



UiT The Arctic University of Norway

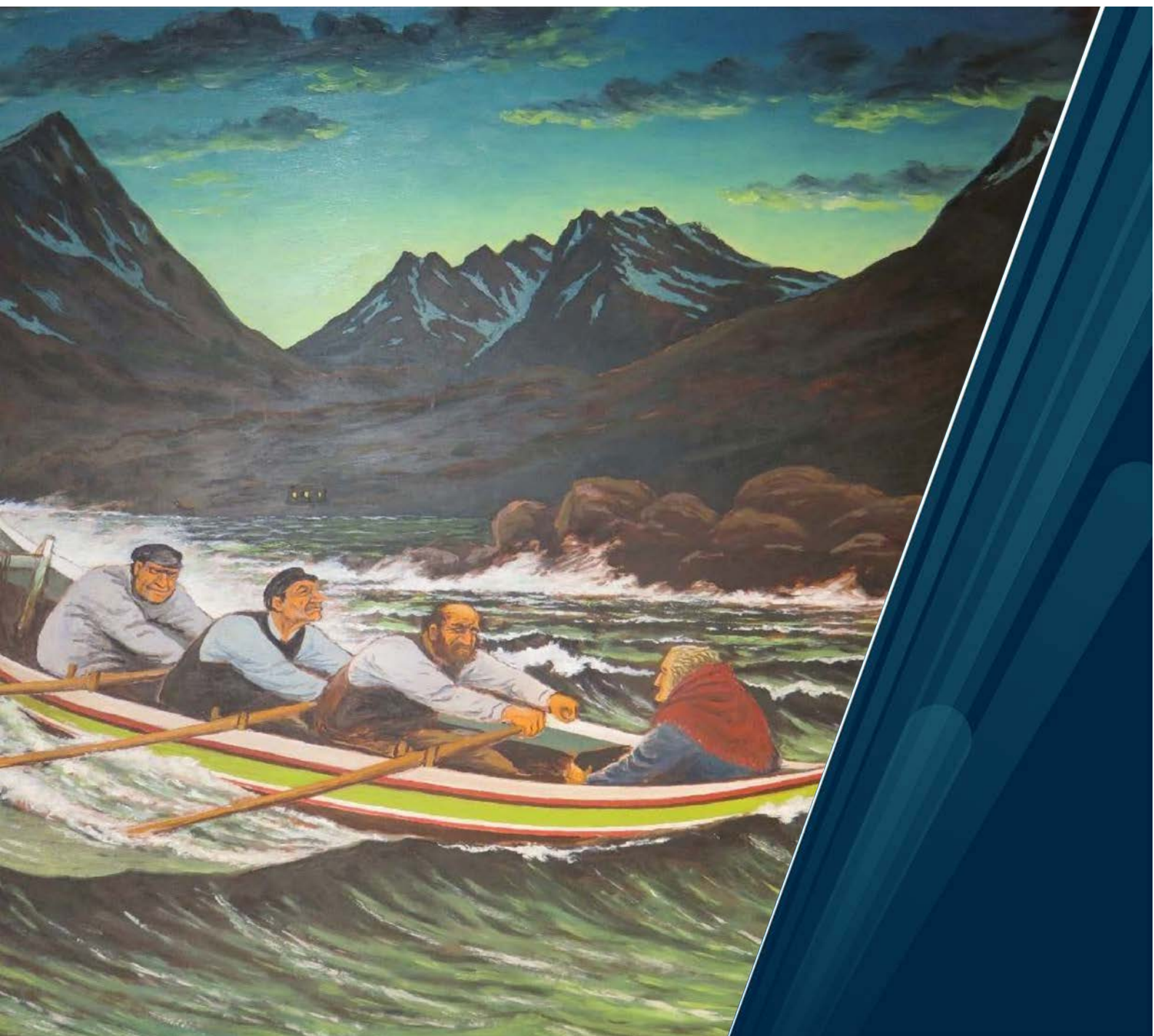
Faculty of Health Sciences

## **Arctic food biographies**

An ethnographic study of food and health in everyday life of elderly arctic women

Trine Kvitberg

A dissertation for the degree of Philosophiae Doctor – June 2020



## Preface

### *Voyage of a Midwife (Jordmorskyssen, 1984)*

Oil painting on canvas by Steinar Solvang (1904-1995) from Kvaløy.

Front Page photo: Trine Kvitberg.

Up until the early 1950s, the sea was the most important transport route of sustenance and livelihood in my grandmother's everyday life on the coast of Kvaløy (Sállir Northern Sami). Kvaløy (Whale Island) is a large island in the Tromsø Municipality in Northern Norway. Up to the 1960s, like many coastal women and men, my grandmother lived in a small rural community closely connected to both the sea and the land. Food harvested from the sea and berries and plants from the land in combination with small-scale farming was a common way of life. "The Sea takes and the Sea gives" is a well-known expression among people of the north Norwegian coast. The sea was life and death, joy and pain, motion and emotion. Events at the sea have impact, and people are affected, shaken and hurt. Stories can set something into motion. *Jordmorskyssen* (Voyage of a Midwife) is a personal story from my grandmother's everyday life. It reflects a concrete event at the coast of Kvaløy where a young midwife lost her life in a battle with the stormy sea. She was travelling in a small Nordland boat in order to assist a rural home-birth. The sea tore the young woman away from family and friends in the small local community of Kvaløy. One way of expressing the pain of loss was through artwork. Grandmother was elderly when she and the artist Steinar Solvang from Kvaløy (a local neighbour) depicted the 'midwife transportation' on canvas as a prayer. The Lord's Prayer 'Give us today our daily bread' encourages asking God to provide the basic needs in everyday life, and to remember giving thanks. In the painting, hope is recognized. The artists painted the young midwife as an old woman acting stable and calm in the small Nordland boat with a clear forwards direction. The old midwife has her hands folded in prayer as an expression of trust in God. The old woman's slightly-bent body position expresses peace and rest on the stormy sea. Her face is directed towards the destination and the end of a challenging journey, the birth of a child and hope in the future. This old coastal woman knew the vulnerability of life in a small Nordland boat at sea, and the fragile boundaries between life, death, pain and joy. Old coastal women were hard working and worked and prayed for their family and loved ones who traveled and garnered their livelihood from the sea. The well-known idiom "In God and cod we trust" expressed experiences that were deeply rooted in the North Norwegian coastal women's everyday life.

## **Acknowledgements**

First of all, I want to extend my gratitude to the elderly arctic women who generously invited me into their kitchen and shared their stories. On this journey, I have encountered rural places and hospitable individuals who have stories worth listening to and reflect upon. The journey has taken a long time with many pauses in relation to family, other work projects, and dealing with all the unexpected circumstances in everyday life.

I thank The Arctic University of Norway (UiT), its Department of Community Medicine and my supervisor Professor of Global Health, Jon Øyvind Odland and Evert Nieboer for their practical assistance, travels and language support. I am also thankful for support and collaboration of my co-supervisor, Professor Rune Flikke, Department of Social Anthropology, University of Oslo (UiO).

My gratitude is also extended to all colleagues and friends at UiT for their help and encouragement at all stages of my thesis research. Thanks to Natalia for language and practical support in the fieldwork and to all colleagues and friends at the University of Lapland for their collaboration. I truly appreciate the participation in all the workshops, seminars and social gatherings in Finland, Sweden and Norway.

I hereby acknowledge my indebtedness to my friends and family, my caring parents Asbjørn and Hildur, my three wise and beautiful children (Maria, Sofia and Mathias) and to Claus, my dear husband. Thank you for the support you provide in everyday life and for being strong together.

Trine Kvitberg

## Table of Contents

<i>Preface</i> .....	1
Voyage of a Midwife (Jordmorskysse) .....	1
Acknowledgements.....	2
List of articles.....	5
List of appendices.....	5
Summary .....	6
Summary in Norwegian.....	7
Introduction.....	8
Background .....	9
<i>Elderly Arctic women and food in everyday life</i> .....	9
<i>Relevance and resonance</i> .....	10
The Arctic.....	12
The Sami homeland.....	13
<i>Elderly women in Sápmi cultural region</i> .....	15
<i>Elderly women in Greenland</i> .....	16
What do we mean by health? .....	18
Aims.....	18
Methodology of the study .....	19
Ethnographic interviews in the sensuous kitchen .....	20
<i>The sensuous kitchen</i> .....	20
<i>Participants and recruitment</i> .....	21
Encounter with participants in Northern Norway .....	22
Encounter with participants in Russia.....	23
Encounter with participants in Greenland.....	26
Analysis.....	27
Ethics .....	28

Results .....	30
Article 1: « <i>Suffering in Body and Soul</i> » Lived life and Experiences of local food change in the Russian Arctic .....	30
Article 2: « <i>Wanting Greenlandic food</i> » A story of food, health and illness in the life of an elder Greenlandic woman .....	31
Article 3: « <i>We do not eat luxury food</i> » A story about food and health in an old Sami woman's everyday life in Norway .....	33
Discussion .....	34
Discussion of methods .....	34
"Who are you?" .....	34
<i>Kitchen Stories</i> .....	34
<i>Grandmothers' Kitchen</i> .....	36
<i>Situated knowledge</i> .....	39
Discussion of results.....	40
<i>The story tellers from Finnmark, North Norway</i> .....	41
<i>The story tellers from Kola Peninsula, Russia</i> .....	44
<i>The story tellers from Greenland</i> .....	48
Closing remarks .....	49
References.....	51

## List of Articles

Article 1: .....

Kvitberg, Trine (2015). **“Suffering in Body and Soul” Lived Life and Experiences of Local Food Change in the Russian Arctic.** In B. H. Miller (Ed.), *Idioms of Sami Health and Healing* (Vol. 2, pp. 103-130). Edmonton, Alberta, Canada: The University of Alberta Press.

Article 2: .....

Kvitberg, Trine & Flikke, Rune (2016) **«Wanting Greenlandic food» A story of food, health and illness in the life of an elder Greenlandic woman** In P. i. Naskali, M. Seppänen, & S. Begum (Eds.), *Ageing, Wellbeing and Climate Change in the Arctic* (pp. 181-195). London & New York: Routledge Advances in Climate Change Research

Article 3: .....

Kvitberg, Trine (2019) **"We do not eat luxury food" A story about food and health in an old Sami woman's everyday life in Norway.** In P. Naskali, J. Harbison, & S. Begum (Eds.), *New Challenges to Ageing in the Rural North: A critical Interdisciplinary Perspective* (pp. 225-238). Springer Nature Switzerland AG: SPRINGER

## List of appendices

Appendix. 1 .....

Confirmation Norwegian Social Science Data Services .....

Appendix.2 .....

Letter of invitation with declaration of consent .....

Appendix.3 .....

Declaration describing the independent research contribution of the candidate .....

Appendix.4 .....

Key biographical data of the participants in Norway, Russia and Greenland .....

## **Summary**

The aim of the ethnographic study described was to listen sensitively and give voice to elderly Arctic women's personal food biographies and everyday experiences of living in small coastal towns and inland areas of Norway's Circumpolar North, North West Russia and Greenland. These specified geographical contexts were selected because they have been the focus of the Arctic and Global Health research activities at the University of Tromsø (UiT) on food, health and sociocultural changes in the Arctic. The focal point of the ethnographic research described in this thesis is indigenous women's everyday life experiences on food and health in an Arctic context.

Ethnographic interviews were conducted with the participants in their Arctic kitchens. They involved personal encounters with 16 story tellers who, in a positive manner, substantiated the themes in the written accounts. Three detailed personal stories are featured in this dissertation. In the evaluation of these ethnographic interviews, attention is paid to how the participants tell their stories and express their health and wellbeing in everyday life through their personal food biographies. The interviews demonstrate a confluence of practices and among them eating traditional food is a key factor to everyday life, health and well-being. The thesis is written from a critical medical anthropological perspective. This perspective gives voice to individual experiences and the consequences that social forces (political, economic, cultural, institutional and religious) can inflict on human experience. These perspectives influenced the form of the interviews and account for why they turned personal. This allows the reader to be touched by the personal stories.

The thesis illustrates how colonization expresses itself in the form of bodily pain in the individual body. It is demonstrated that researchers methodologically can recognize and experience such embodied experiences of pain by establishing trust in relation to the participants and listening sensitively to words, pauses, silences, tone of voice and body language. Furthermore, the study shows what the participants mean by health and well-being, namely to have access to the traditional food one likes to eat and identify with. The findings in this study indicate how lack of access to the local traditional food intensified the elderly women's feelings of exclusion and marginalization. In short, the dissertation shows how individuals express experiences of colonization through their stories of traditional food and eating habits and that being deprived of such access can contribute to social and bodily pain.

## Norsk sammendrag

*Arktiske mat biografier. En etnografisk studie om mat og helse i hverdagslivet til eldre Arktiske kvinner*

Målet med den etnografiske studien som er beskrevet i denne avhandlingen var å lytte sensitivt og gi stemme til eldre arktiske kvinners personlige matbiografier og hverdagsliv erfaringer av å bo i små kystbyer og innlandsområder i det sirkumpolare Nord Norge, Nordvest Russland og Grønland. Den geografiske konteksten ble valgt fordi det har vært i fokus for Arktis og Global Helse forskningsaktiviteter ved Universitetet i Tromsø (UiT) på mat, helse og sosiokulturelle endringer i Arktis. Fokuspunktet i den etnografiske studien er urfolkskvinneres' hverdagsliv erfaringer om mat og helse i en arktisk kontekst.

Etnografiske intervjuer ble gjennomført med studie deltakerne på deres arktiske kjøkken. Intervjuene fant sted i personlige møter med 16 historiefortellere som på en positiv måte understøttet temaene i de tre tekstene i avhandlingen. Tre detaljerte personlige historier er skrevet frem. De etnografiske intervjuene viser hvordan deltakerne forteller sine historier med ord, kropp og uttrykker helse og velvære i hverdagen gjennom sine personlige matbiografier. Intervjuene viser et samlop av aktiviteter, og deriblant er det å spise tradisjonell mat en nøkkelfaktor for helse og velvære i hverdagslivet. Studien er skrevet fra et kritisk medisinsk antropologisk perspektiv. Den teoretiske tilnærmingen gir stemme til personlige erfaringer og konsekvensene som sosiale krefter (politiske, økonomiske, institusjonelle, religiøse, kulturelle) kan påføre menneskers erfaringer. Disse perspektivene gir plass til enkeltindividet og viser den personlige formen intervjuene tok som kan bringe leseren i berøring med historiene.

Avhandlingen viser hvordan kolonisering uttrykkes i form av kroppslige smerter i individuelle kropper. Metodologisk kan forskeren komme på sporet av den sosiale smerten ved å etablere tillit i forhold til deltakerne og lytte sensitivt til ord, pauser, stillhet, tonefall og kroppsspråk. Videre viser studien hva helse og velvære betyr i hverdagen til deltagerne, nemlig å ha tilgang til den tradisjonelle maten man liker å spise og identifisere seg med. Funnene i denne studien belyser hvordan manglende tilgang til lokal tradisjonell mat forsterket de eldre kvinnes følelser av eksklusjon og marginalisering. Kort fortalt viser avhandlingen hvordan enkeltpersoner uttrykker erfaringer av kolonisering gjennom sine historier om tradisjonelle mat- og spisevaner og at det å bli fratatt slik tilgang kan bidra til sosiale og kroppslige smerter.



## INTRODUCTION

This study aims to listen sensitively and give voices to elderly Arctic women's personal food biographies and of everyday life in the Circumpolar North. Listening means paying attention to how women tell their personal stories verbally and nonverbally. The intended focus is on their everyday lives.

Arctic women have traditionally been conscientious care workers, responsible for the family's health and wellbeing, nutrition and the organizer of their homes and households. Flexible and complementary relationships between women, men and generations were highly valued. These were crucial to the livelihood, survival and everyday life in the harsh Arctic climate. The relentless changeable weather has impact on everyday life. Storms, fishermen lost at sea and snowfall are examples. For generations, people have been vulnerable in their battle with nature. It was necessary to learn being flexible and a willingness to help and care for each other in times of crises.

The current study involved ethnographic interviews conducted with elderly arctic women in coastal and inland areas of the Circumpolar Arctic Regions of Russia, Norway and Greenland. Conducting such interviews in these areas is to encounter a geographically large region with historical, political and cultural diversities, several languages and challenges in communication. Historical processes of colonialization, marginalization, assimilation and forced relocations are juxtaposed between the past and the current everyday life. Breakdown of traditional social structures have unfortunately resulted in social problems for peoples and places across the circumpolar Arctic regions.

Even though there are differences between peoples and places in the Arctic, bridging seems feasible:

*“Resonance evokes shared human experience, what people across place and time can have in common. Where culture separates, resonance bridges – from a lived realization that this is the only practicable way. It does not deny difference....But it renders difference relatively insignificant in the face of that which counts more for certain purposes: shared human potential.”(Wikan, 1992, p. 476)*

My role in the “field work” was as a social anthropologist listening to elderly arctic women tell their food stories. The social anthropologist grapples with the relation between biography, autobiography and ethnography. Social anthropology responds to critical events that produce bodily pain and threats to health and well-being. Empathy and respect are key words in listening to the stories told by the study participants.

The three articles in this study narrate the lives of ordinary Arctic women who were embedded in critical events of their everyday lives. Giving voice is an attempt to elicit the participants’ personal stories. The latter were born in the time period 1930s to the 1950s. The ethnographic interviews were conducted in personal encounters, and nearly all took place in the kitchens of the 16 participants. Of these, two were from Greenland (Nuuk), nine from Russia (town of Lovozero in the Kola Peninsula, North West Russia) and five from northern Norway in Troms and Finnmark County). Our study focuses on concrete personal encounters with participants and how they told their personal food biographies. The participant’s stories were touching, and I listened to their stories without necessarily having the “same experience”. I grew up north of the Arctic Circle nearby the sea and in the kitchens of my grandmothers. These experiences constituted a *bridge* to the stories of the study participants. The participants were ordinary Arctic women who cared for their family's health, well-being and diet, and related how they struggled through various crisis and losses in their everyday lives.

The stories of Anna (Sami woman in Russia), Inga (Sami woman in Norway) and Sara (Inuit woman in Greenland) stood out. They shared in detail how they conscientiously fulfilled their day-to-day work and tasks.

