2014) and the most important wild berry of Finland (Himmelrick, 2001) Sweden (La Mela, 2014) and Norway (Ulltveit, 1995, 2013). I contradict the statement of Ulltveit (1995, 2013) and argue that the most important berry in northern Norway, in central Troms and Finnmark from the position of value and worshiping is the cloudberry, and only after the yellow queen goes lingonberry.

Black crowberry beads generously cover all kinds of soils in the region, as it is truly hard to find the place where crowberries would not be able to survive. These berries have been functional foods here due to their high level of antioxidants. Crowberries were named as the leading representatives on the list of prospective super foods (Jurikova et al., 2016). In particular, locals have a strong believe in and awareness about the health benefits of black crowberries. Linda, Toril and some other people from my circle, believe that crowberry juice is an effective preventive tool against cancer. There are several general statements about the health promoting benefits of berries in managing cancer (Laupsa-Borge, 2012; Nesby et al., 2019). Ulltveit (2013) wrote that crowberries have been appreciated more in northern Norway. Additionally, in comparison to their counterparts, growing in the southern parts of the county, the northern crowberries are bigger and tastier (Ulltveit, 2013, Winge & Bergersen, 2013).

Crowberry beverages are the easiest way to enjoy a flavourless, slightly tart berry, as their big hard stones prevent housewives from baking or pickling crowberries. During the last decades in central Troms and Finnmark crowberry alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages were made by

several companies. The best known of the companies were “North Cape Wine” and “Midnattsol Produkter”, both are closed now. The first one was functioning in Lakselv and was believed to be Norway's northernmost wine producer, making and selling aperitifs and wines made from locally picked berries. The second one in Skibotn, was famous for cold-pressed crowberry juice, its owner Aage Hamnvik was widely known as Krøkebærkongen (the crowberry king). Currently many elderly customers of “Bærkokeriet” buy up the crowberry juice, Linda said it is one of the most popular products.

The characteristics of juniper prevent from using it in the same way as other berries, its sweet but hard and dry flesh does not suit for classical jams and juices. In the region, aromatic juniper was and is present as a food additive. Before in Northern Troms, juniper gave flavour to sauces and was added to potato meals (Fjellheim, 2018). Now at “Nordlysmat” juniper is the most often used berry and Linda from “Bærkokeriet” said that she is ready to pay for juniper almost double that of cloudberry, as it is difficult to pick, and local berries are small and scanty on the bush.

As was demonstrated, cloudberry, blueberry, lingonberry, crowberry and juniper are widely used in local food practices and in different tourism settings in the region. Analogous to a gold rush, the notion used to describe rapid influx of fortune seekers to the site of newly discovered gold deposits in the 19th century¹⁷, this section's title refers to the high value of and demand for wild berries. Relatedly, cloudberry and lingonberry folklore names them respectively as northern gold and all the berries discussed herein are part of the berry rush that occurs when season arrives.

5.4 So what about the taste?

Taste of place, as terroir food was called, has its supporters and detractors, but the taste dimension is still important. Wild northern berries mirror the flavour of specific areas while their general taste is common, berry-like – sweet, sour and a bit tart. How does this taste line up with tourists' expectations of northern Norwegian taste, how do locals themselves respond to the traditional palate?

One study of the Sámi eating habits in northern Norway conducted over twenty years ago (Anderson, 2000) showed that adults attributed less attention to wild plants than their kids, which still consumed a lot of wild taxa. Unfortunately, current realities are that children spend much less time in the fields and forests, they do not take part in pastoral and agricultural activities as previous generations did (Łuczaj et al., 2012). Instead, they eat more packaged food from stores. This has affected the taste perceptions of berries and products made from them.

¹⁷ For more information see: <https://www.britannica.com/event/gold-rush>

So, the taste dimension is problematic among regional inhabitants. For Linda and Toril engagement with wild berries is natural since their childhood and in their production. They try to save this well-remembered taste from before, both business managers are concerned with the future. Their motivation for engaging with berries is aimed at making berries available and valued by their children and future generations. Toril's example demonstrates that it is time to ring the alarm because nowadays youngsters already have awry taste habits. Thus, soon it might be needed to habituate locals to the 'right' taste of berries and products made out of them.

«I did a test when I took my jelly and some factory jellies, and asked youngsters to taste them. No-one knew which jelly was which and that was impossible to distinguish. They tasted all the jellies and most of them said that my jelly was the best, when I asked them which of these they would buy, they pointed to the factory one. Factory jelly taste they recognized and even though my jelly was nice it was new. They were used to factory jelly taste and would rather buy that one. It is sad, we will lose the generation of youngsters if we do not act».

When it comes to tourism, some actors involved in food industry do not utilize cloudberries due to its unusual taste. For example Toril, who is loving cloudberries and picking them for household use does not engage with the yellow berries at "Nordlysmat": *«The berry we use least is maybe the most popular or the most special berry here, which is cloudberry and that is because cloudberry is very difficult to collect, you have to go far away and it is hard to find much».* The main reason for that is not even a high cost, but rather the very special taste of berries, which is not to everybody's liking:

«The most interesting is that cloudberries, berries that we are so proud of in the North, many tourists do not like. They say: "they do not taste very much", or "they do not taste good". This is so funny because cloudberries are the most exclusive and expensive berries we have (laughing). I totally understand them, the cloudberry does not have strong taste, it tastes a little bit, I think it is more for the locals. Therefore, I decided that it is not so important to use cloudberries in the product» (Toril).

As tastes differ, cloudberry flavor is most certainly not for everyone. However, it is still possible to influence perceptions of cloudberries and turn the balance to cloudberry's favor. Doonan (2020) focused on the role of the cloudberry in an analysis of terroir food and place-making in Québec, Canada. She was mindful of the experiential dimension of taste. She wrote that for visitors, berries and their hard seeds feel strange on the tongue and are difficult to digest, she suggested that sharing stories about the purity and cultural significance of cloudberries can make them taste better (Doonan, 2020). Adding context to any dish is beneficially perceived by tourists. In case of the cloudberry, persuading factors are the health benefits and strong traditional background.

Recognition of the sourish cloudberry can also be nurtured over time. Among my international friends many do not understand the Norwegian and Sámi passion for cloudberrries, but they appreciate the home baked treats I make for them. My husband who does not share my affection for berries, and especially cloudberrries because of their too big and hard stones. However, over time he has got used to the cloudberry taste and has started liking it more. Working at the “Storgammen” restaurant in Karasjok in summer 2021, I was able to talk to guests about their take on how berries complement the taste of the dishes they were served. For dessert we had panna cotta with cloudberrries. Asking one Norwegian guest about how s(he) liked panna cotta, the answer was that earlier s(he) did not like cloudberrries at all, but does like them now, describing cloudberry taste as *«mature, a taste one has to accustom oneself to and to grow up to understand»*.

Berries are so small and in the pyramid of a healthy diet are close to invisible, hidden by the big and defined sections of meat; dairy; fruits & vegetables. At the same time, berries are a rightful and competent counterpart of the most basic and broad segment of human ration. Being a depository and fresh supply of vital microelements and vitamins, berries are akin to the most precious gems in the diet, although tiny, they carry value and use beyond any price.

Adopting the principles of the New Nordic Diet (NND) is one of the ways to promote local, terroir food, because a sustainable diet should encourage consumption of organic and regional, reducing the ecological impact of the production chain. Several studies have been conducted on the composition and nutrient content of the NND (Mithril et al., 2012; Mithril et al., 2013; Mazzocchi, De Cosmi, Scaglioni, & Agostoni, 2021). Been rather a heuristic concept, NND above all emphasizes wild, foraged, local, fresh and a highly palatable cuisine (Meltzer et al., 2019).

Currently, in the county the main recommendations about food are delineated at the governmental level by the Norwegian ministries in the Norwegian National Action Plan for a Healthier Diet 2017-2021 (Norwegian Ministries, 2017). At a regional level delineation is made by the Food strategy for Troms and Finnmark 2020-2025 (Johnsen et al., 2020). In the first document, suggestions about enhanced utilization of locally sourced foods are articulated only in the context of Sámi nursing homes. However, a 20% increase in general consumption of berries (also vegetables and fruits) was one of the quantitative targets (Norwegian Ministries, 2017). In the second document, food and drink producers in the region were advised to produce as much food as possible in a sustainable way based on local resources, as an example of good practices. The document also mentioned that there were several producers in the county who used in their manufacturing local raw materials among which were berries (Johnsen et al., 2020).

