ANNA CÉLINE SCHÄFER

OF WEED AND VALUE

Encounters with the Stinging Nettle in the Urban Wilderness of Cologne

KÖLNER ETHNOLOGISCHE BEITRÄGE

Herausgegeben von Michael J. Casimir

Heft 65

2024

Image source: Photo by Anna Céline Schäfer

To my parents, Jutta and Rolf, for their unconditional support of the wildest ideas.

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Preface

The study by Anna Céline Schäfer, supervised by Dr. Clemens Greiner, engages with the stinging nettle, a plant probably better known for painful encounters than for its many beneficial properties. Reflections on this plant's ambivalence led Schäfer to explore experiences and notions of urban "wilderness" in the City of Cologne.
In this accessible and highly readable ethnography, Schäfer explores Western cultural memories of "wilderness" and traces the history of wilderness thinking from the Middle Ages through the Romantic period to the present day. The subsequent ethnographic exploration of the world of the urban stinging nettle is beautifully organised into four tropes: Chaos (the uncontrollability of wilderness in an over organized space), Contamination (the risks for more-than-human wellbeing through pollutions), Danger (fear of intoxication), and Feral Culture (contemporary struggles about the meaning of "wilderness").

Schäfer explores the world of urban foragers who try to educate and sensitize their contemporaries as to the nutritional benefits of wild herbs, which grow at their doorsteps and can be used as complementary food source. Their foraging trips, Schäfer argues, are embodied and sensory encounters with more-than-human worlds. In this way, urban food-foraging practices help those alienated from nature to refamiliarize with these worlds and to rethink prevalent nature-culture dualisms.

Connecting wild ecologies, urban foraging practices and current debates about "superfoods", this work touches a wide range of pressing issues relating to the crisis-ridden relationships between humans, the environment and beyond. It brings these topics literally to our doorstep and thus contributes in an exemplary way to an "anthropology at home".

Michael J. Casimir

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1. Introduction

In the late afternoon of August 18th 2022, I met Diego for the first time in Cologne, on the riverbanks of the Rhine. Starting from the Severin Bridge in the South of Cologne we followed a path down the river towards the city center. I had often been on the Rhine's riverbanks before then, and had spent hours there sitting and chatting with friends or walking up and down the banks. That spot in the city of Cologne, for me, had always been a spot of social interaction for all kinds of people and their leisure time activities. On that day however, my perception of the space changed when Diego took me on a walk and gathered wild herbs to share a cup of wild herbal tea with me afterwards. The vegetation around the riverbanks had never caught my attention, not even when I had a picnic on a nearby meadow. They had seemed to be just some weeds that grew there, unworthy of more attention. After the walk with Diego, the riverbanks gained a whole new meaning for me. Where I had previously just seen a green mixture of weeds, was now a rich and diverse space of many plant species blossoming amid a big city and providing a healthy and nourishing food source. With the help of Diego, and later also with my other research participants, I encountered urban green spaces in Cologne anew. During fieldwork it became clear that this experience of a shift in perception and understanding was something I shared with many other urban foragers, including Diego, and that not only my understanding of wild herbs and urban green spaces has changed, but so have those of my research participants.

Indeed, urban subsistence strategies like urban agriculture, bee-keeping, and urban gardening have become more and more popular in recent years, not only in Europe (Landor-Yagmagata et al. 2018), but also in other countries of the Global North (McLain et al. 2014) as well as the Global South (Garekae, Shackleton 2020). Despite a growing number of studies about urban subsistence strategies, urban foraging of wild herbs is largely overlooked. While some studies focus on cities in the Global South, see Garekae, Shackleton (2020), only a few studies have been conducted in the Global North, for example McLain et al. (2014) and Landor-Yagmagata et al. (2018). According to these studies urban foraging is a common practice in urban areas, but administrative and green-space planning considerations generally exclude urban foragers and their needs from their planning strategies (McLain et al. 2014: 224; Landor-Yagmagata 2018:1). McLain et al. and Landor-Yagmagata et al. show that the general ignorance of the importance of wild herbs for urban cultural biodiversity is an issue in cities of the United States (like Philadelphia, New York, Baltimore, and Seattle) and in Berlin (Germany), and my current

research in Cologne shows similar results. Even though Cologne has initiated programs to support urban subsistence strategies, like the project *Essbare Stadt*, municipal staff and project managers told me that in the project *Essbare Stadt* the promotion of wild herbs and urban foraging is not part of their strategies. However, they do acknowledge a growing trend for urban foraging (interview with Fr. Mayer 13.02.23; phone call with Fr. Rademacher 20.04.23).

Urban planning in the twentieth century acknowledged the importance of human-environment relationships and created spaces where humans were able to differently engage with the natural environment for mental relaxation and physical activity. As an antidote against the stressful lifestyle of employees in offices and factories, urban green spaces were not meant for any economically productive activities, but rather for relaxing, recreative, and aesthetic purposes. Activities like subsistence gardening and foraging were therefore excluded from, and even forbidden in, urban green spaces. Through technocratic green-space planning, humans were assigned the role of mere users, rather than co-producers and active creators of green spaces. Only in the 1980s, when sustainable relations with the environment became popular, did urban planners also include social, economic, and ecological concerns in their strategies (McLain et al. 2018: 223). However, urban green spaces still remain museum-like spaces where people contemplate nature, but do not physically engage with it (Gobster 2007: 100). Mesuline Martin however claims that leading an environmentally sustainable life means having an intimate relationship with the natural environment. Meanwhile, many citizens seem to alienate themselves more from their natural environment, which leads to physical and mental health problems and less sustainable lives. According to Martin, one way to reconnect with nature is urban foraging (Martin 2018: 150).

Most studies about urban foraging focus on more practical questions like who gathers what kind of wild plants in which spaces. The question 'What happens when gathering in an urban space in regard to people's understanding of wild and urban nature?' remains generally unanswered, if acknowledged at all. However, with respect to the construction of sustainable relationships with nature, especially questions about the understanding of the environment, and how our relationships towards it have developed and are changing, are essential. This thesis tries to answer these questions by locally embedding them into the city of Cologne and its green spaces. With the help of an exemplary wild plant, the stinging nettle (lat. *Urtica dioica*), this work will discuss how relationships with the natural environment in an urban setting are changing when people

engage in urban foraging and encounter wild herbs in a realm where cultivated landscapes are common. Here, cognitive concepts of wilderness, which are based on a Western nature-culture dualism (Ingold 2011: 40), as well as physical and emotional encounters with wilderness in the form of wild herbs must be reviewed to determine what exactly has changed in the understanding of the environment and how this change happens. After discussing methodological and ethical aspects of this work in chapters 2 and 3, and a short botanical description of the stinging nettle in chapter 4, I will dive into common conceptions of wilderness and how they are manifested in the local field in chapter 5. In a subsequent step, in chapter 6, I will show how the understanding of the urban wild environment can change when people emotionally and physically engage with wild herbs, i.e. the stinging nettle. This includes gathering experiences, and experiencing nutritional and health benefits, as well as establishing personal and emotional connections to the environment. This work is concluded with an outlook considering possible future developments of how wild herbs could play a more important role in the urban natural spaces of Cologne and in future world-making activities. Although wild herbs can be used in diverse ways, this work focuses on the culinary and nutritional aspects of wild herbs. Following Claude Lévi-Strauss, cooking is the transformation process of nature into culture. In this sense, the urban forager stands in between nature and culture and negotiates or mediates for a reconciliation between nature and culture to be understood as entangled rather than separated (Martin 2018: 159). I will show in the following how food, as a category and ontological and cultural concept, is especially well suited to explain how wild herbs can change people's perceptions of the environment.

Before I begin with the description and analysis of the fieldwork, I would like to make some formal remarks about the work. First, although the main language in this work is English, most of the research process was conducted in German. Since German is my mother tongue, the field itself is located in a big German city, and all of my research participants are German-speaking (either as their mother tongue or as their second language), it seemed convenient to use German instead of English for the research. However, I have translated all German citations in the text in English (indication of translations after each citation) so they conform with the rest of the text, while German names and some notions (indicated with italics) remain in their original language. Furthermore, I use generic feminine pronouns throughout by default, except in situations and interactions where gender relations are clear, when I use the appropriate assigned

pronouns for specific persons. In this way, I try to avoid any further misunderstandings and misinterpretations. My own positionality will be discussed in chapter 2.4.

2. Constructing the Field at Home

Foreignness has always played a crucial role in Anthropology, and still does. Edmund Leach once said that anthropologists need to be naive aliens in foreign cultures to accomplish their research with impartiality. In their own societies, Anthropologists would only see what they already believe themselves to know (Leach 1982: 122ff). For Leach, distance is a key word in ethnography. The anthropologist must maintain a distance from her research participants and the field, which allows her to maintain the scientifically required objectivity of ethnography (ibid.). As fieldwork seems to be an obligatory task for anthropologists – or, as Victor Turner would say, a rite of passage from student to the status of a full anthropologist who has experienced the hardships of being in a foreign country and culture – travelling abroad has always been part of ethnography (Sökefeld 2002: 82). This academic tradition comes from colonial times, when for the first time Europeans left for other continents to meet foreign cultures and returned home after studying and trying to understand these cultures. While this has often been criticized by many postcolonial scientists and activists, it is still common practice today. However, the justification for studying cultural phenomena outside one's own cultural sphere is more of a methodological one. As Sökefeld and Greenhouse mention, anthropologists who are not native to a given culture, might have another perspective and observe specific phenomena that people familiar with the cultural customs would not be able to see (Sökefeld 2002: 84; Greenhouse 1985: 261). On the other side, the native anthropologist might have more access to specific events and already has some knowledge of the cultural customs which make it easier for her to find research participants or to understand specific patterns of behavior or worldviews that are less accessible to strangers. In Greenhouse's words: "At home, we struggle to see *through* [emphasis in the original text] the ordinary to the extraordinary whereas elsewhere, we struggle to achieve the ordinary" (Greenhouse 1985: 261). While the methodological approach may be one reason for conducting ethnography at home, there are many more. Anthropology at home can for example contribute to socio-political changes when embedded in activist or developmental contexts (Pulido 2008, Onyango-Ouma 2006). Furthermore, recent developments in globalization and migration make it even more difficult to enclose a field in one specific location and to define it as

either foreign or familiar. On top of these more theoretical and political reasons why anthropology at home would be useful, anthropologists may also face practical issues that force them to stay at home. These issues may include insufficient financial resources to pay for travel expenses, lack of visas, or lack of research permission granted by the research destination's government (Sökefeld 2002: 85). While methodologies in foreign and familiar fields may not seem to be very dissimilar, there are special characteristics that differentiate these two types of fields. Before explaining these characteristics by means of my own experiences, I shall discuss some meanings of the notion of "home" in anthropology.

2.1. Who Is "Home"?

In everyday language people refer to home as the place they live, their house or flat, a patch of land or another person who evokes feelings of being home. For anthropologists however the term "home" is more complex. An anthropologist who conducts research at home is generally assumed to be a member of the local society because of national citizenship, ancestry or family bonds (Greenhouse 1985: 261; Sökefeld 2002: 86). Once colonial rule had been implemented in the Global South, anthropologists were required to study the culture(s) of the native population(s). Because it was assumed that one native person could completely represent her culture, Western anthropologists used individual persons as their primary information resource. The expectation that people who belong to a specific culture are familiar with all cultural customs and rules has remained almost unchanged until today. As time went on and anthropological studies were also conducted by non-Western researchers in their own home countries, the notion of the native anthropologist, who is very familiar with her own culture, was created (Narayan 1993: 672). However, regarding current developments in migration and globalization, the concepts of nativity and familiarity need to be rethought (Narayan 1993: 673). As Martin Sökefeld (2002) and Carol J. Greenhouse (1985) noticed in their own fieldwork experience, familiarity and strangeness are often very close to each other. It should not be expected that someone who belongs to a specific cultural group is familiar with it in every sense. People can find strange things in the midst of their familiar environments. After Greenhouse, however, being open and aware to strangeness in our environment can change worldviews and the understanding of what familiarity means (Greenhouse 1985: 261). Rather than expecting to experience familiar things, anthropologists who do research in their own respective cultural environments should try to find things they are not familiar

with (Sökefeld 2002: 87). Belonging to a cultural group is another aspect that should be discussed. While many anthropologists tried to construct belonging on the basis of facts like national citizenship, family, gender, or even race, the choice whether being an insider or outsider, a native or a stranger to the field is not only to be made by the anthropologist herself (Sökefeld 2002: 88). Belonging is a negotiation between the anthropologist and her research participants. Fieldwork in anthropology always requires engaging with a range of people and listening to what they say (Narayan 1993: 679). During fieldwork, strangers become closer the more time the anthropologist spends with them. Over time, anthropologists become entangled with the field and the people in the field, which leads to more familiarity in a formerly strange cultural environment (Sökefeld 2002: 90). Where the anthropologist positions herself and is positioned by her research participants shifts throughout the research process. The anthropologist in the field can have many identities. In some cases, although she is local to the field, she can become a stranger to the studied community: "The loci along which we are aligned or set apart from those we study are multiple and flux" (Onyango-Ouma 2008: 260). Consequently, being native has nothing to do with attributes the researcher ascribes to herself but rather with the quality of the established and changing relationships in the field. As Narayan claims, the dichotomy between insider and outsider should be overcome and replaced by acknowledging that an anthropologist can be both a native and a stranger, and more, at the same time (1993: 671f). This understanding is especially crucial for ethnography conducted in a place or group where some sort of connection already exists or where anthropologists are already active in the studied society – if they live there, for example. Since anthropologists and research participants are equal actors in a common social and political field, although they have different positions, the epistemological barrier between researcher and researched breaks down. The researcher's claimed objectivity due to her being an outsider is no longer tenable (Sökefeld 2002: 91). The field is now characterized by localizations, positionings, perspectives and stories from both the researcher and the researched (Sökefeld 2002: 93). What is at the center of research now is not the enclosed cultural group, but rather one cultural aspect of society understood from a specific group's perspective (Sökefeld 2002: 90). This, after Sökefeld, is what constitutes and differentiates anthropology at home from anthropology in foreign cultural spaces. What is more, the researcher at home does not experience a concrete beginning or ending of her fieldwork. In contrast to the traveling anthropologist, she undergoes no arrival or departure, but rather she was already there and is not able to leave the field and gain some distance (Sökefeld 2002: 88). Especially

defining an end to the fieldwork can be challenging, since there is no fixed departure date, but the anthropologist must force herself to end the research at some point:

> "As much as there is no definite beginning, there will be no definite ending. […] I must stop myself. But when? I will never finish. Open questions will always remain, new intriguing informants will always appear who should actually be immediately interviewed, or new aspects are highlighted that I haven't acknowledged sufficiently yet." (Sökefeld 2002: 89; [translated by the author])

In sum, the field at home cannot be exclusively identified by national citizenship or a specific location. There are many more factors that play a role when constructing the field, like positions, relationships with research participants and stories of the field. In the next subchapters, I will try to reconstruct my research field by illustrating the research process and the sites of fieldwork and discussing my positions and roles in the field which influenced its construction. This will be followed by a short ethical reflection on how my positions and relationships have influenced the research process and its outcomes using two examples that were ethically challenging.

2.2. The Research Process and the Field in Cologne

This research project is embedded in a larger academic, interdisciplinary, and international research cooperation at the University of Cologne, called *Beyond the Domesticated and Wild Divide: Plant Biology and the Politics of Nutrition* (BiPoN). The cooperation was established by several universities, namely the University of the Westen Cape (Cape Town, South Africa), the ICAR Vivekananda Parvatiya Krishi Anusandhan Sansthan (Almora, India), Universitas Gadjah Mada (Jakarta, Indonesia), the University of Namibia (Windhoek, Namibia), and the University of Cologne (Cologne, Germany). The research project includes professors and lecturers from various disciplines, including geography, biology, and anthropology, as well as some of their students. They all contribute to the cooperation with various smaller research projects and specific topics that are all related to the main topic of food security and the role of local, orphan, and wild crops for securing food supplies in a changing world. While some received a specific research topic from their respective supervising professors, others, like me, made a research proposal for a specific topic. The students that do research within this cooperation are offered a six-month stipend worth €1,800 and, if needed, can get a refund for travel expenses of the research. In my case, I received the full stipend, but had no travel expenses, for my field was located "at home".

The research process in total took about one and a half years, from October 2021 to June 2023, with interruptions due to a chronic disease I am suffering from. The process can be divided into three main research phases. In the first phase, from approximately October 2021 to April 2022, the goal was to formulate research questions and construct the field after becoming familiar with the research topic and the current discourses about wild herbs, urban foraging and wilderness in anthropology. The actual field research was then conducted during the second phase, from May 2022 to November 2022, including participant observations and interviews as well as field-journey preparations, reaching out to research participants, and follow-up work like interview transcriptions. Finally, the last main phase included data analysis and putting the research results on paper. The last phase began in December 2022 and ended in June 2023. An overview of all my field stays and the interviews I conducted can be found in Appendix 4.

Because I did not travel abroad and decided instead to stay in my hometown, Cologne, my research process was different from what is common in anthropology. Generally, anthropologists leave their home to conduct several months of research in a foreign region and can precisely determine when and where their field stay starts and ends. In my case, this was not possible since I haven't traveled abroad. Rather, my research process was shaped by many short field stays with a maximum duration of about twelve hours. This situation required that I repeatedly jump between the field and my daily life, while including the field in my daily routines. Therefore, especially in the second phase, I felt like I was always negotiating between two realities. This feeling of being in between ran through the whole research process and showed in several situations and on several scales. At this point, I won't go into any more detail, but will revisit this subject at the end of my analysis. My field stays were replete with participant observations, which also included mere observations and active participation, as well as with qualitative interviews, both formal and informal. Since my journeys were quite short, I never actually had leisure time in the field and never explored it without having any appointments. Consequently, my field experience was always somewhat busy and crowded since I was never really alone in the field. While I refer to the field as the city of Cologne, I did not do research in every corner of the city. The concrete fieldwork locations are oriented towards my research-participants'preferred foraging spots in the city, whose choices are influenced by their individual understanding of "good" spots. These spots are for example located in districts like Marsdorf (*Die Wildkräuterei*), Brück (*Kräuterkauz*), Deutz, and Sülz.

2.3. Research Participants

My research process was marked by different encounters I had with various people. With some I built close relationships, while my interactions with others were rather short and fleeting. Although I personally value every encounter the same, I nevertheless need to differentiate the encounters with regard to their importance for my scientific interest. Therefore, I divided my research participants into two groups. The first group comprises people I had built a closer relationship with because I met them several times, had longer conversations and interviews with them, and got to know them better. In Anthropology these kinds of persons are called key informants for the researcher, but I prefer to call them research participants, since they were not merely passive informants but actively agreed to participate and share their knowledge with me. This first group has in common that they have all achieved some sort of official qualification and/or education in teaching others how to collect and use wild herbs in different ways. Therefore, they can also be referred to as wild-herbs experts. They were all engaged into some sort of educational work and offer wild-herbs workshops and walks in the city of Cologne and the surrounding areas. Most of them have their own websites and social media accounts where they advertise their workshops and walks. I found most of my research participants of group 1 on the internet and contacted them via email. Furthermore, some research participants provided me with the contact details of their colleagues, so I could get in touch with them, too. Although I contacted about 20 wild-herbs experts in Cologne, I ended up with eight people willing to meet and agreeing to do an interview with me. These eight people were all women (Mica, Thewie, Judith*, Wildkräuterentdeckerinnen*, Jana and Lena) with the exception of one man (Diego). My research participants of group 1 were of various ages between around 25 and 55. They also have different specializations, like edible wild herbs, medicinal wild herbs, wild-herbs art etc. and accordingly offer different workshops for adults as well as children. Most of them have their own "territories", which means that they have different corners in the city where they hold their workshops and walks. Some even have their own wild-herb garden and educational institution. They also do cooperations with other wild-herbs experts and most of them know each other, as there are not a lot of wild-herbs experts in the city. Apart from the two *Wildkräuterentdeckerinnen*, whom I met together, all other meetings with my research participants of group 1 were one-to-one. I also accompanied most of them during their workshops and walks (six workshops and walks in total).