## **Background**

### **Elderly arctic women and food in everyday life**

Quoting a Russian Arctic woman: “In northern families the women - the mother and particularly the grandmother – had an indisputable authority”(Williamson, Hoogensen, Lotherington, Hamilton, & Savage, 2004, p. 188). Elderly Arctic women have been the custodians of traditional practices and knowledge of food and health. Yet, there is a gap in the research to the gendered experience of food (AHDR, 2015, p. 24) Our ethnographic studies were conducted as a component of the project's affiliation with the Arctic and Global Health research activities at the Arctic University of Norway (UiT). Their objective was to conduct

qualitative research interviews with elderly Arctic women in various inland and coastal areas of the Circumpolar North. Arctic rural communities in Greenland, Russia and Norway constituted the specified geographical contexts of the project. The interviews were to focus on food, health and adaptation to sociocultural changes. My PhD research focused on these objectives.

The Arctic health research activities at the UiT began in the early 1990s and cooperation with the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP<sup>1</sup>) was established. From the 1990s on, there has been increased awareness of environmental health threats to Arctic indigenous peoples. The consequences of environmental toxins in the traditional Arctic diets was deemed a severe health threat, especially for Arctic women. Arctic health research (ACIA, 2004; AMAP, 2009, 2015) has documented the dramatic changes in Arctic traditional foods, diets and modes of living. The 2015 AMAP Report describes the consequences of climate and sociocultural changes as an “existential threat” especially to indigenous peoples’ health and everyday life in the Arctic. Arctic research calls attention to the problem of increased human activities linked to industrial developments of oil, gas, electrical power dams, as well as the tourist industry – they that have displaced many indigenous peoples from their traditional areas and subsistence life-styles. Hunting, herding, fishing and gathering disappears while urbanization and social problems increase (ACIA, 2004, p. 110; AMAP, 2015).

### **Relevance and resonance**

*Creating resonance is “to bring the reader, or the audience, in touch with the stories”*(Wikan, 1990, p. 268)

Our ethnographic study is thematically at the intersection between woman research and indigenous research in an Arctic context. The study shows how lack of access to traditional food creates a sense of marginalization in a woman’s everyday life. The significance of having access to the traditional food and to be connected to a confluence of basic health practices gives people meaning and bodily strength in their everyday lives.

---

<sup>1</sup> AMAP is an Arctic Council working group. The member states include: Canada, Denmark/Greenland/Faroe Island, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and United States of America.  
<https://www.amap.no/>.

The current study shows in different ways how development leaves its marks on individuals, including bodily pain. Researchers can recognize/identify such impact by establishing trust with the participants and listening attentively to words, pauses/silences and body language in the interview situation. Bodies tells stories about our lives that often, but not always are put into words. Beyond the words – in between words – there is the power of resonance (Wikan, 1992). Embodiment (Csordas, 1990, 1993) is a methodological perspective in anthropology to understand how our living bodies tell stories about our lives. “The body is to be considered as the *subject* of culture, or in other words as the existential ground of culture” (Csordas, 1990, p. 5).

The inter-subjective encounter between the current researcher and the study participants has led to an understanding that the human body is an essential source of understanding of who we are and how we live. The statement "I *am* my body" refers to a holistic view of body and mind.

I grew up in a family that had close relationships with the northern landscape, weather, wind, sea, mountains, people, food, berry picking, fishing etc. The appreciation of living everyday life in the North embodies a bridge to understanding what health and well-being meant to the participating women in this study. This constitutes ‘situated knowledge’ (Haraway, 1988, p. 581). Simply said, it is my story about their stories.



Figure 1. Arctic Boundaries.

**The Arctic** includes the territories of eight nations: The northern parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland, Canada, Russia, the United States (Alaska), Greenland/Denmark and Iceland.

The Arctic is home for about four million and includes a multitude of different people – indigenous and non-indigenous, city dwellers and recent arrivals. The hunters, herders, fishers and farmers live in more sparsely populated areas. Arctic residents of both coastal and inland settings include individuals with different and mixed ethnic backgrounds and ways of life. About ten percent are indigenous with distinctive languages, cultural, historical and geographical backgrounds, who continue traditional activities and adapt to the modern world at the same time. They are “shaping and being shaped by the local and regional environment” (ACIA, 2004, p. 6). “Over millennia, Arctic indigenous peoples’ culinary traditions and food culture have nourished peoples, enriched communities, bound generations and embodied the very essence of ‘sustainability’” (Antipina et al., 2017). Food from a subsistence economy and independent households has been a vital component for health and wellbeing in Arctic rural areas. Ryd (2015) gave voice to kitchen table interviews with elderly people in Lapland (the Sami homeland) about how they practiced independent households side-by-side. Her narrators often told her: “Everyone did it differently” (Ryd, 2015, p. 8). The basic survival strategy was flexibility and close co-operation between groups of people, namely settlers and nomads, women and men, and between generations. Ryd has criticized generations of researchers and young scholars for neglecting the reality of *‘betweenness’* and concludes that a lack of historical knowledge

leads to strict non-historical boundaries and to highlighting differences that never were problems (Ryd, 2015, p. 9).

People's stories about food and health is not heard when strict dichotomies and categories are drawn or exist. The 'either/or' view of the world restricts and over-simplifies matters, and imposes limits on everyday life. McGilchrist (2009) refers to the western philosophy in terms of dichotomies: real *versus* ideal, subject *versus* object, men *versus* women etc.

*“ It is verbal and analytic, requiring abstracted, decontextualized, disembodied thinking, dealing in categories, concerning itself with the nature of the general rather than the particular, and adopting a sequential, linear approach to truth, building the edifice of knowledge from the parts, brick by brick.”*(McGilchrist, 2009, p. 137)



Figure 2: Map of the Study Areas/Countries<sup>2</sup>

### The Sami Homeland

The Sami homeland, *Sápmi*<sup>2</sup> is the geographical and cultural region inhabited by Sami peoples (see Figure 2). Sápmi is the name for the traditional territory of different Sami groups, and it stretches across four countries. The Sami homeland was colonized, and its

<sup>2</sup>Source: The Indigenous World 2019, International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA)

people were subjected to oppression as in many other places around the world. The Kautokeino rebellion in 1852 was a historical trauma that stigmatized many individuals in Sapmi. The film *Kautokeino rebellion* (Gaup, 2008) describes the drama. The social authorities – including local merchants who sold liquor – were a target for the rebellion due to their repeated exploitation of Sami customers, of whom many were vulnerable to alcohol consumption. Alcoholism was widespread and highly destructive to the Sami at this particular time. In Norway, the Sami were exposed to profound assimilation by the Norwegian state. The assimilation process started around 1850, with politics and laws in which Sami individuals were not permitted to speak their native tongue. The assimilation politics was severe in schools (Eriksen, 1979). Sami people, like many other Arctic groups, experienced the pain of families being divided, including the separation of children from their families; and all done in the name of education and modernization. Assimilation continued in the modern Norwegian welfare state until the 1980s, but the pain inflicted continues to live on (Nergård, 1994).

The Sami homeland encompasses the northern parts of Norway and of northern Sweden, Finland, as well as the Kola Peninsula within the Murmansk Oblast of Russia. Statistics Norway (SSB) estimates that approximately 50 000 Sami individuals live in the northern part of Norway. Along the north Norwegian coast, historically there have been many fishing and farming communities which lived side-by-side. In inner Finnmark, in the communities of Kautokeino and Karasjok the majority speak the Sami language. Due to assimilation in this large geographical area that spans Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia there is no exact population count for the Sami people. One estimate is approximately 70 000: 40 000 in Norway, 20 000 in Sweden, 7 500 in Finland, and 2000 in Russia (Lund, Brustad, & Høgmo, 2008, p. 6). Another assessment suggests: 50 000-65 000 in Norway, 20 000 in Sweden, 8 000 in Finland, and 2000 in Russia (Vars, 2019, p. 53)

Men reindeer herders have often been associated with Sami culture and lifestyle. Reindeer herding employs about 10 percent of the Sami peoples in Norway (Sønstebo, 2018). Traditionally, the Sami had a semi-nomadic lifestyle and moved with their reindeer between the inland mountain areas and the coastal regions according to the availability of winter and summer pastures. In the rural coastal areas of North Norway, both women and men combine fishing and farming. Today's activities are often a combination of coastal fishing, the fishing industry (processing, preserving, storing, transporting, marketing), small-scale farming. Many

women also work in health-care services (Sønstebø, 2018). In the past, people in rural Northern Norway gained their subsistence from the resources the local landscape could provide. These and the climate were the foundation for their subsistence and diet. A clinical survey showed that the geographical region had a stronger influence on the dietary pattern than the Sami/Norwegian ethnicity (Petrenya, Skeie, Melhus, & Brustad, 2018, p. 2666)

### ***Elderly women in the Sápmi cultural region***

*“The traditional ideals for women were to be barggán – conscientious workers, good at handicrafts, dexterous; and able organizers. These female qualities were needed in the running of a subsistence household community”* (Eikjok, 2004, p. 54)

Complementarity between women and men was the basis of the societies in the north. The division of labor between men and women had to be *flexible* in order to survive (Kramvig, 2005). The men in coastal areas fished and were absent from the house and home for long periods of the year, while the women took care of the household, the meat, fish, barn, children and other family members. Even though the women were farming and the men brought in income as fishermen, the combined management characterized the co-operation and complementarity. Women considered their life as ‘God’s gift’ to be managed and ‘to the best of our ability’. Trust and faith in God were based in the Bible and nature was included as a vital necessity” (My translation from Norwegian) (Grønbech, 2008, p. 168)

The Russian Sami have experienced forced relocation from their traditional areas. Until recently, the life stories of elderly Russian Sami women living in the Kola Peninsula have not been told. This region borders Norway and lies almost exclusively within the Arctic Circle. The Russian Sami were controlled under both the Soviet Union and Russian administrations. In the 1950s and 1960s, Sami people were forced to move to the village of Lovozero, which is located within in Kola Peninsula and is bordered by the Barents Sea in the north and the White Sea in the east and southeast (Sergejeva, 2000). Testimonies of five elderly Russian Sami women in Lovozero have shown how their lives were affected by brutal collectivization, the terror of Stalin, and forced relocations from their traditional areas (Allemann, 2013). The consequences of these actions affected their everyday lives. Their society was subject to high unemployment, crime, suicides and alcoholism. The collapse of



the Soviet Union in the early 1990s impacted the Russian Sami's living conditions even further. Allemann (2013) describes how these traumatic historical events affected the lives of the Russian Sami, and how they managed and dealt with the fundamental changes imposed on their everyday lives.



Figure 3: Map of Greenland

### *Elderly women in Greenland*

Greenland<sup>3</sup> (see Figure 3) is the geographical and cultural region inhabited by the Greenlandic Inuit, who are indigenous people who constitute a majority (almost 90%) of its population. The total population was 57 691 in 2018. The majority of Greenlanders speak the native language, namely Kalaallisut. It is the official language, while Danish is second. Nuuk, in the West of Greenland, is the largest city on the island and is the capital and home to about one-fourth of the country's total population. Subsistence in Greenland includes hunting,

<sup>3</sup>Figure 3. Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenland). Source: IWGIA – The Indigenous World – 2019

commercial fisheries, tourism and different oil and mining industries (Berger & Wessendorf, 2019, p. 27)

Greenland was a colony from 1721 to 1953, and has been a self-governing within the Danish Realm since 1979 and consists of Denmark proper, the Faroe Islands and Greenland. Nevertheless, aspects of economic and cultural colonialization persist. Urbanization, immigration of workers from other countries and alcohol consumption have increased in the post-colonial period. Arctic health researchers indicate that there are subtle negative stress factors in everyday life that have had negative impact on mental health of the Inuit in Greenland (Bjerregaard & Larsen, 2016).

The researcher Gitte Trøndheim showed that the household was defined by kinship and sharing with others in the traditional Greenlandic society (Trøndheim, 2004; Trøndheim, 2010). The elders (men and woman) made the decisions in the household of an extended family. Trøndheim interviewed people in two urban cities in Greenland. The life and work of the elderly (women and men) had been strictly divided between traditional lines. Women have been responsible for both homecare and children and the men for the economy. Her research demonstrates that people living in the urban cities in Greenland still find kinship and family to be very important since, among other things, kinship gives a sense of belonging and contributes to identity. One of the participants told the researcher:

*"Looking back to my childhood, as an Inuk I can say that my family is my substance ..."*  
*Woman, 75 years old* (Trøndheim, 2010, p. 208).

Trøndheim defines kinship as "relatedness". Greenlandic relatedness is sharing and distribution of emotions, namely 'care' and 'taking care of' family members. It is practiced in every-day life activities such as the process of receiving and giving food.

*In general, all the families from Nuuk and Upernavik found kinship relations highly important and both places sharing and distribution of isumassuineq (care) and paaqqinninneq (taking care of) are central in their kinship relations" (Trøndheim, 2010, p. 218).*

### **What do we mean by health?**

“Underlying any attempt to conceptualizing health one must be able to conceptualize the *self* as an *embodied self*” (Das, 1990, p. 27). Das theory builds on three perspectives from which the body may be viewed in Critical Medical Anthropology (CMA), namely: as a phenomenally experienced individual body-self; as a social body and the body politic; an artifact of social and political control (Scheper-Hughes & Lock, 1987). In order for elderly arctic women’s personal stories to be heard, their individual experiences need to be listened to. Some medical anthropologists claim that we do not recognize the living links without a historically-deep and geographically-broad analyses (Farmer, 2004, p. 309). ‘The silencing of voice’ is a potential result (Kurtz, Nyberg, Van Den Tillaart, & Buffy, 2008). ‘The silencing of voice’, ‘voices not heard’ or the ‘suppression of personal biographies’ are conceptualized as structural violence in the context of a critical medical-anthropological approach. The concept of social suffering (Kleinman, Das, & Lock, 1997) advances our understanding of the lived reality of human suffering. The latter is structured by the political, economic and institutional power relations in a society. It transcends the concept of health and gives meaning to suffering.

In an open open-ended ethnographic interview, the researcher is an attentive listener to the personal story. Sensitive listening in such interviews is a sensory ethnography (Harris & Guillemin, 2011; Pink, 2009) The researcher uses her body and listens sensitively. It is about being present and receiving the stories being told. Sensitive listening in interviews acknowledges the moments of silence and pauses in the stories that are told.

### **Aims**

This study’s primary aim to listen sensitively and give voice to elderly Arctic women’s personal food biographies and details about everyday life in different coastal and inland areas of the Circumpolar North. Sensitive listening is to be aware about how stories are told, the limits of speech, and the moments of silences and pauses in a conversation. Ethnographic interviews must pay close attention on how participants express experiences of health and illness in their everyday lives. Critical historical events in the circumpolar north have in different ways inflicted pain that have controlled, regulated and transformed people’s everyday life.

The overall research question for the study was: How do elderly Arctic women express health and wellbeing in everyday life through their personal food biographies?

The thesis is based on three published papers that address the overall research questions posed. In this study, voice is given to the stories and encounters with three elderly arctic women, Inga, Anna and Sara. In the discussion chapter, the voices of all 16 participants are intertwined. Key biographical data from the interviews with 13 participants are presented in Appendix 4.

## METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

In this section I give an account of the methodological choices and considerations that constitute the study. It is based on a number of field visits, ethnographic interviews and various interactions and communication with people in rural arctic localities.

As shown in Figure 1, the study area was geographically located in coastal and inland areas of the circumpolar arctic region. All the ethnographic fieldwork<sup>4</sup> was conducted in Inner Finnmark (North Norway), Lovozero (Kola Peninsula, North West Russia) and Nuuk in Greenland. The field work was carried out in time periods between 2008-2011.

The interviews involved personal encounters with 16 participants. The encounters with three participants stood out. They involved Inga, Norwegian Sami (participant 1), Anna, Russian Sami (participant 2), and Sara, Greenlandic Inuit (participant 3). Their expression of pain, caring and compassion motivated me to start writing their stories. It was clear that they were battling with the subtle things in everyday life that really mattered.

Most of the interviews took place around their kitchen tables. Only one participant indicated that the kitchen was not a good place. In this case, the interview was conducted at the local grocery store. All participants were born the 1930-1950 period. Four participants had not yet turned 60 at the time of the interview. Nevertheless, I have included them in the study as elderly<sup>5</sup> arctic women.

---

<sup>4</sup> Ethnography is a fieldwork method and an approach to writing.

<sup>5</sup> There is no universally accepted definition of the term '*elderly*'. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2002) has stated that "At the moment, there is no United Nations standard numerical criterion, but the UN agreed

A tabulation of key biographical data for 13 of the 16 participants are included in the Appendix. The Norwegian Sami women were Karen (participant 4), Kirsten (participant 5), Ellen (participant 6) and Margret (participant 7); and the Russian Sami were Anastasia (participant 8), Olga (participant 10), Larissa (participant 11), Paula (participant 12), Elena (participant 13) and Maria (participant 15). Furthermore, two Russian Komi women participated, namely Petri (participant 9) and Zoya (participant 14), as well as the Greenlandic Inuit Johanne (participant 16).

### **Ethnographic interviews in the sensuous kitchen**

Ethnographic interviews were conducted in group settings. Such interviews are dialogical and often informal. The knowledge was gained collaboratively with the participants in an interview setting. The interviewer encouraged the progression of the interviews, listened to the interviewees, and followed up pertinent cues and interest. The hallmark of this particular study was this informal interview.

*“The ethnographic interview process is “open”. The “open” or “open ended” dimension describes the interview control, in which there is a continuum with structuring interviewing in one end and informal interviewing on the other end (Hilden & Middelthon, 2002, p. 2475).*

The dialogical interview implies active partnership in conversation and includes the participant, the researcher, the translator and the subject. These interviews were personal encounters between the researcher (myself) and the participants (elderly arctic women). Sometimes other family members were present during the interview and, as indicated above, an interpreter when needed. The interesting aspects of such encounters is to explore the world in-between to bring to the fore “the live, complex, embodied, world of individual, always unique beings, forever in flux, a net of interdependencies, forming and reforming wholes, a world with which we are deeply connected”(McGilchrist, 2009, p. 31)

### ***The sensuous kitchen***

The physical encounter between the researcher and the participant in a specific location have an impact on how the story is told. A kitchen constitutes an intimate and personal place for

---

cutoff is 60+ years to refer to the older population”. According to the WHO ‘elderly’ are persons between 60-74 and persons  $\geq 75$  years are ‘old’. *Effective* age is difficult to describe based on chronology because it is individual (Leksikon, 2020; Myrstad, 2015). In the current study ‘elderly’ refers to women who are born in the time period from 1930s to the 1950s.

cooking and evokes memories and feelings. It is thus a good place for an interview about food and cooking and would likely facilitate subjective stories.