Many of the traditional appetizers, main courses, deserts, and drinks in the region are either fully constituted of or accompanied by wild berries. So, their taste is known and appreciated by those who follow the old ways. Mazzocchi et al. (2021) investigation found that the introduction of

meals with berries to small babies leads to the formulation of healthy eating habits possibly from infancy. Other research has shown that throughout life the common taste of good home-made food can evoke memories and associations or even create a feeling of belonging and joy (Hanssen & Kuven, 2016). The known taste that arouses nostalgia, sense of a certain place and feeling of belonging is a limited luxury, preserving such a unique gustatory treat is a matter of keeping berry practice alive and close to traditional ways. So, lobbying the NND in the region at higher levels can possibly turn the favour of inhabitants to wild berries and make local producers even more attractive. As Toril contemplated: «...even though these products are quite expensive, people with not that high income can afford them in between, because they are vital part of people's culture. It is already a tradition to buy our gløgg for Christmas time, use our jelly together with the Christmas meal and so on».

Local products are part of the celebrations and everyday life. Despite their high price tags, these products are imbedded in people's lifestyle and are acknowledged by community. With extra support from the government, it would be possible to lower prices and popularize wild berries even more. Such a strategy in Norway is working in the agricultural and dairy sectors, and can certainly be adopted for those, who utilize raw materials from nature. Finally, with the open access right on wild berries for locals in the region it is always possible to follow NND guidelines and consume wild berries harvested and processed by your own hands.

5.5 Conclusions

Wild berries and products made from them embody all characteristics of terroir. They can be protected by Norwegian designations based on their origin, geographic indications, and traditional distinctive features. However, none of the berry-related businesses in this research applied for it. Berries are local foods the taste of which should associate with sustainability and be the only possible choice of a knowledgeable host and interested guests. This berry taste is unique from place to place, which mirrors the characteristics of terroir food. This berry taste is ascribed in the NND, following which will reassure the building of healthy and balanced diet of inhabitants in northern Norway. Berries as foods possess extraordinary palatable features, they are ingredients that are in line with traditional recipes, flavorful edibles that mirror natural environments, and have great potential in the tourism industry in a region that aims to become gastronomically known.



Chapter 6: Gifts from the wild

6.1 Introduction

Wild berries are grounded deeply in the traditions of the Troms and Finnmark inhabitants. They are more than cooking ingredients for the locals. The berries are something entangled in reciprocity, something so adored and needed that one wants to share it with relatives and friends.

In this chapter, I deconstruct the concept of gift in regard to wild berries, I start by looking at gifts in social communities, the entwining philosophy of gift giving, and I point to legislation aiming at managing berry practices. ‘Picking gifts of nature’ follows part of an analysis where I introduce berry harvesting as an activity of collecting nature's riches from the wild with a supportive take on the concept of wilderness. Finally, the discussion brings the reader to the point where gifts turn into commodities that support regional economies and contribute to sustainable destination development.

6.2 Managing gifts across communities

In the realities of northern scarcity, berries are valuable resources and have been and still are embedded in reciprocity systems in local networks. In response to their overriding meaning in the north, the common right to roam has tended to bypass the most exclusive of berries – cloudberry. Wild berries are precious gifts of nature, albeit manageable gifts. For instance, access to cloudberry is outlined in the country's legislation. But why are wild berries a narrative of gift giving and how are the gifts of nature influenced by human law?

On the vast expanses of the northern Norwegian mainland wild berry plants proliferate and support the surrounding living systems with their juicy fruits full of healthy stuffs. These small by size but large by vitamin content edibles of which locals have found tens and hundreds of applications are gifts of nature and gifts within communities. A gift is one of the structural principles of many indigenous peoples' philosophies (Kuokkanen, 2006; Doonan, 2016), and part of this worldview is inherent in communities. I argue that wild berries can be considered gifts for which one should be grateful. According to Toril, who has indigenous roots, the appropriate gratitude for gifts of nature follows:

«When you go collecting berries or herbs you always have to say, “thank you”. You may ask whom to thank, is it God, spirits in nature or similar, I do not know whom you are thanking, it

is up to you, if you have a God then you say thank your God if you believe in spirits then you thank them. For me it is just obvious that all this wealth comes from somewhere, and it is very important to be grateful for it».

Since ancient times, gifts of nature have been a vital part of people's economies and survival. It is also part of the historical background informing legislation that aim to reserve the exclusive right to berry resources for locals. From 1600 up to 1900 a monopoly on cloudberries was assigned to northern Norway and Finnmark, specifically, because of the large concentration of cloudberry marshlands (Bratrein, 1995). However, there is no evidence from that times that locals benefited from importing large amounts of cloudberries. Nor when the law was adopted in 1854, and the county governor was assigned extensive cloudberry rights as part of an official income (Bratrein, 1995).

Present-day legislation says that in Troms and Finnmark picking wild berries and cloudberries among others is the right of everyone. However, if a landowner places a sign that constrains picking, berries can be only collected and eaten onsite, then it is forbidden to take them in bins or baskets home (Friluftsløven, 1957). According to the Finnmark Act (2005), all inhabitants in Finnmark have the right to pick cloudberries, and some individuals or groups of persons may be assigned special rights to utilize renewable resources, among which are berries.

While user rights to land, where berry picking among other traditional food practices should occur, can be a stumbling block for indigenous and non-indigenous locals. Generally, conflicts over wild berries between locals and outsiders are another hindrance for free berry picking. Ween and Lien (2015) studied how nature practices unite and separate indigenous and non-indigenous locals using the example of Finnmark, based on the canvas of The Finnmark Act. There are studies that engage with turbulence and conflicts regarding interests and ideas concerning property rights and regulation of wild berry harvesting in Sweden (Sténs & Sandström, 2012). Even though, the conflict was intensified by an influx of foreign professional berry pickers (Sténs & Sandström, 2012), which is not in accord with Norwegian realities, the work provides valuable assistance when discussing potential and existent conflicts of the multiple-use nature resources. For instance, picking as a tourism experience, can be seen as commercialization of everyman's right in Norway and respectively a misuse of the right (Peltola et al., 2014). This can be compared to the situation in the Sámi region, where local practices of nature-use and nature-based tourism meet.

Although restrictions are present, they are minor, as in Finnmark 95% of all land under the Finnmark Act is common property (Ween & Lien, 2012). Meanwhile, there are some concerns about land and water being privatized through individual and collective claims, they are not a threat any time soon. An unpleasant predicted future articulated in local newspaper (Mjøen, 2021)

advances that at many more cloudberry patches around Finnmark a person may be met with a sign from landowners that cloudberry picking is not allowed.

On the canvas of restrictions and limitations is one specific repeated name – cloudberry. The cloudberry being expensive and hard to find is much appreciated by local people. This is the berry locals are proud of and willing to show off to others. Meals with cloudberries during the season are present in most self-respecting dinners around the county and on the store shelves of local supermarkets either in a fresh, frozen or processed way. Its special berry flavour and oily structure is the taste of Christmas and the Midnight Sun. Respectively, multekrem (a traditional dessert eaten at Christmas, consists of whipped cream and cloudberries with an optional scoop of sugar or syrup) is served; or fresh berries sweetened by nocturnal sunshine are eaten in the open air straight from a berry patch.

During my stay at “Bærkokeriet”, I witnessed a dialog over cloudberry syrup between one local elderly couple, the approximate exchange follows: he «*Why taking three bottles, you have plenty of cloudberries in the freezer, plus home-made jams*», she «*But this is cloudberries, cloudberries are never enough*». This cloudberry homage, caused by the long-standing food practice that is predetermined by absence of choice, as in the harsh northern conditions when not many fruits and berries grow in the wild, is a strong and deeply grounded tradition. That is why, cloudberries are specifically appreciated by Troms and Finnmark inhabitants.

Being such an indispensable and at the same time hard to get resource turned cloudberries into important actors of exchange and a presence in regulations. There are several accounts about the special place of cloudberries in gift-giving in Troms and Finnmark (Lien, 2001; Olsen & Thuen, 2012; Ween & Lien, 2012; Svensson, 2014). First and foremost, yellow berries serve to build social connections through reciprocity, and establish close social relations. Cloudberries are given away to those who cannot for any reason pick themselves, mostly sick and elderly people as a sign of care and as a form of a social safety net (Lien, 2001; Doonan, 2020). To gift cloudberries, to be the one who gives is vital to maintain core values that mean more than the cloudberries themselves (Lien, 2001).

In the study from Båtsfjord that lies on the coast of Troms and Finnmark, Lien (2001) argued that being the one who gives is primarily a role without gender, but it is of special importance for women. This is mainly because usually women oversee harvesting, preserve wild edible resources and use these as exchange objects. However, for me, it was interesting to find out that in my Sámi part of the family living in Karasjok, cloudberry harvesting and giving to a lonely elder was often done on an ongoing basis by males.