The eight experts were not my only research participants. Another group of research

participants, namely group 2, are people whom I met during any wild-herbs event, like a cooking workshop or a walk. These people actually attended the workshops and walks. In contrast to the encounters with research participants of group 1, these encounters were rather short, fleeting, and unique. Research participants of group 2 were mostly part of my participant observations. With some I also had short informal conversations during the workshops and walks. Apart from that, I never encountered these people again. Group 2 is also a very diverse group, and have in common only that they happened to attend one of the workshops or walks I also took part in. Consequently, the meetings were very spontaneous, and I was not able to determine who I would meet. In contrast to group 1, people from group 2 in general had little or no knowledge about wild herbs. It was mostly out of curiosity that they participated in the workshops. Considering age, gender, class etc., group 2 is equally diverse. Finally, I had encounters with three staff members of the municipal administration of Cologne. With each of these three staff members I had a phone call, and additionally conducted one interview with one of them. They can be considered experts in the sense that they know a lot about how the municipality treats wild herbs, and the kinds of discussions currently taking place regarding wild herbs in the municipal administration. Since I only had phone calls and one (online) interview with them, it is hard to say that we were able to establish close relationships similar to those I had with research participants of group 1. I would rather describe these encounters, too, as short and fleeting, but they are nevertheless different from the encounters with the research participants of group 2 since they were planned, not spontaneous, and since they did not happen in a workshop context but rather in one-to-one conversations. In the following, I will refer to these three people as municipal staff members.

Research has become more regulated and requires for example informed consent from research participants when cooperating with ethnographers (Fluehr-Lobban 2015: 135). For my research, too, I always asked for either written or oral consent from any of my research participants. I asked for written consent from all people with whom I conducted and recorded interviews, which concerns only research participants of group 1. Since the relationships with the municipal staff members as well as research participants from group 2 were not close, and often of short duration, it was simply not always possible to get written consent from everybody, so in these cases I just asked for oral consent before participant observation started, or at the beginning of a phone call. Only one staff member also gave me written consent, since she also agreed to give an interview, which I recorded. While people who just gave oral consent remain completely anonymous in this work, those

who gave written consent were able to choose how they wanted to be addressed. Most of them agreed to be addressed by their real names, while some chose to be pseudonymized.

2.4. The Researcher's Role(s) and Position(s)

The term *encounters* in the subtitle of this research was not chosen arbitrarily. For me, to encounter means to meet on an equal footing. That this ideal was not always possible to meet in my research should not be surprising when we think of the many power imbalances that can occur during fieldwork. The issue of encountering someone or something recurringly appeared in the research process, and relates to my different positions in the field as well as the relationships that I entered. In this sub-chapter, I want to explore positions and relationships a little further. Reflecting on the researcher's position and her field relationships has not always been this important in anthropological work, but became an integral part for many anthropologists, most recently with feminist approaches that especially highlight the importance of the researcher's positionality. Positionality means gender, age, religious orientation, social status, ethnic or national belonging, etc., as well as positional entanglements, constituted by different mutual attributions and expectations in the field which continually influence the research results (Dilger 2020: 292).

The first position I ascribed to myself, and how I initially presented myself to my research participants, was as ethnographer who was doing a research project in the academic realm with the goal of graduating soon. Although I was able to combine my personal interest with my scientific and academic interests, it was the latter two that actually guided me through my research process. My own positioning was addressed in several situations either in writing or orally, but was by no means the only position I was ascribed. While I tried to introduce myself as an ethnographer to the field to give my research participants the opportunity to categorize me in the way I wanted to be seen, they did not always stick to this but ascribed me various roles. During workshops I encountered people from group 1 and 2. While the people of group 1 always knew that I was taking part, for people of group 2 my presence was always unexpected as they had not been informed beforehand that someone else would participate. I suppose the surprise and my own positioning made it difficult for them to put me into a familiar category in the situation, e.g. herbal pedagogue, expert on wild herbs or participant. This confusion led either to mistrust and doubt, which resulted in exclusion and distancing, or to curiosity and interest in my person. That is why I ended up with open and informal interviews with some

herbal workshop participants while others decided to not talk to me at all. While I tried to participate as much as possible in the workshops, I also tried to observe the other participants from a distance. The position I had initially chosen for myself has been mingled with the active position of a participant, while my role as ethnographer has been blurred with that of a participant and other ascribed roles.

Furthermore, I noticed a student-teacher dynamic especially with the research participants of group 1. As I was actively participating and learning how to deal with wild herbs, I also became a student of my research participants of group 1. This teacher-student relationship continued through the whole research process and was constantly reproduced during workshops and walks, and also in interview situations, when I was alone with my research participants. This dynamic emerged rather naturally, as my research participants are used to teaching their interlocutors while I, as researcher, am used to asking a lot of questions and learning from my interlocutors. The age difference between me and most of my research participants of group 1 (most were a lot older than me) probably reinforced this dynamic. Parallelly, there were also situations where I became a teacher for my research participants when I shared knowledge with them that I had acquired during my research, and which was new to them.

Roles and positions in research relationships most of the time include hierarchies. My research was no exception to this, and I quickly understood that my presence in the field caused some hierarchies. The student-teacher relationship I formed with my research participants of group 1 for example put my research participants in a higher position than me, as I was taught by them and depended on their benevolence and knowledge to get all the information I needed for my research. On the other side, although at the time when I was conducting the research I had not yet graduated, my academic background often made me stand out, for not all research participants shared an academic background with me. Especially in the workshops, when I presented myself as an ethnographer from a university who would soon graduate, I got the impression that some research participants of group 2 felt intimidated by this position and were shyer towards me. My closer relationship with the research participants of group 1 might have put me on a higher or at least an in-between position in the workshop order. Additionally, in many situations I was younger than my research participants. As age is also a factor in social hierarchy, I was often in a lower position as the younger part, while my research participants ranked higher as they were older. These three examples were the most striking hierarchical differences in my research that were directly influenced by my presence as young researcher and student.

Many factors that would cause inequalities in other cases do not apply in my research, at least as far as I am aware of. Gender for example was not really a problem. As the workshops I attended were dominated by women or people that identified as female, I do not remember any situation where my female gender caused problems. The same is true for race or skin color. Since most of my research participants identified as white, in many situations race was simply not an issue. I also had encounters with people with an immigrant background from different regions of the world, but here, racial issues concerning for example wild-herbs workshops were not mentioned by my research participants. Rather, they told me about cultural differences they observed between Cologne and their hometown concerning wild herbs. Diego for example explained that his workshop concept in Cologne would not be suitable for the Argentinian context as people would refuse to pay him with money but would rather share their own experience and knowledge in exchange for his (interview with Diego 18.08.22). My research participant Thewie also told me about her childhood experiences with wild herbs in Thailand and how she still includes these influences in her workshops and her way of cooking with wild herbs (interview with Thewie 17.10.22). However, instead of pointing out the differences, both are rather eager to find similarities or ways how they can embed their experiences with wild herbs in different contexts. Therefore, neither origin nor nationality or race are crucial issues for my research participants, at least concerning the realm of wild herbs and what they mentioned in front of me. This is not to say that there is no inequality and discrimination in this realm, but as far as it concerns my research these were not pressing issues.

2.5. Ethical Reflections

The researcher's personal involvement in the field is complex, and the relationships built, and choices made, have effects on the research and the people involved. In this complex realm of social, political, economic, and religious entanglements the risk of harm is always present. To avoid this risk as far as possible, institutions like the *American Anthropological Association*[1] and the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Sozial- und Kulturanthropologie*[2] have formulated guidelines on research ethics for researchers to use before, during, and after fieldwork with the objective of conducting research and producing ethnographic works that

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[1] American Anthropological Association: "AAA Statement on Ethics: Principles of Professional Responsibility" https://americananthro.org/about/policies/statement-on-ethics/ [19.06.23]

[2] Hahn, Hans Peter; Hornbacher, Annette; Schönhuth, Michael 2008: „Frankfurter Erklärung" zur Ethik in der Ethnologie. https://www.dgska.de/dgska/ethik/ [19.06.23]

are ethically responsible. These ethical guidelines have not always existed, but are part of a historical learning process caused by several incidents in the academic history of anthropology, like the repeated involvement of anthropologists in political processes as part of governmental intelligence services (Fluer-Lobban 2015: 132). Only in 1971, after some incidents during the Vietnam War prompted anthropologists to take their ethical responsibility seriously, were the first Principles of Professional Responsibility published, which changed ethnographic research up until today (Fluehr-Lobban 2015: 134). These principles concern not only theoretical but also practical aspects of anthropological research (Fluehr-Lobban 2015: 135). In any case, anthropologists today take ethical concerns seriously, and these concerns should be included from the very beginning of the research until the end. After Fluehr-Lobban, the bases of all ethically correct research are “openness and disclosure” (Fluehr-Lobban 2015: 139), which means that anthropologists should always be open and attentive regarding the impact and purpose of their research.

In many research situations it is mandatory to undergo a process of research-ethics reflection before entering the field. Such reflections, which are mostly supervised by an ethics board, are meant to avoid any harm coming to research participants and to ensure that the conducted research is ethically acceptable. While this is especially important for research on delicate topics and in regions where fieldwork can mean a potentially high risk for researcher as well as research participants, it can also be helpful in less risky or delicate research situations. In contrast to doing research in a war region or on stigmatized illnesses for example, my present research topic and the chosen research region do not seem very risky or delicate at first sight. However, as I will show in this chapter, even here I encountered situations that could bear a potential risk for my research participants’ wellbeing. I will present two situations that required an ethical decision from my side. I will not go into any details but rather explain why these situations should be understood as delicate and why I decided to not include any details of them in my analysis.

For anthropologists, the goal should always be to include as many perspectives and opinions on a situation or a phenomenon as possible to generate a holistic picture. However, as I experienced in my research, this is not always possible. The researcher then is left with the decision whether to include a one-sided perspective or to leave the topic out. In my case, I captured one perspective on a certain story but due to time limitations I was not able to capture another perspective. Although the story was interesting for my research, I nevertheless decided not to include it as I felt it was incomplete. In another situation I was confronted with practices that were illegal with regard to German law, but

some people tried to find a way around this as they perceived the law as unjustified. This would also have been an interesting phenomenon worth including in the data analysis. However, for the sake of protecting my research participants from any legal prosecution and harm, I decided to exclude the topic from any further or more detailed analysis. Both decisions have had an influence on the outcome of my research analysis, but as codes of conduct require anthropologists to always protect their research participants, my research participants' welfare mattered more than my research interests.

In sum, there are many factors that influence the research process as well as the outcomes. The researcher herself can have a huge impact, even though this might not be clear in the beginning. To include a reflection of the researcher's position, roles, and decisions made in the field offers a new perspective on the outcome of the research, and not only makes research more transparent but also enables the reader to better understand how the analysis is made as well as why the researcher comes to her specific conclusion.

3. Research Methodology

This chapter presents and discusses the research methods used in my present research, including some examples from the field to illustrate it. The chapter is divided into three parts, each discussing one of the three main methods used in the field: participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and free listing. The methods are seen as complementary to each other and were used in parallel during the research process.

3.1. Participant Observation and Beyond

When we talk about ethnographic research or fieldwork in anthropology, we refer in almost every case to a specific methodology, namely participant observation. Participant observation, often summarized under the notion of fieldwork, is a common research methodology in anthropology and at the same time one of the discipline's particularities, which differentiates it from other academic or scientific disciplines. Most anthropologists agree on some general characteristics of participant observation: the anthropologist spends a longer period (at least a year) with the group in the field she researches, lives with the group, speaks their language and participates more or less in the group's daily activities (Spittler 2001: 2; Hauser-Schäublin 2020: 35). The group or field that the anthropologist wants to study is mainly chosen in accordance with her research topic. However, it is not the anthropologist's choice alone, as the researched group accepts her and allows her to

participate in the group's daily life (Hauser-Schäublin 2020: 35f). In that sense, the field in anthropology is not always a delimited territory (although it can be and often was in earlier anthropological research), but it implies rather a "being-there" or "being-part-of" in a social environment and participating in the social relationships of the research participants (Hauser-Schäublin 2020: 35).

The first anthropologist who used participant observation in his research and elaborated it both practically and theoretically in his ethnography was Bronislaw Malinowski during his research journey in Papua New Guinea from 1914 to 1918. More than a hundred years later, the core purpose of participant observation has not changed – which is, as Malinowski described it, "to grasp the native's point of view […] to understand *his* vision of *his* world" [emphasis in the original] (1922: 25). More than other scientific research methods, participant observation tries to understand and describe emic perspectives of different parts of human life.

Participant observation can be used throughout the whole fieldwork process as a research method. However, there are different ways of participating in the field, and they can vary during the fieldwork process. The participant observer in a social situation, as described by Jonathan Spradley (1980), is different from the ordinary participant as the former notices and thinks about aspects of daily life that would be considered as unnecessary trivia by an ordinary participant. Noticing and thinking about these aspects of daily life requires not only more attentiveness to collect as much information as possible, but also to find a balance between an insider and an outsider perspective in the field (Spradley 1980: 54ff). Generally speaking, the more the participant observer is actively engaged in the activities of the researched group, the more she becomes an insider. On the other hand, the more she just observes what happens, the more she holds the position of an outsider (Spradley 1980: 57). The outsider position helps the ethnographer to see what is invisible to the insider due to it being too usual or familiar for the latter to notice. In most cases, at the beginning of the fieldwork the researcher is an outsider with respect to the field, which means she is not familiar with the cultural customs, forms of communication, important events and world views there. Through participant observation she tries to assimilate her behavior to that of her research participants' and thereby grasps at understanding social relationships, structures, work patterns – in short: the world through the research participants' eyes. The goal of participant observation is to find a good balance between the insider's proximity and the outsider's distance (Hauser-Schäublin 2020: 39). When the researcher becomes too much of an insider, this is generally referred

to as *going native*, which should be avoided (Hauser-Schäublin 2020: 42). According to Hauser-Schäublin, distance should not be underestimated. Especially after the field work process, the researcher should gain enough distance from the field for reflection and scientific analysis (ibid.).

Reflection and self-reflection are another important part of participant observation. Already in 1980, Spradley recognized that self-reflection or "introspection", as he called it, should be integrated throughout the research process (Spradley 1980: 57). The research itself as well as the field are influenced by a number of factors that the anthropologist is attentive to. One example is that of power relations in the field, not only between the anthropologist and her research participants, but also with other actors and institutions (Hauser-Schäublin 2020: 48). Another influential factor is the anthropologist herself. She can shape the field according to her personal characteristics like age, gender, nationality, religious orientation, language, dress etc. These characteristics define how she is seen by her research participants, and partly influence how she is accepted and integrated in the field by her research participants (Hauser-Schäublin 2020: 41).

3.1.1. Beyond Participant Observation: Thick Participation and Thick Partaking

While participant observation is still constantly used in ethnographic research, it does not remain uncriticized. Gerd Spittler (2001) briefly summarizes that participant observation has some inconveniences for today's research settings, as it has not been developed further since its founding. Using this method takes a lot of time that anthropologists today don't have anymore, and it is also not suitable for multilocal research (Spittler 2001: 3). Despite the critiques, participant observation is not yet an outdated method but needs some change, or radicalization, as Spittler suggests (Spittler 2001: 5). He proposes the concept of thick participation, which is in fact a continuation of participant observation but with a stronger involvement of the anthropologist. In this section I will further elaborate on this concept.

Spittler emphasizes that observation is often more convenient for certain research contexts than the interview because some environments, things or activities are difficult or even impossible to put in words and easier to capture by sight. Sometimes one glance can be enough to capture a whole situation (Spittler 2001: 8). Especially what Michael Polanyi (1973) calls tacit knowledge[3] is often impossible for research participants to formulate

[3] Tacit knowledge, after Polanyi, has two dimensions. It comprises theoretical and practical knowledge and capacities as well as any activity and the processes happening during the activity. Polanyi, Michael 1973: Personal Knowledge: Towards a post-critical philosophy. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

orally. In this case interviews meet their limits, and observations start (Spittler 2001:9). But then again, participant observation in some cases seems not sufficient to generate reliable research data. Participant observation means in general that the anthropologist is physically present in the field, observes, talks to people and tries to record meaningful behavior (Spittler 2001: 15f). The factor of social proximity as epistemological category is missing. When participating in the lifestyle of other people, the anthropologist becomes automatically close to the field and experiences it with all her senses. Sensual experience for Spittler is not only watching and listening: "This *experience* [italics in the original] involves all the senses. Not only seeing and hearing, but also physical and emotional feeling" (Spittler 2001: 19; [translated by the author]). Thick participation is the integration of more sensual experiences in the field, which also includes the anthropologist's own senses. In other words, she must learn how to smell, taste and feel again (Spittler 2001: 20). The sensual experience in the field asks for another degree of the researcher's engagement in the field: "All in all, he [the anthropologist] has to use his whole body, his mind, his eye, his ear and his voice. He should work and dance physically, but also suffer" (ibid.; [translated by the author])

Considering Spittler's claim for more (sensual) involvement in the field, it becomes clear that anthropologists are in fact entangled with their field and the persons living in the field. Tabea Häberlein therefore argues that this personal involvement should not remain unnoticed, as the field can't be analyzed without taking the anthropologist's entanglements into account with help of more self-reflection (Häberlein 2014: 117). Some anthropologists like Spittler (2001), Stodulka (2014), Häberlein (2014), and even Spradley (1980) argue that reflection on the anthropologist's position as a field-shaping factor is not done enough. The self-reflection of the anthropologist is considered a method to develop additional research data. In 1980 Spradley claims that the anthropologist should learn how to use herself as a research instrument by reflecting on her own emotions and feelings in the field (Spradley 1980: 57). While Gerd Spittler (2014) only highlights the importance of sensual experiences, Tabea Häberlein (2014, 2014a), Thomas Stodulka (2014) and Philipp Schröder (2014) highlight the importance of emotional experiences in the field and expand the concept of thick participation to thick partaking, or in German *Dichte Teilhabe*. Again, while the concept of thick participation focuses on the anthropologist's sensual and physical experiences in the field, thick partaking stresses the researcher's personal and emotional involvement in the field.

In many situations anthropologists must give up their supposedly neutral position as participant observers and get more involved in social-relational issues (Häberlein 2014a: 131). Although Häberlein (2014a) and Stodulka (2014) write in detail about their involvements in the field during research, this is not common practice in anthropology. In fact, reflection on personal experiences and feelings is an exception in ethnographic texts. Additionally, the anthropologist's personal involvement, interactions, and individual engagements remain mostly unmentioned (Häberlein 2014: 118).