Communication involves intersubjective encounters and means more than speaking. Facial expressions, hand movements, music, songs, photos, food, smell, touch, taste, beauty, and stories speak *to* us in relationships and our manner of being in the world. This kind of knowledge is not easily captured in words; it goes *beyond the words* (Wikan, 1992). It has to do with the embodiment, which resists general terms and has to be experienced.

The encounters between the participants, the interpreter and the researcher constitute an interpersonal zone. It begins with ways to get to know each other, exchange of smiles, friendliness and comments on everyday small things such as the view from the window, the weather, beautiful handicrafts or a dress. Some of the women interviewed wanted to know why I was interested in listening to their food stories, where I come from and who I am. For those who wanted to know, my spontaneous response involved telling them about my grandmother's kitchen at a location on the north Norwegian coast. In these moments of sharing my personal story it often initiated a communication process that involved the personal stories of the participants.

### ***Participants and recruitment***

The first stage of my research journey was participation in Arctic festivals together with friends and colleagues from different Sami institutions (twin-villages and woman associations etc.) Festivals facilitated recruitment of research participants, social gatherings, listening to songs and music, conversations, friendship, tasting food and looking, touching and buying beautiful handicrafts.

Key local persons had a snowball effect on recruitment. It started with personal encounters at the Easter festival in Kautokeino (Finnmark, Norway), the summer festival in Lovozero (Kola Peninsula, North West Russia) and an arctic conference in Nuuk (Greenland). In fact, I was invited to a participant's kitchen. The recruitment of participants was informal and personal.

### **Encounter with participants in North Norway**

The fieldwork in inner Finnmark involved numerous field visits to the districts of Kautokeino and Karasjok. The project proposal was first presented at the local health care center in Karasjok, the Sami Health Research Unit at UiT, and the Sami Parliament in Karasjok in the Spring of 2008. The ethnographic interviews were conducted with 5 participants from this district and included visits to the kitchens of four of the women. One of the five participants, Inga, did not speak Norwegian. Even though a professional linguistic interpreter was suggested, the participant wanted her spouse to translate.

An old Sami woman, the aunt of a colleague and friend at UiT invited me to rent a room in her house. Aunt Karen opened the door into her hospitable home, and she became one of my research participants. At the grocery store, she introduced me and the project through personal encounters to her fellow locals. The grocery store had a small area for chatting over a cup of coffee.

Aunt Karen lived a calm life alone with her dog in a house on the outskirts of Karasjok. The house had many rooms, and she invited me to stay in her house during fieldwork. I was to learn about food and everyday life in the district while recruiting the participants. Aunt Karen started her days chatting with her dog and feeding the birds outside her kitchen window. Her dog had been sick for a while and was not eating. Aunt Karen said she herself lost appetite and stopped cooking. Gradually her appetite was restored and we started cooking together hot soups and baking bread, chatted, and had calm meals together.

The kitchen of Aunt Karen, her caring and compassion for people and animals, the simplicity, of the food and the hot meat soup reminded me of my grandmothers' kitchen and the small everyday things that really matter in everyday life. Aunt Karen listened to the songs of the visiting birds and the needs of the animals. Food was never thrown away. Aunt Karen took her time to prepare food. Preparing a meat-soup meal, started by driving to nearby Finland to buy the reindeer meat directly from a local reindeer herder at a price lower than in Norway. She went to Finland regularly to buy the reindeer meat from a Sami shepherd with whom she had traded with for many years. She wanted to know where the meat came from. She preferred to get it from Finland because it came from non-stressed reindeer and she trusted the vendor.

Field visits to inner Finnmark was timed to coincide with the annual Sami Easter festival in Kautokeino. When there, I stayed at a traditional mountain hut. Traditionally, the Easter festival was held in the local church. Kirsten, participant number 5, was a brilliant traditional cook of Sami food at her mountain hut. *Bidos*, reindeer meat together with potato and carrot, was her favorite dish. *Bidos* is a traditional and warming soup with lots of flavor and rich texture. Kirsten invited me to watch her cook it and to follow the process until the dish was served in the guesthouse. Evenings around the table in the mountain hut involved lively conversations between guests and the host about the traditional Sami food. On Easter Sunday morning I was invited to go with Kirsten and some of her regular visitors to the local church. Kirsten opened doors for me in her guesthouse, the local church and to her Laestadian church family to facilitate recruiting. In inner Finnmark and North Troms, the Laestadian spiritual community is important in everyday life of elderly Sami. Many Sami elders have a strong link to laestadianism, a Christian revival movement that is positioned in between traditionalism and modernity in northern Scandinavia (Kristiansen, 2015). The religious commitment is linked to resistance to materialism and luxury, as well as the abstinence from alcohol.

### **Encounter with participants in Russia**

The annual Sami summer festival in Lovozero in the Kola Peninsula of Russia is held in June. The festival take place at the nearby lake. Individuals from Lovozero and other places in the Kola Peninsula and Sami friends from Norway, Sweden and Finland come together to enjoy the program, which includes folk groups, music, sports competitions, and displays of Russian and Sami foods and handicrafts. All generations and folk groups are included in the celebrations. A number of elder Sami, Komi and Russian women come to the festival to sell their handicrafts and food, especially pirogues and sweet cakes<sup>6</sup>.

---

<sup>6</sup> Photos: Trine Kvitberg. Russian Sweet cakes at the summer festival.





Sami crafts and Russian cakes displays at the annual Lovozero festival in June 2008.

I started the first field visit to Lovozero by traveling from Karasjok, the Norwegian twin-village to Lovozero in a bus with festival people of all ages. Some had repeatedly visited the annual summer festival and their Russian Sami friends in Lovozero since it started in the beginning of the 1990s. Karasjok in Norway is its twin village. The travelers were children, parents, youngsters, young and old men and women. The twin village tour is a regularly event since the 1990s with open borders between the Scandinavian countries and Russia. I was invited to participate on this tour with a Sami friend and colleague from UiT, who had visited Lovozero a number of times for cooperative work with Russian Sami friends in the Kola Peninsula. I was introduced at the festival as an anthropologist and an arctic health researcher from UiT who was interested to meet elderly women and to listen to their stories on food in everyday life.

During the festival we met seven Russian Sami women and two Komi women who gave us their telephone numbers. The women expressed curiosity and interest in participating in the interviews. Some of them expressed that they had been waiting to tell their stories.

All ethnographic interviews were conducted during the second visit in the late fall and thus some months after the first visit to Lovozero. The first encounter involved my Russian linguistic interpreter (Russian-Norwegian). She was a senior Russian scientist from St. Petersburg State Technical University and had extensive experience working as a linguistic assistant in different cooperation programs in isolated rural localities in the Kola Peninsula. The Russian language interpreter had been doing community surveys and measurements several times in cooperation with the Arctic Health Research Group at UiT and AMAP.

My assistant helped with all the formalities including obtaining visas and approvals for conducting research in Russia. The first field visit to Lovozero was an obligatory meeting at the town hall with the village mayor. Information and presentation of the study were shared

with the local authorities for their approval to conduct interviews in the village. The first field visit in Lovozero also included an encounter with the Sami women's network.

The second field visit to Lovozero began with an encounter with the chief physician at the nearest hospital in one of the industrial towns in the Kola Peninsula. The chief physician offered transport in his vehicle from Murmansk city to the rural village of Lovozero – a two-and-a-half hour drive on bad roads. Transportation over long distances in the Kola Peninsula at that time was rather poor and those who had a car fill it with people in need of transport. The chief physician shared his experience about the most serious issues to people's health in the region. Years of clinical experience showed that men's alcohol consumption/dependence destroyed health, social relations, families and communities.

My linguistic assistant managed the contact information (including telephone numbers) and correspondence with the women who had shown interest in participating in the study. In advance of the second field visit to Lovozero, she contacted the women who had signed up for an interview. They were asked about their willingness to participate, the time and place for the interviews and informed of the need to sign an informed consent form. All the women who expressed interest in participating at the first encounter during the summer festival invited us into their kitchen and the offered cup of tea facilitated stories to be told. My assistant, Natalya, grew up in the Soviet Union in the 1950s and her presence contributed to understanding some of the participant's stories better.

During the autumn weeks, 9 ethnographic interviews took place in the village of Lovozero. The kitchen table interviews were personal conversations that lasted about 2 to 3 hours. The stories were received with empathy, curiosity, astonishment and respect. The interviews started with the signing of an informed consent form and asking permission to use a tape-recorder. Only participant 11 did not want her interview to be recorded.

The interviews involved the participants, myself and our Russian-Norwegian language assistant. The absence of Russian language competence by the current author created the opportunity to listen between the words. Attention to the participant's movements and bodily expression is acknowledged as an important part of the stories – it captures 'the world beyond the words' (Wikan, 1992) through facial movements and of the eyes, mouth, hands and body. The participants used objects such as historical photos from albums and beautiful handicrafts to tell their stories. These reinforced that attending includes listening to how words, gestures,

facial expressions, pauses and silences were used to express what really matters in everyday life.

Kitchen tables became the arena for receiving and sharing stories. Receiving the story and the story teller is to listen with your sensuous body. The act of waiting for words, the magical moment without breaking in to control is the moment for letting the story happen to you.

*“For the power to silence others resides not simply in the power to prevent them from talking; it lies also in the power to shape and control the talking that they do, to restrict the things they may talk about and, more specifically, the ways in which they are permitted to express their thoughts”*(Connerton, 2011, p. 77).

My interpreter Natalia assisted in the fieldwork for three weeks. She transcribed the first seven interviews verbatim from Russian to Norwegian. The most challenging to my Russian-Norwegian assistant was to translate the participants’ use of metaphors.

The fieldwork in Russia continued with two more interviews with a second linguistic assistant, a young local male teacher who translated from Russian to English. The two last field interviews with him were more formal than the more personal interviews that were conducted in collaboration with Natalya. Interestingly, In *Behind Many Masks* (Berreman, 1962), the researcher had to change his linguistic assistant and the available information immediately changed. In a somewhat similar manner, I experienced that switching to the male linguistic assistant and to another language also altered the nature of the interview. The local translator was eager to do a good job and, but to a certain extent, took control. It was therefore more challenging to hear how the participants used words and gestures to tell their stories. The two field interviews were transcribed verbatim from Russian to Norwegian language by a translator at the University of Tromsø.

### **Encounter with participants in Greenland**

The field visit to Greenland started with travelling with a group of colleagues from the Health Faculty of UiT for attending and participating in an Arctic Health Conference in Nuuk, the capital of Greenland. The first stop for the whole group was to visit the National Institute of Public Health in Copenhagen to meet some of the arctic and global health scientists involved in health research activities in Greenland. One of the experts promised to introduce me to a hunter and gather association in Greenland. The promise was not fulfilled. Instead at a local conference, a Greenlandic participant introduced me to a family member

who worked in the hotel kitchen. This person knew some of the women who delivered fresh local Greenlandic food to the hotel.

The hotel kitchen worker asked Johanne (participant 16, a local female Inuit hunter) if she would like to meet a Norwegian anthropologist and arctic health researcher for an interview. Johanne delivered berries and reindeer meat from her own hunting activities to the hotel. Johanne invited me to follow her and her family to hunt and pick wild berries at the outskirts of Nuuk, where she had her cottage that was her childhood home. In periods of the year this home was rented out to tourists in order to increase their income to offset the high cost of living in Nuuk, the capital of Greenland.

Two women, Sara and Johanne were recruited to the Greenland component of our study. The encounter with Sara's story "Wanting Greenlandic food", and her expression of bodily pain in everyday life touched me. Sara was suffering from severe back pain. Nevertheless, she walked around picking berries from the land and expressed that she felt no back pain when doing this physical activity. Sara delivered self-picked wild berries to the hotel kitchen and also sold them from her fixed dwelling in the center of Nuuk.

A linguistic interpreter was not used during the fieldwork in Nuuk, Greenland. Despite the fact that the participants spoke fluent Danish, they both expressed that they were feeling better in communications with a Norwegian rather than a Danish researcher. This reflects the colonial history and historical wrongs that many Greenlanders have experienced.

### **Analysis**

The ethnographic interview also facilitates how participants express health and well-being in everyday life through their personal food biography. The interviews were tape recorded, transcribed and anonymized. Tape recorded interviews from Norway and Greenland were transcribed from Norwegian and Danish into English by the writer. The tape-recorded interviews from Russia were transcribed by professional linguistic Russian interpreters from Russian to Norwegian and English. Field notes were taken throughout the fieldwork in Russia, Norway and Greenland and written in diaries by hand.

Every evening when I came back to my home, the hotel or guest house to write the day's field notes it was the silence and the pain in the participants' stories that had touched me.

What was at stake? I gave in to the silence and to that does happen between people. My experience as a medical nurse who listens and recognizes silence and the pain in her patient's stories became the bridge that connected me to their stories. In practical nursing, in encounters with people in pain and suffering, silence is often about sharing a common space.

*“To experiencing silence not as a void or absence but as a space full and pregnant with meaning is difficult for a word-mongering academic” (Wikan, 1992, p. 470).*

The writing process started after each interview. The transcribed material was read conscientiously, re-read and re-written a number of times. It reflects my own struggle with the academic dependence and overreliance on words and exact utterances. Wikan (1992) had an approach that was in tune with a commonsense view that better captures what is at stake for people in everyday life.

“It would have us attend to the *effect* people are trying to make and the *relevance* of their words in terms of how they are positioned and where they seem to want to go, rather than the message their words might seem to encase”(Wikan, 1992, p. 467)

So how did I “do” it? I did not have a systematic set of research questions. Rather it was to listen how the participants told their personal food biographies through words and body. They were asked to tell about their lived lives, their life stories about food, health and everyday existence, namely: ‘The year and place of birth’; ‘marital status’; ‘children’; ‘education’; ‘place of residence’; ‘activities in daily life’; ‘food memories from childhood’; ‘diet in daily life’; ‘family’; ‘social network and ‘engagement in social life’. The lived life constitutes "all the data" in between these categories. (Appendix 4)

## **Ethics**

The Norwegian Social Science Data services (26556) approved the project (Appendix 1), while the Regional Committee for Research Ethics (P REK NORD 38/2008/ 200801129-4/MRO/400) considered the project not to be within its scope because it did not involve biomedical research on humans.

The participants' names and anonymity have been protected throughout the study. All participants and their family members have been given pseudonyms in order to protect their anonymity. The interviews were conducted in accordance with the regulations pertinent to informed consent. The participants received letters of invitation that included information

about the aim of the study and related ethical issues. This letter was also translated into the Russian and Sami languages. The participants provided their written consent to participate (Appendix 2).

Many of the participants told their stories through their personal photos and arts and crafts. The photographs evoked personal memories of past events. Some of the participants expressed the pain of loss of access and availability to their way of life, family traditions, animals and the special local foods from their home localities. The participant's photos and body language gave voice to critical events that were difficult to communicate in words. Descriptions and photos that I have used in the thesis were approved by the participants.

In indigenous communities, researchers often "come and go". Questions about potential benefits for the people who take part in the research need to be stated and if the results are to be shared with the communities and those who have been the focus of research (Jacobsson, 2016, p. 45). I decided to write three stories, specifically about: Inga, Sara and Anna. They stated that they had been waiting to share their stories in order to be heard. These were touching conversations and I have tried "to create resonance" and "to bring the reader or audience, in touch with their stories"(Wikan, 1990, p. 268). I have also attempted to avoid alienating academic language which can rob the voice of the participants. My focus is on personal experience and those small things that really matter in everyday life.

The ethnographic interviews with Inga and her husband in Finnmark, Norway, revealed a complaint. In the 1960s social scientists participated together with the couple in the reindeer husbandry. The couple could not recognize themselves and understand the scientific articles that had been written in complicated English about their everyday lives as Sami herders. My promise was to provide a text they could recognize their own voices and wrote Inga's story in Norwegian "*Vi spiser ikke luksusmat*"(Kvitberg, 2019 -a).

The results for the Russian study were presented at Sami women's conferences in Murmansk and Lovozero in June 2016. Anna received the article with her voice in English. Unfortunately, I couldn't give her a copy in Russian or Sami because there was no project funding for this. Nevertheless, Anna knew someone who translated the entire article orally to her in her own language.

## RESULTS

**Article 1: “*Suffering in Body and Soul*”.** Lived Life and Experiences of Local Food Change in the Russian Arctic.

“*Suffering in Body and Soul*” (Kvitberg, 2015) is a story of a lived life and changes in local foods in the everyday life to Anna, an elderly Russian Sami woman living in the Kola Peninsula in North-West Russia. The aim of this article is to show how sensitive listening to a personal food biography enhances the awareness of health and illness experiences of an elderly Sami woman living in one of the residential blocks in a small village in the Russian Arctic. I draw attention to a critical medical anthropological approach that focuses on social pain and voices not heard. The medical anthropologist Veena Das asks “*who hears this voice?*”, when we listen sensitively and let stories happen to us. This in turn affects the way we write our ethnographies (Das, 1995)

In this article, Anna’s story and events are written primarily in her own voice. The ethnographic interview was conducted in Anna’s kitchen in the presence of the interpreter and myself. Anna was born in the 1940s in a small Sami locality at Kola Peninsula. Anna asked with words and body if I was following her story. She turned over the pages in her photo album as chapters in her life. Anna’s story started with her food memories from childhood in a Sami family, the traditions, the free access to reindeer meat, berries and fish, as well the preparation of this food from the tundra. Hard physical work was required of all the family members. There were lots of hardship, but a strong sense of connectedness between people, animals and nature. Anna gave a detailed description of her Sami home village and of food memories from her childhood, especially her mother’s preparation of the juicy fish soups. Mother’s tasty fish-soup and father’s slaughtering of reindeers gave vitality and strength in body and soul.