Furthermore, it has been also demonstrated how gifts of food help to initiate and maintain social relations in Finnmark (Lien, 2001). Food seems to be a central element in generalized reciprocity

and is often more important in (re-)creating social relations than other objects (Kramvig, 2005; Svensson, 2014). In Lien's (2001) study, she showed how the exchange of edibles decodes the belonging to a certain community. Food strengthens unity within a group and simultaneously marks the boundaries of group membership to the outside world (Kramvig, 2005). For instance, cloudberry gifts are given to the circle of well-known and appreciated people and not just to anyone (Ween & Lien, 2012).

To the elderly and/or dear – that is to whom cloudberry gifts are given, to either support the community as one living organism by circular interchange of resources or to demonstrate affection by sharing precious ‘northern gold’ from the wild. Cloudberry giving is grounded at a deeper cultural level, varies insignificantly at the outward family level, and can be used for both purposes by men and women. Noteworthy is that if someone shares berries with you or takes you cloudberry picking, giving up their secret harvesting spots, it already can be considered as a step forward in relationships, meaning an increase of trust in and general sympathy to you.

6.3 Picking gifts of nature

Berry picking, that is an activity of acquiring berry resources by picking them, is a practice with deep roots in hunter-gatherer societies. Although there are different approaches to study it, I look at berry picking as an important social activity, that can be a benefit to solving some of the current global issues, for instance securing food supply. To reach the point when wild berries become part of rethinking food security in the North, I distil harvesting from mundane work into a time of empowerment and strengthening of family bounds. In addition, in the paragraphs below I review practicalities of wild berry picking mentioned in the literature, with focus on the legislation in Troms and Finnmark municipality.

Berry picking as an activity by itself brings so much more than packed with delicious edibles freezer. It is a time for being together with important people, possibility to learn, and opportunity to spend time with yourself in the open air. During 2021 season, I completed more than 20 trips to collect as many harvesting experiences as possible in as many different settings of which I only could think. I picked with my family members, friends, groupmates, dog, by my own, beside strangers I saw for the first time who had just have chosen the same berry patch as me. I invited and was invited by people of so many nationalities and professions, a very broad age range and all of them extended my mind about wild northern fruits and kept me great company. I want to share some of the important enlightenments gleaned from my picking tours.

In unfolding the complexity of the berry collecting process, I want to underline that the berry plants with which people engage while harvesting are more than green stems designated to hold, feed and shelter valuable fruits. Plants are perceived as immobile (rooted), passive, non-sentient

beings, with whom humans are unable to interact, because they do not share the human senses. But in contradiction to prevailing notions, plants can learn, play just as animal cubs, and communicate (Cohen & Fennell, 2019). The ethical treatment of plants, which is ignored by humankind concentrated much more on the question of ethical behavior towards animals, is a necessity (Cohen & Fennell, 2019). For example, the use of various rakes while collecting blueberries, lingonberries, crowberries, I personally perceive as a threat to the delicate, tenuous haulms, and even a scientifically proven fact that such a method of picking does not endanger berry species (Manninen & Peltola, 2013) cannot convince me from harvesting by hand. Berry plants are important actors in the interactions that occur during berry picking, they are alive and deserve proper attitude.

While on a picking tour, there is a lot to learn from the nature. Embodied knowledge that is ever present in the physical field: how to move, where to look, what to search for. These practical insights one gets by being out there, willingly sensing the milieu around. Linda and Toril described how they perceive picking tours and the complementary knowledge from being in nature:

«...This is an important part of the feeling of going out in the forest, being there, feeling safe about it. You do not follow any path, but you know where you are because you can see where the mountains are. That is, maybe the most important what we tell our children just go in the forest and be there and feel good about it» (Linda).

«We learned a lot of where we can find the berries, but that was not the only thing. I remember once I was with my grandmother and she said that we are going to make coffee, but we did not bring with us water and I thought there is no way we can find water around. She said: “There is a rivulet, not that big that you can hear it”. So, I learned about this small water spring, which was very important for me because that was nearby good blueberry area. Now when I go there to collect blueberries, I know that there is no need to bring water as it is already there» (Toril).

Berry harvesting is also time for participating in something important together with relatives. From dialogs with locals in Karasjok and Alta it was often cloudberry picking trips that took a few days when whole families went far from their homes in search of abundant cloudberry marshlands. As several authors suggested (Kangas & Markkanen, 2001; Parlee & Berkes, 2005; Ween & Lien, 2012; Rattfelt et al., 2018; Hossain & Punam, 2020) time of families being together is empowering, providing a strong bond between people. As Linda and Toril added berry picking tours are vital for socialization and bring joy to all:

«...so just the feeling of going out in nature and having a nice time together, sitting down and having breaks, having a cup of coffee with a piece of chocolate – it is part of a tradition too. When I tell my son that we are going to pick berries it is not just to pick berries we are going

out on a trip. If we do not find a lot of berries, we have still been outside together and that is the goal» (Linda).

«When the berry season came, we did not have any choice but to go out with our parents. Then it was not only berries it was also going fishing and, you know, living a life up there... The most exciting moment was when we had a break and we had to make a fire, they made coffee on the fire, we grilled sausages and that was wonderful for us kids» (Toril).



Figure 4 Meditative berry-picking tour with friends, August 2021, photo by the author

As my friend reflected and I agreed, collecting berries is very common to meditation. Even if in a group, during actual harvesting one is all alone, moving along one's own trajectory, following the berries, bending and leaning, plucking and putting them in the bin. Figure 4 is a picture from such a collective-meditational tour.

Although, picking was often attributed to recreational activity, grounded in lifestyle and rurality (Kangas & Markkanen, 2001; Pouta et al., 2006; Bardone & Pungas-Kohv, 2015; Joks, 2022) both Linda and Toril said that the most promising segment for participation in commercial picking tours for tourists is city citizens. This assumption is built on the idea that people from big metropolises lack unity with nature and the calm setting of harvesting trips. For those, who miss the bliss of tranquility, berry picking is a new way of meditation. So, if I was going to advertise a berry picking activity for tourists, I would highlight these three main gains that one obtains from such tours: educational, recreational, socialization.

As of now, for aught I know, in Troms and Finnmark wild berry picking as an activity for tourists is present only on Stor Tamsøy island and runs from season to season by the “Tamsøya” company, but I asked the businesses with whom I engaged if it is possible to monetize the practice at their

venues. While Linda saw many possibilities in hosting harvesting tours for tourists but pushed it further from implementation because of lack of time, Toril named many constraints concerning commercial berry picking: *«Like all tourist activities it needs a very good guide, with a lot of knowledge about berries and all aspects of berries. Also, it should be good collaboration with hotels, inns, so they can offer trips. If tourists come and it is raining heavily, you have to consider other options»*. Berry picking as a deliverable product in the region is not a priority of the stakeholders who work within the berry industry, it is uncertain if the good practices of harvesting tours for tourists from Canada (Everett, 2005, p.201) and Finland (Miettinen, 2005, p.167-169) could be implemented in the county.

In choosing and collecting, berries for production Toril and Linda give preference to wild local berries, the use of wild raw stuffs is also embedded in their working strategy. Fresh, ripe, properly picked and locally grown resources utilized in the production of “Bærkokeriet” and “Nordlysmat” secure the highest quality of manufactured goods. Both business managers realize that the standards of harvest of the wild local berries are the reason for their companies' success:

«All wild berries and herbs are very important; it is the frame of all that we are doing. It is with nature and wild berries where my heart is, and of course local berries, it would be stupid for me to work with berries from other places, I would never do that» (Toril).

«We are totally dependent on clean nature, because that is why the berries are so valuable. Northern Norwegian areas are the basis for what we do. If we had to buy berries from somewhere else, we could not tell the same story about our traditions and how we get the raw materials for what we make» (Linda).

“Bærkokeriet” and “Nordlysmat” prefer to work with wild raw materials and present this as their philosophy and reason for existence. The local resources are ecologically grown, harvested, brought to the production fresh with minimal transportation involved, the healthy raw stuffs tasting like home that bring money back to the community, wild berries are indeed worthy ingredients for businesses. At the same time, untamed belonging to the wilderness paired with seasonality turn wild berry utilization in general and in tourism specifically into fragile, yet appealing practice.

So, how do seasonality and wilderness mirror the northern berries image in tourism? The distinct advantages of wild fruits are constrained with regard to commercialization by a whole range of challenges: high dependence on the climate and weather conditions throughout the year, limited, often hard-to-access habitat, traceability and general unpredictability (Nilson, 2005; Paasilta et al., 2009; Martinussen et al., 2018). Those challenges are mainly derived from two ultimate – seasonality and wilderness.