According to Häberlein there has been more transparency about personal engagements and involvements in the field (Häberlein 2014a: 133), which was partly an outcome of the Writing Culture Debate as well as the implementation of Action Anthropology (Häberlein 2014: 118). Reflecting about (one's own) emotions and involvements in the field can turn into an additional source of data. Data generated through interviews, observations, mapping, listing etc. is a relational communication and negotiation process between the anthropologist and the research participant(s). Emotions, from an epistemological point of view, are social means of communication between the anthropologist and her research participants that can be experienced and also verbalized. Therefore, emotions are crucial for understanding each other (Stodulka 2014: 182f). Experiencing and sharing emotions in a social setting like the field allows the anthropologist to receive thick insights into emotional and social negotiations and dynamics between her research participants and their environment (Stodulka 2014: 188). Sharing emotions also means that these emotions are not simply individual sentiments but social facts that are present for many people in the field (Stodulka 2014: 199). If analyzed as socio-cultural phenomena and epistemological categories, emotions can uncover things that would otherwise remain invisible and can also enable deeper understanding of social structures and interaction patterns (Stodulka 2014: 198). To include the anthropologist's own experiences and emotions is indeed a balancing act and the anthropologist is often criticized as acting as the auto-ethnographic and narcissistic main character of her study. Here, a lot of self-reflections is proposed to solve this problem, as well as scientific distancing achieved by examining and classifying emotions as epistemological socio-cultural phenomena (Stodulka 2014: 201).

In the present research the implemented participant observation also followed the last two approaches, thick participation and thick partaking. This was not intentionally the case from the start of the research but became obvious after the first attempts at participant observation. I conducted the main part of my participant observation during herbal walks

that were offered to interested people as educational walks about wild herbs in different parts of Cologne. The goal of these walks is to familiarize participants with different seasonal wild herbs in the green areas of Cologne. Part of the familiarizing process involves only contemplating wild herbs in their natural environment, but also recognizing and differentiating them from other herbs by sensual experiences. Participants are invited to smell, feel, pick, and taste the herbs. As I was also part of the group, I decided to share those experiences with the participants and became sensually engaged with the wild herbs and therefore with the field. The wild-herb experts frequently asked how the herbs feel or taste, what they look like, or what similarities and differences they have compared to other herbs. I often realized that my sensual impressions matched those of other people – that is, I was sharing impressions and experiences with my research participants. Although there was not always room for questions about feelings and emotions during these walks, since they were guided and filled with a lot of information by the expert, I observed behavior that was similar to mine. I most often recognized similarities when the stinging nettle was explained. People were happy, but also anxious about touching and eating it. Some picked a lot of nettles, while others rather refused to go near the plant. And I shared this hesitance and anxiousness with my research participants, as much as I shared the pride and happiness when I was brave enough to overcome these feelings and engage myself with the stinging nettle. This anxiousness was later mentioned in the interviews and informal talks (field notes 20.08.22; interview with *Wildkräuterentdeckerinnen* 29.08.22). What I also shared with many people – not only with participants but also with some of the experts – was the pain after gathering stinging nettles. This happened during herbal walks and was also mentioned in interviews. Once, a herbal expert even presented a plant to relieve the burning pain after gathering stinging nettles (ibid.). These examples show how feelings and practices carried out in the field by the anthropologist can actually reveal tangible aspects of encountering stinging nettles that would have remained unnoticed if I hadn't experienced them myself and compared my behavior and my feelings with those of other people in the field. These aspects will later take effect in the analysis of the research data and the discussion of my research results.

3.2. Semi-structured Interviews

A semi-structured interview is a specific form of interview which is often applied in qualitative research. In Anthropology, interviews and participant observation are regarded as complementary methods and are often applied together in the field, since the interview

generates data that would not be accessible by participant observation and vice-versa. The combination of ethnographic interviews and participant observation are the specific characteristics of ethnographic research (Schlehe 2020: 92) and are also applied in the present research. The goal of interviews is the same for participant observation: to understand research participants' perspectives, their daily experiences, local knowledge and cultural certainties; in short, the interview should give access to emic perspectives (Schlehe 2020: 93).

Interviews per se are a specific form of conversation. Even though they can be very similar to informal friendly conversations between a research participant and the researcher, which also occurs during fieldwork (Schlehe 2020: 96; Spradley 1979: 58), interviews have some peculiarities. In the field, the most crucial difference is the research participant's awareness that she is being interviewed for a specific purpose. Additionally, the interviewing researcher has more control over the whole conversation than the interviewed research participant, for the former seeks to capture the cultural knowledge of the latter (Spradley 1979: 59).

The most common interview type in anthropology is the semi-structured interview, but there are also others, like unstructured interviews, narrative interviews, biographic interviews, key-informant-interviews, structured interviews, group interviews and many more. Unlike in unstructured or narrative interviews, an interview guideline with the most important aspects and some key questions has been prepared in advance for the semi-structured interview. This guideline helps the interviewing researcher to structure the interview and guide her interviewed research participants through the interview. The formulated questions result from previous fieldwork and research literature. As opposed to a structured interview, where every interview question is prepared and there is no room for spontaneous questions, in the semi-structured interview the guideline is solely used as a means of orientation for the researcher. Here, she must remain open to other topics that arise during the conversation and spontaneously formulate new questions. The researcher has to remain flexible during the whole interview and react to new information in order to adjust the course of the interview (Schlehe 2020: 98). With the semi-structured interview, the anthropologist aims for an open and natural conversation that at the same time enables her to collect a lot of specific cultural information from her research participants. Presenting a guideline in this situation can be disturbing for interviewed research participants, but is still recommended to use one, especially for inexperienced anthropologists (Schlehe 2020: 99).

In a semi-structured interview, different kinds of questions are possible as ways of collecting information. The most commonly used questions are exploratory questions, descriptive questions, structural questions, census questions, and contrast questions (Spradley 1979: 60; Schlehe 2020: 105). To decide what kind of questions are asked depends inter alia on the interviewed research participant's cultural customs. Furthermore, it often easier to ask narrative questions and let the interviewed talk about her stories and experiences. Irrespective of the kind of question, anthropologists prefer open questions rather than leading questions (Schlehe 2020: 104). In every interview situation it is important to reassure the research participant by showing interest and attentiveness (Schlehe 2020: 105; Spradley 1979: 68).

Before I go on to talk a little more about the selection and the treatment of interview participants, I would like to mention that today the classic interview setting where the researcher sits in front of the interview participant can be prized open. Interviews may just as easily as well take place during a walk or a ride, or even through a digital device like a computer or a phone:

> "[Here] valuable question perspectives and conversational dynamics can develop, which, for example, refer to perceptions of space or objects or identify local resources, and the person being interviewed is guided into a reflective attitude towards themselves and the object." (Schlehe 2020: 96; [translated by the author]).

Interview participants can potentially all be "ordinary people with ordinary knowledge" (Spradley 1979: 25), but the anthropologist selects her interview participants according to relevance for the research question and in a way that they display heterogeneity and a holistic perspective on the research topic (Schlehe 2020: 103). That is why anthropologists often work with so-called key informants who are considered experts in specific cultural domains or particularities (Schlehe 2020: 100). If possible, interviews are conducted in the interview participants' language. When the anthropologist is not familiar with the language or the communicative skills, a translator is often consulted (Schlehe 2020: 103).

Reciprocity with interview participants, or generally with research participants, is an important matter. A fair return is often asked for the interview participants' expense. Schlehe suggests to agree on what is culturally and individually perceived as a fair return before the interview (Schlehe 2020: 104; see also Spradley 1979: 38). Despite giving a fair return, it is no less important to protect the rights, interests, and sensitivities of interview

participants via communicating research objectives and protecting the participants' privacy (Spradley 1979: 36f).

To use interviews as a source of data, they must be recorded in one way or another. If possible a digital record of the interview is the easiest way to recall it later. The digital record can be completed by notes taken before, during and after the interview. If a digital record is not possible or is unwanted, then the anthropologist must rely on the notes taken or even on her memory after the interview (Schlehe 2020: 106).

Finally, every non-standardized interview is new and original as it is shaped by its constellation, the relationship of the interviewing anthropologist with the interview participant(s), and the context of their encounter. The ethnographic interview is always a challenge for all involved parties, because people must engage with each other and balance the ambivalences of their encounter (Schlehe 2020: 91).

In my present research I applied interviews as one of two main research methods. The interviews conducted are of different kinds, with semi-structured interviews being the most frequently used format. As I did qualitative research, I tried to stick as little as possible to my interview guideline and add as many ad-hoc questions as possible. However, as a rather inexperienced anthropologist in the field, I also wanted to keep some control of the interview course and to be sure to recall the issues I am interested in. I created the guidelines according to previous observations in the field and some literature read beforehand. I designed two interview guidelines in total, one for interviews with wild-herb experts (Appendix 2) and another for municipal staff of the City of Cologne (Appendix 3). The decision to use two different guidelines came from previous informal conversations I had with municipal staff and experts, which showed that they are in fact quite different in their approaches and the issues they deal with, and that the questions for the one group were not suitable for the other. I conducted seven semi-structured interviews in total. Only one of them was a partner interview; the others were all individual interviews. Two of the individual interviews were conducted via online calls on the platform Zoom, the other six in person. The interviews generally followed an initial informal conversation on the phone or in person, where I declared my research objectives and explained how the project is embedded in further academic structures, and what I intend to do with the gathered interview material. In all seven semi-structured interviews, the interview participants were informed verbally and by a written consent form that I asked them to sign before beginning the interview. In this consent form, my interview participants were asked to choose how they would like to be addressed in the interview and

later in the analysis, either with their full name or with a pseudonym, or even anonymously. As Schlehe (ibid.) had predicted, every interview situation was different with each participant. There were interviews that felt like actual interviews, where I was able to ask almost all the questions I had noted down, but there were also interviews that deviated a lot from the guideline. All seven semi-structured interviews were recorded digitally with my smartphone, and later transcribed into text format. Moreover, I took notes before and after each interview. The interviews had different durations varying between 30 minutes and almost two hours.

Besides the seven semi-structured interviews I also did one unstructured interview during a longer walk and picnic with one of my research participants who is also a wild-herb expert. I conducted this interview without a prepared guideline and asked a lot of ad-hoc questions that were derived from the situation, mostly narrative and descriptive. This interview was partly recorded, and my research participant was aware of the interview situation. In this case, I only got verbal consent for recording, but this consent was also recorded. The walk and picnic took about four hours in total. During the workshops and educational walks on wild herbs that I participated in, I had a lot of short informal interviews with research participants of group 2. Although these people were aware of my presence and work as a researcher observing and asking questions, some people were probably not aware of the interview situation as they talked to me. The questions I asked were also mostly derived from and adjusted to the specific situation in which I engaged with these people. The duration of these interviews varied greatly, from only a minute to almost half an hour. They were not recorded digitally but I took notes during and after the interviews. I had many such informal interviews, among which I also count the first conversations I had with wild-herb experts and municipal staff members in person or via telephone. Since I was not able to openly declare my research objective and the use of the gathered data in interviews to each interview participant of group 2, I decided to anonymize all of them to avoid any harm.

3.3. Free Listing

Free listing as a method is part of the cultural domain analysis[4] (Robbins, Nolan 2000: 18) and is used to identify semantic domains (Brewer 2002: 108). The method is commonly

[4] A cultural domain is a set of items that people of a specific group see as somehow connected or related, for example medicinal plants, ice cream flavors, horror movies etc. This can be physical or observable things, or conceptual things like emotions or roles. Cultural Domain Analysis is a

used to “defin[e] the contents and boundaries of a cultural domain using the language, concepts, and categories that are meaningful to informants” (Gravlee 2005: 954) and to measure cultural and psychological importance, prominence, familiarity etc. Free listing can also be used to identify cognitive characteristics of research participants, which include the identification of their knowledge in the domain or their categorization patterns (Ryan et al. 2000: 83). Free lists are usually applied in the beginning of a research process, when researchers do not yet have detailed knowledge of the domain, since prior knowledge of the field is not required to use this method successfully (Brewer 2002: 109). However, H. Russel Bernard inserts that free listing only helps us to understand what goes together, while in order to know why these things go together, a detailed knowledge about the culture is required (Bernard 2018: 236).

Free listing is a special interview format that asks research participants to list all the items and aspects they know about a domain. Gravlee (2005) for example asked his research participants from Southeast Puerto Rico to list all the skin colours they knew, while Smith et al. (2007) asked their research participants to list all the features they thought a good person had. In these examples the domains were “colour” and “the good person” respectively, while the listed items were specific colours like “negro“ and “jabao“ (Gravlee 2005: 956), or features like “caring” and “reliable” (Smith et al. 2007: 340). Depending on the domain that is asked for, the term for the domain itself can either be part of the domain or not. Well-established domains sometimes don’t have names at all (Sutrop 2001: 264). Free listings can be limited in time. Smith et al. for example gave their research participants a total of 20 minutes to list all the relevant items they knew (Smith et al. 2007: 340). However, a time limit is not obligatory for free listings (Sutrop 2001: 264). Free lists can be either written down or orally listed, although the former is only possible if participants are literate (Sutrop 2001: 263).

Especially in ethnomedical and ethnobotanical studies, scientists frequently use successive free lists. The beginning is the same for successive and standard free lists, but in the successive free list potentially every item can be used as its own domain. Respondents are then asked to list all the items in this newly created domain. Ryan et al. exemplify this with a case study from Mexico, where respondents were asked to list all the home remedies

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methodology developed by the ethnosciences in the 1950s and 60s, which had the goal to understand cultural systems of classification, whether the actual taxa were physical/observable or conceptual. The aim was not to defame groups that had a different classification but to illuminate that there are different classifications. (Bernard 2018: 233)

they knew and then list all the illnesses one of the mentioned remedies could cure in another free list. They did this for most of the mentioned remedies (Ryan et al. 2000: 86).

When creating free lists, the research participant is asked to list words, notions, concepts, phrases etc. that she associates with a semantic domain. She lists these items independently and unconstrained, with no further specifications (Robbins, Nolan 2000: 18). It may be necessary for the researcher to communicate directly with her research participants, encouraging them to list as many items as possible and probing for more items (Bernard 2018: 235; Brewer 2002: 109). There are in fact some interview techniques the researcher can utilize for probing. The first technique is following up on someone until the research participant can't list anymore items (non-specific promoting). The second is reading back to the research participant what she has already said, which helps her to review the items already mentioned and to add other items to the list. Finally, the researcher can ask the research participant about other items that are similar to one already mentioned item (semantic cues) (Brewer 2002: 109ff). More knowledgeable informants usually provide longer lists (Bernard 2018: 237).

The free lists can be analyzed in different ways, but the parameters *frequency* and *rank* seem to be very popular among scientists. Frequency refers to how often an item was mentioned in one individual list and across all lists, while rank refers to the order in which, or more specifically at what position, an item was listed. When the aim of the list task is to only define the boundaries of a certain cultural or cognitive domain, then only the frequency parameter is needed. Before analyzing the lists via the frequency parameter, the researcher must determine the frequency boundary arbitrarily, for example excluding all items that are mentioned by only one research participant. Additionally, she must find a natural break or a grouping in the frequency (Sutrop 2001: 264f). When these conditions are met, the researcher can simply measure how often an item occurs in the lists. The items that occur most often are likely to be the most salient in the cultural domain. It also enables a researcher to make a statement about a research participant's knowledge of the cultural domain (Ryan et al. 2000: 84). Grammatical variations in lists can be summarized in one item and synonyms can be put together in categories. The categories allow researchers to include more items in the analysis. Regarding their own research, Smith et al. explain: "We wished to avoid underestimating the relative importance of synonymous concepts scattered across a given prototype, in comparison with their single-term counterparts in other languages. We therefore tallied close synonyms into the same category: for example, humble with modest; dependable with reliable; rational with reasonable" (Smith et al.

2007: 340).

If the aim of the free listing is to identify not only the boundaries of the cultural domain, but also the structures, the parameter rank needs to be included. There are two ways of calculating this: the Salience Index developed by Jerome Smith in 1993, and the Cognitive Salience Index developed by Sutrop in 2001. Although the equations of these two calculations are different, they both essentially aim to differentiate between basic and non-basic items, or more specifically more and less basic items (Sutrop 2001: 267)[5]. The (cognitive) salience index makes comparisons of individual lists very easy. It helps to structure the given cultural domain (Sutrop 2001: 274).

But there are also limits to free listing, such as respondents forgetting to list items they know, or when they don't understand that it is important to list as much items as possible and therefore do not list these items. It is also possible that informants know a lot more items but can't recall them in the specific situation of the free listing or only remember them afterwards (Brewer 2002: 108). Moreover, the standard free list is limited in the sense that it only relies on similarity and list organization. How respondents categorize the items and what rules they use to order the lists is left to the researcher to generalize (Ryan et al. 2000: 86). Therefore, the collected data of the lists should always be accompanied by other data evaluated differently, with other methods for instance (Brewer 2002: 117).

In my present research free listing was one of several methods used in the field and was supposed to be complementary to the semi-structured interviews I conducted. The purpose of the free lists was to get a glimpse of my research participants' cognitive concept of the stinging nettle, or in other words to define the cultural domain "stinging nettle". But in contrast to Ryan et al. (2000) I decided that a standard free list was sufficient for this purpose – although the successive free list seems more common in the realm of ethnobotanical studies – since it was just meant to support the semi-structured interviews and to get a first impression of the cognitive concepts. Therefore, I intended to put the free listings at the beginning of each semi-structured interview. In most interviews I conducted, my research participants created free lists, even though the implementation varied. For the interviews I conducted face to face with my research participants, I either asked my research participants during the preparatory meeting of the interview to write down the

[5] Further reading about the Salience Index and the Cognitive Salience Index:
Smith, J. Jerome. 1993: Using ANTHROPAC 3.5 and a Spreadsheet to Compute a Free List Salience Index. Cultural Anthropology Methods 5,3. pp.1-3.
Sutrop, Urmas 2001: List Task and a Cognitive Salience Index. Field Methods 13,3. 263-276.

lists or, when there was no preparatory meeting, I set this as a task for the very beginning of the semi-structured interview. Not all interviews were conducted face to face; I also conducted one online interview via the meeting platform Zoom, for which I asked my research participant to write down the list beforehand and send it to me before the interview appointment. There were only two interview situations where the free-listing method was not applied, mostly because of the interview circumstances. The interview with Lena was conducted spontaneously after an educational walk on wild herbs. I did not prepare appropriately for the interview or the free listing. For the interview with Fr. Mayer from the citizen project *Essbare Stadt Köln*, I also decided to skip free listing since the topic of the interview varied as it focused more on public initiatives and urban gardening projects, but not so much on the cultural domain "stinging nettle". Here, I did not see the need to let her create a free list about a domain she was not so familiar with, and which was not focused upon in the interview. Finally, both interviews were comparably short (they were each just about 30 minutes long) and it felt more reasonable to conduct the actual interview and skip what was only meant to be complementary.

The lists that were created (seven in total) before or during the face-to-face interviews were not classic lists in the sense that there were just words written down on one piece of paper, but rather each item was written down or depicted on a separate little card. I constrained the time for the listing to five minutes, but that was just meant as a means of orientation, and my research participants could have as much time as they needed. The task was always the same: "List all the items of the stinging nettle that you can think of". In contrast to the approach suggested by Bernard (2018) I decided to forego probing for more items after my research participants told me they had finished their list, as I intended to keep it short. But what I asked them to do afterwards was to classify the cards with the items in order of importance on a picture of the stinging nettle: the closer to the stalk of the depicted plant, the more important the item. In doing so, I basically asked my participants to rank their own items. This opened up another dimension in the ranking, because now it is not only possible to measure which items are most important to most research participants, but also to clearly recognize which items are most important for every individual research participant. The latter is needed to avoid any unnecessary speculation and to complement or rather to critically reflect on the frequency parameter that should determine what is considered important. This ranking additionally revealed parts of the cultural domain's structure. For more explanation I included questions about some items in the subsequent semi-structured interviews, which turned out to be helpful in

many cases, because behind most items there were broader cognitive concepts that invited further exploration and which extended the actual meaning of the questioned item. The table below presents the results from the free-listing method applied in my research. The items are summarized and ranked after the average importance and frequency of occurrence, with the first item being the most important and most frequent and the last item the least important and least frequently mentioned. Like the interviews, the lists were created in German.