The second part of Anna’s story was the dissolution of her home, family and livelihoods as a consequence of the construction of hydroelectric power dams at their Sami village at Kola Peninsula. The Soviet state forced her family and all the people in the Sami locality to move from their village. The family was compelled to give up their animals, house and all private property. The social order, the family, the private property, the traditional food supply and way of life broke down. Her Sami people were forced to move to blocks and barracks in the

new administrative center of Lovozero during the 1960s. Anna complained having bodily pain. She had experienced multiple losses. Anna had lost family members and access to reindeer meat, berries and fish, the traditional food she appreciated in her childhood and that she wanted to eat in everyday life. Anna indicated that what mattered in her everyday life had been lost. Her people had changed. The mutual relationship between people when giving and receiving help and care to each other as they used to do had been lost.

The analytical approach indicates that the state's colonization generated traces of physical and emotional pain in individuals. The core argument by Das is that pain is social. As a social fact, expression of pain bodily or through words is to partake in a moral community. This argument is shown through the interview with Anna. The importance of the researcher being present in the moment was clear, listening attentively and capturing the story that is being expressed with words, body language, and through silence, pauses and the unspoken.

**Article 2: “Wanting Greenlandic food”.** A story of food, health, and illness in the life of an elderly Greenlandic woman.

“*Wanting Greenlandic food*” (Kvitberg & Flikke, 2016) is a story of food, health and illness in the life of Sara, a marginalized Greenlandic woman living and selling wild berries in Nuuk, the capital of Greenland. Sara was born there in the 1950s. In this article, written in collaboration with my supervisor, we argue that sensitive listening opens up an understanding of how adverse events are inscribed in the body in ways that shape a social hierarchy and access to local food delicacies. Sara’s story reveals how embodied memories of food can be expressions of belonging as well as alienation and loss in the changing Greenlandic society. We argue that researchers as listeners become part of a moral community of expert witnesses, which obliges them to let the voices of our interlocutors be heard. Our focus in this article is on access to valued local food. The article outlines the critical events in Greenland that have impacted Sara’s health and wellbeing. We argue that sensitive listening is needed in order to give voice to victims of structural violence so that their pain may be experienced by others. This kind of storytelling, which gives voice to subaltern experiences of global processes, often stay hidden and unexplored and creates much-needed moral communities.



The ethnographic interview between Sara and the writer was in the kitchen in a residential block where Sara spends part of her daily life cooking and doing housekeeping for her ex-husband. Sara expressed how heavy back pain had impacted her everyday life, which she had suffered since she was 15 years old. Bodily pain had transformed Sara's life. The injury happened when she lifted a heavy pot in kitchen work. Bodily pain had made her body movements slow. The Danish school system in Greenland gave her the message that she was "slow" and delayed her classmates. She had to return to a Greenlandic class. The severe back pain had affected her life since she was 15. The pain inhibited her to fulfill a vocational training. Sara expressed her struggle with pain in her everyday life. There were generations of doctors who had not met her cry for help. Instead they had prescribed pills and had not listened to her complaints. Sara had turned to bottles of alcohol that became a way for her to solve her pains.

I asked Sara a simple question about her everyday food habits and she answered with careful and subdued verbal and bodily utterances of pain and discomfort. These were tied to the longing for traditional Greenlandic food in the context of social processes in which the unavailability of local food delicacies surfaces as a central component of the social suffering she experienced. Sara evoked memories of the whale meat she used to eat in childhood to which she no longer had access. Not being part of a sharing network of the Greenlandic meats and seafood and the high cost of meat and seafood had resulted in exclusion from accessing this local delicacy. Sara, expressed that eating "Danish food" from the stores (industrial food) felt wrong in her body.

The theoretical attention in this article is the social scientist's respond to the pain of the other (our interlocutors). The medical anthropologist Veena Das shows that pain is a medium available to an individual through which an historical wrong done can be inscribed as a memory in the body. According to Das, relating to the pain of others is to partake in moral living. Das refers to a quote of Wittgenstein: "*To say I am in pain is not a statement, it is a complaint*". Words and body are used to produce an effect. The stories to our interlocutors happen to us and the researcher responds by listening to the experiences of pain, and cannot be confined to follow official guidelines and principles. In Sara's case, the approach required a capacity to pay attention to body language as well in order to get to know the meaning of traditional food in the life of an elder Greenlandic woman.

**Article 3: "We do not eat luxury food"**. A story about food and health in an old Sami woman's everyday life in Norway.

*"We do not eat luxury food"* (Kvitberg, 2019 -b) is a story of food and the meaning of health and wellbeing in the everyday life of Inga, an old Sami reindeer shepherd living in inner Finnmark, Norway. Inga was born in the 1930s in rural Finnmark. She was living and working in the same place where she was born. In this rural area people live a calm life and have work in reindeer herding. This ethnographic interview was conducted in collaboration between Inga, her husband and the writer when sitting around the kitchen table in their home. The husband and wife invited me to a simple meal with home-made bread, wild berries and dried reindeer meat they harvested and produced locally.

In this article, I focus on appetite as a voice, a form of social protest and a silent struggle for corporal freedom to have control over your body and life. They resist eating "luxury food". The participants refer to "luxury food" as food, drink and people that are not anchored locally. Luxury food does not require work and is distinct from the simple local food harvested in the mountain. The latter involves hard physical work. Inga belongs to a Laestadian Lutheran faith community, where lifestyle habits express who you are and where you belong. Total abstinence from alcohol, luxury food and luxuries are highly valued, as well as embracing simplicity and moderation.

The article reflects on the relationship between food, health and the body in the context of efforts to maintain a traditional lifestyle that is threatened by an encroaching state politics. Inga did not like to speak about food in childhood as that was connected to bad memories from her experiences during the Norwegianization and assimilation imposed in the boarding school she attended. She has been struggling to live everyday life in her own traditional way and to eat the food she craved for. Inga and her husband indicated: "We were people who had to learn how to struggle with nature". As already inferred, the couple had experienced how the school system tried to transform them to become Norwegian. They said: "We were forced to forget who we are", but returned to their roots in the Sami society. They said: "Nevertheless we are proud of the fact that we eventually learned to migrate back and forth across the Finnmark plateau". In their Laestadian community they found a way to live their everyday life as good reindeer shepherds in harmony with their strong belief in the Biblical God that integrates their perceptions of health and wellbeing.

In this article I draw on a medical anthropological approach to health that conceptualizes “an embodied self”. I relied on the Veena Das article, “*What do we mean by health*” (Das, 1990) which links the experiences of health- and wellbeing to the individual’s view of herself and, initially, from an oblique perspective of pain. The study findings show that the meaning of health in everyday life of an elderly Sami woman in rural North Norway was a silent struggle for corporal freedom, a struggling with nature, and the freedom to have control over her own body and life. Inga resisted a modern lifestyle and had made an active choice to live a simple life and eating food they harvested directly from the ‘mountain’. Inga and her husband lived their everyday lives in their own way.

## DISCUSSION

### **Discussion of methods**

#### ***“Who are you?”***

The question “who are you?” seems as a simple question. From where and to whom do you speak as a researcher? What is your relationship to and position toward the community or field that you are studying? Your position matters (Olsen, 2016). Who I am as a researcher in the field and as a writer of texts?

#### ***Kitchen stories***

The researcher is not an objective observer but becomes subject engaged in the encounter with her or his participants. In a warm and humorous manner, the filmmaker Bent Hamer reveals the positivist’s view that it is possible to be an objective researcher on human behavior. Hamer’s film *Kitchen Stories* (Hamer, 2003) deals with all the complications associated with a research program in which the goal is to completely avoid human interaction with the “research object”. By being a “fly on the wall”, the observer (Folke) is trying to make a systematic overview of his research object’s (Isak) movements in the kitchen. Folke has a view from a highly raised judge’s chair in the corner of the kitchen from

where he is watching his research object Isak's kitchen. The film shows in a humorous way how the contact between them (the researcher and the research object) gradually is created. Isak took the initiative to be seen as "who he is", namely a person in need of dignity, contact and communication. Such knowledge that depends on 'betweenness' (an encounter). Consequently, who I am as a researcher matters and thus my story is part of the information that was collected and thereby influenced the paths the ethnographic interviews took. Malterud reminds us about reflectivity and the significance of the health researchers' own background and role in knowledge production (Malterud, 2002, p. 2468). She or he is not a neutral or objective person. Research is not neutral in its gaze or objective in its examination of the "other" (Smith, 2012). Researchers are placed within some values, systems, relationships, interactions, beliefs and theories.

My story in part concerns the professional life as a medical nurse, an arctic health researcher and my education in public health and social and visual anthropology (Kvitberg, 1996, 1997, 2006a, 2006b). The participants were not curious about the titles, rather "who I am" as a person, my values and where I come from. The sensory dimension of the ethnographic interviews in the Arctic kitchens evoked question about my own family background including memories of my grandmother's kitchen during my childhood in the 1960s-70s. The furniture, the traditional foods, songs and stories reminded me of a bygone time. That which especially spoke to me was the atmosphere of care, compassion and respect for other human beings and animals. It reminded me of my grandmother's kitchen in childhood. During the time I was doing this PhD project I had my nursing duties involved travelling in rural coastal districts and islands outside the city of Tromsø in order to visit elderly people in their homes to provide health care. These encounters again reinforced my childhood memories.

I think my story reflects deep respect of elders, their stories and wisdom. Respect comes from the Latin root word, *spectare* –"to look." *Re-spect* means "to look again. Another meaning of the Latin word *spectare* is "spirit." Respect can be thought of as "the act of seeing a person."

*"Being respectful gives you an openness that enables you to listen; you have to listen deeply so you can hear". "Once you comprehend what you are being told, you are connected to the person speaking; this creates a space for mutuality and inclusion"* (Sherwood, 2010, pp. 262-263)

Sensitive or attentive listening is linked to the capacity for empathic communication and is unconscious, intuitive and deeply bound up with our emotional sensitivity to others. The participant's stories happened to me. The beginning of a communication process is when the listener or researcher is marked by the others' story. Sensitive listening means to show respect by acknowledging and being curious about other ways of knowing, being and doing.

In my experience, the Arctic kitchen is a place that made songs and stories happen. The latter are rooted in the body and affect our listening. In the interview encounters I attended the stories gave resonance to living everyday life in the north. The Arctic landscape, people, family and food traditions are a part of me. However, our lives are not one or two dimensional but rather multidimensional. I have traveled worked and lived in the global south. The Arctic as well as the global south reflects differences and similarities between people. Working with culture and health in relation to refugees from the global south also reflects the health effects of stories being told and listened to (Kvitberg & Pedersen, 2018)

### *Grandmothers kitchens'*

My grandparents' sensuous kitchens were indeed a place of food, songs and stories. As a child I loved being in the kitchen with my grandmothers and taking part in their everyday work. They had a recipe for a good conversation and communication. The ingredients for good cooking and meals around the kitchen table was to have time. In their kitchens there were always guests who had a cup of coffee and a meal. Recipes was unknown to the women who had knowledge of cooking in their hands. The grandmothers made hot meat soups, lobsouse, porridges, waffles, "lefse" and bread. From the fish they made fish soup and fried fish cakes. Cutting and preparing the fresh fish was often done by the fishermen themself, while the women boiled or fried the fish. They had salt and pepper as the only seasoning, along with flour and frying the fish in butter. Potatoes were served on the side and butter from the frying pan was used as a sauce. They picked berries, rhubarb, chives and so on. My grandmothers used rhubarb for jam, porridge and as a medical plant.

As a grown-up I encountered my grandmother Nora in the kitchen with a video camera. The ethnographic film about Nora is a close-up interview with her during her daily work in her kitchen (Kvitberg, 1997). Nora remained active until very old age. Caring for family, friends and the larger community was expressed in the kitchen through the cooking. Kitchen

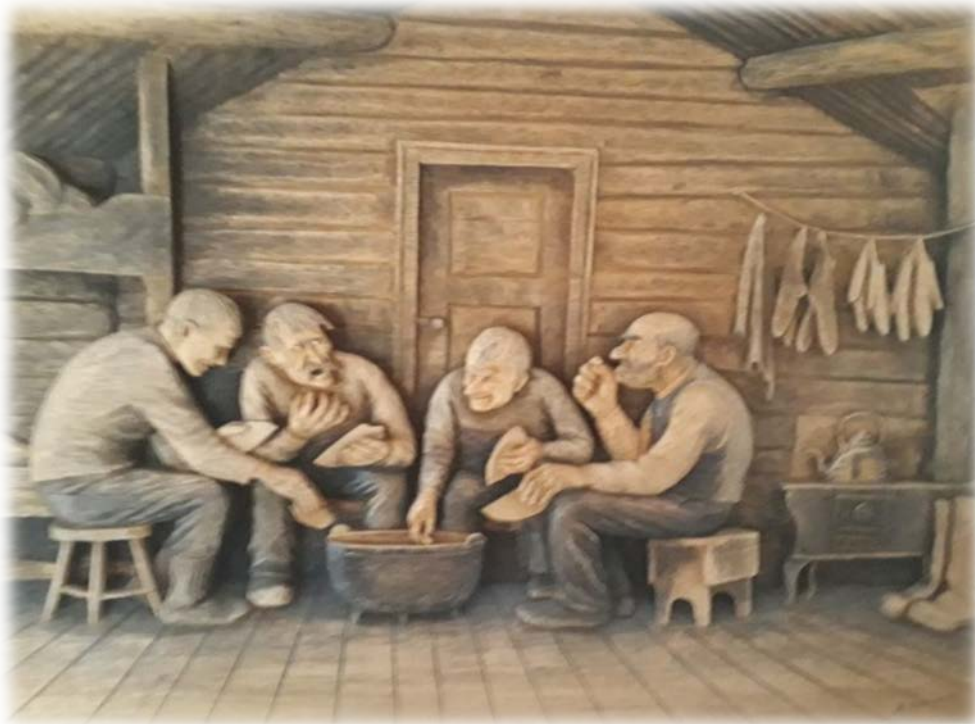
encounters constituted the manifestation of everyday life and tradition for North Norwegian coastal women and I have appreciated the kitchens of my grandmothers. For these reasons, the Arctic kitchen was a nice place for kitchen stories and ethnographic interviews with elderly women in the Circumpolar arctic.

My grandparents had the sea as the main livelihood in combination with a small farm. The latter constituted women's work. Grandpa was a skipper and spent much of the year at sea with his beloved fishing boats, and thus was away from home. He had three love affairs in his life. The fishing boats were all "female", which he appreciated and treated with great love and care. He had a strong connection with the boats and the sea, and participated in the seasonal fishing with his beauties in the waters near Lofoten and Finnmark. The first fishing boat and love was *Lilly (The little Sweet)*. Then he "married" a great female beauty, the fishing boat *Svanen (the Swan)*. His last love was the fishing boat *Vi To (Us Two)*. The old well-kept princess *Vi To* remains active and this connects the next generations of the family (my parents, me and my husband and my children) to the sea, and the joy of fishing cod, coalfish, halibut and herring together. It is a part of my story and "who I am".



**"Fiskaren"** (The fisherman) Wood carving of Steinar Solvang. Photo: Johann Vannes

In grandmother's kitchen simple food were prepared with love for family and friends. Simple foods from the sea were appreciated together in a calm atmosphere that made stories happen. The fishermen caught cod and coalfish for *Mølje* (Jumble), the favorite dish of the North Norwegian coast. *Mølje*, the typical traditional meal, consists of boiled fish, liver and roe, and is a social feast/event around the North Norwegian coast. The women prepared for the *møljekalas* (Jumble feast), which started immediately after the men's fishing boats returned home. Family and friends gather around the kitchen table when *Mølje* is served. The tradition was to celebrate and give thanks to God for the food through songs and prayer. Fishing and personal stories were shared widely and served as an invitation for mutual communication. The message simply is that personal stories matters and are to be heard and acknowledged.



**"Møljekalas"** (Jumble feast) Wood carving of Steinar Solvang. Photo: Kirsti Berg

My grandmothers were diligent coastal women and cooks who mixed Norwegian and Sami dietary traditions. Harvested food was an outcome of diligent work that was highly valued. Hard physical work was the price you had to pay for a good "harvest". There were no shortcuts, and only from hard physical work and patience does the harvest come. The price must be paid and the process followed. One always reaps that which is sown; there is no shortcut. This principle served as a guideline and is rooted in the laws of the harvest and

includes that one never disposed of food – a gift of God harvested from nature. "Eat your food". The children were told not to throw away even a small crumb on a plate. Hard physical work six days a week was required, and one day a week there was complete rest – a sanctuary in time that was a very important health principle. The one-day of rest was about receiving a much-appreciated gift from God.

### *Situated knowledges*

Haraway (1988) argues that *we*, researchers, have to position ourselves in the text, because *we* are a part of the social flow that forms the basis for the information that underlies our research – our empirical data. Haraway talks metaphorically about the “objective” scientific gaze from nowhere of everything. The researcher is “the fly on the wall” in the film “Kitchen Stories”(Hamer, 2003) and who pretends to see without being present. Haraway use the term "the god trick" (Haraway, 1988, p. 581), which is pretending to see everything from nowhere, without a body and without seeing from a particular position with eyes based in your own experiences, values, etc.; namely, the doctrine of embodied objectivity.

*“I would like a doctrine of embodied objectivity that accommodates paradoxical and critical feminist science projects: Feminist objectivity means quite simply situated knowledges”*(Haraway, 1988, p. 581).

The texts I have written is *situated knowledge*. My background and experiences matter to the form the interviews took and that the encounters turned personal. The published papers based on my studies (Kvitberg, 2015, 2019 -b; Kvitberg & Flikke, 2016) focused on the encounter with the stories of three elderly Arctic women. The ethnographic interviews with the other 13 participants in this study endorse the three publications. I chose to write these stories because they embody the themes that emerged in the interviews with the 13 other participants. The confluence of many practices that includes the food you eat as a key factor to health and wellbeing. I brought the reader to my grandmother’s kitchen. This was done to understand more clearly the encounters between me (the writer) and the three women. My background as a practicing nurse in the encounter with my patients' pain has also contributed to creating resonance, namely: "to bring the reader in touch with the stories" (Wikan, 1990, p. 268). This explains why I chose the theoretical approach, namely critical medical anthropology that allows personal voices to be heard rather than what is common in science, namely to use data from many to substantiate legitimacy and representativeness. However, what I have done is



listening to and give priority to the individual voices of elderly arctic women that in part reflects different forms of colonialism in their everyday lives.