Enclosed in short season frames, wild berry practices in the form of picking and eating fresh are available in northern Norway from mid-summer until the snow covers berry patches. Fusté-Forné (2019) argued seasonality in culinary tourism is normal in a fragile human-in-nature context. Seasonality is indeed a ubiquitous feature of northern Norwegian nature as it is of Norwegian tourism. Flognfeldt (2001) suggested before railing against it, one needs to identify as many positive elements of seasonality as possible. The short season which corresponds to exclusiveness lures tourists to experience seasonal practices rooted in lifestyle tradition (Fusté-Forné, 2019). Thus, berries in the wild are limited to a short period of the year, but so meaningful gift of nature in July-October are potentially attractive for those who seek authentic and upmarket experiences.

While seasonality influences modern perceptions of wild berries, belonging to the wilderness domain also is an attractive factor for tourists. Everett (2007) referred to the wilderness, natural habitat of the northern berries, as to ‘welcoming’. It is welcoming, indeed; the berry practice lies beyond cruel and dangerous ways of ancient food acquisition just in the bosom of nature.

Questioning what wilderness is and what wilderness areas are for in tourism, Saarinen (2019) wrote that images of wilderness as spaces of pristine nature are sold well in the tourism context. They are constructed as certain adventure-scapes for touristic purposes, but such an imagining can harm locals. The duality of the wilderness concept in the eyes of northern Norwegian citizens and all others was also a concern of Ween and Lien (2012). They argued that groups of tourists are attracted by wilderness, the barren, untouched land, and the prospect of engaging in the same kinds of nature practices enjoyed by different kinds of locals. At the same time for most people living in Finnmark, the wilderness is not wild at all, but a fine and familiar web of activity-based points, like spots where the cloudberries are found (Ween & Lien, 2012). For tourists, wild northern fruits are desirable pieces of wilderness, while for locals, berries belong to nature as an integrated part of everyday life (Ween & Lien, 2012)

Even though, wild berries comparing to their domesticated counterparts have better palatability and are more beneficial in the matter of health (Mithril et al., 2012; Bardone & Pungas-Kohv, 2015; Hossain & Punam, 2020); attempts to gain control over the harvest led to working on *in vitro* propagation. The cloudberry, being one of the most expensive, yet most difficult to find is one of the most popular berries used for artificial cultivation (Martinussen, Nilsen, Svenson, Junttila, & Rapp; 2004; Nilsen, 2005; Doonan, 2020). Contrary to other gardens, commercialized blueberry gardens have not been popularized in Norway, presumably due to easy access to wild blueberries (Rattfelt et al., 2011). Even though, in the wake of domestication, there has been interest in breeding and propagation of selected clones of wild berries in Norway (Martinussen et al., 2019), in many cases, artificial cultivation is too expensive (Martinussen et al., 2004), so

cloudberries, lingonberries, crowberries and blueberries are available to the general public only in the wild.

6.4 Commercializing gifts

Wild berry practices performed by locals for household needs in the region have long ago pervaded representational industries like restaurant businesses and tourism. In the region, with a long tradition of welcoming visitors who want to experience nature, culture and people, is a strategic goal to develop versatile and sustainable reciprocity in the food and tourism sectors (Johnsen et al., 2020). Small berry businesses “Bærkokeriet” and “Nordlysmat” promote traditional and sustainable ways of food production in order to create a high-quality product that also serves the tourism market. Both companies are working within the food sector, producing premium edibles from local wild berries, however, they have the potential to go beyond food production. I have discussed with Linda and Toril possibilities and limitations of berry related offers within the tourism industry in the region.

Gifts of nature are first and foremost widely utilized in local restaurants. Wild berries as part of wild foods are unique actors in contemporary gastronomy as they have such a controversial status. On the one hand, they were seen as affordable edibles for poor, on the other – luxury ingredients available exclusively in the top restaurants. It was claimed that the status of wild berries is shifting toward the high-end dimension lately (Łuczaj et al., 2012; Bardone 2013; Bardone & Pungas-Kohv, 2015).

From a childhood reminiscence of Linda as well as some other inhabitants of Alta and Karasjok berry picking was related to their poverty, this is how Toril reflected upon it: *«When I was a child, we were quite poor, and we really needed berries as part of our daily life»*. Nevertheless, in present days, Toril considers her products as upmarket and comments the situation of local wild berries' utilization: *«In the fancy restaurant you can find it [wild northern berries] but not in all the other ones. If it is a bit of a lower standard then there are no local berries, it is only in high-end restaurants you can find it»*. So, authentic wild foods, in the context of mass production and consumption, are in vogue today, with ongoing commodification and attribution of them as holding the status of top-class raw stuffs (Łuczaj et al., 2012; Bardone, 2013).

How are these haute ingredients used in representation of local cuisine? Three restaurants with comparatively high prices and standards “Storgammen” in Karasjok, “Trasti&Trine” in Alta, “Bios” in Storslett use local wild berries in their menus, but in somewhat different ways. The first restaurant belongs to the “Scandic Hotels Group”, a hotel chain broadly presented in Scandinavian countries with its headquarters in Sweden. The two others are family initiatives that over the years gained respect and recognition among locals due to their good food and individual approach. While

in “Trasti&Trine” and “Bios” most of the berries are picked by the restaurants' staff, in “Storgammen” berries are bought from local pickers; while in first two, wild fruits are either ingredients of traditional or new meals, in “Storgammen” apart from traditional courses wild berries are also present in panna cotta and vanilla pudding.

Toril spoke about an old recipe for blueberry pie from the Kven tradition that had been preserved and actively used in her family. In the “Nordlysmat” café this blueberry pie was also served, and it is planned to be on the menu of the restaurant in Toril's soon to open inn. Such traditional meals should be used within a tourism context more because this is the experience tourists come for. Toril hit the nail on the head with the panna cotta example: *«International tourists want local products. Italians do not come here to get panna cotta for dessert, it is better to give them something that we have here. We always think that the grass is greener on the other side, which is not, it is better to find something here»*. In many dinners in Troms and Finnmark, at the “Storgammen” restaurant for instance, berries even if utilized are ingredients of widely known or popular courses, Toril raised this issue in favour of local berries being in locally common dishes.

I remember the same arguments from one of the “Storgammen's” chefs in a conversation on this topic. S(he) said that having such, in all respects, magnificent resources from the wild (referring to herbs, mushrooms and berries) and not using them to the maximum is a crime. It was also articulated by h(im)er that dishes should be proper ones, of local origin.

The creativity over new berry meals or simply turning to old cookbooks does not seem challenging, but the chosen strategy resonates with at least a half-century old idea that tourists need something familiar around them. Food is often that thread which connects tourists with home, letting them experience the novelty of the macroenvironment of a new place from the security of a familiar microenvironment (Cohen, 1972). The aim to provide comfort in transgression into the very specific environment of northern Norway justifies panna cotta with cloudberry. Nevertheless, it does not match the strategic goal to make northern Norway an internationally known food region (Johnsen et al., 2020), as such an image could not be built up on copycatting and inauthenticity.

So, the choices should be made by every actor of the industry individually, as well as the chances for success taken. Two different ways are: approach of Toril, “Trasti&Trine” and “Bios” with their position of promoting unique and traditional; and the other of those in charge of “Storgammen”, which inscribes berries on at global canvas. By all accounts, the restaurants' role in the promotion of local cuisine is hard to overestimate, even attempting to stay objective I sympathise with Toril's confusion: *«I cannot understand why we are living in Norway, especially outside the city, having any kinds of desserts in the hotels and restaurants which are not with berries. How come you make all kind of deserts from Italy, Spain, wheresoever instead of using the local products!?»*.

Noteworthy that none of the approaches is exclusively correct, they are different ways to one final purpose – to bring the local resources to the tourists' tables.

If restaurants are important linking points between tourists and local culture and traditions through food, thematic events can imprint a berry image in destination development on another level. Festivals attract many people and sometimes become the markers of the areas where they are held. So, the northern Finnish village Ranua, promoted as Arctic cloudberry village, the annual berry festival gathers a big crowd¹⁸. Events and festivals exhibit local specialties and traditions, entertain the visitors, and contribute to learning experiences and a better understanding of the destination (Bonow & Rytönen, 2012). Wild berry rhetoric is inherent to the communities in northern Norway, as terroir food fruits can be utilized for advertising and branding tourism destinations.