Item	**Item (English translation)**	**Number of occurrences across all seven lists**
Power	power	5
widerstandsfähig	resistant	5
gesund	healthy	4
Superfood	superfood	4
Schönheit	beauty	4
Nahrung	food	4
Bedenken	demur	4
altes Wissen	old knowledge	4
grün	green	3
vielseitig	versatile	3
Samen	seeds	3
überall	everywhere	2
Erde	earth	2
Eisen	iron	2
Stolz	pride	2
Harnweg	urinary tracts	2
nützlich	useful	2
Frühjahrskur	spring detox	2
da sein	being there	2
kostenlos	free of charge	1

4. The Stinging Nettle

The stinging nettle is one of the many species that belong to the group of *Urticaceae*. These species have many similarities, but the biggest difference is their height – they range from 30cm to 3m (Mitich 1992: 1039). The botanic name of the stinging nettle is *urtica dioica*. *Urtica* is the Latin word for nettle, whereas *dioica* means dioecious, which is, after Ludwig Fischer, an artificially constructed word from the Greek word "oikos", which means house, and the syllable "di" which means two. The word highlights the fact that the plant has both male and female exemplars (Fischer 2017: 31). The stinging nettle has many more names. In Germany alone, more than one thousand lexical and phonetic variants and different names were listed in a census in 1939 to 1940 (Fischer 2017: 25). The stinging

nettle, also known as the great nettle, can reach a height of 1.5 m and grows best in moist areas next to streams (Mitich 1992: 1040) or on nitrogen-rich soils. Since humans produce a lot of nitrogen, especially in agriculture, stinging nettles can be easily found next to dung heaps, on meadows, or at the edges of fields (Fischer 2017: 12). Sometimes, stinging nettles grow on wastelands that have been abandoned by human beings (Fischer 2017: 13). The plant is comprised of a hairy stem and "opposite, long-oval, long-pointed, rounded, or heart-shaped at the base, coarsely but sharply teeth" (Mitich 1992: 1040) leaves that are also clothed in the characteristic little hairs. The 1mm-long hairs of the plant are a protection against predators. They contain a venomous fluid, similar to formic acid (the precise composition of the fluid is still unknown) and are located on the leaf or stem and are steeply erected. A hair consists of many smaller cells that are filled with the acid, and a little breaking point at the end of the hair. When a predator touches the stem or a leaf, the hair breaks and forms a sharp injection needle that stings into the predator's skin and releases the acid fluid, which then causes a burning feeling on the skin or even an allergic reaction (Fischer 2017: 33).

As the botanic name already suggests, the stinging nettle is a dioecious plant, with male and female specimens. They can be differentiated by their flowers and seeds. Both male and female plants have flowers, but the male flowers are upright on small branching shoots, while the female flowers hang down in dense clusters. The male flowers contain the pollen in small capsules that are under high pressure. When the male flower is mature, the capsules explode and shoot the pollen at tremendous speed (speeds up to half the speed of sound have been measured) to a neighboring female plant whose flowers catch the pollen. The explosion is one of the fastest movements in nature. The ovule is then fertilized, and the seed is produced on the female plant (Fischer 2017: 31).

Although the stinging nettle has a sophisticated protection strategy, it is a forage plant for many caterpillar and butterfly species. After Fischer, at least 36 different butterflies, moths and spiders rely on the stinging nettle. For some caterpillars, the stinging nettle is the only forage plant. Without it, they could not survive. It is unknown however, how they can avoid the stinging hairs and the release of the acid fluid when eating the plant (Fischer 2017: 34). But it is not only animals like caterpillars and butterflies that feed on the stinging nettle. Human beings have also included the stinging nettle to their diets and in other parts of their daily life. The whole plant can be eaten, and counts as one of the most nutritious plants in the Western Hemisphere. After Fischer (2017) the plant contains a high amount of iron (14mg per 100g) as well as other important minerals like magnesium,

calcium, potassium, sodium, phosphorus, and sulfur. Furthermore, the stinging nettle is rich in nitrates, silica, vitamin A, B, C, E and K, as well as glycosides and lectins. The most nutritious part, however, are the seeds, which include all the above listed minerals, a lot of vitamin A, C and E, linoleic acid (up to 30% of the seed) and several phytohormones (Fischer 2017: 98f). Because of all these ingredients, the stinging nettle is not simply considered as vegetable but can also be used as medicinal or cosmetic herb. Apart from that, the fibers of the stinging nettle can be used to make thread and cloth. For a long time, nettle cloth was as popular as linen or hemp. But because nettle fiber is comparatively difficult to extract, it has not caught on as a cloth plant, even though the fibers are more pliable and tear-resistant than many others (Fischer 2017: 37).

In sum, the stinging nettle has many different beneficial characteristics for humans. Some sources confirm that the stinging nettle has been used and praised for many centuries. The oldest find of processed nettle fibers was made in the Graviette Caves in Dolní Vestonice and is estimated to date back to 28,000 B.C. (Fischer 2017: 11). It is also handed down that the stinging nettle was already known in ancient times for some of her healing and stimulating properties (Fischer 2017: 9). Some sources also suggest that the Roman soldiers brought stinging nettle seeds with them to Britain and grew their own nettles, with which they could rub their limbs when they became stiff because of the extreme cold (Mitich 1991: 1040). In some religious traditions like Tibetan Buddhism the stinging nettle is still considered a sacred plant (Fischer 2017: 17).

Whereas the stinging nettle was considered a source of food, today it is especially referred to in terms of its the medicinal and healing properties. Prepared as tea or as tonic, the plant has diuretic, astringent, tonic, and anti-asthmatic effects and can be used to cure rheumatism, gout, and dropsy, and even promotes weight loss and hair growth (Luna 2001: 111).

Humans seem to have a long history with the stinging nettle, but while the stinging nettle has a lot of beneficial properties for human beings, the relationship has always been ambivalent: the plant was cursed, expelled, and despised, but at the same time revered, used and valued. Although the last major stocks disappeared with the agri-food industry, the stinging nettle has never fully disappeared, though a lot of knowledge about the plant seems to have been forgotten (Fischer 2017: 13). But as one of the most adaptable and resilient plants, it will probably never fully disappear. On the contrary, in recent decades, the stinging nettle has received more attention and respect again (Fischer 2017: 14).

5. Chaos and Contamination

Human existence for a great part is based on plants in different forms, for example as a source of food, for medicinal and cosmetical purposes or for textiles. Most plants that humans consume today have been cultivated over several decades or centuries in order to extract their most beneficial features according to human lifestyles. Cultivated plants make up over 2.1% of about 6,000 known species of the worldwide flora. This comparably small number of cultivated plants has a huge socio-economic impact (Schlosser 1991: 30). Although there are some species that have been alienated to a high degree by cultivation, the majority of all cultivated plants still resembles their "wild" relatives a lot. Most food plants, like wheat, rice, beans, and millet, that we consume today were cultivated in early times and haven't changed much over the centuries (Schlosser 1991: 31). However, some plants couldn't adapt to the frequent changes in human history (intensive agriculture, industrialization, globalization etc.) and have therefore been abandoned as foodstuffs or have completely declined (Schlosser 1991: 32f). While human nutrition today is largely secured with cultivated plants, wild herbs play only an insignificant role. Some wild herbs are still important for pharmaceutical production, but they seem to be disappearing more and more in general due to fertilizers and industrial agriculture (Schlosser 1991: 34, 51). This leads to a decrease in plant diversity as well as more severe biotope changes (Schlosser 1991: 51). The lack of cultivation is but one of many factors that have shaped the way we see and understand wild herbs. Our understanding today is not just influenced by merely functional and economic factors impacting wild herbs, but also by historical and emotional ideas about wild herbs, or more generally about wilderness. Therefore, I will discuss some perspectives on wilderness that are based on philosophical worldviews from different decades in human, and especially Western, history. I will link these perspectives directly with statements and observations from my field study. The goal of this chapter is to present current views and discourses in the City of Cologne about the role of and people's feelings towards wild herbs. At this point, it should be mentioned that I do not claim to present a complete discourse analysis of wild herbs and wilderness in a German city. Firstly, this would simply go beyond the scope of this work, and secondly my research is not focused on the current dominating discourses of wild herbs but rather on strategies to change these discourses and to include wild herbs more in our daily lives. Thus, the presentation of the current discourses shall describe the starting point or rather the current state of the wild herbs in our society. On the basis of this current state, I will

then explain strategies that try to change the current state and to create a new idea of what wild herbs can be in chapter 6.

5.1. Emotional and Cultural Ideas of Wilderness: How to Understand and Experience Wilderness

We constantly encounter notions like wilderness, wild animals, wild landscapes, wild herbs etc. for example in leisure activities, television documentaries, videos on social media like YouTube, or even in the supermarket when tents and other camping and survival gear are on sale. These are just some of the many examples when we encounter wilderness in our daily lives, and yet the question that remains to be asked is: what is wilderness, and how can we understand, represent and experience wilderness?

After Tim Ingold (2011), it has been claimed that nature (and wilderness, as a part of it), and culture are cognitive constructs. There exist various such constructs in the world, the Western nature-culture dualism being one of them, as well as different forms of wilderness. When looking at which places are called wilderness areas, it quickly becomes obvious that wilderness can look very different. There are in fact many different locations and natural environments that are considered as “wilderness”, ranging from alpine mountain wilderness to tropical forests and the Australian outback (Kangler 2018: 10). Wilderness can mean nature, in the sense of nature left as it is or untouched/uninfluenced by any human action. In reference to Aristotle, nature in this sense is understood as a timeless entity that exists on its own, in contrast to anything artificial. But wilderness can also, in an aesthetic sense, be perceived as landscape (Kangler 2009: 263). Landscape is the name for the aesthetic perception of some part of nature. In the moment of perception, nature becomes landscape, based on cultural and teleological knowledge. This subjective perception can propagate and become part of the public perception of this part of nature. Calling a landscape wilderness means attributing it some specific characteristics and cultural sense (Kangler 2009: 265). While wilderness is an abstract and emotional idea that is associated with different attributes and feelings, like uncontrollable, unpredictable, unknown, impenetrable, overwhelming, scary, sublime, native, free, or unspoiled (Kangler 2018: 10), there is always a spatial reference point outside of ourselves where people experience wilderness (Kangler 2018: 17f). How a concrete space is perceived is culturally differentiated, and underlies social change. Consequently, whether a particular space is considered wilderness or not is equally culturally dependent (Kangler 2018: 20). However, wilderness attributions are not arbitrary but happen for areas that have special characteristics. Therefore, Hass et al.

(2012) differentiate four different types of wildernesses: mountains, jungle, wild streams, and urban wasteland. In that sense, not only are the meanings of wilderness different, but also the location from where the notion gets its specific meaning: “Attributions of meaning are different for each region, even if the same facets of meaning can be found for different regions” (Kangler 2018: 15; [translated by the author]).

In recent discourses people tend to use one idea of wilderness as if everybody already shares the same idea, without giving attention to other existing ideas, which leads to misunderstandings. In fact, not everybody understands wilderness in the same way. For some, a space can be considered wilderness, while for others the same space has a whole different meaning (Kangler 2018:11). These culturally different meanings of wilderness are based on a specific history of ideas that influence people’s cultural worldviews today. Therefore, to understand wilderness, we must first consider how different ideas about wilderness historically emerged.

5.1.1. The Western Cultural Memory of Wilderness

What Gisela Kangler calls “unknown wilderness” derives from ideas about wilderness that were popular before the Enlightenment reformed the understanding of society (Kangler 2009: 269). In pre-modern, archaic societies wilderness is understood as an alien and chaotic space where foreigners, demons and ghosts live and therefore as the opposite of the space where humans live and society rules (Hass et al. 2012: 108). To protect society, the common sense prevailed that people must fight the aggressors (wild animals, demons, monsters etc.) that threatened them from the wild realm. So, a ritualized war against wilderness was initiated that stabilized the existing social order (Hass et al. 2012: 109). While a border between the outer wilderness and the inner society was built by tabooing aspects like violence, lust, or death, the desire to cross that border and experience what is forbidden was high. Therefore, an organized border-crossing was implemented. After the anthropologist Hans Duerr, such border-crossing helped to stabilize the social order: if people experience the hardships of wilderness, they will behave well in society (1985: 76). In the Middle Ages, this negative understanding of wilderness remained, while people explained it with a Christian background. When God left the Earth, the natural space outside the Christian society was populated by sinister and demonic entities. Wilderness thus became the opposite of a faithful life and an inner threat for Christian order. Making border-crossings into wilderness, like so-called witches did, was again demonized and fought against (Hass et al. 2012: 110). This understanding is based on the dualism of good

social and religious order and evil wilderness. However, wilderness outside the social and religious order also served as a refuge for outcasts or as adventurous space for brave knights.

In the early Enlightenment area, the understanding of wilderness shifted to a more positive one thanks to the emerging ontological and epistemological appreciations of material nature (Hass et al. 2012: 111). From a more religious perspective from this area, natural phenomena like mountains or waterfalls symbolized infinity and divine grandeur since the human mind is unable to completely understand the existence of such phenomena. Also, while observing wilderness, it was assumed that divine harmony, as exists in paradise, could become visible (Hass et al. 111f). Phillip and April Vannini attribute this understanding with the notion of "sublime wilderness". They explain:

> "'Sublime' refers to something that impresses the mind and body with grandeur and power, something that is awe-inspiring, and worthy of being venerated and elevated in language and all forms of expression. Wilderness the sublime is wilderness that is subject to effusive praise, contemplation, and adoration. Wilderness the sublime is overpowering, enlightening, stimulating, and larger than life itself." (Vannini, Vannini 2016: 36)

Advancing in history, new philosophical ideas like liberalism, democratic theory, romanticism, and conservatism emerged over the subsequent decades and centuries. The notion of wilderness also changed over the course of time. In liberalism, wilderness is understood as a chaotic and warlike state of natural disorder that is waiting to be appropriated and used for economic and social purposes by society (Vicenzotti 2011: 106). The not-yet-cultivated wild nature was the opposite of the state in liberal thinking, whereas what is considered as cultivated was very much subject to the European Christian worldview of those times. The urge to cultivate any wild realms was expanded outside Europe, which today is known as Colonization (Hass et al. 2012: 113). In a more democratic idea of the Enlightenment area, whose most popular representative might be Immanuel Kant, wilderness was still negatively connoted, but rather as the embodiment of dependence and lack of freedom (Vicenzotti 2011: 181). For great thinkers like Kant, wilderness represented compulsive instincts like lust, greed, and violence. To make use of the human reason, it is necessary to overcome these instincts. The observation of wilderness's grandeur, after this philosophical idea, enables people to recognize their "super-natural" power, namely human reason (Hass et al. 2012: 113).

With the critiques of the Enlightenment movement, wilderness received new

meanings. In Rousseau's tradition, imaginations emerged of a past golden age without religious and economic constraints, where people lived in virtuous and equal communities in harmony with nature, and wilderness was received as the symbol of this golden age. Encountering wilderness (especially in the form of vast pastures) is a means for going back to this golden age (Hass et al. 114). In the romantic area, wilderness had two rather contrary meanings. On the one hand, it was regarded as the symbol of the afterlife which is still unreachable for the living; but gazing into the distant wilderness allowed an imagined passage (Hass et al. 2012: 115). On the other hand, wilderness also represents the dangerously close human abysses, which are not so much fearful but rather eerily wonderful (ibid.) In the conservative way of thinking the eerily wonderful feeling was transferred into a more adventurous one, where people encountered bodily strength, power, and also their own limits, as well as the divine creative force that is located in wilderness. In that sense, for conservative thinkers, wilderness was also the starting point and condition for building a functional society (Hass et al.: 117).

5.1.2. Associations with War and Crisis

As already mentioned at the beginning of this section, the liberal understanding saw wilderness as a chaotic and warlike state of disorder. Indeed, war is an aspect that should also be taken into consideration when we talk about the cultural memory of wilderness, not only in Germany but also in other parts of the world. From the beginning of the 20th century, and even before, people in Europe suffered diverse wars. As recent research shows, wilderness always played a role in these times of crisis. While we might even call a battlefield a wild space where people encounter death, violence, and extremely chaotic situations, I would like to explain how ordinary people had daily engagements with wilderness in the form of wild herbs during such times of crisis. During my literature research I stumbled upon some studies that dealt with survival strategies during war times in Europe and neighboring regions. In the research for her doctoral thesis, Markéta Slavkovà (2019) discusses survival strategies in the Bosnian War from 1992-1995. The results of her research show that eating habits change in times of crisis due to hunger and scarcity. In such situations, plants, mushrooms and animals that are normally not considered as foodstuffs because of their bitter taste, their unpleasant consistency or even because they could be harmful to people's health become nutritional resources. During the Bosnian war, wild herbs like the stinging nettle were an important and nutritious food source, and gathering wild herbs was one of the most important survival strategies in many

parts of Bosnia (Slavkovà 2019: 301). The knowledge of how to process wild herbs and what to cook with them, after Slavkovà, was also a decisive survival factor during the war (ibid.). During her field research, she gathered a lot of recipes for dishes with diverse wild herbs. Stinging nettles for example were popular as a filling for savory cakes, as side dish or even as a drink (Slavkovà 2019: 303). While the Bosnian war is probably one of the most recent examples where people in Europe had to suffer severely from scarcity and hunger and used wild herbs as survival strategy, it is certainly not a new strategy. There are accounts that stinging nettles, for example, were used in different ways during both World Wars as a food source (ibid.) and as fibers for cloth production when flax and hemp were scarce (Luna 2001: 110). Even during my own research, many research participants mentioned the use of stinging nettles and other wild herbs during times of crisis for survival purposes. Mica for example told me about her grandmother, who experienced World War II and had to eat a lot of stinging nettles in order to survive. The direct cognitive connection of stinging nettles with the struggle to survive and the danger of starvation resulted in a highly negative association with the wild plant (interview with Mica 30.09.22). Diego also told me about an encounter with a person who had developed an allergy against stinging nettles. This person had also experienced hunger and food scarcity during war times and had to eat stinging nettles in order to survive, and therefore associated stinging nettles with the danger of starvation and other dangerous memories of that time (interview with Diego 18.08.22). Although World War II lies in the past and they hadn't experienced the starvation and the urgent need to eat wild herbs for survival, my interlocutors still told me about these shared associations, which influence our present society's image of wild herbs. Further, Diego once told me that he, too, was in a situation where he had to rely on wild herbs since he did not have enough money to buy food for a whole month. Wild herbs, he told me, were back then a reliable food source for him to survive (field notes 18.08.22). But other than associating wild herbs with crisis and scarcity, Diego told me he saw them in a rather positive way as representing the possibility to survive on his own: "In my journey of survival, as I told you today, at some point I learnt to see the problems as opportunities and to find something new, to find another way, to find a new beginning" (interview with Diego 18.08.22; [translated by the author]).

In the same way, Thewie recounted her growing interest in wild herbs as a means of survival in early childhood when she watched television shows where survival experts taught people how to survive in the wilderness, and her first experiences in Thailand with her parents and grandparents, where they often gathered wild herbs to complement dishes.

(interview with Thewie 03.10.22). In the interviews, both Thewie and Diego recounted rather positive experiences with wild herbs in relation to survival. Nevertheless, these two are individual experiences, while relying on wild herbs during World War II or during the Bosnian War are experiences that are shared by many people at the same time and have manifested themselves as part of the cultural memory, since many people were affected at the same time by exceptional hardship. In sum, shared associations of war, hunger, and scarcity with wild herbs today are still present in the minds of many people, although many haven't experienced such situations themselves, but share them in form of a cultural memory. Besides, there are other, rather individual experiences with wild herbs for survival purposes under different circumstances that promote a positive connotation. At this point however, I would like to note that not all experiences with wild herbs in the above-mentioned wars have been exclusively bad and that all experiences with wild herbs under circumstances other than war are always positive. Encounters with wild herbs had and still have diverse qualities and are either shared or individual. The encounters in times of particular hardship are just one example of such experiences.