## Discussion of results

Writing with your head (thinking), heart (feeling) and thus writing with your whole body and senses is a challenging work. “Thinking-feeling”(Wikan, 1990) is to encounter other people with an open heart and mind in order to achieve understanding. You write in order to create *resonance* “to bring the reader, or the audience, in touch with the stories.

It (*resonance*) will require us to do more than just “let their voice be heard,” for that is typically limited to other people’s accounts of *themselves* and their particular world. Rather, we must be willing to learn *general* lessons from their insights and analyses of the human condition (Wikan, 1991; 1992, p. 471)

Buettner (2008) has formulated some general lessons “from the people who’ve lived the longest”. He learned from his story tellers that health and wellbeing are a confluence of basic activities in everyday life. Some of the general lessons Buettner obtained from his research participants and I received from my grandmother's Arctic kitchen are bridges to understanding the everyday life in the Arctic of elderly participants. The old folks harvested wild food as berries, plants, fish and seafood 'the gifts of nature' from the sea and the land. They practiced the principle of receiving in gratitude what God gives through nature. Simplicity, moderation and courtesy towards nature and animals were expressed in their everyday lives. Wild food harvested from nature gave health benefits, flavor and supported physical and emotional well-being. Simple foods were highly celebrated. Even though the old folks truly respected and appreciated medical knowledge from health experts, they knew who they were and defended their local food traditions and health principles and their traditional way of living. They gave family the priority (family first), they were socially engaged, they practiced moderation: life was based on a flexible attitude; they practiced stress relief; they moved naturally; they had hard physical work; they harvested food from the "Arctic garden" the sea and the mountain; they had faith in God; belonged to some faith based community and had a life purpose. The practices contributed to physical, social, moral and spiritual

health and well-being in everyday life. The old folks navigated their everyday lives with these basic principles (Buettner, 2008).

This study includes 16 ethnographic interviews. Inga (participant 1), Anna (participant 2) and Sara (participant 3) have been given a voice. Who are the 13 other story tellers? What is their message? What do they eat, or do not eat? What general lessons is it to learn from the story tellers' insights and analysis of the human condition?

*The story tellers from Finnmark, North Norway*

Inga and her husband were about 80 years of age at the time of our ethnographic interview in Finnmark. They were both still active semi-nomadic shepherds, a profession that involves hard physical work, patience and miles of hiking every day, especially during in long periods of the year. In wintertime they used skiing in their reindeer herding. Inga was connected to a rough landscape that required strength, patience and endurance. Her life had unfolded with hard physical work, daily, seasonal routines in co-operation together with her husband. The old couple expressed themselves as the last generation of shepherds who liked a simple lifestyle with hard physical work. They were living without snowmobiles and a modern lifestyle. They expressed enjoyment in their work as shepherds, and they had never ever been sick.

Inga expressed that she did not like to speak about the boarding school in her childhood and the food associated with that particular time in her life. Margret (participant 7) expressed that 'past is past' and there is nothing to put into words. Painful memories were not expressed in words. Kirsten's (participant 5) said: "We eat only what is found on our mountain". She makes and eats *Bidos* (reindeer meat and meat broth) in exactly the same way done in all of her life. Karen (participant 4) remembers food feasts and the blood after the slaughter of their animals in her childhood. Ellen's (participant 6) food memories from childhood of dried reindeer meat. In her daily life she eats it and reads words from the Bible, which she defined as her "soul food", that what she needs for health and wellbeing.

The five participants Inga, Karen, Kirsten, Ellen and Margret expressed their care for family, animal's, guests and their church family. Inga, told her story about being a good reindeer herder. The caring for family and animals was what mattered most in her everyday life. Inga and her husband Peter expressed a "*we-ness*". The family was a first priority (Buettner,

2008). Inga and her husband ate their meals together, prayed together, worked together, visited the church together – they spent their everyday life together. The couple's way of life was moving in a rhythm that was in accordance with the surrounding nature.

Inga and her husband shared a meal and their story around the kitchen table. The meal began with a prayer. They said a prayer of thanksgiving before eating, a way to calm down from the day's activities. Inga folded her hands in prayer and silence when her boarding school memories turned up. Prayer was a way to relieve stress from painful memories. Inga did not complete compulsory education in the Norwegian school system. The school had not been her first priority. She expressed that the memories from the boarding school was not important to remember. Inga knew who she was and emphasized that she was brought up in the Sami lifestyle. That was her education. She had made her family, animals and her Sami handicraft and other work her first priority in life.

Inga, Karen, Kirsten, Ellen and Margret belong and participate in a Laestadian spiritual faith community. The women spend one day a week in their church family, "a sanctuary in time". It was always time for putting the week in perspective and the lessons of the physical work of everyday life. The women regularly visited their church, read texts from the Bible, prayed, sang, found rest and socialized with their church family and were engaged in church activities. Ellen (participant 6) is a Sunday school teacher and she is engaged in Church-related care work. Ellen works full time sewing Sami tents (*lavvo*). "I am sewing my first home", she said. Ellen is engaged in being a good grandmother to her many grandchildren. She expressed that seeing her grandchildren grow up well and her work is that what mattered and provides meaning and strength in her everyday life.

Inga, Karen, Kirsten, Ellen and Margret expressed that their Laestadian community is an important source of social security, social relationships and who they are. This community uses texts from the Bible and food is viewed as a gift from God that is to be received with gratitude. This relational perspective to food is an encouragement to be thankful for the provision of food, and to show this gratitude by the sharing the food with others – thereby meeting the physical, social, moral and spiritual needs of your community. Margret's (participant 7) kin network and of support broke down, and her story shows that the church family was an important source of security and material needs in everyday life, as well as emotional support in a time of loss and crises.

The story tellers from Finnmark embrace a down-to-earth and practical attitude to food, health and wellbeing. Kirsten (participant 5) eats mountain food, the berries, reindeer meat and fish from the mountain lakes. For more than 50 years Kirsten has been cooking and caring for her family and her guests at the mountain hut. *Bidos*, her favorite dish, has pleased many of her guests and visitors. Kirsten gets up very early in the morning to take care of her guests. She expresses that the work is what really matters in her life.

The mountain food involves practical physical work. Kirsten, Ellen and Inga eat mostly food from the mountain, as they did in their childhood. Their diet and lifestyle have not changed. Kirsten said that the only thing that has been altered is the transportation; more specifically, people's ways of moving their bodies on the mountain. She said: "They (people) have a machine not a reindeer under their butt". The story tellers have a simple lifestyle and food from the mountain is their source to health and wellbeing.

At the time the story tellers attended boarding school in their childhoods, they heard that their simple mountain food was inferior to the Norwegian food. Yet, the story tellers emphasize that their mountain food is who they are and always have been. Inga said: "We do not eat luxury food", the kind of food and drinks of people not anchored locally. Luxury food does not involve bodily work and it affects everyday life negatively. Luxury food does harm by weakening the physical, emotional, intellectual and moral strengths. It affects the body and awareness to "who you are". Inga and her husband do not eat foods that do not involve relationships of care, love and hard work such as canned and ready-made foods. Kirsten (participant 5) does not eat sweet food and sugar that weaken the body because of diabetes. Karen (participant 4) stays away from drinking alcohol. She lost her only son who was an alcoholic. Karen is "staying awake" and strengthening her health and wellbeing by her daily walks in fresh air.

Christina (not one of the participants), a woman in the Laestadian community gives voice to the social suffering of alcoholism and how it has affected everyday life in her village physically, socially, economically, morally and spiritually.

"Alcohol is a solvent, dissolving families and marriages. It takes away happiness, security, prosperity, intimacy and love. It even takes visions, hope and economy and at the very end the physical health. The only thing alcohol don't solve are problems" *Christina*.

The participants expressed resistance to luxuries and material wealth. Self-control and abstinence from alcohol is a hallmark in the Laestadian spiritual community. In a historical trauma, namely the Kautokeino rebellion in 1852, there were Laestadians who protested against the sale and use of liquor. Thus, they were at odds not only with the local priest and merchant, but also Norwegian law and the state-run alcohol industry (Gaup, 2008). Laestadius preached to his followers to take control of their own life and health.

*The story tellers from Kola Peninsula, Russia*

The Russian Sami story tellers (participant 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15) expressed ways of dealing with the sorrow that relates to the breakdown of their modes of living in the 1960s-1970s. The Russian Sami were removed from their traditional 'siyts'. They were forced to move from their villages and land areas under the Soviet Communist regime in the 1960s. Their Sami community and the network of kin and social relationships, the mutual support and security broke down. The pre-Soviet Sami community were attached emotionally and spiritually to the traditional 'siyts' (a Sami form of semi-nomadic settlement) (Allemann, 2017; 2018, p. 120).

Anna, Anastasia, Larissa, Elena, Maria (participant 2, 8, 11, 13, 15) lost their home villages and access to reindeer and the areas they used to go to berry picking and fishing in their childhood. In the 1960s their Sami families were forced to move from their villages into barracks in Lovozero. The suffering and bad condition there included alcohol abuse. Some of the story tellers complained that the pain of lost family members and the social suffering of alcoholism impacted everyday life. Family members had passed away one by one. The story tellers mentioned the historical wrongs done towards their Sami families who had been forced to move from their traditional home areas. The pain of historical trauma was to be alleviated in one way or another.

Anna had pain in heart and body that inhibited her everyday life felt trapped inside the apartment block on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor. She remembered the physical tundra work in her childhood and how she had struggled to be "a good son" to her father who wanted her to have the physical and emotional strength of a boy. Anna and Anastasia's (participant 8) stories have similarities. They expressed that they stayed mostly indoors in the apartment block. They are both trained in traditional *duodji*, the Sami arts and crafts. Anna sews caps, mittens, purses made of reindeer skins for sale to visitors in the village. Sewing is a way to be connected to the reindeer. Anna expressed that her sewing activities were a thread to her Sami background.

Anastasia makes Sami beadwork. Anna and Anastasia miss berry picking in the forests of their Sami home village when they were young girls, namely Voron'e. Unfortunately, there was no access to areas for picking berries because of the tourists and other industries. Anna and Anastasia complained how the state had stolen their "hearts and life" and inflicted so much pain in their everyday lives. Anastasia does not trust the state who stole her Sami beadwork (her lifework). Anna expressed a feeling of loneliness of all that has been stolen from her and the Sami people.

Anna "finds the new Sami people very different from the Sami people who had lived in the old Sami villages. The new Sami people are not helping others in need as they used to do in their old settlements before the damming"(Kvitberg, 2015, p. 126).

Larissa (participant 11) expressed herself as a "helping hand" in the care for children and grandchildren who need her hands in knitting. She sells knitwear in order to support them. Larissa says that she is old and does not need the money to eat. She would rather share the money with her jobless family who needs it to survive in a big city in the Kola Peninsula. Larissa expresses the lack of helping hands in the community and that she does not trust the state which closed down her home village and inflicted so much pain in her life. Larissa did not want her voice to be recorded in the interview.

Paula (participant 12) is a great-grandmother who lives in a small block apartment with six family members. Paula sees herself as the building block in the household. She prepares everyday meals, cares for the smallest children in the household, and knits for an income to help her suffering family members. Paula suffered severe headaches, dizziness and high blood pressure. She started to walk an hour every morning and experienced that bodily pain slip away. The walking activity changed her life and health completely. She started "healing walks". Paula shows with her body how she takes deep breaths when she is walking. She is breathing *in* fresh air from nature and breathing *out* the stress in the village. The walking enables her to take care of herself and her family. Paula urges her family members to participate with her in walks for healing.

The Russian Sami story tellers indicated that they eat mostly store-bought food, namely chicken, pork, frozen and salted fish, and meat in cans in addition to bread, sugar, dairy products and butter. Anastasia (participant 8) does not eat the Russian soups, namely beetroot and cabbage soup. She prefers to eat nothing when these dishes are eaten. Her daughter-in-law is the family's housekeeper, who cooks the everyday meals and decides the menu.

Anastasia sometimes buys fish from local anglers who sell their catch at the door. Anastasia experiences this as a feast happening and makes her mother's traditional fish soups.

The Russian Sami participants expressed concerns about the limited access to their traditional tundra food. Olga (participant 10) indicates she misses "the three Sami elephants": reindeer, fish and berries. She has access to reindeer meat from a close relative who works on the tundra. She remembers that they always had fish to eat in her childhood.

*Olga said: "If the reindeer disappear, then the Sami disappear. Fishing is expensive to get on your own. You need a car, petrol, fishing equipment and a license. I do not find cowberries, blueberries and cloudberry. The berries from the area do not taste as in my childhood".*

Olga puts into words many of the Sami story teller's experiences of the difficulties in accessing fresh tundra food, reindeer meat, fish and berries. Most of the Sami participants are not part of a sharing network. Most of the Sami story tellers indicate that they do not have the money to buy the expensive tundra food from the local distributors who sell their catch.

Maria (participant 15) expressed her feeling of having an "inner hunger" for the tundra food. Each year she saves money to buy two kilos of fresh salmon in order to have the good feeling in her body as in her childhood. Maria remembers: "We were never hungry. The children fished and it was not a rule that the adult fed us".

In Maria's childhood they had sufficient access to salmon, halibut, cod, haddock and reindeer meat. Maria described the landscape she grew up in by the Barents Sea area in the Kola Peninsula as having rich resources and an open endless landscape. They were nomads and always physically active and moved in this vast landscape. Maria expressed her deep need to be physically active, to keep her body in energy balance, and to "give new life" to old Sami objects.

Elena (participant 13) buys her dairy products and beef, pork, chicken in the shops. Elena is a writer and expresses that she needs to eat the childhood tundra food in order to be a good Sami writer. In her youth they ate the 'the whole reindeer', 'the whole fish', roe, liver, blood, kidney etc. She needs to eat it 'whole' for her vitality and strength. Elena also buys buckets of fresh, berries, fish and reindeer meat from local distributors. She says: "They know I like the 'whole fish' and bring it to my door. I use the intestines, liver, stomach, head for making fish soup". Elena makes money from her writing and she has access to buy the expensive tundra food from the distributors who sell at the door.

Anna had limited access to the reindeer meat, berries and fish from the lakes. She misses the traditional juicy and tasty reindeer meat she ate in childhood at her family home. Anna expressed that the body needs the juicy reindeer meat for vitality and strength. Reindeer meat is only accessible if you have the right acquaintances and the money to pay high prices.

Anna and Olga (participant 10) complained that the access and rights to traditional food was limited in their everyday life as elderly Sami women. Inspectors from the tourist industry and other industries controlled the traditional land areas. The women expressed that limiting the access to the traditional food was about limiting who you are as an individual and a people. This message was to be heard.

Anna expressed that she was suffering in body and soul. She had lost access to the traditional tundra food and missed particularly the reindeer and meats that were an important part of her Sami background. The local traditional food was now distributed by 'new' people and the new social values did not include mutual sharing network as done in her Sami home village Voron'e. Anna expressed that the new ways of slaughtering the reindeer was stressful for the animals. Eating the stressed reindeer meat gave a bad feeling in body and soul.

Petri and Zoya (participants 9 and 14) grew up in Komi families in the Kola Peninsula. Their families were reindeer people who had immigrated to Kola Peninsula from the Komi republic. Zoya express that her family had full access to fresh clean tundra food from their kin network who work and live on the tundra. They always filled the freezer with tundra food. Zoya identified her Komi people as strong, healthy reindeer people. She said: "We had healthy, strong tundra food. Reindeer meat, milk, milk products, butter. We had cows, chicken, fish and berries". Petri and Zoya have daily activities in their *Datsja* (kitchen garden) during the summer. They grow potatoes, turnip, currants and strawberries. Zoya needs to travel regularly to her childhood home and family in the tundra in order to feel strong and healthy. These visits give her time to heal from headaches. She picks berries, does physical hard work, and goes to a sauna on her tundra visits. Petri sees herself as an active helping hand for those in need in the village. She says "*the place you are born needs you*". Petri's words express there is hope and vision for the future in this small rural village in the Kola Peninsula.



*The story tellers from Greenland*

Sara and Johanne (participant 3 and 16) are the two participants who live in Nuuk, the capital of Greenland. Although a small town, Nuuk has changed rapidly from a traditional fishing village in the 1970s to the present-day modern town with new people, new trade, business, tourism, and multinational industries. Sara and Johanne like to eat the ‘Greenlandic food’, but their access to whale meat and fish differ. Sara indicated that she recalls from her childhood the taste and smell of whale meat and her body hungers for it.

*“These foods are said to be effective in keeping the body warm, making the body strong, keeping the body fit, and even making the body healthy- all qualities that Inuit value”*  
(Borré, 1994; Searles, 2002, p. 64)

Sara indicated that she had been excluded from eating the ‘Greenlandic food’, the whale meat, and fish she used to eat in childhood. Social relationships and kin networks had broken down and suffered from a broken painful back since her youth. This transformed her to everyday life of unbearable bodily pain that affected her whole life. The use of alcohol was a way to relive the pain. The high costs of Greenlandic sea food and the lack of access to a sharing network put Sara in the outskirts of the community and of both the modern Danish world and the Greenlandic traditional world to which she belonged by birth and heritage. Detailed memories of bodily pain in early life made her feel as an outsider in the Danish school system and later on in the paid employment opportunities in Greenland. Sara lived her everyday life alone in a one-room apartment in a residential block in the center of Nuuk. She said she was divorced and lived separately from her ex-husband and in a different apartment block. Still, Sara was cleaning and cooking in his apartment, an activity that impacted her severe back pain. She felt trapped inside the apartment block, especially during the long dark cold winter time.

Sara enjoyed life in the summer. She indicated that the activity of harvesting berries felt like being alive. Picking several kilos of crowberries during the short weeks in summer was a life-giving-activity. Every summer she filled many freezers with berries from the land. And when so, she felt that the unbearable back pain completely disappeared.