For example, Alta is currently promoted as a city of the Northern Lights, however it is a city of much more than just one natural phenomena. Following the calls of Kaján (2014), in the Arctic, more emphasis should be given to summer tourism, making tourism multiseasonal is an important factor in any future tourism development. So, some markers should be chosen to advertise the destinations in other seasons. With the production of “Nodlysmat” Alta already became a city of high-class berry products too. Linda believes that her syrups are imbedded in the Reisa image already:

«Reisa the name of our company is also the name of the area, maybe it is already a part of what we show outside and what is known about Reisa. Sometimes when people hear about Reisa they think about a syrup, and it is called Reisa syrup, so it is part of promotion of the area too. I hope it sparks proudness as we are not just syrup, we are REISA syrup, we use local product...».

At the same time both Linda and Toril are sceptical about using berries as the main promotion markers. Linda considers them too common to be bent to one place and Toril thinks that because of lack of a wild berry items on the store shelves, in activity lists, and restaurants and dinners it will be not quite honest to devote a fully-fledged marketing to berries which can be hardly found as ready-to-consume products in cities and villages of the county. Thus, even being very promising, the key hindrance for a berry concept is its underdevelopment; paradoxically with the ample berry patches, close to empty ‘berry stacks’ prevent berries from leading in the destination promotion of Troms and Finnmark.

Although, organization of a festival is an unexplored possibility to promote wild northern berries in tourism or give a boost to tourism in central Troms and Finnmark through fruits, both Toril and Linda believe that a berry festival is a feasible idea that can promote wild berries in the region.

¹⁸ For more information see: <https://visitrana.fi/en/charm/ranua-the-arctic-cloudberry-village/> Last visited 24 March 2022

«I think it is an excellent idea and I have said it so many times to others. We should really have berry, collecting, [thinking] the harvesting festival! Because it is such an important part of our culture and we should have that, but we do not have any» (Toril).

«It will be so funny to do something about it and absolutely possible, though our company cannot do it alone. We must be many more, it must be linked to something else, maybe to the herders, to the hunters, serving places should also be a big part of it. Festival for enjoying all the good things that come in the harvest season, maybe harvest festival – more likely» (Linda)

Both entrepreneurs also without any chance of knowing each other's comments agreed upon a 'harvesting' festival and articulated that a massive event needs support from many similar producers and different branches.

Conducting big projects and simplifying healthy development of the industry require strong connections between the producers. Collaboration among small tourism enterprises, in marketing as well as in other aspects, was considered crucial (Tervo-Kankare, Kaján, & Saarinen, 2017). In the region some actors are seriously lacking this support net within the segment of local food producers. Linda, as an owner of a small manufacture and in addition cosy shop often struggles because of the unstructured supply chain and the absence of branch unions. So, in the county exists also the need for organizational assistance for the small enterprises working with local food within tourism.

6.5 Conclusions

Gifts and goods – two nouns objectify berries in everyday life and commerce. While berries are social currency within northern communities, and since long ago harvesting gifts of nature is more than just food procurement, it is a recreational possibility and a time for bonding together. It might seem not easy to bridge berries as gifts and commodities, however it is successfully done in Troms and Finnmark by local stakeholders.

Berries circulate in food practices and push boundaries towards gift economies, simultaneously berries sold as mundane jams and extraordinary berry salt transcend the restaurants and shops marking the whole destinations. If fruits are already present in all possible kinds of culinary tourism, picking gifts of nature can be in and of itself an organized attraction in other kinds of tourism. However, the unpredictable dimension of the wilderness, which is perceived cardinally differently by locals and tourists is important to mind when thinking about utilizing berries in tourism. Taking control over something impossible to harness and presenting legislation for wild berry crops acknowledges not only the willingness to manage gifts of nature but also their vital role in society and the economy.



Chapter 7: Wild berries in food security

7.1 Introduction

Wild northern berries growing in the Arctic's pristine nature have adapted well to the harsh climate and reign vast territories of bogs, glades and rocky grounds where cultivated plants have no chance for survival. Since ancient times, they have been a reliable food supply for locals, who either patiently pluck these colourful juicy beads one by one or gathered them with a rake. Nowadays, wild fruits are also deliberate actors in the food security agenda which is discussed below.

Food security, a notion of increasing importance and its relevance to berry realities is elaborated upon throughout this chapter. There are two directions for analysing the place of wild berries in securing edible resources: the potential of Arctic (northern regions) in food security and indigenous knowledge as a mean to overcome insecurity. In the following sections I unwrap wild berry realities in Troms and Finnmark, the northernmost county of Norway, where the bosom of pristine nature is continuously giving ample wild berry crops that satisfy the needs of a balanced diet. Lastly, I address the knowledge that stays behind berry practices and the intertwined Sámi, Kven and Norwegian contributions, with the very loud voice of Sámi tradition.

7.2 Pointing to berries in food security

In the global world picture, the question of food security is impossible to ignore when talking about edibles. With multiple approaches to refer to this concept, mine is easy to follow on the canvas of this Master's thesis: northern berries are culturally important foodstuffs that are not given proper attention, such wild edibles are highly vulnerable given the circumstances of climate change, sustainable ingredients in social crises, like COVID-19 and the Russian-Ukrainian war. So, why should a country as rich as Norway be concerned about food security and how can wild northern berries be inserted into a food security agenda?

Securing access to edibles grown in the wild has been highlighted since the COVID-19 pandemic and Russian invasion of Ukraine. Such access emerged as an essential component of resilient household food security and sustainable livelihoods in many developing area contexts (Hickey et al., 2016; Shaheen et al, 2017), and in the North it should be externally and internally encouraged. The results of a survey of 24 countries and 7,975 households confirmed previous research pointing

to the breadth that wild foods can add to global food baskets, which has important implications for food security policies (Hickey et al., 2016).

In Norway, there is no strong need now to go berry picking. In referencing to the reasons why an old practise of procuring food became unpopular, Toril mentioned that modern Norwegians have become simply too lazy as buying berries from the supermarket is easier than harvesting. This argument was also mentioned in several other works together with increased urbanization and changing attitudes toward nature among younger generation (Pouta et al., 2006; Peltola et al., 2014; Hossain et al., 2020). However, most wild foods including berries, are nutritionally superior and free in comparison to store-bought or imported products (Shaheen et al, 2017; Hossein & Punam, 2020). In addition, they belong to a cluster of known and traditional foods consumption which supports ideas behind food security.

In addition, the call to sustainability in food production echoes the commitment of Norway to follow and realize the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, among which Goal №2 is about food security, improved nutrition and sustainable agriculture (United Nations, n.d.). Food security is not a pressing matter in northern Norway compared to some other Arctic areas (Nøstvold et al., 2021). However, from the perspective of less and less available traditional and local foods which is an integral factor of food security (Nilsson, 2018; Hossain et al., 2020), it also becomes of greater concern in Troms and Finnmark. “To support small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous people ... through secure and equal access to land ... and non-farm employment” – is one of the UN targets to harness food security (United Nations, n.d.). The need for increased and ecologically responsible food production, taking advantage of national resources has been also emphasised by the Norwegian government (Nøstvold et al., 2021). It is also a goal for the Food Strategy for Troms and Finnmark 2020-2025 (Johnsen et al., 2020) to produce as much food as possible in a sustainable way in relation to the local resource base while being mindful of the circular value chains. Behind these aims for increased Norwegian food production and specifically foods with local origin, is not an urgent recognition of a lack of provisions in Norway as it is a rich country that can assure imports for food supply from abroad. Instead, it is rather a desire to make an internationally known food region out of northern Norway (Johnsen et al., 2020).

Being situated in the vibrant web of the Arctic, wild northern berries are extremely vulnerable to climate changes provoked by anthropogenic and other factors. These changes in climate in addition to changes in lifestyle discussed above, have impacted how people practice and experience activities on the land, among which is berry picking. A systematized overview of data on how climate changes will and is affecting wild berries was undertaken in Scandinavian countries (Nesby et al., 2019) as well as in Canada (Boulanger-Lapointe et al., 2019) and in USA (Smith et

al., 2019). The researchers reported negative implications together with some positive ways to harness and adapt to new conditions. While some berry species, for example the crowberry, are vulnerable to disturbance and climate change and are locally extinct or decreased in its habitats because of such effects, bilberry can persist, despite considerable climatic change and blueberry can even benefit in growth under the current climatic change (Nesby et al., 2019). Thus, Arctic communities although sensitive to climate change, with respect to food security, because of their close relationships with the environment (Kaján, 2014), can also count on alternate berry choices that will appear due to warmer weather conditions in the north.

Apart from nature, climate and weather variables, wild berry realities should also be narrated in a food security context through a general canvas of recent social disasters such as the COVID-19 pandemic and Russian-Ukrainian war. The devastating results of the global virus spread were somewhat analysed in tourism studies literature as well as discussed by both managers of “Bærkokeriet” and “Nordlysmat”. The influence of the war in central Europe on the world's food security with the aftermath on northern Norway is an underdeveloped topic with only some predictions from experts available.