5.1.3. Media Images of Wild Herbs

Complementary to the cultural memory, the perception of wilderness is further influenced by recent discourses about nature conversation, climate change and economic exploitation of resources for example. These discourses are for a large part led on various media platforms. Since media, especially online media, have gained a lot of importance in the last decades, their influence on the discourse of wilderness should not be underestimated. How media can influence our way of thinking about wilderness, and in this case especially about wild herbs, I will show using two examples from my own research.

While personal and collective experiences shape our relations with wild herbs, they are not the only influential factors. Thewie's enthusiasm for wild herbs, as she told me, was highly influenced by survival television shows and documentaries:

> "When I was little, I remember one of the first TV series was called 'On the Road with Malcom Douglas', and it was a guy who drove through the Australian outback with his jeep and his dog and a thousand pieces of equipment, nh, and then looked for his food there. He fished and pulled Witchetty Grubs out of his food and stuff. And uh I thought that was so cool and I always thought to myself, boah I'd like to spend a week in Australia in the outback. And that's where my love of the outdoors and survival came from. And then came Bear Grylls, Man vs. Wild and it was super hyped for a while. And then at some

> point one survival documentary after another came along and that kind of got me hooked. And then, of course, there was also talk of wild edibles and things like that: edible wild herbs, berries, fruit, whatever, mushrooms. And yes, then I just started to look into it." (interview with Thewie 03.10.22; [translated by the author])

The media, in her case television, highly influenced her perspective of wild herbs and she gained a lot of knowledge from these shows and documentaries. While Thewie seems to have been rather positively influenced, there are also many reports, articles, and documentaries that focus on dangerous and bad characteristics of wild herbs, as Mica explained during our interview. In her opinion, many journals, websites and social media pages try to generate the most attention and the highest number of clicks, which works best with bad or scandalous news. Therefore, people read more about the dangerous and bad characteristics of wild plants than about good and beneficial ones. Since daily journals and social media are the only information resources for many people, they adopt the media's opinion about wild herbs. There are also social media and internet pages, as well as journal articles and even whole books about the benefits of wild herbs, but these are rather niche resources:

> "It's not that nobody talks about it, but in order to get the positive things, you have to use media, books, websites, homepages that specialise in it, that have special knowledge and explain things comprehensively. In a normal medium, let's say, there is usually no room. And it's also perceived as more or less boring, unless the topic pops up and interests so many people that media professionals then think that something has to be done about it, because if we don't have that, then um it's kind of assumed that we didn't even notice it." (interview with Mica 30.09.22; [translated by the author])

The different narratives about and associations with wild herbs create an image of the wild plant that is controversial and ambivalent. These two examples show how different wild herbs can be received depending on how they are presented. Such presentations can either have a positive or negative influence, but in both examples, it should become clear how profound the influence can be.

There are probably more factors that influence the understanding of wild herbs today, some might be individual, others may be shared. However, as far as I can tell, in my research the ones presented here seem to be the most influential.

5.2. Urban Wilderness in the City of Cologne

Based on the cultural memory of wilderness and combined with other shared as well as individual understandings of wilderness, I will now describe how my research participants understand wilderness in the city of Cologne with the help of wild herbs. I will structure this section around four main aspects: hygienic issues, danger, chaos and feral culture.

5.2.1. Chaos

The dominant understanding of wilderness in archaic times encompassed chaos as one of main characteristics of a wild landscape (Kangler 2009: 269; Hass et al. 2012: 108). Like wild animals and demonic forces, chaos was equally fought against in these times. Until today, chaos is something many people struggle with and try to avoid. People perceive something as chaotic when it does not adopt to what is (individually) understood as social order. In wilderness, there seems to be no controlling power that regulates the space. Wild herbs, too, grow mostly uncontrolled. Indeed, they are called wild, since they, for the most part, can't be tamed and cultivated in their original form. As my research participants from group 1 told me, wild herbs just grow where they want.

> "Wild herbs can't really be cultivated, they grow wherever they want. That's why they are wild." (interview with *Wildkräuterentdeckerinnen* 29.08.22; [translated by the author])

> "Wild herbs are now something you can't grow. They actually just come." (interview with Thewie 03.10.22; [translated by the author])

To put it the other way, wild herbs are plants that have not been altered and included into monocultural systems by human agency. On the contrary, it seems that wild herbs have an agency on their own. My research participant Diego explained the agency of wild herbs not only as the choice of where to grow but also in the way the plants use humans for reproduction or protection purposes:

> "We humans think that we have everything under control and that's what we do to the plants, but the plants do the same to us. They also change to survive and sometimes change their substance. There are plants, for example, that have realised that if they have so many bitter substances, they won't be eaten by these creatures. The plants realise things like, if there is more sugar, then the monkeys or humans will come and eat more of it and I have more opportunities to reproduce. Then they produce more sugar." (interview with Diego 18.08.22; [translated by the author])

The lack of control, or chaos, is not always easy to endure, especially when the cultural memory tells people something else. From her own experience, Mica confirms how hard it can be to accept that wilderness and wild herbs are chaotic.

> "[…] but yes, anti-feeders do something, that the plant grows so chaotically and uncontrollably everywhere. Erm, many people have a problem with that per se. Chaos is a big issue in our society, hardly anyone can stand it." (interview with Mica 30.09.22; [translated by the author])

> "So, the most blatant personalities, whether they're biologists or conservationists, are people who need the feeling that they have something under control for themselves and their lives, for everything. They are, chaos ... fighters. [...] There are people who really can't stand chaos and they might join an environmental movement or form a guerrilla group against certain plants and set themselves the goal of eradicating them at all costs [...]." (interview with Mica 30.09.22; [translated by the author])

As she tells it in the second quote, wild-growing herbs in gardens, parks, and other locations are mostly pulled out and called weeds. As the *Wildkräuterexpertinnen* affirm, from the perspective of a gardener, these weeds are unpleasant guests in a patch as they repel cultivated plants.

> "Last year I had a field of fifty square metres and of course there were a lot of weeds, tares, whatever you want to call them. Of course, I also cleared it away, because in that case I wanted to have a yield of courgettes, tomatoes, carrots and I don't know what else. And I also plucked out the weeds, but even that can still be taken. [...] But if you leave it standing, it overgrows everything, then you don't get anything out of it and then I can understand that people will of course pull it out as soon as it takes something like that away from what you're planting." (interview with *Wildkräuterentdeckerinnen* 29.08.22; [translated by the author])

This behavior towards wild herbs seems to be something that more people share. During a participant observation in a wild-herb cooking workshop, I witnessed for example how a workshop participant aggressively pulled out plants that participants were supposed to gather for a meal. Later, I told my research participant and workshop teacher about this situation. She confirmed my observations and said that this person indeed had no respect for the wild herbs and treated them like weeds that should be erased from a cultivated space like a garden, rather than as little living beings (field notes 30.07.22).

All these examples from my fieldwork show how the battle against the chaotic

wilderness is still part of our present understanding of wilderness. The lack of control and the chaotic circumstances of the growth of wild herbs in almost any place can evoke fear. As mentioned above, wilderness always threatens society in its existence, since wilderness is the symbol of chaos. Until today, people fear that chaos can destroy their social order, even if it is just in the form of a small inconspicuous plant.

5.2.2. Contamination

After all the workshops I attended, all the interviews I conducted, and also after my own attempts to gather wild herbs in an urban space, I realized that not every wild-growing plant in any corner of the city is suitable for gathering. In fact, there are many rules and personal preferences that play a huge role in this activity. This became especially clear when I asked about the places in the city where my research participants of group 1 prefer to gather wild herbs. Other than expected, they told me that there are few places in the city of Cologne where they practice gathering safely. "Safely" in this case means without worrying about a possible contamination of the wild herbs. Contamination occurs in the context of Cologne in different forms. In a city, compared to more rural places, the population density is much higher. Consequently, with more people there is more traffic that releases exhaust gases into the air and pollutes nearby green spaces with tire wear. This is why nobody I encountered and accompanied for a gathering walk would ever choose wild herbs growing near much-frequented streets. When I was out on gathering tours during workshops, we always went away from streets deeper into parks, woods, or pastures. When talking to research participants from group 2, some mentioned that they try to avoid gathering wild herbs at the wayside, even if it is not directly next to much-frequented streets, because they are afraid that soils and plants could be contaminated. On the other hand, my research participant Lena from group 1 was less anxious about the contamination and intentionally showed us wild herbs at the wayside that seemed to be perfectly fine. After Lena, whether to gather wild herbs at the wayside or not is an individual choice (field notes 23.08.22). In Cologne, there exist also many urban wastelands and areas that were former industrial sites. Here, in many cases the soils are still polluted by toxins and other materials that these industries used. Especially on urban wastelands wild herbs are left to grow freely, since there is no current use for any social or economic purposes. The contamination of such soils has been confirmed by the city of Cologne in a project report from 2022. Although the project *Essbare Stadt*, in cooperation with the municipal administration, tries to decontaminate polluted areas, there are still

many that need a rehabilitation that is time- and cost-intensive (Sachstandsbericht Konzept Essbare Stadt 2022: 4). The risk of soil contamination in the urban area of Cologne is consequently quite high and fuels the fear of wild herbs being contaminated when growing in concerned areas. Therefore, some research participants from group 1, like Jana, even told me that they seldom gather in the city but head out into the more rural surrounding regions of Cologne: “I have two places in the Eifel where I love to go, which I then combine with a day trip with the children […]” (interview with Jana 17.10.22; [translated by the author]). Judith also told me that she wouldn’t eat most of the plants gathered in the city and would rather consume wild herbs that have been grown in more rural areas (interview with Judith 08.09.22). Besides car exhaust gases and tire wear, Jana for example is also concerned about the influence of greenhouse emissions from planes as well as electromagnetic emissions (interview with Jana 17.10.22). But air and soil pollution are by far not the only concerns when it comes to wild herbs.

In a crowded city like Cologne, many people keep dogs as pets and generally take their dogs for a walk in the green spaces of the city. In these spaces, dog excreta become a problem for urban gatherers. On waysides, in park meadows and in woods, especially dog urine is a problem. Ammonia in the urine damages plants in such a way that they are no longer consumable for humans. On a walk with my research participant Diego, we walked by some stinging nettles that seemed to be burned. While I wondered if these burns came from the summer heat, Diego explained that these actually came from a contamination through dog urine.

> Me [interviewer/researcher]: Look, there’s stinging nettle here now, isn't there? This is stinging nettle here, but it's really withered.
>
> D [research participant Diego]: Right, and look [shows brown leaves of the stinging nettle]: You wouldn’t collect things like that. It doesn’t look good and it’s down on the ground. A dog might have peed here. You can sometimes see if a dog has peed there if things look like that, a bit burnt.
>
> Me: Ahh okay, when they turn brown like that.
>
> D: Exactly, like when they're burnt like that. It’s from the ammonia and the pee.
>
> Me: Does that etch it away?
>
> D: Etch?
>
> Me: Like when you get acid on your body.

D: Exactly, exactly.

Me: You wouldn't collect that under any circumstances.

D: Exactly, that's why I don't collect here. [...] (interview with Diego 18.08.22; [translated by the author])

Many of my research participants mentioned fearing the contamination by dog excreta in the city. However, not all plants are equally affected. While smaller plants have a higher risk of getting contaminated as they are closer to the ground and dogs can simply step over them, other plants like the stinging nettle, which can grow higher than most dogs, are still at risk, but if the plant reaches a certain height that dogs can't reach anymore, it is still possible to gather from these plants, even if the lower leaves are actually burned. As Jana told me in the interview, she, too, has no problem by gathering from a plant that has been contaminated as long as the plant is high enough and the leaves on the upper part don't show any signs of contamination (interview with Jana 17.10.22) Other research participants like the *Wildkräuterentdeckerinnen* told me that the locations of places where dogs are forbidden are shared as insider tips between wild herb experts (interview with *Wildkräuterentdeckerinnen* 29.08.22). But it is not only dog urine that contaminates green spaces and wild plants. Humans seem to be equally contaminating. It is not just their pets' excreta that pose a risk. Parks and woods are often used as toilets and dumps. This is also a factor in the contamination of wild herbs that should not be ignored. In the case of the stinging nettle though, this sort of contamination does not have only negative effects, but may at the same time enable a better growth for the plant. Since excreta, waste, and other substances that humans and animals produce contain a lot of nitrogen, stinging nettles often follow human and animal traces. Nitrogen is an important substance for stinging nettles. Therefore, the more human and animal activities happen in one place, the more stinging nettles will probably appear, as they live on the produced nitrogen. Thus stinging nettles are also called *Kulturfolger,* or "nitrogen junkies":

"[…] and there are also many plants that follow humans. Wherever we are, there is naturally a lot of nitrogen in the soil, and they follow us there. [...] Yes, the [stinging nettle] is like the dead nettle, it particularly likes nitrogen-rich soil. Where we are, there's always a lot of rubbish, a lot of dirt, a lot of, um, pee and poo from dogs or ourselves in the past, when there were piles of manure and slurry and things like that, and of course it loves that." (interview with Judith 08.09.22; [translated by the author])

These examples illustrate that contamination in the specific context of wild herbs in an urban environment has different meanings and that the fear of contamination is experienced in different ways through different factors. Referring to Kangler (2018: 10), as wilderness is an individual emotional experience, contamination, too, can be understood as an individual experience made in a specific location and with a cultural memory directing the valuation of the experience. As exemplified, in most cases the experience of contamination is understood as a negative aspect of wilderness. In many cases it is not easy to determine whether a plant is contaminated or not. While urine leaves traces on the plants, other toxic substances in the soil or air are not visible for humans. Not knowing what sort of substances a wild plant could possibly be exposed to is a lack of control over the plant that people indeed fear, especially when the plant is meant to be consumed (Lupton 1996: 89). As pollution in an urban context is comparably high, the fear of consuming something that might be contaminated and unhealthy is consequently high.

5.2.3. Danger

Considering wild plants as unhealthy because people can't control what toxic or dirty substances the plant has been exposed to is one reason why wild plants are viewed as dangerous, but certainly not the only one. It is true that not every wild plant that grows on the wayside is edible. There are indeed a bunch of toxic plants which grow in Cologne and must be reported to the municipal authorities, which then remove them. One of the most infamous toxic plants is the giant hogweed. Giant hogweed has phototoxic characteristics which means that the plant's sap can cause burning on human skin when it is exposed to light. This generally happens when the plant is cut or parts of it are pulled out. Moreover, people who struggle with allergies can have respiratory problems when they come in contact with giant hogweed (field notes 30.07.22; interview with *Wildkräuterentdeckerinnen* 29.08.22). What makes giant hogweed even more dangerous is its similarity to another – non-toxic and healthy – plant, the common hogweed. The most obvious difference is their height. While giant hogweed can reach a height of 4m, common hogweed is much smaller. However, in an early stage of growth, both plants are difficult to distinguish (field notes 30.07.22). After the *Wildkräuterentdeckerinnen*, people fear becoming injured by giant hogweed so much that there have been formed whole movements to eliminate the plant. The same goes for plants that are toxic for animals (interview with *Wildkräuterentdeckerinnen* 29.08.22). Besides plants, mushrooms are also

feared by many people. The *Wildkräuterentdeckerinnen* also told me about encounters with people who tried to eliminate mushrooms since they believed they were toxic:

> "[…] when I trained as a mushroom coach, there were a lot of teachers in this group and they said they were doing it because they wanted to know more about it, because they had often experienced children's parents saying: 'Uh, that's a mushroom, don't go near it, it's probably poisonous', and they trample it to death, so they just flatten everything. And yet a mushroom is ... of course there are poisonous mushrooms, but they are not contact poisonous." (interview with *Wildkräuterentdeckerinnen* 29.08.22; [translated by the author])

It is not only toxic or contaminated plants that are feared, but so are plants that have developed effective protection against predators, like the stinging nettle. When someone tries to pick a stinging nettle, it is highly probable that touching the plant results in a burning and stinging feeling on the skin. As I have already described in chapter 4, the stinging nettle has little hairs all over the leaves and stem that break when one touches the plant and release an acid that reacts with the skin. The breaking point of each hair serves as a small injection needle (Fischer 2017: 33). This burning can be experienced as injury, and the pain can cause traumatic memories that influence how the plant is perceived in the future. My research participant Jana, for example, told me about a situation in her childhood when she and two other people got lost on a walk and had to cross a field full of high stinging nettles to get back to their car. After this experience, she told me, she distanced herself from stinging nettles for a while (interview with Jana 17.10.22). Also, during my participant observation at workshops, I often encountered how people hesitated to pick stinging nettles with their bare hands, me included. Like for other people, it was hard to overcome my fear of touching a stinging nettle and risking a burning. In my field journal, I wrote the following observations:

> "I have reservations about stinging nettles – a little less so after I've made the pesto. My fingers still burn, despite wearing two layers of gloves. The first time I felt the stinging when collecting it, I flinched and immediately lost interest. I then used scissors instead of my hands, but I burnt myself there too." (field notes 30.07.22; [translated by the author])

> "Some are sceptical at first, but then everyone joins in with the picking. Some hold back at first (including me), but then become more courageous. [...] I have rarely seen such potent nettles. This experience [of picking] means we will never mix them up again, says D. [...]

In fact, after a while everyone's fingers do burn, some more, some less. I still find it unpleasant." (field notes 20.08.22; [translated by the author])

How the burning feeling on the skin is perceived seems to be just as individual an experience as contamination. Some experience the burning as intolerable pain, while others don't mind the stinging feeling. Some are even thankful for the feeling, as I learned in interviews. One of the *Wildkräuterentdeckerinnen* told me that touching the stinging nettle does not hurt her, but she associates the feeling with positive emotions:

> "I really like it. I always try to touch it the right way, even if it doesn't work, I think it revitalises me. They also say that it's good for rheumatism and so on, so I'm always happy when I touch it the wrong way." (interview with *Wildkräuterentdeckerinnen* 29.08.22; [translated by the author]).

Jana, too, mentioned that the stinging feeling is something positive in her opinion and that she often gathers stinging nettles with bare hands: "[...] but there were also many years when I always deliberately harvested without gloves because it was so important to me to really be in contact with the plant and also to feel its reaction." (interview with Jana 17.10.22; [translated by the author])

What stands out in this analysis is that the fear of dangerous plants is mainly based on ignorance. Like the *Wildkräuterexpertinnen* told me about mushrooms and the hogweed, many people fear them because they don't know how to handle wild plants. Since most wild plants and mushrooms are only dangerous or toxic when they are consumed, keeping distance would be enough to avoid any risk (interview with *Wildkräuterentdeckerinnen* 29.08.22). Additionally, not knowing how to distinguish the toxic plants from the non-dangerous ones is also a problem which forces people to completely distance themselves from all wild herbs or, at the other extreme, to eliminate everything they don't know or that could be potentially dangerous. Therefore, ignorance also plays a role in the perception and understanding of wild herbs. Referring to the stinging nettle's hairs, Jana shared the following observation:

> "[…] the same pain from a stinging nettle can perhaps be traumatically painful for a child and be quite terrible, because this connection simply does not yet exist or the knowledge about it does not yet exist, and for someone else it can mean something special, because it somehow brings the qualities of the stinging nettle closer to you or the powers of the stinging nettle." (interview with Jana 17.10.22; [translated by the author])

The horrible and painful experience due to a lack of knowledge matches Kangler's description of the unknown wilderness as alien and dangerous space that people fear and fight (Kangler 2009: 269). Wilderness is unknown because people keep their distance and rather fight wilderness instead of trying to understand and encounter it. This is not just a phenomenon that occurred in pre-modern times but is still relevant today. While much of the knowledge people collected over time about wild herbs has been forgotten and partially lost, there circulated a lot of misinformation about wild herbs in our society which often paints wild herbs, as representation of wilderness, in an even poorer light. My research participants *Wildkräuterentdeckerinnen* compare the process of misinformation with the game Chinese Whispers:

> U[*Wildkräuterentdeckerin 1*]: Yes, and the knowledge has also been lost and is now just being rediscovered. And in the past, the knowledge wasn't written down at all. [...] And it was passed on from generation to generation to women, rarely to men.
>
> S[*Wildkräuterentdeckerin 2*]: But not in writing.
>
> U: Not in writing. It was only passed down orally and now everything is written down and I think you can see that there's a lot of traditional rubbish in a lot of books or on the internet where you just have to look, so you have to be critical. Not everything is always true. It's a bit like Chinese whispers, the game, because one person tells another something, then they pass it on and what arrives is not what the first person said. So you have to be a bit critical and also know where you ... which source you use. (interview with *Wildkräuterentdeckerinnen* 29.08.22; [translated by the author])

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that ignorance and the wrong information fuel the understanding of wild herbs, or rather wilderness, as dangerous for human existence, as wild herbs could be toxic and contaminated and therefore cause death in the worst case. Death, as an integral part of wilderness (Hass et al. 2012: 109), endangers human existence and is therefore feared.