Johanne (participant 16) is physically active during summer. She hunts reindeer and picks berries. Johanne grew up with hunting and missed it during her business education and subsequent sedentary work in an office. Johanne got breast cancer, a disease that she

expresses has its origin from a polluted atmosphere in the city of Nuuk. Her body told her to return back to the hunting activities in childhood to the “the breath of childhood”. Johanne describes the return back to the physical activities of hunting, berry picking and inhaling the fresh outside air in the town of Nuuk as “the healing smell of Greenland”. She regularly goes hunting alone in the summer. Her husband is a fisherman and prefers to fish cod using his own fishing boat. Johanne indicated that they prefer to eat reindeer, berries, fish and whale meat that is harvested nearby the area of her childhood home in Greenland; the air is clean there. All catches from her childhood region have a good taste and smell. Johanne and her husband consume Greenlandic food (fish, whale meat, reindeer meat and different kinds of berries) at least four days a week. She explained that if she eats Danish food (store bought food) one day, her body needs ‘Greenlandic food’ the next day otherwise she feels sick and weak. Johanne and her husband harvest their own food, fish, reindeer meat, and berries and also sell some of the catch to the tourist hotels in Nuuk!



Photo: Trine Kvitberg. Blueberry arts. From the Lovozero festival.

## CLOSING REMARKS

Our ethnographic study is thematically at the intersection between women research and indigenous research in an Arctic context. The study of food and health in everyday life of elderly arctic women described is based on ethnographic interviews with 16 participants at three different localities in the circumpolar north, namely: Kola Peninsula (Russia), Finnmark

(North Norway) and Nuuk (Greenland). The ethnographic interviews were conducted in personal encounters in the kitchens of the participants.

The study shows that lack of access to traditional food creates a sense of marginalization. The significance of having access to it and to be connected to a confluence of several basic health practices gives elderly women meaning and bodily strength in their everyday life. Traditional food like berries, fish, reindeer meat, whale meat etc. is seen by the participants as their “Mountain food”, “Tundra food”, “Greenlandic food” etc. Elderly women emphasize that their traditional food is a key factor to the experience of health and wellbeing and to “who they are” in everyday life.

Each of the three texts I have written focus on only one kitchen encounter and constitute one personal story. The three elderly women’s stories reflect the comparable experiences of the 13 other participants. My own experiences and background, as a child in the Arctic kitchen of my grandmothers and as a practicing medical nurse in the encounter with my patient’s pain explains the open form of the ethnographic interviews, and that they thereby became personal. They matter in bringing “the reader in touch with the stories” (Wikan, 1990, p. 268). I gave voice to personal stories to illustrate different forms of colonialism in the everyday life of elderly Arctic women. These can be the cause of bodily pain. Researchers can recognize such embodied experiences of pain by establishing trust and by listening attentively to words, pauses/silences and body language in the interview setting. Instead of asking how to *look* at the pain of colonialization and logically grasp it, *we* (researchers) should ask *Who hears this voice?* When we listen sensitively and let the stories to our participants happen, it will affect the way we write ethnographies. In the film “*Kitchen Stories*” (Hamer, 2003), Isak “the research object” took the initiative *not* to be seen from the “conquering gaze from nowhere”. He took the initiative to be heard and seen as an individual person and started a communication process on his own way. Researchers can listen, being aware and attend to what is at stake in their research participant’s everyday life. *We* (the researchers) can take part in a communication process and let the participants stories happen to us. Giving voice to individual stories and ordinary peoples everyday life is to take part in moral life!

## References

- ACIA. (2004). *Impacts of a Warming Arctic: Arctic Climate Impact Assessment* Retrieved from University of Cambridge: <http://www.acia.uaf.edu>
- AHDR. (2015). *Arctic Human Development Report. Regional Processes and Global Linkages* In J. N. L. G. Fondahl (Ed.), *TemaNord 2014:567* doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.6027/TN2014-567>
- Allemann, L. (2013) The Sami of the Kola Peninsula. About the life of an ethnic minority in the Soviet Union. In. *Skriftserie, nr.19*. Senter for Samiske Studier (UiT) University of Tromsø.
- Allemann, L. (2017). Yesterday's Memories, Today's Discourses: The Struggle of the Russian Sámi to Construct a Meaningful Past. *Arctic Anthropology*, 54(1), 1-21.
- Allemann, L. (2018). "I do not know if Mum knew what was going on": Social reproduction in boarding schools in Soviet Lapland. *Acta Borealia*, 35(2), 115-142. doi:10.1080/08003831.2018.1536115
- AMAP. (2009). *AMAP Assessment 2009: Human Health in the Arctic*. Oslo, Norway: Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme Retrieved from [www.amap.no](http://www.amap.no).
- AMAP. (2015). *AMAP Assessment 2015: Human Health in the Arctic*. Oslo, Norway. : Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) Retrieved from [www.amap.no](http://www.amap.no).
- Antipina, E., Avelova, S., Degteva, A., Dubovtsev, A., Dondov, B., Gerasimova, A., . . . Pogodaev, M. (2017). *EALLU. Indigenous Youth, Arctic Change & Food Culture. Food, Knowledge and how we have Thrived on the Margins*. International Centre for Reindeer Husbandry (ICR). Guovdageaidnu/ Kautokeino, Norway: An Arctic Council Sustainable Development Working Group Report from the EALLU Project in 2015–2017 Retrieved from [www.sdwg.org](http://www.sdwg.org).
- Berger, D. N., & Wessendorf, K. (2019). Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenland) In D. N. Berger (Ed.), *The Indigenous World 2019 IWGIA newsletter* (pp. 26-34). Copenhagen: International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs IWGIA. Retrieved from [www.iwgia.org](http://www.iwgia.org).
- Berremen, G. D. (1962). *Behind many masks : ethnography and impression management in a Himalayan village* (Vol. no. 4). The Society for Applied Anthropology monograph series. Lexington, Ky.
- Bjerregaard, P., & Larsen, C. V. L. (2016). Health Aspects of Colonization and the Post-Colonial Period in Greenland 1721 to 2014. *Journal of Northern Studies*, 10(2), 85-106.
- Borré, K. (1994). The Healing Power of the Seal: The Meaning of Inuit Health Practice and Belief. *Arctic Anthropology*, 31(1), 1-15.
- Buettner, D. (2008). *The Blue Zones: Lessons for Living Longer From the People Who've Lived the Longest*. Washington D.C: National Geographic Society.
- Connerton, P. (2011). *The Spirit of Mourning: History, Memory and the Body*: Cambridge University Press.
- Csordas, T. J. (1990). Embodiment as a Paradigm for Anthropology. *Ethos*, 18(1), 5-47. doi:10.1525/eth.1990.18.1.02a00010
- Csordas, T. J. (1993). Somatic Modes of Attention. *Cultural Anthropology*, 8(2), 135-156. doi:10.1525/can.1993.8.2.02a00010
- Das, V. (1990). "What do we mean by health?". In J. C. Caldwell (Ed.), *What we Know about Health Transition: The Cultural, Social and Behavioral Determinants of Health* (Vol. 1 pp. 27-46). Canberra: Health Transition Centre, Australian National University.
- Das, V. (1995). Voice as Birth of Culture. *Ethnos*, 60(3-4), 159-179.
- Eikjok, J. (2004). Gender in Sápmi : socio-cultural transformations and new challenges. In K. Wessendorf (Ed.), *Indigenous Affairs. Indigenous Women IWGIA newsletter* (Vol. 1-2, pp. 52-57). Copenhagen: International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs. Retrieved from [https://www.iwgia.org/images/publications/IA\\_1-2-04.pdf](https://www.iwgia.org/images/publications/IA_1-2-04.pdf).

- Eriksen, L. (1979). Fornorskningpolitikken i skolen 1850-1910. *Pedagogen*, 27(1979):3, 6-12.
- Farmer, P. (2004). An Anthropology of structural Violence. *Current Anthropology*, 45(3), 305-325.
- Gaup, N. (Writer) & N. Gaup (Director). (2008). The Kautokeino rebellion [Film]. In Borealis/Rubicon (Producer). Oslo: Sandrew Metronome Norge Warner Bros. Entertainment Norge.
- Grønbech, D. (2008). *Kystkvinnens liv og virke : fra naturalhushold til enetilværelse. En verdighetsbeskrivelse*. (Dr. philos. avhandling), Universitetet i Tromsø, Institutt for pedagogikk. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/10037/11913>
- Hamer, B. (Writer). (2003). Kitchen Stories (Salmer fra Kjøkkenet) [Film]. In B. Hamer & J. Bergmark (Producer). Norway-Sweden.
- Haraway, D. (1988). Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective. *Feminist Studies*, 14(3), 575-599. doi:10.2307/3178066
- Harris, A., & Guillemin, M. (2011). Developing sensory awareness in qualitative Interviewing. A Portal Into the Otherwise Unexplored. *Qualitative health research*. Sage Publications, 22(5), 689-699. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732311431899>
- Hilden, P. K., & Middelthon, A.-L. (2002). Kvalitative metoder i medisinsk forskning – et etnografisk perspektiv. *Tidsskr Nor Lægeforening*, 122(25), 2473-2476.
- Jacobsson, L. (2016). Is there a need for a special ethics of Indigenous research? In A.-L. Drugge (Ed.), *Ethics in Indigenous Research Past Experiences - Future Challenges* (pp. 45-56). Umeå University Center for Sami Studies.
- Kleinman, A., Das, V., & Lock, M. (1997). Introduction. In A. Kleinman, V. Das, & L. M. (Eds.), *Social Suffering*. Berkeley Los Angeles London: University of California Press.
- Kramvig, B. (2005). Fleksible kategorier, fleksible liv. *Norsk antropologisk tidsskrift*(02-03), 97-108.
- Kristiansen, R. E. (2015). Læstadianismen; vekkelsesbevegelsen mellom tradisjonalisme og modernitet. *Religion og livssyn*, 27(3), 23-32.
- Kurtz, D. L. M., Nyberg, J. C., Van Den Tillaart, S., & Buffy, M. (2008). Silencing of Voice: An Act of Structural Violence Urban Aboriginal Women Speak Out About Their Experiences with Health Care. *Journal of Aboriginal Health*, 4(1), 53-63. doi: <https://doi.org/10.18357/ijih41200812315>
- Kvitberg, T. (1996). *Hva påvirker fysisk, psykisk og sosial velvære på personer som har epilepsi?* (Master Public Health (MPH) Master Thesis), The Arctic University of Norway (UiT) University of Tromsø Department of Community Medicine.
- Kvitberg, T. (1997). Nora. *Visual Cultural Studies* [Ethnographic film 15 min]. The Arctic University of Norway (UiT): Department of Social Science.
- Kvitberg, T. (2006a). *Drømmen om paradiset - fortellinger om styrke: en studie fra et lokalsamfunnsbasert rehabiliteringsprosjekt for funksjonshemmede barn på Jamaica*. (Cand.polit thesis Social Anthropology), The Arctic University of Norway Department of Social Science (UiT) University of Tromsø
- Kvitberg, T. (2006b). Shine On Me. *Visual Cultural Studies* [Ethnographic Film 27 min. Master Visual Anthropology]. The Arctic University of Norway (UiT) University of Tromsø: Department of Social Science.
- Kvitberg, T. (2015). "Suffering in Body and Soul" Lived Life and Experiences of Local Food Change in the Russian Arctic. In B. H. Miller (Ed.), *Idioms of Sami Health and Healing* (Vol. 2, pp. 103-130). Edmonton, Alberta, Canada: The University of Alberta Press.
- Kvitberg, T. (2019 -a). "Vi spiser ikke luksus mat" En historie om mat og helse i samisk hverdagsliv. In J.-I. Nergård & P. Vitebsky (Eds.), *KULTUREN SOM PASIENT Uvanlige møteplasser for vanlige folk*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- Kvitberg, T. (2019 -b). "We do not eat luxury food" A story about food and health in an old Sami woman's everyday life in Norway. In P. Naskali, J. Harbison, & S. Begum (Eds.), *New Challenges to Ageing in the Rural North: A critical Interdisciplinary Perspective* (pp. 225-238). Springer Nature Switzerland AG: SPRINGER. doi:[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-20603-1\\_14](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-20603-1_14)

- Kvitberg, T., & Flikke, R. (2016). "Wanting Greenlandic food" A story of food, health, and illness in the life of an elderly Greenlandic woman. In P. i. Naskali, M. Seppänen, & S. Begum (Eds.), *Ageing, Wellbeing and Climate Change in the Arctic* (pp. 181-195). London & New York: Routledge Advances in Climate Change Research.
- Kvitberg, T., & Pedersen, I. (2018). *Navigating Body, Health and Culture in the North 2015-2018*. Minority Health Care Collaboration. Stiftelsen Amatea & Tromsø municipality Tromsø municipality.
- Leksikon, S. M. (2020). Alderdom. Retrieved from <https://sml.snl.no/alderdom>
- Lund, E., Brustad, M., & Høgmo, A. (2008). The Sami-living conditions and health. *International Journal of Circumpolar Health*, 67(1), 6-8. Retrieved from doi:10.3402/ijch.v67i1.18218
- Malterud, K. (2002). Kvalitative metoder i medisinsk forskning - forutsetninger, muligheter og begrensninger. *Tidsskrift for Den norske legeforening*, 122(25), 2468-2472.
- McGilchrist, I. (2009). *The master and his emissary : The divided brain and the making of the Western world*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Myrstad, M. (2015). De gamle er eldst – eller bare eldre? *Tidsskr Nor Legeforening*, 6, 135.
- Nergård, J.-I. (1994). *Det skjulte Nord-Norge*. Oslo: Ad notam Gyldendal.
- Olsen, T. A. (2016). Responsibility, reciprocity and respect. On the ethics of (self-)representation and advocacy in Indigenous studies. In A.-L. Drugge (Ed.), *Ethics in Indigenous Research Past Experiences - Future Challenges* (pp. 25-44). Center for Sami Research: Umeå University.
- Petrenya, N., Skeie, G., Melhus, M., & Brustad, M. (2018). Food in rural northern Norway in relation to Sami ethnicity: the SAMINOR 2 Clinical Survey. *Public Health Nutrition*, 21(14), 2665–2677. Retrieved from doi:10.1017/S1368980018001374
- Pink, S. (2009). Articulating Emplaced Knowledge: Understanding Sensory Experiences Through Interviews. In S. Pink (Ed.), *Doing sensory ethnography* (pp. 81-96.). Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Ryd, L. (2015). *Urfödan : om självhushållets mat hos folk i Lappland*. Skellefteå: Ord&Visor.
- Scheper-Hughes, N., & Lock, M. M. (1987). The Mindful Body: A prolegomenon to future work in medical anthropology. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly, New Series* 1(1), 6-41.
- Searles, E. (2002). Food and the Making of Modern Inuit Identities. *Food & Foodways. Routledge*, 10, 55-78.
- Sergejeva, J. (2000). The Eastern Sámi: A short account of their history and identity. *Acta Borealia*, 17(2), 5-37. doi:10.1080/08003830008580509
- Sherwood, J. (2010). *Do No Harm: decolonising Aboriginal health research*. (PhD Thesis), University of New South Wales,
- Smith, L. T. (2012). *Decolonizing methodologies: research and indigenous peoples* (2nd ed. ed.). London, Dunedin, N.Z: London: Zed Books.
- Sønstebo, A. (2018). *Samisk statistikk 2018*. (2018/05). Statistisk sentralbyrå. Oslo-Kongsvinger: Statistisk Sentralbyrå Retrieved from <https://www.ssb.no/befolkning/artikler-og-publikasjoner/samisk-statistikk-2018>.
- Trøndheim, G. (2004). The flexibility of Greenlandic women. In K. Wessendorf (Ed.), *Indigenous Affairs. Indigenous Women IWGIA newsletter* (Vol. 1-2, pp. 58-66). Copenhagen: International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs. Retrieved from [https://www.iwgia.org/images/publications/IA\\_1-2-04.pdf](https://www.iwgia.org/images/publications/IA_1-2-04.pdf).
- Trøndheim, G. (2010). Kinship in Greenland - Emotions of relatedness. *Acta Borealia*, 27(2), 208-220. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/08003831.2010.527536>
- Vars, L. S. (2019). SÁPMI. In D. N. Berger (Ed.), *The Indigenous World 2019 IWGIA newsletter* (pp. 52-63). Copenhagen International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs IWGIA. Retrieved from [www.iwgia.org](http://www.iwgia.org).
- WHO. (2002). Proposed working definition of an older person in Africa for the MSD Project. Retrieved from <http://www.who.int/healthinfo/survey/ageingdefnolder/en/>
- Wikan, U. (1990). *Managing turbulent hearts : a Balinese formula for living*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Wikan, U. (1991). Toward an Experience-Near Anthropology. *Cultural Anthropology*, 6(3), 285.
- Wikan, U. (1992). Beyond the Words: The Power of Resonance. *American Ethnologist*, 19(No.3), 460-482.
- Williamson, K. J., Hoogensen, G., Lotherington, A. T., Hamilton, L. H., & Savage, S. (2004). Gender Issues In Niels Einarsson, J. N. Larsen, A. Nilsson, & O. R. Young (Eds.), *Arctic Human Development Report (AHDR)* (pp. 187-206): Akureyri: Stefansson Arctic Institute.



## Article 1

Kvitberg T. (2015). "Suffering in Body and Soul" Lived Life and Experiences of Local Food Change in the Russian Arctic. In B. H. Miller (Ed.), *Idioms of Sami Health and Healing* (Vol. 2, pp. 103-130). Edmonton, Alberta, Canada: The University of Alberta Press.





## Article 2

KvitbergT., & Flikke, R. (2016). "Wanting Greenlandic food" A story of food, health, and illness in the life of an elderly Greenlandic woman. In P. i. Naskali, M. Seppänen, & S. Begum (Eds.), *Ageing, Wellbeing and Climate Change in the Arctic* (pp. 181-195). London & New York: Routledge Advances in Climate Change Research.



### **Article 3**

Kvitberg, Trine (2019). "We do not eat luxury food" A story about food and health in an old Sami woman's everyday life in Norway. In P. Naskali, J. Harbison, & S. Begum (Eds.), *New Challenges to Ageing in the Rural North: A critical Interdisciplinary Perspective* (pp. 225-238). Springer Nature Switzerland AG: SPRINGER.