Toril mentioned that “Nordlysmat” was hit hard by the corona virus without even me asking. For a businesswoman who spent a lot of efforts and investments on business development, pandemic became a killer for plans and routines:

«We are insecure of what we are going to do further on. Before the pandemic we had done so much work and we were ready for lots of tourists. Now we have used all these money for surviving, for paying taxes and we do not have money anymore. It is like we concentrated on the core of the company and that is the collecting and producing part, I do not think we will manage the tourism part».

Linda also responded that survival during corona times for her small business was a very difficult thing, however, they managed to go through the darkest phase and now look brightly to the future:

«It has affected our production very much because our customers, the resellers of our products have a lot of visiting customers and when the borders were closed, these customers did not have anyone to sell to and we could not sell very much to anyone... It has been a tough time it has not been as much income as we expected but we have survived. Barely».

Notably, during the global pandemic, Linda spotted a very positive trend of locals being more interested in their products as well as people turning to berry collecting themselves:

«It is an example when something negative triggered something positive. Many more started to think about self-sustainability, to have their own food in times of crises. The local community has been more focused on using what is closest, because if neglected it will be gone the next day. We have had much more local customers than we expected and that is very good thing».

So, challenges teach to adapt and sometimes bring unexpected benefits. Mentioned self-sustainability and independence in procuring food, turning to local producers for qualitative, short-travelled edibles match with food security principles, featuring food sovereignty and the use of available ingredients from the area.

Food security becomes even more important withing the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian war in central Europe. As Secretary-General at the UN Antonio Guterres (Guterres, 2022) stated their task now is to avert the hurricane of hunger and a meltdown of the global food system, as the whole world depends heavily on the grains and oils supplied from Ukraine and Russia. The war on the Ukrainian territory prevents local agrarians from a fully-fledged sowing season and the sanctions against Russia significantly limit trade with the invader. The number of people experiencing food insecurity around the world could be at a 15-year high because of the effects of COVID on top of the impacts of climate change and Russia's war in Ukraine on global food security (Bechdol, Glauber, Dozba, & Welsh, 2022). For Norway, the existing situation with increased food prices might be not the biggest concern, however, it is another lesson for striving for more independence in the food sector.

Food security is a concern of growing importance. Within the hectic environmental and social realities, securing a sustainable and healthy food supply should be a key priority. Wild northern berries, traditional ingredients, nutritional foodstuffs and local superfoods have a great potential in securing vital vitamins and microelements in people's diet and singling out Troms and Finnmark as a gastronomic region.

7.3 Berry place in the north

Previously mentioned special features of wild berries grown above the Arctic circle are inscribed in berry value as well as in berry performances in households and businesses. To get a sense of the main research question, an understanding of the value of the Arctic origin of wild berries on the perceptions of fruits and their potential in marketing and in tourism is needed. What does this belonging to the northernmost label mean and what can the industry gain from of this unique Arctic origin?

The position of wild berries within Arctic food production is tough. In Sweden plant-based foods cultivated in the North originate in southern latitudes; the only traditional plant-based food item included in the current Arctic regional strategy documents is wild berries (Nilsson, 2020). The number of small companies in the agricultural sector has increased during the last decades due to a higher demand for locally produced groceries, and today there are about 500 local food producers in Northern Norway (Østerlie & Wicklund, 2018; Nøstvold et al., 2021). Toril says that there are less and less actors in the berry segment. In Finland, being always on a high scale, berry businesses

provide a steady supply to the inner market and have a strong net of importing wild berries from abroad, also from Norway (Paassilta et al., 2009). Notably harvesting wild berries with their further processing can boost growth in the food supply chain, especially when at least 90% of the whole wild berry crop in the Nordic forests perished unpicked every year (Paassilta et al., 2009).

The power behind food production in the Arctic has the potential in upcoming environmental crises to generate strong branding possibilities for the region where goods of the highest quality are growing (Nuttall et al., 2005; Johansen et al., 2018; Hossain & Punam, 2020; Nøstvold et al., 2021; Mølmann et al., 2021). Reports claim that even with the threat of global warming, wild berry crops in the near future will only be slightly affected. So, intensified utilization of wild northern berries, that thrive in severe weather conditions is promising horizon for manufacturing sustainable and accredited groceries.

Toril expressed the idea that in Norway wild berries in general have a much stronger meaning for northern communities compared to southern ones. «*I think here [referring to Alta area and northern Norway in general] this tradition was much longer, stronger than it was in the south of Norway*». Nevertheless, it is hard to make any clear-cut conclusions especially analysing berry realities from the perspective of Troms and Finnmark, at the same time the general supreme characteristics of northern wild berries, are scientifically proven (Johansen et al., 2018; Nøstvold et al., 2021; Mølmann et al., 2021).

In the past, berry products were either very expensive or not available at all, that is why everyone in the family had to go to the forest to secure their own portion of berry treats. Toril and Linda shared common memories from their childhood:

«In former times we did not talk that much about berries. It was part of what we must have in the freezer or in the jars to survive... We could not afford to buy a lot of jam, so normally we made it ourselves» (Toril).

«When I was a child, I went berry picking with my mother or my grandmother. My grandmother sold them to others who wanted to buy them because they could not pick themselves. You could not buy any berries other than that, you just had to pick them. There was nothing organized like we have now for buying berries» (Linda).

Berries and their meanings were not articulated much, but still their acquisition was indisputable, they were locally grown and available to everyone hardworking enough to go and pick them from the berry patches.

Wild berries in northern Norway were a reliable source of vitamins and minerals and because of the scarcity of other alternatives people in the north developed specific attitudes towards wild fruits. In addition to securing the supply of vital foods for the winter, wild berries were are

important commodities that helped in providing extra income for those who harvested and then sold them. Several authors wrote about berries from the wild that made a big impact on the family economies (Kangas, 2001; La Mela, 2014, Peltola et al., 2014; Bardone & Pungas-Kohv, 2015). My stepfather reminisced that in his childhood, around 60 years ago, wild berries were massively bought by big firms and the money raised from wild berries for the season were a deliberate source of income. By all accounts, the berries were sold only if they were excessive, and more was picked than the family needed. The main priority was to harvest enough for personal consumption.

Nowadays this long-lasting food practice that encapsulates so many silent traditions and stories can also be an economic boost for the region and individuals wanting to monetize the unique qualities of Arctic berries. Using the example of berries as illustrative actors, food and food-related cultural dimensions have been studied and found to be tightly embedded in tourist experiences and the promotion of Arctic places (de la Barre & Brouder, 2013). Belonging to the Arctic gives many extra positive characteristics to food from the region compared to other foods in the eyes of consumers (Nøstvold et al., 2021). The Arctic quality as an independent concept was used to estimate the unique characteristics of foods in northern Norwegian realities (Johansen et al., 2018). The Arctic origin, especially for some edibles from the Arctic region among which are wild berries, was claimed to have strong potential for marketing (Nøstvold et al., 2021).

The popularization of wild berries and increase in sales for businesses that utilize them is thus possible through employing an Arctic quality/origin label. The development of marketing strategies for berry businesses, although not a vector of this Master 's thesis, was singled out as an important challenge in the industry based on the interviews with business owners:

«The most important now is to be good with marketing because the key to success is marketing... It is so popular this product [referring to berry salt] and still we could have been selling a lot more if we had more marketing. So, I think if we concentrate more on marketing then we can even make more [profit]» (Toril).

A decision to buy a food product is by and large based on the ‘packaging’, meaning not only the appearance, but also peculiarities, stories and traditions associated with the product (Johansen et al., 2018). As many characteristics associated with local Arctic food are in line with current international food trends, like healthiness, naturality, authenticity, and traditionality (Østerlie & Wicklund, 2018; Nøstvold et al., 2021), it is very likely that concentrating more on the inherent origin of berry products while advertising, can bring them more success in the market.

7.4 Berries in traditional and indigenous knowledge

Wild berries are important and the harvesting activity itself bears sacred meaning for many. Traditional knowledge about the relationships among humans, lands and resources is deeply

intertwined with food practices, for both indigenous and non-indigenous locals, performing these practices embody the right to take part in cultural life (Hossain & Punam, 2020) and have a role in the continuum of knowledge sharing. In one of the case studies (Parlee & Berkes, 2005), the interchange of knowledge was tightly connected to wild berry picking, in another (Olsen & Thuen, 2012) the strategies of managing relevant knowledge about land and sea resources in northern Norway were addressed as factors for protecting the valuable knowledge from leaking to outsiders. But, in all accounts, berry harvesting activities are interpreted in the context of cultural integrity, the skills and knowledge involved in them, association with traveling to certain places, finding good patches of berries and establishing and sustaining people's legacy (Parlee & Berkes, 2005). This circle of knowledge around wild northern fruits is a sustaining balance in the complex bale of traditional food practices, where harvesting belongs, and challenges food insecurity.