5.2.4. Feral Culture

In a city like Cologne, not every place is occupied and used for social and economic purposes. When walking through the city, people frequently come across places that are deserted. These places are called urban wastelands. Urban wastelands are temporary islands that are in between past and future uses, but at present they are just there without purpose (Hass et al. 2012: 130f). Filled with weeds, ruins, and waste, these abandoned

places are associated with social and economic relegation, with periphery, and lack of meaning – feral and empty spots in a culturally flourishing city. While these places are considered feral, they are not, in a traditional sense, wild. The definition of wilderness in our cultural memory hardly applies to urban wastelands, particularly because wilderness and society are understood as separately existing entities. That wilderness can occur in the midst of a social structure like a city has not been taken into account yet. However, wild places that have not been affected by any human and cultural activity become more and more rare, as humans also tend to access the most remote areas, leading to the disappearance of wilderness on this earth. Wilderness in that sense does not exist anymore for many of my research participants, for example Mica:

> “We no longer have wilderness per se. Humans have actually utilized the whole world – apart from a few spots where it is perhaps different – in such a way that we can no longer speak of wilderness […].” (interview with Mica 30.09.22 [translated by the author])

While the traditional understanding of wilderness is going to disappear with the last wild areas, maybe a new understanding must be developed and new places, like urban wastelands, must be included in the definition of wilderness. Urban wastelands are understood as uncultivated and dangerous space, where social order and control is nonexistent (Hass et al. 2012: 131f), which has also been and is still considered a characteristic of wilderness, though of wilderness that exists outside of our society. The lack of culture (in the sense of human activity) however does not imply that there has never been any human activity in this place. The understanding of wilderness that my research participants explained to me refers to this aspect. Mica for example said that wilderness today is where people leave formerly cultivated sites to themselves and let nature reappropriate the space:

> “[…] where man leaves the plants alone, whether it’s a forest that is no longer cultivated or a meadow that is no longer mowed, I would say that for me it is ... um, yes, a kind of wilderness. Not the classic wilderness, that has grown here since time immemorial, but people leave areas alone and simply allow wilderness to grow, to be wilderness.”(interview with Mica 30.09.22; [translated by the author])

Thewie, too, has similar ideas of what we could call wilderness today: “Of course there are forests nowadays that have been planted by humans, but nonetheless, what grows and thrives there ... you let it grow. And then it comes more or less by itself […]” (interview with Thewie 03.10.22; [translated by the autor]). Thewie and Mica, as well as

other research participants I spoke with, would consider their gardens, where wild herbs can grow as they like, as wilderness, even if this wilderness is part of their social and cultural life (interview with Thewie 03.10.22; interview with Mica 30.09.22). Letting something grow as it comes, in its original form, and without any help of fertilizers and pesticides, or even artificial cultivation of plants, are aspects that make plants wild (interview with Lena 23.08.22; interview with Judith 08.09.22). Mica also acknowledges that wild plants in general have some abilities and special tasks in nature that most cultivated plants lack. Cultivated plants might look nice or taste sweet but many other entities like bees, beetles, and birds often can't do anything with these kinds of plants (interview with Mica 30.09.22). To be useful to non-human beings, too, is a quality that applies to plants that are considered as wild.

In sum, our understanding of wilderness is changing as our environment is equally changing. The native and unaffected wilderness, as it was understood for centuries, is disappearing, and we are dealing with new ideas about wilderness as well as new reference landscapes. Wilderness today is no longer unaffected – traces of human activity can be found in wilderness, and past human activity becomes a condition of the emergence of wilderness: a formerly cultivated space that has become feral and, in the future, might be cultivated again. Wilderness in the city is seen as a space in between social and economic activities in two senses: it is located amidst a cultural space, without being affected by the cultural activities in the present and finds itself in-between a past and possible future use. The in-betweenness might replace the strict separation of wilderness and society. And as the location and understanding of wilderness changes, so will and must change the valuation of wilderness. In chapter 6 part, I will show how people in the city of Cologne create new emotional understandings of wilderness, or more precisely of wild herbs as one possible materialization of wilderness, as people encounter and entangle in wilderness in in-between spaces.

6. Rethinking the Environment

After having seen how wilderness in the city is currently understood, it becomes clear that the relationship between citizens and wild herbs is marked by danger, contamination, and chaos. These aspects lead to a rather negative and distanced relationship with wilderness in the city, as wilderness is understood as a threat to human life. However, wilderness, in the form of wild herbs, is never far from where people live – even in the city wild spaces are

frequently encountered. In current discourses about human-environment relationships, the dualism between nature and culture, which leads to a strict separation between humans and plants like wild herbs, is in question. More and more scientists aim to create a new understanding of human-environment relationships where this dualism is dissolved. The trend leads to a more interdependent and equal understanding of existing entities, human and non-human. For some people, like Mesuline Martin (2018), overcoming the dualism of nature and culture and to acknowledge natural-cultural entanglements is a key condition for encountering the challenges of climate change. After Martin (2018), in order to lead a more sustainable life, it is necessary to integrate nature, for example in the form of wild herbs, into daily life. Wild herbs can not only improve peoples' diets and health and guarantee food security during times of shortage, but can also have a deeper impact to profoundly change human-environment-relationships.

What Martin claims is indeed not unrealistic. During my research, I also have experienced myself how my relationship with nature and wilderness in the city can change when encountering wild herbs in different urban spaces. On the surface, changing one's relationship with nature might seem nothing special in the sense that the awareness of human dependence on nature has risen exponentially in the last decades. However, having this awareness, on the surface, might not seem enough considering that it has not been sufficient to stop many developments which will have severe consequences for the near future of our planet. But what I encountered during my research and what many of my research participants propagate is a more profound change, not only in human relationships with nature but also in our relationships with each other and with ourselves. In the end, encountering wild herbs is also encountering ourselves anew. Some of the most striking aspects that have been changed or must change, according to my research participants as well as other scientists, I will discuss in this chapter.

6.1. Gathering Local Superfoods

Food security is a concern of many millions of people worldwide. Especially people in economically poorer countries tend to suffer from insufficient food resources (Bharucha, Pretty 2010: 2916; Garekae, Shackleton 2020: 2). Today, food security depends on a handful of cultivated plant species, like maize, rice, and wheat, which generally grow in large monocultures and create monotonous diets. In times of climate change and unforeseeable environmental crises, monocultural systems and diets depending only on a few cultivated plant species make people more vulnerable to food stress and shortages. In

many poorer and/or non-industrialized societies, foraging wild foods is common practice. After Garekae and Shackleton, about one billion people worldwide forage wild foods to avoid food insecurity and malnutrition (2020: 2). Industrialized societies, especially in the Global North, struggle less with food shortages and insecure supplies, and more with unhealthy, unnourishing, highly processed foods. Historically seen, diets changed as people's lifestyles were adapted to social and economic developments like the Industrial Revolution, which not only changed daily routines but also created new forms of industrial food production. These developments resulted in the consumption of highly processed edible food-like substances that are purchased in supermarkets (Martin 2018: 151). Purchasing and consuming highly processed food-like substances can be understood as an alienation of food, since the preparation process when making one's own food is thereby rendered almost obsolete. Additionally, the consumption of highly processed foods is considered unhealthy, while natural and raw foods represent healthy alternatives: In many cases "[t]he privileging of nature is a highly embodied and emotional position, in which the 'alienated' experience of the consumer in eating highly processed food is highlighted and contrasted unfavorably with the experience of eating 'natural' foods" (Lupton 1996: 87). The discourse connects processed foods with culture and urban living, while unprocessed foods are associated with rurality and naturality. Since nature is symbolically and emotionally associated with concepts of purity and goodness, natural foods are directly connected to a nostalgic discourse around health and a wholesome life (Lupton 1996: 86; Martin 2018: 158). Besides all the debates about dangerous unhealthy foods, there is today a big promotion of so-called functional foods that contain a lot of nutrients and other beneficial components. Such functional foods are associated with specific medico-physiological claims. In recent years a rich market of functional foods has emerged (Lupton 1996: 80). A subset of functional foods are the so-called superfoods. These special functional foods have gained a worldwide attention in recent years and entered the nutrition industry. Although one encounters the term every day in different contexts, there is no universally valid definition of it (EUFIC, 2012[6]). The Oxford Dictionary defines a superfood as "a food considered especially nutritious or otherwise beneficial to health and well-being" (OED, 2023[7]), while the Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines it as "a food

[6] European Food Information Council – EUFIC (2012): What Are Superfoods and Are They Really Super? EUFIC, Brüssel, https://www.eufic.org/en/healthy-living/article/the-science-behind-superfoods-are-they-really-super/ [Accessed 25 April 2023]

[7]"super-, prefix." OED Online, Oxford University Press, March 2023, www.oed.com/view/Entry/194186. [Accessed 25 April 2023]

(such as salmon, broccoli, or blueberries) that is rich in compounds (such as antioxidants, fiber, or fatty acids) considered beneficial to a person's health" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2023[8]) – to name just two examples.

Despite two thirds of my research participants mentioning "superfood" in the free lists and showing that they were familiar with the term, the majority struggled to define it and gave rather vague, though similar, descriptions:

> "Exactly, good ingredients, lots of uh uh nutrients that are good for the body, uh good for your health, that you can ..." (interview with *Wildkräuterentdeckerinnen* 29.08.22; [translated by the author])

> "Well, in any case, they have lots of ingredients, lots of minerals and so on, lots of vitamins and maybe a few rarer things too. There are some that contain gold and things like that. Trace elements that you need. And they're called superfoods." (interview with Judith 08.09.22; [translated by the author])

> "I think wild herbs are a superfood, if only because of the ingredients they contain. You can no longer find that in supermarket vegetables. Bitter substances have now been completely bred out." (interview with Thewie 03.10.22; [translated by the author])

> "Superfood simply means that, like a dietary supplement, it represents a mega health benefit." (interview with Mica 30.09.22; [translated by the author])

> "For me, superfood means a food source with the highest possible density of sensational ingredients for the body." (interview with Jana 17.10.22; [translated by the author])

In all five exemplary definitions superfood is understood as anything edible that contains a lot of important nutrients that the human body needs for good health. However, almost all my research participants of group 1 acknowledged that the term superfood is primarily a marketing strategy of the nutrition and health industry for certain, generally imported, and expensively sold foodstuffs that promise medico-physiological benefits for human well-being. Judith and Mica both explained that the term is used to sell expensive products imported from all over the world, like Manuka honey, chia seeds, or flea seeds. Behind this term hides an economic sales strategy rather than a promise about health benefits (interview with Mica 30.09.22, interview with Judith 08.09.22). Others, like Jana, were less critical about the term in their explanations (interview with Jana 17.10.22).

While my research participants have more or less the same definition of superfood,

[8] "Superfood." *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, Merriam-Webster, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/superfood. [Accessed 25 Apr. 2023]

they disagree on whether wild herbs should also be included under the term *superfood*. Many wild herbs I have encountered during my research process, contain lots of nutrients, like bitters, micronutrients and vitamins, that are missing in many foods today. My research participants especially emphasized that the stinging nettle is rich in almost all substances essential to the human body. From this definitional point of view, the stinging nettle can be considered as a superfood: “There are simply an incredible number of trace elements and vitamins contained in stinging nettle and this combination of this high density of trace elements and vitamins is what makes stinging nettle such a fantastic superfood” (interview with Jana 17.10.22; [translated by the author]).

However, some of my research participants do not agree on labeling the stinging nettle and wild herbs in general as superfoods. For them, there is a crucial difference between superfoods and wild herbs. In their opinion, the economic and marketing aspect of superfoods is more important in the definition of what should be called superfoods than the nutrient aspect. What are called superfoods today are mostly imported goods that are produced in regions far away and have to travel a long way to local German supermarkets. After being imported these products are sold at a high price.

> “The term *superfood* is a marketing term for products that are labeled as such but come from all over the world. It was created so that people would buy these products. And that doesn’t include wild herbs at all. So, psyllium or chia seeds, you can’t collect them here in nature. They have to be flown here by plane and there are clearly marketing and economic considerations behind it.” (interview with Mica 30.09.22; [translated by the author])

Wild herbs instead are local plants that can be found in many places and can be harvested and processed at home, while they contain the same or even higher amounts of nutrients. As wild herbs are more accessible and do not require a monetary exchange value, since they can be gathered by anybody, they are indeed different to what is sold as superfood.

Despite being critical about the term, many of my research participants of group 1 make use of it. They however explained that their aspirations are not of economic nature, but educational. As already mentioned, the term *superfood* has become popular in mainstream and everyday language. Many people associate health, wellbeing, and other things with this term. Herbal experts use these associations, as Thewie says, to trigger something in people and to get their attention for wild herbs (interview with Thewie 03.10.22). The hope is to arouse interest in the nutritional diversity of wild herbs among

more people by using a term which is already popular and emotionally charged (interview with Mica 30.09.22 p. 4). The overall goal is to sensitize people to the nutritional benefits of wild herbs like the stinging nettle and to present alternative, cheaper and healthier local superfoods and at the same time raise critical awareness that the promises of any promoted superfood from overseas are kept: "The wild herb people try to take the term and say: 'People, all well and good, but we have this here in our nature and you don't need to pay for it at all.'" (interview with Mica 30.09.22 [translated by the author]). For lack of a better term than *superfood*, this continues to be used by many wild herb experts, however critically embedded in the local context.

As Garekae and Shackleton (2020) for example show, wild herbs can indeed contribute to the diversification of diets and help to prevent or cure illnesses caused by the lack of important nutrients. The integration of wild herbs into diets as complementary and super-foods, however, is not a rational decision as a direct answer to malnourishment or food insecurity. Food is a relational category that occurs through the interaction of human and more-than-human actors in a specific social, cultural, economic, spatial and time setting (Nyman 2019: 171). Therefore, "there is no guarantee its edible plants will come to be understood and used for food. Food scarcity and abundance are not mere descriptions of material reality but entanglements of emergent social relations between people and things, in time and space" (Claassen, 2009: 471). Especially wild plants, which do not emerge from established networks of food production, are not predetermined to be "food". Understanding wild herbs as nutrient-rich and healthy and framing them with the emotionally and culturally charged term *superfood* suggests that wild herbs, too, can be considered "food". Ascribing "superfood" status to a plant like the stinging nettle, which is understood as weed rather than edible plant, adds a new cultural and emotional meaning to it. As Nyman explains, food is "becoming". It is a negotiation of human and more-than-human entanglements, with food itself being an entangled actor with a certain power (Nyman 2019: 173).

At the same time, it should be noted that food does not equal superfood and that most foragers understand wild herbs not as a primary food source, but rather as a complementary one (Garekae, Shackleton 2020: 13). Regarding the different conceptions of wild herbs as the representation of wilderness, superfoods in the form of wild herbs can be understood as some form of border-crossing between the wild, foreign and dangerous, and the familiar, safe and moral realm inhabited by human beings. The difference between wild herbs and food is the cultural value that has been attributed to something edible via an

ontological transformation process (Martin 2018: 156). While food is nature made culturally available for human beings by agriculture, wild herbs do not quite fit into the category of food, even if they are consumed. The fact that they are not cultivated but consumable, and furthermore often beneficial for human health, leads people to question the dominant conception of what is food and consequently to rethink the deeply entrenched dualism of nature and culture in Western ontologies (Martin 2018: 155). To designate wild herbs as superfoods, but not food, enables people to engage with wilderness but to keep their distance at the same time. Humans who are familiar with the abstract, industrialized, and commercialized lifestyles of the Global North have the opportunity to slowly familiarize themselves again with their natural environment and the spaces considered as wilderness. Describing wild herbs as superfoods is therefore a slower process of becoming, where the entanglements with human and more-than-human actors on this planet are slowly highlighted without risking a complete "nature shock".

6.2. Embodied Engagements with the Stinging Nettle

The dissolution of the nature-culture dualism, in order to rise to the challenges of climate change and to promote collective sustainability, must happen on a cultural level. As has been shown, wild herbs are one way to dissolve the dualism. However, it should be taken into account that human encounters with wild herbs do not happen on a cultural but rather an individual and sensual level. Like Deborah Lupton already showed in 1996, food is a central aspect of human subjectivity (Lupton 1996: 1). Consequently, experiencing wild herbs as (super)foods is an equally subjective act. Encounters with wild herbs generally occur on the individual level and are a sensual experience through the practice of gathering, which can be separated into different sensual activities. Here, all senses (smell, touch, taste, sight, and hearing) play a role in understanding the diversity of wild herbs. As Nyman (2019) points out, foraging, or gathering, are embodied engagements with plants and present some sort of intercorporeality beyond consumption, e.g. eating. These embodied engagements include the five senses (Nyman 2019: 177). After Gerd Spittler (2001) thick participation is especially helpful for ethnographically grasping activities and the knowledge behind them, which otherwise would be difficult to observe or describe. When it comes to understand embodied engagements and sensual experiences, it seems reasonable not only to rely on descriptions from research participants but also to include the researcher's own experiences with the urban environment through wild herbs.

Physical experiences with wild herbs happen unconsciously for most people in the city. While wild herbs are often ignored or destroyed in cultivated spaces, like front yards or on sidewalks, people get in touch with wild herbs when walking on the grass of meadows in the park, when grazing in the urban forests, picking daisies, or tasting the blackberries that grow next to the street en passant. All these activities are sensual encounters with the wild urban nature. These encounters seem to happen in the meantime, when focusing on other things. Having a bodily encounter with the stinging nettle however can't be ignored in most cases, because the plant makes us clearly feel its presence, especially when touching it. It is therefore a good example to describe bodily encounters with urban nature and the individuality of experiences. As I have learnt in the workshops and on the walks, encountering and learning about wild herbs is less theoretical than practical. On one of my first workshops, where I conducted thick participation, I and the attendees were not told much about each plant species. Getting to know the plant happened via looking at the plant, feeling its texture, observing how it grows and differentiating its parts, as well as smelling and tasting it. I observed how this method of teaching had been applied in most of the workshops and walks. An example from my field notes representatively summarizes my experiences:

> "Mica's approach to imparting knowledge is interesting. She tells us relatively little about the individual herbs and their properties, but sends us off with the task of looking at the herbs very closely, touching them, smelling them, eating them and getting really close to them. [...] It is about a very sensual perception and understanding, different from what we are used to." (field notes 30.07.22; [translated by the author])

Thewie, another research participant, affirms that a plant should never be determined by only one part of it, but as a whole, because only when considering every single characteristic, one can be a hundred percent sure that this is indeed the right plant (interview with Thewie 03.10.22) After Anna Tsing, there are indeed different forms and categories of knowledge through which people interact with and know their environment (Tsing 2001: 9). The interaction with wild herbs happens on a sensual level (Martin 2018: 155; Nyman 2019: 177). In order to describe how people engage with their local environment, understanding the ways in which they interact with and learn about wild herbs is one possible way to do so. Since sense plays a crucial role in these interaction and learning processes, it is necessary to analyze the sensual experiences with wild herbs.