## Appendix 1

### Confirmation Norwegian Social Science Data Services



Harald Hårfagres gate 29  
N-5007 Bergen  
Norway  
Tel: +47-55 58 21 17  
Fax: +47-55 58 96 50  
nsd@nsd.uib.no  
www.nsd.uib.no  
Org.nr. 985 321 884

Trine Kvitberg  
Institutt for samfunnsmedisin  
Universitetet i Tromsø  
MH-bygget  
9037 TROMSØ

Vår dato: 11.05.2011

Vår ref: 26556 / 3 / AMS

Deres dato:

Deres ref:

## TILRÅDING AV BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 28.02.2011. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

26556                                      *Arktiske personlige biografier. Urfolkes kvinner og sosial lidelse i Arktis. Et kritisk medisinsk antropologisk perspektiv*  
Behandlingsansvarlig                      *Universitetet i Tromsø, ved institusjonens overste leder*  
Daglig ansvarlig                              *Trine Kvitberg*

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet, og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger vil være regulert av § 7-27 i personopplysningsforskriften. Personvernombudet tilrår at prosjektet gjennomføres.

Personvernombudets tilråding forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i melde skjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, eventuelle kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven/-helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, [http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/forsk\\_stud/skjema.html](http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/forsk_stud/skjema.html). Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, <http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/prosjektoversikt.jsp>.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 31.12.2011, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen  
  
Vigdis Namtvedt Kvalheim

  
Anne-Mette Somby

Kontaktperson: Anne-Mette Somby tlf: 55 58 25 83  
Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering



Prosjektet ble i følge prosjektmeldingen påbegynt 1. januar 2010. Forsker opplyser i e-post mottatt 13. april 2011 at prosjektet ikke er meldt før oppstart fordi det var uklarerheter knyttet til meldeplikten. Prosjektet er en del av en multisenterstudie CHER (Climate health environment Research) ved Universitetet i Tromsø, men personvernombudet er ikke informert om hvilke tillatelser som er innhentet for denne internasjonale multisenterstudien. I henhold til prosjektmeldingen vil det ikke bli utlevert personidentifiserende opplysninger til andre forskere tilknyttet CHER.

Ombudet har informert forsker om vilkårene for at et samtykke skal være gyldig i e-post 29. mars 2011. Forsker opplyser i e-post 31. mars at det er gitt informasjon om hensikten med studien, hva opplysningene skal brukes til, om anonymisering og at det er mulig å trekke seg fra studien både skriftlig og muntlig. Personvernombudet har ikke mulighet til å vurdere om informasjonen som er gitt tilfredsstillende vilkåret om informert samtykke, da det ikke foreligger skriftlig dokumentasjon på hvilken informasjon som er gitt. En tilråding gis derfor med forutsetning om at den informasjonen som er gitt tilfredsstillende vilkårene i personopplysningsloven.

Datamaterialet består av lydopptak av intervjuer, transkripsjoner og feltnotater. Intervjuene dreier seg om kvinners personlige fortellinger (biografier) jf. e-post mottatt 13. april 2011. Tema knyttet til religion, helse og etnisitet kan inngå i datamaterialet selv om dette i følge forsker ikke er et tema i publikasjonen. Opplysningene vil anses som sensitive jf. personopplysningsloven § 2 nr. 8 a og c.

Datamaterialet lagres i låst skuff, og navn er erstattet med nummer.

Prosjektslutt er angitt til desember 2011 jf. e-post mottatt 31. mars. Innen prosjektslutt skal datamaterialet anonymiseres. Personvernombudet understreker at anonymisering vil innebære at lydfiler slettes, og at indirekte personidentifiserende opplysninger slettes eller omskrives i feltnotater og transkripsjoner. Dersom navn er erstattet med et nummer i datamaterialet, må en ev. kopling mellom navn og nummer slettes for at datamaterialet skal være anonymt.

Prosjektet er meldt til REK Nord, som uttaler at det faller utenfor deres mandat jf. brev datert 14. mars 2008.

## Appendix 2

Letter of Invitation with declaration of consent

## Forespørsel om deltakelse i forskningsprosjektet

Tittel på forskningsprosjekt:

### *”Arktiske matbiografier” En studie om mat og helse i hverdagen til eldre arktiske kvinner*

#### **Bakgrunn og hensikt**

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i en studie som kan bidra til å formidle din historie om endringer i forhold til mat i din hverdag i det området som du bor i. Din historie kan bidra til å gi de arktiske endringene et «menneskelig ansikt».

Mat er helt sentralt i et hvert menneskes hverdagsliv. Mat og den måte mat blir tilberedt på og fordelt i samfunnet er av betydning for å forstå helse og velvære i hverdagen. Hva betyr endringer for deg i din hverdag? Hvilke endringer i lokal mat oppfatter du er positivt for helse- og velvære? Hvilke endringer i lokal mat opplever du er negative og representerer fare eller trussel for din og din families helse og velvære? Hvordan er tilgjengeligheten til den tradisjonelle maten for deg? Hvilke forhold i ditt lokalsamfunn hindrer bruk av lokal mat?

Hvorfor en studie med fokus på hvordan eldre kvinner erfarer endring i hverdagen og den tradisjonelle maten? Med din fortelling kan du formidle viktig informasjon om hvordan eldre kvinner i Arktis opplever sin hverdag. Eldre arktiske kvinner har ofte kunnskap om mat, helse, kultur, natur, vær og vind som kan bidra til å se helse i en større sammenheng hvor alt som rammer naturen, rammer liv og helse. Eldre arktiske kvinner har praksiser, tradisjoner og kunnskap som ofte er ukjent for yngre generasjoner. Eldre kvinners kunnskap er verdifull og spiller en rolle i arbeidet for at folks helse kan bli bedre både lokalt og globalt.

Ved å delta i prosjektet kan du bidra med å fortelle om dine erfaringer i forhold til endringer som du kanskje opplever virker inn på helse og hindrer din og din families mulighet for å spise lokal tradisjonsmat. Dette kan være hindringer av miljømessig, økonomisk, sosial eller religiøs art. Det kan være rettigheter og behov som du opplever er truet.

Vi vil be deg om å fortelle din historie om mat fra hverdagen din. Har du bilder eller en historie som kan fortelle noe om endringer i ditt lokale samfunn? Det er viktig at folkehelsearbeidet tar utgangspunkt i det som er av størst betydning for folk, hvilke behov er viktige å prioritere, og hvilke rettigheter som trenges å ivaretas når samfunn og klima endres.

#### **Hvem er ansvarlig for studien?:**

Studien er tilknyttet Arktisk Helse Forskning, Institutt for Samfunnsmedisin, Universitetet i Tromsø, Norge. Trine Kvitberg er sykepleier, antropolog og arktisk helseforsker. Hun er ansvarlig for intervjuene som utføres og har en tolk med i de intervjuene hvor det er behov for oversettelse.

## **Hva innebærer studien?**

I dette prosjektet inviteres eldre arktiske kvinner som har bakgrunn fra å leve nært naturen med å høste bær og vekster fra naturen, reindrift, fangst, fiske etc.

Studien gjennomføres i Norge, Finnmark (Kautokeino og Karasjok) og Russland, Kola Peninsula (Lovozero) og på Grønland (Nuuk) i 2008-2011. I fra hvert lokalsamfunn vil det være omtrent 6 eldre kvinner som deltar.

Mat spiller en sentral rolle i dagliglivet for hvert menneske, og kvinner har ofte mye kunnskap og erfaring med tilberedning og produksjon av mat. Dersom du ønsker å delta i denne studien vil det være ett eller eventuelt flere intervju om du ønsker. Du blir bedt om å fortelle om mat og helse fra din hverdag. Vi ønsker din historie om mat og endringer, tilgjengelighet, produksjon, tilberedning og fordeling av lokal mat etc. Hva kjennetegner mat som bygger kroppen (mat) i motsetning til mat som skader kroppen (ikke-mat)? Hva er hellig/høytidelig mat i motsetning til alminnelig mat? Hvilken mat er medisin og har helbredende effekt?

Et intervju eller samtale rundt disse spørsmålene er ønskelig på et sted som du opplever passer deg best. Trine Kvitberg, eller en tolk, vil ta kontakt med deg for nærmere avtale. Du bestemmer sted og tid for møte enten i ditt eget hjem eller et annet sted. Vi ber om ditt samtykke til bruk av lydopptak under intervjuet.

## **Mulige fordeler og ulemper**

Deltagelse i dette prosjektet krever 2-3 timer av din tid. Det å fortelle om sitt liv kan noen ganger være utfordrende eller smertefullt å gjenfortelle. Det å fortelle om sitt liv kan også være godt og bevisstgjørende i forhold til det som betyr noe i hverdagen. Det understrekes at det er du selv som bestemmer hva du vil fortelle.

Resultatene fra studien vil kunne få betydning for at eldre kvinners kunnskap om mat og helse inkluderes og høres i folkehelsearbeidet og at det ikke bare er ekspertenes kunnskap om mat og helse som gjelder. Et viktig spørsmål å stille er om ekspertenes kunnskap om mat og helse stemmer overens med eldre arktiske kvinners kunnskap om mat og helse. Fordelen er at din stemme og fortelling kan bli hørt.

## **Hva skjer med informasjonen om deg?**

Informasjonen som registreres om deg skal kun brukes slik som beskrevet i hensikten med studien. Alle opplysningene vil bli behandlet uten navn, eller andre direkte gjenkjennende opplysninger. En kode som vil være knyttet til en navneliste vil gjøre det mulig å sammenholde opplysninger som er registrert om deg, og denne vil oppbevares separat fra annen informasjon. Det er kun de personer som har det overordnede ansvar for studien som har adgang til innsamlet informasjon og navneliste.

Lydbånd med intervju og feltnotater vil bli oppbevart nedlåst i godkjent arkiv på universitetet i Tromsø, og vil bli slettet etter bearbeidelse av intervjuene.

Den enkelte deltager vil bli kontaktet før det som tiltenkes for publisering fra intervjuene for eventuelle kommentarer. Deltagerne vil få i hende materiale som blir publisert.



[Sett inn korttittel på studien – Kapittel A og B - dato]

### **Frivillig deltakelse**

Det er frivillig å delta i studien. Du kan når som helst og uten å oppgi noen grunn trekke ditt samtykke til å delta i studien. Dersom du senere ønsker å trekke deg eller har spørsmål til studien, kan du kontakte ([Trine Kvitberg, Tlf. + 47 77620716 (Kontor Institutt for Samfunnsmedisin. Mobil + 47 90586253. Det er også anledning å kontakte tolk om du ønsker å trekke ditt samtykke til å delta.

### **Økonomi**

Prosjektet er finansiert av Universitetet i Tromsø.

### **Personvern**

Opplysninger som registreres om den enkelte deltager vil være alder, kulturell bakgrunn, opplevelse av helse og velvære, livshendelser, sosialt nettverk, aktivitet, tilknytning til sosiale felleskap, mattradisjoner, aktiviteter, familie forhold.

### **Informasjon om utfallet av studien**

Alle deltagere vil få tilbakemelding om resultat av studien

## **Samtykke til deltakelse i studien**

Jeg er villig til å delta i studien

-----  
(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

Stedfortredende samtykke når berettiget, enten i tillegg til personen selv eller istedenfor

-----  
(Signert av nærstående, dato)

Jeg bekrefter å ha gitt informasjon om studien

-----  
(Signert, rolle i studien, dato)

## Appendix 3

Declaration describing the independent research contribution of the candidate

To whom it might concern.

Professor Odland has been the main supervisor of the PhD candidate *Trine Kvitberg* during her work on the thesis «*Arctic food biographies. An ethnographic study of food and health in everyday life of elderly arctic women*».

I can declare that the candidate has shown a great ability to work independent with all sides of the thesis. She has been the main responsible person for the extraction of data and the assessment of the data as the basic content for all assessments in the papers. She has performed all field works and ethnographic interviews in three arctic countries, ethnographic analyses, writing, and publication procedures. All publications are based on independent and thorough scientific work under supervision.

Paper 1: Trine Kvitberg (2015). "Suffering in Body and Soul" Lived Life and Experiences of Local Food Change in the Russian Arctic. In B. H. Miller (Ed.), *Idioms of Sami Health and Healing* (Vol. 2, pp. 103-130). Edmonton, Alberta, Canada: The University of Alberta Press.

The candidate has used data from her fieldwork and ethnographic interviews with nine elder indigenous women in Lovozero, Kola Peninsula, North West Russia and have performed all ethnographic analyses and written the paper herself with supervision.

Paper 2: Trine Kvitberg & Rune Flikke, R. (2016). "Wanting Greenlandic food" A story of food, health, and illness in the life of an elderly Greenlandic woman. In P. i. Naskali, M. Seppänen, & S. Begum (Eds.), *Ageing, Wellbeing and Climate Change in the Arctic* (pp. 181-195). London & New York: Routledge Advances in Climate Change Research.

The candidate has used data from her fieldwork and ethnographic interviews with two indigenous women in Nuuk, Greenland and have performed all ethnographic analyses and written the paper herself with constructive supervision from her co-supervisor, Rune Flikke.

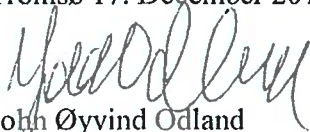
Paper 3: Trine Kvitberg (2019). "We do not eat luxury food" A story about food and health in an old Sami woman's everyday life in Norway. In J. H. Païvi Naskali, Shahnaj Begum (Ed.), *New Challenges to Ageing in the Rural North: Welfare, Gender and Voice: A critical interdisciplinary perspective*: SPRINGER.



The candidate has used data from her fieldwork and ethnographic interviews with five elder Sami women in Inner Finnmark, Norway and have performed all ethnographic analyses and written the paper herself with supervision.

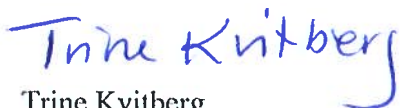
Conclusively, all papers and the thesis itself are all independent and thorough work that should qualify to defend the thesis for a PhD.

Tromsø 17. December 2019



John Øyvind Odland

Professor



Trine Kvitberg

PhD candidate

## Appendix 4

Key biographical data of the participants in Norway, Russia and Greenland



### Key Biographical Data of the Participants in Norway

<b>Karen</b> (Sami), Participant 4	<b>“Staying awake”</b>
Place of birth, marital status, education, work and place of residence.	Karen was born in the 1930s in East Finnmark. Her family were farmers. Moved to the south for skill training and worked in health care. Returned to East Finnmark and started as a farmer with barns and animals. Single, never married, 1 child (passed away) and pensioner. Karen lives alone with her dog at her closed down farm.
Activities in daily life.	Karen expresses that her daily walks in fresh air is one way to ‘stay awake’ and it is strengthening health and wellbeing in everyday life. Karen regularly bakes bread, which is shared with family, and does her shopping tours to Finland to buy fresh reindeer meat.
Food memories from childhood and diet in daily life.	Karen remembers blood dumpling and black pudding as feast food in childhood. Her family had cows and milk. They bought the reindeer meat from local reindeer herders and fish from a fish lorry that came to the inland village from the coast. There was no waste of food. They used all parts of the animal. The lifestyle and diet have gradually changed from childhood. Karen has a mixed diet with Sami and Norwegian traditions. Blood food is no longer consumed.
Family, social network, faith community, and engagement in social life.	Her everyday meals are in company with her dog. She has a large family and social network in the area. Belongs to a Laestadian spiritual faith community.
<b>Kirsten</b> (Sami), Participant 5	<b>“We eat only what is found in our mountain”</b>
Place of birth, marital status, education, work and place of residence.	Kirsten was born in the 1930s in the Finnmark mountain plateau. The family were reindeer herders, attended primary school, widow with 2 children and pensioner. Lives and works together with her son at their mountain lodge in East Finnmark
Activities in daily life.	Kirsten identifies herself as a Sami woman who takes good care of her guests and cooks good meals for visitors. She has conscientiously been cooking <i>Bidos</i> (reindeer meat and meat broth) for her visitors for more than 50 years. She says; “ <i>The mountain has not changed, it is only the way people move. They have a machine not a reindeer under their butt</i> ”. Kirsten has been harvesting food to eat from the mountain her entire life “ <i>We eat only what is found on our mountain</i> ”. She has been picking berries and she has fished in the lakes. She got strong from all the hard work throughout her life.
Food memories from childhood.	Kirsten expresses that she always has been eating the same kind of food from the mountain (reindeer meat, fish and berries). She has cooked <i>Bidos</i> regularly and in her own specific way as long as she can remember. They salt and smoked the fish, and cooked soups of dried reindeer meat. She remembers that they made coffee when the reindeer were resting, and pancakes of reindeer blood after slaughtering. Kirsten remembers she got iron (strength) in the body from consuming reindeer blood. She did not like vegetables in her childhood. “ <i>Eating like a rabbit (grass, salad) was not common</i> ”. They baked bread with lots of sugar and syrup for preservation. Kirsten remembers eating food with lots of sugar and syrup. She got diabetes.
Diet in daily life.	Kirsten has the same diet as in childhood. There is an important difference, namely that she no longer uses syrup, sugar and sweet foods. Reindeer meat is easy to obtain in the mountain. Kirsten freezes the <i>bidos</i> so she can always serve it to unexpected guests. Her <i>Bidos</i> recipe is melted butter, reindeer meat, white Laestadian flour and water.