Even though using wild plants as food to reduce food insecurity is an opportunity barely explored (Shaheen et al, 2017), links between wild berries, knowledge around them and food security and sovereignty in the entire North have been made (Nilsson, 2018; Smith et al., 2019; Hossain & Punam, 2020). Discussions of wild berry practices indicate that these are primarily of interest to woman and are of specific value in indigenous communities. Such practices are of high relevance in the scope of food security in Troms and Finnmark. The ongoing interplay of traditional and indigenous knowledge coupled with a demand to utilize existing resources make wild foodstuffs a noteworthy ingredient for inner and outer food markets.

Rooted in Norwegian, Sámi and Kven traditions, the best wild berry practices are transgressed into high-quality products created and advanced by women with indigenous background, small business owners with philosophy of protecting traditional foods by popularising them. As Toril and Linda reflected, berry picking as an activity is an old traditional way of acquiring food: *«I have grown up collecting berries together with my parents and like for all kids I was kind of forced to go out with them. We used to say that we have it in the blood, it is in the genes this collecting habit for every one of us»* (Toril). *«This is based on our tradition of using berries, which has always been a way of living or making money or just to have food through the winter»* (Linda).

Wild northern berries as a resource are imprinted in local food practices, they are age-old ingredients in authentic meals and couriers of traditional smell and taste in modern products. For Toril the use of wild fruits in “Nordlysmat” is a quality guarantee and assurance of good flavor, she acknowledged that wild berries are a vital part of manufacture: *«...we are talking about the history of the North and collecting tradition and Sámi culture, northern culture, the Northern Lights – that all is a very important part of the product»*. For Linda berries with their image of clean and fresh ingredients from the wild are foundational resources for running both companies, she believes her goal is brining wild berry values in masses: *«Wild berries in my companies are*

the reason we are living. If something which makes impossible to pick berries in the nature around us happens, I do not think we have anything more to do around here».

It was argued that while in the Scandinavian High North availability and access to supplies for basic consumption is fair; spiritual, sociocultural, and psychological wellbeing, political participation, and control over food practices by relevant actors – are significant missing points that make the region food insecure (Hossain et al., 2020). The development of initiatives targeting traditional food ways, businesses rooted in the lifestyle practices of knowledgeable locals would support food security and sovereignty. By putting together a berry agenda deeply grounded in traditional cuisine, the sacred meaning of berries in “Bærkokeriet” and “Nordlysmat”, venues run by women with indigenous background, the place of wild northern berries in securing sustainable edibles is obvious.

For Toril and Linda work with berries aimed at keeping the tradition alive and encourage others to perform berry practices:

«I wanted to continue the traditions we had up here [referring to gathering and using resources from the wild] and to be more in the nature, so I started to think how to make a company where I can actually do that» (Toril).

«I want maybe also to inspire people to go pick and then produce it [syrup] too. Because yes, one can make it oneself and one can buy it with us, both things we are cheering for. We cannot manufacture everything for everyone. So, we want everyone try to remember to make it themselves – that is our main goal» (Linda).

Meanwhile, wild resources have the same importance for keeping the Norwegian North more independent in the global food question. By relying on import and denying useful substances readily given by nature can generate negative consequences during crises when for any reason food import is impossible.

To educate younger generations in best food traditions, it has been claimed that plucking wild berries should be strategically promoted in schools (Nilsson, 2020). However, this is already implemented in school and kindergarten level in some communities in Troms and Finnmark. The effectiveness of such actions regarding the interest among youngsters to wild crops is uncertain. Relatedly, Linda commented that cultivating these food habits in the younger generation is an important task that can be executed by parents transposing their knowledge to youngsters: *«...it is for bringing it onto our children. We have to show our children how berries look, how they taste and which forest to find them in. If we do not do it, it is going to be lost».* Another argument from a study of Sámi children in Finnmark (Anderson, 2000) is that youngsters can teach adults how to obey and utilize wild plants, as they do not neglect any of the berry species among the rich berry

bounty and find their ways to use all kinds of berries. So, this sacred knowledge is kept by many actors and only evolves, when transgressing from young to adult and in reverse.

At “Bærkokeriet” and “Nordlysmat” Linda and Toril willingly share their knowledge with others, believing that the more people know and perform berry practices the better. Toril reflected that more people should engage in berry practices, she added that one of the ways to bring interest to berries back is to teach others about resources from the wilderness:

«I have to say that today in Norway are less and less people collecting berries, we need more people in the forest, not less.

...it might be like we have a little inn and there you can make small courses where you teach people how to make certain products with berries, like ice-cream with berries».

Even the general belief that locals fervently protect their berry spots and do not want to share, which in many cases is justified, often is exaggerated because there is no lack of berries, only lack in the eagerness to harvest them:

«There are so many berries and that is enough for everyone... There is such an abundance, it is enough for everyone. I am not afraid to give up my secret places, I know other secret places (laughing). If people find some of those, they can take them, I will find other places. I am just happy people want to go out and pick berries and I am prepared to give up my secrets» (Linda).

The idea of food security that refers to a situation in which locals maintain traditional knowledge about how to utilise available wild berries exclusively for local food production (Hossain et al., 2020) needs review. The desire to share knowledge and to work on educating younger generations as well as everyone who is interested in berry practices empowers, but not abates communities.

Another point is that this knowledge is stored far from general availability, somewhere in the back of the head. Hidden from accessible internet and open databases, not even once being registered anywhere, it is dispersed in the air and every time is brought to life by word of mouth:

«I do not think that much about all the knowledge I have, of course I know every place where blueberries and crowberries and lingonberries are, but if someone asks me, I say “No, I do not know where to send you”, but I know indeed. I feel that I have a lot of knowledge I do not even think about» (Toril).

Who or what earns trust and can share that knowledge in solidarity is assumed to be maybe ten to thirty close friends (Peterson, 2013), although I would say that knowledge about patches is available to a much wider circle. By all accounts it is important knowledge, and often shared to repay for a favour or as a sign of trust and sympathy (Olsen & Thuen, 2012), but more people want to share it and few hide it for themselves. Asking locals in Karasjok or Alta, they will almost be guaranteed to point you in a few directions to go berry picking. I witnessed a conversation between a guest and receptionist at a hotel when a worker being local and, by all appearances, very engaged

in harvesting gave several hints where to go picking not far from hotel. I also got valuable information about good berry spots in my first encounters. Although, it is worth mentioning that it was not detailed and sometimes limited to general advice, also once it was almost whispered and with the remark «*Yeah, well, now I have to warn my wife that she has a rival*». Nevertheless, on that note, people want to be discovered in their ‘crimes’, in a berry context, people want to reveal their knowledge, especially when they see you are interested to know.

Notably this social favour in giving away information can turn into disgrace if the strangers are spotted on the berry patches reserved for concrete groups. So, In Troms and Finnmark exists an unspoken law that nearby to living areas patches are for those who cannot go and search for berries very or long away, those are for elder people and small children. That means that in my example from the hotel (situated in the centre of city), the receptionist tipped the tourist about a berry spot that for some reason is not interesting to the locals with this right. During my field work in “Nordlysmat”, Toril's thinking allowed where we would go picking and rejected another person's suggestion of a berry patch, because «*That one was the closest to kindergarten and one day soon kids will go. It is unacceptable for them to come and find nothing because of us*». The common belief that all cloudberry marshlands in Alta or near it belong to old ladies is so strong that no one, with single exception, will pick cloudberry there.

All the above testifies that the statement of Hossain and Punam (2020), who mentioned that tourism businesses benefit from using food from traditional and local sources, however, the premise that berry picking as a tourism activity puts additional pressure on available resources is not applicable in Troms and Finnmark realities. In the county stakeholders realise that in their forests and glades there is wild berry bounty enough for everyone. Keeping that in mind, commercial berry picking, or wild berry harvesting as a tourism activity will not undermine food security, on the contrary, it should bridge insecurity that has emerged because of abandoning traditional practices.

Cohen and Fennell (2019) stated that in tourism we do not pay attention to plants, however plants are everywhere in what we do, they are actors in important food practices and our companions on tour, in addition to being the healthy edibles. Wild plants, northern berry plants in Norway hardly have any status compared to salmon or game, although they are by all accounts ethical foodstuffs and their acquisition is no less fascinating than fishing or hunting. Tourists seek a better understanding of traditional knowledge of wild plants in many regions thereby helping to boost the importance of the plants (Cohen & Fennell, 2019), in Troms and Finnmark, this can occur through participation in gathering activities.