6.2.1. Hearing and Smelling: Creativity

While most of my research participants had rather a culinary or medical focus on wild herbs, my research participant Diego showed in what multiple and creative ways wild herbs in general can be used. From the stinging nettle he was able to make paper and paint; even cloth is possible (field notes 20.08.22). In our interview, he also told me that wild herbs in general can be smoked like incense. He even told me how he built instruments out of gathered products and made music (interview with Diego 18.08.22). This example shall briefly show how the inherent diversity of wild herbs can be encountered through a variety of senses. These enable creative ways to engage with wild herbs other than what is commonly known. For Diego, hearing is also connected to another quality of wild herbs. For him, listening to and telling each other stories is what brings people together and what connects them to their local environment and history. For him, plants embody a cultural memory, and listening to stories about plants means encountering them anew and being reminded of their and our own existence (interview with Diego 18.08.22).

6.2.2. Touching and Tasting: Being there

Many of my research participants include the stinging nettle in their daily diets; the taste of the nettle becomes a steady companion. As a *Kulturfolgerin*, a plant that preferably grows in proximity to humans, the stinging nettle is always there, and its taste reminds people of the plant always being there and providing for them (interview with *Wildkräuterentdeckerinnen* 29.08.22; interview with Jana 17.10.22). Historically seen, as demonstrated in chapter 5.1.2., the stinging nettle even provided a healthy, rich nutrition source for many people.

But being there can also mean being in the present moment. In the opening narrative of this work, I talked about my research participant Diego and I drinking tea made from the wild herbs we gathered earlier. As Diego prepared the tea in a little tea pot he had brought with him, he told me that we should let the tea steep before drinking it to allow the flavors to develop. He described it as the taste of the moment, or in his words: “This is how the moment tastes” (interview with Diego 18.08.22; [translated by the author]). This form of being there expresses itself also when stinging nettle and human come into touch with each other. In contrast to most wild herbs, the touch can be clearly felt, at least from the human perspective. The stinging and burning feeling on the skin brings humans back to the present moment and reminds them of their environment and their presence in a specific space and time. My research participant Thewie for example told me that she also calls the

stinging nettle "Hier-und-Jetzt-Pflanze" – in English "the here-and-now plant" (interview with Thewie 03.10.22). Furthermore, my research participant Lena observed that people rather look for something different and ignore their local environment. For her, the stinging nettle is a way to remind people of the advantages and particularities of their local environment. The plant helps us to refocus on the here and now (interview with Lena 23.08.22).

6.2.3. Seeing: Awareness

The sense of seeing wild herbs is strongly connected with knowledge. Many people, especially in the city, tend to ignore their environment and just run through daily life. "We are far too little attentive and when we walk through nature, we tend to just run through and not look left and right, [...]" (interview with Thewie 03.10.22; [translated by the author]), Thewie told me while we were sitting in her patio surrounded by wild growing plants. The *Wildkräuterentdeckerinnen*, too, affirmed that people are generally ignorant towards wild herbs they encounter in everyday life. For them, seeing wild herbs needs knowledge of wild herbs (interview with *Wildkräuterentdeckerinnen* 29.08.22). In other words, wild herbs can only be recognized with sufficient knowledge. The knowledge about wild herbs not only enables people to recognize their very existence in the environment, but also to identify the different wild herbs according to their special features, like leaf structure, growth habit or flower head. While the identification of a plant should always be a wholesome experience using several senses, recognizing plants by their appearance and special characteristics is central to knowledge about the gathering and use of wild herbs (interview with Thewie 03.10.22). Knowledge is created through looking at plants, seeing differences and similarities, and recognizing particularities. At the same time, knowledge offers a differentiated perspective on the local environment, as it enables us to see more details, and even things that would otherwise remain invisible. Judith for example told me that she is now, thanks to her knowledge about the particular needs of stinging nettles concerning soil composition, able to identify nitrogen-rich soils simply by recognizing where many stinging nettles grow (interview with Judith 08.09.22). Knowing what grows where and why has often been mentioned as one motivation why people want to deal with wild herbs in their local environment (see for example interview with *Wildkräuterentdeckerinnen* 29.08.22). Taking a good look at wild herbs and being able to differentiate is also an important strategy for safe gathering. Some wild herbs have toxic lookalikes. Being unaware and unable to identify these lookalikes can cause tremendous

damage to people's well-being (interview with *Wildkräuterentdeckerinnen* 29.08.22; interview with Mica 30.09.22). Gathering carefully is considered essential for the engagement with wild herbs, and only possible when the gatherer is sufficiently knowledgeable.

6.3. More-than-human Encounters

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the sensual learning and the generated embodied knowledge create awareness of the local environment and allow us to understand the environment in multiple creative ways. This differentiated understanding gives us the opportunity to rethink current cultural concepts of wilderness and nature, which is crucial for future sustainability. For Anna Tsing, every encounter is a transformation: "We are contaminated by our encounters; they change who we are as we make way for others." (Tsing 2015: 27). The question then is: In the particular context of the urban wild spaces in Cologne, how do people and their perceptions of the environment change through encountering wild herbs?

My research participants of group 1 responded differently to the question and highlighted numerous aspects. In most cases, I was able to relate from my personal experiences from engaging with wild herbs. One example is the appreciation of wild herbs and how they provide for me and other people. For me, the appreciation towards wild herbs is expressed by thankfulness. In my research journal I wrote:

> "While we were collecting the flower buds of the hogweed – we were only allowed to pick one umbel with seeds from each plant so as not to harm the plant – I involuntarily felt the need to thank the plant, which I did." (field notes 30.07.22; [translated by the author])

This was the first time I had the urge to thank a wild plant for providing for me and my health with its seeds. This thankfulness is a relatable feeling, as I found out later. Many research participants acknowledged that thanking a plant, by simply saying "thank you", or, as Thewie describes, to say a little prayer for the plant (interview with Thewie 03.10.22), is a common way to express appreciation. Others tell me that appreciation can also be expressed by caring for the environment. Caring has been interpreted differently. Jana for example regularly cleans local green spaces (interview with Jana 17.10.22) and Judith purchases and consumes only organically produced foods to counteract the use of pesticides and other toxic substances that contaminate and damage (wild) green spaces (interview with Judith 08.09.22). These acts of showing one's appreciation and respect towards wild herbs is part of a reciprocal relationship between human and non-human

actors which is promoted. Like Jana and Lena describe, there is some sort of communication happening between plants and humans, which happens on an energetic level and is therefore difficult to describe for them. Getting into resonance with plants means feeling their presence and understanding that some plants actively look for human presence, too, like the stinging nettle (interview with Jana 17.10.22; interview with Lena 23.08.22). After Nyman (2019) the gathering and distribution of wild herbs is a reciprocal and sharing experience between human and non-human actors (177), or in Anna Tsing's words: "the undeserved bounty of the gift" (Tsing 2012: 142), which is received and appreciated. The emerging reciprocal relationships, or entanglements, can be understood as what Anna Tsing calls "collaboration" (Tsing 2015: 28), which is working across differences and getting entangled with each other in order to survive.

Encountering wild herbs means acknowledging that the strict separation of culture and (wild) nature, which is central to the ontological dualism many societies still rely on today, the German society included, can no longer be maintained. Questioning the dominant dualism means questioning the Anthropocene and human dominance in the world. This seems to be a challenging task, first because we are indeed speaking from a human perspective. The task therefore is a shift in perspective, trying to understand the world from another perspective, e.g. from a wild-herbs perspective. A first step in this direction is to acknowledge the entanglements of human and wild-herb actors as interdependent and equal actors in one world. My research participant Mica phrased this acknowledgement in an example. She told me that people tend to value wild herbs according to their abilities and benefits for human existence. In her opinion, every plant has value since even the smallest is included in the entangled more-than-human collaborations that shape our world:

> "[...], so the appreciation of plants shouldn't just depend on whether you can do something with them, but every plant actually has its importance in nature, even if it's just that it produces a little bit of oxygen for us so that we can breathe. So that's also our job, to give people a sense of where they should place themselves in nature." (interview with Mica 30.09.22; [translated by the author]).

As Mica describes, and the *Wildkräuterentdeckerinnen* affirm (interview with *Wildkräuterentdeckerinnen* 29.08.22), understanding the world as more-than-human encounters means rethinking our own position in this world and becoming humbler, as we understand the world not in terms of human dominance but as entanglements of equal

actors. Further, it means to realize that human beings depend on these entanglements as much as non-human beings do. Most of my research participants of group 1 see this as one of their main tasks in teaching other people about wild herbs. Their goal is to help people understand these entanglements and collaborations that human existence depends on. Wild herbs offer an easy and accessible way to approach another worldview and to initiate a rethinking of the becoming of the world. How the world can be understood differently is represented by wild herbs becoming food. As Marcus Nyman states, "[a]ny system of food provisioning involves more-than-human relationships […]" (Nyman 2019: 177) and he describes these relationships over time and space (Nyman 2019: 178). Capturing how wild herbs become food through embodied knowledge and reapproaching wilderness helps to dissolve the long-standing dualism between nature and culture. Food itself becomes an actor in the collaborations for world-making processes (Bennett 2007: 145).

7. Conclusion

Categories like "food" and "wilderness" have been shown to be essential in world-making-processes. These categories, however, are not stable, but are located in an ever-changing process of becoming. This process of becoming is influenced by many factors. The analysis of my field research in Cologne suggests that wilderness is an individual experience, but at the same time is shaped by shared memories, a history of philosophical ideas, and public opinions expressed on social media, in television, or in print media. Conversations with people in the city of Cologne have shown how urban wilderness is currently imagined: as uncontrollable, uncultivated, dangerous, contaminated, and feral spaces. This understanding is based on an ontological differentiation between human culture and non-human nature. In the city, a highly cultivated realm, nature is encountered in most cases as formerly cultivated and now feral spaces, which are also called urban wilderness. Fieldwork in the city indeed demonstrates that the current idea of wilderness is no longer sustainable because we are dealing with a whole other material wild environment. The untouched wilderness that is often talked about is non-existent in the urban realm; humans have shaped it completely. Wilderness should therefore be rethought and understood as a space of equal more-than-human encounters without human dominance. Speaking of more-than-human encounters also means rethinking the strict separation of nature and culture in a dualistic ontology and promote natural-cultural entanglements as world-making processes. Creating a new understanding of how our

environment is becoming and who acts in these processes of becoming can be understood with the help of embodied and sensual experiences with the environment, for example via foraging for food. With the help of wild herbs, and the stinging nettle in particular, as part of and a representation of wilderness, it could be highlighted how a plant can change from wild weed to food as the embodied and sensual experiences with the plant change our perception of it, which may then lead to a new understanding of the environment in general. Seeing the world through wild herbs like the stinging nettle offers a new level of appreciation and respect towards our environment, not only because we acknowledge that every plant and animal are active contributors to world-making processes, but also because we start to question the dominant human position in the world and make room for more-than-human entanglements in our worldviews. Acknowledging more-than-human entanglements is necessary for survival (Tsing 2015: 28). In times of environmental crisis and changing climatic circumstances, survival has again become a pressing issue in this world. Among my research participants in this study, the dominant opinion is that human beings, with their current lifestyles based on the exploitation of the earth's resources, won't be able to adapt and survive. If people want to survive, or at least stay a little longer on the Earth, the understanding of our environment must change and the interdependence of human and non-human-actors in this world must be acknowledged. Or, in the words of Anna Tsing: "It is in listening to that cacophony of troubled stories that we might encounter our best hopes for precarious survival" (Tsing 2015: 34). Wild herbs and urban foraging are one way of acknowledging more-than-human entanglements, but by far not the only way. On the contrary, urban foraging is not meant to become a mass activity, as this could quickly change from a sustainable engagement with the environment into an exploitation of the environment:

> "We just say: with caution. And I think this free mentality leads to people wanting a lot straight away. And it's true when you say they [wild herbs] are free or maybe not, because nature pays. It might pay in that if we graze everything, it might not continue to exist." (interview with *Wildkräuterentdeckerinnen* 29.08.22; [translated by the author])

Knowledge about and appreciation of the environment, learned through engagement with wild herbs, is, at the same time, a precondition for sustainable engagement with wild herbs. In sum, urban foraging can be understood as a survival strategy when facing the environmental crisis, in two ways: i) foraging can improve food security as wild herbs are robust and nutritious complementary foodstuffs for human diets; ii) further, engagement

with wild herbs – and, through wild herbs, with the environment – can change our understanding of the world and world-making processes as collaborations between human and non-human actors in a world full of mor-than-human entanglements, which must be understood in order to create new collective survival strategies.

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9. Appendix

Appendix 1: Written Consent Form (blanc)

Einverständniserklärung zur Datenverarbeitung

Projekttitel: Of Weed and Value: Encounters with the Stinging Nettle in the Urban Wilderness of Cologne

Name Interviewführung:

Name Teilnehmer*in:

Interviewtermin:

Das Interview hat ____ Stunden und ____ Minuten in Anspruch genommen.

Die Fragen und das Interviewsetting wurden mit Bedacht gewählt, um jedwede Risiken der Teilnahme für den/die Teilnehmer*in auszuschließen. Dennoch behält sich der/die Teilnehmende das Recht vor, das Interview an zu jedem Zeitpunkt zu unterbrechen und die Teilnahme zu beenden.

Für die Durchführung, Aufnahme und Verarbeitung sowie die spätere Veröffentlichung des Interviewmaterials wird Ihr Einverständnis benötigt. Im Zuge der Datenschutzverordnung ist dies ein gängiges Verfahren in Deutschland, um zu gewährleisten, dass Sie ausführlich über die Umstände und Bedingungen Ihrer Teilnahme sowie den Zweck des Interviews aufgeklärt wurden. Bitte stimmen Sie den folgenden Punkten mit ihrer Unterschrift am Ende der Erklärung zu.

Ich bin einverstanden, dass…

- das Interview mit einem Aufzeichnungsgerät digital aufgezeichnet wird und die Aufzeichnung in ein Transkript verschriftlich wird.
- das Interview-Transkript von der Forschungsverantwortlichen Anna Schäfer analysiert wird.
- der Zugang zu den Transkripten nur der Forschungsverantwortlichen Anna Schäfer sowie ihren akademischen Kolleg*innen und Forscher*innen, mit denen sie während des Forschungsprozesses möglicherweise kooperiert, gewährleistet wird.
- ich auf Anfrage ebenfalls Zugang zu meinem Interview-Transkript erhalte und das Recht habe nachträglich, allerdings vor Einreichung der Arbeit als Abschlussprüfung beim Prüfungsamt der Universität zu Köln, meine Aussagen zu korrigieren oder zurückzuziehen.
- dass inhaltliche Zusammenfassungen sowie direkte und indirekte Zitate in der Abschlussarbeit und in möglichen darauffolgenden Veröffentlichungen in Fachzeitschriften oder ähnlichem verwendet werden.

- ich in der Abschlussarbeit sowie möglichen Veröffentlichungen folgendermaßen (nicht) identifizierbar bin (*bitte ankreuzen*):
  - o mit vollem, korrektem Namen sowie Zuordnung zu bestimmter Gruppe/Institution
  - o pseudonymisiert mit Zuordnung zu bestimmter Gruppe/Institution
  - o anonymisiert ohne Zuordnung zu bestimmter Gruppe/Institution
  - o individuell:

    ____

    ____
- weitere personenbezogene wie Alter, Beruf und beruflicher Werdegang, Familienstand, religöse Zugehörigkeit sowie andere Überzeugungen, soziale Klasse etc. aufgenommen und ggf. veröffentlicht werden.
- die Originalaufnahme des Interviews sowie die Transkripte zu Nachweiszwecken von der Forschungsverantwortlichen Anna Schäfer auf einem dafür vorgesehenen externen Speichermedium über den Zeitraum der Datenanalyse hinaus abgespeichert werden.
- die oben genannten Bedingungen nur mit meiner ausdrücklichen Zustimmung verändert werden können.

Ich wurde zudem darüber informiert, dass …

- die Forschungsverantwortliche Anna Schäfer sich dazu verpflichtet hat, jedes Risiko meine Person und Berufstand betreffend, möglichst zu vermeiden und meine Daten vertrauensvoll zu behandeln. Die Forschungsverantwortliche hält sich dabei an die aktuellen Vorgaben Deutschen Gesellschaft für Sozial- und Kulturanthropologie
- ich mich jederzeit an die Forschungsverantwortliche Anna Schäfer wenden kann, sollte ich Zweifel an meiner Teilnahme haben.
- meine in Interviewsituationen erhobenen Daten jederzeit auf meinen Wunsch gelöscht werden können, sofern sie noch nicht in der Abschlussarbeit verwendet und die Arbeit eingereicht wurde. Nach Einreichung können die Daten nicht mehr entfernt werden.
- ich das Recht habe, eine Kopie der fertigen Abschlussarbeit bei der Forschungsverantwortlichen Anna Schäfer anzufragen.

___

Ort, Datum Unterschrift Teilnehmer*in

Appendix 2.: Interview Questionaire for Research Participants of Group 1

Datum:

Ort:

Uhrzeit:

Interviewer*in:

Teilnehmer*in 1:

Teilnehmer*in 2:

Teilnehmer*in 3:

Weitere Teilnehmer*innen:

Teil 0 Begrüßung

Hallo …, schön, dass du/ihr da bist/seid. Vielen Dank für die Teilnahme an diesem Interview. Dieses Interview ist ein semistrukturiertes Interview. Das bedeutet, dass ich zwar Fragen basierend auf meinen Recherchen und ggf. Erstgesprächen vorbereitet habe, ich aber auch spontan weitere Fragen stellen kann, die sich im Laufe des Interviews ergeben. Wie bereits in der Einverständniserklärung beschrieben, kannst du/ könnt ihr das Interview zu jeder Zeit stoppen und fortsetzen. Wenn du/ ihr keine Fragen mehr hast/habt, beginnt jetzt das Interview.

Teil 1 persönliche Informationen

Bitte stelle dich in einigen Sätzen vor.

Wann hast du begonnen, dich mit Wildkräutern zu beschäftigen?

Bitte skizziere kurz deinen Werdegang zum/zur Wildkräuterexpertin.

Teil 2 Sammeln

Welche Regeln befolgst du beim Sammeln?

Wie häufig sammelst du und an welchen Stellen?

Wofür sammelst du (eigener Gebrauch, Küche, Apotheke, Verkauf)?

Wie sieht eine typische Sammel-Tour bei dir aus? Kannst du das erläutern?

An welchen Stellen wächst die Brennnessel im Kölner Stadtgebiet (besonders gut)?

Wo und wie sammelst du Brennnesseln?

Wann ist die beste Zeit Brennnesseln zu sammeln?

Welche Teile der Brennnessel sind essbar?

Teil 3 Vermarktung

Weshalb hast du dich dazu entschieden Wildkräuter-Kurse anzubieten?

Wie häufig gibst du Kurse?

Welche Art von Kursen bietest du an?

Wie viel kosten die Kurse/ Angebote?

Warum bietest du Kurse kostenpflichtig an?