Family, social network, faith, community, engagement in social life.	Shares the daily meals with her son who is her assistant and administrator of the mountain lodge. Kirsten belongs to a Christian Laestadian community, and Sunday morning is the time for rest. She regularly visits her congregation on Sunday mornings.
<b>Ellen</b> (Sami), Participant 6	<b>“Soul food”</b>
Place of birth, marital status, children, education, work and place of residence.	Ellen was born in East Finnmark in the 1940s. Widow and has 9 children. Works full time as a Sami tent-seamstress, grew up in reindeer herding and had a primary education. Ellen lives in her house in rural east Finnmark, surrounded with family who live in the same area.
Activities in daily life.	Ellen expresses herself as a strong Sami woman who had from early childhood worked and learned to overcome a physical disability. She has been active in reindeer herding her entire life. Worked hard, forgot to listen to the body and lost taste. A good doctor challenged her to listen to her body. Ellen express that the healing is sowing Sami tents: “I am sowed my first home”.
Food memories from childhood and diet in daily life.	Ellen lived in tents on the mountain and ate dried reindeer meat, fish and berries in her childhood. Her basic food was dried reindeer meat and has remained so even today. She shares meals with family members or eats alone. Ellen stated that her body needs ‘soul food’, namely the Word of God from the Bible as her food for health and wellbeing in everyday life.
Faith community, engagement in social life, family and social network.	Belongs to a Laestadian spiritual community. Ellen cares for her family and the church community as a Sunday school teacher. Has many grandchildren (29) who often visit her in the kitchen for a meal, a chat, and the Lord's prayer just the way she herself visited her grandmother during childhood.
<b>Margret</b> (Sami), Participant 7	<b>“Trusting God for every need”</b>
Place of birth, marital status, place of residence, education and work.	Margret was born in East Finnmark in the 1940s. Widow. Pensioner. Lives in her childhood home in East Finnmark. Grew up in a reindeer herding family and had primary education. Worked in reindeer herding until it abruptly ended in the early 1990s. Within two years, five family members in the same pasture area lost their lives to cancer. The state authorities closed down the sustenance sources.
Activities, food memories from childhood and diet in daily life.	Margret says she is <b>‘trusting God for every need’</b> in her everyday life. She expresses that she directs her attention to God and not to the past. The past is past and there is nothing to put into words. She indicates that the kitchen is not a place where she feels comfortable and she does not like to cook – the interview was at the grocery store. <i>“After all, these worldly things are not important”</i> , she says.
Social network, faith community and engagement in social life.	Belongs to a Laestadian spiritual faith community and shares her meals with her church family. Margret expresses that she is grateful to God and trusts God for all needs in everyday life.

### Key biographical data of the participants in Russia

<b>Anastasia</b> (Sami), Participant 8	<b>“The state stole the Sami beadwork”</b> Field notes/ tape record. Translator: Natalia
Place of birth, marital status, children, education, work and place of residence.	Anastasia was born in the 1930s in Sami village Voron’e, Kola Peninsula and was forced to move in the 1960s, had 4 children and was a widow and pensioner. She attended primary school and was a milkmaid; resided in Komi ASSR with husband and was a teacher in Sami traditional beadwork. Made handicraft that disappeared: <i>“The state stole the Sami beadwork”</i> (her lifework). She lives in an apartment block in Lovozero with her son and his wife.
Activities in daily life.	Anastasia expresses care for family and Sami beadwork, and teaches her grandchildren to do so. She cares for the health of her family and her indoor green plants. Alcohol took the health of many of her family members. Stays indoors most of the time.
Food memories from childhood.	Anastasia remembers her family harvested fish, reindeer, berries, grouse, duck and geese directly from the traditional Sami areas. They mixed black crowberry with reindeer meat. Her mother made soup with reindeer meat, crowberry and meat broth.
Diet in daily life.	The diet has changed and there is limited access to fresh food from the tundra. Reindeer meat and fresh fish is very expensive and difficult to obtain. Anastasia sometimes buys a fish from local anglers who sell their catch door to door. Most food comes from the stores: namely chicken, frozen/salted fish, potatoes and Russian sweet cream cakes. Dislikes the Russian beetroot and cabbage soups. Prefers to consume nothing when the family eat the Russian soups. Makes her own fish and her mother’s traditional fish soup. Dislikes the potatoes they buy in the shop. Earlier she had planted her own, but the fertilizer became so expensive that she stopped.
Family, social network, and engagement in social life.	Ana share meals with family members in the household. Her daughter in law cooks the daily meals and the Russian soups. Anastasia participates in the annual Sami summer festival in Lovozero and the annual visits to the memorial cross of her Sami home in Voron’e.
<b>Petri</b> (Komi), Participant 9	<b>«The place you are born needs you»</b> Field notes/ tape record. Translator: Natalia
Place of birth, marital status, children. education, work and place of residence.	Petri was born in the 1940s in Lovozero. Ancestors were reindeer people who immigrated from Izma in the Komi Republic to the Kola Peninsula in the 19 <sup>th</sup> century. She had 10 years of primary school. Started as an office worker and climbed to a senior position, is single and has one child and a pensioner. Lovozero has always been her home and lives alone in a block apartment.
Activities in daily life.	Petri expresses herself as a social and very active woman who cares for her community. She says; <i>“The place you are born needs you”</i> and <i>“Old age does not restrict activity”</i> . Organizes events at the cultural center and helps young people by taking care of their community and each other. Suffers from high blood pressure, and spends time relaxing in the library and at the cultural center. Petri has her own <i>dasja</i> (summer home and garden) and grows potatoes.
Food memories from childhood.	Petri remembers she used to eat all parts of the reindeer except the lungs in her childhood. She enjoyed the cold fat from bone and the fresh fish from the tundra. Her father had reindeers in the ‘kolhos brigade’ and they fished in the lakes. Her Komi family cultivated potatoes. The family had goats, sheep and hens, reindeer meat, soups and goat milk.
Diet in daily life.	Petri buys fresh reindeer meat from a close relative who works at a foreign food company. She eats the same food as in her childhood (reindeer meat and fish) from the tundra. She likes the variety of foods. She buys butter, cheese and other foodstuff in the shops. Feast food include meatballs, roast beef, different fishes, whitefish, pike and <i>shanga</i> (pies with potatoes, cowberries and cloudberries). Dislikes the contaminated fish from the lakes in the area.
Family, social network and engagement therein.	Shares meals with her daughter and grandchildren once a week. Participates in an ethnic choir, sings songs in the native language (Komi) at many festivals in Russia. Petri speaks her mother tongue with her choir members and Russian with her grandchildren.



<b>Olga</b> (Sami), Participant 10	<b>“Reindeer, fish and berries: The three Sami elephants”</b> Field notes/ tape record. Translator: Local
Place of birth, marital status, children, education, work and place of residence.	Olga was born in the 1950s in Lovozeo. Her Sami family worked with reindeer and fished in the Kola Peninsula tundra. She was 8 years old when her mother died, and the state authorities sent her to a boarding school in the south. Was separated from her Sami family and culture for 35 years. She had vocational training, was a fabric worker and dressmaker, was married and a pensioner and had 2 children. Olga lives with her husband, dogs and many cats in a very old house on the outskirts of Lovozero.
Activities in daily life.	Olga identified as a woman who had to handle difficulties in life alone, and lent a helping hand to suffering people. Returned north to her Sami family after long time separation. Cares for her family (grandchildren, children, husband and animals) and for the Sami people in the Kola Peninsula. Olga studied the Sami language that she had lost in her childhood.
Food memories from childhood.	Olga remembers the berries, reindeer meat and fish from her childhood <i>“The three Sami elephants”</i> tasted delicious. Her father worked at a fishing company in the Kola Peninsula. They always had fish to eat and her father fished with a net.
Diet in daily life.	Olga said she in particular missed the fish and berries from childhood. Olga had access to reindeer meat from a family member who lived on the tundra. She says: <i>“If the reindeer disappear, then the Sami disappear. Fish are expensive to get on your own. You need a car, petrol, fishing equipment and a license. I do not find cowberries, blueberries and cloudberry. The berries from the area do not taste as in my childhood”</i> . She has mostly store-bought food, namely: frozen fish, chicken, and canned meat.
Family, social network, engagement in social life.	Olga shares the daily meals with her husband and sometimes with children and grandchildren who live in the same village. Social life is within a Christian congregation in the village. Olga is actively engaged in her congregation as a prayer warrior for her Sami people life and health. Each summer she goes to a “holy” lake in the Kola Peninsula to pray for the Sami people.
<b>Larissa</b> (Sami), Participant 11	<b>“Closed down”</b> (Field notes. Translator: Natalia)
Place of birth, marital status, children, education, work and place of residence.	Larissa was born in the 1930s in a Sami winter village. She says; <i>“The state closed down the village”</i> . Started to work with reindeer on the tundra at the age of 13 and had 2 years primary education. She expressed that she had a very difficult time during the war. She distrusts the state, is widow and has 4 children, of whom 2 have passed away due to alcoholism. Is a pensioner and lives alone in an apartment block in Lovozero.
Activities in daily life.	The highlight of the year is the annual Sami festival where she sells her Sami knitwear. Larissa takes weekly walks to the cultural center. Makes and sells knitwear at the cultural center in order to help with money and care for her children and grandchildren. She suffers from heart problems and loneliness.
Food memories from childhood.	Larissa remembers how much she appreciated to eat reindeer meat, fish and berries in her childhood. They were harvested directly from nature. They ate reindeer soup, fish soup, and bread. Describes her childhood diet as <i>“Closed down!”</i> because the state prevented access.
Diet in daily life.	Larissa picks no berries and mushrooms. Reindeer meat is too expensive to buy. She buys fish from local anglers when she has money. Buys beef in cans or chicken in the shops. Sometimes makes soup with potato, carrots and rice. Dislikes pork.
Family and social network.	Larissa shares no meals with family. Her family are struggling with social issues and problems. Larissa helps and gives her children and grandchildren the money she makes from her knitting. She says that she is old and does not need the money to eat. Larissa thinks of herself as the ‘helping hand’ for her children and grandchildren in their everyday lives.

<b>Paula</b> (Sami), Participant 12	<b>“Healing walks”</b> , field notes/ tape recorded. Translator: a local person.
Place of birth, marital status, children, education, work, and place of residence.	Paula was born in the 1930s in Lovozero. Father was a reindeer herder. Attended a boarding school, was a widow, had 4 children and was a pensioner. Four generations (6 family members) live in the same household in a small apartment block in the village of Lovozero.
Activities in daily life.	Paula prepares the everyday meals, cares for her great-grandchildren and knits for sale to help her family members in the household. Paula suffered from severe headaches, dizziness and high blood pressure. She started with “healing walks” every morning and experienced that this changed her life and health completely. Describes the experience as God’s help and in healing. She likes to walk and smell the fresh air in the forest. She urges her family members to try the healing walks; breathing <i>in</i> the fresh air and breathing <i>out</i> the stress in the village. Paula likes the smell of spring and birch trees. The forest is important for her stress relief in daily life.
Food memories from childhood.	Paula remembers the fresh tundra food in childhood. They ate fish, reindeer meat and berries. They net-fished from the lakes. The recipe she likes is <i>Njute</i> (Sami meal): whitefish with the bones removed, finely chopped and adding cloudberry and butter.
Diet in daily life.	Purchases fish once a year from a family member who holds a fishing license. Reindeer meat is expensive and very difficult to get. Paula no longer finds berries in the forest. She buys food in the shop (bread, sugar, dairy products, butter, hermetic- meat). The household diet mostly consists of canned meat and potatoes.
Family, social network, engagement in social life and faith community.	Shares meals with her household members in the apartment. Churchgoer in a Christian community, which together with her family, constitutes the center of her social life. Paula receives some help from her congregation to manage the family household needs and is an active church member. Paula is the cornerstone in the family’s household.
<b>Elena</b> , Sami, Participant 13	<b>“Food for vitality and strength”</b> Field notes/ tape record. Translator: Natalia)
Place of birth, marital status, children, education, work and residence.	Elena was born in the 1930s in a Kola Sami village and her Sami family lived on the tundra. She was trained as a schoolteacher in the south. Elena has worked her entire life as a Sami schoolteacher, is single, had one child and is a pensioner. Lives in an apartment block in Lovozero.
Activities in daily life.	Elena indicated that she is a Sami writer who is married to her pen, paper and books. Writing in the Kildin Sami language is her life and purpose. Elena tells she was very active until her body restricted her activities. She needs her childhood diet, ‘ <i>food for vitality and strength</i> ’ in order to write. Elena is active engaged in the education of Sami children, and Sami institutions support her work.
Food memories from childhood.	Her childhood diet consisted of fresh reindeer meat, fish, river salmon and berries. The food storage was by salting and freezing. The children picked the berries. Her mother made stone-baked bread, boiled and salted mushrooms. They always had fish to eat – fish soup with seasonal berries – and consumed the ‘whole reindeer’ and ‘the whole fish’, including raw liver, blood and kidney.
Diet in daily life.	Elena buys the dairy products and beef, pork, chicken from the shops. She prefers to eat the traditional food from her childhood. She buys buckets of fresh berries, fish and reindeer meat from local distributors and her social contacts once a year. “ <i>They know I like the ‘whole fish’ (pike) and bring it to my door. I use the intestines, liver, stomach, head for making fish soup</i> ”. Likes to eat reindeer blood, raw liver and the roe from fish. Elena says that roe is good for her health.
Family, social network, and engagement in social life.	Elena eats her meals alone or with Sami friends. She has one son who lives a busy life in a city in the Kola Peninsula.. Elena started at a bible school in adulthood in order to translate the Gospel of Mark into the Kildin Sami language.

<b>Zoya</b> (Komi) Participant 14	<b>“Healthy, strong tundra life”</b> (Field notes: Translator: Natalia)
Place of birth, marital status, children, education, work and place of residence.	Zoya was born in the 1950s in the Kola Peninsula tundra. Her Komi family were well off, reindeer people who immigrated to the Kola Peninsula in the 19th century. Attended technical school, worked in administration, is married with 3 children (one passed away), has grandchildren, is a pensioner and lives with husband in an apartment bloc in Lovozero.
Activities in daily life.	Zoya expresses herself as a healthy strong tundra woman from a Komi family. She has a <i>dacha</i> (garden) outside the village in which she grows potatoes, turnips, currants and strawberries. She needs to have at least 4 tundra visits each year to her childhood home and family in the tundra in order to feel strong and healthy. Suffers from headaches when in the village, which disappear when she visits the tundra. <i>“The healthy, strong tundra life is in our fresh food, hard physical work and sauna”</i> . Zoya picks fresh berries on the tundra and she likes to go skiing and walking in the forest. Reading and weekly visits to the village library are her times to relax.
Food memories from childhood.	Zoya remembers her Komi family (mother, father, grandparents and other relatives) being strong, healthy reindeer people. <i>“We had healthy, strong tundra food. Reindeer meat, milk, milk products, butter. We had cows, chicken, fish, and berries”</i> .
Diet in daily life.	The family had full access to the fresh clean tundra food from relatives on the tundra and had the freezer filled with reindeer meat, fish and berries. Petri often prepares soups for her family. She does not pick berries from the areas around the village since she claims they have strange shape, and smell and taste bad.
Family, social network, and engagement in social life.	Zoya shares daily meals with her husband. She cares for the Komi language, songs, history and politics. She finds that the communist Russia was more predictable and better organized for young people. Zoya cares for the young people in the village
<b>Maria</b> (Sami), Participant 15	<b>“Inner hunger”</b>
Place of birth, marital status, children, education, work and place of residence.	Maria was born in the 1930s on Kola Peninsula coast, an area with rich natural resources. An open endless landscape along the Barents Sea. Her family were reindeer nomads. Lost family members in the tragic events during the Soviet period. She is a widow without children and a pensioner, has worked as a school teacher and lives alone in an apartment block in Lovozero.
Activities in daily life.	Maria sees herself as a ‘birth giver’ to old Sami objects. She restores and gives new life to them. Maria makes traditional Sami handicraft and dresses, and spends time restoring old traditional Sami clothing. Maria has collected old traditional Sami clothing patterns and collaborates with several other Sami craftswomen. She was very active in sports in the Soviet period. Maria suffers from headaches. She connects the headache to her sensitivity to magnetic waves in the village that give off poor energy. She says; <i>“Too much energy is bad”</i> . Maria express her need of being physically active.
Food memories from childhood.	Maria remembers the river fishing of salmon, and the infinite lush costal scenery where they harvested halibut, cod and haddock. The diet was fresh reindeer meat, berries and fish. Salmon, cow's milk and quark were foods of her childhood paradise. The tundra and coastal food saturated the body with good energy. <i>“We were never hungry. The children fished and it was not a rule that adults fed us”</i> .
Diet in daily life.	Her diet in daily life has changed radically from childhood. Maria express a feeling of an ‘inner hunger’ for the tundra food. The tundra food is very expensive (salmon, cod, fish, and reindeer meat) and difficult to get. She buys two kilos of fresh salmon each year in order to have the good feeling in her body from childhood.
Family, social network and engagement in social life.	Maria eats her meals alone or shares meals with Sami friends. She said she enjoyed the company of dolls she made and gave names to each of her dear family members who have passed away. Has no children: <i>“God gave no children”</i> . Gives daily thanks to Mother earth for the breath of life, the water and the earth.

### Key biographical data of the participant in Greenland

<b>Johanne</b> (Inuit), Participant 16	<b><i>“The breath of childhood”</i></b>
Place of birth, marital status, children, education, work and place of residence.	Johanne grew up in a hunter family in a small village in West Greenland in the 1950s. Was married with two children and had a business education. An early retiree from her office work that had inflicted breath problems. Johanne lives with her husband in a block apartment in the city of Nuuk. In the summers, she lives a very active life as a hunter in her childhood home area, where she can inhale <i>‘the breath of childhood’</i> .
Activities in daily life and food memories from childhood.	Johanne sees herself as a hunter of reindeer and berry picker during the summer season. Describes these activities as <i>the breath of childhood</i> . She learned to hunt reindeer in childhood, and at the age of 9 shot her first reindeer. She describes the hunting of reindeer, birds and berry picking as activities that give her vitality and strength. Her husband is an angler and has his own boat. He fishes cod and trout in the summer and he travels on trawls in the winter.
Diet in daily life.	Johanne expresses that they only eat reindeer, berries and fish from their childhood home in Greenland. The air is clean at the childhood home place. What she catches there have a good taste and smell good. She has Greenlandic food at least four days a week. When she eats ‘Danish food’, she needs to have ‘Greenlandic food’ the next day, otherwise she feels sick and weak in her body.
Belonging, family, social network and engagement in social life.	She Shares her daily meals with husband and her mother-in-law. Delivers meat, berries and fish that she has harvested directly from nature to a hotel in Nuuk. Johanne indicates that she feels she belongs to her childhood home area, not to any other places.