7.5 Conclusions

Judging by mainland area, Norway is relatively large country, where only 3% of the terrestrial area is cultivated, so, growing a food supply is on top of being an intensive labour in the harsh northern conditions primarily limited by the scarce amount of fertile grounds. At the household level in northern Norway, even if harvesting practices are no longer economically important due to full-time employment elsewhere, berry picking is still culturally vital (Dannevig et al., 2015). Given the circumstances, wild foods which are renewable resource bountifully grown in Norwegian nature should be in the spotlight for those who want to eat local and live sustainably.

The concept of food security implies the right to physical and sociocultural wellbeing. That is why the intake of wild berries as well as participating in harvesting are vital tools for sustaining food security in the North. The knowledge of locals about berry practices is deeply grounded in everyday life, and they are willing to share both tangible and intangible aspects of those practices, as there are enough berry resources for all. While there is a fear that people will stop utilizing wild berries, tourism is associated with claiming back attention to the important resource. Articulating and showing off wild berries in the tourism sector is akin to fighting for food security in minds and in the field.



Chapter 8: Conclusions

In this Master's thesis, I answered the call of Cohen and Fennell (2019) to enlighten the under-rated place of plants in tourism and analysed the role that wild berries play in the diverse touristic accounts in central Troms and Finnmark county, with a greater attention to food settings. In parallel, I attempted to sketch the place and role of wild northern berries in everyday food practices of locals as an overarching background. The main insights of the study were derived from two interviews with the owners and executives of two berry businesses as well as numerous informal conversations with local citizens and my Sámi family living in Karasjok. Participant observations which entailed mutual picking tours, and multidimensional participation in the two businesses' work, was also used as a research method. The thesis structure fuelled by the research question represents a thematic run of theoretical arguments, data analysis and fruitful discussions.

Berries – a superfood from the wild, have a long-lasting history in Norwegian cuisine, thanks to their health benefits, the small fruits gained vivid attention from biology scholars in addition to century-old public love. However, within social studies, a wild berry agenda has been only sporadically discussed, with single works devoted to berries in tourism. By means of this Master's thesis, I draw more attention to wild berries as a valuable Arctic resource to utilize primarily in food tourism.

Although, berries in Norway are deeply rooted in folklore and popular beliefs, during field work, several actors mentioned that the berries' former importance had faded away. Wild berry crops in the ample spaciousness of the Norwegian north are hard to estimate, but from season to season there are many tonnes of bilberries, blueberries, cloudberries and crowberries decay without being harvested. With an initial thought that nowadays berries are ignored by individuals and businesses, I worked to uncover the complex realities of wild berries and found that berries are still deeply grounded in the everyday activities and business strategies in the study region.

I approached berries from three main conceptual pillars: terroir, gift, food security, and each time I built a discussion with examples, comments and arguments. Due to the very special place berries have on the table, I chose to study them within food practices and culinary tourism. So, the three ways berries are entangled in local food practises and in tourism in central Troms and Finnmark county are: as locally grown, terroir food; as gifts of nature and gifts to sustain social connections within communities; as a sustainable alternative and reinsurance for food sovereignty in the north.

The three main analysis-discussion chapters were formed accordingly to the concepts which led the way for examples and theory. The questions raised in those chapters together with the outline of the main arguments is presented in the paragraphs below.

As terroir, food wild northern berries mirror the taste of place, I argued that they do not need to be processed into products, the raw fruits in themselves bear the unique notes of the climate and landscape where they grow. I analysed the ways for businesses to protect those exclusive berry characteristics by digging into the threefold Norwegian designation system based on a terroir principle. The specific berry taste that is the key dimension of terroir was deconstructed into usual and unusual, pleasant and unpleasant, and was considered from tourist and local perspectives.

Guided by the broad gift concept, I pursued berries as gifts of nature and gifts within communities, connecting gifts to commodities in tourism. I evaluated the legislation over berry harvesting and sketched some dilemmas associated with berry laws. I speculated about possible ways of popularizing the berry collecting activity in tourism and turned to the meaning of harvesting practices for locals. The berry picking activity, for instance, brings families together, it is out there not just to fill up the freezer, but also to secure knowledge that has been circulating within groups of people for generations. The complex berry realities in restaurant kitchens were presented together with ideas for further berry promotion that goes beyond cookery frames.

Food security in relation to wild northern berries is aligned with the necessity to sustain the breadth and availability of local traditional foods which was undermined in northern Norway by a whole range of reasons. Under the current disturbing circumstances like climate change, the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russian-Ukrainian war, a food security agenda is more central than ever before. I gave extra attention to discussing the characteristics of berries as products from the Arctic and which benefits such an origin can bring to tourism businesses in order to comply with tourists needs using sustainable and traditional products. I disclosed the importance of indigenous knowledge that stays behind berry practices and in general propose the idea of food sovereignty. In summary, I outlined how vulnerable berry practices are, what efforts it takes to sustain them and what challenges follow.

Stepping to the second part of the research question, a short report about the role and place of berries in local food practices and in tourism follows.

Berries play the role of side products, mostly complementing main experiences with unique characteristics, shading them with extra flavours. Although, berries are often not in the spotlight of tourist-oriented businesses, wild fruits are extremely important for actors aiming for an authentic representation of regional culinary to high-end customers. The prominent role of wild northern berries is well recognized by the two managers, who participated in this study, they ascribe a big part of their companies' successes to the resources they use.

The data analysis, although showed some general negative trends in the amounts of berries picked, confirms the stable place of fruits in the food practices of locals and a sound interest in them from tourists. Inside communities and in tourism market the leading placed berry is cloudberry, embedded in different traditions and experiences. In addition to ‘yellow gold’, other berry sorts have their deserved place as the top food associated with Norwegian Arctic cuisine. Wild fruits including cloudberrries, lingonberries and blueberries were one of the five most mentioned edibles associated with Arctic food in Norway (Nøstvold et al., 2021). The place of northern berries as ingredients is thus stronger than the place of berries as objects in picking activities at least in tourism practises.

8.1 Limitations

This Master's thesis has a specific conceptual framework. Although the concepts were carefully selected to provide the best possible description of the data, I cannot deny the element of subjectivism in choosing what theoretical ways to follow. So, a three-dimensional suggestion of how berries are entwisted in the local food practices and in tourism is a key limitation of this paper. In fact, there are many more possible directions or ways that berries can be interlaced with both. Thus, concentrating on the terroir, gift and food security, I do not exclude other concepts relevant for studying berry realities, on the contrary, I recognize their presence and cheer for the complexity of berry practises.

As for limitations more practically related, two of the biggest are: the small number of businesses included in the sample and the short period of field work. Only having two main participants represents a rather small sample that can only partly be explained by the very limited number of venues that utilize wild berries and relate their work to tourism. The short field work period, unusual for ethnography, was somewhat compensated by its intensity and justified by the rigid time frames of this research project.

8.2 Directions for further research

Unfortunately for me, my Master's thesis has a specific scope that could not embrace all the ideas and thoughts that I wanted to develop within the presented topic. A lot of what is interesting and important had to be pared away, one needs to resist the temptation to include too much in a single study like a Master's project (Alvesson, 2010). However, I cherish a hope that the wild berry agenda in tourism will be picked up in further research either by myself or by the other scholars.

The question that interests me the most is: what is the future of wild northern berries as well as what will future picking practices be like. In the hectic conditions of today's world that I tried to depict in this thesis, food security is a cutting issue. How will the national and local discourses

respond, what will happen as food becomes more expensive, will it change the role and place of wild berries from multiple perspectives?

As already mentioned, there has not been much public attention to wild northern berries, or attention from social science scholars to them. Despite those facts, berries and, particularly, the activity of collecting berry crops constitute a complex phenomenon; to discover them as a mechanism of social belonging, knowledge sharing, recreational time for both indigenous and non-indigenous inhabitants of Troms and Finnmark generates another way of studying the social component of local food practices. Harvesting as an integral part of berry practices deserves separate attention from academics, the possibilities of implementing it in nature-based tourism in the region can be a promising topic for further research. A philosophical approach can also be taken to study embodied knowledge beyond berry practises within wilderness and seasonality.

Finally, the tourist experiences can serve as a broad entrance in berry research in tourism. Studying experiences has always been one of the most popular topics in tourism studies. Concentrating attention on new knowledge about tourists' perceptions and their feedback is by large useful and beneficial for the practical side of work in the tourism sector.

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