- Was bekommen die Teilnehmer*innen für ihr Geld?
- Warum zahlen sie dafür?

Sind Wildkräuter gratis?

Wie gehen Menschen in deinen Kursen damit um, dass sie sich nehmen können, wie viel sie wollen?

Verkaufst du Produkte aus Wildkräutern oder Wildkräuter an sich?

- Warum (nicht)?
- Welche Produkte bietest du an und warum gerade diese?
- Was verkauft sich gut und was nicht?
- Kannst oder willst du von dem Verkauf von Wildkräuterprodukten und Kursen leben? Warum (nicht)?

Teil 4 Superfood

Welche Eigenschaften unterscheiden Wildkräuter als Nahrungsmittel zu anderen Nahrungsmitteln, die wir beispielsweise im Supermarkt kaufen?

- Wie integrierst du Wildkräuter in deine alltäglich Ernährung?
- Welche Vorteile bringen die die Wildkräuter als Teil deiner Ernährung?
- Gibt es auch Nachteile? Welche?

Wie hat sich deine Einstellung zu Nahrungsmitteln verändert?

Welche Rolle spielt Gesundheit und gesunde Ernährung heute für dich?

- Wie hat es sich verändert im Vergleich zu früher, bevor du dich mit Wildkräutern beschäftigt hast?
- Wie vereinen Wildkräuter Gesundheit und Ernährung in sich?

Es ist schon seit einiger Zeit Trend Superfoods in die Ernährung zu integrieren. Wie definierst du den Begriff Superfood? Was macht ein Superfood aus?

Welche Superfoods nutzt du in deinem Alltag?

Warum könnte, sollte oder tut man Wildkräuter als Superfood bezeichnen?

- Welche weiteren Eigenschaften haben Wildkräuter, die über die Definition von Superfoods hinausgehen? (1:1 Superfoods, oder steckt da noch mehr dahinter?)

Was kannst du mir im Bezug auf Ernährung über die Brennnessel erzählen?

Spielt die Brennnessel eine wichtige Rolle in deiner Ernährung? Warum (nicht)?

- Wie häufig konsumierst du Brennnesseln in der Woche?
- In welchen Formen konsumierst du Brennnesseln?
- Welche gesundheitlichen Vorteile hat die Brennnessel für dich?

Welche Rolle werden Wildkräuter in der Zukunft in unserer Ernährung spielen?

- Im Hinblick auf aktuell vorherrschende Krisen, wie der Krieg in der Urkaine oder stetig steigende Preise für Energie und Nahrungsmittel?
- Sind Wildkräuter vielleicht eine Resilienzstrategie?
- Sind Wildkräuter wie die Brennnessel krisensicher und warum?
- Welche Eigenschaften sind hierfür besonders wichtig?
- Was wird benötigt, um Wildkräuter in der Zukunft mehr in unseren Speiseplan zu integrieren?

Teil 5 Wahrnehmung

Wenn die Brennnessel eine Person wäre, wie würdest du sie beschreiben?

Die Brennnessel ist dafür bekannt, dass sie bei Hautkontakt ein brennendes Gefühl verursacht. Warum brennt es und wie gehst du mit dem Brennen um?

- Welche Bewältigungsstrategien nutzt du?
- Wie nimmst du das Brennen wahr? (als Gefahr, Schutzmechanismus, angenehmes Kribbeln?)
- Welche Gefühle löst es in dir aus?
- Welche anderen Eigenschaften der Brennnessel findest du herausstechend?

Wie hat sich deine Sicht auf die Brennnessel und deine Umwelt allgemein verändert, nachdem du dich mit der Pflanze auseinandergesetzt hast? Gab es Schlüsselmomente? Welche?

- Was genau hat sich geändert?
- Wie bewertest du diese Veränderung?

Wie hat sich die Beziehung zu deiner Umwelt und auch zu dir selbst verändert?

- Wie gehst du heute im Vergleich zu früher mit der Natur um?
- Worauf achtest du/ legst du Wert?
- Was hast du im Umgang mit dir selbst und deinen Mitmenschen gelernt?
- Wo verortest du dich heute (und im Vergleich dazu früher) in der Welt?
- Was ist deine Aufgabe/Verpflichtung gegenüber der Natur?

- Handelt es sich um ein reziprokes Verhältnis? Was gibt dir die Natur zurück (wenn überhaupt)?

Wie hat sich die Beziehung zu anderen Menschen durch Wildkräuter verändert?

- Welche neuen Bekanntschaften hast du durch die Wildkräuter gemacht?
- Begleiten dich Menschen beim Sammeln? Warum?

Man sagt, dass Essen Menschen zusammenbringt? Wie ist das bei den Wildkräutern? Auf welche Weise bringen sie Menschen zusammen?

- Welche Eigenschaften der Wildkräuter bringen Menschen zusammen? Warum gerade diese?
- Gibt es Wildkräuter, die Menschen mehr oder weniger zusammenbringen?
- Welche Rolle spielt hier zusätzlich das Sammeln? Handelt es sich hierbei um eine gemeinschaftliche Praktik und wie drückt sich das aus?

Was bedeutet das Adjektiv „wild“ und was genau sind Wildkräuter?

- Wie unterscheiden sie sich von Küchenkräutern?
- Warum ist es wichtig die Pflanzen als Wildkräuter zu bezeichnen?
- Welche Bedeutungen erhalten sie dadurch?

Teil 6 Gender

Die Brennnessel ist eine geschlechtliche Pflanze. Wie spiegelt sich die Unterscheidung zwischen männlich und weiblich in den Kursen und in der Beschäftigung mit Wildkräutern allgemein wider? Welche Analogien findest du?

- Warum sind Wildkräuter ein eher von weiblich gelesenen Personen dominiertes Feld?
- Warum gibt es nur wenige männlich gelesene Personen, die sich damit beschäftigen?
- Wie könnte man mehr männlich gelesen Personen dazu motivieren, sich mit Wildkräutern auseinanderzusetzen?

Ist die Brennnessel im speziellen eine Pflanze, für die sich mehr weiblich gelesene oder mehr männlich gelesene Personen interessieren und warum?

Teil 7 Vermeidung

Warum kennen sich so wenige Menschen mit Wildkräutern aus?

Warum meiden Menschen Wildkräuter sogar?

- Was ist bei der Brennnessel konkret der Auslöser dazu?
- Welche Ängste verbinden Menschen mit Wildkräutern, speziell mit der Brennnessel?

Wie sind die aktuellen Wildkräuter- und speziell Brennnesselvorkommen in Köln? Hat sich da etwas in den letzten Jahren geändert?

Wie geht die Stadt Köln mit Wildkräutern um?

Appendix 3.: Interview Questionaire for Municipal Staff

Datum:

Ort:

Uhrzeit:

Interviewer*in:

Teilnehmer*in 1:

Teilnehmer*in 2:

Teilnehmer*in 3:

Weitere Teilnehmer*innen:

Teil 0 Begrüßung

Hallo …, schön, dass du da bist. Vielen Dank für deine Teilnahme an diesem Interview. Die Aufnahme des Interviews ist bereits gestartet. Im Vorfeld habe ich dich schon über den Verlauf des Interviews aufgeklärt. Solltest du das Interview zu einem beliebigen Zeitpunkt aus irgendeinem Grund stoppen oder abbrechen wollen, ist das kein Problem, einfach Bescheid sagen. Fragen von deiner Seite haben wir bereits im Vorfeld geklärt und wenn du einverstanden bist, beginnen wir jetzt das Interview.

Teil 1 persönliche Informationen

Bitte stelle dich selbst kurz vor und erläutere deine Rolle im Ernährungsrat?

Teil 2 Projekt „Essbare Stadt“

Warum wurde das Projekt „Essbare Stadt“ ins Leben gerufen?

Wie denfinierst du „essbar“?

Wann ist eine Stadt in deinen Augen essbar?

Inwieweit sind die Ziele der essbaren Stadt, die im Aktionsplan 2017/18 beschrieben werden, bisher umgesetzt?

Teil 3 Essbares öffentliches Grün

In der essbaren Stadt geht es vor allem um den Anbau von Kulturpflanzen. Aber es gibt auch essbare Pflanzen, die sich schwer anbauen lassen, zum Beispiel die Brennnessel. Wie werden diese Pflanzen als essbares Grün berücksichtigt?

Viele dieser Pflanzen, allen voran die Brennnessel, besitzen viele wichtige Nährstoffe für den Menschen. Sie werden häufig auch als Superfood bezeichnet. Wie nutzt die essbare Stadt diesen Begriff? Welche Potenziale und/oder Schwierigkeiten siehst du?

Welche Rolle spielt eine ausgewogene und gesunde Ernährung im Projekt essbare Stadt? Wie soll dies umgesetzt werden? Inwieweit könnten Wildkräuter dazu beitragen?

Inwieweit könnte man die Brennnessel und andere Wildpflanzen (weiter) in die Pläne der essbaren Stadt integrieren? Was braucht es dazu?

Teil 4 urbane Wildnis

Gibt es Flächen in Köln, die in deinen Augen Wildnis sind? Welche?/ Warum nicht?

Was ist Wildnis? (Def.)

Wie können Bewohner der Stadt Köln mit der urbanen Wildnis interagieren? Sollten sie dies überhaupt tun?

Sollte es in Köln Flächen geben, die überhaupt nicht vom Menschen beeinflusst, sondern sich selbst überlassen werden? Warum?

Teil 5 Gefahren

Es wird nicht klar, wie sich die gemeinschaftliche Nutzung von essbarem Grün in der Stadt gestalten soll. Wo siehst du Gefahren bei dem Konzept?

Was tun, wenn Menschen anfangen das essbare Grün auszubeuten, indem sie zum Beispiel viel mehr nehmen, als sie verbrauchen können, ganz nach dem Motto: Wenn es nichts kostet, nehme ich so viel ich kann. Wie wird dem vorgebeugt?

Was passiert, wenn Menschen plötzlich denken, dass die ganze Stadt essbar ist, tatsächlich aber nur bestimmte Teile? Inwieweit ist das gefährlich?

Teil 6 Mensch-Umwelt-Beziehung

Wie kann Essen bzw. eine essbare Umwelt die Beziehung von Mensch und Umwelt ändern? Was ist hierbei erstrebenswert?

Wie sollen Menschen in Zukunft mit ihrer (essbaren) Natur umgehen?

Appendix 4: Overview of fieldstays, including interview appointments

Date	Event	Location	Participants	Methods
27.07.22	First Meeting	Carlsgarten (Cologne Mülheim)	Diego (wild herbs expert; r.p.g. 1*	Informal interview
28.07.22	First Meeting	Wildkräuterei (Cologne Marsdorf)	Mica (wild herbs expert; r.p.g. 1)	Informal interview
30.07.22	Cooking Class „Wilde Aufstriche und Dips"	Wildkräuterei (Cologne Marsdorf)	Mica (wild herbs expert r.p.g.1), workshop attendees (r.p.g.2**)	Participant observation / thick participation, and informal interviews
15.08.22	First Meeting	Funkhaus (Cologne City)	Wildkräuter-entdeckerinnen (two wild herbs experts r.p.g.1	Informal interview, free listing
18.08.22	Walk and interview	Rhine (Cologne Deutz)	Diego (wild herbs expert, r.p.g. 1)	Semi-structured interview (recorded), free listing , participant observation/ thick participation
20.08.22	Walk and workshop	Cologne Brück	Diego (wild herbs expert, r.p.g. 1), Diego's colleague, workshop attendees (r.p.g.2)	Participant observation/ thick participation, informal interviews
23.08.22	Walk „großer Kräuterspaziergang"	Wildkräuterei and surrounding area (Cologne Marsdorf)	Lena (wild herbs expert, r.p.g.1), attendees (r.p.g.2)	Participant observation/ thick participation, informal interviews
29.08.22	Interview	Satt grün (Cologne City)	Wildkräuter-entdeckerinnen (two wild herbs experts, r.p.g. 2)	Semi-structured interview
08.09.22	Interview	Zoom (online)	Judith (wild herbs	Semi-structured

			expert r.p.g.1)	interview, free listing
18.09.22	Cooking Class „Wilder Kräuterwok“	Wildkräuterei (Cologne Marsdorf)	Thewie (wild herbs expert, r.p.g.1), workshop attendees (r.p.g.2)	Participant observation/ thick participation, informal interviews
30.09.22	Interview	Wildkräuterei (Cologne Marsdorf)	Mica (wild herbs expert, r.p.g.1)	Semi-structured interview, free listing
03.10.22	Interview	Rommerskirchen	Thewie (wild herbs expert, r.p.g. 1)	Semi-structured interview, free listing
17.10.22	Interview	kom:jun yoga studio (Cologne Sülz)	Jana (wild herbs expert, r.p.g.1)	Semi-structured interview, free listing
31.01.23	Phone interview		Fr. Mayer (municipal staff member, project *Essbare Stadt,* city of Cologne	Informal interview
07.02.23	Phone interview		Fr. Kirchhoff (municipal staff member, city of Cologne)	Informal interview
15.02.23	Interview	Zoom (online)	Fr. Mayer (municipal staff member, project *Essbare Stadt,* city of Cologne)	Semi-structured interview
20.04.23	Phone interview		Fr. Rademacher (municipal staff member, project *Essbare Stadt*, city of Cologne)	Informal interview

* r.p.g.1 = research participant of group 1
** r.p.g.2 = research participant of group 2

KÖLNER ETHNOLOGISCHE BEITRÄGE
HERAUSGEGEBEN VON MICHAEL J. CASIMIR

HEFT 1 — **BABET NAEFE 2002**
Die Kormoranfischer vom Erhai-See
Eine südwest-chinesische Wirtschaftsweise im Wandel

HEFT 2 — **ANNIKA WIEKHORST 2002**
Die Verwendung von Pflanzen in der traditionellen Medizin bei drei Baka Gruppen in Südost Kamerun

HEFT 3 — **IRENE HILGERS 2002**
Transformationsprozeß im Norden Kirgistans
Sozio-ökonomischer Wandel am Beispiel eines Dorfes

HEFT 4 — **BRITTA FUCHS 2002**
Wenn der Muezzin rufen will
Diskurse über ein Moscheebauprojekt im Kölner Stadtteil Chorweiler

HEFT 5 — **KERSTIN HADJER 2003**
Illegalisierte Identitäten
Auswirkungen der Sans Papiers-Problematik auf den Alltag afrikanischer Migranten in Pariser Wohnheimen (Foyers)

HEFT 6 — **FLORIAN STAMMLER 2003**
Überlebensstrategien im postsozialistischen Russland
Das Beispiel der rentierzüchtenden Chanty und Nentsy in Nordwestsibirien

HEFT 7 — **CLAUDIA LIEBELT 2003**
Die Wasserwirtschaft im südmarokkanischen Dratal im Spannungsfeld von lokaler und staatlicher Ressourcenkontrolle

HEFT 8 — **NADIA CORNELIUS 2003**
Genese und Wandel von Festbräuchen und Ritualen in Deutschland von 1933 bis 1945

HEFT 9 — **HENRICA VAN DER BEHRENS 2003**
Gartenbau der Himba
Ackerbauliche Bodennutzung einer pastoralnomadischen Gruppe im Nordwesten Namibias und Wandel von Festbräuchen und Ritualen

HEFT 10 — **TOBIAS SCHMIDTNER 2004**
Ressourcenmanagement und kollektives Handeln
Wirtschaft und soziale Organisation bei einer Gemeinschaft namibianischer small miners in der Erongo-Region

HEFT 11 — **NATASCHA GARVIN 2004**
„La vara es recta, no es torcida“
Der Alcalde Auxiliar als lokale Autorität in einer indigenen Gemeinde Guatemalas

HEFT 12 — **SEBASTIAN T. ELLERICH 2004**
Der Yaqona-Markt in Fidschi
Zustand, Probleme, Bemühungen

HEFT 13 — **ANNE SCHADY 2004**
"Community Participation" and "Peer Education"
A critique of key-concepts in HIV/AIDS prevention in Swaziland

HEFT 14 — **THEKLA HOHMANN 2004**
Transformationen kommunalen Ressourcenmanagements im Tsumkwe Distrikt (Nordost-Namibia)

HEFT 15 **BETTINA ZIESS 2004**
Weide, Wasser, Wild.
Ressourcennutzung und Konfliktmanagement in einer Conservancy im Norden Namibias.

HEFT 16 **DEIKE EULENSTEIN 2004**
Die Ernährungssituation und Ernährungsweise in der DDR (1949-1989) und die Veränderungen nach der Wiedervereinigung am Beispiel Thüringens

HEFT 17 **SONJA GIERSE-ARSTEN 2005**
CHRIST CRUSHES HIV-CRISIS
Umgang namibischer Pfingstkirchen mit der HIV/AIDS Epidemie

HEFT 18 **JANA JAHNKE 2006**
Lokale Interessen, Staatlichkeit und Naturschutz in einem globalen Kontext
Untersuchung eines Projektes der Weltbank zur Einrichtung von geschützten Gebieten in Peru mit Management durch indigene Bevölkerungsgruppen

HEFT 19 **MONIKA ZÍKOVÁ 2006**
Die kulturspezifische Formung des Gefühls
Japan im interkulturellen Vergleich

HEFT 20 **BJÖRN THEIS 2006**
DISKRETION UND DIFFAMIE
Innensicht und Fremdbild am Beispiel der Freimaurerei

HEFT 21 **LAURA E. BLECKMANN 2007**
Zur Verräumlichung kollektiver Erinnerung
Landschaften in Preisgedichten der Herero/Himba im Nordwesten Namibias

HEFT 22 **SUSANNE HVEZDA 2007**
Wasser und Land im klassischen islamischen Recht unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der mālikitischen Rechtsschule

HEFT 23 **SILKE TÖNSJOST 2007**
Plants and Pastures
Local knowledge on livestock - environment relationships among OvaHerero pastoralists in north - western Namibia

HEFT 24 **TAIYA MIKISCH 2007**
Stolz und Stigma
Tanz und Geschlechterrollen in Zagora, Südmarokko

HEFT 25 **FRANZISKA BEDORF 2007**
We don’t have a culture
“Being coloured” in Namibia als Konstruktion und Praxis

HEFT 26 **FRANK WILDAUER 2007**
Zur Genese ethnischer Konflikte
Die Konkomba-Kriege im Norden Ghanas

HEFT 27 **MARTIN BÖKE 2008**
Die Rolle der Emotionen im traditionellen chinesischen Medizinsystem

HEFT 28 **NICOLAI SPIEß 2008**
Die Tempel von Khajuraho (Indien) und ihre erotischen Skulpturen in den Augen ihrer Betrachter

HEFT 29	**ELISA TRÄGER 2008** **Bioprospektion und indigene Rechte** **Der Konflikt um die Nutzung von Bioressourcen**
HEFT 30	**KATRIN SCHAUMBURG 2008** **Maponya's in Transition - The Social Production and Construction of an Urban Place in Soweto, Johannesburg (South Africa)**
HEFT 31	**LINA GANDRAS 2009** **Warum Bio?** **Eine Untersuchung zum Kaufverhalten im Lebensmittelbereich**
HEFT 32	**LEANDROS FISCHER 2009** **Landscape and Identities** **Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon**
HEFT 33	**MICHAEL J. CASIMIR 2010** **Growing up in a Pastoral Society** **Socialisation among Pashtu Nomads in Western Afghanistan**
HEFT 34	**KATHARINA GRAF 2010** **Drinking Water Supply in the Middle Drâa Valley, South Morocco** **Options for Action in the Context of Water Scarcity and Institutional Constraints**
HEFT 35	**BARBARA SOLICH 2010** **Increasing Malaria Risk in Eastern Africa** **A Multi-Causal Analysis**
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